

Bertelsen

Violent Becomings

State Formation, Sociality, and Power in Mozambique

Violent Becomings conceptualizes the Mozambican state not as the bureaucratically ordered polity of the nation-state, but as a continuously emergent and violently challenged mode of ordering. In doing so, this book addresses the question of why colonial and postcolonial state formation has involved violent articulations with so-called 'traditional' forms of sociality. The scope and dynamic nature of such violent becomings is explored through an array of contexts that include colonial regimes of forced labor and pacification, liberation war struggles and civil war, the social engineering of the post-independence state, and the popular appropriation of sovereign violence in riots and lynchings.

It is theoretically original in its insistence on radical reading of state formation as related to violence and irreducible to the formal state apparatus. It is a long-term study of transformations – building on fieldwork from 1998 onwards – which surpasses a number of other relevant studies from Mozambique (Obarrio, West, Kyed, for instance). It systematically construes contemporary processes and historical trajectories from the margins and is consistent in not adapting a view from the country's centre, Maputo – such a Maputo-view informing the majority of studies in and on Mozambique.



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