

Catherine Brölmann, ***International Institutional Veil in Public International Law. International Organisations & the Law of Treaties***. Oxford: Hart Publishing, Ltd, 2007. Pp. 313. €72.99. ISBN 9781841136349.

The monograph at hand is based upon the author's PhD thesis, successfully defended before the University of Amsterdam in 2005. Although it is not indicated by the main title, *International Institutional Veil in Public International Law*, the book deals mainly with the many different aspects of the law of treaties concluded between, or with, international organizations. The choice of the title is a result of the author presenting the topic with a broad foundation, in the context of which she thoroughly scrutinizes the specific nature of international organizations and their independence in dependence.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first part the author sets the theoretical framework for the following chapters. The international organization is analysed in terms of its features, nature, *raison d'être*, and its historical development, along with the main actors of international law, the states.

Considering the many works on the legal nature of international organizations, those hesitant to open this chapter will be pleasantly surprised by the author's argumentative agility and the thematic connections. In this respect, the work is a far cry from simply providing information. Despite her occasional argumentative jumps Brölmann presents a clear position on matters of academic dispute and terminological confusion.

The second part of the book is entitled 'International Organizations and Treaty Practice'. It presents the different types of relationships of international organizations with treaties. This includes the capacity of an international organization to offer its member states a forum for the drafting of treaties, with or without the possibility of influencing their contents. On the other hand, international organizations are themselves contracting parties to treaties. And in the end, international organizations are based on treaties, their constituent instruments. The author does not address these three complex constellations in detail. In particular, the function of international organizations as treaty-making fora is a topic which, because of the broad spectrum of international organizations, cannot be thoroughly analysed within this book. A separate chapter on the function of international organizations as 'watchdogs' and 'nurses' of treaties would have rounded out this portion of the book more effectively.

The third and main part of the book is completely devoted to the 1986 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties concluded between states and international organizations or between international organizations. The author begins with the preparatory work of the ILC which eventually led to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties between States in 1969. Even back then the special rapporteurs gave some consideration to the treaties of international organizations. Brölmann does not address the ILC preparations for the 1986 Vienna Convention separately; rather she refers to them when treating the individual convention articles. The final chapter of the book comments on the major provisions of the 1986 Convention. While the first part of

the book impresses with new perspectives on age-old questions, the substantive analysis of each convention article does not go very much beyond the work of the ILC and the *travaux préparatoires*. However, the concept of the book is not to delve into all legal aspects of the law of treaties, as is the case with a commentary.

With this book the author has produced a work which enriches the body of literature on international organizations with an original and creative treatment of much discussed topics. In contrast, the scientifically less noted law of treaties of international organizations receives a rather traditional treatment. Further, the author leaves a number of interesting legal questions untouched (e.g. the passing on of treaty-making capacity by IOs and the relationship between Articles 27 and 46 of the 1986 Vienna Convention). Other topics, e.g. the ability of IOs to escape the performance of a treaty concluded with a member state by adopting acts legally binding upon that member state (at 226), could have been discussed in more detail.

These flaws, however, do not curtail the scholarly value of the book, which provides for a genuine reading experience.

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