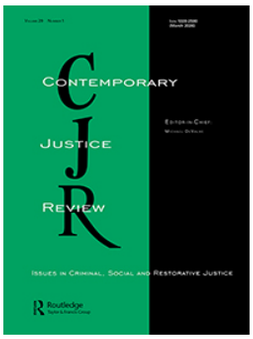


Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Contemporary Justice Review
Issues in Criminal, Social, and Restorative Justice

ISSN: 1028-2580 (Print) 1477-2248 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/gcjr20

The purpose of data in restorative justice: a socio-ecological systems lens

Benjamin M. Fisk

To cite this article: Benjamin M. Fisk (08 Apr 2026): The purpose of data in restorative justice: a socio-ecological systems lens, Contemporary Justice Review, DOI: 10.1080/10282580.2026.2638263

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2026.2638263

Published online: 08 Apr 2026.

CONTEMPORARY JUSTICE REVIEW
https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2026.2638263

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The purpose of data in restorative justice: a socio-ecological systems lens

Benjamin M. Fisk*

School of Business, Computing and Social Sciences, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, UK

ABSTRACT

The institutionalisation of restorative justice and integration of these practices within government policy and criminal justice systems is an international debate. This work contributes to the literature by using a socio-ecological system lens to examine practitioner perspectives from semi-structured interviews about the use of data for recording, monitoring, and evaluation of restorative justice services in the UK. Findings highlight the influence of various stakeholder groups, organisational cultures, and competing value systems on data collection which are shaped by institutionalisation. Practitioners collect data to accurately represent initial engagement and case progress, demonstrating professional accountability and contributing to service development while showing value to their commissioners. Although service and practitioner success raises restorative justice awareness at a sector level, awareness and success are limited by government-imposed metrics and managerialist approaches that demonstrate ambivalence towards restorative justice data. The study concludes that addressing structural barriers to data access and citizen engagement is essential for expanding the evidence base and promoting a nuanced, whole-system approach to embedding restorative justice in society. This requires evidencing restorative justice through standardised and expanded approaches that include quantitative and qualitative measures, and further developing an institutionally subversive and empowered sector to enhance awareness of restorative justice.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 13 December 2024
Accepted 17 February 2026

KEYWORDS
Restorative justice; organisational culture; criminal justice system, recording and monitoring; socio-ecological systems

1. Introduction

Restorative Justice (RJ) has gained significant international recognition as a holistic and relational approach to addressing crime and promoting healing for victims, offenders, and communities. It seeks to repair the harm caused by crime and restore relationships, shifting the focus from punishment to restorative practices (Wachtel, 2003). The principles of RJ have been integrated into policies and practices worldwide. For example, New Zealand has pioneered the use of family group conferences, involving victims, offenders,

CONTACT Benjamin M. Fisk bfisk1@glos.ac.uk School of Business, Computing and Social Sciences, University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall Campus, Swindon Rd, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ, UK

*This research was completed as part of a PhD fees-funded studentship commissioned by the University of Gloucestershire, UK and Restorative Justice Council, UK.

and their families in decision-making about restorative responses to harm (Connolly, 2006; Morris & Maxwell, 2019). In Canada, victim-offender mediation programs have been established to facilitate dialogue and understanding between stakeholders in an offence (Stewart et al., 2018; Umbreit et al., 2004). International legal instruments, such as the Council of Europe (1999) Recommendation on Mediation in Penal Matters and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes (Economic and Social Council, 2002), were vital for global recognition of RJ. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes (UNODC, 2006) and Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)8 concerning restorative justice in criminal matters highlight how this has been further solidified over more than 20 years.

However, despite this global expansion and recognition, the institutionalisation of RJ has shaped its development in ways that can conflict with its core values. Institutionalisation has shaped the development of RJ services to reflect the values and practices of state institutions (Maglione et al., 2024). While RJ has gained prominence on global political stages, it's crucial to recognise the tension between its values and the dominant punitive, managerialist ideologies within the criminal justice system, as it undergoes institutionalisation and professionalisation, often reflecting the state's dominant cultures and practices (Maglione et al., 2024; Marder, 2020; Pali & Maglione, 2021).

This tension is particularly evident in the challenges related to service data processes. Recording, monitoring, and evaluation are essential for evidencing RJ practice (Shapland, 2022). However, even in nations where RJ is embedded within the police and exists as a public standardised service with clear data processes, service data challenges persist because of institutionalisation. In Germany, the embedding of RJ into the logic and procedures of the dominant criminal justice system (CJS) has resulted in a 'deadly embrace,' leading to marginal use and neglect of indirectly affected individuals through 'morally charged' and individualised processes (Willms & Malzahn, 2024, p. 193). Despite the German state collecting national statistics on RJ since the 1990s, data has been shaped by processes that arguably do not reflect the values of RJ (Willms & Malzahn, 2024). Similarly, in Norway, a public standardised service has existed for over 15 years. Yet, awareness of RJ remains low, and the public availability of statistical data has recently ceased (Rasmussen, 2024). These examples highlight the challenges to data access and illustrate how policy shapes what is practiced and the types of evidence that can be produced.

Recording and monitoring of RJ within professionalised services has received a renewed focus since the publication of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on RJ (APPG-RJ) inquiry (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022a). The inquiry brought together Members of Parliament from diverse political backgrounds around three key aims: to examine the use of restorative justice principles within the UK justice system and beyond; to raise the profile of restorative justice principles within Parliament; and to provide opportunities for policy discussion and consultation (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022a, p. 8). Nine key recommendations were produced to improve access, capacity, and awareness, with recommendation two being the specific grounding of this research to support the investigation of 'gathering and using data to monitor and evaluate restorative justice' (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022a, p. 19). Submissions to the inquiry offered initial insight into practitioner concerns about the consistency of data between police forces (All-Party

Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022b). Further research into data reported by RJ services funded by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) identified a range of differences between six RJ services and the data they collect, including terminology, counting methods, and approaches to presenting and reporting data (Fisk, 2023). PCCs prioritise quantitative measures of processes and outcomes over qualitative evidence of transformative narratives that capture both objective and subjective measures of success (Fisk, 2023; Fisk et al., 2025). Recommendations since the initial enquiry have advocated for a national reporting framework, a repository of evidence, and for services to ensure approaches to embedding evidence of success in their data (Hobson et al., 2023).

This paper analyses the perception of practitioners through their experiences with service data processes, aiming to understand the extent to which institutionalisation impacts their ability to evidence success in RJ. This paper uses a socio-ecological systems lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) and hybrid thematic analysis of interviews (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) with RJ practitioners to explore the intersections between the institutionalisation of restorative justice, marketisation, metrification, and organisational culture challenges among RJ service providers and the various organisations and bodies they interact with in practice. This paper aims to build upon the technical and descriptive literature of RJ institutionalisation by drawing on qualitative data from the field to add a further critical account of this phenomenon through the lens of RJ service data and the perspective of practitioners who collect it (Maglione et al., 2024). By identifying the range of stakeholders invested in RJ processes and outcomes, who have a role in a whole system approach to implementing RJ (Banwell-Moore, 2024), and the types of data they value as 'success,' this paper enables those expanding restorative practices globally to consider their own subjective socio-ecological context and identify the range of barriers, potential successes and evidence required to meet their goals.

2. Literature review

2.1. Institutionalisation and the contextual implementation of RJ services

There is no universal way of implementing RJ. At the international level, the UN and the Council of Europe (CoE) were instrumental, but implementation of RJ is shaped by national legislation, societal values, language, and the organisation of government departments, on state-wide and locally devolved levels, resulting in services which operate in their own distinctly national way in countries such as France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil (Lanni, 2024; Mannozzi, 2024; Rasmussen, 2024; Rosenblatt et al., 2024; Soulou, 2024; Willms & Malzahn, 2024; Wood et al., 2024).

The institutionalisation of RJ has been an area of study for some time (Aertsen et al. 2006; Morris and Maxwell 2001). It involves understanding how RJ practices have been mainstreamed and integrated into formal criminal justice systems, often through state-regulated processes and services. The 'RJ movement' or sector reflect this too, advocating for changes to dominant systems and the application of restorative values in society, whilst becoming more established as a formalised network that reflects self-perpetuating and inequitable hierarchies that do not meet the needs of citizens, and that RJ originally aimed to transform (Maglione et al., 2024, pp. 1–2). Academics have raised concerns about

the potential for co-option of RJ as it becomes formalised and aligned with dominant institutional cultures and goals, potentially compromising its original values and principles (Crawford, 2006).

The study of RJ institutionalisation makes it possible to critically identify the common themes where barriers to successful implementation exist. These include the lack of full institutional buy-in that involves the absence of 'dedicated resources that provide clear direction, policy and commitment, for example, legislation, policy and processes and funding', and specific to data, the need to ensure '*automated and uncomplicated referral processes, data-sharing agreements, specific RJ "offer" points*' which work to streamline access to and then delivery of RJ (Banwell-Moore, 2024).

Institutionalisation can result in top-down control of services, resulting in significant variation in the types of cases that services are allowed to use RJ with, which amounts to blanket bans for some offences (Banwell-Moore, 2019; Marder, 2020; Shapland et al., 2020). This naturally impacts on the types of data that will be collected if these types of harm are omitted, which can shape the way services record data, and are then evaluated (Fisk, 2023). However, this depends on a complex array of cultural and subjective components and can occur from the bottom-up or the top-down (Hobson & Payne, 2022). RJ is used in different areas of criminal justice which have their own distinct aims, such as prison and probation (Calkin, 2021) and front-line policing (Clamp, 2023).

Oversight in different settings has implications for RJ use and access. His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) established the Restorative Practice Hub (re:hub) in 2019 to oversee the quality, integrity, and safety of restorative practice with participants residing in prison. Research has identified the role of re:hub as a barrier to RJ access due to unclear processes concerning case eligibility and decision making, limited communications with RJ services working with victims in the community, and a lack of organisational transparency (Fisk & Cawley, 2024). A lack of standardisation in terms of organisational structure (size, staffing, methods) and data collection make evaluation difficult, impacting on the ability of services, and the broader RJ sector to deliver evidence of success despite delivering similar work (Fisk et al., 2025).

Consideration of political, social, physical, and economic '*spaces*' can contextualise the implementation and development of RJ services '*providing an understanding of the conditions through which they came and the nature of what it is that emerges*' (Hobson, Payne, Bangura, et al., 2022, p. 7). RJ in the UK has ebbed and flowed over the last 30 years, highlighted by the lack of action in the political and economic space evidenced by the lapse of the MoJ action plan and RJC government funding removal (Marder et al., 2023). Whilst many places have invested in RJ, there are places where it has declined. This begs the question, *why has it worked in some areas and not in others?* Banwell-Moore (2024) offers a whole systems answer for this, building on the work of Shapland et al. (2020), noting that institutional buy-in, referral processes, and victim focus and the lack of any one of these components can affect successful implementation. Monitoring is essential to ensure that RJ takes place, as a drop-off in referrals and a lack of institutional cultural change can mean RJ does not embed (Clamp & Paterson, 2017).

Further barriers exist due to how services are funded, positioned, organised, and staffed to undertake work with the public. There are a range of service structures in place that utilise RJ. Petrilla (2024) highlights the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) in the United States who are closer to communities than the CJS and perceived as

less bureaucratically and politically compromised, enabling them to deliver work that aligns with the key values and principles of RP. For many parts of the sector, this is clearly important in terms of the identity of a service. The role of 'new public management' (NPM), which has had a significant impact on a variety of areas where restorative work takes place, has shaped how organisations collect data as a response to external demands around targets and performance. For example, youth justice is a statutory service where NPM has resulted in increased demands around recording and monitoring, with bureaucratic demands impacting on the quality and creativity of practice, leading to bureaucratic, managerialist, localised, and decentralised services (Newburn, 2014). The incompatibility between the state system of doing justice and the principles of restorative justice may mean the implementation of RJ will ultimately be ineffective (Boyes-Watson, 2004). In modern western societies where RJ has a long history, such as Australia and the United States, an 'individualist ontology' and 'instrumental rationality' has led to managerialism dominating politics and public administration, which have shaped how RJ services are formed into hierarchical bureaucracies which in themselves do not represent restorative values (Stout & Salm, 2011). Recent introduction of a key performance indicator for victims explicitly mentions RJ but does not consider the person who has caused harm, shaping stakeholder awareness of RJ values and functions in relation to service performance (Youth Justice Board, 2023).

In the England and Wales, PCCs have discretion in how they implement RJ services from their funds for victims (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2016). A range of bottom-up and top-down approaches to delivering RJ reflect the local priorities of a police service, that can be driven by a range of intersecting community and institutional needs (Hobson & Payne, 2022). These variations occur because funding for RJ is not ringfenced and there exists no right for citizens to access RJ, only to receive information about RJ, and the process of implementation is not formally proscribed (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2016, pp. 12–13). These policy decisions allow variation in implementation of RJ and demonstrate how the policy context has allowed institutionalisation of RJ to occur in the form of marketised services (Marder et al., 2023). Marketised RJ services are subject to accountability measures (Shapland, 2022), and organisational culture theory offers a range of insights around the role of the institutionalisation in recording and monitoring.

2.2. Impact of organisational culture

Organisational culture can be defined as the shared values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and common practices within an organisation (Schein, 2010). A tension exists between the relational value base of restorative justice and the dominant managerialist systems within which it operates, with significant variation of dominant cultural and system values across nation-states where RJ institutionalisation has occurred (Pali & Maglione, 2021; Maglione et al., 2024).

Handy (2009) argues that variations exist between cultural categories in organisations. The 'power' and 'role' cultures which focus on centralised decision making, competitive work environments, bureaucracy, and predictability of practice contrast the 'personal/cluster' culture which emphasises people, rejects formal hierarchy and encourages power sharing (Handy, 2009). Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2003) highlight the

range of ways that culture can shape the way organisations can operate in practice, nothing the emphasis on *long versus short-term orientation, individualism versus collectivism*, and the extent to which an organisation will tolerate or avoid uncertainty. Schein's cultural iceberg model (2010) theorises how organisations operate with unconscious and taken for granted values, assumptions, beliefs and expectations which are difficult to change as they are not discussable, with public challenge even resulting in defence mechanism activation. Peters and Waterman (1982) highlight how organisations cultures can embody 'rational approaches' that prioritise monitoring, evaluation and efficiency with targets and budgets, and 'cultural approaches' that value traditions, shared purpose, employee trust, and autonomy. However, Boisnier and Chatman (2003) caution that organisational culture is not homogenous as subcultures can form, especially in dynamic organisations, which can disrupt practices if they channel dissent towards the core organisational values but can be useful as a mechanism to disrupt and change peripheral values if the overarching culture is generally effective.

There is precedence for exploration of culture within organisations that use restorative justice. A managerialist approach and focus on risk management in the CJS have been shown to impact on the rate of victim participation in RJ through victim-protectionism and the subsequent restriction of equal access to RJ (Banwell-Moore, 2024). Managers themselves play a crucial role in shaping organisational culture and facilitating a shift towards restorative principles (Clamp, 2023). Clamp (2023) highlights how RJ as a cultural approach to police practice has transformed from original pilot programs to being a service referred to by officers in neoliberal countries such as US, Australia, England and Wales. The type of successes that police are looking for, particularly when quantitative targets are applied such as quotas for arrests, differs from the types of success that RJ can produce. Within police forces, there is disparity of understanding between those in senior ranks having a better grasp of RJ theory and values, whilst frontline officers are more concerned with doing RJ in practice (Stockdale, 2015). When Police are using RJ 'to close the case rather than to meet the needs of those involved' (Clamp, 2023, p. 7), there is a lack of alignment between the principles and values of RJ and policing more generally.

2.3. Recording, monitoring, and evaluation

Recording and monitoring serve different purposes from evaluation (Shapland, 2022; Shapland et al., 2011). While evaluation assesses how well a service meets its stated aims, monitoring is *'a basic duty of all schemes offering restorative justice and is part of being accountable to all those using the schemes'* (Shapland, 2022). However, recording, monitoring, evaluating the efficiency of services, or measuring success have been rejected by some on the grounds that these acts reinforce the institutionalised controls of government over RJ, particularly when these ways of making RJ concrete are attached to state funding (Willms & Malzahn, 2024).

Standardisation of reporting processes can support comprehensive evaluation of services to provide evidence of the success of RJ (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022b; Fisk, 2023; Marder et al., 2023). However, others have highlighted the way RJ has been traditionally evaluated in relation to the dominant CJS at the expense of measures that align with the values of restorative work (Doak & O'Mahony, 2018; Llewellyn et al., 2013; Pali & Maglione, 2021). Restorative practitioners define

evaluation measures such as effectiveness and impact differently from the ways traditional evaluations have been applied, whilst some reject that a concept such as efficiency can exist within restorative practice (Fisk, Hobson & Twyman-Ghoshal, 2025). Building on the institutional knowledge of practitioners is key to successful integration of RJ, shaping potential measurement that can be demanded by commissioners and policy makers, whilst preventing the subsummation of RJ into the values and practices of other sectors (Pali & Maglione, 2021).

Longstanding principles have shaped processes, such as 'minimal recording' (Roche, 2003) which continue to manifest in modern policy and practice. Coventry Children's Services practice standards (2024) describe how 14 services have agreed the same standards since 2009. They state that 'only minimal additional records will be kept about each FGC process' and 'no minutes of an FGC are taken', with the co-ordinator having the specific practice role of ensuring 'there is no minute-taking or recording of discussions during a FGC beyond the Family Plan'. Co-ordinators themselves keep working notes which are not filed on databases due to their neutral facilitative role. Recording and monitoring of a RJ process is also subject to legislation, in this case the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. This specifies that anyone responsible for using personal data must make sure that information is used fairly, lawfully, transparently, for specific and explicit purposes that are adequate, relevant, and limited to only what is necessary (Data Protection Act, 2018).

The MoJ were instrumental in funding and setting the agenda for the recording, monitoring, and evaluation of RJ in the 'Shapland trials' with three English police forces (Shapland et al., 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008). Shapland's work has influenced service development and recording and monitoring globally, and sits firmly within institutionalised provision, contributing to international debates and service development guidance (Hamad et al., 2020; Shapland, 2022; Shapland et al., 2020). The UN Handbook on RJ programs (2006; 2020) outlines data for recording, monitoring and evaluation but notes challenges to understanding RJ success due to variability in potential indicators and concerns about the possibility of quantifying highly subjective elements of RJ that are interactive and personal to participants. It offers examples of statistical and qualitative information that can be gathered through monitoring within a typical process (referral, preparation, agreement, evaluation). Satisfaction, frequently gathered through a quantitative scale, can be interpreted by the participant in terms of satisfaction with one or more of these components: (a) the way their case was handled; (b) the outcome of the case; (c) with the facilitator; (e) the fairness of the process; and (f) the interactions with the offender.

Practice frameworks that highlight potential outcomes grounded in the values of RJ include the opportunity for the process to facilitate moral repair for participants, reparation, rehabilitation, desistance and recovery (Kirkwood, 2022). Researchers have sought to understand the cost-effective of RJ, which can be shaped by the needs to address managerialist and bureaucratic approaches to funding and commissioning that demand evidence before committing large sums of public money to specific projects (Grimsey Jones et al., 2023; Taylor & Bailey, 2022). As cautioned by the UN Handbook (UNDOC, 2020), how success is evidenced depends entirely on what is being measured, and even more so, what people think they are measuring (Doak & O'Mahony, 2018). Furthermore,

transformative and subjective success may be neglected if 'all that is of value may not be quantifiable or measurable' (Llewellyn et al., 2013, p. 286).

RJ processes can be monitored at 3 points on a timeline: pre-conference, conference, and post-conference (Restorative Resources, 2015). Other metrics include numbers of referrals, time taken to get to a conference, and number of meetings needed with stakeholders (Hamad et al., 2020). The objective count of a single conference brought to fruition by a service cannot capture the subjective variations of work that go in (Fisk, 2023). Likewise, a larger number of community stakeholders involved may not mean that a process will take longer or shorter. Time is a key component of efficiency, but it is subjective and contextual and difficult to make inferences about success from this alone, if efficiency is accepted as a measure of success in restorative work (Fisk et al., 2025).

The challenge with a linear 3-stage concept of this type is that success can be minimised and perceived as just the achieving of a conference. It could be argued that this is a factor in terms of the historical reductionism in what success in RJ looks like that has shaped the quantitative demands of service commissioners and the data subsequently reported by services (Fisk, 2023). Practitioner submissions to the APPG-RJ inquiry stated that in their professional opinion successes can be achieved during a process without achieving a formal conference (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022b). An interpretative challenge exists if outcomes can only occur upon completing an 'intervention', as many successes may not be recorded or formally associated with the service or sector due to logistics and challenges of evidencing.

A critique of RJ in terms of evidencing success is the difficulty demonstrating cause and effect between a process and an outcome, and there existing a need for longitudinal work to demonstrate effectiveness and impact (Menkel-Meadow, 2007; Gregory & Evans, 2020). Experimental studies have demonstrated positive outcomes, but the wealth of studies undertaken predominantly demonstrate correlation, and even if that is considered better than nothing, repeated studies which eliminate or reduce major competing explanations of causations are limited (Sherman et al., 2008). Recidivism, a key measure in the broader CJS is a prime example of this. It features prominently in evaluations of RJ effectiveness (Gaffney et al., 2024; Strang et al., 2013) and is an important social issue that research has looked to address. Whilst there are empirical data and testimonial accounts that suggest RJ has a positive impact on reducing recidivism (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022b; Kimbrell et al., 2022; Shapland et al., 2008), there also exists evidence that challenges the extent of this.

A recent meta-analysis (Fulham et al., 2023) of largely unpublished non-peer reviewed evaluations from government agencies, consultants, and university research centres across English-speaking nations internationally highlighted only modest reductions in recidivism from RJ. Specific types of crime where it may not be as effective as other approaches especially those that focus specifically on recidivism and repairing of harm, cases where programmes which have not adhered to restorative principles have seen greater reductions in recidivism than those that did, and 'lower quality' studies reported greater reductions in recidivism than 'higher quality' ones, suggesting potential bias in study methodology (Fulham et al., 2023). Evaluations struggle to tap into outcomes that are not easily measurable, and success of implementation relies on organisational values aligning with the values of RP despite the incongruence between the rigidness of professional

structures and the need for subjective professional judgement (Bevington, 2015). Such variations in the evidence base highlight how individual a process can be. RJ does not happen in a vacuum as usually multiple other services can be involved, and participants can be affected by a variety of other social factors outside professional spheres of influence.

In summary, recording and monitoring of RJ is a complex and contested task that generates a variety of data. It is shaped by institutionalisation of policy and managerialist organisational culture. This paper will explore these concepts from the perspective of RJ practitioners and consider potential practice and policy implications from the findings.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design and data collection

This study employed a social constructivist, qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews ($n = 20$) with RJ service professionals. A hybrid thematic analysis (TA) was used (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), employing inductive TA to identify initial codes and themes, and a deductive TA using the theoretical framework of socio-ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) to identify the purpose of data for different stakeholder groups from the perspective of the interviewees.

Social constructivists take the position that knowledge construction is a primarily social and cultural process, where individuals bring their own perspectives driven from their experience (Shepard, 2000; Sutherland et al., 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). Traditional approaches to measurement, whether in education or the realms of social work and criminal justice, frequently do not measure what they purport to. Adams (2006b, p. 233), in their critique of traditional measurement approaches, states:

> … mental activities and processes are indirectly observed through the prism of actions and reactions, which in turn are seen to provide reliable information about the type, scale and quality of learning … to use such observations to comment upon anything other than specific, context-bound performance misses two fundamental points: learning, or at least aspects of it, occurs in the mind; and behaviour is not a priori a reliable indicator of cognitive processes.

Short-term, easily measurable gains, rooted in behaviourism and managerialism, come at the expense of longitudinal transformation and success (Fisk et al., 2025). Such approaches ignore how individuals acquire, select, interpret and organise information in multiple different ways (Adams, 2006a, 2006b). Social constructivism therefore acknowledges the subjective nature of success in RJ (Doak & O'Mahony, 2018), recognising that participants, practitioners, and other stakeholders hold varying definitions and interpretations from their own lived experience.

The social constructivist qualitative interview design allows for capturing the richness and complexity of subjective stakeholder perspectives on recording and monitoring practices within RJ services due to the range of social actors that are involved in constructing services, and the various negotiated orders that exist within and between RJ services which are constantly changing (Bryman, 2016).

3.2. Sample and procedure

Twenty participants ($n = 20$) working in England or Wales consented to take part in semi-structured interviews. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select 17 participants from a pool of 70 respondents who participated consensually in a survey of definitions of success in restorative work and consented to be contacted further. Participants were contacted directly by e-mail. A second process of consent was undertaken prior to all interviews. Three further participants were identified by participants during interviews as being able to illuminate other aspects of recording and monitoring. Consenting participants contacted their colleagues directly to enquire about their availability and willingness to participate, where upon information and consent forms were shared prior to any further interviews. Participants included males ($n = 5$) and females ($n = 15$), with direct RJ practice experience ranging from 2 to 35 years. Participants were involved in the delivery, recording, and monitoring of RJ processes funded by PCCs, and included volunteers ($n = 2$) and paid employees ($n = 18$) of these RJ services. Six ($n = 6$) participants were managers or senior leaders within their RJ services

Interviews were conducted in-person ($n = 2$) or via Microsoft Teams ($n = 18$) and lasted between one and two hours. After brief introductions and outline of the participants job role and organisational context, they were asked an initial question:

- Describe the journey of data in your service from the earliest point of collection

Participants were prompted if there was anything else they wished to say about an aspect of their recording and monitoring, and to enquire 'what happens next?' in recording and monitoring. This was framed in the context of a linear-3-stage model, however participants used their own language to describe restorative processes, such as meetings, interventions, and conferences (Restorative Resources, 2015). Clarifying questions were asked to ensure meaning was understood by the researcher if unclear, and where acronyms or technical terminology were used.

3.3. Author positionality

The author defines themselves as a pracademic due to their background in professional practice as a restorative practitioner and registered social worker, which informs the methodology, analysis, and theoretical lens adopted in this study (Gartner, 2024; Hollweck et al., 2021) This experience facilitates an understanding of recording and monitoring tasks involved in anti-oppressive work with citizens, that enables the humanisation of research and sustains an ethical awareness of institutional inequalities (Shapland, 2022; Strier, 2007). RJ is complex relational work that operates on the edges of statutory sectors, incurring long-standing issues with awareness and understanding (Ministry of Justice, 2012; Shapland, 2014). As a pracademic it was important to create a safe interview space of contextual understanding for conversations that enable purposeful development of relationships and research that could enable future collaboration (Baldwin, 2024). RP draws practitioners from a vast array of professional human service disciplines with disparate approaches to documentation of work, which required a careful semi-structured interview approach that fostered relationships whilst also preventing

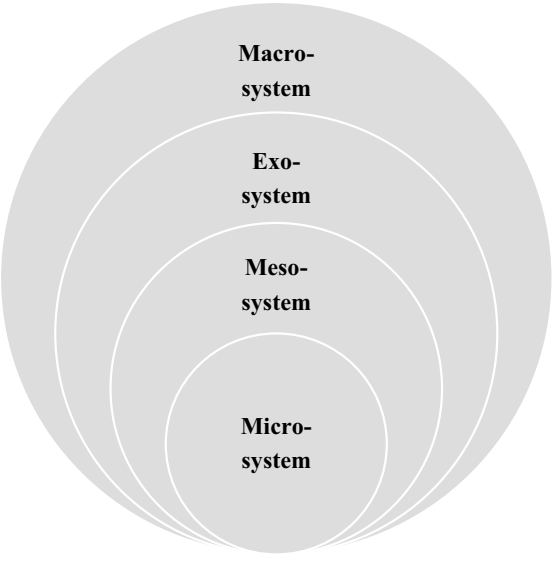
leading questions and interviewer effects (Adams, 2015; Husband, 2020; Twyman-Ghoshal & Hobson, 2022, p. 11) Professional background information was mutually shared and open questions were used to clarify responses or acronyms, as previous research has identified a variety of distinct and overlapping terminology used when RJ services report their data (Fisk, 2023).

3.4. Data analysis and theoretical framework

The hybrid TA (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) uses a systematic linear combination of inductive and then deductive TA with the same set of qualitative data. Authors have historically distinguished between the two approaches (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006), with inductive (bottom-up) TA used to identify and analyse initial themes, and deductive TA (top-down) using previously identified codes and themes or application of a theoretical framework to a dataset (Proudfoot, 2023). A hybrid approach is an iterative and reflexive process that offers greater rigor in qualitative data analysis from mutual reinforcement (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Proudfoot, 2023).

This paper utilises the socio-ecological systems (SES) model (Diagram 1) for deductive TA to understand the use of recording and monitoring processes, and how stakeholders within RJ services interpret the use of the data collected (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). SES allows us to consider multiple stakeholders and societal layers. This approach emphasizes their influence in a pragmatic and relational manner that aligns with restorative values (Pranis, 2013). In turn, it supports a call for a whole systems approach (WSA) framework to enable the radical implementation of RJ for social action in accordance with concepts such as social phenomenology where hybrid TA has also been used (Schutz, 1967). This can bring about sustainable change by enabling the understanding of the parts actors play in the broader systems of governance and practice (Banwell-Moore, 2024; Public Health England, 2019; Stansfield et al., 2020).

SES uses concentric circles to visually represent layers of an individual's social life. This analysis considers the journey of data collected about individuals taking part in an RJ process. SES typically uses four levels starting from the individual and their micro-system, moving through the meso-system, exo-system, and finally the macro-system. These layers hierarchically represent the different layers of an individual's social world. No individual SES is the same due to the complexity and subjectivity of human experience. A potential limitation exists in the visual representation of these layers that can be misleading, suggesting a lack of direct interaction between them (Healy, 2022). Concepts such as the 'ecotone', unique and dynamic places where interactions between different systems occur are useful to enable a metaphor for the potential of change and new opportunities (Normore et al., 2019). Although again, this is limited as it may infer only a linear relationship between neighbouring systems. Complex systems theory offers a more nuanced understanding of the non-linear interactions and constant change within systems in human service work (Shafi, Templeton, et al., 2020). However, concerns still exist that this approach is overly technical or reductionist (Healy, 2022). SES acknowledges power dynamics and structures at play between stakeholders, services, practices, the wider restorative sector, and social policies influencing RJ implementation. Individual layers shape and are shaped by others, creating a complex system of interconnected relationships (Adams et al., 2017).



	Macro-system: The overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture.
	Exo-system: The exosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person
	Meso-system: The mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person
	Micro-system: A pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting
Bronfenbrenner (1994: 39-40)	

Diagram 1. Bronfenbrenner socio-ecological systems model.

The SES lens offers several advantages for understanding stakeholder perspectives on recording and monitoring in RJ services and has precedence in previous research. The SES lens sheds light on the broader power structures impacting restorative justice and enables a move beyond simplistic visual binaries (Downes, 2017), such as service-client relationships, acknowledging the multifaceted and complex nature of human lives and interventions. This is particularly relevant in RJ, where personal transformation and success may involve interactions with multiple services and ongoing personal change. McCold (2000, p. 4) considered RJ theory at the socio-psychological micro level with harmed citizens, and the connections to political theory that operate on a macro level. SES has been adapted to consider the role of resilience in learning and education within complex contexts (Shafi, Middleton, et al., 2020; Shafi, Templeton, 2020). Combining public health and restorative justice perspectives has been explored using an SES approach (April et al., 2023). Resilience is essential for health and harm repair. By embracing complexity and understanding the various societal layers that value it, traditional service evaluations can adopt alternative approaches that overcome the limitations of conventional methods, aligning more closely with restorative values (Hood, 2019; Hood & O'Donovan, 2021).

Macro- and meso-level challenges to RJ use have been outlined in political and social structures, and within institutions and communities (Wood et al., 2021). The macro-policy system is resistant to inputs from the RJ sector system, and integration whilst attempting to subvert traditional justice mechanisms highlights the paradoxical nature of the RJ sector

(Schiff, 2013). The policy and RJ sectors have been identified as different systems with their own language and rhetoric, with the RJ sector being subordinate and having to change its language, values, and practices to be amenable to the dominant perspective on how crime should be managed (Tauri, 2023, p. 45).

3.5. Ethical and project approvals

This research received full project and ethical approval from University of Gloucestershire.

4. Findings and analysis

Within the context of a hybrid TA (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), an inductive TA of interviews transcripts highlighted a range of purposes for collecting and using RJ service data, and a range of individual and collective stakeholders that received, requested or required data. Using the SES lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) for deductive TA, a range of themes were identified that further elaborated upon the purpose of RJ service data, and the stakeholders involved can be mapped across four SES levels:

- Policy and government (Macro)
- Restorative sector (Exo)
- Restorative services (Meso)
- Participant and Practitioner Interaction (Micro)

These findings are visually represented in diagram 2.

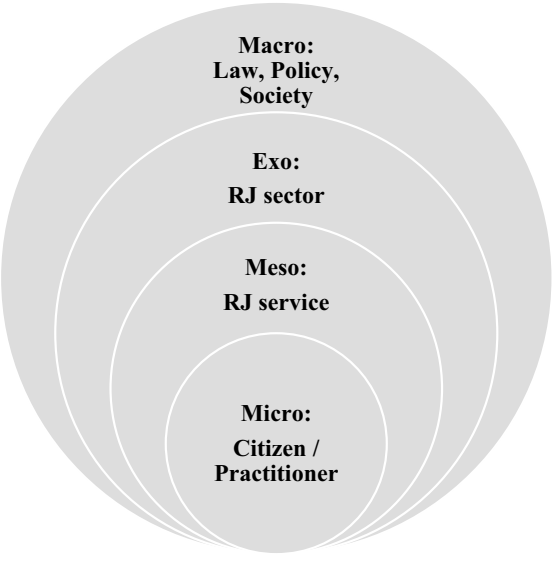
The four systems will now be outlined, starting with the closest proximity to the generation of data within a restorative process between a citizen and a practitioner, and moving out to service, sector, and policy and governance.

4.1. Micro-system: participant and practitioner interaction

Data at this level is concerned with initiating restorative case work with participants that enables practitioners to accurately represent their story and a routine task, essential for tracking and informing case progress and evidencing professional accountability at the practitioner level. Responses frequently intersected case progress and accountability, as demonstrated in the following quote:

4.1.1. Initial engagement

Recording and monitoring starts with individual people, groups, or communities and an identified type of harm to start the process of engagement between a citizen and a practitioner to undertake a restorative process. Participants identified *'inquiries'* and *'referrals'* as processes where data is initially collected about those who may go on to work with a service. Inquiries and referrals can come from a potential participant or another stakeholder, such as a professional. They include only basic data such as name and address and does not capture equality, diversity, or inclusion details. Practitioners described the delicate and sensitive process of taking limited information, to *'build relationships'* with citizens, gaining consent to turn inquiries and referrals into cases and



	Macro-level: Data which feeds into the demands of social and political structures, HMPPS, VCOP data and the MoJ.
	Exo-level: Data that represents the entire 'restorative sector', across all services within a nation state, including evaluations and research
	Meso-level: Collation of data across all cases, including staff and service performance
	Mirco-level: Collected from a citizen by a practitioner on an individual case level
Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1994)	

Diagram 2. Stakeholders and purpose of data RJ through a SES lens.

then beginning the process of formally recording and collecting a range of personal data, particularly the citizen's story.

> I wanna get to know that person. And then what we don't wanna do is necessarily re-traumatise somebody. So we take them on the day that we meet them. If they, at that point if they wanna talk about what's happened, they will. If they don't, they won't.

However, at this early point, not being able to gain data about participants was a key barrier. Inconsistent application of information sharing agreements, or the inability to form these between services due to issues of bureaucracy or service awareness was a common issue.

> If I don't have data. I can't do the job, because I'm not a clairvoyant and I can't contact victims and offenders through that medium, pardon the pun … So, you need good information sharing agreements with police, probation, youth justice, prisons.

Data barriers at this early-stage manifest through power imbalances between services that prevent restorative work taking place. RJ services that are not able to engage directly with individuals must wait for other gatekeeping services to enable them access to the range of citizens involved in harm.

> we referred it to re:hub as is the process, and it was six months before a multi-agency meeting was arranged, and at that multi agency meeting, the offender had still not been approached to see if he would even consider engaging.

4.1.2. Accurate representation

Once access is gained and consent is given, data must *'accurately represent'* the personal story and the story of the process, particularly where young children are involved. Accurate representation included *'evidencing clear outcomes'* and *'agreements'* for participants, as well as any changes that occur post-referral. Formal plans were recorded consistently, but for some services and individual practitioners these also involved tracking participant well-being and progress in respect of self-defined outcomes through dialogue or scaling tools. These were agreed at the start of a process and development over the duration of their involvement was monitored. These are used as a reflective tool for the participant to identify *'distance-travelled'*, *'growth'* and *'movement'* in terms of the initial harm that led to an RJ referral. Accurate representation was described as having the benefit of minimising *'story repetition'* for participants engaged in multi-agency work and was considered vital to *'promote trust'*,

> It's just making sure that it's all recorded accurately and then working with them to accurately record what they want from the process . . . it always has to come from them. It's just making sure that if it changes as well, noting on our information on the case management . . . It's just making sure that I capture it in their words more than anything.

Creative approaches that were not easily transferable or quantifiable were often employed. These included *'sculpting'* approaches, drawing '*pictures'* or '*network-maps'*. Practitioners described taking photos or scanning these, and ensuring evidence was uploaded to the CMS and included with plans and agreements shared with participants to accurately and fully represent their involvement.

The degree of detail captured by practitioners in their case records depended on the practitioners own writing needs connected to *'having a good memory'*, strategies related to neurodiversity, practices from previous employment such as social work or probation, or organisational procedures such as a 'minimal recording principle' (Roche, 2003). Accurate representation had the benefit of positively influencing practitioner accountability by demonstrating *'reliability'* and *'professionalism'* which *'prevent complaints'*, and ultimately encourage processes to continue and be completed.

4.1.3. Case progress

Recording varies individually or due to services requirements, highlighting a subtheme of recording and monitoring inconsistency across practitioners within and between services. Some practitioners record the '*three or four minutes'* of a phone call, whilst others *'don't record how long things take'* because they *'don't need to, we're not asked to'*. Practitioners are allowed a *'fair degree of autonomy'* in terms of the amount of recording undertaken if it *'complies with confidentiality'* and is *'factual'* as opposed to *'opinion or judgement'*. Tracking *'on-going case suitability'* and *'risk assessment'* were vital purposes of this work. Use of *'minimal recording'*, *'basic notes', or 'bullet points'* for *'reminders of conversation'* contrasted more detailed recording to prevent *'forgetting things', 'maintaining accuracy'* and *'fully transparency'* to ensure *'professional accountability'* and *'watertight'* case management by *'recording everything'*. Level of detail in a recording was seen as important if a case needed to be handed over to another practitioner due to *'sickness'*, *'leaving the service'*, or *'winning the lottery'*, to ensure processes can be completed with minimal delay and prevent participant re-traumatisation from having to relive their story.

Case progress, tracked by senior staff and managers, was essential for understanding staff well-being and any needs they may have as practitioners. Some checks occur '*Every week or two*' for active cases, although some services rely more on formal supervision which can occur monthly or less frequently, depending on the needs and experience of the practitioner.

4.1.4. Practitioner accountability

Practitioners feel accountable and responsible for progressing a case and securely handling data. This is a challenge for practitioners as they understand the subjective contextual nature of the work that is fundamentally participant led, and by their own account not efficient in practice (Fisk et al., 2025), but there is also an organisational need to turn-over cases due to service-level metrics. Services can be held to account for this in terms of commissioning and expectations. However, macro-level barriers and gatekeepers which delay processes can cause practitioner responsibilisation due to the lack of case progress caused by data gatekeeping from external statutory services. These can include the police, re:hub within HMPPS, or GDPR rules which are an example of government policy that directly impacts on practitioners. GDPR was described as adding '*75 extra steps*' to a process that requires practitioners to ask the Police for data whereas before access was easier. Practitioners felt that '*GDPR has impeded the delivery of services*' because it was slowed down the speed practitioners can reach people. Access to police systems for gathering basic personal data has been restricted for some services. Even once cases are progressing, cases are '*bogged down by administrative, legal, permissions*' and struggle to '*move forward*'. The personal impact of GDPR on practitioners also shapes recording habits, as data must be anonymised to ensure they are *'data compliant*', as responsibility '*ultimately comes back onto the person who has written the note*'.

Whilst the macro-factor of a policy like GDPR can impact on practice, accurate representation and demonstrating case progress factor into practitioner accountability. As professional managerial organisations, RJ services do undertake performance management of individual practitioners due to complaints or lack of progress. Interviews highlighted significant variation in the number of cases individual practitioners hold in different services, related to local RJ awareness, referral numbers and capacity, case complexity and training levels. For some services, it was an issue of performance management if '*a 20 hour a week practitioner did 20 cases in a year*'. The *'what's going wrong'* could be the level of support from a manager, the volume of work to start with, or effective allocation of cases. However, some services shared that they are not reaching this figure across their entire team, so accountability is contextual.

4.2. Restorative services (meso)

The types of data collected were generally in line with those recommended for service collection (UN Handbook, 2020; Shapland, 2022) however there are significant variations in terminology and reporting (Fisk, 2023). The purpose of data at this level was primarily for reporting to the service commissioner but was also used for internal service development. It covered performance and accountability such as referrals received, active case numbers, interventions completed, tracking hours of work undertaken, service satisfaction and complaints.

4.2.1. Reporting for commissioners

Participants described the construction of an *'annual report'* as a key service level output of recording and monitoring processes. The annual report is primarily for service commissioners, although engagement and sharing of this information locally with other statutory, voluntary, or third-sector organisations does occur. Requests from these other agencies can then shape the content of the annual report. Changes of elected PCC, who have their own personal and professional interests, political agendas, and knowledge of restorative ways of working, also impact on the content of the report and the approaches managers take to present their report. Some services report more frequently on a monthly or quarterly basis (Fisk, 2023).

Annual reports can impact on contract renewal or extension, which influence staff job security, morale, and public access to an RJ restorative service. Report format and content were unique to a service, with significant variation in structure and data demands with a focus on raw numerical count of quantities and transitions from inquiry to referral to process and outcome numbers, as identified previously via documentary analysis (Fisk, 2023). Interviewees expressed concerns around the primacy of quantitative count data despite mixed attempts to add qualitative data and case studies for context when evidencing success using PCC metrics, as interviewees believe data does not reflect the amount of work or range of success observed. This reductionism has resulted in a *'focus on tangible outcomes'* and a subsequent '*misconception'* of the *'whole manner of work that happens before we even get to the point of assigning facilitators'* which means that '*all those other successes'* are not considered or captured using the processes they have been allocated.

Some PCCs are clear about the types of data they want a service to evidence and may have an '*off the shelf KPI idea'* which can change over years of a contract when *'they realise we don't need all that, there's far more valuable information that we could get from you than that'*. Other PCCs requested the service to inform them of the types of data that can be collected. These variations were described as connected to the PCC understanding of RJ or their management and leadership style and can change during the life of a contract, such as a focus on '*how many hours volunteers have done*' but not the work of paid practitioners. The professional experience of how commissioners choose metrics highlights further the issues of RJ awareness, subjectivity of success, and the impact of relationships in reshaping these.

In terms of the purpose of reporting '*whether you're an in-house service or an out-house service . . . you're still beholden to your funders . . . you've got to provide data to show that you're worth paying for'*. However, externally commissioned services explicitly outlined the need to provide evidence that *'service agreements were fulfilled'* and *'value for money'* was achieved. There was less concern from services *'internally employed by the PCC'* with commissioners that have a *'good understanding of RJ so we don't actually need to explain why certain things take as long as they do*', because *'there's not that pressure . . . that other services feel to prove themselves'* as they report strong relationships and are '*having conversations with the commissioner and their office all the time . . . So we sort of don't have those targets'*.

Fundamentally, PCC data collection is shaped by the MoJ annual data request and practitioners feel that there is false equivalence between cases as the level of impact RJ has on an individual is not effectively captured through current data demands.

> Restorative justice has been life changing for this victim … But when you look at the MoJ report, it's just captured her feedback. Her experience is captured in the same way as those just having a telephone call with someone that says that was really helpful.

There is a growing awareness in the sector that some services are pivoting to track *'restorative conversations'* at any point during a process as evidence of success. Those not recording these noted that they could but were concerned that *'it's so subjective'* and would need standardisation. A restorative conversation *'indicates that facilitators did a real piece of work … spent a lot of time working with maybe one participant, but it never quite got there'*. This metric was considered useful when working with victims for a long period such as two years allowing the service '*to capture the work that they've still done*' even if a process is not completed and a *'traditional outcome'* is not achieved.

A key data area that many services have said they struggle to report on is recidivism. The nature of many referrals means tracking reoffending data can be difficult: *'Most of my cases are sensitive and complex and most of the time the offenders are in prison, so they're in prison. Chance of reoffending is probably next to nothing.'* Many services lack access or capacity to work with the longitudinal data and there was scepticism about the extent to which services are routinely tracking this across the sector. Current data management systems are not equipped to facilitate this task as '*you'd have to go into the police systems and go into every single case and kind of do it that way*'. There is also concern about how recidivism is interpretated as reoffending can be a *'yes or no'* metric regardless of repeated offence or *'de-escalation'* as reporting does not '*delve any deeper as to why*'.

4.2.2. Service development

Service statistics, case studies, and participant feedback are used as an internal 'snapshot' to learn how RJ services can improve and develop. Frequency of review varies across services. Example identified included decreased '*referrals from probation*', increased *'hate crime referrals'*, or '*to improve burglary referrals*'

Data enables evidence-informed discussions with other services to increase referrals from specific individuals, agencies, geographical areas, and case types. Data enables services to work with their professional partners to *'investigate why that's happening and unblock some of the issues if there are any'* and to understand *'is the work that we're doing working, do we need to be doing something else?'*

Senior practitioners or a manager undertake internal evaluation, although some services have developed relationships with local universities to explore their data by paying academics or on a free basis with students completing undergraduate or postgraduate research projects. Services can use this data to critically understand trends in referral sources and the types of case work undertaken, and identify areas where RJ is underrepresented and take action.

Understanding and using data for service development was described as '*a bit tricky*' and a time-consuming task, but one that those with this responsibility find *'interesting'*, enabling a retrospective account of service development over previous years. Analysis difficulties are exacerbated by databases and computer systems that did not easily facilitate this task. Few services have a dedicated data-manager, with many being practitioners or managers who take on this role in addition to their regular duties. Elaborate spreadsheets prone to human error due to large data volumes require time-consuming

manual input to transfer data, due to a lack of trust in the accuracy of the service database and the inability of computer systems to communicate.

4.3. Restorative sector (exo)

The restorative sector as the exo-system is reminiscent of a disembodied stakeholder, one that is the production of multiple social actors over decades, one that consists of both individual practitioners and organisational groupings such as services, that are represented by institutionalised RJ regulatory institutions, with the RJC being the primary body for this in England and Wales (Maglione, 2017, 2019a, 2019b). However, the extent to which the RJC could be called a 'state-funded institution' which constitutes 'RJ's macro-regulatory core' (Maglione, 2019a, p. 660) is questionable, as it does not have a statutory basis in law and receives no funding from central government.

The primary purpose of data at this level was for the raising of awareness. Two subthemes were identified to support this purpose, in terms of developing an evidence base to support awareness and a restorative identity that practitioners align with that supports their need to use data to fulfil this aim.

4.3.1. Raising awareness

Raising awareness is not a passive task of advertising or sharing leaflets, but one that is active and relational, that also seeks to generate understanding of the potential of RJ. *'Success for the statutory agency that you're working with, might be different to what your success is'*. It is undertaken by savvy practitioners who may feel that they are subverting social and organisational norms. Raising awareness is something all services do but discussed in terms of a collective *we* sector identity that is linked to embodying and believing in restorative values. However, awareness and profile raising is a cyclical problem that has not improved despite sector evidence from domestic and international evaluations of effectiveness (Shapland et al., 2011; Strang et al., 2013). In the restorative sector *'The same conversations that are taking place in 2001 and 2002 are still happening'*. A direct connection can be drawn across the socio-ecological system, from handling micro-system data correctly, being able to evidence work for a service in the meso-system, that can provide evidence to support the expansion of the entire restorative sector exo-system.

> if we can continually contribute to the growth of the integrity of the service … it inspires confidence in us, the better the reputation … we're gonna get more referrals, then we can increase the restorative capacity … we can increase the growth of restorative justice … I just totally believe in the restorative way of working.

Embodying RJ values comes into conflict with how data is used. RJ services are trying to raise awareness of their values and their service to generate referrals but valued by external services for meeting their data needs, alluding to a professional play-off within institutionalisation. Understanding how data shapes other areas and services is key to raising awareness. The police or probation point of view that RJ can be counted as a sanctioned responses or countable intervention may *'not be born of a belief and a passionate drive for RJ, but that's what ticks their box'*. Participants presented a pragmatic approach driven by data, noting that *'It's not*

being naive to different agencies have different views in regard to how much numbers matter and from a policing point of view numbers really matter, quality less so, numbers really matter'. However, professional knowledge and experience *'knowing what makes the agency tick'* could increase awareness and generate more referrals.

Whilst the marketisation of RJ services has led to competition for contracts (Marder et al., 2023), participants highlighted a sector-wide collaboration to ensure practice quality, awareness and availability across geographical boundaries. Informal regional networks have been formed, some pre-existing the recommendation of APPG-RJ work-stream four (Hobson et al., 2023), although these vary in terms of organisation and purpose. Some explicitly share best practice and discuss service data, but this is inconsistent due to commercial sensitivity. Peer-supervision for smaller services for complex and sensitive cases was seen as vital for reflection and improving practice. Larger providers that operate multiple services reported internal processes to analyse data across these, alongside participation with some networks. Many services use their own social media to promote their successes which feeds into a national or sector picture. The role of the RJC was discussed and the potential for them to more proactively promote the sector and facilitate data collection, analysis, and dissemination of qualitative and quantitative service data in a national archive as they already collect registration and renewal data for practitioners and services and have ideological power and the general perception of neutrality amongst marketised service provision.

A sector wide data approach to understanding RJ awareness was considered as a *'duty of care'* and a *'responsibility'* for practitioners and services to gather as much meaningful and useful information for the RJ sector and share that. Service data can identify challenges, trends, and gaps which can then be explored on a national level. However, the issue of RJ services practically collaborating on cases has issues in terms of data too. Siloed data systems can result in data duplication or services not being able to evidence '*successes of a case'* for their commissioners when a case is held by a practitioner in a different service.

4.4. Policy and governance (macro)

Interviewees described government organisations as having significant institutional power to demand data from all services and perceived the purpose of data for those in policy and governance as being different from those at other levels. Policy and governance shape the types of data services collect and how they organise these (Fisk, 2023), varied approaches to doing this are due to manager perception of the value of the MoJ data request.

Furthermore, the purpose of data at this level was unclear due to the two key themes that emerged: top-down control of data and institutional ambivalence towards the data collected by services. Ineffective macro data requests, non-transparent decision making and top-down one-way communication that are contrary to the relational, collaborative, dialogical approach of most RJ practices highlight a fundamental clash of values between RJ and the dominant CJS (Umbreit et al., 2006).

4.4.1. Data control

The role of the MoJ, the Victim's Code and the right for members of the public to be offered RJ, and the role of re:hub who oversee RJ for HMPSS were key examples of

bodies that have a role in RJ data at the macro level. Interviewees described the ineffective use of data at this level. Power is exerted through data demands, that *'don't really fit' and 'doesn't make any sense'*. They must be adhered to because '*no one can change that*' due to the perception of the institutional power of those demanding it.

However, participants highlighted how the MoJ data demands have changed, during certain periods '*changings every six months'* but this only occurs as a top-down activity done to services: '*historically we used to . . . feature victim and offender data, but then they got rid of that. So now we only report on victim data'*. This highlights how changes in institutional policy focus, such as the VCOP, have affected service data collection which clash with the values of RJ as a focus has switched to the singular harmed party at the expense of data about those who have harmed them. However, some services reported that they continue to collect this data despite not being asked to report it, resulting in the feeling that the data they use internally '*tells us a lot more than what the MoJ data does'* as *'locally they get quite a lot of qualitative data. MoJ is yes or no', and* a feeling of *'luck'* that services can record a narrative that enables them to *'look at the immense difference this has made. But in terms of the (MoJ) data, that's not captured anywhere.'*

The frustration of macro level data demands are also experienced with re:hub, who are perceived as '*gatekeepers in prison who don't understand what restorative justice is'*. Practitioners feel they restrict RJ access for those in prisons and work in ways not aligned with restorative values such as accountability, collaboration, and transparency.

> it's really widely known, right the way across the RJ field that we are now required to have an information sharing agreement with Re:Hub, and let them know about all of our complex and sensitive cases, and then they make a decision as to whether or not they can go ahead and that is going to continue to be a real barrier for lots of reasons . . . On what basis are they making these decisions? It's not transparent enough . . . why do they feel like they need to and on what basis are they making the decisions? If you could share that with us, we could make decisions based on the same criteria. Could we not?

External demands from policymakers, such as frequent changes to data collection requirements are perceived negatively by service providers who feel pressure to comply without collaboration or consideration of the impact on their practices. This reinforces the need for a more collaborative approach to data collection and utilisation, something that is expected by restorative services given the value base they operate within that runs counter to traditional hierarchical CJS processes (Wachtel, 2003).

4.4.2. Institutional ambivalence

The lack of a reciprocal data relationship, and the absence of feedback in terms of information and analysis received from the MoJ post-submission highlights institutional ambivalence towards RJ seen through data. Participants described how *'once you send the MoJ statistics . . . you just hear nothing back.'* and *'you don't see it going anywhere. You don't see it being used or cited in anything'. C*hanging demands that do not reflect the needs of the RJ service are generating reciprocal ambivalence due to the lack of communication and dialogue, or effective use of data.

> It's never easy and we don't align our recording with it. It can be different every time, so it doesn't make any difference. We just work out what we can give it on the data that we've got

> so. Yeah, it's not, honestly, it's not something we pay a lot of attention to, really. Don't necessarily see the value in it.

The MoJ also request qualitative case study data from services *'one or two case studies per year'*. One participant noted their assumption but with a lack of evidence that the very collection of this type of data would infer a purpose, but they had *'no idea what the MoJ did with them . . . surely it goes somewhere or you know, showcase it or something'*

The lack of standardisation of data across RJ services is linked to institutional ambivalence, as services are recording data in different ways. Participants understood that '*everyone records differently*', and 'e*verywhere is so different any . . . comparisons are, you kind of can't quite trust those comparisons anyway*'. This impacts on the quality of data at a sector level, as one participant succinctly summarised, *'You're comparing apples with bowling balls'*. Such ambivalence from representative of the macrosystem towards ensuring the quality of data collection reinforces the dominant CJS and prevents RJ developing a national evidence base that could lead to institutional change of the CJS and a more relational way of dealing with crime. Clearer guidance and support on terminology and processes are needed (Fisk, 2023). However, even when strong methods are embedded within an individual service and terminology is standardised at the service level, findings are rejected by funders and decision makers, highlighting issues with evidencing cause and effect that beg the question why is data being collected (Gregory & Evans, 2020)

> Where we've had robust monitoring and evaluations of both victims and offenders. When that data is then being turned in and analysed, we then said look at the impact we've had on offender substance misuse and alcohol abuse following RJ intervention and met with, well, that's not down to you, though, is it, that's down to probation service work or drugs and alcohol service. How can you make that claim? . . . Then why are we monitoring it?

Whilst RJ services send data to the MoJ, participants noted how the language used in data focuses on a single stakeholder, the victim, and suggests an ambivalence towards RJ due to the exclusion of those who have caused harm in their data demands. *'MoJ currently get nout in regard to RJ, they get the victim services stuff. It's not fit for purpose to really reflect RJ; it doesn't really fit'*. The minimisation of the role of RJ, or the lack of an explicit mention of RJ, and a singular focus on 'victims' and victim services is connected to the issue of RJ awareness identified in the exo-system. This is also reflected in the inclusion of 'KPI 9 – Victims' in youth justice services, that measures 'number of victims engaged in restorative justice opportunities as a proportion of the total number of victims who consent to be contacted' (Youth Justice Board, 2023). These measures minimise the role RJ can play for all stakeholders and may impact on awareness of RJ for anyone involved in crime if it is seen as merely a component of victim services, and not a radical alternative to doing justice for all more generally.

RJ is not a primary focus within police services and the organisational culture of the police does not align with RJ services (Clamp, 2023). Frequent promotions and staff turnover disrupt police relationships with RJ services. RJ services are significantly smaller than the police forces they work for, with a limited range of roles, and less room for internal and external promotion.

> You get a senior police officer who is really, really into it and it's really, really pushing for it. Then they get promoted or retire. And then you start again and it's another lottery, then once

again because it's not embedded as policy. You're then very reliant on does he or she believe in it.

RJ and the value system it embodies are not embedded at the macro level, indeed the ambivalence has a silencing effect which shapes RJ (Maglione, 2022), highlighting further still the variations in organisational culture. This constant change, as RJ services must continuously rebuild connections with new individuals. This turnover means those in leadership who grasp RJ values move on and are replaced by those moving up from the frontline who are more focused on practice and will take time to grasp the theory and values (Stockdale, 2015). This induces cycles of learning and ambivalence towards RJ which hinders the development of data and policy.

5. Discussion

This paper uses a social-ecological systems lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992) to understand the purpose of data collected by recording and monitoring processes within RJ services from the perspective of practitioners and service managers. The themes identified and their corresponding socio-ecological system are presented in Table 1.

This research highlights how institutionalisation shapes the way RJ service data is used and valued (Maglione et al., 2024). A key finding is that the previously identified disparity in recording and monitoring processes between RJ services (Fisk, 2023) has wider implications than simply the reliability and validity of data and any subsequent analysis of this. The SES lens demonstrates how RJ data illuminates contrasting RJ and CJS organisational values, general fragmentation of the RJ socio-ecological system driven by institutional control and ambivalence, which leads to poor data use, resulting in the breakdown of trust with the macro-level CJS and stagnation of national RJ awareness and growth.

The multifaceted reasons for recording and monitoring across the RJ sector are heavily influenced by the top-down power of the macro-system. The imposition of NPM principles, embedded in legislation and stakeholder demands, has enforced a hierarchical structure on RJ services that is fundamentally at odds with RJ values and prioritises quantitative metrics over transformative narratives (Fisk, 2023; Marder et al., 2023). This creates inherent tensions between core RJ values and dominant CJS practices. These are exacerbated by the perception of RJ services as outsiders, culturally opposed to traditional service delivery models (Maglione, 2021). The distinct cultures and values of restorative services, whether externally commissioned or

Table 1. Purpose of data themes identified across socio-ecological systems.

Socio-ecological system	Themes identified
Micro-system: Participant and practitioner interaction	Initial engagement Accurate representation Case progress Practitioner accountability
Meso-system: RJ Service	Reporting for commissioners Service development
Exo-system: RJ Sector	Raising Awareness
Macro-system: Policy and Governance	Data control Institutional ambivalence

integrated within larger organisations like the police (Clamp, 2023), further highlight this divide. RJ services often function as internal sub-cultures within larger organisations (Boisnier & Chatman, 2003), adapting data collection methods to balance qualitative and quantitative demands. Despite this research supporting previous evidence of macro-level resistance to RJ (Schiff, 2013), participants felt leveraging subjective success stories through case studies could enhance RJ awareness at the macro level. However, the fundamental disconnect between RJ and CJS values risks further institutionalising RJ as a mere tool, or contemporary justice mechanism (Daly, 2016) rather than a holistic approach to the repair of harm (Clamp, 2023; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Inconsistent understandings of RJ across organisational levels, compounded by staff turnover, hinder sustained implementation (Stockdale, 2015). Restorative processes have the potential to foster meaningful dialogue (Wachtel, 2003), but underlying values are often not explicitly discussed (Schein, 2010). RJ services that demonstrate an understanding of the needs of other professionals can increase referrals and service provision, effectively acting as a 'Trojan horse' for RJ values.

Recidivism rates, a quantitative CJS metric, are prioritised over qualitative measures of victim satisfaction or community healing. The focus on recidivism in academic literature, often mandated by the CJS, sets RJ services up for failure when it comes to evidencing RJ service success, as individual service level data capture and any subsequent internal evaluations that are not supported by academic research and broader agreements for data use struggle to provide robust evidence due to limitations in data access and the inherent complexity of isolating RJ's impact on reoffending. This research has demonstrated how practitioners focus on the progress of the cases they are working, reporting active case data to commissioners and informing them of the immediate outcomes when a case is closed. Longitudinal data concerning reconviction is not collected by the RJ service itself and is therefore not in their direct data remit to report on. Therefore, at the service level it is difficult to demonstrate cause and effect of RJ (Menkel-Meadow, 2007; Gregory & Evans, 2020) because many services do not have the capacity to evidence this themselves. The use of recidivism data and other outcomes less directly tied to RJ intervention, such as changes in drug or alcohol use, also requires careful consideration. Existing literature highlights the complexity of isolating RJ's impact on these outcomes (Sherman & Stang, 2007). Robust analysis, including control groups and longitudinal studies, is still necessary to draw reliable conclusions that are valued by those who control funding for RJ and can make policy changes to enable greater access. This gap between meso-level services and macro-level policy highlights the missed opportunity for the exo-level sector to leverage data to promote RJ awareness.

Case studies, which are currently under-leveraged, can contribute to a richer understanding of outcomes that resist quantification and offer insights into positive subjective experiences of RJ and transformation in their situational context (Fisk, Hobson & Twyman-Ghoshal, 2025). A standardised case study framework, capturing both subjective experiences of restorative processes and experiences of transformation alongside traditional quantitative data, can foster meaningful dialogue with policymakers and the public that allows stakeholders to personally relate to the experience of participants through their RJ stories. However, the challenge is collation and dissemination. As services continue to create their own case studies but publication and awareness of these varies.

Practitioners demonstrate considerable adaptability, striving to align their data collection with stakeholder priorities, reinforcing the evidence that practitioners take a nuanced approach in the face of institutionalisation (Butler et al., 2022). Practitioners recognise the limitations of measuring all that RJ values quantitatively (Llewellyn et al., 2013) but are committed to providing evidence of success and enhancing RJ awareness when it is demanded in this fashion (Doak & O'Mahony, 2018; Fisk, 2023). However, the limited public and professional awareness of RJ (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice, 2022a) hinders the development of a cohesive evidence base. The sector-level exo-system embodied by groups such as the RJC, where data produced by all practitioners and services could be collected, faces significant funding constraints, limiting its capacity to effectively coordinate service data, research, and dissemination. The APPG-RJ attempts to address this by engaging with dominant hierarchies to elevate RJ's profile and influence policy (Maglione et al., 2024).

The establishment of a centralised data repository (Hobson et al., 2023) would significantly improve access to and analysis of existing evidence, and has precedence given the existence of similar data approaches with the MoJ Data First programme and the NHS England digital data collections. Enhanced data tracking and a sector-level approach to awareness-raising could foster a deeper understanding of RJ and increase referrals. The current lack of a centralised repository, devolution of RJ services, and the prevalence of managerialism impede collaboration and the formation of both a serious sector level exo-system and the potential for a cohesive national RJ service.

Further research is needed to develop a centralised data repository capable of hosting the wealth of service data submitted to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) that currently goes unused. Such a resource would facilitate further empirical research and support the generation of key research priorities for the sector as occurs in the NHS and MoJ broadly, and signpost stakeholders to current evidence of success in academic publications and service evaluations. However, this would have significant financial and logistical implications that would demand collaboration between services, PCCs, the RJC, and central government.

5.1. Next steps

This research advocates for a pragmatic approach that acknowledges the socio-ecological system (SES) context of data, recognising both the challenges and benefits of institutionalisation, while simultaneously supporting practitioners and services in expanding RJ implementation. Sustaining macro-level political momentum is essential; otherwise, progress in RJ could be significantly delayed. This necessitates a careful balance between preserving core restorative values, navigating marketisation pressures, and addressing the challenges of limited awareness and resources within a hierarchical and punitive society.

It is imperative to challenge NPM ideologies and advocate for a balanced approach to evidence, which requires employing a diverse range of data collection methods to demonstrate success. Considering the range of stakeholder perspectives across the SES when capturing the multifaceted and subjective nature of RJ success (Fisk et al., 2025) can help bridge the gap in building an evidence base that resonates with the organisational language of the listener. These should

encompass both tangible outcomes and intangible benefits, as both are crucial indicators of RJ's impact (Fisk et al., 2025).

While caution is warranted regarding the potential for CJS subsumption through institutionalisation, organisational theory suggests that internal sub-cultures can effect change in entrenched organisational values and cultures (Boisnier & Chatman, 2003; Schein, 2010). Currently, the macro-system displays resistance to RJ. However, through relational efforts to engage with powerful stakeholders, deliberate actions by practitioners and services within their organisations, and collective sector initiatives involving politicians and decision-makers, supported by a robust evidence base, the development of sub-cultures capable of transforming wider social and political values is possible. A centralised repository of evidence would help minimise the impact of organisational stakeholder turn-over, but a national RJ service and a dedicated minister for RJ would significantly improve awareness and uptake.

By leveraging the institutional power of the exo-system, RJ can develop a pragmatic approach to evidencing success, aligning with core RJ values, and addressing the various stakeholders and their needs. Regional networks (Hobson et al., 2023) require exo-level promotion and recognition to influence local and national macro-level decision-makers. Services often operate in isolation, with distinct organisational cultures, and struggle to measure longitudinal outcomes due to their service remits and commissioning cycles. Representatives of regional networks could gain institutional legitimacy and contribute in a more coordinated and direct way to the RJC's work. This research advocates for sector-level organisations to collaborate with services in developing communication strategies that consider the SES model when disseminating RJ evidence to policymakers, professionals, and the public. Sector-level organisations like the RJC must leverage their power to unify stakeholders in defining agile ways of evidencing success, built on the findings research (Fisk et al., 2025). Further work is needed to support RJ services in applying consistent language and measurement approaches (Fisk, 2023) to enable cost-effective evaluations of basic components without the need for rigorous and expensive external involvement due to increasingly limited nature of public funding.

By seeking to demand changes to metrics, or 'mark its own homework' (Fisk et al., 2025), the need for a more robust approach to RJ service and sector level data collection and analysis is highlighted. This study reveals a macro-level authority that neither provides guidance nor support, leaving the current 'homework' unmarked and feedback absent. Applying the SES lens and the social discipline window (Wachtel, 2003), we see that the macro-system imposes and controls metrics but exhibits ambivalence towards reported data, stifling RJ growth. The CJS dictates metrics that the RJ system must adhere to, yet metrics that capture the true potential of RJ, such as victim empowerment, community repair, and long-term behavioural change, are neither collected nor valued by the CJS. If the RJ sector can take control of their own data, this has the potential to change and subsequently expand RJ awareness and access significantly.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The work was supported by a doctoral studentship from the Restorative Justice Council and University of Gloucestershire.

ORCID

Benjamin M. Fisk http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2389-4521

References

Adams, P. (2006a). Demystifying constructivism: The role for the teacher in new-technology exploiting learning situations. In L. Tan Wee Hin & R. Subramaniam (Eds.), *Handbook of research in technology at the K-12 level* (pp. 493–514). Idea Group.

Adams, P. (2006b). Exploring social constructivism: Theories and practicalities. *Education 3-13*, *34*(3), 243–257. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004270600898893

Adams, R., Payne, M., & Dominelli, L. (2017). *Social work: Themes, issues and critical debates*. Bloomsbury Press.

Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, 492–505. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19

Aertsen, I., Daems, T., & Robert, L. (Eds.). (2006). *Institutionalising restorative justice*. Willan.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice. (2022a). *Restorative justice APPG inquiry into restorative practices in 2021/22*. last Retrieved August 20, 2024, from. https://rjappg.co.uk/inquiryreport/

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Restorative Justice. (2022b). *Restorative justice inquiry appendix 1*. Retrieved August 20, 2024, from https://rjappg.co.uk/inquiryreport

April, K., Schrader, S. W., Walker, T. E., Francis, R. M., Glynn, H., & Gordon, D. M. (2023). Conceptualizing juvenile justice reform: Integrating the public health, social ecological, and restorative justice models. *Children & Youth Services Review*, *148*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.106887

Baldwin, L. (2024). A foot in all of the camps: A personal reflection of the merging of lived experience, practice and academia. In D. Turgoose, V. Knight, & D. Woodward (Eds.), *Pracademics in criminal justice* (pp. 190–198). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003344421-16

Banwell-Moore, R. (2019) *Restorative justice: Understanding the enablers and barriers to victim participation in England and Wales* [PhD thesis]. The University of Sheffield. https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/26923/

Banwell-Moore, R. (2024). Restorative justice: Adopting a whole system approach to address cultural barriers in criminal justice. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, *24*(5), 1028–1046. https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958241268005

Bevington, T. J. (2015). Appreciative evaluation of restorative approaches in schools. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *33*(2), 105–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2015.1046475

Boisnier, A., & Chatman, J. A. (2003). The role of subcultures in agile organizations. In R. S. Peterson & E. A. Mannix (Eds.), *Leading and managing people in the dynamic organization* (pp. 87–112). Psychology Press.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Sage.

Boyes-Watson, C. (2004). What are the implications of the growing state involvement in restorative justice? In H. Zehr & B. Toews (Eds.), *Critical issues in restorative justice* (pp. 215–225). Criminal Justice Press.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. HUP.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In *International encyclopedia of education* (2nd ed., Vol. 3). Elsevier. Reprinted in M. Gauvain & M. Cole (Eds.), *Readings on the development of children* (2nd ed., pp. 37-43). Freeman. https://www.ncj.nl/wp-content/uploads/media-import/docs/6a45c1a4-82ad-4f69-957e-1c76966678e2.pdf

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. OUP.

Butler, S., Maglione, G., & Buchan, J. (2022). Institutionalising restorative justice for adults in Scotland: An empirical study of criminal justice practitioners' perspectives. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958221104229

Calkin, C. (2021). An exploratory study of understandings and experiences of implementing restorative practice in three UK prisons. *British Journal of Community Justice*, *17*(1), 92–111.

Clamp, K. (2023). *A restorative framework for transforming police practice 2023*. Nottingham University.

Clamp, K., & Paterson, C. (2017). *Restorative policing: Concepts, theory, and practice*. Routledge.

Connolly, M. (2006). Fifteen years of family group conferencing: Coordinators talk about their experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*(4), 523–540. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bch273

Council of Europe. (1999). *Recommendation no. R (99) 19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning mediation in penal matters*.

Council of Europe. (2018). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning restorative justice in criminal matters*. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from https://search.coe.int/cm?i=09000016808e35f3.

Coventry Children's Services. (2024). *Coventry Children's services procedures manual: Practice standards for family group conferences*. last Retrieved October 16, 2024, from https://coventrycs.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/practice-standards-for-family-group-conferences

Crawford, A. (2006). Institutionalising restorative justice in a cold, punitive environment. In I. Aertsen, T. Daems, & L. Robert (Eds.), *Institutionalising restorative justice* (pp. 120–150). Willan Publishing.

Daly, K. (2016). What is restorative justice? Fresh answers to a vexed question. *Victims & Offenders*, *11*(1), 9–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2015.1107797

Data Protection Act *3-13*. (2018, c12). Retrieved from April 15, 2025, from https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12

Doak, J., & O'Mahony, D. (2018). Evaluating the success of restorative justice conferencing: A values-based approach. In T. Gavrielides (Ed.), *Routledge international handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 211–223). Routledge.

Downes, P. (2017). Extended paper: Reconceptualising foundational assumptions of resilience: A cross-cultural, spatial systems domain of relevance for agency and phenomenology in resilience. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, *9*(1), 99–120.

Economic and Social Council. (2002). *Basic principles on the use of restorative justice programmes in criminal matters, ECOSOC res. 2002/12*. United Nations. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Basic_Principles_on_the_use_of_Restorative_Justice_Programs_in_Criminal_Matters.pdf.

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *5*(1), 80–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107

Fisk, B. M. (2023). What are restorative justice services recording? Qualitative analysis of six restorative justice reporting templates for offices of the police and crime commissioner in England. *Laws*, *12*(2), 28. https://doi.org/10.3390/laws12020028

Fisk, B. M., & Cawley, P. A. (2024, May 29–31). The unexpected benefits of barriers to restorative justice in prisons. In *12th international conference of the European Forum for Restorative Justice. Just times: Restorative justice responses in dark times* [Unpublished]. Tallinn University Conference Centre. https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/14136/

Fisk, B. M., Hobson, J., & Twyman-Ghoshal, A. (2025). Practitioner definitions of effectiveness, efficiency, and impact in restorative justice: Navigating the subjective and objective to evidence success. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*. (In peer review). https://doi.org/10.1163/25890905-bja010003

Fulham, L., Blais, J., Rugge, T., & Schultheis, E. A. (2023). The effectiveness of restorative justice programs: A meta-analysis of recidivism and other relevant outcomes. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958231215228

Gaffney, H., Jolliffe, D., Eggins, E., Ferreira, J. G., Skinner, G., Ariel, B., & Strang, H. (2024). Protocol: The effect of restorative justice interventions for young people on offending and reoffending: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, *20*(2), e1403. https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1403

Gartner, M. F. (2024). Weaving the space between: Navigating identities and institutions as a third-sector pracademic. *Development in Practice*, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2024.2353721

Gregory, A., & Evans, K. R. (2020). *The starts and stumbles of restorative justice in education: Where do we go from here?* National Education Policy Center. http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/restorative-justice

Grimsey Jones, F., Jaffé, L., Harris, L., Franklin, J., Allam, L., & Shapland, J. (2023). An economic evaluation of restorative justice post-sentence in England and Wales. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1162286. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1162286

Hamad, R., Shapland, J., Kirkwood, S., Bisset, C., & Edginton, E. (2020). *Designing and implementing restorative justice in Scotland*. University of Edinburgh. www.sps.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/Restorative_Justice_Toolkit_121020-min.pdf.

Handy, C. (2009). *Gods of management : The changing work of organisations*. Souvenir Press.

Healy, K. (2022). *Social work theories in context: Creating frameworks for practice*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hobson, J., Fisk, B., Hook, K., & Jaffe, L. (2023). A*ppg for restorative justice RJ workstream, 4: The commissioning, collection, and dissemination of evidence-based research in restorative justice and restorative practice & the benefits of a national reporting framework*. last Retrieved July 9, 2024, from https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/14068/

Hobson, J., & Payne, B. (2022). Building restorative justice services: Considerations on top-down and bottom-up approaches. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, *71*, 100555. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcj.2022.100555

Hobson, J., Payne, B., Bangura, K., & Hester, R. (2022). 'Spaces' for restorative development: International case studies on restorative services. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *25*(2), 143–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2022.2044802

Hofstede, G. (2003). *Cultures and organisations: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival: Software of the mind*. Profile Books Ltd.

Hollweck, T., Netolicky, D. M., & Campbell, P. (2021). Defining and exploring pracademia: Identity, community, and engagement. *Journal of Professional Capital & Community*, *7*(1), 6–25. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-05-2021-0026

Hood, R. (2019). What to measure in child protection? *British Journal of Social Work*, *49*(2), 466–484. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcy066

Hood, R., & O'Donovan, B. (2021, March 30–31). Measuring what matters: A systems approach to evaluating impact and effectiveness in children's social care. In *Evidence, evaluation and impact: Improving outcomes for children*, Held online.

House of Commons Justice Committee. (2016). *Restorative justice*. Fourth report of session 2016-17. House of Commons. Retrieved September 1, 2016, from https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmjust/164/164.pdf (last accessed 15 November 2024).

Husband, G. (2020). Ethical data collection and recognizing the impact of semi-structured interviews on research respondents. *Education Sciences*, *10*(8), 206. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10080206

Kimbrell, C. S., Wilson, D. B., & Olaghere, A. (2022). Restorative justice programs and practices in juvenile justice: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis for effectiveness. *Criminology & Public Policy*, *22*(1), 161–195. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12613

Kirkwood, S. (2022). A practice framework for restorative justice. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, *63*, 101688. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2021.101688

Lanni, A. (2024). Meeting the challenges of scaling up restorative justice in the United States. In G. Maglione, I. D. Marder, & B. Pali (Eds.), *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (pp. 149–164). Taylor & Francis.

Llewellyn, J. J., Archibald, B. P., Clairmont, D., & Crocker, D. (2013). Imagining success for a restorative approach to justice: Implications for measurement and evaluation. *Dalhousie LJ*, *36*, 281. https://digitalcommons.schulichlaw.dal.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2014&context=dlj

Maglione, G. (2017). Embodied victims: An archaeology of the 'ideal victim' of restorative justice. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, *17*(4), 401–417. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895816677172

Maglione, G. (2019a). The restorative justice apparatus: A critical analysis of the historical emergence of restorative justice. *Social & Legal Studies*, *28*(5), 650–674. https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663918806561

Maglione, G. (2019b). The political rationality of restorative justice. *Theoretical Criminology*, *23*(4), 545–562. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480618756364

Maglione, G. (2021). Restorative justice and the state. Untimely objections against the institutionalisation of restorative justice. *British Journal of Community Justice*, *17*(1), 4–22.

Maglione, G. (2022). Restorative justice policy in context: A legal-archaeological analysis. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law - Revue Internationale de Sémiotique Juridique*, *35*(2), 493–517. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-020-09747-0

Maglione, G., Marder, I. D., & Pali, B. (Eds.). (2024). *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (1st Edition ed.). Taylor & Francis.

Mannozzi, G. (2024). Innovative and transformative effects of restorative justice. Reflections on the recent reform adopted in Italy. In G. Maglione, I. D. Marder, & B. Pali (Eds.), *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (pp. 78–103). Taylor & Francis.

Marder, I. D. (2020). The new international restorative justice framework: Reviewing three years of progress and efforts to promote access to services and cultural change. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, *3*(3), 395. https://doi.org/10.5553/IJRJ.000048

Marder, I. D., Banwell-Moore, R., Hobson, J., & Payne, B. (2023). New ideas, enduring cultural barriers? An analysis of recommendations from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on restorative justice in England and Wales. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958231198787

McCold, P. (2000). Toward a mid-range theory of restorative criminal justice: A reply to the maximalist model. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *3*(4), 357–414.

Menkel-Meadow, C. (2007). Restorative justice: What is it and does it work? *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, *3*(1), 161–187. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.lawsocsci.2.081805.110005

Ministry of Justice. (2012). *Restorative justice action plan for the criminal justice system, November 2012*. Retrieved October 15, 2024, from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/162265/restorative-justice-action-plan.pdf.pdf.

Morris, A., & Maxwell, G. (Eds.). (2001). *Restoring justice for juveniles: Conferencing, mediation and circles*. Hart Publishing.

Morris, A., & Maxwell, G. (2019). The practice of family group conferences in New Zealand: Assessing the place, potential and pitfalls of restorative justice. In A. Crawford & J. Goodey (Eds.), *Integrating a victim perspective within criminal justice* (pp. 207–226). Routledge.

Newburn, T. (2014). Punishment, populism and performance management. In S. Wagg & J. Pilcher (Eds.), *Thatcher's grandchildren? Palgrave studies in the history of childhood* (pp. 140–158). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137281555_8

Normore, A. H., Lahera, A. I., & Zoller, K. (2019). *Voices leading from the ecotone*. Word & Deed.

Pali, B., & Maglione, G. (2021). Discursive representations of restorative justice in international policies. *European Journal of Criminology*, *20*(2), 507–527. https://doi.org/10.1177/14773708211013025

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies*. Bloomsbury Press.

Petrilla, C. M. (2024). *Ngo roles in promoting restorative juvenile justice programmes*. European Forum for Restorative Justice. https://www.euforumrj.org/ngo-roles-promoting-restorative-juvenile-justice-programmes

Pranis, K. (2013). Restorative values. In G. Johnstone & D. W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 59–74). Willan.

Proudfoot, K. (2023). Inductive/deductive hybrid thematic analysis in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *17*(3), 308–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/15586898221126816

Public Health England. (2019). *Whole systems approach to obesity: A guide to support local approaches to promoting a healthy weight*. Retrieved October 17, 2024, from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820783/Whole_systems_approach_to_obesity_guide.pdf

Rasmussen, K. B. (2024). Victim offender mediation in the Danish police. The dancing and wrestling of organisation culture and programme purpose. In G. Maglione, I. D. Marder, & B. Pali (Eds.), *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (pp. 211–235). Taylor & Francis.

Restorative Resources. (2015). *Restorative conferencing facilitator's handbook*. Retrieved August 23, 2024, from https://www.restorativeresources.org/uploads/5/6/1/4/56143033/handbook__5-4-15_.pdf

Roche, D. (2003). *Accountability in restorative justice*. OUP.

Rosenblatt, F. F., Pessoa de Mello, M. M., & Salazar L'Armée Queiroga de Medeiros, C. (2024). Restorative justice and domestic violence courts in Brazil. The double challenge of institutionalisation. In G. Maglione, I. D. Marder, & B. Pali (Eds.), *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (pp. 104–126). Taylor & Francis.

Schein, E. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Schiff, M. (2013). *Dignity, disparity and desistance: Effective restorative justice strategies to plug the "school-to-prison pipeline"*. UCLA: The civil rights project/proyecto derechos civiles. Retrieved September 9, 2024, from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6kw7w8s8

Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world*. Northwestern University Press.

Shafi, A., Middleton, T., & Millican, R. & Templeton, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Reconsidering resilience in education: An exploration using the dynamic interactive model of resilience*. Springer.

Shafi, A., Templeton, S., Middleton, T., Millican, R., Vare, P., Pritchard, R., & Hatley, J. (2020). Towards a dynamic interactive model of resilience (DIMoR) for education and learning contexts. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, *25*(2), 183–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2020.1771923

Shapland, J. (2014). Implications of growth: Challenges for restorative justice. *International Review of Victimology*, *20*(1), 111–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758013510808

Shapland, J. (2022). Evaluating restorative justice - according to its aims. In E. Molinari & S. Randazzo (Eds.), *The impact of restorative justice*. https://www.euforumrj.org/en/evaluating-restorative-justice-according-its-aims

Shapland, J., Atkinson, A., Atkinson, H., Chapman, B., Colledge, E., Dignan, J., Howes, M., Johnstone, J., Robinson, G., & Sorsby, A. (2006). *Restorative justice in practice: Findings from the second stage of the evaluation of three schemes*. Home office research findings 274. Home Office. https://restorativejustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/Full%20report.pdf

Shapland, J., Atkinson, A., Atkinson, H., Chapman, B., Dignan, J., Howes, M., Johnstone, J., Robinson, G., & Sorsby, A. (2007). *Restorative justice: The views of victims and offenders*. Ministry of Justice research series 3/07. MoJ. https://www.oijj.org/sites/default/files/documentos/documental_6425_en.pdf

Shapland, J., Atkinson, A., Atkinson, H., Dignan, J., Edwards, L., Hibbert, J., Howes, M., Johnstone, J., Robinson, G., & Sorsby, A. (2008). Does restorative justice affect reconviction? The fourth report from the evaluation of three schemes. *Ministry of Justice Research Series*, *10*(8). https://restorativejustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/Does%20restorative%20justice%20affect%20reconviction.pdf

Shapland, J., Atkinson, A., Colledge, E., Dignan, J., Howes, M., Johnstone, J., Pennant, R., Robinson, G., & Sorsby, A. (2004). *Implementing restorative justice schemes (crime reduction programme): A report on the first year*. Home office online report 32/04. Home Office. https://restorativejustice.org.uk/

sites/default/files/resources/files/Implementing%20restorative%20justice%20schemes%20-%20an%20evaluation%20of%20the%20first%20year.pdf

Shapland, J., Burn, D., Crawford, A., & Gray, E. (2020). From victimisation to restorative justice: Developing the offer of restorative justice. *The International Journal of Restorative Justice*, *3*(2), 194. https://doi.org/10.5553/IJRJ.000034

Shapland, J., Robinson, G., & Sorsby, A. (2011). *Restorative justice in practice: Evaluating what works for victims and offenders*. Willan.

Shepard, L. A. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher*, *29*(7), 4–14. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X029007004

Sherman, L., & Stang, H. (2007). *Restorative justice: The evidence*. The Smith Institute. https://research.tees.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/6854074/600940.pdf .

Sherman, L., Strang, H., & Newbury-Birch, D. (2008). *Restorative justice*. Youth Justice Board. Retrieved November 27, 2024, from https://troublesofyouth.pbworks.com/f/Sherman%20-%20RJ%20Systematic%20Review%20-%20YJB.pdf

Soulou, K. (2024). The 'autonomy' principle as a normative 'red line' between restorative processes and criminal proceedings in France. In G. Maglione, I. D. Marder, & B. Pali (Eds.), *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (pp. 61–77). Taylor & Francis.

Stansfield, J., South, J., & Mapplethorpe, T. (2020). What are the elements of a whole system approach to community-centred public health? A qualitative study with public health leaders in England's local authority areas. *BMJ Open*, *10*(8), e036044. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-036044

Stewart, L., Thompson, J., Beaudette, J. N., Buck, M., Laframboise, R., & Petrellis, T. (2018). The impact of participation in victim-offender mediation sessions on recidivism of serious offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *62*(12), 3910–3927. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17752274

Stockdale, K. J. (2015). Police understandings of restorative justice - the impact of rank and role. *Restorative Justice*, *3*(2), 212–232. https://doi.org/10.1080/20504721.2015.1069528

Stout, M., & Salm, J. (2011). What restorative justice might learn from administrative theory. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *14*(2), 203–225. https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2011.565978

Strang, H., Sherman, L. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., Woods, D., & Ariel, B. (2013). Restorative justice conferencing (RJC) using face-to-face meetings of offenders and victims: Effects on offender recidivism and victim satisfaction. A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, *9*(1), 1–59. https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2013.12

Strier, R. (2007). Anti-oppressive research in social work: A preliminary definition. *British Journal of Social Work*, *37*(5), 857–871. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcl062

Sutherland, R., Armstrong, V., Barnes, S., Brawn, R., Breeze, N., Gall, M., Matthewman, S., Olivero, F., Taylor, A., Triggs, P., Wishart, J., & John, P. (2004). Transforming teaching and learning: Embedding ICT into everyday classroom practices. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *20*(6), 413–425. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2004.00104.x

Tauri, J. (2023). The plastic shamans of restorative justice. In C. Cunneen, A. Deckert, A. Porter, J. Tauri, & R. Webb (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook on decolonizing justice* (1st ed., pp. 43–55). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176619-6

Taylor, T. O., & Bailey, T.-K. M. (2022). The restorative justice attitudes scale: Development and initial psychometric evaluation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *50*(1), 6–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/00110000211044485

Twyman-Ghoshal, A., & Hobson, J. (2022). *Practitioner perspectives on diversifying restorative justice practice. Broadening cultural and ethnic representation in leadership and policy development*. University of Gloucestershire and Restorative Justice Council. https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/11594/

Umbreit, M. S., Coates, R. B., & Vos, B. (2004). Victim-offender mediation: Three decades of practice and research. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, *22*(1–2), 279. https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.102

Umbreit, M. S., Vos, B., & Coates, R. B. (2006). *Restorative justice dialogue: Evidence-based practice*. Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking. (1–16. https://communityengagement.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RJ_Dialogue_Evidence-based_Practice_1-06.pdf

UNODC. (2006). *Handbook on restorative justice programmes*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

UNODC. (2020). *Handbook on restorative justice programmes* (Second ed.). United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. HUP.

Wachtel, T. (2003). Restorative practice in everyday life: Beyond the formal ritual. *Reclaiming Children and Youth: The Journal of Strength-Based Interventions*, *12*(2), 83–87. https://www.rpforschools.net/RP/2007_RP_primer.pdf

Willms, C., & Malzahn, R. (2024). The 'deadly embrace' of restorative justice in Germany. In G. Maglione, I. D. Marder, & B. Pali (Eds.), *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (pp. 189–210). Taylor & Francis.

Wood, W. R., Suzuki, M., Hayes, H., & Bolitho, J. (2021). Roadblocks and diverging paths for restorative justice in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. In T. Gavrielides (Ed.), *Comparative restorative justice* (pp. 197–221). Springer.

Wood, W. R., Suzuki, M., & Tauri, J. (2024). Restorative justice in Australia and New Zealand: A faustian bargain with the state? In G. Maglione, I. D. Marder, & B. Pali (Eds.), *Restorative justice at a crossroads: Dilemmas of institutionalisation* (pp. 11–39). Taylor & Francis.

Youth Justice Board. (2023). K*ey performance indicator guidance for youth justice services*. Version 1.8. Ministry of Justice. Retrieved November 26, 2024, from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66e17496dd4e6b59f0cb24e5/KPI_Recording_Guidance_for_YJSs_v_1.8.pdf