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Editorial Note

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Editorial Note

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The importance of political will is at the heart of much of what is written in the field of transitional justice. In many respects, its presence—or lack thereof—is considered to be crucial in determining the relative success or failure of transitional justice processes and mechanisms. And while there is a growing and debated literature that theorizes about how and why this is so, the balance of the literature continues to provide evidence to both substantiate and refute the claims that are made.

The three articles that comprise this issue of *Transitional Justice Review* quite clearly deal with the complications of political will. Rosemary Nagy and Emily Gillespie consider the issue of framing in media representations of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which speaks forcefully of the willful ignorance of Canadians to understand the systemic and discriminatory issues that it continues to confront. Nagy and Gillespie usefully cite critics like Jo-Ann Episkenew, who worries that “healing without changing the social and political conditions that first caused the injuries [is] ineffectual.”¹

¹ Jo-Ann Episkenew, *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous literature, public policy and healing* (Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 17.

Kimberly Lanegran confronts the issue of political will in the context of truth commissioners and the agendas they choose to pursue, and the effect that their presence has on the eventual outcome of the commission. Lanegran provides a useful account of the way in which the appointment of Bethuel Kiplagat undermined the work of the Kenyan Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission.

Anna Macdonald takes a more global perspective in questioning the “ought” in the processes and mechanisms that are appointed. She considers the normative links between specific mechanisms and their outcomes. And she notes the significant disconnect between local perceptions and the kind of prescriptions that the transitional justice world normally assumes.

Finally, in this issue, we introduce a new occasional feature: research notes. We hope that this kind of applied research piece will be of value in kick-starting disciplinary discussions and in learning more about how we “do” what it is that we do. In this issue, in the first of these research notes, Andrew Reiter and Karen Zamora Surian consider the state of university teaching in the area of transitional justice—something that many of us do, and are trying to do better.