



Traditional Governance Structures and Modern Democracy in Southern Africa: An Exploration in Ghana

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Abstract

Southern Africa has a rich tapestry of traditional governance structures that have coexisted with modern democratic systems in Ghana and other countries within the region. A survey was conducted among 500 randomly selected participants comprising of community leaders, government officials, and ordinary citizens in Ghana. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to capture diverse perspectives on traditional governance structures and their integration into modern democracy. The findings indicate that approximately 75% of respondents believe traditional practices significantly enhance community cohesion and trust in institutions, which are crucial for effective democratic engagement. However, only about 40% of participants support the continued use of traditional courts alongside formal legal systems to address disputes. While traditional governance structures contribute positively to social stability and legitimacy, there is a need to integrate them more seamlessly into existing legal frameworks to ensure fairness and consistency in dispute resolution processes. The government should establish clear guidelines for the coexistence of traditional courts with formal judicial systems. Additionally, educational programmes aimed at fostering mutual understanding between traditional and modern governance structures should be promoted. Traditional Governance Structures, Modern Democracy, Ghana, Southern Africa

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, Africanist, Socio-Political, Cultural, Hierarchies, Qualitative, Comparative*

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