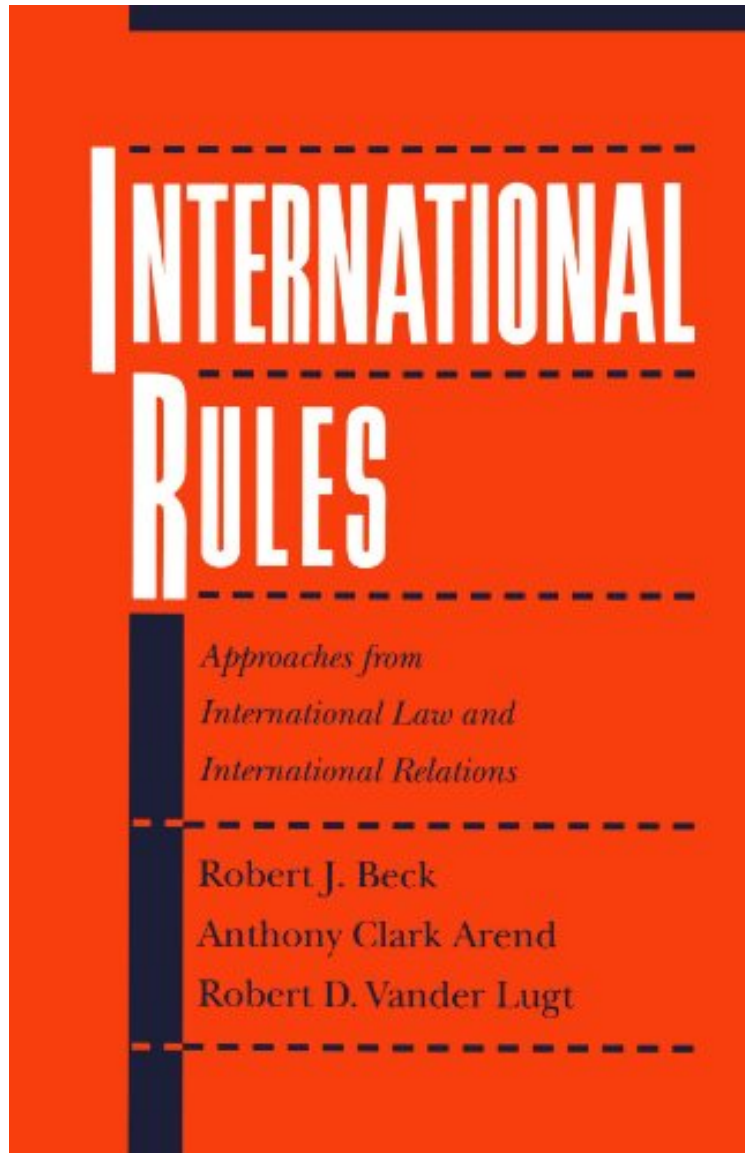


International Rules: Approaches from International Law and International Relations

From Robert J Beck

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From Robert J Beck : International Rules: Approaches from International Law and International Relations
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised International Rules:
Approaches from International Law and International Relations:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good intro to the place of rules in the international arena

By Michael Bendavid

International Rules is a prime example of a composite being more the sum of its parts. The authors collected writings from the main schools of international law (IL) and international relations (IR) scholarship and provide the reader with the basic analytical tools to ponder the place of rules (and norms) in the international system. In addition to an insightful introduction to each of the eight schools represented (five IL and three IR schools), Professors Beck and Arend wrote an opening (Beck) and closing (Arend) chapter providing a general framework for the discussion. The main problem tackled by the collection is the divergent positions and lack of communication between the fields of international relations and international law. While international law assumes the influence of (though not necessarily compliance with) legal rules on the behavior of its subject (and when it cannot exert such influence, it would no longer be classified as law) this point is, indeed, an open point of discussion among IR scholars. IR's Realists, for example, refuse to accept the influence of rules, rather focusing on power and view whatever rules do exist in the international system as mere reflections of the configuration of power. Even some of the IL schools focus on the influence power has on the formation of rules (IL's Feminists, New Stream and New Haven schools), as Beck aptly points out (pp. 15). Yet, some of the most interesting and groundbreaking work on the enigma of international rules finds no place in the collection. The constructivist program of research in IR focuses on the social determinants of the international system. As such, their work explores, with great detail, such issues as the function of norms and norm emergence, the influence of identity on action in the international arena and on the mutual constitution of the actor and the international system. This school traces its roots to Hedley Bull's "The Anarchical Society" and from the late 1980's a flurry of writings on these subjects has emerged. In fact, Arend published an article (Virginia Journal of International Law, Vol. 38, No. 2, 1998, pp.107) and a book (Legal Rules and International Society, 1999) focusing on rules in the international system both of which implement constructivist methods. With the exception of the selection from Keohane setting off the constructivist approach (named by him "reflective"), the selection from Hurrell is really the only one which will give the reader a view into this important body of scholarship (although the select bibliography will set the reader in the right direction). Beyond this obvious shortcoming, there are several smaller ones I feel need to be pointed out. First, bringing Feminist voices to the discussion is laudable, but it is my feeling that the more developed "Third World" voice should not have been overlooked. (see: Third World Attitudes Toward International Law: An Introduction (F. Snyder and S. Sathirathai, Eds.), 1987 and K. Mickelson's "Rhetoric and Rage" article in Wisconsin Int'l Law Journal, Vol. 16 (1998) pp. 353). Second, Beck raises the question of the place of morality in the development of legal norms, yet the selections do not include the work of Lon Fuller, who wrote extensively on this subject. Nonetheless, I feel this book is an excellent starting point for the discussion on the place of norms in the international system and warmly recommend it to anyone with an interest in this subject.

International Rules brings together exemplary works from the most prominent approaches to international rules of International Law and International Relations disciplines. Included are chapters on Natural Law, Legal Positivism, Classical Realism, the New Haven School, Institutionalism, Structural Realism, the New Stream, and Feminist Voices. Each of the eight chapters begins with a brief overview, offers a representative work or works, and concludes with a selected bibliography. From Hugo Grotius to David Kennedy, from George Kennan to Robert Keohane, the featured authors provide valuable insights into their common subject: international rules. Despite divergent methods and objectives, they address fundamentally the same questions: What is the nature of such rules? What is their purpose? How do they originate? What role, if any, do they play in politics? Framing the selections assembled are two original chapter-length essays. The first chapter of this volume assesses the prospects for interdisciplinary collaboration; the final one suggests a direction for future research.

"A valuable synthesis of the various theories of international law and of their major flaws and inconsistencies. Required reading in any discussion of international law, world institutions, and state sovereignty."--Lydia Gardner, Southwest Texas State University

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