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CONTENTS

PAGE

The Survival of the Secret Treaty: Publicity, Secrecy, and Legality in the International Order

Megan Donaldson

575

This article offers the first detailed history of the norm of treaty publication as it has evolved over the last century. Drawing on both public debates and archives of foreign ministries, it traces how, and why, secret treaties have persisted, even in liberal democracies. It challenges assumptions of ever-greater transparency over time, and complicates the associations made—by interwar reformers and international lawyers today—between the norm of treaty publication and ideals of legality in the international order.

What Works in Human Rights Institutions?

Katerina Linos and Tom Pegrum

628

Since 1993, the United Nations has promoted national human rights institutions (NHRIs); these have spread to almost 120 countries. We assess what makes NHRIs effective, using quantitative and qualitative methods. We find that formal institutional safeguards contribute greatly to NHRI efficacy even in authoritarian and transition regimes. Complaint-handling mandates are particularly useful because they help NHRIs build broad bases of support. Our findings show how international organizations can wield great influence with soft tools such as recommendations and peer-review mechanisms.

Notes and Comments

Unintended Positive Complementarity: Why International

Criminal Court Investigations May Increase

Domestic Human Rights Prosecutions

Geoff Dancy and Florencia Montal

689

Correspondence

Anibony D'Amato

724

International Decisions

Edited by David P. Stewart

Maritime Delimitation in the Indian Ocean (Somalia v. Kenya) (Beatrice I. Bonafé)

725

International Court of Justice decision on interpretation of optional clause declarations that include a reservation for alternative methods of dispute settlement