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Rethinking the role of indigenous governance practices in contemporary governance in Africa : the case of Ghana

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Subject

Abstract

The discourse of governance on the continent of Africa focuses primarily on achieving and imbibing Western values and ideals. Africans, on the other hand, are highly invested in their indigenous culture, socially, so what is the relationship between indigenous culture and contemporary governance. This study focuses on the nature and to what extent indigenous culture influences governing practices in contemporary Africa using Ayittey's (1991) summary of the features of the African indigenous political system. Using a mixed methods approach participants in the study were asked to fill out a semi-structured survey of indicator questions corresponding to the features of the African indigenous political system. The participants of the study comprised of Members of Parliament, a traditional Chief, and citizenry. The results indicate that Ghana's current political dispensation lacks real incorporation of indigenous governance, specifically as it relates to citizens' influence on government, decentralization of the polity, decision-making by consensus and effective participatory democracy. On the basis of the results, it is recommended that; first Ghana's legislature be decentralized through regional parliamentary sessions, secondly, the powers of the executive be reduced, thirdly creating a constitution that is built on indigenous governing principles and finally building an indigenous political system.

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