

ing and erudite elucidation on the practical difficulties and issues facing the UN make this an insightful text.

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**Law, War and Crime: War Crimes Trials and the Reinvention of International Law** by **Gerry Simpson**. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007. 248pp., £55.00, ISBN 978 0 7456 3022 9.

*Law, War and Crime* offers a significant contribution to the globally important subject of international criminal law by exploring the tensions prevalent in international trials. The first chapter, 'Law's Politics', deals with the tension between law and politics. In it, Simpson argues that international criminal trials are necessarily political, but not in the negative sense often invoked as a reason for not recognising international criminal law as genuine law. Chapter 2, 'Law's Place', deals with the tension between the local needs of the population affected by atrocity and the value of transcending sovereignty with an internationalised process and recognition of cosmopolitan justice. In this chapter, Simpson does not forward a particular position on where in the spectrum international criminal law appropriately lies, but rather he explores the tension and the developments of international criminal tribunals. Ultimately, he asserts that 'the negotiation between the claims of the cosmopolitan and the needs of the local ... is the very stuff of international criminal law' (p. 53). In the following chapters he explores the tensions between individual responsibility and collective guilt, and between a criminal trial's ability to provide a narrative of atrocity and its effectiveness as an institution of retributive justice. He also examines the differences and parallels between international criminal trials and show trials, and justifications for law's supremacy as the response to international conflict.

Simpson's focus on tensions is an interesting approach to tackling the many issues facing the burgeoning international criminal system. While each of the tensions raised in this book has been examined elsewhere, and often in combination, this book is unique in its particular focus on the

conflicting aims and pressures that plague international criminal law, as well as for the specific arguments and insight presented in each of the chapters.

Of interest is Simpson's consistent, and unexplained, use of the terms 'war crimes law' and 'war crimes' to refer to all international criminal law and all manner of international crime. This is misleading given that war crimes are only one of four categories of international crime, with all of which Simpson is obviously concerned. Genocide and crimes against humanity, which Simpson subsumes within the category of war crimes, are distinct, in part because they can be committed when there is no war occurring.

Ultimately, this is a notable book. It is well written and provides unique insight into considerably challenging issues.

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**Regulating Capital: Setting Standards for the International Financial System** by **David Andrew Singer**. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2007. 163pp., £17.95, ISBN 978 0 8014 4525 5

Singer's book seeks to explain the conditions under which national financial services regulators cooperate internationally to set minimum standards. He uses a principal-agent model to argue that banking, insurance and securities trading regulators cooperate internationally to preserve their independence when they come under strong threat of political intervention. This threat is likely when unforeseen shocks threaten the regulators' ability simultaneously to guarantee the stability of the country's financial system and the competitiveness of the country's regulatory environment. International standards and cooperation are the only means by which regulators can satisfy political demands that both these goals be met. Singer focuses on what he calls core harmonisation: agreement of the British, American and Japanese financial markets on international standards, expecting 'peripheral' regulators to follow their lead.

Singer provides a brief but effective and accessible introduction to how the contagion of

financial instability works, posing problems for regulators and attracting public and political attention. He then applies his model to the development of minimum capital requirements in international banking regulation (the Basel I and II Accords), and the contrasting lack of cooperation in regulating securities trading firms and insurance companies at moments of financial instability.

Singer's explanation strives for parsimony by revolving around win sets. These win sets are determined by political demands for regulation to ensure stability, and demands for restrictions on regulation in the interest of competitiveness stemming from political sources and business exit. He emphasises that domestic politics plays a decisive role in determining the likelihood of cooperation. Unlike the classic two-level game scenario, however, domestic constraints may promote international cooperation among regulators rather than constraining them. Regulators pre-empt political intervention in the principal-agent relationship with their own initiatives.

Strangely, Singer does not consider private pre-emptive initiatives on standards and good governance as an alternative to initiatives by regulators. This is something to be considered for future research, and something that is surprisingly absent, given the importance of private actors in new research on global governance.

Ideas about the appropriate regulatory response to financial crisis play a crucial role in determining domestic win sets and the possibility of a workable international alternative, a point which Singer acknowledges yet which is external to his analysis. His framework therefore provides a starting point for analysis to which thicker investigations of policy paradigms and ideas should be added. It will make good reading for senior undergraduate and postgraduate students.

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**Good Governance and Development** by **B.C. Smith**. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 320pp., £22.99, ISBN 978 0 230 52566 5

This book has as its key focus two of the most challenging themes of the twenty-first century –

*good governance* and *development*. While development remains a perennially contested theme in the global debating arena, to relate it to 'good governance', a new but hotly debated theme, makes the task even more provocative.

The author consciously invites provocation not only by seeking to dissect the good governance agenda in its elemental form (accountability, transparency, rule of law, human rights, eradication of corruption, efficient public management and so forth) but also by putting the perspective of the international development agencies, one of the main carriers of the agenda, at centre stage of analysis. However, his fundamental argument is that since agenda setting is basically a task in political engineering, political science provides a key to the pluri-dimensional understanding of the development/good governance interface. In doing so the author provides a service to political science, which is often on the receiving end of both the interdisciplinary orientation and dominance of economics that mark mainstream analyses of such an interface.

In terms of the countries and societies used as case studies, the tilt towards the developing world is appropriate as this remains the prime site for implementation of both the development agenda and the good governance agenda. The main target readership of the book are students and development activists, though the theoretically oriented mind might also acquire some food from the practice-oriented approach.

While the volume has little to contribute in terms of methodological innovation, it is based on an interesting analytical framework which imports some of the existing theoretical formulations of good governance and dissects them literally at the 'ground level' with instances of implementation. However, to address all the prime attributes of the good governance agenda, important though it is, also tends to miss some dimensions of the complex dynamics. Thus, for instance, the chapter on the decentralisation of political power analyses the strengths and limits of participation, but does not go deep enough to address the widely prevalent practice of 'pseudo-participation' – non-participation in the name of participation – which subverts both agendas. The