Are We Citizens or Subjects? Service Delivery at the Intersection of Modern and Traditional Leadership in Emaqeleni

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Abstract: Much of Africa's encounter with Euro-American modernity has dictated that Africans should abandon their ways of life and adopt those of modernity. This has permeated the entire life of Africans, including how they should govern themselves in the post-colonial era. In rural areas, such as in parts of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province in South Africa, local governance has been complex, as both traditional (represented by *izinduna* - headmen and *amakhosi* - chiefs) and modern governance systems (ward councilors) continue to co-exist. Such a nexus has had implications for the delivery of services in Emaqeleni, a rural area in one of KZN's most historically important towns, Eshowe. Through multiple key informant interviews, this qualitative study explores the insights of traditional and modern leaders to understand the relationships, roles, and experiences they have had working together. These first-hand accounts are important for our understanding of the goings-on in the internal affairs of local governance. Furthermore, community members were also interviewed to understand their experiences of how this nexus has affected their lives. The study took interest both in how residents understand the presence of traditional and modern leadership, along with how this affected the residents' lives. Guided by the postdevelopment theory, the study found that there is confusion over the responsibilities and roles of modern leaders and traditional leaders. This confusion leads to citizens (for modern leaders - who are also subject to traditional leaders) being confused about who is responsible for delivering the services needed by the communities. Confusion exists amongst citizens and leaders as well. This mystification of roles and responsibilities seems to imply that no one and everyone is in power, thus residents are sometimes dissatisfied with the leadership nexus, and with no specific person/institution to hold accountable when needing assistance with some services, there is no one to hold accountable and no one to send requests for assistance to. This empirical study affords us insights and reflections that were unavailable at the democratizing moment and further helps us reflect on the realities of what South Africa's rural areas may need to develop meaningfully, with key considerations from local government officials, traditional leaders, and community members who live through these dynamics, a feature often missing from studies on this subject. Thus, the case of Emaqeleni helps us reflect on how the residents of rural areas may desire to be governed, drawing from empirical findings, and studying how power relations shape rural areas.

Keywords: governance; modern leadership; postdevelopment theory; rural areas; traditional leadership

Introduction

Much of Africa's encounter with Euro-American modernity has dictated that Africans should abandon their ways of life and adopt those of modernity. This has permeated the entire life of Africans, including how they should govern themselves in the post-colonial era. In rural areas, such as in parts of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, local governance has been complex, as both traditional (represented by *izinduna* and *amakhosi*) and modern governance systems (ward councillors) continue to co-exist. Interestingly, the phenomenon of traditional leadership does not present a challenge in urban areas. This may partly explain why urban areas typically develop/modernise faster than rural areas.

While recent studies such as Ramolobe (2023), Mathonsi & Sithole (2017), amongst others, have treated the matter of divisions between councillors and traditional leaders working together, concluding that the two are incompatible (Mathonsi & Sithole, 2017). A cause for concern as that this tumultuous relationship impedes service delivery and development in rural areas. However, these studies have left out the voices of the community members. Unfortunately, such studies end up presenting the researchers' views as superior and activistic, beyond being representative of communities' experiences and desires. In the current study, the postdevelopment theory helps us question the seat of power and roles of local governance in South Africa's rural areas in the democratic era while considering the experiences of communities, in line with the critical theory paradigm, which seeks to both understand communities' views and represent them accurately (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Focusing on a smaller area (Emaqeleni) in historically significant rural town in KwaZulu-Natal, Eshowe, this qualitative study traces the experiences of multiple stakeholders to understand their views on the coexistence of modern and traditional governance since South Africa's (SA's) democratisation in 1994. The Emaqeleni case helps us reflect on how the residents of rural areas may desire to be governed, while drawing on the views of their current and former leaders as well, to draw on past and current experiences of leaders. This empirical study concludes, from both postdevelopment (theoretical) and empirical findings that traditional and modern leadership can coexist successfully, but concessions have to be made for this to thrive.

Literature Review

Brief History of Eshowe and its leadership

Emaqeleni is located in Eshowe, a city that was once was the headquarters of the British Government when they conquered the Zulu Nation (Gumede, 2019) and King Cetshwayo was arrested in St Helena. This was also the site of King Cetshwayo's death in 1884 (Gumede, 2019). This is a very important place in the history of the Zulu Nation, this is where King Shaka grew up and had his headquarters called KwaBulawayo which is similar to a district found in Zimbabwe. It was a site where older warriors advised younger ones on matters of war an life, and a site for punishment for Zulu Warriors who were defiant (Gumede & Mdiniso, 2022). The magistrate court which tried their cases is still hound adjacent to the police station. Thus, the history of the area holds much significance as a site that was the seat of Zulu traditional leadership, a heritage site whose importance should not be relegated only to the presence of key sites and histories, but should continue to house lived histories, as the postdevelopment theory (discussed below) argues.

Coloniality and the Installation of Modern Governance

Societies throughout the world have had some form of social ordering to function and achieve individual or societal goals. Often, there would be leaders in these societies, even though the form of (age, gender, human, deity, or other characteristic) of the leader may be different across societies. Importantly, the forms of leadership and social organisation in societies across the world are only one of many areas of life that societies differ (Kothari et al., 2019; Sachs, 2010). On the rise of colonisation (Arndt, 1981) and modernity (Lushaba, 2009), the views of statehood, governance, and leadership began to be universalised based on Western views thereof. For example, This is evidenced, partly, in African leaders' absence from the Berlin Conference (dubbed the Scramble for Africa), where important decisions were made about the present and future conditions of the African continent were made. African leader's authority was not thought to be the same as that of Western leaders (Enaifoghe et al., 2020), if anything, African leaders were already seen by Western leaders as subjects, never equals, and we observe this by African leaders' absence from key decisions on their territories and people .

Part of this colonial leadership has permeated African views of what makes a legitimate leader, and the consequences of the colonisers' low view of African leadership have lasted beyond the formal era of colonisation to haunt many post-colonial African countries as seen in works like (Düsing, 2002; Kayuni, 2016; Meyiwa et al., 2014), amongst many others. South Africa has not escaped this problem. While, formally speaking, African countries have rid themselves of colonisers, the epistemic views of the coloniser still remain and to a great extent, play a bigger role than Africa's original ideas, an idea called coloniality, which describes the end of formal and colonisation, with the continuation of colonial ideas applied by the "formerly" colonised people (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). In the South African context, the formal end of apartheid did not mean the re-installation of traditional leadership, which throve before the country was colonised. In fact, traditional leaders seem to be less powerful in the democratic state than they were in pre-colonial South Africa. Some local governments, such as in Emaqeleni, are faced with the quagmire of having democratically elected leaders with traditional leaders, who inherit the throne

within their families, which was the preference of some in the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) (Tshehla, 2005).

A big challenge with this is how the residents of such areas exist in two identities at once, to the government officials, they are citizens who are entitled to demand services in reasonable ways, including legal protest. This is a form of expression that is common in SA (Alexander, 2010; Breakfast et al., 2019) Emaqeleni's second identity is that of subjects, which they are to their traditional leaders. Here, they do not have the same rights and privileges as they with the local modern leaders, as one does not easily protest against the traditional leader, who is to be understood as a different kind of leader who should be obeyed, if not feared in some instances. This raises multiple questions about who the residents need to speak to when they face challenges related to the provision of their basic needs/service delivery. It is this confusion that seems to disadvantage residents more than it helps them.

Making the Paradox of Rurality: Leaders and Governors (*Amakhosi nezinduna* and Public Servants)

The view of leadership in precolonial Africa worked differently from modern governing systems. The current view of traditional leaders operating under government authority in South Africa was introduced by the white government who sought control over this institution, even using it to control local people (Houston & Mbele, 2011). Unlike government leaders, traditional leaders are believed to be appointed divinely by the same spirits who guide the communities to live well and succeed in their lives, thus not drawing their legitimacy by the vote, but by human and divine consent (Honig, 2019; Mamvura, 2021). For those believing in the science-driven views of modernisation, the concept of African spirituality as a valid form of knowledge appears incomplete, and even senseless, thus critiquing the legitimacy and worth of traditional leaders. This as modernisation not only sees traditional beliefs as counterproductive to development, belief in divine beings/spirituality as unfounded, and tangible science as the best way living (Asante, 2003; Rostow & Rostow, 1990).

Such beliefs have rendered the notion of traditional leadership a contested idea, especially where these leaders strictly follow tradition. It has mostly been in rural areas (see Houston & Mbele, 2011; Shai, 2018, 2019; Sithole & Mbele, 2008) that traditional leadership continues to thrive in South Africa, while urban areas do not need to contend with balancing tradition and modernisation, simplifying (in the sense of having fewer consultations and debates with other kinds of leaders) administration in these areas, which have, over time, been areas that serve capitalist ends as labour reserves for exploitation, while rural areas develop economically at slower rates. Thus, in South Africa, rural areas, economic development has been slower than that of many of the country's urban areas (Mariotti, 2012; Mbatha & Mofokeng, 2021; Sewell et al., 2019).

Weaponizing Democracy/Policy: Let Traditional Leaders Reign, but Never Rule

In most local authorities, there is a local house of traditional leaders that is meant to prioritise the needs of traditional leaders. Eshowe and uMlalazi Local Municipality does have such a local house. There are provincial houses, as well as national house of traditional leaders, per the South African Constitution (Sithole & Mbele, 2008). The KZN provincial legislature is officially opened by King Misuzulu kaZwelithini, this is the tradition that dates back to the pre-democratic era (Eyewitness News, 2023). In This way they can represent tradition, but they control no meaningful local resources, and idea explored by Pawson & Peck (2017), who argued that it was possible to have kings who reign but have no power. Similarly, democratic local governments sometimes appear to make traditional leaders visible but disempowered. For example, kings and queens must be acknowledged by the President of South Africa for them to be legitimate, per the *Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Amendment Act, 2019* (2019). This raises questions about their true legitimacy, is it still divine and spiritual or is it apportioned as the government sees fit? This study approaches this question for the viewpoint of the traditional leaders, local government officials, and the community.

This is not a new phenomenon, the British Indirect Rule which was an instrument of colonisation reduced traditional leaders to 'migrant' labour and they were paid stipends or allowances for maintaining peace in their areas (Mamdani, 1996; Ramolobe, 2023). King Moshoeshoe was one of those who requested the British Government to convert Basotholand into a British Protectorate. *Izinduna* are now paid an allowance including kings and other traditional leaders. One might argue that their allowances are similar to the allowances given to members of parliament (*Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Amendment Act, 2019*, 2019), which is similar to a continuation of colonialism as compared to the Royal Bafokeng Nation which appear to be independent of the state. Gapa & Walker (2020) explain, the Royal Bafokeng appear to have successfully resisted falling into the resource curse, where leaders become wealthy by plundering the land's wealth at the expense of their subjects.

Theoretical Framework: Post development Theory

To understand why there is a problem with the co-existence between modern and traditional leadership in SA, one ought to acknowledge that these two forms of leadership come from different epistemic traditions. As such, the conception of life and society by these 2 governments is not the same. Even where the societies' needs are similar, how they should be met varies. For example, traditional leaders may prefer communal ownership of certain resources (like water access points), while modern leaders want private ownership of the same. Postdevelopment theory helps us understand that ultimate control of such resources lies with modern leaders due to the different levels of power wielded by the different types of leaders (Escobar, 2011; Kothari et al., 2019).

This reality often leaves traditional leaders in positions of power, but without real power. Interestingly, in 2008, South Africa's then President, Thabo Mbeki, commissioned a study whose central concern was to *inter alia*, assess the extent to which traditional leadership had been incorporated into SA's policy and practice since 1994. The study's main terms of reference was, "To assess whether reforms aimed at integrating institutions of traditional leadership into the democratic system of governance have been successful" (Sithole & Mbele, 2008). A close reading of the premise from which the study begins is that democracy is the standard to which traditional leadership should be measured, suggesting that democracy either ought not to be is elastic enough to adapt accept views that may not be inherently of its own design, or that traditional leadership should adapt to modernist principles. In either conception, the postdevelopment theory helps us see how democracy (and development) are seen as the standard by which other worldviews, such as traditional ones, ought to be judged. Anything that deviates in an extreme way from these is to be rejected or smithed into what modernisation will accept. The postdevelopment theory explains that one's occupation of a seat of power may not be meaningful of the person's knowledge wields no power, it leads to a kind of continued foreign rule, imposed by a local leader (Kothari et al., 2019).

Finally, in its focus in this study, the theory further helps us understand that development is a technocratic practice that pursues the agenda of modernity (promoting capitalism, private ownership of key resources, individualist priorities, etc.) (Escobar, 2011; Willis, 2020). Development does this, implying that there is a universal standard of living, leading, etc., and thus societies and economies should function in that same way (Rostow & Rostow, 1990; Ziai, 2017). Postdevelopment theory, here, helps us observe that the idea of development is inherently not neutral, it promotes ideas that may not be beneficial to non-Western societies, where everything is judged by Western societies, even in instances where the West's views are destructive (Oyewumi, 2004). Based on postdevelopment's deconstruction of development, Lewis et al. (2003) describes development as hegemonic and monolithic, rejecting variations to worldviews and culture, asserting itself as the only way to live life, rejecting alternative to Western views of how the world could operate. Thus, postdevelopment theory helps us navigate the power dynamics in local governance where there are modern and traditional leaders, thus helping us observe and understand how these contradictions are experienced by local residents.

These theorisations have played out in the case of Emaqeleni as shown by the findings of this study. Not only in relation to the issues of power pointed out above, but also in how the residents of Emaqeleni have sometimes been left with more problems than are desirable, with leaders who themselves are sometimes unclear about the delimitations of their own roles. Such appears to be caused by how traditional leaders hold positions but because of the current discourses of how society should function, the leaders' roles are difficult to define and carry out (Mathonsi & Sithole, 2017; Ramolobe, 2023). This will be discussed in greater detail in the Findings and Discussions section.

Research Methodology and Methods

Research Paradigm

This study follows in the critical theory paradigm. A meaningful view of historical trends, structures, and how they can be challenged is embedded in this paradigm. Critical theory further allows one to emancipate oneself (or communities) from mental and physical structures that arrest one's imagination and life. Furthermore, this paradigm allows the voice of participants to be heard, advocated for, and the researcher is a kind of activist who seeks to assist the participants in their desire for economic and social structures to change (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, critical theory's rejection of the universalism of Westocentric social sciences (Neuman & Robson, 2014) is what gave place to postdevelopment theory's correctly disapproving gaze towards Western universalist ideas of development. Western development's worldview has often suggested that other parts of the world do not have valid knowledges (Ndlovu, 2018), a dangerous assertion that has led to the bastardisation of people's and nations'

histories and futures (Oyewumi, 2004). As such, the critical paradigm allows us to problematise our world appropriately with a view to improve it.

Sampling Procedures

This qualitative study sampled key informants who had information that helped to understand (Babbie & Mouton, 2012) the circumstances of Emaqeleni's challenges with local governance. Semi-structured interviews were used to generate data with the participants. Semi-structured interviews allowed that the participants could express their thoughts and be probed in a guided manner, to keep the discussions relevant to answering the research question (Babbie & Mouton, 2012; Creswell, 2014). The key informants were 1 ward councillor and 1 municipal official, who have insights on the local government's relationship with traditional leaders/roles councillors play and gave perspective on service delivery in Emaqeleni. Secondly, 2 ward committee members were interviewed, who could give further insight on their experiences working with traditional leaders and how this has impacted their work. Thirdly, a traditional leader (*induna*) who, conversely, is able to share how the relationship with the local councillors has been and explain what the role of traditional leaders in local governance is in the democratic dispensation, along with the processes of service delivery. Finally, 5 community members, whose lives have been impacted by the governance shared by *izinduna* and modern local government councillors. They were able to share their experiences and share their views on how the leadership in them has fared.

Data Generation and Analysis

Questions for community members were based on their observations on the part played by traditional leaders in provision of services. Questions prepared for the traditional leaders were aimed at getting information on their roles during the democratic dispensation, as well as their role during the apartheid regime. Questions directed at the traditional leaders allowed them to give details on their roles as well as that played by the ward councillor and explain the nature of their relationship. Semi-structured questions aimed at the ward councillor were intended at establishing the extent of cooperation between traditional leaders and the ward councillor. These data were then analysed thematically to establish patterns of meaning and tell a coherent story of the study's findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings and Discussion

The findings below point to a number of matters raised by the participants who, mostly, felt somewhat conflicted about the place of traditional leadership in the democratic state. Many of the participants are in favour of the presence of both a democratically elected government and traditional leaders. While this coexistence is in itself not a challenge, the concern is that often, it is unclear what the role of each institution is, especially when services are not delivered to the residents of Emaqeleni, as then it becomes unclear who they need to direct their concerns to.

Residents are dissatisfied and with no one to hold accountable

In the case of the Zulu monarch, the traditional view has been that "a Zulu king should be above politics… this was traditionally the case. The king was thereby discouraged from publicizing his opposition to the [political] movement, for fear he would be seen as violating tradition, the very tradition that was the basis of his own legitimacy," a principle that would apply to all of the king's chiefs as well (Golan, 1991). It would, thus, be advisable, to follow this traditional practice to keep traditional leaders free from alignment with party politics so they may have their focus on ensuring their subjects' wellbeing, including by keeping political parties in check.

Per Participant 2's (2022) (a traditional councillor) observations 'Traditional leaders ought to continue protecting and promoting programmes concerning, culture and tradition…' A similar view was shared by Participant 9 (2022) (a community member), who argued that "traditional leaders are custodians of traditions and land, and they maintained that traditional leaders are supposed to work hand in hand with ward councillors to improve development, and must avail themselves to solve community problems." In this way, per the postdevelopmental view, traditional leaders will be able to thrive by pursuing what matters to them as custodians of culture and tradition, serving their subjects, and creating space for a meaningful existence for their institution, without needing to compete with politicians, whose role in society is a different one. One available opportunity to achieve this is the integration of traditional and scientific knowledge where needed, which has shown potential in both social and hard sciences. One way in which this has been achieved was by building agricultural resilience through a drought, where researcher found that traditional leaders and other practitioners of indigenous knowledge, were able to offer helpful advice before and during a drought to build mechanisms (social and agricultural) for surviving the drought (Ngcamu, 2019).

A separation of roles in this will help avoid an obfuscation of roles and responsibilities which sometimes seems to imply that no one and everyone is in power, thus no one and everyone should be held accountable for service delivery. However, overcoming this practice will not be easy as some traditional leaders, such as the Prime Minister of the Zulu nation, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, have been both traditional leaders and political leaders for a long time (Golan, 1991; Houston & Mbele, 2011). Thus, there is a diversity of views on the exact role to be played by traditional leaders.

Obfuscation of Roles and the Desire for Clarity

During an interview, Participant 10 (2022), who is a former member of the traditional council, felt that,

The modern system of government was not properly introduced as Traditional Leaders have mixed emotion about this structure because it does not spell out their roles and responsibilities in service delivery, he also pointed out that the provision of services is in the hands of the municipality who assign the responsibility to the ward councillor to drive service delivery. Traditional leaders have become ordinary recipients of services like ordinary citizens.

This view was also held by Participant 2 (2022). There appears to be some level of consensus that traditional leaders have a role to play in aiding the delivery of key services to their communities, with some traditional leaders seeing their role as mobilising interventions that have to do with the provision of health, social, and economic services. However, what is not clearly defined is how the traditional leaders should pursue this (Sithole & Mbele, 2008). This is partly why some have argued that there is not much place for traditional leaders in governance, but they remain more symbolic and cultural representatives. This is different in instances such as those of Zimbabwe where, despite their shortcomings, traditional leaders appear to still be playing a meaningful role in drawing services to their people (Kurebwa, 2020a). However, considering the warnings about monarchs not getting involved in politics and administrative roles of local government, there remains a need for deeper theoretical engagement on the matter. In such a case, the postdevelopment theory helps us understand how trying to balance differing views will favour the will of modernity over that of tradition, as people are unlikely to be content without services while power struggles between leaders affect the residents negatively.

For instance, when a resident needs letter used in opening a bank account which indicate the proof of residence, it is unclear who's responsibility this is. Some are issued by ward councillors whilst others are issued by traditional authorities. In a similar instance, granting of Land rights are also the responsibility of traditional leaders and sometimes rural based councils mainly because there are no policies specifying which roles belong to whom (Koenane, 2018). Resultantly, this exposes residents to uncertainties about who can assist them because seemingly, both the ward councillor and the traditional leader can do so, and if this is the case, with whom does the finally responsibility lie, should a resident not be assisted?

The relationship between the traditional leaders and ward councillors

This study's findings show that there is a lack of cooperation between the traditional leaders and the democratically elected Councillors in Emaqeleni. This clarifies why there are challenges regarding service delivery in Emaqeleni rural area, this is consistent with Ramolobe's (2023) study, who found, through the cooperation theory, that local government officials and traditional leaders often do not cooperate with each other, to the detriment of the service delivery needs in rural areas. However, Most participants in the current study approved of the coexistence of traditional leaders and ward councillors, though admitting that the relationship is often tumultuous.

The approval of this hybrid leadership is a thorn on the side of modernisation thinkers who believe that tradition hampers with development (Folorunso, 2020; Rostow & Rostow, 1990). This points to the need for understanding what has worked successfully in these relationships, and what still requires further attention, per Sithole & Mbele (2008), as some communities are not fully open to losing their culture and traditions. The postdevelopment theory, here, becomes helpful in understanding that some of the problems between traditional leaders and local government leaders are not impossible to overcome, but may require open-minded and socially innovative approaches (Phills et al., 2008), especially for the wellbeing of the communities served by these leaders . Such a view validates the need for studying these relationships from community-centred approaches which will represent the views of communities.

Moreover, a chief (*Induna*) (Participant 6, 2022), participating in the study explained that, "Resentment in the relationship between traditional leaders and the ward councillor emanates from the fact that ward councillors have a habit of undermining traditional leaders and in return, traditional leaders retaliate by exerting their power and authority in their area of command."

Councillors' view of their superiority over traditional leaders may be linked to the epistemic view that modernity is better than tradition, where tradition is viewed as irrelevant and backward, while modernity is relevant and forward-looking (Horowitz, 2005; Ziai, 2017). Historicising why councillors may hold this view, Mathonsi & Sithole (2017) argue that this behaviour emanates from councillors' ill-understanding of the role traditional leaders played in the fight for the end of apartheid in South Africa. Many Councillors' incorrect view is that the fight for democracy was led and won by modern politicians, whereas traditional leaders played an important role therein. Furthermore, minimising the role of traditional leaders in local leadership is an unwarranted usurpation of their power as many residents of rural areas are happy to be their subjects, and sympathise with traditional leadership.

Concurring with this view, Participant 8 (2022) (a community member) considered that, "Other sources of hostility originate from traditional leaders joining with political parties. When ward councillors are not from the political party that traditional leaders support, that results in aggression and conflict. To some extent, a hostile relationship hinders service delivery." In the fight to be recognised as they should be, some traditional leaders are drawn to taking up political affiliation, an action that compromises both the leader's legitimacy, and the role they can play in keeping local government officials accountable. Instead of having the interests of their subjects as a priority, traditional leaders who are politically affiliated burden themselves with the need to be in line with the views of their political parties. Such an action not only compromises the traditional leaders, but it subjugates them to the government, an institution they, by tradition, should be above. Kurebwa (2020a), while not finding many negative sides to traditional leadership, found that traditional leaders were key to keeping the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) in power since 1980. While this may be to the benefit of ZANU-PF, there are many who are opposed to the party , and the view that traditional leaders have supported ZANU-PF may lead to a questioning and suspiciousness against the traditional leaders (Kurebwa, 2020b; Mutanda, 2022).

Inheriting Power, Winning Power, and the Legitimacy of those in Power

Some of the participants raised questions about the legitimacy of traditional leaders in light of South Africa's democratic principles, especially that of voting local leaders into power. Participant 5 (2022) (a community member) said,

South Africa has progressed on since 1994. We are a democracy which is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Hence, principles of democracy must be followed. In a democracy, people come into power through elections and as councillors, are legitimately put into power to deliver service to the communities.

Such a claim questions the acceptability of traditional leaders where they have not been chosen by people in the same/similar way as local government leaders are, a question that has been raised in countries like Zimbabwe (Chigwata, 2016) as well. This concern is exacerbated by the challenges in the succession of leaders when they die. Succession to the throne is often highly contested (Lethiwe, 2023), and even then, the public often has no say over who will lead them. According to Houston & Mbele (2011), during the subjugation of and apartheid periods in South Africa, the succession of royal houses in the country was manipulated by the government in ways that led people to question the very legitimacy of the royal institution.

However, some residents still see traditional leaders in a positive light as these leaders are '… near to the communities, and for this purpose, they know the real needs of their people.' (Participant 10, 2022). Such a view agrees with part of the experiences amongst Zimbabwe's traditional leaders and residents. Kurebwa (2020a) reports that, "The existence of traditional leaders means that both the decentralisation and the strengthening of local governance are not taking place in a vacuum." Such a case can be useful for considering the cause of integration of traditional and modern governance systems, where the most useful parts of either side can be better contextualised and applied for the betterment of communities.

Conclusion

This empirical study affords us insights and reflections that were unavailable at the democratising moment, and further helps us reflect on the realities of what South Africa's rural areas may need to develop meaningfully. The case of Emaqeleni, traced here, helps us reflect on how the residents of rural areas may desire to be governed, drawing from empirical findings. In general, there is consensus amongst the participants that traditional leaders are desirable and should be taken seriously on local governance. There are undertones of a sense that traditional leaders should not be seen necessarily as part of local governance, but in a sense, should play an oversight role in the interest of the people of Emaqeleni. From a postdevelopment view, this view is an acceptable one, as people are not forced to accept an institution (modern government) that they do not desire. Moreover, they find confidence in knowing that traditional leaders who, in the residents' view, have the residents' best interests at heart, will be playing

a key role in keeping the local government accountable and ensuring the residents' wellbeing. While there is a need for further research to probe this, initial findings suggests that there is a view that traditional leaders are not providers of services, however, they should be an oversight body whom the local government will need to report to in the interest of the traditional leaders' subjects. Such a view suggests a level of local government being traditional leaders' subjects who deliver services to the leader's people in a way that meets the standards of the South African Constitution's expectations, along with those of the local chief.

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