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Editorial introduction

The *International Journal of Law in Context* is a new journal and a new venture. But it takes its cue from, and builds upon, the established series of books which nestle under the overarching title 'Law In Context'. This imprint has been leaving its impact on legal scholarship for more than 30 years. Many 'classics' have been produced. It is fitting that one of the progenitors of the series, William Twining, writes in this inaugurating issue. 'Law In Context' has extended the discipline of law, opened up the teaching of law and stimulated scholarship both within and outside the law academy. Not least, it has encouraged the growth of new journals.

The *International Journal of Law in Context* is pledged to offer a forum for continuing the enterprise of the 'Law In Context' series. It creates a space for exploring law in all of its contexts. Some of these contexts are better established than others: law and sociology and law and economics in particular. We hope that scholars working within these disciplines will take the opportunity offered by a new journal to explore new aspects of their subject. But we want to encourage explorations of the interface between law and its many other contexts too. Some of these are now well established, like law and literature (and popular culture) and law and religious studies. Others are only emerging, like law and geography and law and bioethics. And others may yet emerge: childhood studies may be an example. University College London has for some nine years established a colloquium linking law with another discipline and has found no shortage of disciplines to embrace. Nor does it anticipate doing so.

The *International Journal of Law in Context* is committed to no one style or ideology and to no single theoretical perspective. Indeed, we would hope to encourage a healthy debate between different theoretical perspectives. Nor will the categories of legal studies be closed: the journal will be broad in scope and open to new ways of thinking about law, which itself will be broadly interpreted. We are happy also to take empirical studies (this first issue contains an example of this – the study by Jane Lewis and Elaine Welsh of fathering practices in intact families). We are looking for articles that provoke and probe. They may be related to one system of law or many or, indeed, none. It is intended that the journal should have a genuinely international dimension. We are interested in comparative work, in historical analysis particularly where it advances our understanding of a contemporary problem or concept, in scholarship from outside the common law world. We would wish to encourage exposure to developments and current thinking in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. There is a concern, which we are sure is shared by others, that there is exciting work going on in these countries and it is passing Anglo-American jurisprudence by.

This is a law journal but we hope it will appeal beyond the discipline of law. We would wish to encourage non-lawyers to submit articles. We would hope also to encourage collaborative work between scholars from different disciplines.

The *International Journal of Law in Context* will have regular 'Special Issues'. One feature of these will be the examination of a particular problem or concept or book (or the work of a significant interdisciplinary scholar) from the perspective of the context of different disciplines. Suggestions as to subjects to explore are welcome.

We would stress that the *International Journal of Law in Context* will be a refereed journal.

We are excited to be beginning this new venture now. We know there is good work out there, and we hope to encourage you to submit it for publication to the *International Journal of Law in Context*.

This first issue opens with an article which examines the limits, if any, to the ability of concepts to travel across boundaries. Twining's article starts from the premise that globalisation raises questions about the adequacy of our conceptual frameworks for discussing legal phenomena across jurisdictions, traditions and cultures. He takes three very different case studies – legal rights, prisons and corruption. Legal rights, as represented in Hohfeld's conceptual scheme, have, it is argued, a high degree of transferability. Rather more surprisingly, discourse about prisons appears to travel well. Corruption, bribery and related concepts used to be considered culture-specific, but, Twining shows, now seem to travel reasonably well in respect of the modern public sector of nation states.

Goodrich's article explores the common law's unease with the institution of friendship. The unenforceability of agreements between friends is traced to theology and early modern ecclesiastical case law. The implications of this for seemingly progressive developments in law which assimilate cohabitation (both heterosexual and gay) and marriage (the quintessential 'friendship' relationship) are considered.

In the third article in this issue, Winter writes of the ways consumerism has eclipsed politics as the dominant mode of our lives, and of how we came to this condition. And instead of the conventional narrative that emphasises the intellectual changes wrought by the Enlightenment, Winter takes up Charles Taylor's dialectical account which emphasises the reflexive relation between the social developments of modernity and accompanying changes in social understandings. He goes on to explore the nature and import of some contemporary practices, their relation to the 'postmodern', and their implications, including those for the ability to sustain meaningful democracies under conditions of globalisation.

With fathers fighting for their rights – and, note, not usually their responsibilities – the final article is timely. In it Lewis and Welsh explore fathering practices in intact families. They offer the findings of a small but valuable empirical study which suggest subtle, rather than profound, shifts in fathers' involvement with their children. These findings have important implications for the role that fathers can be expected to play on relationship breakdown, for contact for example.

With the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz having just been commemorated, Simpson's review article on the 'politics of memory' is also timely. It is our intention to publish such review articles regularly, in addition to book reviews such as the two which round off the first issue.