

**GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS IN RANGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN
LESOTHO: A CASE STUDY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY
COUNCIL AND CHIEFTAINSHIP INSTITUTIONS
IN QACHA'S NEK.**

BY

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DECLARATION

The work contained in this dissertation was carried out and completed by **MATLOTLA AGNES PHEKU (LINEO RABETHANE), 201300077** at the National University of Lesotho Water Institute, National University of Lesotho. I hereby declare that this study constitutes my original work and has never been submitted for the award of a degree or diploma to any University. To the best of my knowledge this dissertation contains no material written by another person except where due reference is made in the dissertation itself.

Signature



Date 09/10/2025

As the candidate’s supervisor, I certify the above statement to be correct to my knowledge and have recommended this dissertation for submission.

Prof. Makoala V. Marake



8th October 2025

Date.....

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Abbreviations

DA	District Administrator
DCS	District Council Secretary
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoL	Government of Lesotho
ICWRM	Integrated Catchment and Water Resources Management
LCC	Local Community Council
SADP	Smallholder Agriculture Development Project
MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
ROLL	Regeneration of Landscape and Livelihoods
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUL	National University of Lesotho
RMA	Range Management Area
NRM	Natural Resource Management
ReNOKA	‘We are a river’ Integrated Catchment Management movement
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme (if mentioned)
NULWI	National University of Lesotho Water Institute
RRM	Range Resource Management
RMAs	Range Management Areas

Abstract

This study explores the roles and interactions of dual governance institutions, chieftainship and local community councils (LCCs)-in managing range resources in Qacha's Nek district, Lesotho. Specifically, it focuses on the Range Management Area (RMA) programme and the traditional *Maboeella* system, examining their effectiveness before and after the 1997 decentralization reforms. To achieve this, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data from structured surveys (n=90) with qualitative insights from key informant interviews and focus group discussions involving chiefs, councillors, and community members. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, whereas qualitative data were examined thematically using Taguette software.

Overall, the findings reveal that while both governance institutions contribute to range resource management, traditional chieftainship continues to enjoy greater community trust due to its cultural legitimacy and grassroots presence. In contrast, although councillors are more aligned with formal policy structures, they often lack local influence and enforcement capacity. Consequently, the coexistence of these systems has led to overlapping roles, institutional friction, and limited coordination. Nevertheless, examples of effective collaboration demonstrate that clearly defined responsibilities and inclusive decision-making can enhance governance outcomes. Therefore, the study recommends the development of a hybrid governance model that integrates the strengths of both systems. This should be supported by improved communication, formalized collaboration frameworks, and legislative reforms to clarify roles and strengthen accountability. Ultimately, these insights offer practical guidance for harmonizing governance structures to promote sustainable natural resource management in Lesotho and similar contexts.

Keywords *Dual governance, Chieftainship, Local Community Councils, Range Resource Management, Community participation*

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Natural Resource (NR) governance is a critical field of study, central to achieving sustainable development and equitable outcomes, particularly for communities dependent on common-pool resources like rangelands. Contemporary discourse in governance literature has moved beyond a simplistic focus on the state, emphasizing instead the interplay of multiple institutions—statutory, customary, and market-based—in shaping resource management outcomes Ostrom (2005). A persistent theme in this discourse is the challenge of institutional interplay, especially in post-colonial contexts where modern, decentralized governance structures are introduced alongside deeply entrenched traditional authorities. Hence, the effectiveness of NR governance often hinges on the collaboration, competition, or conflict between these parallel systems, a dynamic that is particularly acute in the management of range resources where access, control, and sustainability are constantly negotiated Agrawal (2005).

This challenge is not unique to any single nation; it reflects a broader international phenomenon. Across sub-Saharan Africa, from Ghana to Botswana, the co-existence of formal local government bodies and traditional chieftainships creates complex governance landscapes for land, water, and forestry management Ribot, (2004). These dual systems often result in overlapping jurisdictions, contested legitimacy, and policy implementation gaps, which undermine sustainable resource use and fuel local conflicts. Thus, understanding how these institutions interact, and how their collaboration can be enhanced, is therefore a question of global relevance for pastoralism, community-based conservation, and rural development. Meinzen-Dick & Pradhan (2002).

It is within this international context that this study examines the governance institutions in Range Resource Management (RRM) in Lesotho. The country provides a poignant case study, characterized by a legislated dual governance system born from the Local Government Act of 1997, which established elected Community Councils, and the historical authority of Chiefs operating under the Laws of Leretholi, Lesotho Government

(1997). The persistent tension between these institutions has been identified as a significant barrier to effective and sustainable RRM Makoa (1999).

This research uses the district of Qacha's Nek as a focal point to investigate this interplay as it is predominantly of rural character and heavy reliance on range-based livelihoods which makes it an ideal setting to explore the efficiency, conflicts, and potential for collaboration between Community Councils and Chieftainship institutions, Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (2018) and Matsela (2020). While the Government of Lesotho has acknowledged the need to improve collaboration between these bodies, the on-the-ground realities and pathways to reconciliation remain critically under-examined Ministry of Local Government (2019).

This study focuses specifically on the substantive jurisdiction of these two institutions—namely, their roles, responsibilities, and influence in land allocation, grazing control, and conflict resolution pertaining to range resources Mojaki & Keregero (2021) It analyzes the perceptions of both institutions towards each other and the formal policy framework that governs them. However, it is acknowledged that while other factors, such as national economic policies, climate change impacts, and the role of non-governmental organizations, are undoubtedly important in shaping RRM outcomes in Lesotho, they fall outside the direct scope of this inquiry Mashinini & Villiers (2005). This study deliberately bounds its analysis to the meso-level institutional interplay between local government and traditional authority, providing a focused lens through which to understand a central governance challenge in Lesotho's RRM sector. Kisoza (2007) and Gusha et al. (2024).

In Lesotho, the coexistence of chieftainship authority and local community council institutions has haunted the Lesotho's governance landscape in RRM for time immemorial. Chiefs have historically been the custodians of land and range resources, enforcing customary laws that govern use of range resources particularly under the framework of the Laws of Lerotholi (1968) with Common Law framework operating at national level and mainly outside the domain of range resources although a framework of local government council was piloted in the early 1960s but subsequently abandoned after independence in 1966, Makoa (1999). The promulgation of the Local Government Act of

1997 as amended, revived the pre-independence concept and codified a decentralized governance dispensation of elected Community Council Members mandated with significant roles in range resource management, Mosoetsa & Kieya (2021). This legal framework created a dual governance system in RRM overlapping the substantive jurisdiction of chieftainship authorities and further added to the instability in governance structures and continued to hinder effective resource management and sustainable grazing practices in Lesotho, Lesotho & Kali (2020) and Moses (2015).

Despite its good intentions, the introduction of new decentralized governance frameworks in African countries has led to unintended conflicts and inefficiencies due to overlapping roles between traditional chiefs and elected local councils Honynuga & Wutoh (2019); Knoetze (2014). The government of Lesotho has acknowledged the need to improve the collaboration between these two governance institutions to enhance RRM. Recent policy discussions have focused on reconciling the institutional authority of local community councils and traditional chieftainship structures with a view to minimizing conflicts and improving their efficiency and effectiveness in RRM Lesotho Ministry of Local Government. The ongoing decentralization reforms are part of a broader national effort to strengthen governance at all levels, including in the area of natural resources Local Government Act (2014).

The Range Management Area (RMA) programme was implemented in early 1980s to improve Range condition and livestock productivity on Lesotho's rangelands by mobilizing collective management of communal grazing areas. The first two RMAs were established at Sehlabathebe in 1982 and Ha Ramatšeliselo /Ha Moshebi in 1987 in the Qacha's Nek district Artz (1993). Thus, the Qacha's Nek provides a unique case study for examining the efficiency of governance structures in RRM. The district is characterized by its rural landscape and reliance on range resources for livelihoods, making the role of governance structures particularly significant, Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (2018). Chiefs in Qacha's Nek are deeply embedded in the community, with a strong influence over land allocation and natural resource use Matsela (2020). However, the introduction of elected councillors has introduced new dynamics into local governance, leading to both opportunities and challenges in RRM Nyathi (2024). Local stakeholders, including

community members, have expressed concerns about the efficiency of these governance structures, particularly in areas where resource management decisions have led to environmental degradation or conflicts over land use. The management of rangelands requires an integrated approach that considers multiple factors and stakeholders Bayala (2023). Hence the study proposed a decision support system for evaluating grazing management sustainability, emphasizing the need to understand key processes and identify indicators at relevant scales Bellamy et al. (1996). Another study furtherly argues for integrating range science, basic ecology, and global ecology to address future rangeland challenges effectively Peters et al. (2012).

The current discourse on the efficiency of governance structures in RRM in Qacha's Nek and similar contexts revolves around the need for a more synergistic relationship between traditional chiefs and local community councils (LCCs) Mwangi (2009). Researchers and policymakers are increasingly advocating for models that blend customary governance with modern administrative frameworks to achieve more effective and equitable resource management. This involves decentralizing authority to local institutions while recognizing traditional rights Ribot (2003).

There is also a focus on the implications of governance efficiency for community resilience and environmental sustainability. Efficient governance is crucial for addressing environmental challenges in Southern Africa, including climate change, water management, and biodiversity conservation Falayi et al. (2021). Studies highlight the need for improved coordination and cooperation among government agencies to integrate biodiversity concepts with water resource management Ashton et al. (2006). Governance challenges in the region are multifaceted, with issues related to system integrity, social equity, and institutional robustness being prominent Shumba (2017). Mwalukomo & Patel (2012) demonstrate how the shift from chieftaincy to democratic local governance in South Africa's QwaQwa undermined chiefs' control over natural resources, creating unclear institutional frameworks for communal land management. Nüsser (2002) challenges conventional rangeland management paradigms, arguing that non-equilibrium dynamics and indigenous knowledge systems are often overlooked in favor of carrying capacity models while Bennett (2013) illustrates how legislative uncertainty

in South Africa's land tenure reform has resulted in varying institutional arrangements with highly variable performance in rangeland management, advocating for democratically elected institutions with clear authority over land administration. The role of traditional chiefs in land management represents both a crucial element and potential bottleneck in Lesotho's rangeland socio-ecological system, with ineffective law implementation contributing to rangeland degradation (Likoti, 2020). Similar governance challenges exist across the region, where uncertainty over land rights has resulted in varying degrees of legitimate authority between traditional leaders and civil society institutions, with collective rangeland management proving most difficult where land rights are contested (Bennett, 2013). These findings highlight the complex interplay between traditional governance structures and modern resource management approaches in Southern African communal rangelands (Fabricius et al., 2004).

Hence, this study aims to evaluate the efficiency of these governance structures by investigating the roles and impacts of LCCs and chief, otherwise called local authorities in range resource management in Lesotho. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the comparative performance of RMAs and maboeella systems before and after the promulgation of the Local Government Act of 1997 to understand their ongoing interactions and impacts on resource management Artz (1993). By adopting a mixed-methods approach, this research seeks to compare the effectiveness of local authorities in policy implementation, resource management, and addressing environmental challenges. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data will provide a nuanced understanding of governance dynamics and their implications for sustainable resource management Creswell & Clark (2018). This research will contribute to the academic discourse on governance and sustainability, offering practical insights for policymakers and development practitioners in Lesotho and similar contexts. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the governance approaches employed by councillors and chiefs, this study aims to provide recommendations for improving governance practices and achieving sustainable development goals; additionally, contribute to the broader discourse

on harmonizing traditional and modern governance systems to enhance sustainable resource management in rural communities Gibson et al. (2005); Ostrom (2009).

Background

Globally, the efficiency and /or effectiveness of governance institutions and structures in range resource management (RRM) has become a critical area of research and policy discourse, particularly in the context of community-based systems. In Lesotho the dichotomy of governance institutions in RRM presents a need to harmonize traditional and modern governance systems to enhance the management of natural resources. Challenges in Lesotho's Range Management Areas (RMAs) include declining authority of traditional governance institutions, which hampers effective enforcement of grazing regulations. Despite efforts to mobilize community support and establish Grazing Associations, participation in management activities remains lower than desired, often limited to mandated actions. Additionally, the mixed success of initiatives to counter livestock-related degradation and the need for continued external support highlight the complexities of managing communal rangelands effectively while ensuring equity and popular support among residents.

There is a general consensus in the rural community development and RRM nexus that indigenous rural communities play a crucial role in resource conservation and environmental stewardship. The interaction dynamics at the confluence of traditional and state-led modern institutions are often conflictual and present governance challenges Agrawal & Gibson (2001) that can only be ignored at the peril of community based RRM. Additionally, traditional systems of range management such as Maboella have been the foundation of sustainable use of natural resources, particularly in communal grazing lands. These traditional practices, deeply rooted in local customs, were designed to manage and preserve ecological balance. However, the introduction of Range Management Areas (RMAs) marked a significant shift towards a new dispensation in resource management approaches in Lesotho characterized by greater participation of livestock owners through

their Grazing Associations in what was traditionally a domain of chieftainship institutions both in the village grazing areas and the transhumance cattle posts.

The challenges of range management in Lesotho include the transition of governance from chiefs to Village Development Councils (VDCs), which did not fully assume the powers of the chiefs, such as designating reserved grazing areas. The impending replacement of VDCs by Community Councils further complicates governance, as interim councils have temporarily reverted range management responsibilities back to chiefs. This instability in governance structures can hinder effective resource management and sustainable grazing practices in the region.

The promulgation of the Local Government Act in 1997 further altered this landscape by introducing elected community councils, which led to overlapping jurisdictions and conflicts between the RMAs and traditional maboeella systems Nyathi (2024). The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 15, which focuses on life on land, emphasize the importance of effective governance structures in managing natural resources sustainably. This has sparked global discussions on how to improve governance efficiency and effectiveness by integrating various systems of authority, including traditional leadership and modern governance institutions.

1.2 Problem Statement

The governance of natural resources in Lesotho is plagued by inefficiencies, conflicts, and mismanagement due to the fragmented and often conflicting roles of traditional chiefs and local community councils Knoetze (2014). This dual governance system, introduced after the Local Government Act of 1997, created overlapping responsibilities, poor coordination, and frequent inter-institutional disputes, thereby weakening effective natural resource management Honyunuga & Wutoh (2019). The lack of a clear delineation

of roles exacerbates tensions, resulting in confusion, ineffective decision-making, and unsustainable use of rangeland resources Bellamy et al. (1996) and Peters et al. (2012).

The consequences of this governance gap are severe: environmental degradation, increasing land disputes, and mismanagement of vital resources such as water, forests, and grazing lands, which are crucial for the livelihoods of rural communities Mashinini & Villiers (2005). In Qacha's Nek, where dependence on rangelands for survival is particularly high, the impact is acute, leading to poverty, food insecurity, and social unrest Likoti (2020). Grazing associations, once promoted as community-based solutions, have instead intensified socio-economic and territorial conflicts by privileging certain groups and excluding others, thereby undermining social cohesion and sustainability Mashinini & Villiers (2005) and Mamimine & Mandivengerei (2001).

Despite these challenges, evidence suggests that traditional chieftainship retains legitimacy and cultural relevance in natural resource governance, offering potential for coexistence and collaboration with elected councils Kapa (2016) and Mwalukomo & Patel (2012). Yet, ineffective laws, weak enforcement, and policy gaps continue to undermine rangeland management, preventing participatory and bottom-up approaches that could ensure inclusivity and sustainability Shackleton (2000) and Mwalukomo (2012). This study therefore addresses the pressing question of how dual governance institutions—chieftainship and local councils affect range resource management in Lesotho, with a focus on their roles, effectiveness, and potential for collaborative governance in Qacha's Nek.

1.3 Research Objectives

Pursuant to the resolution of the defined research problem, the study seeks to a definite set of questions and objectives. The overall goal of the study is to evaluate the interaction

of governance institutions in range resource management in Lesotho. The specific objectives of the study are:

- a) To examine the roles and responsibilities of local authorities i.e. councillors and chiefs in range resource management in Lesotho.
- b) To appraise the traditional and modern RRM institutions for effectiveness and comparative advantage in RRM
- c) To identify policy and legislative innovations for improvement of the synergy between the local authority institutions in RRM.

1.4 Research Questions

- a) What are the specific roles and responsibilities of chiefs and councillors in range resource management in Lesotho?
- b) How do traditional institutions (chieftainship, maboeella) and modern institutions (community councils, RMAs) compare in terms of effectiveness and comparative advantage in managing range resources?
- c) What policy and legislative innovations can strengthen collaboration and synergy between chiefs and councillors in range resource management?
- d) What strategies can be implemented to enhance collaboration between chiefs and councillors for sustainable range resource management?
- e) How have RMAs and traditional maboeella systems evolved since the introduction of community councils in 1997?
- f) What are the current interactions and conflicts between RMAs, maboeella systems, and community council institutions?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study holds significant academic, practical, and policy implications which will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on governance and resource management, providing practical insights for improving local governance practices, and offers policy recommendations to enhance sustainable range resource management.

It will contribute to the academic discourse on the intersection of traditional and modern governance systems in range resource management. By examining the roles and effectiveness of the local authorities, the study provides empirical evidence on how dual governance structures can influence resource management outcomes Ostrom (2009). It furtherly extends the theoretical frameworks on governance, particularly in contexts where traditional authorities play a significant role alongside modern political institutions Gibson et al. (2005). The mixed-methods approach used in this study demonstrates the value of combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex governance issues and will serve as a model for future research in similar contexts Creswell and Plano Clark (2018).

By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of local authorities in range resource management, the study will offer practical insights for improving governance practices and highlight areas where training and capacity building can enhance the effectiveness of both governance structures Materechera (2010). The findings will further inform the development of targeted interventions to foster better collaboration between councillors and chiefs, leading to more effective and sustainable resource management practices. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of community participation and support in range resource management Artz (1993). The involvement of local communities in the research process seeks to empower them to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes. This participatory approach will enhance the legitimacy and acceptance of governance practices Ostrom (2009).

Furthermore, the study will provide evidence-based policy recommendations to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of governance structures in range resource management. The findings will guide policy designs that are culturally sensitive and context-specific, ensuring that they address the unique challenges faced by the local authorities and thus, in achieving sustainable rangeland management, there is a need for greater integration between traditional and modern governance systems, improved collaboration among stakeholders, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge and practices Dong et al. (2007); Rantšo (2015); Mamimine & Mandivengerei (2001).

1.6 Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on examining the roles, effectiveness, and interactions of two key local governance institutions in Lesotho: the chieftainship (customary authority) and the elected community councils (statutory authority).

The study explores how these institutions influence the management of range resources within the Range Management Areas (RMAs) of the Tsoelikana Community Council in Qacha's Nek District. The research emphasizes how this dual systems shape decision-making, conflict resolution, and community participation in range management, drawing on data collected through in-depth-interviews, surveys, focus group discussions, and document analysis between March-May 2025.

However, evidence from the field shows that Range Resource Management (RRM) is not limited to chiefs and councillors. Grazing Associations (GAs), established under the Range Management Programme of 1982, have historically played a significant role in enforcing rotational grazing and supporting communal decision-making Kisoza (2007). Although their role has weakened over time, they remain influential in some communities. Similarly, institutions such as the Forestry Department, Soil and Water Conservation Officers, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) authorities, and NGOs also interact with rangeland governance, though often in fragmented or project-specific ways Mairomi & Kimengsi (2021). Furthermore, the reality of governance on the ground involves multiple chiefs and councillors across catchments, which adds to institutional complexity and occasional conflicts of mandate. While these actors were not the primary focus of this study, they emerged in questionnaires, FGDs, and KIIs, underscoring the multi-layered nature of governance. Falayi et al. (2022).

The geographical scope is limited to selected villages and RMAs within Qacha's Nek, meaning findings reflect governance dynamics specific to this district and may not directly apply to other regions of Lesotho. The study also focuses on natural resource governance, particularly the management of communal rangelands, and does not cover other land-related issues (such as residential or commercial site allocation) unless directly linked to range resource management Bennett (2013).

There are several limitations. First, the study's findings may not be generalizable beyond the study area, as institutional arrangements and environmental pressures vary across Lesotho Kabanda et al. (2019); Bothale (2020); Mu (2022); Bisaro et al. (2010). Second, data relies on self-reported views of respondents, which may be shaped by personal bias, local politics, or institutional loyalty Gonyea (2005). Third, time and logistical constraints limited fieldwork duration and depth, and seasonal factors affected access to some communities during key periods for range activities. Lastly, while national policies such as the Draft Range Resources Management Bill are referenced, their broader political dynamics fall beyond this study's primary scope Government of Lesotho (2021).

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into how hybrid governance can either enable or constrain effective range resource management in Lesotho. It contributes to scholarship on integrated governance systems and natural resource co-management Mashinini & Villiers (2005); Artz (1993); Workman (2019).

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters, each building towards a comprehensive understanding of the roles, effectiveness, and interactions of local governance institutions in the management of range resources in Lesotho.

1.7.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the background to the study, the research problem, objectives, research questions, justification, scope and limitations, and outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.7.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

This chapter reviews existing literature on natural resource governance, dual governance systems (chieftainship and elected councils), and range resource management, with a focus on Lesotho and similar contexts. It also presents the conceptual framework guiding the study.

1.7.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research design, study area, data collection methods (including interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis), sampling strategies, and data analysis techniques. It also addresses ethical considerations and limitations of the methodology.

1.7.4 Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the key findings of the study, organized around the research objectives. It integrates quantitative and qualitative results, and discusses them in relation to existing literature and the conceptual framework.

1.7.5 Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the main findings, reflects on the study's contributions to knowledge and policy, outlines recommendations for improving governance and range resource management, and suggests areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Successful RRM in contexts like Lesotho necessarily must engage the dedicated capacities and involvement of the traditional and modern governance structures. Traditional governance systems, such as chieftaincies, have historically played a crucial role in the stewardship of natural resources, enforcing customary laws and practices that have evolved over centuries and this has definitely been the case in Lesotho Kapfudzaruwa & Sowman (2009). Conversely, modern governance systems, introduced during colonial and post-colonial periods, are designed to implement statutory laws and national policies at the local level Mandondo (2000). In Lesotho, this played out in the attempted transition of governance from chiefs to Village Development Councils (VDCs), which did not fully assume the powers of the chiefs, such as designating reserved grazing areas Moses (2015). Subsequently, the VDCs were replaced by Community Councils complicating governance, as interim councils temporarily reverted range management responsibilities back to chiefs Turner (2013). Inter alia, the RMA program was implemented in 1982 to improve range condition and livestock management productivity on Lesotho's rangelands by mobilizing collective management of communal grazing areas Artz (1993).

2.2 History of traditional and modern leadership in Lesotho

In Lesotho, as in other African communities, traditional chiefs are pivotal in managing range resources and hold significant authority in the enforcement of customary laws Likoti (2020). Chiefs, for instance, have historically been the custodians of land and range resources, enforcing customary laws that govern use of range resources particularly under the framework of the Laws of Lerotholi (1968). The foregoing often includes sophisticated systems of resource allocation, conservation, and conflict resolution which rooted in deep ecological knowledge and cultural heritage which have had a commendable record of promoting sustainable resource use Asrawijaya (2024); Saefullah et al. (2024);

Gadgil et al. (1993). In parallel, the Common Law framework operated at national level and mainly outside the domain of range resources management although a framework of local government council was piloted in the early 1960s but subsequently abandoned after independence in 1966.

In the 1980s, the RMA with grazing associations concept was introduced in Lesotho and piloted in the Qacha's Nek district at Sehlabathebe in 1982 and later at Ha Ramatšeliselo /Ha Moshebi in 1987 to manage communal grazing lands under chieftainship institutions. The pilot areas served as testing ground to: a) identify effective ways of formally establishing an RMA; b) mobilize community support; c) organize a Grazing Association; d) devise appropriate range – and livestock – management activities; and e) develop requisite support infrastructure Artz (1993). This system was considered successful in the pilot areas and elsewhere at Pelaneng/Bokong and Mokhotlong /Sanqebethu established in 1988 until the Local Government Act of 1997 introduced the local community council (LCC) institution, which created jurisdictional overlaps and conflicts with traditional maboeella systems Saefullah et.al. (2024); Gadgil et.al. (1993). The LCC institution, elected through democratic processes within designated electoral divisions under the Local Government Act of 1997, is tasked with the implementation of national policies and statutory regulations at the local level. Its officials, the members of LCC known as Councillors, are accountable to their local constituents and are often seen as representatives of modern administrative governance. However, their effectiveness in RRM are compromised by limited resources, insufficient training, and the overlapping jurisdiction with traditional leaders Coulibaly-Lingani et al. (2011). Local council committees, particularly ward committees in South Africa, face significant challenges in promoting effective administrative governance and local democracy. These committees struggle to influence decision-making processes and often lack resources, hampering their effectiveness Sekgala, (2016); Diedericks & Seitholo (2018). Communication issues between municipalities and communities, as well as inadequate support from local councils, further impede their functioning Diedericks & Seitholo (2018); Reddy & Sikhakane (2008). Despite being designed to enhance public participation and local

governance, these committees have not been consistently effective, impacting service delivery and citizen engagement Reddy & Sikhakane (2008). The shift from local government to local governance globally emphasizes the need for balancing public sector modernization with wider civic participation Swindal & McAreavey, (2012). However, strategies like community governance and decentralization are not panaceas and require careful consideration of contextual factors and interactions among multiple variables to achieve desired outcomes in local governance Yi & Qiu (2024).

2.3 Governance complexities

The dual governance system often leads to conflicts due to overlapping responsibilities and differing approaches to RRM. Thus, in Lesotho the conflicts between chiefs and local councils often stem from overlapping and poorly harmonized mandates regarding land and natural resource governance Kokome (2025). While chiefs traditionally derive their authority from customary law to allocate land and manage communal resources, councillors are empowered under statutory frameworks, particularly the Local Government Act of 1997, to oversee development and land-related decisions within community councils. This duality creates friction, especially in matters of grazing control, range management, and allocation of sites for housing or cultivation Cousins (1996).

For example, the study has shown that in Lesotho, chiefs sometimes continue to allocate land without consultation with local councils, leading to disputes over legitimacy and confusion at the community level Kapa (2016). Similarly, studies highlight how some councils attempt to assert authority over areas that communities still view as under chieftainship control, particularly in Range Management Areas (RMAs), leading to tensions and sometimes open conflict Ubink (2007). This situation often results in inefficiency in resource use, weak enforcement of environmental regulations, and difficulty in implementing sustainable land management practices Matlosa (1999).

Despite the conflicts, there are potential synergies. Integrated governance combining traditional knowledge with modern administrative frameworks can enhance the effectiveness of RRM Nyathi & Ayodele (2024). The dual governance system, if better harmonized, offers a chance to combine the deep-rooted traditional knowledge of chiefs,

who possess intimate understanding of local ecological conditions, seasonal grazing patterns, and customary conflict resolution mechanisms, with the planning, technical expertise, and development funding channels that elected councils can access through the state and development partners Mamimine & Mandivengerei (2001). For example, in Range Management Areas (RMAs), chiefs can play a critical role in mobilizing community compliance with grazing controls, while councils can support the development of infrastructure such as water points or fencing through public budgets and donor funds. The World Bank has funded infrastructure development and grazing rights allocation in communal areas across various African countries Haan (1994); Artz (1993).

A study argues that integrated governance structures that respect both customary authority and modern administrative systems can lead to more sustainable and locally accepted natural resource management Nyathi & Ayodele (2024). In Lesotho's context, this could mean establishing joint committees or forums where chiefs, councillors, and community stakeholders collectively plan, implement, and monitor RRM activities Lekaota (2016). Such integration could help overcome duplication of efforts, reduce disputes over roles, and ensure that interventions are both ecologically sound and socially legitimate Slootweg et al. (2001). Indeed, evidence from pilot projects in the highlands of Lesotho shows that where chiefs and councils have worked together, for example in community-driven soil conservation schemes-outcomes have been more durable because they combine local legitimacy with external support Khaketla (2010). However, several challenges e.g. lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities lead to confusion and conflict potentially hindering the efficiency of dual governance systems in RRM Muchaku & Magaiza (2024); Stuart-Hill et al. (2020). Both traditional and modern governance structures often lack adequate resources for effective RRM Mamimine & Mandivengerei (2001). In the case of Lesotho, Councilors earn sitting allowances much higher than the salaries and benefits of chiefs. The persistent remuneration gap between councillors and chiefs has fueled tensions that extend beyond salaries into the governance of natural resources, particularly range resource management (RRM) Lesotho Times (2024). While councilors currently earn, sitting allowances averaging around M4,500 per month, they have publicly demanded increases to M20,000 per month, arguing that their growing administrative and oversight duties, including on matters like Range Management Areas (RMAs)- justify the higher

pay Public Eye (2024). In contrast, chiefs remain paid as low as M1,500 to M4,500 per month, depending on rank, despite efforts by the Lesotho Workers' Association (LEWA) and traditional leaders' associations to advocate for salary reforms. Although a salary adjustment was approved by Cabinet in 2024, it has not been implemented, prompting chiefs to engage in strikes and go-slows MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism (2025).

These tensions spill over into RRM because both governance structures play critical but overlapping roles. Chiefs are traditionally responsible for enforcing grazing controls and mobilizing communities around range protection, while councillors are tasked under statutory law to coordinate land use planning and environmental management. When chiefs feel undervalued and unsupported by even the principal chiefs, as seen during their recent strikes, their participation in RRM initiatives weakens, for example, delaying site inspections, approvals for range improvements, or enforcement of communal grazing rules Public Eye (2024). This creates governance gaps that undermine efforts to sustainably manage Lesotho's fragile rangelands Gusha et al. (2024) and Likoti (2020). The perception among the public and key actors in Lesotho is that councillors often look down upon chiefs, who enjoy limited benefits compared to their elected counterparts. This fosters a sense of inferiority and insecurity among chiefs, who sometimes respond through undermining tactics or unproductive attempts to assert that they have greater knowledge or enjoy deeper community respect Kita (2018). The ensuing competition for authority typically results in power struggles that undermine cooperative efforts, including in critical areas such as range resource management Dahlberg & Söderberg (2023). In Lesotho, a water management project aimed at improving community irrigation systems and water tank infrastructure in areas such as Qalo in 2019 faced delays and disruptions due to disputes between local councils and traditional leadership Workman (2019). These tensions arose from uncertainty and competition over authority in the management of water resources, as decentralization efforts blurred the boundaries of responsibility between councils, chiefs, and rural water committees Bildhaeuser (2010). Similar tensions exist in dam-affected communities, where resettled populations struggle with new water payment systems and inadequate communication channels for conflict resolution Bildhaeuser (2010). The resulting power struggles contributed to the neglect of critical water infrastructure, with community water tanks falling into disrepair and irrigation

benefits delayed, ultimately exacerbating water scarcity and undermining rural livelihoods Workman (2019).

In another instance, disputes between traditional authorities and statutory governance structures have directly undermined range resource management initiatives, offering parallels to reforestation project challenges. For instance, a grazing restoration project at Lekhalong-la-Lithunya wetland experienced major delays and inefficiencies due to conflicting claims of authority between the Principal Chief of Malingoaneng and the elected Liseng-Mofolaneng Grazing Association Tsoelopele Consultants and Contractors et al. (2009). The Principal Chief asserted jurisdiction and delegated certain permit functions to the Grazing Association, but internal conflicts and overlapping authority with local councils caused the association to become dormant. As a result, grazing permits were inconsistently issued, covering only about 3% of actual grazing activity, and no clear leadership emerged to ensure the project's success. This stalemate led to missed ecological cycles for restoration, mirroring how similar chief–council disputes could derail reforestation initiatives by delaying site selection and planting activities, concluded Tsoelopele Consultants and Contractors et al. (2009).

Lastly, a development initiative aimed at constructing schools and clinics in Maseru District encountered significant delays due to a power struggle between the local principal chief and the municipal councillor over budget control and decision-making Matipi (2011). The disagreement centered on who had the authority to allocate funds, approve contractors, and oversee project execution. This stalemate froze all progress: contracts were unsigned, materials unpurchased, and the project missed critical timelines-leading to prolonged construction delays and increased costs due to inflation and repeated mobilization of contractors Kabi, Kompi and Twala (2014). This case highlights the broader issue in Lesotho's governance system: when authority is contested, essential community services like schools and clinics suffer-mirroring similar disruptions seen in natural resource projects like reforestation or grazing Sibanda (2003).

In Ghana, while chieftaincy is supported for cultural reasons, there's criticism of chiefs' performance, particularly in land management Ubink (2007). Additionally, South African research reveals challenges in implementing legislation for traditional leaders'

participation in municipal councils, with traditional leaders feeling limited and municipalities showing negative attitudes Klaas-Makolomakwe & Reddy (2020). In Sierra Leone, tensions exist between chiefs and NGOs in dispute resolution, with chiefs perceiving NGOs as undermining their authority Conteh (2014). Interestingly, competition between chiefs and elected councilors is associated with improved public goods provision, while collusion or familial ties correlate with poorer development outcomes Cook (2015). These studies highlight the complex relationships between traditional and modern governance structures, emphasizing the need for balanced power-sharing and clear role definitions to enhance local development.

Discrepancies between customary and statutory laws create legal ambiguities and enforcement issues Mamdani (1996). In many regions, customary laws recognize communal land ownership, where land is managed by traditional leaders and allocated to community members based on customary practices. However, statutory laws often require formal land titles and registration (Bilal et al., 2003) This discrepancy leads to disputes when individuals or entities seek to formalize ownership, causing legal battles that hinder land development and management. For example, customary laws often govern the use and management of natural resources like water, forests, and grazing lands, emphasizing communal rights and responsibilities Keresi R. Fonmanu et al., 2003). Statutory laws, on the other hand, may impose individual permits and regulatory frameworks. This discrepancy creates enforcement issues, as communities may resist statutory regulations that they perceive as undermining their traditional rights and practices. Community perceptions of governance structures significantly affect their legitimacy and effectiveness (Mukherjee, 2004. In many rural areas across Africa, traditional leaders are deeply trusted due to their cultural and historical ties, while modern governance structures-like municipal councils, are frequently met with suspicion or skepticism Amoateng (2017).

In addition to these dynamics, the governance of Range Resource Management (RRM) is even more complex because it extends beyond the duality of chiefs and councillors. Evidence from questionnaires and FGDs revealed that other institutions also play, or should play, critical roles in rangeland governance but are often omitted or marginalized. For example, Grazing Associations (GAs), once central under the 1982 Range

Management Programme-still exist in many communities but are sidelined due to unclear integration with local councils and chiefs Turner (2009); Twala & Kabi (2014). Similarly, agencies such as the Forestry Department, Soil and Water Conservation officers, and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) authorities have statutory responsibilities related to rangeland and watershed management, yet their involvement in daily RRM decisions remains minimal Government of Lesotho, (2021); Stuart-Hill et al. (2020). Respondents often pointed out that *“Forestry works on planting trees, but we never see them working with chiefs on grazing issues”* and that EIAs are considered only for large projects rather than routine communal land use. The exclusion of these actors creates governance gaps, as critical environmental expertise and regulatory oversight are left outside RRM structures Likoti, (2019).

Furthermore, the multiplicity of chiefs and councillors within single Range Management Areas (RMAs) adds another layer of complexity. In practice, several chiefs preside over different villages within one RMA, alongside multiple councillors representing overlapping constituencies. This leads to inconsistent decision-making and confusion. As one FGD participant noted: *“One chief tells us the grazing area is closed, another says it is open, and the councillor also gives a different message.”* This not only undermines community compliance but also erodes trust in governance Matlosa (1999); Gusha et al., (2024). Equally important is the absence of key groups such as women, youth, and herders in formal governance structures, despite their daily dependence on rangelands. Studies show that the exclusion of these stakeholders often leads to poor compliance and weak legitimacy of rangeland governance systems Baasi, (2016); Ostrom, (2005); Nyathi & Ayodele, (2024). Their participation is critical, as women and youth often serve as primary resource users, yet remain structurally marginalized in decision-making (Amoateng, (2017).

Taken together, these omissions and multiplicities illustrate that RRM governance in Lesotho is more fragmented than a simple duality of chiefs and councillors. While the study’s primary focus is on these two institutions, the findings underscore the need for broader institutional integration, bringing in Grazing Associations, technical line ministries, and marginalized community groups. This recognition provides a stronger

basis for advocating integrated RRM frameworks, aligning with lessons from South Africa, where traditional leaders collaborate with municipalities in environmental governance Klaas-Makolomakwe & Reddy (2020); from Ghana, where chieftaincy remains central to land allocation but co-management is needed to strengthen accountability Ubink (2007); and from Sierra Leone, where hybrid governance between chiefs and civil society actors has been shown to improve dispute resolution and local compliance Conteh (2014); Cook (2015).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The governance of range resources in Lesotho is embedded within complex institutional, ecological, and socio-political dynamics that cannot be fully understood through descriptive analysis alone. A theoretical grounding is therefore necessary to provide a systematic lens for examining the dual governance system of chiefs and Local Community Councils (LCCs). Theoretical frameworks help to interpret how institutions operate, how communities respond to governance arrangements, and how ecological outcomes are shaped by social interactions Ostrom (2005); Berkes (2009).

In this study, the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework would be selected to unpack institutional rules, roles, and decision-making processes, making it suitable for comparing chiefs and councillors in terms of authority and effectiveness Basurto et al. (2013); Clement, 2010). The Adaptive Governance framework would be integrated to assess how institutions respond to uncertainty and change—particularly relevant in Qacha’s Nek where rangeland governance has been reshaped by decentralization reforms and climate variability Folke et al. (2005); Dietz et al. (2003). Lastly, the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework would provide the analytical foundation for linking governance institutions with ecological outcomes, ensuring that the study captures the interdependence between social rules and rangeland conditions Berkes et al. (2003); Epstein et al. (2013).

By combining these complementary frameworks, the study not only grounds its methodology in established theory but also ensures that the findings can be interpreted in a way that informs both policy and practice. Thus, the below-mentioned section is

essential, as it lays the conceptual foundation that directly informs the research design, data analysis, and interpretation of results.

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

2.5.1 The Institutional Analysis and Development Framework

The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework, provides a comprehensive approach to analyzing the governance of range resources by examining the roles and interactions of various actors within institutional arrangements Ostrom (1990). It focuses on how rules, norms, and strategies within different governance structures influence outcomes. I will leverage this framework to compare the roles and effectiveness of chiefs and LCC in resource management by analyzing how they interact with each other and with the community and examine the formal and informal rules governing resource use and management, and highlighting differences between traditional and modern governance structures. Recent studies have utilized the IAD framework to understand resource governance in similar contexts Basurto et al., (2013). They employed the IAD framework to analyze fisheries management, demonstrating its applicability in diverse range resource settings. Similarly, a study on forest management in Nepal showed how the framework could uncover the complexities of governance involving traditional and formal institutions. Clement (2010).

2.5.2 The Adaptive Governance Framework

Adaptive governance emphasizes the capacity of institutions to adapt to changing environmental and social conditions. It is particularly useful for managing resources in contexts where uncertainty and change are prevalent, requiring flexible and responsive governance structures Folke et al. (2005). This framework will help assess how chiefs and community councils adapted their governance strategies to changing environmental and political conditions especially since the advent of RMA program and LCC institutions in Qacha's Nek. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of collaboration between different governance actors, which is crucial in understanding the interaction between traditional chiefs and elected councils and was demonstrated in managing common-pool

resources under changing conditions where they found that successful resource management under changing conditions depends on the ability to adapt and respond to new challenges Dietz et al. (2003). However, achieving effective resource governance in rural areas requires flexible structures that integrate both customary practices and statutory regulations. Multiple studies emphasize that collaborative efforts between traditional chiefs and elected councils can strengthen adaptability and resilience. For example, integrated governance enhances trust among actors, improves information sharing, reduces conflicts, and fosters cooperation Hubbard et al. (2024). When chiefs and municipal councils establish participatory forums and clearly defined roles, communities are more willing to engage, leading to better outcomes in natural resource and infrastructure management AU Commission (2025). Traditional leaders and elected officials need to establish trust-based relationships to manage resources effectively and adaptive governance could enhance the resilience of social-ecological systems, providing a strong theoretical basis for analyzing governance efficiency in dynamic environments Lebel et al. (2006).

2.5.3 **The Social-Ecological Systems Framework**

The Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework integrates ecological and social components to analyze how human and environmental systems interact and affect each other Berkes et al. (2003). It focuses on understanding the complexity and interdependence of social and ecological systems. The SES framework facilitates a comprehensive analysis of how chiefs and community councils manage natural resources by considering both social and ecological factors. It also underscores the interdependence of governance structures and ecological outcomes, helping to compare the effectiveness of different governance systems in sustaining natural resources. The SES framework has been widely applied in natural resource management research where it was used to study water governance, demonstrating its ability to address complex governance issues involving multiple actors and ecological processes Epstein et al. (2013). In similar studies SES was used on the performance of irrigation systems and showed how the framework could reveal the interactions between governance structures and ecological outcomes Cox et al. (2010).

Accordingly, this study aligns with the selected theoretical frameworks to provide a robust analytical foundation for comparing the efficiency of chiefs and community councils in Range Resource Management (RRM) in Qacha's Nek. The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework is applied to explore institutional arrangements and decision-making rules, while the Adaptive Governance framework is employed to assess aspects of flexibility, learning, and collaboration. Lastly, the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework is used to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the interactions between social and ecological components.

2.5.4 **Research gap analysis**

There is limited research on how customary and statutory governance systems can be effectively integrated to enhance RRM. Most studies treat these systems as mutually exclusive rather than exploring synergies Berkes (2009). While there are general studies on governance structures, specific contexts like Lesotho, where both chiefs and community councils play significant roles are under-researched and understanding the unique interplay in such contexts is crucial Leduka (2006). Additionally, there is a lack of empirical data comparing the efficiency and sustainability outcomes of resource management practices under chiefs versus community councils and such data are essential to identify best practices and areas needing improvement Agrawal (2001). Research often overlooks community members' perceptions and their participation in governance processes. Understanding these perceptions is key to developing more inclusive and effective governance structures Cleaver (2002).

Addressing these gaps is critical for developing a holistic understanding of RRM in Lesotho. Integrating customary and statutory systems could provide a more robust framework for governance, leveraging the strengths of both systems (Kokome, 2025). Conducting context-specific studies in Lesotho will offer insights that are directly applicable to the local environment, potentially informing policy and practice in similar contexts. Gathering empirical data on efficiency and sustainability outcomes will enable policymakers to make evidence-based decisions. Finally, incorporating community perceptions will ensure that governance structures are inclusive, fostering greater

community engagement and compliance. By filling these gaps, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between traditional and formal governance systems in RRM, providing a basis for more effective and sustainable practices in Lesotho and beyond (Mamimine & Mandivengerei, 2001).

2.5.5 Conclusion

The literature reveals that dual governance systems involving traditional chiefs and democratically elected community councils are common many African contexts. In Lesotho, this norm is also well documented and is enacted by customary and common law frameworks although these systems face significant challenges due to role ambiguity, resource constraints, legal conflicts, and power struggle (Kali, 2020). However, there are opportunities for synergies through collaborative and integrated governance approaches. By applying analytical frameworks such as the IAD, adaptive governance, and SES, this study aims to comprehensively the efficiency of governance structures in natural resource management in Qacha's Nek. Ortiz-Riomalo et al. (2022).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess governance interactions in RRM in Lesotho. This methodology is appropriate for capturing the complexities of governance structures, evaluating their effectiveness, and identifying potential policy innovations. The rationale for this approach is to ensure a comprehensive, triangulated analysis that maximizes the validity and reliability of findings Creswell & Creswell (2018).

3.2 Research Design

The research methodology for this study integrated both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the governance structures and their impact on resource management. The design was structured to ensure robust data collection, analysis, and interpretation assuring reliability and validity Creswell and Plano Clark (2018). This mixed-methods approach was employed to combine the strengths of qualitative and quantitative research Tashakkori & Teddlie (2021). The study investigated the: a) roles and responsibilities of councillors and chiefs in RRM; b) comparative efficiency of governance institutions; c) historical evolution of RMAs and traditional maboeella systems; and d) policy innovations necessary for governance improvement. The methodology leverage triangulation to enhance the reliability of findings by comparing qualitative and quantitative data sources Bryman (2022). This approach captured both numerical governance efficiency indicators and in-depth perceptions of governance actors hence provided holistic understanding Creswell (2018). Lastly, it ensured that empirical data and stakeholder insights inform policy recommendations Yin, (2020).

3.3 Research Approach

Following the research design above, this study adopted a convergent-parallel mixed-methods, comparative case-study approach with descriptive, exploratory and diagnostic elements Creswell & Plano Clark (2018). In practice this meant that quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same field period, analyzed independently, and then merged for interpretation (convergent parallel design) Yin (2020). The study treated Qacha's Nek (Tsoelikana CC) as a bounded case for in-depth, context-sensitive inquiry while explicitly comparing institutions (chieftainship vs LCC; RMAs vs maboeella) to draw broader lessons for governance reform (case-study + comparative). This combined strategy is consistent with best practice for governance research where contextual depth and cross-institutional comparison are both required Tashakkori & Teddlie (2021). 58693080

3.4 Study Area

The study was conducted in the Tsoelikana Community Council (LCC #71) of Qacha's Nek District, one of the original pilot areas of the Range Management Area (RMA) program in the early 1980s, prior to the promulgation of the Local Government Act of 1997, which ushered in the era of Local Community Councils (LCCs). The focus of the study was on the three villages of Schlabathebe, Ramatšelis, and Tsoelike, which historically represent the confluence of traditional *maboeella* institutions and the RMA innovation, operating under both chieftainship and elected local authorities Artz et al. (1993)

The community is predominantly Basotho, with a strong cultural identity rooted in livestock keeping, particularly sheep, goats, and cattle, which form the backbone of local livelihoods. Herd boys (*balisana*) play an important role in rangeland use and management, while crop farming-mainly maize, sorghum, and beans, supplements household food needs. In addition to agriculture, communities engage in small-scale trade, herbal medicine collection, and limited wage labor migration to South Africa. Land in Tsoelikana, as in much of Lesotho, is held under customary tenure and allocated through the chieftainship system Kokome et al., (2025). While the Local Government Act (1997)

vested land administration authority in community councils, in practice chiefs remain influential gatekeepers of access and land-use decisions, resulting in overlapping authority and frequent disputes. Farmers' associations and grazing associations function as intermediaries in rangeland management but have faced challenges of legitimacy, exclusion, and elite capture Kabi et al. (2014) and Daemane et al. (2012).

Demographically, the area is marked by youth outmigration, leaving a high proportion of women, elderly, and children in villages, with young men often employed as herd boys or seasonal laborers in South Africa. This dynamic shape governance participation, as elderly men and chiefs dominate decision-making structures, while women and youth are often marginalized despite their dependence on land and rangelands for survival. Historically, Tsoelikana is significant for hosting the Sehlabathebe National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which reflects both the environmental importance of the area and the ongoing tensions between conservation, traditional grazing rights, and modern governance systems Duval et al. (2021). This history has made Tsoelikana a strategic case for studying dual governance dynamics in natural resource management, Wittmayer et al. (2010)

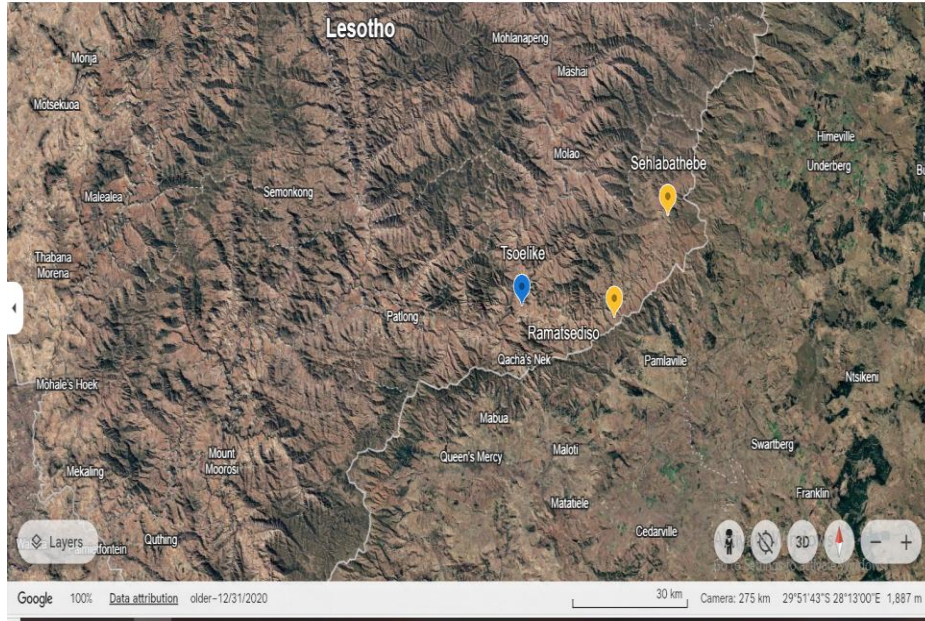


Fig. 1. Study areas in Qacha's Nek (Tsoelikana Council).

3.5 Sample size

The target population consisted of adults aged 18 and above in the Tsoelikana Community Council, which totaled 12,559 people and 4689 households as of April 2025. The council comprises 40 villages but the study focused on six purposively selected villages—three falling under RMAs and three under non-RMA zones. To ensure balanced representation and valid subgroup comparisons, a stratified random sampling technique was adopted. The population was divided into two distinct strata: villages with active RMA systems, where grazing is regulated through structured local governance, and non-RMA villages, where grazing associations are either inactive or absent. Within each stratum, a systematic random sampling was applied to select participants from the chosen villages which enhances representativeness and minimizes sampling bias, especially in comparative studies of different governance systems Creswell (2014). The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula with a total population (N) of 12,559 and a margin of error of eight percent, suitable for a mini-survey, ensuring reliability without overstressing research resources Yamane (1967).

When constraints such as time, budget, and accessibility limit full sampling, smaller but well-stratified and random samples are acceptable if bias is minimized and representativeness-maintained Israel (1992). Thus, a total of **90 respondents (15 from each of 6 villages)** were taken through a simple/systematic random sampling to ensure quality and generalizability within manageable limits. This stratified proportional representation enhances external validity, a key requirement in governance and community-based research Bryman (2016). For triangulation, a sample size of 10 key informants (chiefs and councilors), selected on the basis of their technical experience with local governance and range resources use and allocation, were randomly selected from Tsoelikana Council to offer qualitative in-depths. A similar approach was used in the study of participation and governance in the Manonyane Community Council in Maseru to manage thematic saturation in local leadership Motseki-Mokhothu (2024).

3.6 Research Tools

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between governance institutions in RRM, multiple qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were employed. These entailed surveys, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis. The selection of these methods is based on their ability to capture diverse perspectives from different stakeholders and provide a robust analysis of governance efficiency Creswell (2014); Field (2018).

Surveys were utilized to gather standardized data from a broad pool of participant ensuring comparability across different governance institutions. This method was particularly effective for collecting numerical data on community perceptions of governance efficiency, leadership roles, and policy effectiveness Bryman (2016). Surveys also facilitated the use of descriptive and inferential statistics to establish patterns and trends Groves et al. (2019). In-depth interviews with chiefs, councillors, technical officers, and community members allowed for an exploratory understanding of roles, responsibilities, and governance challenges in RRM. This qualitative approach enabled participants to express experiences and perspectives in detail, providing contextual data that may not be captured through surveys Patton (2020).

Three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to complement data obtained from surveys and key informant interviews. Each FGD comprised 15–20 participants, representing a diverse cross-section of the community—including youths, elders, men, women, and herdboys, with a few participants having tertiary education though the majority had limited formal schooling. This diversity ensured inclusive representation across age, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds, enriching the depth and validity of the qualitative data. The FGDs were held in Pitseng (FGD 1), Motalaneng (FGD 2), and Liteng teng (FGD 3) within the Tsoelikana Community Council to capture social and ecological variation across the study area. Each session lasted 90–120 minutes and was guided by semi-structured questions derived from the study objectives, focusing on the roles, interactions, and effectiveness of local governance institutions in range resource management.

All discussions were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically using Taguette software. Coding was performed separately for each FGD to preserve contextual nuances, and patterns were compared across groups to identify both convergent and divergent perspectives. This structured and traceable approach strengthened data credibility through triangulation and enabled clear attribution of themes in the findings (e.g., “*FGD 1—Pitseng elders highlighted...*”).

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

A structured questionnaire (Appendix B) was administered and data captured and then processed i.e. cleaning, handling missing values, assigning numeric codes and recording variables. IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software was used to conduct descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistics was conducted to obtain chi-square, T-test, analysis of variance and correlation. Visualization of the data was done through tables, bar charts and pie charts for ease of interpretation. This method enabled a structured summary of quantitative responses and identification of prevailing trends Field (2018).

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis was conducted through a rigorous and systematic process grounded in thematic analysis, aimed at understanding the nuanced perceptions, roles, and interactions of chieftainship and community council institutions in RRM. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and FGDs with key informants entailing local chiefs, members of LCCs, technical officers, GA /RMA members, and ordinary community members. The qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using Taguette, an open-source software designed to support qualitative coding and theme identification. Thematic analysis followed the six-phase model outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). This includes familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Coding was conducted inductively to allow themes to emerge from the data, ensuring that participant voices and context-specific dynamics guided the interpretation. Credibility and trustworthiness of the data were ensured through triangulation of data sources (interviews and FGDs), member checking, and peer debriefing according to the criteria for qualitative rigor Lincoln & Guba (1985). The emergent themes focused on governance legitimacy, community participation, institutional conflict, and synergy opportunities between customary and statutory institutions. This approach allowed for a deep exploration of lived experiences and institutional realities, enhancing the validity of the findings and their alignment with real-world governance dynamics Creswell & Poth (2018).

To compare the effectiveness of chieftainship and elected councils in RRM, comparative analysis was conducted by assessing differences in governance strategies, policy implementation success rates, and stakeholder collaboration. This approach provides a structured evaluation of governance performance Silverman (2020). Data analysis primarily employed descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to examine the roles, effectiveness, and interactions of chieftainship and Local Community Councils (LCCs) in range resource management. Survey responses on community perceptions, institutional performance, and governance challenges were summarized using frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations.

Although logistic regression models were initially considered to explore predictors of governance effectiveness, they were not applied in the final analysis, as the study objectives focused on descriptive assessment of perceptions, institutional roles, and governance complexities, rather than predictive modeling. This ensures consistency between the research objectives, data analysis methods, and reported results.

This statistical approach allowed for identifying key determinants of governance success (Tabachnick & Fidell (2019)). A systematic review of policy documents and legislative frameworks is conducted to assess the legal basis of governance structures in RRM. Content analysis methods are applied to identify policy strengths, gaps, and opportunities for institutional synergy (Bowen (2019)).

3.8 Ethical Consideration

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. Written informed consent were obtained from all participants. Additionally, data had been anonymized to protect participants' identities and ensure confidentiality. The study obtained ethical approval from the National University of Lesotho's institutional review board (IRB) before commencing data collection.

A systematic review of national policy documents and legal frameworks governing range resource management (RRM) in Lesotho reveals both progress and persisting institutional fragmentation. Key legislative instruments such as the Local Government Act of 1997, the Chieftainship Act of 1968, the Range Management and Grazing Control Regulations of 1980, and the Lesotho National Rangeland Management Policy of 2014, outline a dual governance structure comprising elected councils and traditional chieftainship. Content analysis of these instruments indicates legal ambiguity in role delineation, particularly concerning land allocation, enforcement of grazing controls, and oversight of Range Management Areas (RMAs). While the Local Government Act 1997, devolves authority to councils, the Chieftainship Act preserves the traditional role of chiefs, often leading to overlapping mandates and institutional tensions in resource management (Mamdani

(1996); Logar (2022). Moreover, the legal provisions governing RMAs lack enforcement clarity and do not adequately integrate community-based structures such as Maboella, despite their social legitimacy and conflict-resolution potential. This legal dualism is further complicated by inconsistent policy implementation, weak inter-institutional coordination, and limited stakeholder participation mechanisms. However, opportunities for institutional synergy exist in aligning the legal framework with participatory governance principles, as advocated in the National Decentralization Policy (2014) and the Land Act, (2010), which call for inclusive decision-making and recognition of customary land use practices. Strengthening the legal integration of traditional and modern institutions through legislative harmonization and clearly defined roles could enhance accountability, legitimacy, and sustainability in RRM Twyman et al. (2019); Sebatane & Qhobela (2020).

Chapter 5: Results and Discussions

5.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents in the Study Area

Table 1 provides insights into the socioeconomic characteristics of the evaluation respondents in the Tsoelikana Council. In the sample population, 57.8 % were male (n=52) compared to 42.2% (n=38) female respondents. The majority of respondents (56.7%, n = 51) fall within the adult age group (36–60 years), followed by the youth category (18–35 years), which accounts for 25.6% (n = 23). Seniors aged 61 and above constitute 17.8% (n= 16) of the sample. Most respondents (42.2%, n=38) have acquired secondary education, while smaller proportion 24.4% (n= 22) have reached tertiary education levels and a slightly lower proportion have did not go beyond primary education 23.3% (n=21).

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Survey Respondents by Categorical Variables (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	52	57.8
	Female	38	42.2
Age Group	18-35 years (Youth)	23	25.6
	36-60 years (Adult)	51	56.7
	61+ years (Senior)	16	17.8
Educational Level	Primary	21	23.3
	Secondary	38	42.2
	Tertiary	22	24.4
	No formal schooling	9	10.0

5.2 The Roles and Responsibilities of Local Authorities in Range Resource Management

The chieftainship and local community council (LCC) institutions were disaggregated in order to ascertain the institutional roles and responsibilities of each authority in respect of range resource management (Fig. 2).

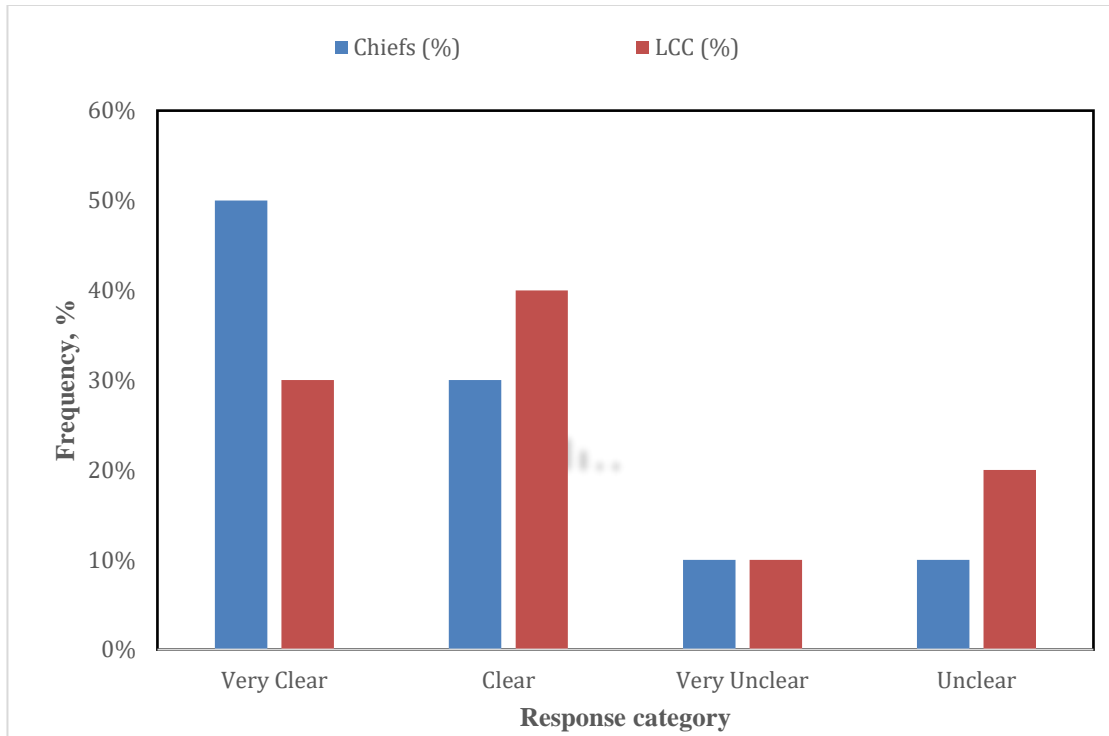


Fig. 2. Perceived Role Clarity of Chiefs and Local Community Councils in Range Resource Management — Survey Respondents (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The findings showed that chiefs are perceived by community members as having clearer and more defined roles compared to Local Community Councils (LCC). Specifically, 50% of the respondents rated the role of chiefs in RRM as very clear compared to a 30% rating in favor of LCCs. Conversely, perceptions of role ambiguity were higher on the part of the LCC institution where comparatively a larger proportion of the population (20% n=18) confessed lack of clarity and /or understanding of the role of the LCCs compared to the chieftainship (10% n=9). However, a small minority of respondents (10%, n=9) perceived the roles and responsibilities of both institutions as very unclear.

The foregoing observations were reinforced in the qualitative triangulation of the findings where key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGDs) affirmed that chiefs were perceived as the primary custodians of range resources, responsible for overseeing grazing allocations and enforcing traditional norms (70%, n=63) including conflict management (65%, n=59). For example, a participant in the FGDs said:

“The chief always tells us where and when to graze, and we follow because he is closer to us.”

The LCCs, on the other hand, were primarily seen as implementers of policies and modern administrative processes especially those linked with infrastructure projects (42%, n=38). A key informant interviewee said:

“Councilors help with government projects, but they don’t actually manage grazing; that’s the chief’s duty.”

However, a participant in focus groups noted that:

“Chiefs act as custodians of range resources but struggle to coordinate with councilors on infrastructure for RMAs”.

These perceptions are contrary to the prescriptions of the Local Government Act of 1997 which states that local councils are mandated to oversee natural resource management, including rangeland governance, within their jurisdictions. However, there was general consensus amongst respondents acknowledging the challenge of overlapping mandates (50%, n=45) noting that the dual governance structure often creates confusion and, at times conflict regarding the jurisdictional authority of the two institutions and resultant confusion amongst the communities (48%, n=43). A community member during the FGDs said:

“Sometimes we are confused who is in charge because both say they have the final word.”

This consensus underscores the lived experience of communities navigating the customary and statutory domain landscapes of these authorities. Many respondents expressed a desire for clearer role definition and better collaboration between the two governance systems. These findings illustrate that a large proportion of the community sees chiefs as central to custodianship of land and enforcement of customary law. A significant portion also recognizes councilors’ role in linking the community to government development initiatives, although this is secondary to traditional leadership in daily management of range resources. Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative

results confirm that the study successfully met its first objective, which was to evaluate the specific roles and responsibilities of chiefs and councillors in RRM.

On the other hand, Hypothesis 1 posited that, “*The coexistence and/or overlapping jurisdictional authority of chiefs and elected local councils leads to conflicts in decision-making, inefficiencies, and a lack of clear accountability in range resource management (RRM).*” Thus, the findings of this study support this hypothesis as both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that respondents frequently highlighted conflicts, power struggles, and unclear roles between chiefs and councillors as major challenges to effective range resource management. These issues were further echoed in interviews and focus group discussions, where community members expressed concerns about duplication of responsibilities, lack of coordination, and poor communication between the two governance institutions.

Therefore, the study fails to reject Hypothesis 1, as the evidence affirms that dual governance contributes to role ambiguity hence inefficiencies and tension in the management of range resources in Qacha’s Nek. The data provides a comprehensive picture of how these roles are understood by local stakeholders and point to areas where policy and institutional reforms could enhance governance clarity and effectiveness in managing range resources.

The institutional analysis and development framework (IAD) Ostrom (2010) were overlaid over the results. The Framework emphasizes the significance of institutional rules, actor interactions, and shared outcomes within action arenas. The study found that Range Management Areas (RMAs) and traditional *Maboeella* practices coexist in the same landscape, yet lack integration. This was evidenced by a non-significant relationship between RMA membership and *Maboeella* participation (Chi-square = 3.66, $p = 0.161$) indicating institutional fragmentation.

Such fragmentation reflects the absence of a unifying institutional framework and overlaps between formal and customary governance, consistent with IAD’s concern about rule incoherence. The Local Government Act (1997) empowers councils with land and grazing responsibilities, yet the Chieftainship Act (1968) continues to validate chiefs’

traditional authority. The Range Resources Management Bill (2021) which seeks to consolidate and modernize the legal frameworks for rangeland governance is pending enactment in parliament. The findings reveal that the conundrum of overlap and ambiguity in institutional roles, which undermines collective action across Southern Africa in hybrid governance regimes Madzwamuse (2020), is playing out in Lesotho.

In this study, we sought to ascertain the institutional roles and responsibilities of each authority in respect of range resource management hence these findings reveal that the dual governance system of chiefs and LCCs in range resource management has led to overlapping roles, contested authority, and inconsistent cooperation. Chiefs remain the main custodians, responsible for grazing demarcation, firewood allocation, and enforcing rules, and are visible leaders in communities. However, since the introduction of LCCs in 1997, their authority has been weakened by unclear role definitions, contributing to reduced order and compliance. This aligns with Mokhosi et al. (2022) and Letsie & Shale (2023), who note that chiefs remain key custodians despite decentralization. The blurry mandates create governance challenges and the role ambiguity fuels rivalry and weak accountability Nkoana et al., (2022); Mapetla & Matlosa (2021). Other researchers Mamdani (1996); Phafane et al. (2020) similarly highlight that legal pluralism and power struggles undermine natural resource stewardship. While post-1997 reforms aimed at clarifying roles were initially promissory Kapa (2021), poor enforcement and weak coordination continue to limit progress.

Comparatively, in a similar study of hybrid governance in natural resource management Mapedza et al. (2021), traditional leaders were often deemed to retain legitimacy in the eyes of rural communities, while modern councils and committees struggle with capacity and acceptance. Others Fabricius et al. (2013) highlighted that successful resource governance frequently depends on blending statutory structures with traditional systems. In this study similar sentiments were echoed by participants' desire for clearer role definitions and stronger collaboration. Interestingly, these findings differ slightly from some cases of co-management in parts of East Africa, where greater integration of councils and traditional leaders has produced more coordinated governance structures Chirenje et al. (2020). In these contexts, legal reforms and capacity-building efforts have

helped reduce conflicts over jurisdiction, showing that Lesotho could benefit from similar initiatives.

Moreover, this study reflects recent policy dialogues in Lesotho Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs (2023) which stresses the urgent need to harmonize dual governance systems to address environmental degradation and improve range management. This underscores that the findings are not only consistent with academic literature but also with on-going policy priorities in the country. This objective fits within the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework. The IAD lens allowed the study to reveal how chiefs predominantly assume roles in land allocation, grazing permit oversight, and enforcing customary rules, while the LCCs focus on development planning and formal policy implementation. This lack of clarity has, in turn, weakened both compliance and accountability in managing rangelands.

5.3 Effectiveness and Comparative Appraisal of Traditional and Modern Governance Institutions in Rangeland Management

5.3a The Perception of the Effectiveness of the Chieftainship versus the Elected Community Council Institutions.

The perceptions of respondents on the effectiveness of the chieftainship and LCC institutions in the implementation of RRM systems and in the management of range resources are variant (Fig. 3). These findings show a polarized perception of the chiefs' effectiveness in managing range resources, with a noticeable tilt toward negative views. For example, 38.9% (n = 35) of respondents rated chiefs as very ineffective, which is the highest single rating category. This indicates a deep dissatisfaction among a large segment of the population regarding the role or performance of traditional authorities in current rangeland governance. In addition, 21.1% (n=19) rated chiefs as ineffective, further reinforcing negative sentiments. Combined, these two groups form 60% of respondents, showing that a majority hold a negative perception of the chief's current role or impact.

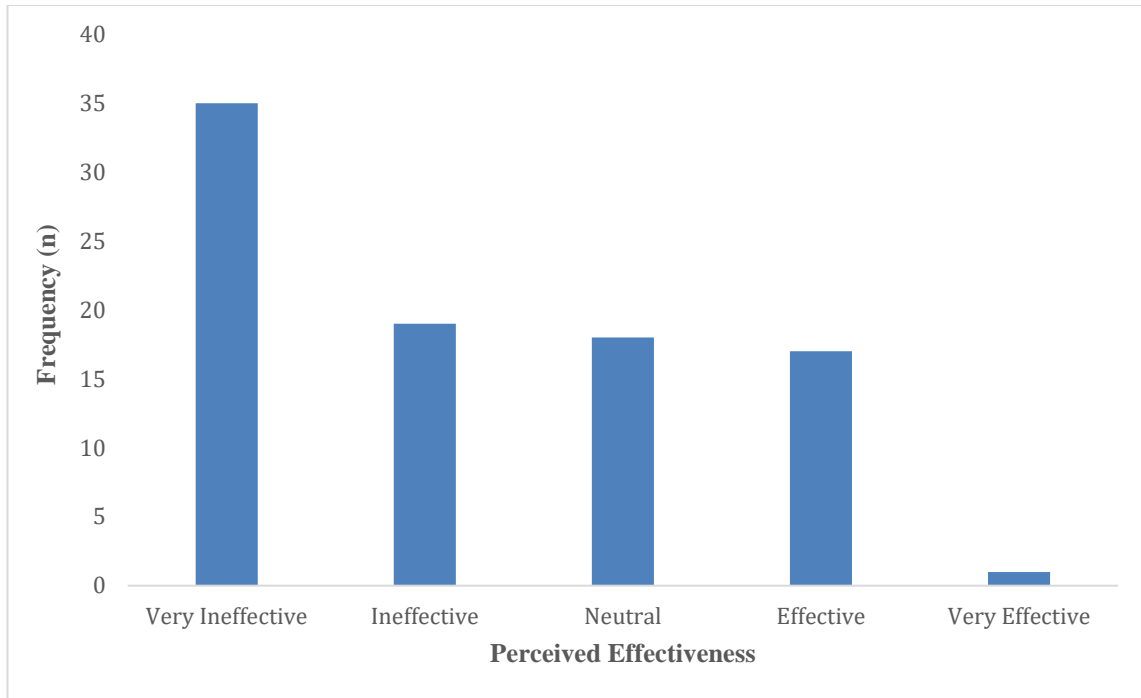


Figure 3: Community Perceptions of the Most Suitable Governance System for Range Resource Management in the Tsoelikana Community Council in Qacha’s Nek, Survey Respondents (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

However, 20.0% (n = 18) rated them as somewhat effective, reflecting a neutral or conditional attitude, perhaps acknowledging chiefs’ traditional roles but critiquing their diminished power or outdated methods. A combined proportion of respondents (20%, n =18) considered chiefs effective to very effective, indicating that some community members still value their contributions and legitimacy in managing communal resources. Within this combined category a very small minority (1.1%, n = 1) viewed chiefs as very effective suggesting that very few perceive the institution as fully competent or impactful in managing today’s rangeland challenges. This suggests that while the majority of the community understands the role of chiefs versus LCCs, they still perceive the chieftainship institution as unable or struggling to fulfill its role in managing range resources effectively.

On the other hand, the findings reveal mixed but generally modest perceptions of the effectiveness of LCC in managing range resources (Fig. 4).

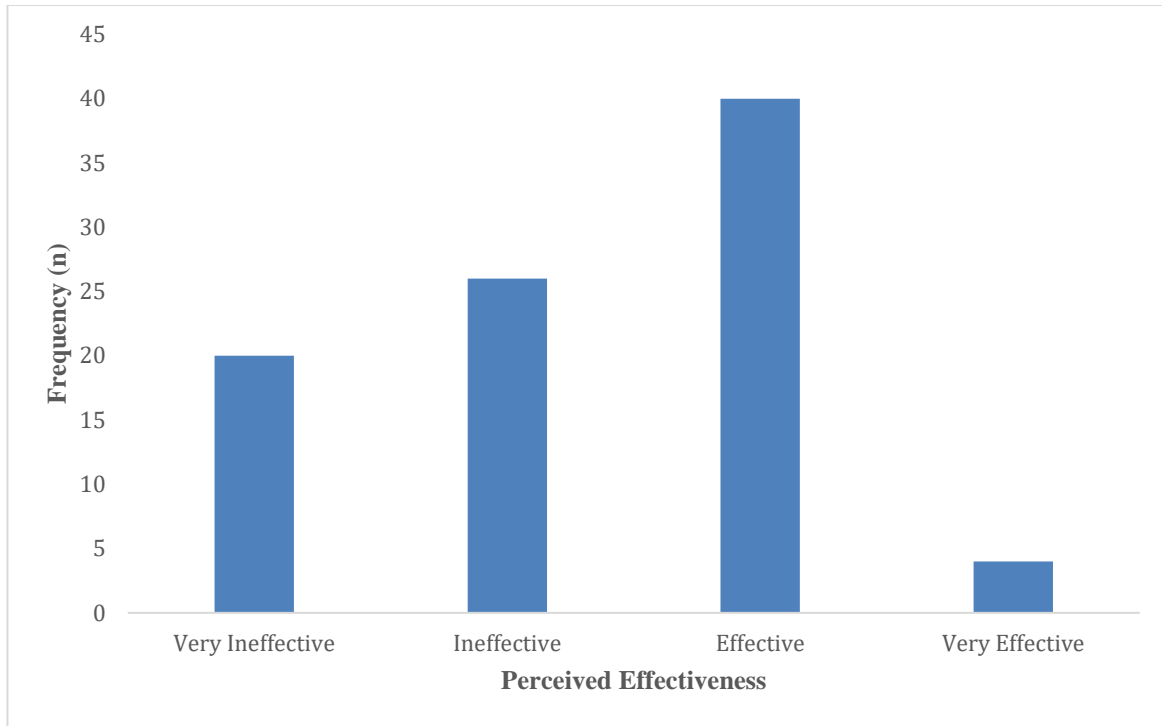


Fig.4. Perceived Effectiveness of Current Local Community Council (LCC) Approaches in Range Resource Management — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

In particular, 22.2% (n = 20) of the respondents rated the institution as very ineffective, indicating a notable portion of the population has serious concerns about its roles in rangeland governance. A slightly larger proportion (28.9%, n = 26) rated them as ineffective reinforcing the perceived lack of confidence because over half (51.1%) of the people holds a negative view of LCC performance. However, 44.4% (n = 40) rated the LCC institution as somewhat effective, implying that a portion of the population is moderate in the assessment of their contributions, possibly recognizing their formal authority but noting implementation gaps. However, 4.4% (n = 4) rated the LCC as very effective, showing that very few perceive them as highly competent or impactful in the range resource management space.

These findings highlight a perceived ineffectiveness of the LCC institution, with more than half of the respondents expressing dissatisfaction. Although some acknowledge their involvement, the low percentage of high ratings implies councillors face credibility and

performance challenges on the ground. This aligns with qualitative insights from the study which pointed to low visibility, limited technical capacity, and unclear governance roles for councillors, leading to weak coordination with chiefs, fragmented planning, and power struggles. That notwithstanding, both governance institutions (chiefs and councillors) are largely perceived by the community as ineffective or struggling in managing range resources. Chiefs appear to receive a slightly higher proportion of strongly negative ratings compared to councillors, but the LCC also suffers from perceived lack of effectiveness. The relatively high neutral rating for councillors (44%) might indicate that their roles are less visible, less understood, or more recent in the community's governance system compared to the entrenched chieftainship.

Overall, the findings suggest that both institutions face significant challenges in effectively managing range resources. While chiefs retain symbolic authority, their practical power is diminished. Councillors are constrained by unclear roles and lack of capacity. The lack of collaboration between the two institutions and changing community values further weaken governance outcomes. Many respondents acknowledged that chiefs traditionally hold authority over communal land and range resources, but noted their limited capacity to enforce rules in the current governance environment. A participant in the FGDs said:

“Our chief tries his best to guide us, but people don't listen anymore because he has no power to punish wrongdoers as he is not even salaried.”

In another village a participant said:

“Chiefs know the land better than councillors, but they are ignored when they speak about range management.”

Thus, the foregoing complements the earlier analysis where 60% of the respondents rated chiefs as ineffective because while their role as custodians is recognized, their practical authority is questioned.

On the other hand, members of the LCCs are viewed as distant and inactive in range management matters. Respondents often expressed that councillors are elected for general development issues, but are not active or visible in range resource governance.

One participant noted:

“I have never seen our councillor talk about grazing or land matters. They come when we are voting or when they want to report about the road.”

While in another one FGD session a participant said:

“The councillor’s role is not clear to us in terms of managing grazing lands. We do not know who they are accountable to.”

This analysis supports the **51% negative** and **44% neutral** perceptions on the ratings for councillors. The magnitude of the neutral scores reflect this uncertainty about their role.

Participants highlighted that the lack of cooperation between chiefs and councillors leads to confusion and inefficiency effectively weakening governance.

A participant in another village noted:

“When the chief says something and the councillor says something else, people get confused. They don’t follow either one.”

However,

“If these two worked together, we would have better grazing lands, but now everyone does as they please.”

These findings clearly show that the dual governance system contributes to ineffectiveness and this is consistent with literature on governance conflicts Mamdani (1996).

The study revealed that the discordance between the two institutions of governance effectively erode traditional respect and accountability. Some participants noted that

modern governance and changing values have undermined respect for both institutions as one participant said:

“In the past, when the chief spoke, we obeyed. Now people say ‘we are free’ and do whatever they want.”

In the final analysis said one participant:

“There is no accountability. Whether it is the councillor or the chief, no one follows up.”

This theme illustrates societal changes that affect governance effectiveness, beyond the institutions themselves.

This study shows that both the chieftainship and LCC institutions are widely regarded by respondents as ineffective in managing range resources. Chiefs, while traditionally seen as custodians of communal land, are perceived as failing to meet current governance demands. Councilors are viewed as limited by low visibility and capacity, while also suffering from community distrust and role ambiguity. These perceptions align with Baasi (2016) who highlighted similar governance confusion with respondents unclear about the roles of chiefs, councilors, or grazing associations-and noted that such lack of clarity negatively impacts rangeland quality. Similarly, analysis of Lesotho’s rangeland socio-ecological system emphasizes that chiefs remain central yet enforcement of environmental laws is weak, pointing to an institutional bottleneck Likoti (2019).

Comparative evidence shows that this lack of clarity hinders effective resource governance as dual leadership in Lesotho often results in overlapping authority and poor coordination, mirroring trends documented by the UNU Baasi (2016). The persistence of chiefs’ legitimacy amidst decentralization, coupled with councillors’ weaker institutional base, suggests a familiar dynamic of legitimacy rooted in tradition versus weakness in modern structures. In summary, the study underscores the urgent need for clear role definitions, improved visibility and capacity among local authorities, and strengthened coordination between institutions to realize more effective, trusted, and sustainable range management in Lesotho. This second objective draws on both IAD and the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework to compare institutional effectiveness.

The SES perspective helped show how stronger traditional leadership correlates with better adherence to grazing controls in some *maboeella* systems, while councils have been more effective in mobilizing external funding and technical support for RMAs, (Biggs, Schlüter and Schoon (2015); Ostrom (2005). This was reflected in findings where respondents reported that “*RMAs supported by councillors accessed better funding, but enforcement of grazing rules was weak compared to traditional systems*”.

5.3b Institutional Governance Duality – Challenges and Conflicts

The objective was to establish and document the challenges and conflicts associated with the dual governance system of the chieftainship and LCC Institutions for sustainable management of range resources. The thematic analysis of the responses showed slightly over a third of the people (36.3% n = 33) perceived serious challenges with the dual structure of governance (Table 2).

Table 2. Perceived Community Challenges in Dual Governance Systems — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Theme	Illustrative Responses	Frequency
Power Struggles & Unclear Roles	“Power struggles, unclear responsibilities and lack of skills”; “Their responsibilities are slightly similar”	3.30%, n= 3
Conflicting Governance Visions	“They seem to have conflicting ideas”; “Their governance does not blend in front of community”	2.20%, n=2
Communication Breakdown	“Lack of communication”; “Lack of clear communication”; “Not involving community members in decision making”	3.30%, n=3
Spatial Disconnection	“They live in different places”; “Councillor is from another village”; “Separate villages cause inconvenience”	5.60%, n=5
Leadership Capacity & Integrity Concerns	“Being led by people of poor thinking”; “Issues related to bribery”; “Lack of accountability”	3.30%, n=3
Lack of Community Engagement & Understanding	“Lack of understanding between the two”; “Lack of preparation before <i>Pitsos</i> ”; “I do not know”; “No understanding”	5.40%, n=5
Other / Unique Responses	“They are both young”; “There is discrimination during hiring”	13.20%, n=12

In contrast, a significant majority of respondents share the perception of problems associated with the dual nature of governance (Fig. 5). Specifically, they were either satisfied (38%, n=35) or indifferent about the issues associated with the duality of governance institutions (27.2%, n=25).

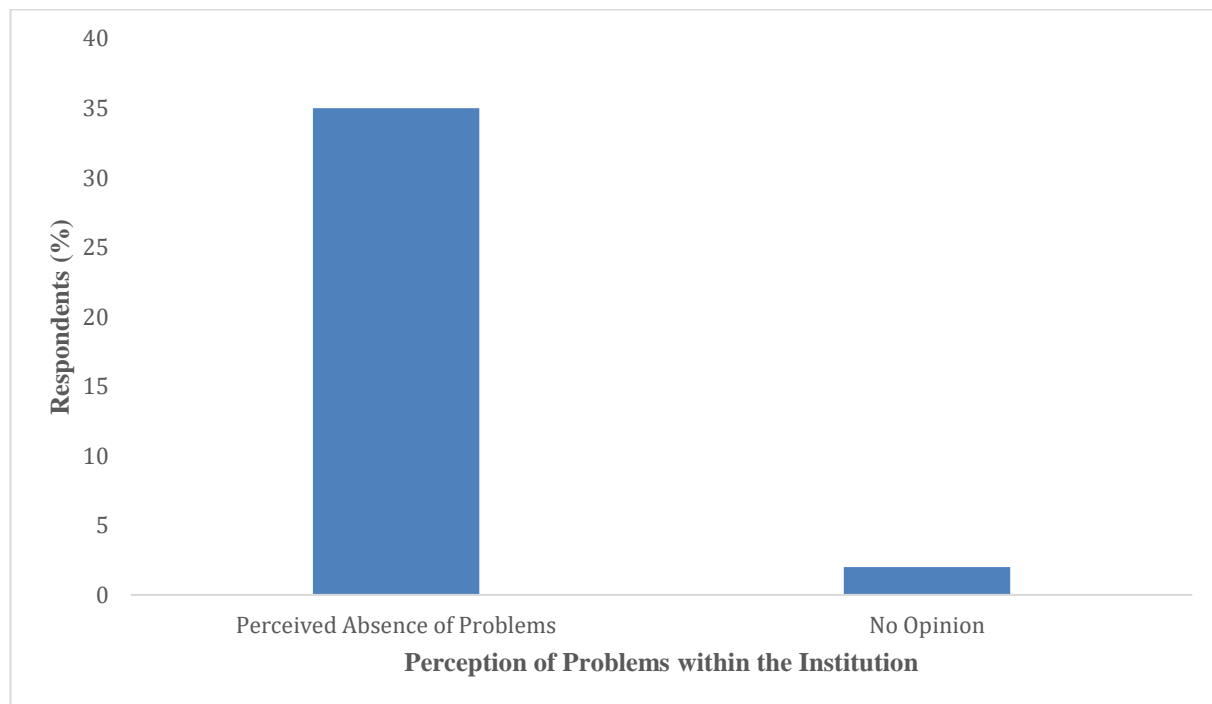


Fig.5. Figure 5: Distribution of Respondents Reporting Absence of Problems or Neutral/No Opinion on Dual Governance Challenges — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The discourse analysis of the responses provides insight into how community members perceive the challenges arising from the dual governance system of local authority institutions in Lesotho. Interestingly, a large proportion of respondents (64.1%, n=58) opted not to give any views on challenges or issues regarding the performance of these governance structures. However, some in this category averred that these authorities do as they please within communities and are not being monitored. This suggests that communities either feel unengaged or unaware of the governance dynamics, perceives no

major problems, or were for some reluctant to openly comment on these governance matters.

However, some respondents (35.56%, n=32) responded to the question and pointed out several key concerns including overlapping or unclear responsibilities leading to power struggles and conflicting roles. From their responses we derived statements indicative of perceived challenges in the operational responsibilities of these two institutions. A number of respondents (Table 2) noted from household survey:

“Power struggles, unclear responsibilities and lack of skills”

“Their responsibilities are slightly similar”

“They seem to have conflicting ideas”

An equal number of respondents (Table 2) mentioned that there is a lack of communication between the institutions, or that the community is not adequately involved in decisions:

“Lack of communication”

“Not involving community members on decision making”

Moreover, others (Table 2) pointed to the fact that chiefs and councilors reside in different villages or places, creating inconvenience or barriers to joint action:

“They live in separate villages which causes inconvenience”

While others (Table 2) expressed dissatisfaction with the capacity or integrity of the leadership. They pointed out that some leaders do not even attend the monthly meetings with other chiefs/councilors and if attended, they hardly report back to the community. They emphasized poor networking, capacity building and other means of improving themselves to even feel worthy of being called ‘Leaders’. Overall, they raised issues such as:

“Being led by people of poor thinking since they lack knowledge”

“Issues related to bribery”

“Lack of accountability and truthiness of governance”

Some (2.2%, n=2) mentioned deeper challenges such as lack of a shared vision or failure of the two structures to present a united leadership front:

“They lack communal vision”

“Their governance does not blend in front of community”

While the majority of respondents did not report specific challenges (or chose not to comment), those who did raised serious concerns about overlapping mandates, poor communication, physical separation, and leadership weaknesses. These challenges contribute to the difficulty in managing range resources effectively under the dual governance system. This dualism creates confusion over legitimate authority, thereby weakening coordinated decision-making in range resource governance. The lack of clarity in institutional roles fosters competition rather than collaboration, undermining sustainable management of shared resources Ostrom (2010); Madzwamuse (2020). Additionally, Hypothesis 2 states that disputes over resource access between chiefs and councils hinder effective RRM, with trust and legitimacy differing between the two. Thereafter, findings from interviews and surveys show that while chiefs retain greater trust from communities due to their rootedness in tradition, councillors struggle with enforcement and legitimacy. Many respondents cited conflicting responsibilities and poor coordination between institutions, confirming governance fragmentation. So, the findings prove the study supports Hypothesis 2. The hypothesis is accepted, as the data show that dual authority causes management inefficiencies and trust imbalances that weaken RRM outcomes.

The foregoing observations were buttressed in the FGDs which more succinctly provided community-level insights into how communities experience the dual governance structure of chieftainship and LCC institutions in managing range resources. The chief is

consistently viewed as the visible and active figure in managing range resources and related communal duties. A participant noted that:

“The chief is the one mostly seen taking more responsibility by reserving grazing zones and firewood.”

This was corroborated by another participant:

“Chief is always available and nearer to us 24 hours working.”

Chiefs lead enforcement of rules and resource preservation measures such as *Maboeella*, wetland protection, and anti-burning efforts. In one session, a member observed:

“We always see the chief during Maboeella and changing grazing zones and alarming us about not burning grasses.”

One member asserted the significance of this role:

“Cattle owners destroying rangelands are given punishments... our chief ensures compliance.”

Participants frequently reported councilors as disengaged or focused only on development projects, especially near elections.

“We see our chief available for us 24 hours, yet a councillor is paid more while doing little work.”

This sentiment was collaborated in other discussions:

“Our problem with the councilor is that he is unavailable within our community and only remembers us when he needs the votes.”

Where councilors did engage, communities acknowledged their efforts in securing services like electricity or water.

“The councilor stood by us during electricity installation and now we have electricity due to him listening and having a heart for the community at that time.” (FGD 1)

However, there were cases, albeit rare, of good collaboration between the two authorities:

“Chief and councilor are seen working together in allocating grazing lands and households.” (FGD 2)

While some FGDs cited examples of joint action, most described collaboration as limited, inconsistent, or invisible.

“We really do not sense cooperation between the two and they are absent within the community most of the time.” (FGD 2)

Communities linked the lack of structured collaboration to weak resource governance, unmet development needs, and frustration.

“We really do feel neglected through decision-making and our cries are not heard at all; both do not solve our water crisis issue.” (FGD 2)

This perception leads to serious consequences:

“It has totally changed and there is lack of order as leadership is duo.” (FGD 3)

The significance of poor or lack of collaboration between chiefs and elected community councils in range resources management is profound, impacting both the effectiveness of resource management and the socio-economic well-being of communities. The absence of collaboration can lead to conflicts, inefficiencies, and the failure of resource management initiatives. This is evident in various case studies where the lack of effective communication and cooperation among stakeholders has resulted in negative outcomes for both the environment and local communities. Research shows that the lack of collaboration between chiefs and community councils leads to conflicts over land and resource use, resulting in strained relationships and limited interactions among stakeholders and limits community participation and accountability Luaba et al. (2023).

The FGD narratives reveal that the chief remains the central figure in range resource governance, while councilors’ roles are often unclear, inconsistent, or perceived as secondary. Although there are isolated cases of collaboration, particularly around infrastructure and land allocation—these appear to stem from individual initiative rather

than structured institutional coordination. The duality of governance thus contributes to community confusion, perceived neglect, and weak resource management outcomes.

Analysis of officer interviews revealed three major themes on how the governance duality of chieftainship and LCCs influences range resource management. Officers consistently highlighted that the unclear legal and operational boundaries between chieftainship and LCCs create tensions.

“The role of local councils in natural resource management is not clearly defined since their introduction, hence it makes it difficult for traditional chiefs to collaborate and work with them. Chiefs feel threatened that councillors will overtake their duties and responsibilities.” (Respondent 1, Department of Environment)

Several officers noted that both governance structures often pursue the same functions, leading to confusion and inefficiency.

“Non-coherent and clashing work plans” (Respondent 3, Soil and Water Conservation)

“Overlapping responsibilities, lack of communication and coordination” (Respondent 2, Forestry)

Officers identified limited or ineffective communication between chiefs and councillors, which negatively impacts joint planning and resource governance.

“Lack of communication and coordination between the two makes service delivery poor.” (Respondent 4, Water Affairs)

Others opined that dual governance weakens the enforcement of environmental laws as neither structure effectively steps forward, and community members take advantage.

“Reluctant to enforce laws on their voters” (Respondent 3, Conservation Officer)

Ultimately, the lack of a clear unified voice leads to mixed signals to communities, reducing participation and trust.

“It furtherly exacerbates challenges as communities become two groups and hinder developments.” (Respondent 2, Forestry)

Consequently,

“Communities not willing to cooperate, expecting to be given something in return”
(Respondent 5, Senior Range Officer)

Other officer directly linked governance duality to continued environmental decline.

“The natural resources are significantly declining e.g. rangeland degradation.”
(Respondent 1, Department of Environment)

This was seen as a direct function of:

“Unclear roles and responsibilities of the councillors and the chiefs leave the natural resources unattended.” (Respondent 5, Senior Range Officer)

The dual governance of chieftainship and LCCs, while designed to blend traditional and modern systems, has in practice resulted in ambiguous authority, poor coordination, weak enforcement, and resource mismanagement. Officer narratives suggest that clarity of roles, integrated planning, and capacity strengthening of both leadership structures are essential to reversing resource decline and building community trust.

To balance this analysis, we engaged a sample of chiefs and councilors in KII regarding the nature of challenges encountered in range resource management. The thematic analysis of their narratives revealed issues bordering on disputes and governance legitimacy. Chiefs are engaged in strikes-which has never happened in the history of Lesotho, demanding improved remuneration, arguing that current salaries do not match their responsibilities in land and resource governance and emphasizing that they have been patient enough to actually be paid what they are worth as they see the government just using them to just reach its goals neglecting their needs.

“We feel overburdened yet underpaid, despite being at the forefront of natural resource management and available 24 hrs for everyone and everything.” RMA Chief 5

Similarly, councilors also push for substantial salary increment upwards of M20,000 per month, citing workload, development roles, and inflationary pressures.

“Our pay does not reflect the expectations placed on them in community development and governance.” Non-RMA Councilor 3

The foregoing impacts governance stability. In essence, the salary struggles have bred rivalry, weakened morale, and contributed to governance paralysis.

“The ongoing salary wrangles have worsened the mistrust between chiefs and councillors.” Officer

Both structures report uncertainty in their official mandates, contributing to conflict and inefficiency.

“Unclear roles and responsibilities of the councilors and the chiefs leave the natural resources unattended.” (Officer 5)

Chiefs perceive councilors as encroaching on traditional authority, fueling power struggles.

“Chiefs feel threatened that councilors will overtake their duties and responsibilities.” (Non-RMA Councilor 1)

In the ensuing struggle of the authorities, the public is often unsure whom to approach for resource governance issues.

“We just see them but do not know who is responsible for what.” (FGD 2)

In the final analysis, the net effect is that councilors and chiefs rarely plan jointly or present a unified front on resource matters.

“We do not seem to understand each other and fail to coordinate.” (Non-RMA Chief 3)

These conflicts between the authorities does not go un-noticed by the public who noted that their (chiefs and councilors) interactions are marked more by competition and rivalry than teamwork.

“Our chief is an active politician-from RFP while our councilor is from a DC party so obviously, he is in competition with the councillor, which severely affects community members and the resources.” (FGD 3)

Chiefs openly participate in bribery activities and politics as a way to supplement their salaries. This is seen more as a competition as councilors, contracted in five-year periods come in hurry to try work hard to leave behind developments in hope to be elected again while chiefs are relaxed in their ways hence see councilors as competitors.

“Mme can you live on a M1600.00 per month salary with no benefits whatsoever while you are expected to be available 24 hrs per day? Will my kids go to school, medical bills, insurances?” (RMA-Chief 9)

In terms of capacity and support, both institutions lack sufficient training on range resource management and relevant legal frameworks.

“Local councilors and traditional chiefs be trained on NRM legal frameworks.” (Officer 1)

A worrisome observation against LCCs was weak enforcement due to fear of losing voter support or lack of legal protection is detrimental to sustainable range resource management. In this study, analysis of KII narratives revealed the councilors are often

“Reluctant to enforce laws on their voters.” (Officer 3)

leading to failures of law enforcement. Ineffective law enforcement, regardless of the cause, undermines the management rules within common property regimes, leading to resource degradation. When local-level institutional arrangements in this instance chiefs and LCCs are weakened, common property systems can devolve into open access

scenarios, where individuals exploit resources without restraint, driven by the tragedy of open access. This results in unsustainable use patterns and resource depletion characteristic of the Lesotho rangelands. The absence of effective sanctions and incentives for compliance further exacerbates the situation, ultimately threatening the sustainability of range resources and the livelihoods dependent on them.

Furthermore, ineffective law enforcement in common property regimes can significantly undermine the sustainability of range resources. These regimes, which govern access to shared natural resources, rely heavily on structured rules and enforcement mechanisms to ensure equitable and sustainable use. When law enforcement is weak or absent, it can lead to resource degradation, loss of community benefits, and increased vulnerability to external pressures. This situation is exacerbated by the erosion of local institutional arrangements and the failure to replace them with effective governance structures.

Common property regimes are often misunderstood as open-access systems, but they are actually structured arrangements with specific management rules and sanctions to ensure compliance Bromley and Cernea (1989). The dissolution of local-level institutions, which are crucial for sustainable resource use, leads to a shift towards open access, resulting in the "**tragedy of open access**" rather than the "**tragedy of the commons**" Bromley and Cernea (1989). Without effective enforcement, these regimes cannot prevent the overexploitation of resources, leading to environmental degradation and loss of community benefits Fuys & Dohrn (2010).

Law enforcement in natural resource management faces challenges such as limited resources, institutional capacity, and legal complexity Widjaja (2024). Corruption and lack of community participation further hinder effective enforcement, making it difficult to implement sustainable management practices Widjaja (2024). The absence of property rights and tenure rights can lead to the marginalization of local communities and the degradation of ecological capital Astuti (2019). This study reveals that the duality of governance between chiefs and councilors is severely strained by salary disputes, role confusion, and poor coordination. The salary tensions exacerbate mistrust and divert attention from urgent range management needs. Without clear mandates, capacity

building, and structured collaboration, both institutions risk undermining sustainable range resource governance.

5.3c The Impact of LCC and Chieftainship Institutions on the Performance of RMAs and Maboella systems

The objective was to assess the performance of the RMA program and the Maboella system under the leadership of the Chieftainship and LCC Institutions. The findings under this objective reveal a complex evolution of range resource management performance in Lesotho, particularly in comparing the traditional *Maboella* system and the RMA program (Table 3). The findings show that traditional knowledge and experience with Maboella remain deeply embedded in the community: over half of respondents (54%, n=49) reported familiarity, and about 43% (n=39) indicated active involvement before or at the time LCCs were introduced (Table 4).

Table 3: Respondents’ Familiarity with the Traditional Maboella System — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Rating	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
1	Very familiar	49	54.30
2	Somewhat familiar	30	33.30
3	Not familiar at all	11	12.20
Total		90	100.0

The findings show that traditional knowledge of *Maboella* still persists among the majority of the population, although not uniformly. A significant minority (about one in eight) lack familiarity, indicating possible generational gaps or weakening of traditional systems over time. This suggests that more than half of those who answered recognize or have direct knowledge of how the *Maboella* system functioned in range management. These participants might have indirect exposure, such as through community stories or partial involvement.

Table 4: Respondents’ Level of Involvement in the Traditional Maboella System Prior to 1997 — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Rating	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
1	Actively involved	39	43.30
2	Somewhat involved	25	27.80
3	Not involved	21	23.30
Total		90	100.00

This enduring connection reflects what Baasi (2016) describes as the persistent cultural and historical significance of traditional grazing systems in Qacha’s Nek, despite shifts in governance. Similarly, Rohde et al. (2006) highlight that communal land use practices in Lesotho and Southern Africa often retain traditional roots, even where formal reforms have taken place.

However, perceptions of grazing management performance since 1997 show notable divergence. A substantial portion of the community expressed negative views regarding changes following the advent of dual governance. Many pointed to deteriorating conditions linked to power struggles between chiefs and councilors, loss of respect for traditional authority, and lack of clear governance structures. Respondents described how “power struggles have led to land deterioration” and that “there is no stability within governance.” This resonates with Hae (2016), who documented similar concerns in Lesotho, where overlapping mandates between traditional and elected structures led to weakened enforcement of rangeland regulations and rising land degradation. The erosion of the orderly, community-driven grazing patterns associated with *Maboella* was also frequently cited, consistent with Matlosa & Shivute (2020), who argue that uncoordinated dual governance often undermines communal land stewardship.

In sum, the findings highlight that the traditional *Maboeella* system was historically associated with strong community cohesion, clear leadership, and effective enforcement of grazing rules, whereas the post-1997 RMA program under dual governance has delivered mixed results. The introduction of LCCs brought opportunities for modernization but also created role confusion and power conflicts that have undermined the potential of range resource management. The community's call for harmonized governance structures, clearer legal roles, stronger enforcement, and integration of indigenous and modern knowledge systems remains urgent if sustainable range management is to be achieved. The evidence points to the need for deliberate policy and institutional reforms that bridge the gap between traditional authority and modern governance, ensuring that the strengths of both are leveraged rather than placed in conflict.

Finally, the findings align with IAD and SES by comparing RMAs and maboeella systems before and after the Local Government Act (1997). They illustrated that while RMAs introduced through statutory systems improved infrastructure development, maboeella maintained stronger local compliance with grazing norms, particularly where chiefs' authority remained respected. This reflects the SES insight that governance shifts affect both institutional resilience and ecological outcomes Ostrom (2005); Biggs, Schlüter and Schoon (2015); Folke et al. (2005).

The results further illustrate that while the RMA program introduced modern planning tools and institutional structures, its effectiveness has been compromised by unclear legal mandates, weak enforcement, and fragmented authority. This is consistent with Liniger & Mekdaschi-Studer (2019), who emphasize that effective rangeland management in Africa requires not only sound policies but also culturally aligned and well-coordinated institutional frameworks. In Namibia, for example, Odendaal (2011) found that community conservancies achieved better outcomes when formal governance structures were carefully integrated with local customs—something that Lesotho's dual governance of range resources has struggled to realize.

In regard to how communities perceive the change in grazing management, the responses were diverse and nuanced (Fig. 6), reflecting a community divided in its assessment. A large portion of responses point to negative change.

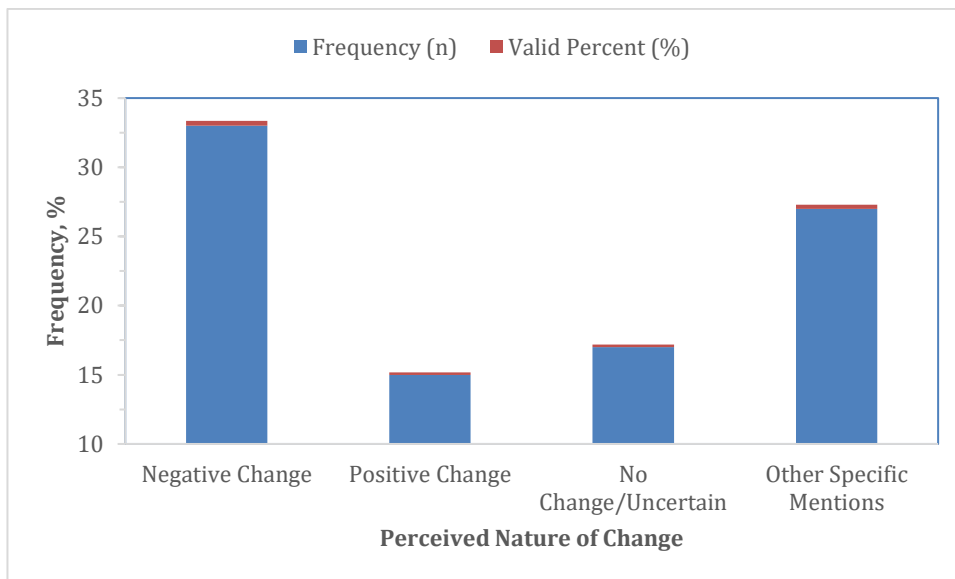


Fig. 6. Community Perceptions of Changes in Grazing Management Practices in Qacha’s Nek Following Governance Reforms — Survey Respondents (n = 90)
Source: Field Survey, 2025

Many respondents mentioned deterioration due to lack of order, power struggles between chiefs and councilors, or weakened authority of chiefs.

Negatively changed as chiefs feel a little powerless hence community no longer has order”.

Several cited lack of knowledge or poor leadership

“It has deteriorated since there is lack of knowledge in managing ranges from leaders”.

Furthermore, power struggles and governance instability were also highlighted

“Due to power struggle the lands have deteriorated”

A minority of respondents (4.3%, n=4) explicitly said

“Negatively changed”

with more providing similar phrasing or causes

“No order, poor management”.

However, a smaller group (7.6%, n=7) plus individual responses viewed grazing management as having positively changed. They noted better laws, improved collaboration, and integration of knowledge systems

“Positively changed as now there are laws regulating rangelands”;

“Great as knowledge is now incorporated”.

Some credited councilors:

“Councilors are doing wonderful job”.

A few respondents (4.3%, n=4) said “no change” and felt grazing management remained much the same. Some expressed uncertainty or lack of visibility of change (e.g. “not sure”, “I cannot really see any change”, “nothing has changed”). A handful linked change to climate challenges (e.g. “bad due to these heavy rains”). Others reflected on the decline of traditional respect and unity in managing rangelands (e.g. “poorly changed as there was togetherness in those years”).

The findings indicate that many community members (35.9%, n=33) feel grazing management has worsened since the dual governance system emerged, largely due to perceived power struggles, lack of clear authority, and weakened community cohesion. Positive views exist but are fewer (16.7%, n=15), often tied to specific improvements like legal reforms or individual leadership actions. A significant portion of the population is either unsure or perceives no visible change.

FGDs revealed that under the traditional Maboella system, communities respected rangeland rules and chiefs’ authority. This sense of order eroded after 1997 with the introduction of local community councils (LCCs). Many respondents (9.1%, n=8) noted

that “*people respected rangelands and had order*” in the past, while now governance is fragmented. This aligns with the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) Framework underscores the interdependence of human and ecological systems, particularly the importance of feedback loops, ecosystem dynamics, and the incorporation of local knowledge in resource governance Biggs et al. (2015). This study found that while Range Management Areas (RMAs) were legally introduced to promote sustainable grazing, they largely exclude indigenous ecological practices such as *Maboeella*. The Range Management Regulations of 1980 advocate rotational grazing but fail to formally recognize community-based systems that have historically sustained rangeland health. This omission weakens the effectiveness and resilience of RRM, as formal governance structures remain disconnected from the cultural and ecological knowledge embedded within local communities. As Cundill et al. (2021) mention that SES resilience is compromised when formal systems marginalize the practices that support long-term ecosystem sustainability.

Both survey and qualitative data pointed to power struggles between chiefs and councilors.

“Power struggles have led to land deterioration” and “no stability within governance”

With the net effect of undermining rangeland management. Officers corroborated these sentiments citing clashes in work plans and confusion over mandates. All KII respondents (officers, councilors, and chiefs) emphasized that unclear and overlapping roles between governance institutions fuel disorder. Thematic insights from FGDs included frustration over not knowing “who is responsible” for certain decisions, contributing to weak community confidence.

Communities and officers reported that weakened enforcement of rangeland rules followed the dual system’s introduction. FGDs stressed that neither institution consistently enforces grazing plans

“There is no order so rangelands have deteriorated.”

A portion of respondents noted positive changes, citing introduction of rangeland management laws and policies that formalized some practices.

“Positively changed as now there are laws regulating rangelands” and “knowledge is now incorporated.”

Though rare, some FGDs and interviews highlighted instances where chiefs and councilors collaborated effectively (e.g., installation of taps, grazing allocations), showing potential for joint governance. Thus, the study accepts Hypothesis 4 as findings validate that traditional and modern systems interact, often contentiously, but with potential for synergy.

Findings from the correlation matrix (*Table 8*) revealed strong positive relationships between governance indicators-trust, consultation, role clarity, and respect for community views, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.61 to 0.74.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis Results of Governance Variables — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey Data, 2025

Variable	Role clarity	Trust	Consultation	Respect
Role clarity	1.00	0.61	0.58	0.66
Trust in decision making	0.61	1.00	0.74	0.68
Consultation on resources	0.58	0.74	1.00	0.71
Community views respected	0.66	0.68	0.71	1.00

Pearson was conducted to assess relationships among governance variables. Notably, role clarity is moderately to strongly correlated with trust ($r = 0.61$), consultation ($r = 0.58$), and respect for community views ($r = 0.66$). The highest correlation is observed between trust in decision-making and consultation on resources ($r = 0.74$), indicating that communities are more likely to trust leadership when they are consulted on resource matters. Similarly, respect for community views shows consistently strong associations

with all variables, highlighting its central role in fostering inclusive governance in range resource management.

Thus, this objective aligns with Adaptive Governance (AG) Framework which promotes flexible, polycentric systems that are capable of responding to environmental and social change through iterative learning, collaboration, and inclusive participation Folke et al. (2005). This highlights the presence of latent social capital and a grassroots readiness for adaptive collaboration. However, despite this local potential, Lesotho's legal frameworks remain largely inflexible. Instruments such as the Land Husbandry Act of 1969, Rangeland Policy of 2014, and Local Government Act of 1997 continue to reflect static, top-down mandates that do not sufficiently support participatory governance or accommodate evolving traditional practices like *Maboeella*. The absence of such indigenous systems in formal policy represents a missed opportunity for institutional adaptability and ecological resilience. Nevertheless, recent initiatives, such as the Climate-Smart Range Management Dialogue (2023) and community awareness campaigns in Mokhotlong (2025) signal an emerging shift toward more dynamic, community-engaged approaches. As Fabricius et al. (2021) assert, without institutional flexibility and participatory mechanisms, governance systems remain ill-equipped to absorb and respond to socio-ecological shocks.

5.4 Policy Pathways for Improved Coordination of Local Authority Institutions in Rangeland Management: Policy and Legislative Innovations

The synergy between Chieftainship and LCC institutions can be leveraged to enhance policy and legislative innovations at the grassroots level by integrating traditional leadership with modern governance structures. This integration can foster a more inclusive and participatory approach to local governance, which is crucial for sustainable development. By combining the strengths of both institutions, communities can benefit from a more cohesive and effective governance framework that is responsive to local needs and aspirations. The objective was to assess the performance of the RMA program and the *Maboella* system across the historical divide between the jurisdiction of the chieftainship and LCC institutions in order to evaluate these two local authority institutions in Lesotho. We sought to evaluate the extent to which the policy and legislative innovations of Maboella and RMAs influenced the synergy between these governance structures in the management of range resources in Lesotho. Prior to the RMA and Grazing Association (GA) innovations in 1982, the adjudication of rangelands was managed by traditional chiefs. Notably, when the LCC institution was introduced in 1997, the RMA concept with GAs was already in practice for over 10 years under the jurisdiction of traditional chiefs. In the study area, the two range management regimes, *Maboella* and RMAs were historically practiced in parallel both under the chieftainship and LCC institutions. Thus, communities were asked to share their opinions as to which authority was more effective for sustainable range management and deemed to work better in their experience.

A greater proportion of the sample population (40%, n=37) preferred chieftainship working alone. This group of respondents had a strong cultural and historical trust in chiefs as custodians of communal land and range resources. A smaller proportion (27.8%, n=26) would rather work with LCCs alone because they trust in modern governance. Others (25.6%, n=24) would prefer the dual governance if it can be made functional. A

minority (6.7%, n=6) was indifferent perhaps reflecting dissatisfaction or disillusionment with current governance structures. The findings showed that while there is deep-rooted preference for chiefs, there is also meaningful support for combined governance.

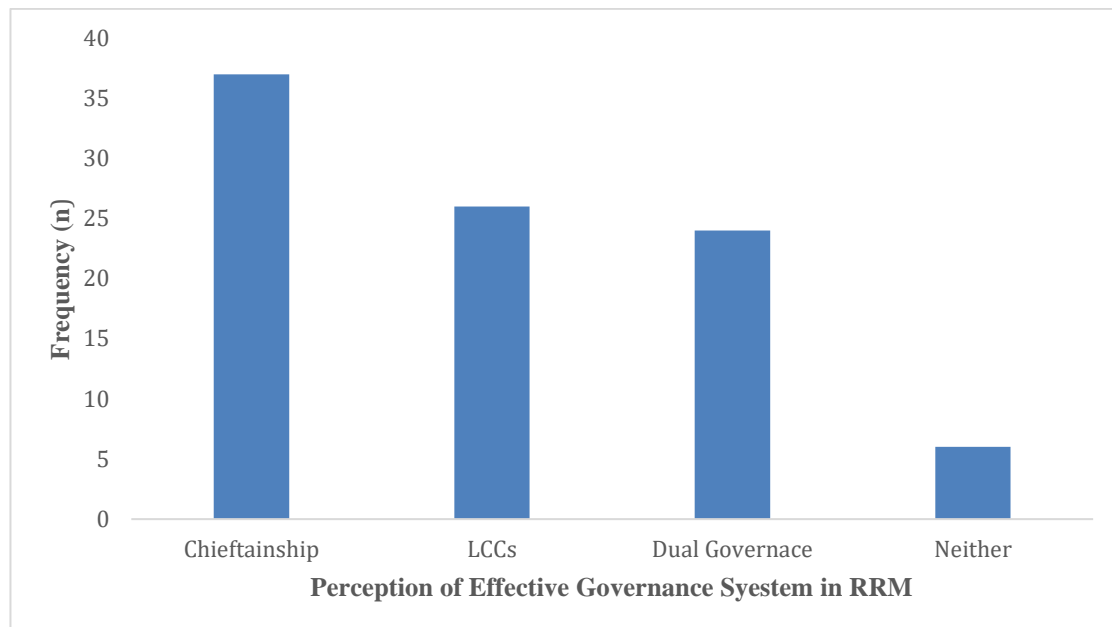


Fig.7. Community Perceptions of the Most Effective Governance System for Range Resource Management — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

This suggests policy innovations should focus on clearly defined, complementary roles in legislation to reduce duplication and conflict with mechanisms for co-decision-making e.g. joint committees, co-signed by-laws and community-driven models that acknowledge cultural attachment to chieftainship while formalizing council roles. In a follow up question to probe which authority works better for natural resource management (Fig. 6), a majority (53.3%, n=48) preferred a combined local institutional authority compared to 24.4% (n=22) said chieftainship alone works better while 17.8% (n=16) said LCCs alone work better. Thus, over half of the respondents see practical value in combined systems despite a slight skewed preference for chieftainship alone.

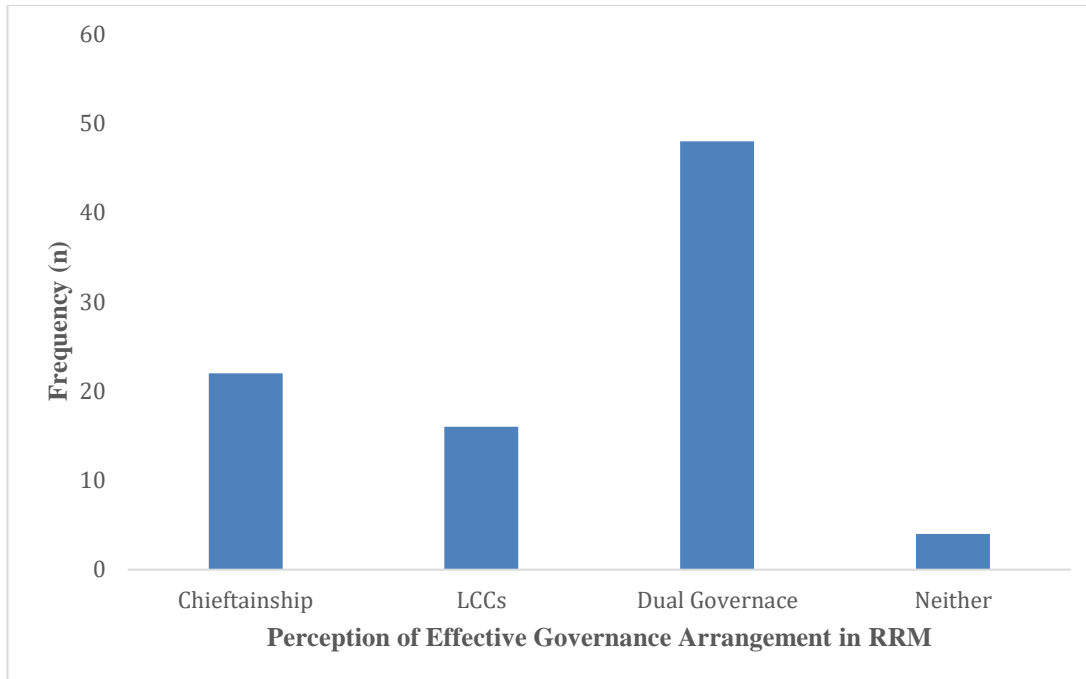


Fig.8. Perceived most effective governance arrangement in RRM Community Perceptions of the Most Effective Governance Arrangement in Range Resource Management — Survey Respondents, Tsoelikana Community Council (n = 90)
Source: Field Survey, 2025

This supports legislative innovations that institutionalize collaboration e.g. mandatory joint planning sessions, shared resource maps. This also will require coordination in law e.g. Range Management Act amendments mandating joint reporting and incentivized joint actions e.g. funding access tied to co-signed plans or agreements.

The foregoing findings were corroborated in FGDs and KII analysis regarding harmony and clarification of roles between the two governance institutions. Respondents noted that lack of clear boundaries cause power struggles between the chieftainship and LCC institutions. One officer put it clearly that:

“The role of local councils in natural resource management is not clearly defined since their introduction, hence it makes it difficult for traditional chiefs to collaborate and work with them.” (Officer 1 - DEO)

Another officer came strongly in support and pointed out the inherent dangers:

“Unclear roles and responsibilities of the councilors and the chiefs leave the natural resources unattended.” (Officer 5 - Senior Range Management Officer).

Similar sentiments were expressed in the FGDs:

“We do not sense cooperation between the two and they are absent within the community most of the time.” (FGD 2 participant)

The KII discussants discussed the issue of legislative frameworks and gazettement of responsibilities especially what they perceived as outdated or weak legislative frameworks.

“Range Management Policy should be looked into as fees are way below par with the times. Effective workshops should be held for all people.” (Officer 2 - Forestry)

“Policy and legislation should be reviewed and updated to protect the implementers of legislative documents.” (Officer 5)

“These weak and heavily outdated laws make our duties very hard to control, the Maboella charging fees are so low that even cattle owners say they budget about M5000.00 to keep paying that little amount charged as long as their cattle can access prohibited grazing zones.” (RMA-Chief 2)

Thus, respondents cautioned for institutional collaboration platforms and formal joint structures especial joint committees and planning units.

“There should be coordination from chiefs, councilors, and people — collectively they must resolve challenges, plan and implement together.” (FGD 1)

“An establishment of a district planning unit to consolidate all plans into one.” (Officer 3 - Conservation Officer)

“Local councilors and chiefs be trained on NRM legal frameworks and these frameworks translated into Sesotho.” (Officer 1)

In the FGDs, the issue of joint community-based committees was emphasized as a way to create community led synergies.

“We need a community council that works hand-in-hand with both councilors and chiefs.” (FGD 2)

and

“Chiefs and councilors must have an active committee that takes into consideration views of community members.” (FGD 3)

The KII discussion further emphasized the issue of capacity building and knowledge sharing through mandatory joint training for capacitating both institutions.

“Frequent trainings for traditional chiefs and local councils for effective communication and knowledge acquisition.” (Officer 1)

“Councillors come with pompous behaviours and mislead communities — they need better capacity-building.” (Officer 4 - Water Affairs)

The integration of indigenous and modern knowledge systems was strongly recommended to combine customary practices and modern tools.

“Bridge the gap between indigenous and modern knowledge in governance.” (Officer 5)

“The RMA came with good ideas, but poor monitoring — we need to combine the new with what worked before like Maboella.” (FGD 3)

The findings revealed the need for enhancing policy linked incentives and compliance irrespective of governance institution especially linking access to funding to collaboration through incentivized joint planning.

“Government ministries should develop policies; chiefs and councils should implement them together to improve outcomes.” (Officer 3)

“RMAs bring wages and that makes people participate, we need more of these linked to collaboration.” (FGD 1)

The foregoing analysis brings to the fore the contemporary issues salary and governance incentives especially the alignment of remuneration to encourage unity of purpose between the governance institutions.

“Current strikes by chiefs for better pay and councilors wanting M20,000 salaries show need for harmonized governance incentives to avoid tension.” (Emergent community commentary + chiefs’ strike reports).

Hypothesis 3 states that; *‘differences in compensation and benefits affect performance and collaboration between chiefs and councillors.’* Hence findings suggest that councillors receive formal salaries, which supports their administrative roles, while chiefs often

depend on community support. This disparity fuels frustration and low morale among chiefs, impacting their motivation and collaboration with councils. Respondents also perceive inequality in responsibilities versus rewards. Thus, the study accepts Hypothesis 3 as disparities in compensation directly influence cooperation and efficiency, affirming the hypothesis.

“Salary-related issues, our chief is an active politician in competition with the councilor which severely affects community members and resources.” (FGD 3)

In the final analysis, respondents in the FGDs spoke strongly on the issue of enhanced community voice and equity as well as strengthening of community engagement through inclusive decision making as an additional pillar to the chieftainship and LCC institutions.

“Not at all, they only consider voices of the high-standard community members.” (FGD 1)

“Discrimination around our community as the rich’s voices are heard more.” (FGD 3)

An officer in the KII emphasized the need for a legal mandate for inclusive Pitso gatherings to ensure participation of the marginalized groups.

“Integrated watershed management projects focus on empowering women and youth.” (Officer 3)

While individual preferences lean toward chieftainship, the majority recognize that synergy between chiefs and councilors leads to better outcomes in managing range resources. The integration of quantitative preferences and qualitative recommendations shows that policy and legislative innovations are essential for unlocking effective synergy between chieftainship and Local community council. The combined governance approach, when strengthened through legal clarity, structured coordination, capacity-building, and fair incentives, holds the greatest promise for sustainable range resource management in Lesotho.

Furthermore, the exclusionary nature of current legal texts, rarely referencing customary practices-overlooks the critical role of communities in resource restoration and degradation mitigation. Given Lesotho’s escalating environmental challenges, including soil erosion, overgrazing, and the spread of invasive species, there is a clear need for

policy reform grounded in SES principles that integrate traditional knowledge into formal governance.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 The Roles and Responsibilities of Local Authorities in Range Resource Management

The study concludes that Lesotho's dual governance system in range resource management has led to role ambiguity, contested leadership, and weak institutional coordination. Chiefs remain central custodians of communal resources overseeing grazing allocation, firewood collection, and customary rule enforcement, but their effectiveness has been undermined by unclear mandates introduced with the establishment of Local Community Councils (LCCs).

Survey findings revealed that 40% of respondents preferred chiefs alone, 27.8% trusted LCCs alone, while 25.6% favored dual governance if properly functional. These figures underscore both the enduring legitimacy of traditional authority and the emerging yet fragile recognition of elected councillors in natural resource governance. Focus group discussions further confirmed that overlapping responsibilities often leave key rangeland management functions "unattended," as noted by one council officer.

This situation resonates with the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework, which emphasizes that clearly defined roles, rules, and responsibilities are essential for sustaining common-pool resources Ramodula et al. (2021). Comparative insights from Ghana's hybrid natural resource governance similarly demonstrate that clarity of authority enhances compliance, accountability, and conflict reduction Crook et al. (1998).

Overall, the study concludes that a well-coordinated hybrid governance model, underpinned by clear institutional boundaries and cooperative mechanisms between chiefs

and councillors, is crucial for improving range resource management in Lesotho. Strengthening coordination, defining mandates, and fostering mutual accountability could enhance both resource sustainability and community trust in governance systems Songa et al. (2025).

6.1.2 Effectiveness and Comparative Appraisal of Traditional and Modern Governance Institutions in Rangeland Management

6.1.2a The effectiveness of the Chieftainship versus the Elected Community Council Institutions in the Implementation of range resource management policies.

The study found that Lesotho's dual governance system in Range Resource Management (RRM) has resulted in role ambiguity, weak coordination, and leadership conflicts between chieftainship and Local Community Councils (LCCs) Likoti et al. (2020). Survey results revealed that 40% of respondents preferred chiefs, 27.8% trusted councillors, while 25.6% supported a dual system if clearly defined, reflecting divided community confidence. Chieftainship institutions remain trusted for enforcing customary norms such as *maboeella*, yet their authority has weakened due to limited legal powers and poor integration into modern governance. In contrast, LCCs show strengths in administrative coordination and access to state resources, but suffer from low community engagement and unclear mandates Kokome et al. (2025).

Overall, the study concludes that neither system is fully effective independently. A hybrid governance model that combines the customary legitimacy of chiefs with the technical and administrative capacity of councils offers the best potential for sustainable rangeland management. This aligns with Ostrom's collective-choice principle and lessons from Sierra Leone, where integrating traditional and modern structures strengthened compliance and trust Manning et al. (2009).

6.1.2b Institutional Governance Duality – Challenges and Conflicts

The coexistence of chiefs and councillors in Lesotho's Range Resource Management (RRM) has produced duplication of responsibilities, leadership conflicts, and coordination failures Likoti et al. (2020). Survey results showed that 53.3% of respondents supported a combined governance arrangement, yet focus group discussions revealed persistent rivalry, absenteeism, and disputes over remuneration, as one participant noted, "*we do not sense cooperation ... they are absent within the community*" (FGD 2).

These governance gaps reflect the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) framework concern that overlapping mandates increase transaction costs and weaken compliance. Similar inefficiencies have been documented in Uganda's forest governance, where customary and statutory authorities overlap, leading to weak enforcement. Logan et al. (2009)

Overall, the study concludes that the coexistence of chieftainship and Local Community Councils (LCCs) in Lesotho presents significant barriers to sustainable rangeland governance. Key challenges include unclear roles, poor coordination, leadership tensions, and institutional fragmentation, all of which undermine collaboration and effective policy implementation Potts et al. (2019).

6.1.2c The Impact of LCC and Chieftainship Institutions on the Performance of RMAs and Maboella systems

Findings reveal that the traditional Maboella system, anchored in chieftainship, was historically more effective in fostering compliance, social cohesion, and orderly grazing practices. About 54% of respondents were "very familiar" with its practices, and 43.3% reported active involvement prior to 1997, reflecting its strong community roots and enforcement power. By contrast, the Range Management Area (RMA) program introduced under dual governance created overlapping roles and weakened enforcement. Although intended to modernize range governance, these reforms inadvertently eroded cultural legitimacy and blurred institutional authority Artz et al. (1993).

This outcome supports the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) principle of congruence, which emphasizes aligning formal rules with local socio-cultural contexts. Comparative experiences from Ghana's CREMAs and Sierra Leone's forest committees demonstrate

that hybrid governance models, combining traditional legitimacy with technical and regulatory capacity, enhance compliance and sustainability Mashinini et al. (2005).

Therefore, the study concludes that sustainable range resource management in Lesotho requires a coordinated hybrid system that integrates the authority and community trust of chiefs with the administrative and planning strengths of local councils Yami et al. (2009).

6.1.3 Policy Pathways for Improved Coordination of Local Authority Institutions in Rangeland Management: Policy and Legislative Innovations

The study concludes that while chieftainship institutions continue to command high legitimacy and moral authority in the governance of communal rangelands, sustainable range resource management increasingly depends on the development of collaborative policy and legislative frameworks that integrate both traditional and modern governance systems Mamimine et al. (2001). Current governance structures remain weakened by vague legal mandates, overlapping responsibilities, and the absence of formal coordination mechanisms, which have perpetuated institutional rivalry, duplication of roles, and fragmented decision-making between chiefs and councillors.

The study further reveals growing community support for collaborative and participatory governance models that recognize the complementary strengths of both institutions—chiefs' local legitimacy and councillors' administrative reach. However, these models can only function effectively if supported by robust legislative reforms, such as the revision of the Local Government Act and the incorporation of traditional authority roles within the national rangeland policy framework Logan et al. (2009). Therefore, the study emphasizes the need for policy and legislative innovations that institutionalize cooperation, clarify mandates, and create joint planning and enforcement platforms between traditional and modern local authorities. Such reforms would not only enhance institutional synergy but also strengthen accountability, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability in range resource management across Lesotho. The study further concludes that although chiefs retain cultural legitimacy, communities increasingly favor

collaborative governance models that combine traditional and elected institutions. However, the absence of robust legislation and formal coordination mechanisms has fueled rivalry and inefficiency. This conclusion echoes adaptive governance theory, which highlights the importance of flexible legal frameworks and inclusive decision-making. South Africa's Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (2003) provides an instructive example, where statutory reforms formally recognized the role of chiefs in development governance.

6.1 Recommendations

6.1.1 The Roles and Responsibilities of Local Authorities in Range Resource Management

It is recommended that Lesotho's legal framework be revised to explicitly define and align the mandates of chiefs and councillors in range resource management. Clear delineation of roles would reduce institutional overlap and strengthen accountability. The study further recommends the establishment of joint governance committees and the implementation of co-management initiatives, where traditional and statutory leaders collaboratively engage in planning, resource allocation, and enforcement. Such arrangements would foster cooperation, enhance transparency, and improve local ownership of rangeland governance processes Cundill et al. (2010).

To reinforce accountability, community-based monitoring systems should be piloted, enabling chiefs and councillors to jointly report on grazing practices, rangeland conditions, and compliance. This approach aligns with Social-Ecological Systems (SES) principles of boundary definition and participatory monitoring. Evidence from Sierra Leone demonstrates that joint natural resource monitoring between chiefs and councils strengthened both community trust and regulatory compliance. Therefore, further research should assess the applicability and effectiveness of such community-based monitoring models in Lesotho to guide the design of an integrated, adaptive, and sustainable rangeland governance framework Fabricius et al. (2007).

6.2.2 Effectiveness and Comparative Appraisal of Traditional and Modern Governance Institutions in Rangeland Management

6.2.2a The effectiveness of the Chieftainship versus the Elected Community Council Institutions in the Implementation of range resource management policies.

Lesotho should prioritize legal reforms and capacity-building to clarify the mandates of chiefs and councillors, strengthen the institutional foundation of local councils, and promote co-management models that integrate traditional authority with statutory governance. Establishing joint training initiatives and integrated planning platforms can enhance enforcement, reduce conflicts arising from overlapping roles, and foster mutual accountability Kokome et al. (2025).

This approach aligns with Ostrom's collective-choice principle, emphasizing shared decision-making and participatory governance to ensure broader compliance. Comparative evidence from South Africa's communal grazing schemes shows that formally recognizing traditional authority within statutory frameworks reduces conflict and strengthens governance effectiveness Likoti et.al. (2020).

Future research should examine the implementation of hybrid co-management structures, including evolving community attitudes toward joint governance, and assess how environmental pressures, such as climate variability, influence governance performance and resilience. By combining technical capacity, institutional legitimacy, and adaptive planning, Lesotho can develop a sustainable and effective framework for range resource management Mashinini et al. (2005).

6.2.2b Governance challenges and conflicts due to Governance Duality of Chieftainship and LCC Institution for Management of Range Resources

Lesotho should undertake legal reforms that clearly delineate the responsibilities of chiefs and councillors, supported by the creation of structured co-management platforms at the community level. Formal cooperation agreements and targeted capacity-building for both traditional and statutory governance actors are essential to minimize conflicts, reduce overlapping mandates, and enhance the effectiveness of range resource management. Workman et al. (2019).

This approach aligns with adaptive governance principles, emphasizing flexible, polycentric institutions capable of responding to local socio-ecological conditions Bennett et al. (2013). Evidence from Tanzania's joint forest management and Uganda's local forest user groups demonstrates that clearly defined agreements and collaborative frameworks reduce transaction costs, improve compliance, and promote sustainable resource use.

Future research should focus on the practical design and implementation of co-management frameworks within Lesotho's Range Management Areas (RMAs), assessing their potential to strengthen institutional synergy, accountability, and ecological outcomes. Additionally, comparative studies on remuneration structures and governance incentives could provide insights into how dual authority systems influence collaboration and community compliance Artz et al. (1993).

6.2.2c The Impact of LCC and Chieftainship Institutions on the Performance of RMAs and Maboella systems

To improve coherence and reduce conflict in range resource governance, it is recommended that formal local platforms or committees be established, where chiefs and councillors collaboratively plan, implement, and monitor rangeland management activities Bennett et al. (2013). Legislative frameworks, particularly the Local Government Act and rangeland-related policies, should be reviewed and amended to explicitly define and harmonize the roles and responsibilities of traditional and modern governance institutions.

Such arrangements would bridge the gap between cultural legitimacy and statutory authority and align with the adaptive governance principle of institutional learning, which emphasizes the joint use of traditional knowledge and modern expertise. Comparative evidence from Sierra Leone's forestry committees and Ghana's CREMAs demonstrates that hybrid governance systems improve compliance, coordination, and community trust. Further research should document and evaluate hybrid governance models in Lesotho, assessing their potential to scale up sustainable rangeland management and strengthen institutional synergy Korol et al. (2025)

6.2.3 Policy Pathways for Improved Coordination of Local Authority Institutions in Rangeland Management: Policy and Legislative Innovations

Lesotho should implement legal and policy reforms that formalize collaborative governance in rangeland management. This includes the establishment of joint range management committees, co-signed by-laws, and integrated resource planning mechanisms that involve both chieftainship and Local Community Councils (LCCs). These structures should be supported by targeted capacity-building initiatives to foster inclusive decision-making, adaptive management, and institutional coordination.

Such reforms align with Social-Ecological Systems (SES) theory, which emphasizes rule congruence and participatory governance to strengthen ecological resilience and compliance. Comparative evidence from Ghana's CREMAs demonstrates that integrating customary and statutory authority through legal recognition enhances community trust, compliance, and ecological outcomes Sanginga et al. (2010).

Future research should evaluate the long-term performance of co-management models in Lesotho, including how integrated legislative frameworks affect institutional trust, coordination, and sustainability Gusha et al. (2024). In addition, RRM strategies should broaden beyond the duality of chiefs and councillors to include other relevant stakeholders, ensuring more inclusive and effective governance of communal rangelands.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Consent form

Study Title: Governance Institutions in Range Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha's Nek

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Matlotla Agnes Pheku, a Master's student in Integrated Catchment Water Resources Management (ICWRM) at National University of Lesotho. This study aims to evaluate the interaction of governance institutions, such as local councils and chieftainship institutions, in managing range resources in Qacha's Nek, Lesotho.

Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of local councils and chiefs in range resource management (RRM).
2. Identify challenges and opportunities for collaboration between governance institutions.
3. Provide recommendations for improving governance structures in RRM.

Your Participation involves:

- ✓ Answering a survey questionnaire (approximately 15–20 minutes).
- ✓ Optionally participating in an interview or focus group discussion (approximately 30–60 minutes).

Voluntary Participation

NB: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may choose to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality and Privacy

- ✓ Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous.
- ✓ Data will be stored securely and only accessed by the researcher.

- ✓ Findings will be reported in aggregate form, without identifying individual participants.

Potential Risks and Benefits

- ✓ Risks: There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.
- ✓ Benefits: Your insights will contribute to understanding and improving range resource governance in Lesotho, benefiting local communities and policymakers.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Matlotla Agnes Pheku

Email: mpheku77@gmail.com

Phone: 57892759

For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact [Ethics Review Board NUL] at National University of Lesotho.

Consent Declaration

Please read the following statements and check the box to indicate your agreement:

- I have read and understood the purpose, procedures, and risks of this study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I understand that my responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.
- I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Name (Optional): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Researcher Use Only

Researcher Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B - Survey tool

Title: Governance Institutions in Range Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha's Nek.

Opening statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose is to evaluate the roles and effectiveness of chieftainship and elected councillors in range resource management. Your responses will remain confidential and used solely for academic research. This will take approximately 50–75 minutes.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read and listen carefully to each question before answering.
- ✓ If unsure, feel free to ask for clarification as the assistant will administer the questions.
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- ✓ For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section A: Respondent Background

1. **Are you a:**

- Household Member
- Grazing Association Member
- Both

2. **Age Group:**

- 18–35
- 36–60
- 61+

3. **Gender:**

- Male
- Female
- Other

4. **Highest Education Level Completed:**

- None

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

5. Main Source(s) of Livelihood: (Select all that apply)

- Livestock farming
- Crop farming
- Wage employment
- Government grant
- Other: _____

6. Village and Community Council Area:

7. Name of Grazing Association (if applicable): _____

8. Role in GA (if applicable):

- Member
- Committee Member
- Chairperson
- Other: _____

9. Length of GA Membership:

- < 2 years
- 2–5 years
- 5 years

10. Are you located in an RMA (Range Management Area)?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Section B: Roles and Responsibilities

11. Who plays a larger role in managing land and range resources in your area?

- Chief
- Councillor
- Both equally
- Neither
- Don't know

12. Chief's responsibilities: (Select all that apply)

- Allocating land
- Enforcing grazing rules
- Resolving land-use disputes
- Organizing community work (e.g., soil conservation)
- Mobilizing the community
- Not involved
- Other: _____

13. Councilor's responsibilities: (Select all that apply)

- Approving development plans
- Coordinating with NGOs/government
- Educating community about policies
- Enforcing RRM policies
- Mobilizing support
- Not involved
- Other: _____

14. How clearly are the roles of chiefs and councillors defined in your area?

- Very clear
- Somewhat clear
- Not clear at all
- Don't know

Section C: Comparative Effectiveness & Trust

15. Chief's effectiveness in managing range resources:

- Very effective
- Fairly effective
- Not effective
- Don't know

16. Councilor's effectiveness in managing range resources:

- Very effective
- Fairly effective
- Not effective
- Don't know

17. Which institution enforces grazing regulations better?

- Chief
- Councillor
- Both equally
- Don't know

18. Do you trust decisions made by:

- Chief: Yes No Not sure
- Councillor: Yes No Not sure

19. Has your household or GA been consulted on resource decisions (e.g., grazing, land rehabilitation)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

20. Are community views respected in resource management decisions?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Don't know

Section D: Sustainability & Collaboration

21. Which conservation practices are promoted by local authorities?

(Select all that apply)

- Rotational grazing
- Reforestation
- Controlled burning
- None
- Other: _____

22. Who supports these conservation practices the most?

- Chief
- Councillor
- Both
- NGOs
- Don't know

23. Are you or your GA involved in planning/implementing conservation practices?

- Yes
- No

24. How often do local leaders consult your GA or household in decision-making?

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

25. Have you observed collaboration between chiefs and councillors?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

26. What challenges hinder their collaboration? (Open-ended)

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27. What suggestions can improve their collaboration? (Open-ended)

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Section E: Historical Comparison – RMA vs Maboella

28. Are you familiar with traditional *maboella* grazing practices?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

29. Were you or your family involved in *maboella* before 1997?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

30. How has grazing management changed since community councils were introduced in 1997? (Open-ended)

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31. Which system is more effective for sustainability?

- RMAs
- Maboella
- Both
- Don't know

32. What works better today, in your opinion?

- Traditional (Maboella)
- Modern (Council-led)
- Hybrid
- Not sure

33. Have you faced challenges from conflicting decisions by chiefs and councillors?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes, please describe:



Section F: Final Reflections

34. What is the best way to manage grazing land, forests, and water in your area? (Open-ended)

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35. Any additional comments or suggestions? (Open-ended)

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Closing Statement:

Thank you for your valuable input. Your responses will contribute significantly to improving range resource management or/and governance in Lesotho. If you have further questions, contact Mrs Matlotla Pheku at 57892759 / mpheku77@gmail.com.

Appendix C - Interview guides

CHIEFS QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: Evaluating the Interaction of Governance Institutions in Range Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha's Nek.

Opening statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate efficiency of these two governance structures, Chieftainship and elected councillors in Range Resource Management. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. This survey will take approximately [50-75] minutes to complete.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read and listen carefully to each question before answering.
- ✓ If unsure, feel free to ask for clarification as the assistant will administer the questions.
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- ✓ For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your age group?

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- Above 50

2. What is your gender?

- Male

Female

..... Other
(specify).....

3. How long have you served as a chief in your community?

Less than 5 years

5-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

4. What are your main responsibilities in Range Resource Management? (Select all that apply)

Land allocation

Grazing management

Forest conservation

Water resource management

Conflict resolution

Implementation of Range Management Areas (RMAs)

Other

(Specify)

5. How do you enforce customary laws on range resource use in your area?

(Text
response).....
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6. Which traditional systems (e.g., maboella,) are still operational under your jurisdiction?

(Text response).....
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Section 3: RMA Concept

7. Are there active Range Management Areas (RMAs) within your jurisdiction?

- Yes
- No (if no skip to No 9)

8. If yes in 7, how are RMAs managed in your area? (Select all that apply)

- Through traditional leadership only
- Through collaboration between chiefs and grazing associations
- Through collaboration with local community councils

Other:
(Specify).....

9. What are the main benefits of RMAs in range resource management? (Select all that apply)

- Improved grazing management

- Reduced land degradation
- Enhanced ecological balance
- Increased community participation in decision-making
- Other:
(Specify).....

10. What challenges do you face in implementing and managing RMAs? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of funding and resources
- Conflicts with community councils
- Resistance from community members
- Overlapping roles with modern/contemporary governance systems
- Other:(Specify)
.....

11. How do you think the RMA system can be improved to support sustainable range resource management?

(Text response).....

Section 4: Interactions with Councillors

12. How often do you engage with local community councils on RMA-related issues?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently

13. What challenges have you faced when working with elected community councils on RMAs? (Select all that apply)

- Overlapping roles and responsibilities
- Lack of coordination
- Conflicting policies
- Limited resources

Other:(Specify)
.....

14. Do you think collaboration with community councils can improve the effectiveness of RMAs?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Section 5: Perceptions and Challenges

15. In your opinion, what are the major challenges in managing RMAs within your community?

(Text response).....
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.....

16. How do community members perceive the role of chiefs in managing RMAs?

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

17. What resources or support do you need to improve the effectiveness of RMAs?

(Text response).....
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Section 6: Recommendations

18. What strategies do you suggest to enhance collaboration between traditional and modern governance systems, particularly in managing RMAs?

(Text response).....
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19. Are there any specific legislative or policy changes you believe could improve RMAs and overall range resource management?

(Text response).....
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Closing Statement: Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable to this study. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact [Mrs Matlotla Pheku] at [57892759 Email: mpheku77@gmail.com].

Appendix C1 - 2. CHIEFS IN RMA REGIMES QUESTIONNAIRE

Study Title: Evaluating the Interaction of Governance Institutions in Natural Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha's Nek.

Opening statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate efficiency of these two governance structures, Chieftainship and elected councillors in Range Resource Management. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. This survey will take approximately [50-75] minutes to complete.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read and listen carefully to each question before answering.
- ✓ If unsure, feel free to ask for clarification as the assistant will administer the questions.
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- ✓ For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your age group?

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- Above 50

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

3. How long have you served as a chief under the RMA regime?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

4. Which community or area do you represent?

(Text response)

.....
.....

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

5. What are your primary responsibilities in managing range resources under the RMA regime? (Select all that apply)

- Allocating grazing lands
- Enforcing customary laws related to RMAs
- Resolving conflicts over natural resource use
- Coordinating with grazing associations
- Other:(Specify)

.....

6. What traditional practices (e.g., maboeella) do you incorporate into managing RMAs?

(Text response)

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7. How do you monitor and enforce compliance with RMA rules?

(Text response)

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Section 3: Community Engagement

8. How often do you involve community members in decision-making about RMAs?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently

9. In your experience, how do community members perceive the RMA system?

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

10. What challenges have you encountered in gaining community support for the RMA system? (Select all that apply)

- Resistance to grazing restrictions
- Lack of understanding about RMAs
- Conflicts over land use
- Other:(Specify)

.....

Section 4: Interaction with Elected Community Council Members

11. How often do you collaborate with local councillors on RMA-related issues?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently

12. What is the nature of your collaboration with councillors? (Select all that apply)

- Coordinating grazing plans
- Resolving land-use conflicts
- Implementing government policies
- Other: (Specify)

13. Have you experienced challenges in working with councillors on RMAs?

- Yes
- No

14. If yes, what challenges have you faced? (Select all that apply)

- Overlapping responsibilities
- Lack of communication
- Conflicting priorities or policies
- Other:(Specify)

.....

Section 5: RMA Effectiveness

15. In your opinion, what are the key benefits of the RMA system? (Select all that apply)

- Improved grazing management
- Reduced land degradation
- Enhanced community participation in resource management
- Other:(Specify)

.....

16. What are the main challenges you face in implementing RMAs? (Select all that apply)

- Insufficient resources (e.g., funding, staff)
- Conflicts with community members
- Conflicts with councillors
- Lack of clear guidelines or policies
- Other:(Specify)

.....

17. How would you rate the current effectiveness of the RMA system in your area?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neutral
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

18. What improvements do you think are necessary to make RMAs more effective?

(Text response)

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Section 6: Sustainability and Climate Change

19. Have you observed any environmental changes (e.g., soil erosion, vegetation loss) within RMA watershed over the years?

- Yes
- No

20. If yes, what changes have you observed? (Text response)

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21. What measures do you think are needed to ensure the sustainability of RMAs?

(Text response)

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Section 7: Recommendations and Policy

22. What strategies do you suggest for better collaboration between chiefs and councillors in managing RMAs?

(Text response)

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23. Are there any specific policies or support mechanisms that would help you manage RMAs more effectively?

(Text response)

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24. Do you have any additional suggestions for improving range resource management under the RMA regime?

(Text response)

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Closing Statement: Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable to this study. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact [Mrs Matlotla Pheku] at [57892759 Email: mpheku77@gmail.com].

Appendix C2 - FORESTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Study Title: Evaluating the Interaction of Governance Institutions in Natural Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha's Nek.

Opening statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate efficiency of these two governance structures, Chieftainship and elected councillors in Range Resource Management. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. This survey will take approximately [50-75] minutes to complete.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read and listen carefully to each question before answering.
- ✓ If unsure, feel free to ask for clarification as the assistant will administer the questions.
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- ✓ For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section A: Background Information

1. Name (Optional): _____

2. Ministry:

- Forestry
- Range Management
- Water Affairs
- Land Management
- Gender Affairs
- Youth Development

- Soil and water conservation
- Other (please specify): _____

3. Position/Role: _____

4. Years of Experience in the Ministry:

- Less than 5 years
- 5–10 years
- More than 10 years

5. Geographic Focus of Work:

- National level
- Regional level
- Local level

Section B: Roles and Responsibilities

6. What are your primary responsibilities in your role? (Select all that apply):

- Policy development and implementation
- Monitoring and enforcement of regulations
- Capacity-building and training
- Collaboration with governance institutions (chiefs and councils)
- Community engagement and advocacy
- Other (please specify): _____

7. How does your ministry contribute to range resource management (RRM) in Lesotho?

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8. Are there specific challenges your ministry faces in implementing RRM-related policies?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe:

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Section C: Collaboration with Governance Institutions

9. How often does your ministry collaborate with local governance structures (chiefs and councils) in RRM?

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

10. In what areas does your ministry collaborate with traditional chiefs?

- Land use planning and allocation
- Forest and grazing management
- Water resource management
- Enforcement of traditional laws
- Other (please specify): _____

11. In what areas does your ministry collaborate with local community councils?

- Policy implementation
- Community training and awareness
- Resource monitoring and management
- Other (please specify): _____

12. What challenges arise when collaborating with governance institutions in RRM?

- Overlapping responsibilities
- Lack of communication and coordination
- Resistance to policy implementation
- Other (please specify):
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13. What strategies can improve collaboration between your ministry and governance institutions?

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Section D: Community Engagement and Participation

14. How does your ministry engage communities in RRM initiatives? (Select all that apply):

- Public awareness campaigns
- Training and capacity-building programs
- Collaboration with local governance structures
- Financial or technical support for community projects
- Other (please specify): _____

15. What challenges does your ministry face in ensuring effective community participation in RRM?

- Limited awareness among community members
- Lack of funding for engagement activities
- Resistance to change in traditional practices
- Other (please specify):

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Section E: Environmental and Social Challenges

16. What are the most significant environmental challenges facing your ministry? (Select all that apply):

- Deforestation
- Soil erosion and land degradation
- Overgrazing
- Water scarcity

- Biodiversity loss
- Climate change impacts
- Other (please specify): _____

17. How do governance inefficiencies (e.g., conflicts between chiefs and councils) impact these challenges?

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18. How does your ministry address gender and youth inclusion in RRM initiatives?

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19. Are there specific programs or projects that focus on empowering women and youth in resource management?

- Yes (please describe): _____
- No

Section F: Policy and Recommendations

20. What policy reforms or legislative changes would you recommend to strengthen RRM in Lesotho?

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21. How can traditional practices (e.g., maboeella, rotational grazing) be better integrated into modern RRM policies?

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22. What role should chiefs, councils, and government ministries play in improving resource management outcomes?

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23. What additional resources or support does your ministry need to enhance its impact on RRM?

- Increased funding
- Enhanced training and capacity-building
- Improved data collection and monitoring tools
- Other (please specify): _____

Section G: Final Reflections

24. What do you think is the most critical factor for achieving sustainable RRM in Lesotho?

- Strengthened governance structures
- Community engagement and awareness
- Integration of traditional and modern approaches
- Adequate funding and resources
- Other (please specify): _____

25. Please share any additional insights, challenges, or recommendations regarding RRM and governance in Lesotho.

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Closing Statement: Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable to this study. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact [Mrs Matlotla Pheku] at [57892759 Email: mpheku77@gmail.com].

Appendix C3 - LOCAL COMMUNITY COUNCILS QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: Evaluating the Interaction Of governance institutions in Natural Resource Management in Lesotho: The case of Local Council and Chieftainship institutions in Qacha's Nek.

Opening Statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the efficiency of these governance structures by investigating the roles and impacts of councillors and chiefs in natural resource management in Lesotho.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read each question carefully, the assistant will administer the interview
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability
- ✓ For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your age group?

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- Above 50

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

3. What is your role or title in the local community council?

(Textresponse)

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4. How long have you served as a councilor?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

5. What are your main responsibilities in range resource management? (Select all that apply)

- Implementation of government policies on natural resources
- Coordination with community stakeholders
- Conflict resolution
- Monitoring and enforcement of regulations
- Other:(Specify)

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6. How do you engage with local communities on issues related to range resources?

(Text response).....
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7. Which range resource systems (e.g., RMAs, grazing lands, forests) are under the jurisdiction of your council?

(Text response).....
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Section 3: RMA Concept

8. Are there active Range Management Areas (RMAs) within your council’s jurisdiction?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, what role does your council play in the management of RMAs? (Select all that apply)

- Policy implementation
- Coordination with traditional leaders
- Monitoring and reporting
- Resource allocation
- Other: (Specify)

10. What are the key benefits of RMAs in your experience? (Select all that apply)

- Improved grazing management
- Reduced land degradation
- Community participation in governance
- Enhanced ecological balance
- Other:(Specify)
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11. What challenges have you encountered in implementing or managing RMAs? (Select all that apply)

- Resistance from traditional authorities
- Lack of community participation
- Resource limitations (e.g., funding, personnel)
- Overlapping jurisdictions with chiefs
- Other:(Specify)

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12. In your opinion, how can RMAs be improved to better support sustainable range resource management?

(Text response).....
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Section 4: Interaction with Traditional Leaders

13. How often do you engage with chiefs on range resource management issues?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently

14. What are the main challenges in collaborating with chiefs on range resource management? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of clear roles and responsibilities

- Conflicting priorities or policies
 - Limited communication channels
 - Power struggles or authority disputes
 - Other:(Specify)
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15. How would you describe the current relationship between community councils and chiefs in managing range resources?

- Very cooperative
- Cooperative
- Neutral
- Conflicted
- Very conflicted

Additional

Comments: _____

16. Do you believe that improved collaboration with chiefs can enhance range resource management?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes /No, Why? _____

Section 5: Community Perceptions

17. How do you think community members perceive the role of councillors in managing range resources?

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

Additional

Comment: _____

18. What feedback have you received from community members about your council’s efforts in range resource management?

(Text response).....
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Section 6: Recommendations and Policy

19. What strategies do you think could enhance collaboration between councillors and chiefs in range resource management?

(Text response).....
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20. What policy changes or support do you think are needed to improve range resource management in your jurisdiction?

(Text response).....
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21. Are there any specific resources (e.g., funding, training, personnel) that would help your council perform better in range resource management?

(Text response).....
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22. Have you observed any environmental changes (e.g., soil erosion, vegetation loss) within RMA watershed over the years?

(Text response)
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23. Does your association collaborate with traditional chiefs' councils in resource management?

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Closing Statement: Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable to this study. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact [Mrs Matlotla Pheku] at [57892759 Email: mpheku77@gmail.com].

Appendix C4 - 5. COUNCILORS IN RMA REGIMES QUESTIONNAIRE

Study Title: Evaluating the Interaction of Governance Institutions in Natural Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha's Nek.

Opening statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate efficiency of these two governance structures, Chieftainship and elected councillors in Range Resource Management. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. This survey will take approximately [50-75] minutes to complete.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read and listen carefully to each question before answering.
- ✓ If unsure, feel free to ask for clarification as the assistant will administer the questions.
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability.

For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your age group?

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- Above 50

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

3. How long have you served as a councilor under the RMA regime?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- More than 20 years

4. Which community or area do you represent?

(Text response)

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Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

5. What are your primary responsibilities in managing range resources under the RMA regime? (Select all that apply)

- Allocating grazing lands
- Enforcing customary laws related to RMAs
- Resolving conflicts over range resource use
- Coordinating with grazing associations
- Other:(Specify)

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6. What traditional practices (e.g., maboeella) do you incorporate into managing RMAs?

(Text response)

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7. How do you monitor and enforce compliance with RMA rules?

(Text response)

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Section 3: Community Engagement

8. How often do you involve community members in decision-making about RMAs?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently

9. In your experience, how do community members perceive the RMA system?

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

10. What challenges have you encountered in gaining community support for the RMA system? (Select all that apply)

- Resistance to grazing restrictions
- Lack of understanding about RMAs
- Conflicts over land use
- Other:(Specify)

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Section 4: Interaction with Traditional leaders (chiefs)

11. How often do you collaborate with chiefs on RMA-related issues?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently

12. What is the nature of your collaboration with chiefs? (Select all that apply)

- Coordinating grazing plans
- Resolving land-use conflicts
- Implementing government policies
- Other: (Specify)

13. Have you experienced challenges in working with chiefs on RMAs?

- Yes
- No

14. If yes, what challenges have you faced? (Select all that apply)

- Overlapping responsibilities
- Lack of communication
- Conflicting priorities or policies

Other:(Specify)

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Section 5: RMA Effectiveness

15. In your opinion, what are the key benefits of the RMA system? (Select all that apply)

- Improved grazing management
- Reduced land degradation
- Enhanced community participation in resource management
- Other:(Specify)

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16. What are the main challenges you face in implementing RMAs? (Select all that apply)

- Insufficient resources (e.g., funding, staff)
- Conflicts with community members
- Conflicts with chiefs
- Lack of clear guidelines or policies
- Other:(Specify)

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17. How would you rate the current effectiveness of the RMA system in your area?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neutral
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

18. What improvements do you think are necessary to make RMAs more effective?

(Text response)

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Section 6: Sustainability and Climate Change

19. Have you observed any environmental changes (e.g., soil erosion, vegetation loss) within RMA watershed over the years?

- Yes
- No

20. If yes, what changes have you observed? (Text response)

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21. What measures do you think are needed to ensure the sustainability of RMAs?

(Text response)

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Section 7: Recommendations and Policy

22. What strategies do you suggest for better collaboration between chiefs and councillors in managing RMAs?

(Text response)

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23. Are there any specific policies or support mechanisms that would help you manage RMAs more effectively?

(Text response)

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24. Do you have any additional suggestions for improving range resource management under the RMA regime?

(Text response)

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Closing Statement: Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable to this study. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact [Mrs Matlotla Pheku] at [57892759 Email: mpheku77@gmail.com].

Appendix C5 5. RESEARCH INSTITUTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Study Title: Evaluating the Interaction of Governance Institutions in Range Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha's Nek.

Opening statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate efficiency of these two governance structures, Chieftainship and elected councillors in Range Resource Management. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. This survey will take approximately [50-75] minutes to complete.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read and listen carefully to each question before answering.
- ✓ If unsure, feel free to ask for clarification as the assistant will administer the questions.
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- ✓ For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section A: Background Information

1. Name of Institution: _____

2. Name of Respondent (Optional): _____

3. Position/Role: _____

4. Primary Focus of the Institution (Select all that apply):

- Environmental research
- Social science research
- Agricultural research
- Policy and governance research
- Other (please specify): _____

5. Years of Operation in Lesotho:

- Less than 5 years
- 5–10 years
- More than 10 years

6. Geographic Focus of Research:

- Rural areas
- Urban areas
- Both rural and urban

Section B: Role in Range Resource Management (RRM)

7. What are the main research areas your institution focuses on concerning RRM?

- Land management and restoration
- Water resource management
- Biodiversity conservation
- Climate change impacts and adaptation
- Governance and policy frameworks
- Other (please specify): _____

8. What is the primary objective of your research in RRM?

- Informing policy development
- Advancing scientific knowledge
- Supporting community-based initiatives
- Collaborating with governance institutions
- Other (please specify): _____

9. How does your research contribute to improving RRM in Lesotho?

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10. What challenges does your institution face in conducting RRM-related research?

- Limited funding
- Insufficient collaboration with governance institutions
- Lack of access to reliable data
- Other

(please specify):.....

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Section C: Collaboration with Governance Institutions

11. Does your institution collaborate with traditional chiefs or community councils in RRM research?

- Yes
- No

12. If yes, in what ways do you collaborate?

- Data sharing and access
- Joint projects and initiatives
- Policy recommendations
- Capacity-building and training

Other (please specify):

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13. How effective is the collaboration between research institutions and governance structures in RRM?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neutral
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

14. What are the key barriers to effective collaboration with governance institutions?

- Lack of mutual trust
- Overlapping responsibilities between chiefs and councils
- Limited understanding of research importance by governance institutions
- Other (please specify):

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15. What strategies can enhance collaboration between research institutions and community governance institutions in Lesotho?

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Section D: Environmental Challenges and Research Focus

16. What are the most pressing environmental challenges identified through your research? (Select all that apply):

- Land degradation and soil erosion
- Deforestation
- Overgrazing
- Water scarcity
- Biodiversity loss
- Climate change impacts
- Other (please specify):

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17. What innovative solutions or approaches has your research proposed to address these challenges?

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18. How do governance inefficiencies (e.g., conflicts between chiefs and councils) impact the environmental challenges you are/were studying?

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19. Do you believe that integrating traditional knowledge with modern research approaches can improve RRM outcomes?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section E: Policy and Recommendations

20. How does your institution contribute to the development of policies on RRM?

- Providing evidence-based research
- Offering policy briefs and recommendations
- Organizing stakeholder workshops
- Other (please specify):

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21. What policy reforms or legislative changes would you recommend to improve RRM in Lesotho?

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22. How can research institutions better support governance institutions in achieving sustainable resource management?

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23. What resources or support does your institution need to improve its role in RRM?

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Section F: Final Insights and Reflections

24. From your perspective, what is the most critical factor in achieving sustainable resource management in Lesotho?

- Strengthening governance structures
- Enhancing community participation
- Integrating traditional and modern practices
- Increasing funding and resources
- Other (please specify):

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25. Please share any additional insights or recommendations for improving range resource governance and management in Lesotho.

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Closing Statement: Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable to this study. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact [Mrs Matlotla Pheku] at [57892759 Email: mpheku77@gmail.com].

Appendix C6

EIAs QUESTIONNAIRS

Study Title: Evaluating the Interaction of Governance Institutions in Natural Resource Management in Lesotho: The Case of Local Community Council and Chieftainship Institutions in Qacha’s Nek.

Opening statement: Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate efficiency of these two governance structures, Chieftainship and elected councillors in Range Resource Management. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. This survey will take approximately [50-75] minutes to complete.

Instructions:

- ✓ Please read and listen carefully to each question before answering.

- ✓ If unsure, feel free to ask for clarification as the assistant will administer the questions.
- ✓ Answer all questions to the best of your ability.
- ✓ For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best applies to you.

Section A: Background Information

1. Name (Optional): _____

2. Organization/Institution: _____

3. Position/Role: _____

4. Years of Experience in Environmental Management and Development:

- Less than 2 years
- 2–5 years
- More than 5 years

5. Key area(s) of expertise (Select all that apply):

- Land management
- Water resource management
- Biodiversity conservation
- Climate change adaptation
- Community development
- Policy and governance

Section B: Governance and Collaboration

6. What is your perspective on the effectiveness of governance institutions (chiefs and councils) in managing range resources?

- Very effective

- Effective
- Neutral
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

7. Based on your experience, what are the main challenges affecting the collaboration between traditional chiefs and local community councils in range resource management?

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8. How do you think the overlapping responsibilities between chiefs and councils affect environmental and resource management outcomes?

- Significantly improves outcomes
- Slightly improves outcomes
- No impact
- Slightly worsens outcomes
- Significantly worsens outcomes

9. What strategies have you observed or implemented to promote collaboration between governance institutions in range resource management?

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Section C: Environmental and Social Impacts

10. In your opinion, how does the dual governance system influence environmental sustainability in Qacha’s Nek?

- Strongly positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Strongly negative impact

11. What are the primary environmental challenges observed in Qacha’s Nek due to governance inefficiencies? (Select all that apply):

- Land degradation
- Deforestation
- Overgrazing
- Water resource depletion
- Biodiversity loss
- Other (please specify):

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11. How do governance practices impact the livelihoods of local communities in the region?

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Section D: Community Engagement and Participation

13. How often are local communities engaged in range resource management initiatives?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

14. What methods or platforms are commonly used to engage local communities in range resource management?

- Public meetings
- Workshops and training sessions
- Surveys and consultations
- Community-based organizations
- Other (please specify): _____

15. What challenges hinder effective community participation in resource management?

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Section E: Policy and Recommendations

16. What policy reforms or changes would you recommend to address governance conflicts in range resource management?

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17. Do you believe integrating traditional knowledge with modern governance frameworks can improve resource management outcomes?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. From your perspective, what are the most effective ways to balance traditional and modern governance systems in managing range resources?

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19. What role should environmental practitioners and development organizations play in improving governance structures for sustainable resource management?

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20. Please share any additional insights or recommendations on improving range resource governance in Lesotho.

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Closing Statement: Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses are invaluable to this study. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact [Mrs Matlotla Pheku] at [57892759 Email: mpheku77@gmail.com].

Appendix D - Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

Title: Governance institutions in Range Resource Management in Lesotho: The case of Local Community Councils and Chieftainship institutions in Qacha’s Nek.

Participants: 6–20 individuals per group
Facilitator Instructions: Encourage open discussion, probe for details, listen for patterns or contradictions. Use local language if necessary. Audio record with consent.

Opening Statement: Thank you for participating in this FGD. The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the efficiency of these governance structures by investigating the roles and impacts of councillors and chiefs in range resource management in Lesotho.

Section 1: Understanding Roles and Responsibilities (Objective 1)

1. Who is mainly responsible for making decisions about land use and grazing in your community?

Follow-up: What are the specific tasks performed by the chief and the councillor in range resource management?

2. Are the responsibilities of chiefs and councillors clear to you as community members?

Follow-up: Have there been situations where roles overlapped or clashed?

3. How do you feel about the way range resource-related decisions are communicated and enforced in your area?

Section 2: Comparing Effectiveness (Objective 2)

4. In your view, who is more effective in managing resources – the chief or the councillor? Why?

Probe for reasons like trust, enforcement strength, experience, training, accessibility, etc.

5. Can you describe any successful (or failed) interventions or projects led by either chiefs or councillors?

Follow-up: What made them succeed or fail?

6. How do community members respond to instructions from chiefs versus councillors when it comes to resource use and restrictions?

Section 3: Institutional Advantage & Sustainability (Objective 3)

7. What efforts have you seen to promote sustainable use of grazing land, forests, or water in your area?

Follow-up: Which institution (chieftainship or council) led them?

8. How does the community get involved in these efforts? Are you consulted or involved in planning or implementing them?
9. What challenges do you face in managing communal resources, and how are these addressed by chiefs or councillors?

Section 4: Policy Gaps and Opportunities for Collaboration (Objective 4)

10. Have you seen or heard of chiefs and councillors working together on range resource matters?

Follow-up: What did that collaboration look like? Was it effective?

11. What kinds of disagreements or tensions exist between chiefs and councillors?

Follow-up: How do these disagreements affect your community or resources?

12. What do you suggest could improve collaboration between traditional and elected leaders?

Section 5: Historical Comparison – RMAs vs. Maboella (Objective 5)

13. How was range management done before the 1997 reforms?

Follow-up: What do you remember about the maboella system?

14. How has the system changed since the introduction of RMAs and community councils?

Follow-up: What are the advantages or disadvantages of the current system compared to the old one?

15. Which system—maboella or RMA/council-led—is better for sustaining your land and livestock? Why?

Final Reflections

16. What would an ideal system of governance for managing range resources in your community look like?

17. Do you feel your voice is heard in decisions about your land and resources? How can that be improved?

Closing Statement:

Thank you for your valuable input. Your responses will contribute significantly to improving range resource management or/and governance in Lesotho. If you have further questions, contact Mrs Matlotla Pheku at 57892759 / mpheku77@gmail.com.

Appendix E: Codebook for thematic analysis

Code	Theme	Definition
Chief_Role	Roles & Responsibilities	Traditional roles of chiefs in resource allocation & enforcement
Councillor_Role	Roles & Responsibilities	Modern governance roles in policy and development
Governance_Effectiveness_Chief	Governance Efficiency	Chiefs' perceived effectiveness in RRM
Governance_Effectiveness_Councillor	Governance Efficiency	Councillors' policy enforcement efficiency
Overlapping_Roles	Challenges	Conflicting or overlapping responsibilities
Coordination_Issues	Challenges	Lack of coordination between governance institutions
Community_Trust_Chief	Community Perception	Community trust and reliance on chiefs
Community_Trust_Councillor	Community Perception	Community perceptions of councillors
Suggested_Synergy	Collaboration Strategies	Recommendations for joint governance activities
Policy_Gaps	Collaboration Strategies	Need for legal clarity or policy reform
Maboeella_Use	Evolution of Systems	Use of traditional grazing systems
RMA_Implementation	Evolution of Systems	Impact of RMAs on rangeland governance
Resource_Impact	Environmental Outcomes	Perceived improvements in environment