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## **Relevance of Traditional Leadership in Rural Community Development amidst Democratic Institutions in Southern Africa: A Critical Review**

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**ABSTRACT** This paper is based on an analysis and synthesis of the literature on relevance of traditional leadership in rural community development in Southern Africa. Although modernists predicted the demise of the institution, available evidence reveals that this is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. Tensions and conflicts characterise the relationship between democratically elected and traditional leaders. This weakens the ability of both institutions to contribute effectively to community development in rural areas. Thus, there is need for investing in efforts that might result in the development of an appropriate governance model that clearly defines the roles of traditional leadership in a democratic state such as South Africa