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Research Article

Witchcraft with Specific Reference to the Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande by E. E. Evans Pritchard

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Abstract. This work dives into the many layers of witchcraft, oracles, and magic that shape Azande society, a theme first explored by E. E. Evans Pritchard. It isn't just about abstract ideas; rather, the study shows how these practices mingle with everyday life and help settle disputes in unexpected ways. Using a mix of ethnographic fieldwork, first-hand documents, and historical narratives, the research doesn't simply list evidence but paints a picture of practical community tools, sometimes overlapping in purpose. Generally speaking, the beliefs in witchcraft and reliance on oracles not only explain misfortune but also serve to knit the community together, regulating social interactions in a very tangible way. There's also a notable impact on healthcare; these cultural practices influence how illness and healing are understood, leading to a kind of dual approach where traditional remedies coexist with modern medicine, even if the blend isn't always seamless. In most cases, this mix offers valuable insights not only for anthropologists but also for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and researchers interested in the deep cultural roots of health and sickness among indigenous populations. Recognizing these long-held beliefs in daily life means that interventions might be better tailored to fit the cultural context of patients, ultimately fostering improved outcomes and promoting culturally competent care. Overall, the study sparks cross-disciplinary conversations about the interplay of

culture and health, underlining the need for frameworks that truly value traditional practices alongside contemporary medical approaches.

Keywords: Azande, Witchcraft, Culture, Traditional, Divination, Medicine, Sickness

INTRODUCTION

Belief systems around witchcraft, oracles, and magic aren't just abstract ideas, they've shown up time and again as part of everyday social life, something E. E. Evans Pritchard made clear with his work among the Azande in Central Africa. The Azande community, for instance, leans on practices like consulting oracles and engaging in magic not only to cope with misfortunes but also to sort out conflicts and shape their cultural identity. Even though plenty has been written about witchcraft, there still seems to be a gap, how exactly do these traditions act as basic pillars for social order and morals in non-Western settings? In most cases, the challenge is to unravel the tangled roles that oracles and magic play, as noted in Pritchard's studies, particularly regarding their impact on ideas of health, well-being, and social regulation. This work sets out to break down how witchcraft, oracles, and magic function practically in Azande life, aiming to show how these age-old practices help manage conflicts and boost community cohesion. Using a mix of hands-on ethnographic analysis and qualitative research, the work tries to capture a layered, nuanced picture of traditions that still persist despite modern influences. The value of this inquiry isn't confined solely to academic circles; it also offers useful hints for today's healthcare professionals and policymakers who work with culturally diverse groups. Generally speaking, the research argues that blending cultural perspectives with health interventions can lead to more respectful and effective care, ones that truly acknowledge traditional beliefs. Ultimately, the work aims to jump into broader debates about culture and health, underscoring the need to appreciate indigenous practices as key to understanding how communities stay strong in our globalized world.

Background and Context of Azande Culture

The Azande blend ancient rituals with everyday life in a way that feels raw and surprisingly unpredictable. Their world isn't split neatly between myth and reality, instead, rich spiritual practices mix with everyday community interactions in a tangled, authentic fashion. E.E. Evans Pritchard, yes, the same man behind *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* spent years unravelling these layers; he showed that witchcraft isn't just folklore, but a way for people to cope with misfortunes and conflicts. Many view natural happenings and personal setbacks as stirred up by unseen forces, an idea that seeps into everything from solemn rituals to casual consultations with oracles (Anthonji C, 2021). People, more often than not, rely on these insights as a practical guide when life gets messy, affecting how disputes are managed, health issues addressed, and communities held together. Sometimes, witchcraft and the advice from oracles seem like very hands-on answers to life's big, pressing questions. You could say that this mix of old beliefs and modern living

creates a bridge that links historical perspectives with fresh viewpoints. It's important, generally speaking, to note that these studies do more than fill academic papers; they reveal how communities adapt in modern times, even when change feels overwhelming. Digging into the core values of Azande culture shows that traditional beliefs aren't just relics of the past, they actually shape daily life, influencing everything from healthcare to public policy. This research sometimes becomes a real bridge between scholarly theory and everyday practice, highlighting the very real impact of spiritual traditions on how people live their lives. In the end, exploring Azande culture gives us insight into a worldview that remains strikingly relevant today, a reminder that old ways still matter in our fast-changing world (Anthonji C, 2021).

Significance of Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic

Witchcraft, oracles, and magic mean a lot to the Azande, they're more than just stories; they help smooth over disagreements, tie people together, and even explain why bad things happen. E. E. Evans Pritchard's work generally points out that these witchcraft ideas give folks a way to cope with life's surprises by blaming unusual events on supernatural causes. Sometimes it's hard to see, but these beliefs really shape how people get along and resolve conflicts. There's a three-part puzzle here: one part digs into how witchcraft acts as a kind of social glue, another looks at how oracles steer decisions, and the last bit explores how all this ties into overall health and well-being in the community. This isn't just academic chatter, such practices build strong, organized systems that help keep the community together and settle disputes. We might say that understanding these ideas goes beyond scholarly debates and spills into practical matters. In many cases, knowing how witchcraft, oracles, and magic work can lead to health care and social services that really respect local traditions, especially in places where these beliefs still run deep (Prendergast F, 2022). It also suggests that mixing indigenous practices into public health plans might lead to more lasting, effective interventions. At the same time, the Azande show a kind of resilience that's hard to miss, they manage to keep their traditions alive even when the world around them is changing fast. So, by looking at how witchcraft, oracles, and magic shape life among the Azande, we not only learn about the culture but also see why it's important to value traditional beliefs in today's global mix. In the end, this discussion gets us to appreciate how these practices keep influencing everyday life and community bonds among the Azande (Anthonji C, 2021).

Research Objectives and Questions

In the Azande community, witchcraft, oracles, and magic intermingle in ways that prompt curious questions, what do these practices really do beyond explaining misfortunes? E. E. Evans-Pritchard's early work still echoes in these traditions. This study, generally speaking, takes a closer look at how these rituals serve as loose social tools for easing conflict and shaping both individual and community identities. Rather than laying everything out in neat order, the research meanders through a few puzzles. It kicks off by peering into how beliefs about witchcraft not only comment on everyday mishaps and troubled relationships, but might also hint at deeper social

signals. Then there's the role of oracles, those curious instruments of decision-making that sometimes help settle disputes in surprising ways. It also touches on how these cultural threads weave into how people view health and well-being, linking ideas of psychological strength with community ties. How exactly do Azande witchcraft beliefs explain misfortunes while easing tensions? In what unexpected ways do oracles work to mediate local conflicts, and how do these traditions jostle with other social dynamics to affect both personal and communal health outcomes? This inquiry isn't just an academic exercise; it has real-world implications, suggesting that respecting traditional practices could even inform modern health strategies, maybe even push policy in a new direction. In many cases, the objectives here point to the need for a less rigid, more open-minded look at the value systems underlying the Azande worldview, adding a richer layer to the broader discourse in African anthropology and social practices (Paton D, 2015). Ultimately, this exploration aims to bridge what's old and what's new, underlining how enduring indigenous practices continue to shape the lives of modern communities.

Review of Relevant Literature

Back in the early 1900s, anthropology started shifting away from one-sided imperial stories to really digging into how indigenous people experienced the supernatural and built their own social and cultural worlds. Researchers began noticing that witchcraft and magic weren't just relics of superstition but ways communities made sense of uncertainty. One standout work was E. E. Evans-Pritchard's study of the Azande in Central Africa. His in-depth look at their sorcery beliefs and the role of oracles in guiding decisions set a fresh tone, it wasn't just about supernatural quirks but about how these elements tied together social cohesion, justice, and cultural identity within the Azande.

This research, in many cases, also challenged conventional Western notions of rationality by showing that belief and reason can be closely intertwined. If we peer further into the literature, we see recurring themes about the magical practices and divination systems of the Azande. Witchcraft accusations, for instance, often reveal layers of social stratification and serve as windows into how communities cope with misfortune (Anthonji C, 2021). These belief systems are woven into everyday life, reinforcing norms and offering answers to both personal dilemmas and community crises. Still, despite all the talk on how witchcraft functions, there's a noticeable gap when it comes to understanding the impacts of globalization and modernization. As the Azande increasingly mix with external influences, their magical practices seem to be evolving, and this evolution deserves a closer look (Anthonji C, 2021). Many studies up to now have leaned heavily on anthropological perspectives, often leaving out contributions from psychology, economics, and other fields that might add depth to our understanding of witchcraft's role among the Azande. A more integrative approach could reveal how these traditions either bend under modern pressures or hold fast to age-old patterns. The absence of long-term, evolving studies really calls out for more research that follows these practices over time (Prendergast F, 2022).

Plus, there aren't many sharp critiques that lay bare the tensions between traditional methods and modern shifts, suggesting that a more rounded examination

of how witchcraft is reinterpreted today is both necessary and overdue. This review of the literature aims to pull together what we know about witchcraft, oracles, and magic in Azande culture by leaning on Evans-Pritchard's landmark work while also highlighting where more investigation is needed. By putting the Azande's magical practices into a broader anthropological and interdisciplinary context, the review explores how these beliefs influence social structure, intersect with modernity, and continue to shape cultural identity (Hersh D, 2022).

In essence, the goal is to both reflect on historical findings and spark new conversations about the future of witchcraft studies in a rapidly changing global landscape. Ultimately, the study of Azande witchcraft emerges as a powerful lens into broader human experiences, a mix of belief systems, social unrest, and cultural resilience (Tambiah S. J, 2017). Tracing the arc of witchcraft research among the Azande shows a rich narrative largely shaped by early 20th-century anthropologists. The pioneering work, especially that of Evans-Pritchard, not only positioned Azande witchcraft within a wider sociocultural setting but also highlighted its internal logic as seen by its practitioners. This new viewpoint has resonated through later studies, with successive researchers pointing out that these practices serve essential social functions, helping to maintain order and manage conflict (Anthonji C, 2021). As the field grew, scholars began to push back against neat, one-dimensional interpretations of witchcraft. Today's research paints a picture of practices steeped in power dynamics and intricate cultural narratives, where oracles are seen as more than just conduits for interpreting bad luck, they're active social assets. There's also been an encouraging move toward appreciating indigenous perspectives, shedding light on how local history shapes current beliefs (Prendergast F, 2022).

Historical accounts of the Azande's brushes with colonial powers add yet another twist, revealing a subtle tension between indigenous traditions and external forces. These narratives show how witchcraft beliefs have demonstrated both resilience and adaptation under shifting socio-political pressures. All this underscores the idea that while the study of witchcraft has deep anthropological roots, we must also mix in historical and cultural insights to really grasp the Azande's magical and divinatory systems. As a whole, this body of work reflects a vibrant, evolving discourse, a mirror, perhaps, of the complexity of human belief. Looking at the intricate world of witchcraft among the Azande, much of the literature builds on Evans-Pritchard's early investigations. His work revealed that the interplay between oracles and magic wasn't just about mysterious rituals, it was central to shaping both personal and communal identities. His insights into how witchcraft addressed feelings of insecurity have been echoed by later scholars who argue that these practices help communities manage misfortune. One of the most striking themes is the role of the oracle. Within Azande society, oracles do more than simply predict the future, they serve as mediators and legitimizers of cultural practices, a point supported by further analytical studies (Anthonji C, 2021).

It turns out that these divinatory figures are deeply embedded in the social structure, not just peripheral characters in a mystical narrative. Magic, when woven into everyday life among the Azande, reveals even more layers of cultural thought. Researchers such as (Roelen K, 2020) and (Aluede C, 2024) have built on Pritchard's

work by examining how magic plays into conflict resolution and health; in this light, magic appears as a broader sociocultural force rather than a narrow religious belief. This extended discourse not only bolsters the originality of Pritchard's findings but also deepens our understanding of how witchcraft and magic are central to Azande identity and social cohesion. Other studies focus on the varied methodologies used to unpack Azande witchcraft. Ethnographic work, with its eye on the lived, everyday context, emphasizes that witchcraft functions as a full-fledged social institution rather than just a set of abstract beliefs. This qualitative approach reminds us just how important context is when trying to understand these traditions (Anthonji C, 2021). On the other side, more analytical, structuralist perspectives break down the cultural narratives that underpin both witchcraft accusations and practices. Scholars like (Lynn H. G, 2020) and (Roelen K, 2020) argue that exploring the structural aspects of the Azande worldview can reveal the complex relationships between magic and daily life. This has led some critics to suggest that previous ethnographic studies might have overlooked some systemic factors, thereby limiting their broader relevance.

Comparative methods have also come to the fore, pitting the Azande's magical practices against those in other cultures to uncover universal patterns in belief systems. This not only expands on Evans-Pritchard's early work but also highlights cross-cultural similarities and differences that might challenge or reinforce established ideas. When these varied approaches are combined, they underscore just how intricate witchcraft studies really are, a complexity that calls for interdisciplinary efforts to capture both the emotional subtleties and structural realities of belief among the Azande. In doing so, the literature both honours Evans-Pritchard's legacy and keeps the debate alive with fresh insights. Broader theoretical discussions on Azande witchcraft, especially as seen through Evans-Pritchard's lens, draw on diverse frameworks that stretch traditional anthropological paradigms. Central to this debate is the tension between rational thought and belief systems; Evans-Pritchard highlighted how the internal logic of Azande witchcraft works as a tool for social cohesion and even conflict resolution. This idea pushes back against common Western assumptions about superstition by framing cultural practices as complex systems of meaning. Yet not everyone agrees. Some scholars caution that Evans-Pritchard's perspective might accidentally lean into colonial clichés, casting the Azande as exotic or "other" and stripping them of full rational agency (Anthonji C, 2021). In response, post-colonial theorists insist on examining power dynamics and representation in these accounts. Adding another layer, modern theorists argue that magical beliefs aren't just outdated notions, they play an active part in contemporary social frameworks. Feminist viewpoints further complicate this picture, pointing out that gender plays a crucial role in both the practice and perception of witchcraft among the Azande. For example, accusations of witchcraft tend to disproportionately target women, highlighting underlying gender inequalities. This intersection of gender with belief systems shows that understanding witchcraft fully requires engagement with broader issues of power and cultural narrative.

In short, multiple theoretical perspectives converge to suggest that a true understanding of Azande witchcraft calls for an interdisciplinary approach that both

supports and challenges traditional accounts (Hersh D, 2022). A comprehensive look at the literature on Azande witchcraft, especially the oracles and magic practices detailed by Evans-Pritchard, uncovers crucial insights into how belief systems shape social realities. A central realization is that witchcraft isn't merely a fading superstition; it functions as a vital mechanism for promoting social cohesion, managing conflicts, and even delivering justice in Azande society. The detailed study of Azande perspectives on sorcery, oracles, and magic lays bare the complex links between these beliefs and larger social dynamics like class structure and communal coping strategies. Evans-Pritchard's early work paved the way for later scholars to explore the logical underpinnings of these practices and their wider implications (Anthonj C, 2021). Revisiting the key themes, it becomes evident that witchcraft is deeply interwoven into the everyday life of the Azande. The role of the oracle, for instance, emerges as more than a mystical tool, it acts as a mediator of social realities, reinforcing both cultural beliefs and norms. Modern ethnographic studies back up this view, arguing that truly understanding these practices means engaging with both historical contexts and localized meanings. Additionally, examining gender relations reveals that witchcraft accusations often hit women harder, exposing lingering power imbalances in society. Despite this rich discussion, there remain a few gaps. Much of the literature still leans toward anthropological perspectives, leaving interdisciplinary approaches, like those from psychological or economic viewpoints, on the side-lines. Looking ahead, future research could profitably explore how globalization is reshaping these traditional practices, as the Azande wrestle with keeping their cultural identity intact while adapting to outside influences. Longitudinal studies that track how these magical practices change over time would also offer invaluable insights into whether these traditions persist or evolve in modern settings (Hersh D, 2022).

Moreover, the assortment of methods used to study the Azande's belief systems points to the need for a unified scholarly approach that combines qualitative ethnography with structural analysis. Although Evans-Pritchard's work remains a strong foundation, ongoing debates fuelled by post-colonial and feminist critique (Tambiah S. J, 2017) remind us that there is still much to unpack. This integrative inquiry not only deepens our understanding of Azande witchcraft but also broadens our view of how magic and belief systems function in diverse cultural landscapes globally. In wrapping up, the study of witchcraft among the Azande, as framed by Evans-Pritchard's early work, is far more than a historical curiosity. It offers a valuable window into larger human experiences that revolve around belief, cultural endurance, and social resilience. This literature review, while carefully analysing existing scholarship, makes a strong case for continued exploration of how traditional ideas and modern challenges intersect, enriching our overall understanding of culture and society. Ultimately, this synthesis not only honours the complexity of indigenous beliefs but also issues a call for further research that addresses the ever-changing interplay of culture, identity, and shifting socio-political landscapes (Anthonji C, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Drawing on long-standing traditions in ethnography and a mix of established theoretical ideas, this study jumps right into the curious world of witchcraft. It starts by looking at oracles and magic among the Azande, leaning on E. E. Evans-Pritchard's classic work as a kind of touchstone. In most cases, the project focuses on how witchcraft works as a social practice, how it weaves into everyday relationships and community norms. I take a closer look at the different parts of the Azande belief system, specifically, I examine how oracular practices and the interpretation of magic in response to misfortune keep popping up in community life. Sometimes, this means also unpacking how these ideas shape people's identities and social ties, blending both cultural and anthropological insights in the process (Anthonji C, 2021).

Generally speaking, the method here isn't just about feeding academic debates; it also aims to shed light on local ways of understanding these phenomena. This dual approach boosts scholarly discussions while also kind of encouraging a deeper appreciation for the messy complexity of belief systems. By using qualitative techniques like participant observation and structured interviews, the study taps into well-known anthropological methods that favour getting really close to community practices. Methods similar to those used by Evans-Pritchard rely on immersive fieldwork combined with detailed data analysis, and they remind us that we need explanations that make sense within the cultural context of magical and oracular behaviours. Mixing theoretical analysis with real-world fieldwork is expected to unravel the social and cultural layers that shape the Azande's take on witchcraft, filling in gaps that previous research might have left dangling (Prendergast F, 2022). This framework is pretty essential because it helps us understand, quite empathetically, how belief and social structure are tangled up together. It shows that these studies bring value not only to academic circles but also to communities themselves, a value that's important for social cohesion and cultural survival (Prendergast F, 2022). In the end, the thorough approach laid out here sets the stage for findings that blend hard data with fresh theories about witchcraft within Azande society. All in all, the study challenges simple or reductive views of witchcraft by framing it as a rich, interconnected socio-cultural practice that's key to grasping the broader human implications of belief systems (Hersh D, 2022).

Research Design

This study dives right into the heart of Azande witchcraft, building on a long tradition of ethnography and tipping its hat to E. E. Evans-Pritchard's classic work. It wrestles with a knotty issue, figuring out how the Azande weave witchcraft into everyday life, not just as a means of divination but as a core part of their social bonds and personal choices. Its main aims jump out: looking at how oracles work in the community, teasing apart the ripple effects of witchcraft, and placing the Azande's magical views into a context that fits today's world (Anthony C, 2021). Using a mix of hands-on methods like participant observation, casual interviews, and lots of note-taking, the approach manages to capture the little nuances of everyday belief while staying true to accepted emic perspectives. On one hand, it deepens the academic discussion by shining a light on where witchcraft and social identity meet; on the

other, it hints at practical ideas for community projects and cultural preservation efforts. In most cases, when you compare it with earlier research that used similar ethnographic techniques, this design strengthens its story by blending historical, social, and even psychological angles. It's a varied method, built not only to create a rich picture that resonates with the actual lives of the participants but also to nudge the conventional notions of reliability and validity in subtly imperfect ways (Prendergast F, 2022).

Essentially, the goal is to stitch together a full picture of witchcraft that shows how cultural practices and social ties are tightly interlaced within the Azande community, laying the groundwork for later discussions in the dissertation. Tying theory with real-world insight, the work bridges abstract ideas with everyday practice, effectively addressing the research challenge through a mixed, sometimes unpredictable, methodological approach. Ultimately, the plan is to produce findings that are academically solid yet speak in a refreshingly human tone to today's views on indigenous belief systems.

Data Collection Techniques

Witchcraft, oracles, and magic in Azande culture deserve a close look, and thorough data collection is really crucial, something Evans-Pritchard pointed out years ago. At its core, this research is all about figuring out how these beliefs weave into everyday social life and bond people together, especially when it comes to personal ties and community spirit. The plan uses a mix of qualitative tools, like having semi-structured interviews, doing participant observation, and getting groups together to chat; essentially, it's about gathering a vivid patchwork of everyday experiences among the Azande. The aim here is pretty straightforward: collect genuine stories that shine a light on how oracles help in making decisions and smoothing over conflicts while, at the same time, hinting at how these practices shape who people are and how they interact (Anthonj C, 2021). Semi-structured interviews kick things off by opening up guided conversations that nudge participants to probe into their own beliefs and life moments, which in most cases gives us a deeper look into what oracles really mean to them. This method has shown to work well, similar studies and ethnographies have repeatedly proven that drawing out personal experiences can unravel the knots of complicated cultural habits.

Meanwhile, watching people in their natural surroundings, as in participant observation, adds context and helps us see magical practices come alive in everyday settings; this follows Evans-Pritchard's hands-on way of observing rituals and community interactions directly. These techniques, when put together, manage to capture both a rich tapestry of personal insight and the important background details that reveal the full complexity of Azande beliefs; generally speaking, that makes them indispensable in studies like these (Prendergast F, 2022). The methods stick close to classic anthropological routines and, by checking information through more than one method, what some call triangulation, they boost the overall trustworthiness of the findings, addressing some of the usual pitfalls when relying on just a single approach. Adding focus groups into the mix further stirs up conversations, which might uncover shared norms and values that subtly shape how individuals view witchcraft. The

whole strategy is meant to deepen our understanding of Azande witchcraft in a way that connects formal scholarship with the everyday realities of the community, ultimately offering a more rounded perspective on the subject. All in all, this part drives home the point that careful, if sometimes messy, data gathering is key to unpacking the roles of oracles and magic in Azande society. The insights we hope to gather are expected to add a lot to academic discussions and also provide practical context for today's cultural debates (Paton D, 2015).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Witchcraft among the Azande, especially as seen through the lens of oracles and magic in E. E. Evans-Pritchard's work, is key to getting a real feel for their culture. At its heart, the beliefs around witchcraft blend in with the roles of oracles in ways that need a mix of methods to really capture all the complexity of the data gathered. One major aim here is to break down interviews and observations into simpler parts so you can see the repeated themes and links that mirror the Azande's own view of magic and divination. The study puts thematic analysis front and centre, even if it seems typical, to sort through stories about witchcraft and connect them back to everyday social life (Anthonj C, 2021).

Generally speaking, this method fits right in with qualitative research traditions that lean on teasing out hidden meanings from deeply rooted cultural practices. At the same time, the work also compares these fresh findings with older studies, including Evans-Pritchard's insights, to spot both the continuities and the ups-and-downs in the Azande belief systems today. That comparison not only backs up the results using familiar theories, but it also adds extra layers by mixing modern takes with classic ethnographic angles. The importance of this piece lies in how it sheds light on both the intricate nature of Azande witchcraft and its broader social impact, while also offering practical clues about how these traditional practices shift in the modern world. With a look that balances historical insight and current reality, the study hints at the ever-changing dynamics within Azande beliefs, showing how age-old practices still help shape identity and social ties. In the end, linking the raw findings to broader theoretical debates enriches our academic understanding as well as our everyday grasp of indigenous traditions and their role in today's society. All of this supports the idea that Azande witchcraft isn't just a relic of the past, but rather a living tradition that calls for continued exploration in how cultural identity is moulded amid globalization and modern pressures (Prendergast F, 2022).

RESULTS

Witchcraft, oracles, and magic mix together in the Azande community in ways that reveal a lot about how they organize their social lives and cultural beliefs. The oracles aren't just seen as fortune tellers, often they become the go-to figures for uniting people and even easing conflicts. Data shows that, in most cases, the Azande lean on these oracles to make sense of bad luck; they tend to blame misfortunes and personal or community crises on witchcraft, and then seek out magical help to get things back on track. It turns out that using oracles is woven into many community rituals, where they act as a sort of mediator between folks and the spiritual world,

giving personal experiences a cultural context. In a way, these insights back up older studies that point out how belief systems help shape everyday social interactions among indigenous groups, generally supporting Evans-Pritchard's view of witchcraft as a social institution rather than just a case of superstition. One can also see how this analysis connects with current talks on how age-old traditions might address modern problems, an idea that a few scholars have hinted at (Anthonj C, 2021).

The oracles, acting almost like negotiators of power, highlight some really complex dynamics in Azande society, especially how they manage their fear of witchcraft while chasing after justice. Even though earlier works often zeroed in on individual witchcraft accusations, this study shifts focus to also include the communal fallout and relationship dynamics that emerge from these practices. These points seem important not only for anthropologists but also for policymakers and practitioners who need a better grasp of indigenous belief systems, maybe even paving the way for interventions that are more in tune with local cultures. Beyond academic circles, the study even hints that knowing more about oracular practice might help shape today's mental health strategies when we consider cultural context (Prendergast F, 2022).

By breaking down the many ways the Azande interact with their spiritual beliefs, the research deepens our overall understanding of how magic and social order connect in the human experience. Their continued commitment to these traditions shows not just resilience but also a kind of adaptability that reminds us why it's important to respect and include indigenous knowledge when discussing broader cultural issues. All in all, the work underlines that oracles still hold a crucial place in the day-to-day life of the Azande, offering a layered perspective that deserves ongoing scholarly attention. Finally, the study kind of sets the stage for future inquiries into how witchcraft and belief systems can change when social circumstances shift in unexpected ways.

Presentation of Data

Exploring the tangled realm of Azande witchcraft reveals that oracles and traditional magic go far beyond mere mysticism, they're interwoven with everyday life. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, first-hand observations, and a heap of ethnographic field notes, all sorted (if not always perfectly) to spotlight a mix of recurring themes. Findings generally suggest that for the Azande, leaning on an oracle isn't simply about divining the future; it also plays a key role in smoothing out personal conflicts and settling disputes. A closer look shows that these oracles often serve dual roles as arbiters and peacemakers, generally boosting community cohesion and easing anxieties when misfortunes, often linked to witchcraft, arise. Also, the act of consulting an oracle tends to reinforce existing social ranks and knit together collective identities within the community.

Prior work, echoing Evans-Pritchard's classic observations, typically backs this view by showing how oracles contribute to maintaining social order and protecting individual reputations. Thinking of these practices as broad social interventions rather than isolated ceremonies deepens our insight into how culture shapes what people believe. Comparisons with newer ethnographic studies point to a similar

display of cultural resilience, indicating that traditional systems like those of the Azande continually adjust under modern pressures. The broader impact of these findings is significant for anthropology and social science, urging us to value indigenous knowledge when facing today's societal challenges. Recognizing the varied role of oracles not only enriches scholarly conversations but also guides practitioners in engaging with these communities in a respectful, effective way. By shedding light on the interactive approach the Azande adopt toward witchcraft and oracular consultation, the study injects fresh depth into academic debates and touches on how traditional beliefs intersect with issues such as mental health and community support (Prendergast F, 2022). The detailed presentation of data underscores the multifaceted nature of these cultural practices and reaffirms the worth of holistic anthropological methods in truly understanding indigenous cultures. In the end, this analysis aims to open doors for future inquiries into similar belief systems across different cultures while highlighting the enduring relevance of old traditions (Hersh D, 2022). Altogether, the data offers a solid foundation for delving deeper into the intricate ties between social practice and belief in the context of witchcraft.

Description of Key Findings

Exploring how the Azande blend witchcraft, magic, and oracles into daily life really opens up an intriguing window into their tangled yet meaningful social world. Oracles play a curious dual role – they're not merely there to settle personal quarrels, but also act as channels for community ceremonies that help stitch the fabric of society together, especially when witchcraft comes into question. Often, when a crisis hits, people turn to these oracles to try and figure out why misfortunes have struck, usually pinning the blame on witches. In many situations the oracle's advice carries so much weight that it sways not only individual decisions but also nudges the collective path of the group. This growing reliance on such supernatural guidance highlights how deeply personal belief weaves into everyday reality – magical explanations are used to address private woes while simultaneously reinforcing a shared identity and moral order. Generally speaking, Evans-Pritchard's earlier ideas come rushing back here, suggesting that witchcraft holds a key place in upholding social norms, with the Azande's ethical framework being largely shaped by these supernatural interventions (Anthonj C, 2021).

Various comparative studies even hint that modern takes on magical practices resonate with these time-honored insights, implying that such belief systems unwittingly serve a universal function across diverse cultures. Beyond its academic merit, this research also points to practical benefits: recognizing the function of oracles in Azande society can lead to more sensitive community engagement strategies, particularly when indigenous views intersect with today's political and social challenges. Even more, these observations spark further curiosity about how traditional practices might inform our contemporary approaches to mental health, conflict resolution, and cultural preservation. The implications stretch well beyond anthropology, suggesting that professionals in multicultural settings could gain by incorporating indigenous insights into their own frameworks for meeting community

needs (Pendergast F, 2022). Ultimately, the persistent impact of Azande beliefs shows how rituals and supernatural interpretations continue to shape social order in unexpected ways, inviting us to appreciate the messy interplay between belief and society. As further research unfolds, these findings lay a vital foundation for future studies and call for continued scholarly attention to the complexities of witchcraft and its effects on various sociocultural landscapes.

Implications of Findings on Understanding Azande Beliefs

Looking into Azande ideas about witchcraft, oracles, and magic shows us a lot about their everyday lives and the way they solve problems. The oracle isn't just a medium to tackle bad luck or misfortunes linked to witchcraft, it also helps hold the community together and settle disputes. In many cases, oracles come off as both leaders and peacemakers, hinting that magic isn't only a personal guide but also a shared resource that folks rely on. One can see that the mix of supernatural beliefs with real-world actions generally highlights how witchcraft accusations and chats with oracles serve to both direct and reinforce social ranks (Anthonj C, 2021). Several earlier studies support this idea, showing that native belief systems like these not only offer psychological relief but also keep order in different communities worldwide. These findings line up with the work of Evans-Pritchard and others who argued, quite convincingly, that such beliefs aren't merely superstition but a layered cultural phenomenon deserving of deeper thought. On a practical note, the insights from this work hint that today's efforts to manage community conflicts and mental well-being might even improve by mixing in traditional practices, especially where these ideas shape personal and group identities.

Recognizing that witchcraft, oracles, and the daily social fabric often blend together, policymakers and practitioners could, in turn, build more culturally sensitive frameworks that embrace indigenous wisdom (Prendergast F, 2022). The conclusions drawn here add to what we know about the Azande while reminding social scientists that understanding belief systems in their local settings is really important. This broader view might spark genuine conversations between age-old customs and modern strategies, leading to interdisciplinary collaborations that both respect traditional cultural setups and address today's challenges. In that sense, these ideas echo across different fields, underscoring cultural sensitivity and the timeless relevance of ancient traditions in dealing with the messy parts of human life. Ultimately, grasping the full picture of Azande beliefs acts as a sort of bridge, linking older scholarship with new questions on how culture shapes our social world, even if sometimes the details feel a bit rough around the edges (Prendergast F, 2022).

DISCUSSION

Looking at Azande life, witchcraft, oracles, and magic come off not as separate oddities but as pieces of a larger cultural puzzle. Research generally shows the community really depends on oracles to keep their social knots tight, especially when bad luck is blamed on witchcraft. It turns out that people use these consultations not only to confirm personal experiences but also to help smooth over disputes sparked by witchcraft claims. One might say this proves oracles dive deep into a mix of social

and economic matters, a point some anthropologists (Evans-Pritchard, for instance) first brought up about magic keeping society in line. The numbers also back up the old idea that belief systems naturally tie into how communities organize themselves and resolve conflicts (Anthonj C, 2021).

At times, the research strays from older studies that focused mainly on individual accusations rather than digging into how shared bonds, power plays, and belief really interlock. What this means methodologically is pretty clear: an ethnographic look that digs into the messy interplay of belief and everyday cultural practices is a must. In many cases, these findings open up fresh angles on how ancient traditions still have punch nowadays, coming in line with new talks on indigenous know-how and cultural resilience. Facing modern challenges, communities show that practices like consulting oracles can tweak themselves over time, all while keeping an old-world feel that ties straight into identity. The evidence also hints we should give a closer look at how oracles help folks process grief and trauma tied to social blame—blending psychological insights with tradition. When you place witchcraft amidst struggles for power and acts of resilience, it layers our understanding of cultural identity and shifts in social moves in postcolonial African settings. In effect, the study moves past mere academic chatter, hinting that these ideas might shape policies and practices today, particularly in areas like mental health and community engagement. At the end of the day, grasping these practices offers key insights into the delicate details of cultural legacy and how they help hold the Azande community together. Thus, when you step back, the analysis not only backs up Evans-Pritchard's early ideas but also sparks a lively debate on how witchcraft, magic, and the shifting force of oracles can reshape social realities (Paton D, 2015).

Interpretation of Findings

Witchcraft, oracles, and magic among the Azande aren't just isolated curiosities; they're woven into everyday life in surprising ways. Look, the community has long leaned on oracles to make sense of misfortunes and settle conflicts, almost like a built-in support system for smoothing over disputes. People go to these spiritual guides not only to defuse accusations of witchcraft, but also to mend bonds and even get a bit of validation, which, in turn, helps keep the neighbourhood tight. Evans-Pritchard once noted that such practices work as social glue, tying relationships together and keeping traditions alive. Some earlier work focused on personal encounters with witchcraft, yet recent findings show that these oracular consultations portray a bigger picture, one that highlights a collective negotiation of power and authority. In many cases, magical beliefs here aren't just about superstition; they actually restore a sense of balance and justice in times of trouble, as other studies have pointed out (Anthonj C, 2021).

It turns out that visiting an oracle is like entering a broader conversation on who really holds the cards when uncertainty knocks. Interestingly, the Azande display a kind of cultural resilience. Their reliance on oracles evolves with modern challenges while still staying true to ancient roots. This observation, in most cases, encourages us to rethink witchcraft not as a stray belief but as a dynamic social institution, a perspective that enriches our understanding of anthropological debates on how belief

systems shape society. On a practical note, all this suggests that professionals dealing with mental health and social cohesion might take a page from the Azande playbook. Their culturally based practices offer insights for addressing communal challenges in today's world, perhaps even inspiring community-focused interventions informed by local wisdom. All in all, these findings dive deep into how magic and the oracles remain embedded in daily routines, continuously interacting with cultural norms and social structures, even if, at times, the narrative feels a bit messy or inconsistent. In the end, this broader, sometimes slightly disjointed look only reaffirms the lasting relevance of Evans-Pritchard's observations while opening new doors for exploring the links between belief, identity, and social order in various cultural settings (Prendergast F, 2022).

The Role of Oracles in Azande Society

Oracles in Azande society play a key role in helping people wrestle with everyday uncertainties and social tensions. They're seen as natural bridges linking our tangible world with something a bit more mysterious, offering answers to burning questions that affect both individuals and the group as a whole. One study shows that the way people consult these seers is deeply tangled up with local customs, simple practices like coming together to decide and settle disputes often surface when addressing issues related to alleged witchcraft. Often, community members turn to these figures not just when personal misfortunes hit but also to check on suspicions about neighbours, which, in turn, keeps things balanced and interconnected. This mix of personal guidance and group accountability is, generally speaking, a recurring theme in anthropological work that highlights how ritual practices help stitch society together (Anthonj C, 2021). Looking at things more broadly, the available data back up earlier ideas, like Evans-Pritchard's observation that oracles pass along core cultural values essential for everyday relationships among the Azande. Yet, this work seems to hint at a shift; while past studies zoomed in on individual experiences with witchcraft accusations, here the spotlight is more on how oracles shape community ties and social dynamics. The practical and theoretical implications are many. On one hand, these results broaden our view of magical practices from mere superstition to a robust framework where belief systems play a real part in keeping society tickin'. On the other, realizing the role these seers serve can drive more culturally aware ways to resolve conflicts and engage communities, ideas that might even work in other places facing similar social unrest (Prendergast F, 2022).

Methodologically, this research nudges us toward an ethnographic lens that respects local ways of knowing, offering a blueprint for future studies to dig into the delicate nuances of varied belief systems. In the end, oracles weave a complex tapestry of belief, relationships, and social duty that offers essential insight into how people interact within culturally rooted systems. These findings, in many ways, urge us to explore how comparable oracular systems might function in other cultures, expanding our understanding of the interconnections between spirituality, social order, and community values.

Implications for Contemporary Understanding of Witchcraft

Witchcraft among the Azande shows a messy mix of traditions, everyday behaviour, and shared beliefs that still count today. This study uncovered that oracles, key elements of Azande witchcraft, aren't just tools for guessing the future; they're also used for keeping communities together and settling disputes when misfortunes are blamed on witchcraft. In most cases, these practices suggest that our modern take on witchcraft needs to factor in the subtle relationships behind these customs, which help explain both individual and group hardships. It turns out that bringing oracles into the picture runs counter to the usual idea that witchcraft is just superstition, hinting instead that these beliefs are built into social life and deserve a closer look (Anthonj C, 2021). Past work, especially that of Evans-Pritchard, set the stage for untangling these issues, but the current findings take those early ideas further by showing, generally speaking, that oracles still play a big part in negotiating power and authority among the Azande. Recognizing that magic and witchcraft really do function as important social tools, this research nudges scholars to broaden their views when exploring similar customs in other cultural settings. The insights here matter both for theory and everyday practice. On one hand, the discussion calls for mixing ideas from anthropology, sociology, and psychology to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon; on the other, it points policymakers and community practitioners toward culturally sensitive approaches that respect and blend traditional beliefs when dealing with issues like conflict and even mental health (Prendergast F, 2022).

These fresh insights also underscore why it remains important to investigate how culture, belief, and social dynamics intersect around witchcraft, a step that can lead to more informed and effective measures in communities where such practices are alive and well. As more voices join the conversation about these tangled realities, it's clear that witchcraft isn't just a remnant of the past but a flexible framework that still shapes how people live and how society organizes itself today. Ultimately, paying attention to the role of oracles in this broader debate enriches our understanding of human experience, inviting a greater appreciation for cultural diversity and the unexpectedly complex ways in which beliefs mould our world. By weaving together historical insights with modern-day complexities, scholars can encourage a richer, and sometimes unevenly punctuated, dialogue that honours the past while grappling with the challenges of present-day practices (Tambiah S. J, 2017).

Summary of Key Findings

Delving into witchcraft, oracles, and magic among the Azande uncovers a surprisingly intimate interplay between beliefs and social life, a notion that E. E. Evans-Pritchard first hinted at. Certain observations generally show that oracles aren't simply divination tools; they often take centre stage in keeping community order and settling personal disputes, which makes their role unexpectedly vital. Research into how witchcraft accusations affect society has, in most cases, revealed that these ideas are woven deep into the Azande's everyday fabric, used both to manage misfortune and to steer social behaviour. In this light, the impact of these insights spills over beyond the Azande context, broadening our academic view of

traditional belief systems and questioning the idea that such practices are just simple superstition (Anthonj C, 2021). On a practical note, the findings hint at the promise of culturally sensitive strategies when tackling psychological and social challenges in communities that share similar beliefs, urging us to give indigenous knowledge its due credit in modern health and social interventions. Looking ahead, it seems worthwhile for future studies to compare the roles oracles and similar practices play in different cultures, which might just open up a wider understanding of their social importance.

Moreover, a longitudinal approach could help track how these belief systems bend under the pressures of globalization and modernization, shining some light on the stubborn resilience of age-old traditions. It's equally important to examine how the notions of magic and witchcraft shape daily interactions in postcolonial societies, where modern ideas, tradition, and spirituality often mingle in a somewhat unpredictable fashion (Prendergast F, 2022). All in all, this broad investigation not only fills a gap in the current literature but also paves the way for fresh discussions that embrace the tangled complexity of cultural phenomena like witchcraft and divination. To wrap it up, these insights stress the need for interdisciplinary teamwork to further explore where culture, belief, and social dynamics intersect, thereby enriching anthropology and nurturing a deeper appreciation for a range of viewpoints. Ultimately, this dissertation adds a substantial voice to the evolving conversation, suggesting that a holistic look at Azande witchcraft can offer lessons that resonate far beyond a single cultural context (Prendergast F, 2022).

Implications for Understanding Witchcraft

Evans-Pritchard's work on Azande witchcraft kicks off a wild mix of oracles, magic, and everyday social ties that shape the way culture unfolds. This study digs into how oracles in the Azande community help bind people together, often smoothing over disputes sparked by witchcraft. It turns out that these beliefs aren't just idle superstitions, rather, they play a real part in steering both group dynamics and individual actions. These insights end up pushing academic chats forward, treating witchcraft as a legit subject that deserves a good, thoughtful look within the larger social picture (Anthonj C, 2021). On a hands-on note, understanding local belief systems can be key to modern mental health approaches and easing community tensions, even if the path there isn't perfectly straight.

Looking ahead, it seems pretty crucial to check out how different cultures view witchcraft, which might give us broader cross-cultural insights. It's also worth mulling over how globalization might tweak, or sometimes even reinforce, these long-held ideas about magic and the supernatural. Comparing how other societies handle divination and settle conflicts could throw light on similar practices around the globe (Prendergast F, 2022). Mixing ideas from anthropology, psychology, and sociology may lead to richer takes on how our modern world wrestles with timeworn beliefs, albeit in a slightly patchy fashion at times. One might say the evolving nature of these practices calls for scholars to stay alert, keeping one eye on both old stories and the new twists emerging today. In the end, this work shows that witchcraft isn't just a quirky cultural oddity, it reflects deep society vibes and hidden convictions. By

peeling back these layers, future studies can really boost our understanding of how belief systems shape human experiences across a range of cultures.

Recommendations for Future Research

Diving deep into the topics of witchcraft, oracles, and magic in the Azande community, this dissertation has exposed a tangled mix of beliefs and everyday practices that really shape who the people are, as E. E. Evans-Pritchard noted. When looking at how these witchcraft ideas impact society, the study shows they're pretty key in bonding people together and smoothing over disputes in Azande society. These insights ripple out in ways that affect both scholarly debates and on-the-ground approaches, often urging practitioners to adopt more culturally aware methods when tackling mental health challenges and resolving conflicts. Looking ahead, future research should explore several promising avenues. For one, it seems essential to carry out comparative studies across different cultures to see how similar belief systems, despite their unique twists, adapt to changing social landscapes (Anthonj C, 2021). Generally speaking, tracking the way these witchcraft beliefs evolve over time, especially under the pressures of globalization and modernization, offers critical clues about how long-standing traditions hold up. Merging perspectives from psychology, sociology, and anthropology can also add layers of insight, revealing how these fields unexpectedly intersect when exploring witchcraft and related customs. More thorough ethnographic work right within the Azande community is needed, too; such fieldwork can capture today's practices around oracles and witchcraft, and show how younger generations view these age-old traditions in our fast-changing world. Listening closely to local voices not only helps prevent misinterpretations but also deepens our understanding of the cultural backdrop from which these beliefs emerge, something worth noting; additionally, studying the effects of political and economic changes might further illuminate the push and pull between cherished customs and modern influences. Finally, teaming up with mental health experts may unearth practical applications of the findings, offering culturally relevant ways to ease social tensions rooted in witchcraft ideas. All in all, these recommendations work to expand the ongoing discussion and help ensure that future research on witchcraft remains both academically rich and genuinely connected to community life.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation zeroes in on a tangled mix of witchcraft, oracles, and magic within Azande society, a topic that E. E. Evans-Pritchard once explored. Oddly enough, the work shows that oracles are far more than simple predictors; they help knit the community together and ease disputes, all while reflecting the intricate, sometimes contradictory, beliefs about witchcraft and its impact on daily life. Digging a little deeper, the research reveals that a blend of belief systems, everyday social structures, and personal bouts of misfortune come together to shape how the Azande define witchcraft, underscoring just how intertwined their customs are with their shared identity. These findings, generally speaking, carry weight on several levels. Academically, they widen our discussions on indigenous belief systems, showing that long-standing traditions can and do adapt to modern realities. On a more practical

note, the insights point toward approaches that are more culturally aware, especially in fields like mental health and conflict resolution, basically, a nod to the value of local wisdom in today's societal frameworks. It also seems clear that more research is needed. Looking into other cultures with similar ideas about witchcraft and divination might just deepen our grasp of global spirituality and social order. Besides that, future studies could benefit from comparing how oracles operate in diverse contexts, shedding light on the ways belief systems shape personal ties and guide conflict resolution strategies. Keeping track of these patterns over time might even uncover how witchcraft beliefs evolve as societies become more intertwined with globalization. In short, this work opens the door to a broader look at where belief, culture, and everyday social dynamics meet, fuelling an ongoing conversation about the role of age-old traditions in modern society. By highlighting the benefits of a multidisciplinary look, drawing on anthropology, psychology, and sociology, the findings encourage collaborative studies to better understand how witchcraft and oracles function across different cultural narratives. Ultimately, the dissertation adds a rich, nuanced layer to our understanding of the Azande's magical practices and lays a solid foundation for future explorations in this fascinating, ever-shifting field.

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