

Globalisation and political transformation in africa

[Parts of the World](#), [Africa](#)



The African community, with its vast diversity in culture, bears a great number of different ideals which run the different communities. Most, if not all, of the African states are governed differently to the next, but they all still share a somewhat just form of governance. Governance ranges from smaller (sub)communities to cities, provinces, and countries. It proves successful in many circles. The article makes mention of 'centralized' and 'decentralized' systems. Centralized systems refer to governance by kings and/or the elder or more "powerful" members of society over the whole community. This is often seen as monarchy. Having a council which worked hand-in-hand with the leader made for accountability by the leader as they served as the people's ear in the midst of the leader. The council could make sure that the leader was unbiased to his people and was not misusing his "political" power. Decentralized systems were where large communities would have different leaders for each of the smaller villages within them. Because this form of governance would occur in small villages with a lower population, it would display a more absolute form of democracy than centralized systems. The people knew each other, and in fear of becoming social outcasts, they would think twice before going against the laws of the village.

This form of governance also allowed for decisions regarding the community to be made by all members of the community. State/Nation-building is a key factor in Africa. This is the process whereby African countries reach out to each other in solidarity and ask each other for assistance. This makes for a stronger economy and governance. The unity does not allow for there to be any cracks in either country's system of governance. This would make for a more transparent government both to its people and to the governments of

the other countries is works with. This removes the many bad traits that states have such as exploitation and poverty as well as corruption. Sports plays a great role in nation-building as we can look at organisations or sports events such as the FIFA world cup and AFCON which allow countries to work together towards the common goal of achieving a successful event. Kings also believed that if two neighbouring villages joined forces they would become a force to be reckoned with and couple aid each other where the other might have short comings. This form of governance is what we may speculate lead to ideals of nation-building. Service delivery in many African states is a predominant issue, with some communities not even having access to basic needs such as water, electricity, or even staple diets. A decentralized system would be a great tool to fix an issue as such as if the communities were subdivided it would be much easier to tackle the issues and fulfil the people's needs. An example of this would be in schools in underprivileged neighbourhoods in South Africa were many people battle poverty. Some schools offer children meals during school to stay focussed and can take meals home if there is surplus. Kings in African villages would not allow for their people to live in poverty as their people reflected them and their leadership skills. All the peoples' needs were brought forward to the king.

This meant that all the needs of the people were looked into and taken care of so that they become a true and good reflection of the leader. African states can take this perspective to encourage them to ensure that their people are not poverty stricken while the leader drowns in his/her own gluttony. B. Every rose has a thorn, so we cannot say that ' Centralized' and '

Decentralized' systems are completely advantageous as they too bear thorns. Both these forms of governance display ideals of gerontocracy in one way or the other and have many other flaws within them. If we look at the Centralized systems, we note that the leader and his council are old people. These people may be biased to many new ideas which they may not understand and can, thus, make uninformed decisions regarding certain matters. The council could also display traits of not being transparent to the people of the community as they would not want to go against the chief seeing as though " chiefs often combined both executive and judicial powers and the councils, when they existed, were often composed largely of members of the nobility or close relatives of the chiefs" Abba A. (2007) Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance, page 4. Older generations are also known for being sexist and homophobic in their opinions as older ideals stated that a man, and a woman each have their own specific role to play in society. This would not be ideal in today's society as we are becoming more revolutionary and pushing boundaries to allow for gender equality and gay rights so that men and women and homosexuals may be treated justly and accepted. We can look at a place such as Zimbabwe where homosexuality is illegal and against the culture, it would be difficult to have a person who was born and raised in Zimbabwe to make an unbiased decision if a certain issue involved a homosexual person. Another concern about employing councilmen that are related to leaders, apart from the obvious nepotism, is that it does not allow for the external community to have a third party involved that stands for them. This is where corruption begins to brew.

The South African government is an example of this. We look at Jacob Zuma who has given many of his acquaintances and family members high positions in the government even though they may not be qualified. We can also take note of his affiliation with the notorious Gupta family which is well-known for its corruption. In Decentralized systems we can observe that the governance occurs in small villages. It is thus easier for people to be labelled as outcasts for whatever reason it is therefore easier for people to be discriminated against. This would lead to biased decisions and subsequently not adhere to the democratic governance which should be. An example of bias in decentralized is that in many small villages in the rural area if one wants land they would have to have family history in that village in order to be even considered receiving it. The land they would receive would be pointed of by the king of the village and he would determine how much land one receives based on their surname/family name and their contribution to the village. " Internationally, it has been observed that land dispossession is a common cause of population displacement and violent conflict" Simelane H. (2012) *The Monarchy, Land Contest and Conflict in Postcolonial Swaziland*, page 235. It is also the males in the villages that are dominant in the decision making which makes for a biased point of view. " all male adults assemble and assist the council in adjudicating disputes and passing sentences upon criminals" Abba A. (2007) *Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance*, page 4. This would also mean that at times females would be favoured and/or pitied in courtrooms as they would be viewed as lesser human beings to males. This alters the way in which a court functions today where all decisions that are made in the courtrooms are

objective and not subjective. The involvement of all the community males in decision making would also result in a hefty decision-making process as people would disagree with each other a lot and as the saying goes “ too many cooks spoil the broth”. C. Globalisation vouches for global-interconnectedness thus including some aspects of African political institutions and systems of governance would prove beneficial to this idea. If we take a look at South Africa, it already employs both forms of governance. With the Centralized government being the party to whom the president of the country belongs (currently the African National Congress - ANC). And with different districts and provinces employing a Decentralized manner as the people from each district may vote as to which candidate from which party they would like to handle their individual districts’ processes and municipal issues. Villages in South Africa also have chiefs/kings that run them. The chiefs have councilmen who help them make more informed decisions in their villages.

These chiefs/kings are also then invited to be a part of the parliament as they are the link to the people for the government running the country vice versa. This makes for a relatively unbiased government as they then know what the needs of all the people in the country are. Ghana too uses a similar approach where a president is democratically elected by the people of the country (Centralized governance). The president would then have a cabinet and other constituent of his/her administrative staff. The administrative process “ splits” the country into metropolitan, municipal, and district areas (Decentralized). Unlike South Africa however, these areas and their leaders/counsellors belong to the elected party (i. e. the country to which the

president belongs). This ensures that all the members of the country's needs are heard and reported to the centre of governance and all issues are handled accordingly by a single party. This makes for good accountability. In order for these ideals to be fully functional in today's society the process of putting them to action would have to be very democratic, transparent and inclusive. The council in parliament would have to consist of both young and old people of both genders and of all religious backgrounds and races. The homosexual community would also have to have representation in parliament. This would aid in removing the gerontocracy, bias and discrimination in many of the government proceedings. The underlying effect of ethnocentrism, which is still evident today, would lessen as people are all represented equally both in parliament and in their communities.