

## BOOK REVIEW

A Review of *Mixed legal systems, east and west* edited by Vernon Valentine Palmer, Mohamed Y. Mattar and Anna Koppel (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015, Pp. 320, ISBN: 978-0-4724-3106-6).

Cross-cultural study is one of the main currents among today's intellectual movements. The study of comparative law is an integral stream of this current, and it is aimed at the convergence, harmonization, and unification of diverse legal systems. The publication of *Mixed Legal Systems, East and West* is an important step toward the fulfillment of this human goal. This volume collects twenty one research essays with the collective attempt to expand the goal and the scope of comparative law which has been traditionally dominated by western perspectives and confined to a small number of western countries. The editors and the contributors are leading experts in their own fields. Editor Vernon Valentine Palmer, whose areas of research interest are civil law, comparative law, mixed jurisdictions, and legal history, is a Thomas Pickles Professor of Law at Tulane University. Editor Mohamed Mattar is a senior Research Professor of International Law at Johns Hopkins University. Editor Anna Koppel is the Director of Research and Development at The Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University. The contributors have diverse cultural backgrounds and their areas of specialization cover the range of legal theory, legal history, comparative law, international law, human rights law, humanitarian law, constitutional law, civil law, Roman law, Islamic law, Chinese law, African customary law, and religious legal systems.

Scholarly reviews contend this anthology represents advanced research in the comparative law studies in general and in the studies of mixed legal systems in particular. This volume expands the concept of mixed legal systems beyond Western-centric perspectives through "the exploration of uncharted legal territories where non-Western indigenous and religious laws mingle with one another and with Western laws," asserts Dr. Olivier Moréteau, Professor of Law at Louisiana State University. In addition, according to Dr. Tamar Gidron, Professor of Law at The College of Management Academic Studies in Israel, "Many of the legal systems discussed in the present volume have not been the subject of academic analysis in the past, and in that sense, it constitutes an original and refreshing contribution to the history and jurisprudence of mixed legal systems."

Most importantly, this volume anticipates a hybrid legal system of future global village. As Dr. Colin Picker, Professor of Law at University of New South Wales, Australia commented, this volume “provides the reader with a sophisticated appreciation of the real mixing that is taking place and consequently provides a better feel for what might be the future of the law on Earth”. All these comments highlight the scholarly contributions that *Mixed Legal Systems, East and West* makes to the studies of comparative law, revealing that it is an invaluable resource for researchers and students working in relevant areas as well as for policy-makers and analysts. My reading of this book endorses these comments.

Will the future law for humanity be a hybrid system which cuts across the legal boundaries between West and East? This is the central question of *Mixed Legal Systems*.... It is around this concept of legal hybridity that the twenty one essays collected in this volume are organized. They are grouped according to the following headings, which highlight recent scholarly achievements: the contemporary nature of mixed legal systems; patterns of common and civil law hybridities; mixed legal systems with indigenous, customary, and religious law; the Islamic legal system and western legal traditions; and patterns of mixing in specialized areas of the law. These categories show at once that Palmer, Mattar and Koppel’s book provides various approaches to plausible explanations of mixed, hybrid legal systems. Some of the contributors’ findings and insights are important and worth noting here. First, almost all the essays reveal that mix, hybrid, poly-foundation legal systems have been a historical phenomenon and become prominent as well as controversial today due to contemporary globalization, which requires mutual recognition of legal norms between countries with different cultural traditions. Second, many of the essays demonstrate that diversity and uniformity of laws are not necessarily in conflict since poly-jurisdiction, though in need of theoretical explanation, works in practice. It is highlighted that in most Islamic states modern international laws are made compatible with Islamic laws. Third, some of the essays strongly suggest that the resilience of laws reveals itself not only locally but globally—especially in the development of international law.

This collection of essays also proposes many issues for further study. If, in the future, legal systems will be both hybrid and consistent in character, then more studies are needed to explain the roots, intersections, interplays, and bridges of East and West, North and South, and past and present. The form of hybridity is also important. This volume focuses on the cases in which those countries: that

are former colonies or semi-colonies of Western countries absorbed, or incorporated, or even transplanted Anglo-American and European laws. If this is the only way of making national laws from a diversity of legal system; if nothing can be done in the opposite way; then it is questionable whether legal globalization in the name of legal hybridity is moving in the right direction. A healthy globalization in the legal sense requires mutual recognition and integration of legal norms from diverse cultural traditions. From this comes the legal foundation of the proposed global village. The mere fact that the book *Mixed legal systems, east and west* raises such important issues makes it an invaluable resource for students and researchers working in the areas of legal philosophy, comparative law, legal pluralism, the evolution of mixed legal systems, and the impact of colonialism on contemporary legal systems.

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