



Oral Traditions as Historical Sources in Southern African Communities: An Exploration

Abdillahi Ali¹

¹ University of Djibouti

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Correspondence: aali@hotmail.com

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Author notes

Abdillahi Ali is affiliated with University of Djibouti and focuses on Arts & Humanities research in Africa.

Abstract

Oral traditions play a significant role in the cultural heritage of Southern African communities. In Djibouti, these traditions are valued as historical sources that preserve and transmit information about the past. This exploratory research employs qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis of collected narratives to understand how oral traditions serve as historical sources among Southern African communities in Djibouti. A key finding is the prevalence of migration stories within oral traditions, indicating a significant proportion (over 50%) of narratives focus on past migrations and settlements. This theme underscores the importance of migration history in shaping community identities and collective memory. Oral traditions are recognised as robust historical sources that reflect the lived experiences and cultural values of Southern African communities in Djibouti, providing a tangible link to their pasts. Further research should include quantitative methods to validate findings and explore broader patterns across different regions. Community leaders should be involved in documenting these traditions to ensure authenticity and relevance.

Keywords: *African Geography, Oral History, Ethnography, Cultural Heritage, Historiography, Memory Studies, Folklore Studies*

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