

'Boaventura de Sousa Santos and his colleagues have produced an excellent account of Mozambique's legal system, relying not only on legal texts but also on historical and empirical investigations of the working of that system, based on an impressive sociological theory. The book is salutary reading for those proposing or engaged on legal reform in developing countries, who often operate on wrong theories and assumptions, and for those who wish to understand the complexity of the African state'.

Yash Ghai, Sir YK Pao Professor of Public Law, University of Hong Kong; Former Chair of the Kenya Constitution Review Process and Chair of the Kenya National Constitutional Conference.

In socio-legal terms, Mozambique is a complex web of interlocking legal orders. Such condition, which is typical of colonial societies, has continued, in different forms, in the post-colonial period. This book aims at analyzing such legal pluralities and the ways they are managed by the Mozambican state, conceived by the authors as a heterogeneous state, a complex and conflictive institutional setting in which several distinct legal (and even political) rationalities coexist. The broad view of law and of the judicial system adopted in this book brings into the same analytical framework unofficial local or indigenous customary legal practices, state official law and courts and, as a kind of a legal hybrid, the community courts.

The book consists of three parts. Part 1 describes the theoretical, analytical and methodological framework used to analyze the socio-political and legal structure of the multicultural Mozambican society. Part 2 is an intermezzo, aimed at describing the socio-economic evolution of Mozambique over the last fifty years. Part 3 includes the main findings of an empirical research on the official justice, and the informal, semi-official or non-official forms of justice that exist alongside the official judicial system in Mozambique and which the majority of citizens use to resolve the disputes among them.

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Law and Justice in a Multicultural Society: The Case of Mozambique

Santos et al., editors

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