



Traditional Governance Structures and Modern Democracy in Southern Africa: A Comparative Analysis

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Published: 05 November 2007 | **Received:** 11 September 2007 | **Accepted:** 21 October 2007

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18859541](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18859541)

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Abstract

Southern Africa, particularly Gambia, is characterized by a blend of traditional governance structures and modern democratic processes. This paper employs comparative case studies to analyse the integration of indigenous systems such as customary law, community-based dispute resolution mechanisms, and formal legal frameworks in modern democratic settings. A key finding is that traditional governance structures often serve as a foundation for understanding local contexts within which modern democratic institutions operate more effectively. The analysis highlights the potential benefits of integrating indigenous knowledge systems into democratic processes to enhance legitimacy, inclusivity, and effectiveness. Policy makers are encouraged to adopt strategies that incorporate traditional governance structures in their development agendas to foster more inclusive and effective democracies. traditional governance, modern democracy, southern Africa, Gambia

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, Bureaucracy, Pluralism, Indigeneity, Communitarianism, Decolonization, Ethnography*

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