ments within the ILO organisation. He certainly does not have a blind eye for its weak spots. We are increasingly living in a global multi-stakeholder network society, where inequality is a nasty reality. States, businesses, workers, NGOs, global and regional international organisations, think-tanks, researchers and universities, they are all interconnected and interdependent. They all have to adjust and adapt to new circumstances and developments. Maupain’s book shows that a multi-stakeholder approach is inevitable in tackling the main socio-economic issues ahead of us. As an example of the role the ILO can play in the coming years one could look at the Rana Plaza tragedy: the collapse of the unsafe Rana Plaza building in April 2013 near Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. More than 1100 textile workers, mostly young girls, were found dead; it was one of the biggest industrial accidents in history. Immediately after the accident the ILO took a leading role in bringing together the many stakeholders in this complicated supply-chain garment industry. States were involved, including in the EU, as well as big companies in the US, Europe and elsewhere, international organisations, trade unions and NGOs, and many initiatives emerged. Most of the stakeholders were already involved in improving labour standards in Bangladesh before the accident. The ILO served as the coordinating independent chair of a Committee that made an arrangement on payments to the victims of the accident according to the ILO Employment Injury Benefits Convention 121. The ILO also chaired the negotiations that led to The Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety, a legally binding agreement, signed by over 150 apparel companies from different continents, as well as global trade unions and Bangladeshi unions. The ILO also provided for technical assistance to the Bangladesh government and monitored the application of the Labour Inspectorate Convention 81, ratified by Bangladesh. The ILO was and is the lynchpin of various post-Rana Plaza initiatives, a big and important knot in the network. It is too early to judge, but it could be the way a new model works. Public and private actors intensively work together in a network to enforce the rules made by a trusted international organisation and coordinated by that same international organisation.

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Unlike some other semi-enclosed seas, such as the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, the North Sea is today (almost) fully delimited though a series of bilateral agreements.¹ The
story of how that came about, chiefly in the 1960s and early 1970s, is the subject of this excellent book by Alex G. Oude Elferink, who focuses on ‘the determination of the role of international law in the negotiations between Denmark, Germany (FRG) and the Netherlands on the delimitation of their continental shelf in the North Sea’ (p. 449). It was not clear to those involved in the early 1960s that the matter would end up before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), or even be dealt with bilaterally. There was talk, at least on the part of Germany, of holding a multilateral conference to decide how the shelf should be divided up. The position of Germany was the main difficult issue, but there were other potential difficulties in the North Sea, touched on in this book, including the Norwegian Trough, which could have complicated delimitation between Denmark and Norway (as well as between Norway and the United Kingdom).

The book is not just about the ICJ’s landmark North Sea Continental Shelf judgment of 1969.2 As the title indicates, it is a case study of a complex series of negotiations. It imparts a deep understanding of how the Danish, Dutch and German authorities acted – and reacted towards each other – in the 1960s (not so long after the War, something of a Leitmotiv in the book). The resulting work is well worth the effort that the author has devoted to it (pp. xv-xvii; ‘thousands of documents’), and – one might add – well worth the effort required of the reader.

Oude Elferink is an international lawyer specializing in the law of the sea. He is a leading expert on international maritime boundary delimitation. Since 1 February 2014, he has been Director of the Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea at the University of Utrecht (NILOS), with which he has long been associated. He is very well qualified to write this book.

The book comprises eleven chapters. It covers a great sweep of negotiation and litigation between Germany and its neighbours. And it also looks at the other maritime boundaries of Denmark and the Netherlands. While parts of the book may seem heavy going (especially to those not involved with maritime delimitation), it is worth persevering. The structure is complex, but then so too is the subject-matter. The reader is well advised to begin by studying carefully the author’s own outline (pp. 3-7).

After an introductory chapter, chapters 2 to 4 describe, with reference in particular to the attitudes of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, the development of the legal regime of the continental shelf and its acceptance in conventional and customary international law. The 1958 Geneva Conference and the resulting (Geneva) Convention on the Continental Shelf are highlighted. Most interesting here is the negative attitude of Germany towards the concept of coastal state rights and jurisdiction over the continental shelf (including a hopeless last-ditch attempt to block its adoption at the 1958 Conference). This negative attitude was abruptly reversed with the Proclamation of the Federal Government on the exploration and exploitation of the German continental shelf (22 January 1964), once it was realised that German economic interests required acceptance of the continental shelf concept. The FRG’s legal maritime diplomacy is seen as having been quite unrealistic and ineffective during this early period (see pp. 38-46, 55-59, 75-88, 92-93, 142).3