

Håkan Hydén, Roger Cotterrell, David Nelken and Ulrike Schultz, 'Combining the Legal and the Social in Sociology of Law: An Homage to Reza Banakar,' (Ed.), Hart Publishing, U.K., 2023, Rs. 9,450/- (INR)

*Reviewed by Shailesh Kumar Rajora**

The sociology of law is an area that looks at how laws and society interact. It explores how laws are shaped by social factors like culture and history and, in turn, how they shape society. This involves studying the legal rules arising from social interactions; their impact on people and communities, and societal changes influencing the development of laws. The focus is on legal institutions like courts contributing to maintaining public order and reflecting societal values. This subject area is often taken under a global perspective, comparing legal systems across different societies, and found interdisciplinary, drawing from sociology, anthropology, and political science to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between law and society. With this background, "Combining the Legal and the Social in Sociology of Law: An Homage to Reza Banakar" honours the significant contributions of Reza Banakar while delving deeply into the complex interrelationship between society and law. This extensive anthology, edited by Håkan Hydén, Roger Cotterrell, David Nelken, and Ulrike Schultz, explores the various fields of socio-legal studies and highlights its multidisciplinary nature and useful applications. The book begins with a synopsis of his career and describes how he ignited a discussion about the goals and identity of legal sociology. The book is then divided into five sections with thirty-four chapters, each of which examines a different topic: applied sociology of law, legal culture, law and sociology of law, theory, techniques, and inter-disciplinarity. The book attempts to promote the sociology of law by highlighting the connections between the legal and the social from different angles, in addition to paying tribute to Reza Banakar's memory and original thought.

The book in its first part begins with *an introduction* of the book by Haken Hyden followed with Mariana Vivian's insightful biography of Reza Banakar, highlighting his significant contribution to developing the sociology of law into a distinct discipline that unites social and legal viewpoints. Vivian explores Banakar's analytical framework, highlighting his unique methodology that functions on the levels of empirical, theoretical-methodological, and meta-theoretical thought. This prepares the groundwork for a careful examination of Banakar's contributions and the larger conversation on the nature and goal of legal sociology at large. Further, Max Travers engages with the life and thoughts of Reza Banakar in this part.

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In Part Two with eight chapters, the main topic revolves around *legal theory, legal pluralism, and sociology of law theory*. Comprehensive assessments of legal pluralism, normativity, and the historical change of constitutional formulations are given in the chapters by Isabel Schoultz, Mauro Zamboni, Martin Ramstedt, Roger Cotterrell, Peter Bergwall, Håkan Hydén, Chris Thornhill, and Martin Ramstedt. Rich layers to the discussions are added by the examination of soft law, how multinational firms manage legal plurality, and the difficulties of normative pluralism in an Egyptian paternity case.

Part three again with eight chapters delves into *the sociology of law methods and interdisciplinarity*, contributed by Ulrike Schultz, Balázs Fekete, Linda Mulcahy, Karl Dahlstrand, Mikael Furugärde, Pierre Guibentif, Peter Wahlgren, Stine Piilgaard Porner Nielsen, and Seda Kalem. These chapters address the importance of law-related education, the limitations of knowledge of the law surveys, questions about theory and methodology, and alternative approaches to studying law, including through literature. The quest for scientific methods, the value of combining top-down and bottom-up approaches, and the challenges of empirical research in legal settings are also thoroughly examined.

Part four explores *comparative legal cultures*, featuring chapters by Marina Kurkchian, Carlo Pennisi, Lawrence M Friedman, Marc Hertogh, Mathieu Deflem, and Hanne Petersen. These chapters offer insights into legal culture as a concept, the repeated patterns of legal behaviour, reflections on reckless driving in Iran, and the consequences of revolutions for legal cultures. The examination of legal legitimacy, compliance, and the role of pre-modern conceptions in modern Iran adds depth to the comparative analysis.

Part five, focusing on *the sociology of law as a science* in four chapters, highlights Banakar's contributions to incorporating insights from dichotomies into a comprehensive socio-legal research methodology. Chapters by David Nelken, John Woodlock, and Nicolás Serrano explore diverse topics such as the use of Covid-19 indicators, risk management strategies in aviation, and interlegal evocation of peace in Colombia.

Finally, part six in four chapters delves into *the applied sociology of law*, featuring chapters by Ann-Christine Hartzén, Jiří Přibáň, Peter Scharf Smith, Anne Griffiths, and Hildur Fjóla Antonsdóttir. These chapters address issues on minimum wage regulation, constitutional imaginaries, public sentiments on justice, discourses over land tenure, and evidentiary standards in cases of sexual violence. The discussions offer practical insights into trade union solidarity, constitutional symbols, marginalized positions in the legal system, challenges to legal orthodoxy, and the tension between legal rules and human sentiments.

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Offering a thorough and multidisciplinary examination of the intricate interactions between law and society, "Combining the Legal and the Social in Sociology of Law" is a magnificent homage to Reza Banakar's legacy. This book is a priceless tool for academics, researchers, and practitioners interested in comprehending and tackling social and legal concerns in modern society because of its wide range of themes and useful applications in socio-legal studies.

This book's price is its only drawback. The majority of students cannot afford the over Rs. 10,000 Price of the book. For individuals who prefer reading books on their devices, there is an option nonetheless, as an e-copy may be found by clicking [this link](#). People of all backgrounds will find the remaining portions of the book interesting and updated with the current socio-legal conversation.

With writings such as "Sociological Jurisprudence: Juristic Thought and Social Inquiry," Roger Cotterrell, the Anniversary Professor of Legal Theory at Queen Mary University of London, UK, and a Fellow of prominent academies, has had a significant impact (2018). Håkan Hydén, a Senior Professor in Sociology of Law at Lund University, Sweden, is dedicated to developing Sociology of Law as a Norm Science, as seen in his latest paper "Sociology of Law as the Science of Norms" (2022). David Nelken, Professor of Comparative and Transnational Law at King's College, London, is noted for his major contributions to sociology of law and criminology, epitomised in "Comparative Criminal Justice: Making Sense of Difference" (2010). Ulrike Schultz is a distinguished specialist who is a retired Senior Academic from FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany.

In conclusion, "Combining the Legal and the Social in Sociology of Law: An Homage to Reza Banakar" serves as a significant and well-crafted exploration of the intricate dynamics between law and society. Edited by Håkan Hydén, Roger Cotterrell, David Nelken, and Ulrike Schultz, the anthology pays homage to Reza Banakar while offering a comprehensive, multidisciplinary perspective on socio-legal studies. Despite the book's commendable contributions and insights from esteemed scholars, its high cost may pose a barrier to student accessibility. However, the availability of an electronic version mitigates this concern, making this resource more widely accessible. Overall, the anthology stands as a crucial read for those in academia, research, and practice seeking a nuanced understanding of the interplay between legal institutions and societal forces in contemporary context.