

## ABSTRACT

### Truth, Justice and Reconciliation: Dilemmas of Transitional Societies, a Critical Examination of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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Truth Commissions are significant elements of policy options used by societies in transition. They are preferred to prosecutions often because these transitional societies have a balance of new and old power forces, which may mean that large-scale trials may cause catastrophe and reversion.

In this thesis, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is examined using the nodal concerns of truth, reconciliation and justice as litmus tests for the success/failure of the Commission.

This critical examination is founded on the rationale, that given the genesis of truth commissions, it is impossible for them to help secure the three nodal concerns without great difficulty. The thesis posits that this amounts to a moral dilemma, that societies in transition have to undergo as a means of dealing with their past. I believe that this will be a meaningful contribution to the expanding literature on the subject.

Keywords: Jermaine Omar McCalpin; truth commissions; justice; reconciliation; amnesty; amnesia; and memory; South Africa.