Interface between Constitutional Democracy and Traditional Mechanisms of Authority in Rural Communities of South Africa: Lessons from Maruleng

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Abstract
This Afrocentric article uses the Maruleng sub-district of Limpopo province as a test case to analyse and critique the intersection(s) between constitutional institutions of authority and traditional mechanisms of governance in South Africa. Methodologically, the author has relied heavily on critical discourse approach and conversations in their broadest form. The article's main argument is that the co-existence of traditional leadership and municipal councils is inherently problematic. At the centre of the problematic nature of the co-existence of traditional leadership and municipal councils lie the discontinuities of the cultural values and practices of the Black communities in Maruleng sub-district. It is concluded that there is an urgent need for the desk of traditional leadership within the local Maruleng Municipality. It is also necessary to craft a space for municipal representation in the council of traditional authority. This desk and municipal representation in each other's affairs would be instrumental in un-tangling the competition for leadership space and other challenges within and/or between the various traditional authorities and the local municipal council.

Keywords: Constitutional democracy, traditional authority, rural communities, Maruleng

Introduction
The subject of traditional leadership in South Africa has been much debated by politicians and scholars (Oomen 2000; Ntsebeza 2005; Logan 2009). It would

appear that the institution and processes involved in traditional leadership has been less understood since the dawn of the 3rd wave of democratisation in the 1990s. Gazing from the on-going scholarly and political discourse, the dominant mode of reasoning has been in favour of the need to preserve traditional leadership (Lekgoathi 2013). Despite this, there is a perception within certain circles that traditional leadership is inimical to democratic culture and practices and therefore, it should be scrapped off (Lekgoathi 2013). The conviction of this line of thought is that traditional leadership should step aside and allow municipal councils to steer political governance and socio-economic development in the rural areas (Williams 2010). Based on the Afro-centric perspective (Asante 2003), this article's overall aim is to use Maruleng sub-district as a case study to critique the intersection(s) between constitutional institutions of authority and traditional mechanisms of governance in South Africa. Particular attention is paid to Bakone ba Mametja, Banareng ba Mahlo and Banareng ba Letsoala and their interaction with elected officials of Maruleng Municipality and other government spheres. In the next section of this article, the author describes the location of the study (Maruleng) and invokes the justification for its choice and use as the case study for this research.

Geographic and Political Context of Study Site

The study site for this article is Maruleng. Maruleng is one of the sub-districts within the Mopani district, in the Limpopo province of South Africa. This sub-district is made up of 14 wards, some of which over-lap the boundaries of traditional authorities (Maruleng Municipality 2016). Since Maruleng sub-district is largely rural, its governance architecture is often characterised by a fierce struggle between traditional leaders and elected leaders (Maruleng Municipality 2016). On top of the power struggles between traditional leaders and elected leaders in Maruleng are conflicts between different traditional authorities (Letsoalo 2009; Ramajela 2011. Squabbles and disputes are also a common feature within the leadership of the same traditional authority. The complexity of the nature of conflictual relations between and/or within traditional leadership and other stakeholders in this domain often renders the existing conflict management and resolution mechanisms into redundancy.

The conflictual nature of traditional leadership and other governance stakeholders is not unique to Maruleng. It can also be observed in other sub-districts in Mopani District and other localities that have embraced mixed

governance mode between traditional leadership and elected leaders (Bank & Southall 1996; Phago & Netswera 2011). However, the dilemma faced by the institution of traditional leadership in South Africa can best be understood if it is located within the context of the uncritical embracing of liberal democracy by most independent African states (Kapa 2014). In clarifying the mix up of traditional leadership and elected leadership under the independent African state, Wamba-dia-Wamba (cited in Ramose 2002: 103) cautions that: 'the content of democratisation is determined by modes of politics. Its content is shaped by the dominant mode of politics. The transition must, therefore, be redefined in terms of the change from the mode of politics in crisis towards a new mode of politics'. What can be deduced from the foregoing expression is the urgent and pressing need to consider the best ways to re-affirm the role of traditional leaders in the era wherein non-African political and economic systems have been wrongly presented as superior and more effective than others (Shai & Iroanya 2014). It is the conviction of this article that there is no perfect system of organising the society politically or economically (Yuhas 2016). Any political system can be effective and sustained if it dovetails with the social and economic history of the people who practices it (Scheurich & Young 1997; Khapoya 2010).

In the case of Maruleng, there are three recognised chieftaincies: Bakone ba Mametja, Banareng ba Mahlo (also known as Sekororo) and Banareng ba Letsoalo traditional authorities. In terms of hierarchy, each of these chieftaincies have headmen. The headman plays the role of the traditional leader of a village whereas the chief is the senior traditional leader of the entire tribe (social group). The headman is appointed by the chief, following a certain biased criteria and the former is expected to report to the latter in terms of traditional protocol (Lekgoathi 2013). While skill, age and rank was part of the set criterion for constituting traditional leadership in Maruleng sub-district, Lekgoathi (2013: 14) adds that historically 'the chief [including headman] was drawn from a dominant lineage – royal lineage'.

For historic and economic reasons, the legitimacy of some of the traditional leaders in the Maruleng sub-district is in doubt. This should be understood within the context that before South Africa's dawn of majority rule in the early 1990s, the apartheid regime appointed and imposed certain illegitimate people as traditional leaders. This illegal imposition of traditional leadership was used by the apartheid government as a means for appreciating the ill-conceived roles of the collaborators of the white minority regime (Mzala

undated). In relation to this legitimacy crisis, Lekgoathi (2013: 14) argues that the 'democratic element of chieftainship was eroded by colonial control, but can and ought to be resuscitated'. The erosion of the democratic ingredients of traditional leadership during the colonial and apartheid era is an unfortunate and dangerous situation which has also cast aspersions on its (chieftaincy) relevance in the new constitutional order. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by traditional leaders in Maruleng and South Africa at large, it would appear that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) is in support of the institution of traditional leadership. The scores made by the ANC-led government in terms of conceiving and adopting legislations that protect the institution of traditional leadership cannot be over-stated (Republic of South Africa 2016). This position must be understood within the context that the founding meetings for the establishment of a liberation movement in name of the ANC were dominated by African chiefs, spiritual leaders and prominent educated Africans (Limb 2010; Thema 2016). As such, the room for the existence of traditional leadership in the new constitutional order in South Africa is to a larger extent the appreciation of the struggles waged by some traditional leaders in the war against apartheid and other colonial tendencies (Thotse 2014). It is also not far-fetched to argue that the ANC supports traditional leadership because this institution largely assures the party with electoral support from tribesmen and women; who are found in its traditional support bases (rural areas). Despite this, it is common knowledge that there are some traditional leaders who tolerated, submitted and cooperated with the apartheid regime and other colonialists at the expense of their people (Author 2009). Whereas it is justifiable for the democratic forces to condemn traditional leaders who had become stooges of the brutal and inhuman system of apartheid, it is unfair to condemn the institution of traditional leadership as a whole.

Flowing from the above, it is safe to state that post-apartheid South Africa has not been able to clearly and rigorously actualise the legislations relating to the retention and promotion of traditional leadership. Even though the desire to protect and sustain traditional leadership has been legislated, it is argued that there are no clear and concrete actions to put those legal postulations into reality (Phago & Netswera 2011). As such, the role of traditional leadership in South Africa remains uncertain inasmuch as they are purported to co-exist with elected councils. For Phago and Netswera (2011), in the post-apartheid era the role of traditional leaders has been limited to that of the custodian for communal resources (i.e. land) and culture. These authors add that

their (traditional leaders) roles are neither developmental in character nor action. Based on this premise, this article uses an Afrocentric perspective to determine the position of Maruleng sub-district towards the adaptation of traditional leadership in the new democratic order (Asante 2003). Against this background, the next two sections of this article outlines the methods and theoretical framework used during the operationalisation of the research for this article.

Research Methodological Framing

This article demonstrates and elaborates the nature of its research problem analytically, qualitatively and empirically. Despite the empirical shreds of this article, it shares the Afrocentrists' argument in favour of 'pluralism in philosophical views without hierarchy' (Mkabela 2005: 180). This premise implies that, unlike the Euro-American knowledge systems, African-centred epistemology does not have a provision for a binary operationalisation and characterisation of knowledge as empirical or non-empirical, subjective or objective, good or evil (Maserumule 2011). To this end, the overarching feature of the article's descriptive approach presents qualitative methods within the locus of the Afrocentric paradigm (Asante 1990; Asante 2003). Hence, Afrocentric research methodology is largely employed in this study as a re-enforcer of qualitative research methodology than an alternative to the latter (Mkabela 2005; Owusu-Ansah & Mji 2013; Welsing 2015). In terms of data collection, the author conducted a comprehensive review of scholarly, official and popular literature. This was complemented by purposive selection and interview of 5 key informants of African social origin and culture. The findings drawn from the literature review and interview exercises were analysed thematically. As provided for in the theory of Afrocentricity, which underpins this article; the latter draws from both empirical and non-empirical research traditions in order to project a holistic picture of the phenomena been probed (Maserumule 2011). In this regard, the choice of case study research design was informed by its ability to generate rich data within the context of limited respondents (Author 2016).

Afrocentric Theoretical Entry Point

The use of Afrocentricity as an alternative theoretical lens for this article was largely influenced by the fact that most of the academic works in this subject

were based on theories, ideas and concepts rooted within the Euro-American world-view (Asante 2003). As such, this article contributes to efforts for *unmuting* the marginalised voices of Africans in academy (Author 2016). Several reasons account for the Afrocentric character of this article. First, its author's epistemological identity is uncompromised throughout its conceptualisation and operationalisation. Secondly, the unit of analysis for this article is the indigenous African political institution. Thirdly, this article is fairly dependent on its author and research participants' experiences with the institution of traditional leadership. Fourthly, and lastly, the underlying drive behind this article is the promotion of African interests through the generation of a crispy understanding which is crucial for preserving traditional leadership as the political heritage of the Africans. The latter is important when one considers the violent and culturally insensitive imposition of liberal democracy around the globe (Shai & Iroanya 2014). Equally important, this article contributes to the *unmuting* of the marginalised voices in academy by employing Afrocentricity as an alternative lens for deciphering governance in a world where theories that are rooted within the Eurocentric worldview are falsely presented as universal (Asante 2003). For this reason, this article also contributes to epistemic justice by philosophically and historically showing that the Afrocentric perspective is one voice among many voices (Maruma & Dhliwayo 2018). The following part of the article shows how the interface between constitutional democracy and traditional mechanisms of authority is animating conflict in Maruleng.

Elected Councils in Maruleng Sub-district: An Alternative or Re-Enforcer of Traditional Leadership?

Before the dawn of democracy in South Africa during the early 1990s, traditional leaders occupied a central position in the administration of local government in the rural areas. Municipal councils were solely meant for the urban areas. As such, traditional leaders were instrumental in the sale of land, division of farming fields, establishment and maintenance of infrastructure within their territorial jurisdiction (Lekgoathi 2013). In Maruleng sub-district, traditional leaders also facilitated the supply of cheap labour to the White-owned farms and mines within their territories and the surrounding. However, the new democratic dispensation has extended municipal councils to the rural areas. This meant that some of the roles and

functions which were usually played by the traditional leaders were then taken by elected local councillors and to a certain extent, officials of the elected provincial and national government. The wind of change that blew within South Africa's governance architecture immediately fuelled the unhealthy relationship between traditional leaders and elected government representatives. An attempt to locate the root of the problem in terms of the sour relations between traditional leadership and elected councils has often produced a representation of the blame game between the two stakeholders. That being the case, the communities have often been at the receiving end of these sour relations. Hence, the perpetuation of the conflict between traditional leaders and elected officials has often dampened the pace of service delivery in the rural areas.

In this context, Lekgoathi (2013: 14) points out that those who advocate for the abolishment of traditional leadership argue that it has 'paid little attention to the needs of [its] subjects'. Thus, the unhealthy relationship between traditional leadership and elected councils has largely deprived the communities to enjoy the full benefits of liberal democracy. This unhealthy relationship has often placed communities at loggerheads with their traditional leaders. Hence, traditional leaders are often mistaken as being anti-development. The communities have a tendency of blaming traditional leaders for retarded levels of development when traditional leadership does not avail the land required by the Maruleng Municipality for development (Lee 2014; Paret 2015). The centrality of land for the purpose of development is well articulated by Phago and Netswera (2011: 1029) as follows: 'Without land there will be minimal service delivery, if any'. Put the other way round, this authors' narrative implies that in the absence or unwillingness of traditional leaders to provide land for development, it would be impossible for the rural municipalities like Maruleng to operationalise some of their seminal developmental programmes.

That public opinion usually does not favour traditional leadership should be understood within the context that it is not elected by the majority (Nyang'oro 1989; Lekgoathi 2013). But it is hereditary. As such, elected councils tend to be appealing to the communities because they are based on principles of liberal democracy; a model which is popular and dominant in Africa due to the influence of Eurocentricity and coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Eurocentricity and coloniality have falsely

projected African traditional leadership as outdated, autocratic and unde-mocratic. However, Afrocentric literature has it on good authority that African traditional leadership has features of democracy (Ramose 2002; Lekgoathi 2013; Molomo 2014). It is the well-considered argument of this article that the reason why the democratic features of African traditional leadership are often overlooked can be attributed to the fact that most scholars commit transversal errors in their analysis and explanation of African traditional leadership (Azibo 2011). This is to say that the use of non-African tools and standards to analyse and think about African traditional leadership is vulnerable to the reproduction of pseudo-imaginings and factual errors (Maruma & Dhliwayo 2018). This analysis does not in any way dismiss the fact that systems borrow from one another for the purposes of self-enhancement and reinvention. But it warns that such borrowing is only useful provided it stands for the liberation of Africans from poverty and under-development to the promotion of their prosperity, development and liberation (Asante 2003). In order to provide a specific context for the progressive or regressive contribution of traditional leaders towards the democratic project, the position of various chieftaincies in Maruleng sub-district when dealing with selected cases of development challenges is explored below.

Banareng Traditional Leadership

Banareng ba Mahlo tribe is currently led by *Kgoši* (chief) Seshego Solomon Mahlo. The administrative hub of this traditional authority is located at an area that is popularly known as Mošate (Head kraal), within ward 14 of Maruleng sub-district. Equally, the Banareng ba Letsoalo's head kraal is situated at Metz, within ward 9 of Maruleng sub-district. According to the informants of the author of this article, the two clans of the Banareng have royal blood. But they are not the true owners of the land (Makhutšwe) that they are currently overseeing. Before they settled in Makhutšwe during the year 1958, the legitimate and long standing historic traditional leader of the area was Chief Mohlabe [Tsonga by origin] (Ramajela 2009). The circumstances that led to the toppling of Mohlabe as the oldest traditional leader of the Makhutšwe area are beyond the scope of this article.

What is of interest to this article is the fact that, in the recent past the traditional leadership of both Chief Mahlo and Letsoalo have had their fair

share of sabotaging government development projects within their territorial jurisdiction. For example, during the year 2014 the Maruleng Municipality has appointed a contractor to build a community hall in ward 14, near Mošate. However, till to date the project could not be started. Among some of the factors attributed for the non-building of the community hall in ward 14 is the fact that Banareng ba Mahlo traditional leadership was allegedly not consulted by the local ward councillor nor any duly elected representative of Maruleng Municipality during the project conceptualisation stage. It is interesting to note that the ward councillor of ward 14 is Ms MJ Mahlo, who happens to be related to Chief Mahlo. Apparently, Councillor Mahlo was not willing to pay homage to Chief Mahlo due to clan disputes over the rightful heir of the Banareng Chieftancy. The Banareng Chieftancy disputes were then escalated into a tense power struggle between Chief Mahlo and the Maruleng Municipal Council. At the end, family disputes of the Banareng ba Mahlo denied the Makhutšwe community a rare opportunity to have a community hall. But this fracas over chieftaincy also implied that the contractor, sub-contractors and community members missed an opportunity to draw an income from the contract by rendering their labour and other services. This is a clear indication of the extent to which unhealthy relations between traditional leadership and elected council can arrest socio-economic development in Maruleng sub-district and other areas facing more or less similar challenges. Nonetheless, Tlhoaele (2012: ii) maintains that traditional leadership 'remains an important link between local government and rural communities'.

Meanwhile, the land dispute between the two chiefs of Banareng tribe, under Mahlo and Letsoalo has also made development impossible in the Makhutšwe area. The context of the land dispute in question took a toll in the year 2014. According to Jeffrey Morema (as cited by Lee 2014) this year [2014] witnessed 'two developers who want[ed] to build shopping complexes here in the villages [around Makhutšwe]. One has bought the title deed to KT 75 Metz from Chief Letsoalo but the problem is that piece of land belongs to Chief Solomon Mahlo from Sekororo. Also, Chief Letsoalo lives on KT 75 along with other people. Chief Letsoalo sold the wrong piece of land. The people want a shopping complex but the developer can't go ahead because of the issue of land'. In relation to this, it is argued that in the rural areas the land belongs to the community or tribe and the chief is just a custodian. Therefore, under no circumstances can the chief legally claim ownership of the land and ultimately sell it without the consent of the community (Lekgoathi 2013).

Against this premise, it is fundamentally crucial to posits that it is selfish for Chief Mahlo to stop the construction of retail infrastructure simply because the contractor had paid another Chief (Letsoalo). The proximity of Chief Letsoalo to the land [farm KT 75] that has been earmarked for development also qualifies him as its caretaker, who is also entitled to royalties. Notwithstanding all of the above, the development of retail infrastructure around the Makhutšwe area has a potential to create jobs for people in this traditional authorities and beyond.

It would also make it easy for people in Makhutšwe and the surrounding areas to have near access shopping services. Hence, they currently have to travel to far areas such as Hoedspruit, Maake Plaza, Phalaborwa and Tzaneen, just to name a few; for the purpose of accessing banking and other affordable retail services. No matter the merits of the land claim under review, it is instructive to stress that the decision of Chief Mahlo to contest the legality of the land transaction between Chief Letsoalo and one of the developers is not in the best interests of his clan, tribe and people of Maruleng sub-district as a whole. In fact, it constitutes petty squabbles that are driven by his desperate desire to milk any prospective developer for the sake of maintaining his lavish lifestyle. Hence, it is the tendency of most traditional leaders in Maruleng sub-district to solicit royalties from people who do businesses within the territorial jurisdiction of their traditional authority for their selfish and narrow goals. Very little, if there is any, of the financial dividends generated by the traditional leaders in Maruleng sub-district and elsewhere are used for the benefit of the community. In some other parts of South Africa including Mpumalanga, these foreign tendencies have provided a fertile ground for the youth movement to 'rapidly and systematically' destroy chieftaincies in the 1980s (Bank & Southall 1996: 419). As such, it is important for the current crop of traditional leaders to draw lessons from the mistakes of their fallen counterparts.

Contextually, the community protests which were geared towards registering dissatisfaction and frustration emanating from the above discussed obstacles to development in Maruleng were staged. While the protesters had a genuine cause, it is disappointing that their protests disrupted schooling, made some roads un-passable, destroyed street lamp posts and other parts of the road infrastructure. The above is a synoptic representation of the confusion between the right to protest, the responsibility to protect public services and the rights of others not to take part in community protests. Unlike during the apartheid era, the new democratic dispensation has presented legal opportunities and

mechanisms for community protests. As such, there is no sound reason for the community to use violence as a means of demanding people-driven development. It is also tantamount to progressive regression if people demand development and in a process, vent their anger and frustration towards the destruction of other developmental gains of the new democratic government. As suggested by the above discussion, Tsheola's (2012: 161) expressed opinion is that in South Africa in general, a calculable number of 'violent protests have paradoxically occurred exclusively in impoverished settlements where some services were delivered, disrupting the underlying infrastructure and existing services'. In this context, it is no over-exaggeration to pinpoint that in the post-apartheid era, there is a re-emergence of the pre-1990 culture of violence in the waging of community's socio-economic struggles in South Africa (Shai & Mothibi 2015).

Regardless of the questionable actions of some community members during community protests, it is emphasised that there is no sound basis for the traditional leadership of Banareng ba Mahlo and Banareng ba Letsoalo to jostle each other over artificial traditional boundaries. Hence, legend has it that both clans have a common history and they both trace their origins from Sabie. Overtime, the two clans have experienced family/clan inter-marriages and as such, their relationship is that of blood. To appropriate the close relationship between the two clans of Banareng, they both share a praise poem (Mbewe 2010). Based on the above account of the historic and socio-cultural commonalities between the two clans of Banareng, this article submits that their ongoing tensions over land can best be explained through changes in the cultural values of Blacks in South Africa and Africa as whole (Mabelebele 2008). That is to suggest that money, material possessions, technological innovation and development have eroded the humanist essence of the African culture; which is based on humanity [*botho/ Ubuntu*] (Ramose 2002; Shai & Iroanya 2014; Author 2016). In putting the forgoing viewpoint, the other way, some of the informants of this author accuse selected traditional leaders in conniving with some of the local businessmen to sabotage the establishment of retail infrastructure in Makhutšwe and the surrounding. It is argued that even though the envisaged retail infrastructure stands to benefit the majority, the local businessmen are likely to run at a loss should a mall or plaza be built around Makhutšwe and the surrounding. Hence, they would no longer exploit the captivated cash market; which they dominate due to limited competition and/or choices that consumers have within their vicinity.

Bakone Ba Mametja Traditional Leadership

Like the Banareng tribe, Bakone ba Mametja tribe is blessed with natural endowments such as river sand, pit sand, stones and natural forests. The listed minerals have provided opportunities for small scale mining in different villages such as Willows (also known as Dingapong), Oaks (Diphuthi), Mabins A (Ga-Mametja) and Worster, just to name a few. The miners include the residents of this villages and people who come from other areas outside Maruleng sub-district. The activities in the small scale mining sector have taken three forms: legal, semi-legal and illegal. Hence, it is permissible for individual residents to engage in mining for domestic use. But those who are involved in mining activities for commercial reasons are expected to either acquire permits from the Department of Minerals and written authorisation from the traditional authority. That both the Department of Minerals and Traditional Authorities separately grants permission for businessmen to engage in mining activities has created tensions within the business community. Those who have permits from the Department of Minerals refuse to pay royalties to the traditional authorities and this tendency often produces unhealthy relations between traditional leaders and some licensed miners. On the other hand, the licenced miners often feel that the traditional leaders and government at large do not do enough to contain illegal mining. That mining can also be sanctioned by the Department of Minerals provides an enabling environment wherein traditional leaders (including Chief Mametja and her headmen) can evade accountability for the royalties generated from mining activities within their territorial jurisdiction. More often than not, financial dividends generated by traditional leaders are used for their selfish benefits and that of their families. This unfortunate tendency is in total disregard of the common understanding that minerals, land and natural forests in the rural areas are communal resources (Tlhoaele 2012; Lekgoathi 2013; Hay 2014). Ideally, their financial dividends should be used for the benefit of the community instead of just a family of the so called custodian in the name of a chief and her headmen.

In the case of the land administered by Chief Mametja, there are also business people who neither possess the permits from the Department of Minerals nor written authorisation from the Traditional Authorities to engage in mining activities. In their corners, they contest the legitimacy of the current Chief and the chieftaincy of Bakone ba Mametja as a whole. Apparently, headman Malepe is the longest serving traditional leader in his area and the

surrounding areas that are currently administered by Chief Mametja. Whether this claim is true or not, it is not the focus of this discussion. However, it has created a dark cloud in terms of the legitimacy of the Mametja chieftaincy. To make matters worse, the position of chief is contested within the Mametja clan because the current chief is a woman. Despite the fact that she is not married and she is one of the children of the late Chief Madie Mametja, tradition has it that only a male can be a chief in terms of the customs and cultural practices of Bakone ba Mametja tribe and most Black tribes in South Africa and beyond (Letsoalo 2009; Lekgoathi 2013). However, this historical and patriarchal practice of excluding women in traditional leadership positions does not find expression in the constitutional order of the new South Africa (Republic of South Africa 1996).

In the past, one of the senior members of the Mametja royal family and who was also the child of the late chief Madie was linked to opposition party, Congress of the People (COPE). This individual political alignment has served as a recipe for the deterioration of the already soured relations between traditional leaders and the ANC-led Maruleng Municipal Council. To this end, some elected leaders have exploited the psychosis surrounding the political affinity of the Mametja traditional authority to undermine its chief and to a larger extent, overlook her authority on development planning and management within her territorial jurisdiction. In the past, the constitution of an advisory council for Willows village's *Ntona* (head man) Thekwane under Chief Mametja was thwarted by ANC members because some of the people who were touted to serve in this structure (advisory council) were aligned to the United Democratic Movement (UDM) at the time. As such, the view of the ANC at the Willows was that the UDM aspire to hijack the traditional leadership of Thekwane and eventually establish a parallel ward governance structure to achieve their political goals. Nonetheless, it is the conviction of this article that political party meddling in traditional leadership affairs is unfortunate and it also cripples the traditional leaders' responsibility to co-govern rural areas and champion development initiatives for the benefit of their communities. Irrespective of these challenges facing the Mametja traditional authority, it is worth noting that its decision to appoint a female chief is well-thought of and it shows the readiness for traditional leadership institutions to adapt to the dynamic nature of South Africa and Africa's political landscape, where it concerns the appointment of women not only in national but also local and traditional areas. The following section of the article sums up the findings

of this article and on this basis, policy relevant recommendations are advanced.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This Afrocentric article sees an avalanche of opportunities in the midst of the difficulties prevailed by the mixed local government model in the new constitutional order in South Africa. Irrespective of the isolated incidents of triumphs relating to the preservation of traditional leadership in Maruleng sub-district, it has been established that South Africa and Maruleng sub-district in particular, is at crossroads. While the quest for the retention of the marriage of traditional leadership and elected authorities cannot be denied, more practical measures ought to be considered by all affected parties for the sake of harnessing solidarity, interdependence, cooperation and collective respon-sibility between the traditional leadership and the elected officials. Whereas it is historically and culturally sensible to retain the institution of traditional leadership in Maruleng sub-district and other rural areas in South Africa, it is observed that the influence of foreign cultures on Africa does not make it an easy task to revitalise African value systems. Hence, there are various financial interests that play a role in the outbreak and escalation of tensions within the institution of traditional leadership and also between traditional leaders and elected government officials.

The findings of this article emphatically suggest that both institutions basically serve the purpose. However, the baseline for the practicalities of the dominant democratic trajectory in South Africa forces this researcher to propose the following measures for fostering peaceful co-existence between traditional leadership and elected councils:

- Both institutions can hold joint community meetings for the purposes of establishing mutual understanding.

- They can have co-ordinated community development programmes and projects.

- There should be representation of each traditional leadership and municipal representative in the various councils/forums of each institution.

- All-encompassing educational interventions and work initiatives that

> appreciate and promote the diversity of governance systems should be rolled out.

- • There is a need for an aggressive revitalisation of African value systems within the political and governance circles at various tiers of government.

In the final analysis, it appears that this article would serve as a stepping stone for future research on traditional leadership in South Africa and Africa at large. Given the dynamic nature of this indigenous political institution, it is important that its discourse be revisited from time to time. Such an exercise would give currency to any policy recommendations derived from this article and others related to it.

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