

JUSTICE, TRUTH AND PEACE:  
THE LIMITATIONS OF TRUTH COMMISSIONS FOR  
THE PROSPECT OF SUSTAINED PEACE

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## ABSTRACT

Scholarly debates have centered on questions of accountability, jurisdiction, the role of the state versus the individual, and the meaning of reconciliation. Truth commissions have been one answer to some of these questions. The question raised in this paper is whether or not truth commissions, in their many forms, serve as adequate mechanisms for justice in transitional societies. Moreover, how effective and appropriate are truth commissions in establishing and maintaining peace in a society uprooted by civil conflict, despair, fear and mistrust? Based on my research, I argue that truth commissions alone cannot provide the justice sought by members of transitional societies to the degree necessary for sustained peace. Rather, these commissions must occur in combination with other forms of transitional justice, such as prosecutorial trials or international tribunals, to be determined by the specific needs of those societies and their people.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Amy Jacobson received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of California, Irvine in June 2003. She continued her education in Comparative Politics at Cornell University in the Department of Government. Upon the completion of this thesis, she was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Government.

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I dedicate this master's thesis to my husband, Brandon, and my mom, Linda. For all of your love and support, I thank you.

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