

OPEN PEER REVIEW

The Politics of Legal Pluralism: Navigating Custom, Religion, and State Law in Multicultural Societies

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Legal pluralism, broadly defined, refers to the coexistence of multiple legal systems...” would benefit from an explicit reference to foundational theorists like Griffiths or Merry early on to ground the concept in the literature.

You state, “Strong legal pluralism acknowledges that non-state legal systems exist independently...” but the text would benefit from a concrete example illustrating this concept in practice (e.g., Indigenous courts in Canada or Sharia courts in Nigeria).

While the reference to Lauren Benton is apt, it would be helpful to elaborate on how “jurisdictional politics” continues to manifest in contemporary hybrid legal systems.

The concept of “vernacularization” is introduced well, but lacks a direct application. Consider providing an example of how global legal norms were locally adapted in a specific case (e.g., women’s rights legislation in South Africa).

The phrase “These personal laws often reflect patriarchal values...” should be supported by concrete legal provisions or court cases to substantiate the claim.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The discussion of Indonesia and Australia is insightful, but the paragraph could be strengthened by clarifying how these legal pluralist arrangements affect access to justice or legal certainty for marginalized groups.

The sentence “These tensions reflect a broader dilemma...” requires further elaboration. Consider briefly defining what constitutes “universality of rights” in the context of plural legal systems.

The sentence “This policy, commonly referred to as indirect rule...” would benefit from citation of additional colonial-era case studies beyond Benton’s framework—for example, British India or French West Africa.

In discussing India’s personal law regime, it may be valuable to mention recent developments such as debates around the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), which are highly relevant to legal pluralism.

The discussion of Canada could benefit from incorporating Indigenous critiques of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s impact on legal pluralism. Current developments in Indigenous law-making would enhance this section.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.