



Traditional Governance Structures and Modern Democracy in Southern Africa: An Eswatini Perspective

Makazi Maseko

University of Eswatini (UNESWA)

Nontoko Nkhona

Department of Advanced Studies, University of Eswatini (UNESWA)

Correspondence: mmaseko@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Southern Africa's traditional governance structures have coexisted alongside modern democratic processes for decades. The research employs a mixed-methods approach including structured interviews with government officials, focus group discussions with local communities, and secondary data analysis from official government records and academic journals. Findings indicate that while traditional structures have significantly influenced modern democratic processes in Eswatini, there remains a notable gap between the formal legal framework and practical application of these traditions, particularly in areas such as land tenure and inheritance laws. The study underscores the potential for further research into reconciling traditional practices with contemporary governance to enhance legitimacy and inclusivity within Eswatini's democratic system. Policy recommendations include fostering greater dialogue between traditional leaders and modern governmental bodies, alongside legal reforms that integrate traditional customs more seamlessly into existing laws and policies.

Keywords: *African geography, Traditional authorities, Democratic transitions, Governance studies, Anthropology, Methodology, Ethnography*

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