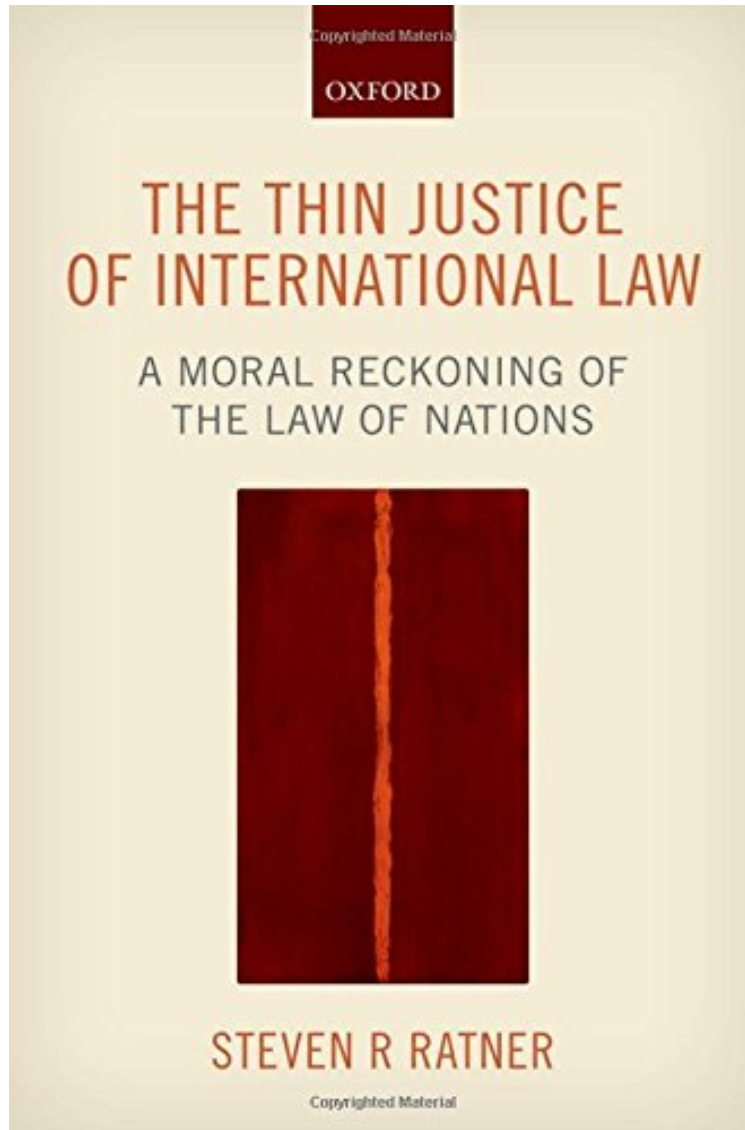


# The Thin Justice of International Law: A Moral Reckoning of the Law of Nations

*Steven R. Ratner*

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**Steven R. Ratner : The Thin Justice of International Law: A Moral Reckoning of the Law of Nations** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Thin Justice of International Law: A Moral Reckoning of the Law of Nations:

In a world full of armed conflict and human misery, global justice remains one of the most compelling missions of our time. Understanding the promises and limitations of global justice demands a careful appreciation of international law, the web of binding norms and institutions that help govern the behavior of states and other global actors. This book provides a new interdisciplinary approach to global justice, one that integrates the work and insights of international law and contemporary ethics. It asks whether the core norms of international law are just, appraising them according to a standard of global justice derived from the fundamental values of peace and the protection of human rights. Through a combination of a careful explanation of the legal norms and philosophical argument, Ratner concludes that many international law norms meet such a standard of justice, even as distinct areas of injustice remain within the law and the verdict is still out on others. Among the subjects covered in the book are the rules on the use of force, self-determination, sovereign equality, the decision making procedures of key international organizations, the territorial scope of human rights obligations (including humanitarian intervention), and key areas of international economic law. Ultimately, the book shows how an understanding of international law's moral foundations will enrich the global justice debate, while exposing the ethical consequences of different rules.

"The Thin Justice of International Law provides a unique perspective on the ethical underpinnings of the international legal order and the ability of international law to contribute to a more just world order... [It] is undoubtedly a source from which related interdisciplinary debates can emerge." - Nikolaos Pavlopoulos, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* "The Thin Justice of International Law is carefully written and meticulously argued; it covers a vast array of issues and contemporary debates. Furthermore, it does so with impressive command of the relevant arguments in both law and philosophy. Ratner's conclusions are always judicious and sensible." - Alejandro Chehtman, *The Modern Law* "Ratner does not limit his engagement with political philosophy to one topic or his philosophical interlocutors to one or two "big names." Rather, he makes the courageous choice to dive into the deep end of contemporary political philosophy, to engage with arguments made by more than two dozen theorists on topics including war, self-determination and secession, state borders, sovereign equality, human rights, universal jurisdiction, global trade, and international investment." - David Lefkowitz, *Ethics* "Ratner is able to convey the crux of complex debates in a couple of sentences and he takes many controversial issues head on. The combination of detailed knowledge of international law and its connexion to philosophical conceptions also makes this book a perfect introduction to international law... it needs to be wholeheartedly applauded." - Christoph Kletzer, *Law and Philosophy* "Steven Ratner's *The Thin Justice of International Law* offers a timely, comprehensive and theoretically rich interdisciplinary theory of international law's relationship with global justice. It is a major contribution to the burgeoning literature on global justice, with a fine eye to legal detail and institutional design." - Patrick Macklem, *Michigan Law* Ratner's extensive experience as an expert and adviser to the United States' government, international non-governmental organizations and various international institutions on a wide range of issues related to the arbitration of investment disputes, ethnic conflict and human rights violations, territorial disputes, and counter-terrorism strategies brings rich texture to the discussion of the effects of international law rules on protecting peace and respecting human rights. It also marks the book as a vast improvement over the ample scholarly discourse on global justice, which has paid scant attention to the way in which international law operates and the values it embodies. International law is at best marginal to such discourse, and if it plays any role at all is to serve as a contrast to strongly idealized concepts of an international global order - Carmen Pavel, *Notre Dame Philosophical*

About the Author Steven R. Ratner, Bruno Simma Collegiate Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School Steven Ratner is the Bruno Simma Collegiate Professor of Law at the University of Michigan Law School. His research has focused on a range of contemporary challenges facing governments and international institutions, including ethnic conflict, territorial borders, implementation of peace agreements, regulation of foreign investment and global business, the normative orders concerning armed conflict, and accountability for human rights violations. For the last ten years his research has concerned issues at the intersection of ethics and international law. Outside the academy, he was a member of the UN Secretary-General's Group of Experts on Cambodia in 1998-99 and of the UN's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka in 2010-11. Since 2009, he has served on the State Department's Advisory Committee on International Law.