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Reviews

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(Roma Prohaska MD)

RULES AND PROCESSES: THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF DISPUTE IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT (PAPERBACK)



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The University of Chicago Press, United States, 1986. Paperback. Book Condition: New. New edition. 211 x 140 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Rules and Processes is at once a compelling essay in social theory and a pathbreaking ethnography of dispute in an African society. On the basis of a sensitive study of the Tswana of southern Africa, John Comaroff and Simon Roberts challenge most of the orthodoxies of legal anthropology. They argue that the social world, and the dispute processes that occur within it, are given form and meaning by a dialectical relationship between sociocultural structures and individual experience. The authors explore in a novel way the relations between culture and ideology, system and practice, social action and human intention. They develop a model that lays bare the form and content of legal and political discourse in all its variations-a model that accounts for the outcome of conflict processes and explains why the Tswana, like people in other cultures, conceive of their world in an apparently contradictory manner-as rule-governed yet inherently open to pragmatic individualism; orderly yet inherently fluid and shifting. Rules and Processes offers a fresh and persuasive approach to our understanding of the dialectics of social life. A work of impressive scholarship in which theoretical sophistication and ethnographic richness are convincingly matched. -Ian Hamnett, Times Higher Education Supplement.

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