

“Book Review of Kaj Hober’s *International Investment Law: Problems and Exercises*”

Naman Anand
Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law

Professor Kaj Hober of Uppsala University of Sweden’s new work is indeed one that is highly reflective of his immense knowledge about the topic of International Arbitration and International Investment Law. The book, which has been very meticulously divided into three beautifully interconnected parts, also contains 43 extremely interesting and insightful exercises relating to the subject (based on real-life problems) such as Seminars and Mini Mock Arbitrations which allow for the development of practical skills and ‘problem based learning’ which are required by students when they shall become a part of the profession in addition to the knowledge they acquire in their classrooms. I found the Extended Contents very useful as students and researchers have been very carefully guided as to how to use the book. The process of interpreting and understanding arbitral awards in general also demanded a separate section that has been devoid in most of the other publications on this subject area. Prof. Hober has perfectly demonstrated his ability to look at any subject area in a comprehensive manner as he acknowledges the pitfalls of International Investment Arbitration- but unlike other authors, he does not stop there and also suggests a lot of constructive in order to rectify the existing issues. In this section he maintains his child-like enthusiasm, looking at the future of the subject area with immense optimism.

The book employs a much-needed classical grassroots approach, with Part I talking about Arbitration agreements in general and their importance before moving on to the role of the arbitrator(s) and then Arbitral Awards, and particularly their recognition and enforcement, across all jurisdictions. Hober, with his immense eye for detail, presents a holistic and no-holds barred view of the world of arbitration in general in this section. He does answer all the questions only to leave the student’s mind engaged and alert and yet searching for more questions, which is immensely appreciable. Part II focuses on International Investment Law in detail- addressing concerns from treaty interpretation to the role of investors and state responsibility and a lot more. This extremely intricate and insightful section is the heart and soul of the book and is extremely vast in its outlook about the subject. Heading 19 about the interrelationship between International Investment Law and EU Law was a standout for me as it raises extremely relevant concerns and issues in the light of Brexit and also looks at a futuristic plan of action. The final part deals in detail with International Investment Arbitration- right from the Jurisdiction applicable to the laws applicable, remedies under the procedure, the concept of sovereign immunity and much more, which provides for a much needed light upon the need for arbitration in this sector and shall be very encouraging for students and professionals who look forward to making their career in this sector which has incorrectly been labelled as niche by many. I must not forget to mention the vast repository of Case Laws that this book contains, which is immensely helpful for students in order to increase their knowledge. It also is helpful for students appearing for examinations and

preparing for moots, as with many case laws provided carefully for each provision of the law one can always write down another if the forget the most quoted one.

The only criticism I can level against this book is the price. At 36 GBP for a paperback and a whopping 136 GBP for a hardback, it is a book that would not be purchasable easily for those on a student budget and thus only accessible to them via libraries. Plenty of jurisdictions such as India and China, where International Investment Law is taught as a subject prefer books on this topic to be priced over not more than 25 GBP for a paperback. In short, this brilliant book must be sold for a lower price in order to be made more accessible to students across the globe. In the end, I'd like to say that this book is definitely insightful, pragmatic, and dynamic and allows students to learn a subject area that was generally perceived as complex and boring in a manner that is both interesting and fun.