



Southern African Traditional Governance Structures within Modern Democratic Frameworks: A Policy Analysis

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Abstract

Southern African traditional governance structures have been influential in community decision-making for centuries. However, with increasing calls for modern democratic frameworks within these societies, there is a need to analyse how traditional practices can be integrated or adapted to support contemporary political systems. The research employs a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with community leaders and quantitative data analysis of historical records related to traditional governance structures in Chad. Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted to gather detailed insights into the current role and future prospects of these structures. Traditional institutions such as chiefdoms and councils play significant roles but are often underutilized or face challenges due to modernization efforts. For instance, there is a notable trend where traditional leaders maintain strong community ties while facing pressure from state authorities seeking uniform governance across regions. The analysis underscores the importance of maintaining traditional elements in modern democratic contexts to preserve cultural continuity and legitimacy among communities. Recommendations include developing hybrid governance models that leverage both traditional and modern frameworks, ensuring equitable participation of all stakeholders, and fostering intergenerational dialogue on governance structures. Develop a framework for integrating traditional governance into modern democracy; promote community engagement in policy development; establish mechanisms for conflict resolution between traditional authorities and state institutions; and conduct capacity building programmes to support the effective operation of hybrid governance systems. traditional governance, modern democracy, Southern Africa, Chad, hybrid models

Keywords: *Africanization, Communitarianism, Decolonial Theory, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Postcolonial Studies, Social Capital, Ubuntu*

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