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Editorial Note

Joanna R. Quinn

Western University, jquinn2@uwo.ca

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Editorial Note

Joanna R. Quinn,
Editor-in-Chief
Western University
jqinn2@uwo.ca

Although in some cases it feels like we've been at it for ages, the field of transitional justice is in many ways still very new. From a handful of interested people in the early- to mid-1990s, there are now hundreds of people working on different aspects of both transition and justice. They come from diverse fields ranging from Theology to Law, Political Science, Anthropology, Philosophy, and more.

The situations which scholars and practitioners now deal with is also expanding. Whereas twenty years ago, the field was largely concerned with states transitioning from conflict to peace, or from authoritarian regimes to democracies, nuanced understandings of what constitutes a transition can now be found. Of late, transitional justice has come to be defined as “the range of judicial and non-judicial mechanisms aimed at dealing with a legacy of large-scale abuses of human rights and/or violations of international humanitarian law.”¹ Yet even that definition does not, many argue, go far enough in addressing the kinds of investigations that are underway, of abuses in places like Canada, where a Truth and Reconciliation Commission has begun to delve into the abuses suffered by First Nations people who suffered in the Indian Residential School system. Or the aspects of DDR that are falling

¹ Rachel Kerr and Eirin Mobekk, *Peace and Justice* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 3.

short in places like Uganda, where TJ efforts have been cobbled together with aspects of development. Or the implications of the so-called “Arab Spring” of 2011, where communities, at the grassroots level, are pushing the boundaries of transitions.

The field itself has moved beyond many of the discussions that catalyzed the early literature, including the once-dominant “peace versus justice” debate, and arguments over the utility of *either* restorative *or* retributive *or* reparative mechanisms of justice. Instead, scholars have begun, legitimately, to consider a range of mechanisms and processes that, while they don’t always fit neatly together, attempt to deal frankly with the aftermath of conflict, abuse, and human rights violations—all the while, building a systematized understanding of the important lessons to be learned from each case. All of this takes place in a range of situations, across a variety of contextually-dependent conditions. And new, important questions are emerging.

To be sure, transitional justice is expanding. This new journal, *Transitional Justice Review*, seeks to provide an outlet for scholarly, peer-reviewed articles that tackle new and emerging themes and issues in the field, including the kinds of questions raised above. In the pages of *TJR*, we hope that you will find cutting-edge debates and discussions that centre around the principles of the field of transitional justice.