

Traditional Chieftaincy and decentralization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Opportunities and Challenges.

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Abstract:

The aim of this thesis is to examine the conditions in which African traditional chieftaincies and their leaders can play a role in the democratic and decentralization initiatives and programs aiming at increasing state's legitimacy in Congo. We apply four dimensions (the political, economic, administrative and financial) of decentralization borrowed from Dele Olowu to analyse the Congolese case. This allowed to question the decentralization rhetoric in the Congolese political leaders' discourse, in light of the legislation that has been actually applied from the colonial period until now. The study shows the parallel or the continuation between colonial and post-colonial territorial administration and emphasize the absence of a real will to decentralize. The study shows, however, some, noticeable signs of decentralization have been carried out recently, particularly in the new constitution of 2006 and laws. They include a constitutional recognition of legal status to traditional chieftaincies, a share in the national revenue, elections of local assemblies and accountability of the executive to these assemblies. Those changes still need, of course, to mature both in their design and their implementation. This study explored some ways in which this improvement can be pursued.