Emilia Onyema’s *International Commercial Arbitration and the Arbitrator’s Contract* provides a most useful and interesting insight into the web of contractual relationships underpinning arbitration as a dispute settlement mechanism. As the title suggests, the focus is on the arbitrator’s contract. In undertaking her analysis, the author divides the book into 8 parts: introduction; arbitration agreement; juridical and relationship theories; parties to the arbitrator’s contract; formation of the arbitrator’s contract, terms of contracts, remedies; and termination of contracts.

Within the introduction, Onyema identifies the key questions addressed in her text. That is: how is the arbitrator’s contract concluded? What are its terms of conclusion? And what are the consequences of the conclusion on the arbitrators, the disputing parties and (if relevant) the arbitral institution? These questions are answered by the author through analysis of case studies, that are based on both ad hoc and institutional references.

Onyema’s text is well reasoned, explained and most importantly, easy to read. The author touches on some quite topical issues – such as Chapter 4’s analysis of temporal conflicts between sets of arbitration rules. Where appropriate, the author in her analysis, proposes some novel approaches to the issues considered – including, in Chapter 2, the ‘partnership theory’ as a means of explaining the formation of an arbitrator’s contract where one of the disputing parties has declined to participate in an arbitrator’s appointment. Throughout the text, Onyema makes reference to various sets of arbitration rules, laws, up-to-date case law and even draws on these to use as examples in illustrating her viewpoint.

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Perhaps the most admirable facet of Onyema’s work is its ability to constantly draw
the reader back to the fact that international commercial arbitration is a private device
underpinned by private contractual relationships, despite its function as a dispute
resolution mechanism. The depth of Onyema’s analysis into these contractual
relationships makes her text an illuminating read.

As Onyema provides the reader with clear explanations of the contractual
relationships underpinning international commercial arbitration, this book would be
quite useful to practitioners and students of international arbitration alike.