



Traditional Governance Structures and Modern Democracy in Southern Africa: A Kenyan Perspective

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Abstract

Traditional governance structures in Southern Africa have coexisted alongside modern democratic systems for decades, influencing policy and societal development. A qualitative research approach was employed, involving interviews with local leaders, focus group discussions among community members, and analysis of existing policy documents. Traditional councils play a significant role in resolving local disputes, with over 70% of respondents indicating their effectiveness compared to modern legal systems. The study concludes that while traditional governance structures offer practical solutions for social issues, they need to be integrated into the formal democratic framework to enhance overall development. Kenyan policymakers should explore ways to integrate traditional councils within existing governmental structures to promote more inclusive and effective governance.

Keywords: *African geography, Traditional institutions, Democratic theory, Governance models, Comparative analysis, Ethnography, Indigenous knowledge systems*

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