



# Comparative Legal Practices in Rwandan Ethnic Communities

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## Abstract

Rwanda's ethnic diversity is a significant feature of its society, influencing various aspects including legal practices. Ethnographic studies were conducted in three major ethnic groups: Hutu, Tutsi, and Hima. Participants included traditional leaders, community members, and local lawyers. Data collection involved interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Traditional justice systems show significant variations between the communities, with Hutu relying more on customary law while Tutsi and Hima have a stronger influence of colonial-era legal frameworks. While traditional practices vary, they collectively emphasise community cohesion and conflict resolution mechanisms that are integral to Rwandan constitutional law. Policy makers should consider the diversity of legal traditions when implementing national laws and promoting inclusive justice systems. Ethnographic research can provide valuable insights for harmonizing local and national legal frameworks.

**Keywords:** *Ethnicity, Legal Pluralism, Ethnography, Anthropology, Comparative Law, Jurisprudence, Cultural Context*

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