



Traditional Governance Structures and Modern Democracy in Southern Africa: An Ethnographic Exploratory Study in Madagascar

Antoine Ratsiravelo¹, Henri Rakotoharinana¹

¹ National Centre for Applied Research on Rural Development (FOFIFA)

Published: 02 March 2009 | **Received:** 26 November 2008 | **Accepted:** 21 January 2009

Correspondence: aratsiravelo@outlook.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18901163](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18901163)

Author notes

Antoine Ratsiravelo is affiliated with National Centre for Applied Research on Rural Development (FOFIFA) and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Henri Rakotoharinana is affiliated with National Centre for Applied Research on Rural Development (FOFIFA) and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Abstract

Traditional governance structures in Southern Africa have been shaped by centuries of indigenous practices influenced by colonial encounters and modern democratic reforms. Madagascar's unique blend of these influences presents a compelling subject for ethnographic study. The research employs an ethnographic approach, involving participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival review. Data collection took place over six months in urban and rural settings across seven provinces. Our findings reveal a significant tension between traditional village councils (Famadihana) and the broader national political framework, with approximately one-third of respondents expressing confusion about their role in modern governance structures. The ethnographic evidence underscores the complexity of integrating indigenous practices into contemporary democratic processes. Recommendations for policymakers include fostering greater dialogue on the integration of traditional elements within democratic frameworks. Policymakers should prioritise inclusive consultations to ensure that local customs are not marginalized in the development of national policies, and strategies should be developed to enhance mutual understanding between traditional leaders and modern governance structures.

Keywords: *Geographic, Malagasy, Anthropology, Indigenous, Governance, Comparative, Cultural, Diaspora, Migration, Identity, Community, Voices, Heritage, Religion, Tradition, Colonialism, Resistance, Development, Empowerment, Representation*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

✉ **REQUEST FULL PAPER**

Email: info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!

SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.

Submit at: app.parj.africa



Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge