

# Contents

Acknowledgments xi

Abbreviations xv

Introduction 1

1 The Subject and Basic Claims of This Book 1

2 Structure and Approach 3

3 The Benchmarks of Legality and Quality 7

## PART I

### *What Is Interpretation?*

1 The Interpretation of International Law by Domestic Courts – A Topic That Matters 15

1 Introduction 15

2 The State of the Literature 15

2.1 *Descriptive Bias* 17

2.2 *Domestic Bias* 20

2.3 *'Amour Impossible'* 22

2.4 *Legal Imperative* 23

2.5 *Swiss Gap* 24

3 Why Switzerland? 26

4 Why Courts? 30

5 Why Domestic Courts? 31

6 Why International Law? 34

7 Why Focus on the Law's Interpretative Methods? 37

2 Terminology and Conceptual Apparatus 44

1 Introduction 44

2 Legal Interpretation 44

3 Judicial Interpretation 47

4 Domestic Judicial Interpretation 52

5 Methods of Interpretation 54

5.1 *Normative Interpretative Theories* 54

5.2 *Structural and Axiological Interpretative Principles* 55

5.3 *Rules* 56

5.4 *Auxiliary Means* 57

5.5 *Argument Types* 57

6 The Interpretation of International Law 58

- 3 Interpreting International Law in Context – Domestic Specificities 62**
- 1 Introduction 62
  - 2 The Swiss State and International Law 65
    - 2.1 *Swiss Foreign Relations Law* 65
    - 2.2 *International Law in the Swiss Legal Order* 71
  - 3 Legal Principles of Political Organization 87
    - 3.1 *Federalism* 87
    - 3.2 *Linguistic Diversity* 89
    - 3.3 *The Rule of Law* 90
    - 3.4 *Semi-Direct Democracy* 92
    - 3.5 *The Federal Assembly qua 'Supreme Authority of the Confederation'* 95
  - 4 The Swiss Judiciary 97
    - 4.1 *The Structure of the Swiss Judiciary* 97
    - 4.2 *Characteristics of Swiss Courts' Interpretative Activity* 105
  - 5 Conclusion 128

## PART 2

### *Why Interpret?*

- 4 The Legal Effect of Domestic Rulings in International Law 133**
- 1 Introduction 133
  - 2 Domestic Rulings as Means of Enforcement of International Law 137
  - 3 Domestic Rulings as Contributors to the Sources and Interpretation of International Law 142
    - 3.1 *Domestic Rulings in the Sources of International Law (Art. 38(1)(a)–(c) ICJ Statute)* 145
    - 3.2 *Domestic Rulings as Auxiliary Means (Art. 38(1)(d) ICJ Statute)* 153
  - 4 Conclusion 158

## PART 3

### *How to Interpret?*

- 5 The Need for Interpretative Methods in International Law 161**
- 1 Introduction 161

- 2 Why Does the Law Need Interpretative Methods? a Comparison With Interpretation Outside the Law 162
    - 2.1 *Similarities* 164
    - 2.2 *Differences* 166
  - 3 The Origins of Interpretative Methods in Domestic and International Law 167
    - 3.1 *Domestic Law* 168
    - 3.2 *International Law* 170
    - 3.3 *The Relationship between the Interpretative Methods of Domestic and International Law* 175
  - 4 Three Reasons for Requiring States to Use Interpretative Methods 176
    - 4.1 *Vagueness* 176
    - 4.2 *Counter-Majoritarian Decisions* 180
    - 4.3 *Judicial Politics* 181
  - 5 Three Objections against Interpretative Methods 184
    - 5.1 *The 'Vague Methods' Objection* 184
    - 5.2 *The 'Self-Made Methods' Objection* 187
    - 5.3 *The 'Outcome Over Process' Objection* 189
  - 6 Conclusion 190
- 6 The Interpretative Methods of International Law: What Are They, and Why Use Them? 191**
- 1 Introduction 191
  - 2 The Interpretative Methods of International Law 192
    - 2.1 *Textual Interpretation* 197
    - 2.2 *Systematic Interpretation* 202
    - 2.3 *Teleological Interpretation* 208
    - 2.4 *Historical Interpretation* 213
    - 2.5 *The Relationship between the Various Interpretative Methods* 219
  - 3 Conclusion 221
- 7 Swiss Courts and Treaty Interpretation 223**
- 1 Introduction 223
  - 2 Domestic Courts and the Methods of Treaty Interpretation 226
    - 2.1 *Introductory Remarks* 226
    - 2.2 *Exposing and Evaluating the Practice* 229

3	Swiss Courts and the Methods of Treaty Interpretation	234
3.1	<i>The Swiss Federal Tribunal and Treaty Interpretation before the vclt's Entry into Force (1954–1980)</i>	235
3.2	<i>The Swiss Federal Tribunal and Treaty Interpretation after the vclt's Entry into Force and before Its Ratification by Switzerland (1980–1990)</i>	238
3.3	<i>Swiss Courts and Treaty Interpretation after the vclt's Entry into Force in Switzerland (1990–2016)</i>	239
3.4	<i>Relationship with Interpretative Methods under Swiss Law</i>	265
3.5	<i>Comparing the Practice of Swiss Courts</i>	267
3.6	<i>Putting the Swiss Judicial Practice into Perspective</i>	269
4	Evaluation	270
8	<b>Swiss Courts and the Interpretation of Unwritten International Law</b>	272
1	Introduction	272
2	Customary International Law	274
2.1	<i>Domestic Courts and the Interpretation of Customary International Law</i>	274
2.2	<i>Swiss Courts and the Interpretation of Customary International Law</i>	283
3	General Principles of International Law	302
3.1	<i>Domestic Courts and the Interpretation of General Principles of International Law</i>	303
3.2	<i>Swiss Courts and the Interpretation of General Principles of International Law</i>	305
4	Evaluation	316
	<b>Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	320
1	The Argument Defended in This Book	320
2	Recommendations	323
2.1	<i>Improving the Legality and the Quality of Domestic Rulings</i>	323
2.2	<i>Enhancing the Accessibility of Domestic Rulings</i>	329
	<b>Bibliography</b>	333
	<b>Index</b>	373