Democracy and consensus in traditional Africa:
a critique of Kwasi Wiredu

Victor Olusola Olanipekun[1]
Department of Philosophy
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
olanipekuno@oauife.edu.ng

Abstract

This article examines Kwasi Wiredu's arguments on democracy and consensus. In Cultural Universals and Particulars, *Wiredu presented consensual democracy as a better means of decision-making process than majoritarian democracy in traditional African life and governance. He defended this claim with two main arguments: (i) that consensus takes care of the interests of the minority, and (ii) that consensual democracy permits substantive representations. Contrary to Wiredu's claim, this article argues that the implication or challenges of majoritarian democracy identified by Wiredu do not necessarily (i) undermine majoritarian democracy, and (ii) make Wiredu's suggested decision by consensus a workable means of decision-making in present African society. Our aim in this paper is not to defend majoritarian democracy as a plausible position; rather, the bulk of the paper is devoted to a critical assessment of Wiredu's defense of consensual democracy. The paper argues that at a certain level of discussion, Wiredu's idea of consensus (consensual democracy) shares some similarities and also faces similar challenges to (majoritarian) democracy. The paper concludes that, logically speaking, democracy and consensus are not mutually exclusive.*

Keywords: Democracy, consensus, minority interests, traditional African life, African politics

Introduction

The article seeks to examine and assess Kwasi Wiredu's view on consensual democracy with its majoritarian democracy counterpart, particularly as it affects the issues of minority interests and better representation. Kwame Wiredu is one of the outstanding African scholars who have contributed immensely in the area of social and political philosophy in the continent. One of his outstanding publications is *Cultural Universals and Particulars*. Given the enormity of the problems that confront contemporary African politics and political life, the search for a suitable system of governance propelled Wiredu to come up with a proposal. In Chapter Fourteen of *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, Wiredu emphasises the incompatibility of democracy (majoritarian democracy) as a means of decision-making and governance with the nature of traditional African life. Instead, for him, a better alternative for decision-making in traditional African life and governance is consensus (consensual democracy). Wiredu argues that despite the complexities of contemporary African life, consensual non-party precedents of traditional African politics are still usable and indispensable. What does this suggest? For something to be indispensable, it implies that such a thing is so good or important that you could not manage without it. One quick important question that comes to mind is: how indispensable is this consensual democracy? This paper examines and challenges Wiredu's view on democracy and consensus. Wiredu's argument is that consensus or consensual democracy which was practised

in traditional African society takes better care of some fundamental moral problems in Africa than the majoritarian democracy which is in vogue in modern African society. Some of the problems identified are the problem of minority interests/rights, as well as the problem of better representation. How tenable is the above claim? Essentially, this view has become controversial among African scholars in the sense that while some scholars have supported Wiredu's claim, others rejected the claim with contrary arguments.

Arising from the above, what is the state of the existing literatures on the subject matter? Among the scholars who have reacted to Wiredu's submission is Emmanuel Eze. What exactly was Eze's position? Eze's criticised Wiredu on two main grounds. These criticisms are the following.

First, Wiredu indulges in misleading romanticism and an excessive rationalism in his normative accounts of pre-colonial Akan society. Second, Wiredu's arguments in favour of the pre-colonial Akan non-party style of politics can function just as well to defend the single-party platforms of the early nationalists whose monopoly on political power required the rigid suppression of democratic freedom (Eze 1999:213).

Eze's criticism appeared to be an acceptable view despite Wiredu's disclaimer of presenting an exaggeration of unbroken harmony in African society (Wiredu 1995:53,1995:182). Meanwhile, Bernard Matolino responded to Emmanuel Eze's critique of Wiredu with the argument that consensual democracy has more appeal than Eze is prepared to concede (Matolino 2005:34). However, after juxtaposing Eze's and Wiredu's views, Helen Lauer submitted that the respective concerns of Wiredu and Eze appear to be compatible, on a careful reading (Lauer 2019:41-59). What exactly is the point of Lauer's view above? Her argument tends towards the fact that there is no factual disagreement between Wiredu and Eze on the subject matter. Recently, in an attempt to reinforce Wiredu's claim, Barry Halen also suggested that consensual democracy should be re-examined as a possibly more suitable and sensible alternative for sub-Saharan Africa given the prevalent challenges in the continent (Halen 2019:2).

Arising from the above literature, our concern in this paper is not to repeat what these scholars have done. Instead, we make bold attempts to consider a certain issue that is yet to be properly addressed by some of these scholars, which has created a research gap that this paper intends to fill. The problem is really whether the practice of consensus (consensual democracy) really escapes the problems that have bedevilled (majoritarian) democracy. Are democracy and consensus mutually exclusive? An answer is provided in the paper, which will also consider how the issue of conceptual crisis undermines Wiredu's consensual democracy.

The paper has three main sections. The first considers conceptual clarifications of the two major concepts in this paper, democracy and consensus. The second section focuses on Wiredu's defence of government by consensus or consensual democracy. The third section focuses on an assessment of Wiredu's arguments. In the final analysis, the paper concludes that democracy and consensus are not mutually exclusive.

Democracy and consensus: conceptual analysis

To start a paper of this nature requires consideration and clarification of the two important working concepts in the paper, democracy and consensus.

Democracy

The question to be addressed here is: what is democracy? Democracy as we understand it from subject literature is a complex concept with different meanings and interpretations by scholars in different epochs. The reality of the existence of varieties or different versions of democracy also makes it difficult to come up with a singular acceptable definition that will capture all the varieties of the concept. As it is being practised, democracy could be described as direct, representative

or participatory. There is majoritarian democracy as well as consensual democracy. Given the definitional crisis, is the definition of the concept "democracy" elusive? Maybe not. The reason for this answer is that most of the definitions given to democracy contain certain features or elements of what democracy is all about. One thing that scholars have agreed on is that etymologically, the concept is coined from two Greek words, *demos* meaning "people", and *kratos* which means "to govern or to rule". Thus, democracy is often defined literally as the government of the people or majority. Abraham Lincoln, for instance, defines democracy as "The government of the people, for the people, and by the people."[1]

George Orwell rightly remarks:

A word like democracy not only [has] ... no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic, we are praising it: consequently, the defender of every kind of regime claims that it is a democracy and fears that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning (Orwell,1968: 32).

The point about Orwell's view is that democracy now appears to be the standard way of governing any society in the world in such a way that those countries that are not democratic in nature still try to appear so to the rest of the world. One factor that may be responsible for the general acceptability of democracy could be due to the notion of legitimacy that is attached to it. In Wiredu's conception, given the complex nature of the interpretation of the concept, democracy could be understood either as a majoritarian democracy or as a consensual democracy. Majoritarian democracy is the form of government tbased on the majority principle. Meanwhile, Consensual democracy could be defined as a form of democracy in which government is effected by consent and subject to the control of the people as expressed through their representatives (Wiredu 1995: 58-59).

More importantly, in Teffo's analysis, one can find what could be described as the minimum package or requirement for democracy. According to Teffo, "Logically, democracy has to be representative, accountable, and participatory" (Teffo 1995:140). Given the array of definitions above, one important factor that is common to all is hat democracy as a system of government is people-centred. Regardless of whichever form it takes, people's interests are always the focus. With this background on democracy as a concept, let us now move to the next concept, consensus.

Consensus and conceptual crisis

What is consensus? Over time "consensus" has carried very different meanings. According to Martin Benjamin, "A consensus is, most generally, an agreement or collective unanimous opinion among a number of persons" (Martin 1995:241). This definition is unique because it involves total agreement. That is, everyone is involved. In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, consensus is defined as the judgement arrived at by most of those concerned.[2] The point of emphasis of this definition is that it involves the agreement of 'most' of the people concerned and not total agreement. Consensus decision-making is also described as a creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement between all members of a group. In fact, Brian William in his own conception identified different accounts of consensus. According to him,

By "consensus levels" I simply mean levels of agreement achieved among government representatives within state legislatures. So, for example, a "simple majority" consensus level would be fifty percent plus one vote, while a unanimous consensus level would be when everybody agrees (William 2012:559).

---

1. Abraham Lincoln's definition is considered one of the most cited definitions of democracy. That does not mean that the definition captures everything about democracy.
2. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary.*

One helpful deduction from William's account of consensus is that it (consensual democracy) is not really different from majoritarian democracy because consensus can be reached either through majority agreement or by total agreement.

In the same spirit, Christoph Haug identifies four different classifications of consensus in his analysis of consensus decision-making. These are:

• Imposed consensus,
• Acclaimed consensus,
• Basic consensus, and
• Deliberative consensus (Haug 2015:556).

As a rider, Haug explains that in an *imposed consensus*, it is simply claimed (e.g. by the meeting's chair) that consensus has been reached with no opportunity for the participants to oppose this claim (Haug 2015:556). In an *acclaimed consensus*, in contrast, there is an explicit opportunity for participants to express their views, but its official purpose is not to express dissent but consent (Haug 2015:556). In a *basic consensus* participants are explicitly asked if there is anyone who disagrees, and a stretch of substantial silence passes before the consensual decision is confirmed (Haug 2015:556). *Deliberative consensus*, finally, not only gives participants the opportunity to express dissent, but actively encourages that dissent is articulated in order to ensure that no one is silenced (Haug 2015:556). Arising from the above view, one important point that must be made is that Haug's fourth conception, as presented in this paper captures Wiredu's point. Those holding minority views can accept consensual agreements reached, despite continued disagreement, by virtue of having, in some meaningful way, a rational and even practical investments when the talking has stopped and decision has been made. The import of the above view is that Wiredu's concern for the minority in basically the process of practical outcome of a rational deliberation.

From the above explanation, it appears that deliberative consensus is far better than other forms of consensus. Why? It is in the deliberative consensus that the main aim of taking care of the interests of everybody can be achieved. This does not mean that I agree with Wiredu; there is a way in which majoritarian democracy could also accommodate deliberations. Further explanation shall be done later. Just like Wiredu, Nelson Mandela of South Africa is another African thinker whose view suggests that consensual democracy is suitable for African society. According to Mandela, "Democracy meant all men were to be heard, and a decision was taken together as a people. Majority rule was a foreign notion" (Mandela 1994:29). From the above quotation, it is evident that Mandela is interested in consensus that is borne out of total agreement. From the above view, there is a sense in which one could argue that Mandela had consensual democracy in mind in line with Wiredu. This became evident when he brought in the idea of majority rule (majoritarian democracy) as a contrast. Mandela's notion of democracy involves equality, equal consideration and general participation. With all these features, it is not clear whether the interests of the minority were ever denied at any point in time, even in the traditional African societies. I shall return to this under the assessment so as not to jump the gun.

Moreover, there is also another form of consensus that is attributed to a renowned social and political philosopher, namely John Rawls. This version of consensus is termed an overlapping consensus. Rawls conceives an overlapping consensus as

> *a consensus in which it is affirmed by the opposing religious, philosophical and moral doctrines likely to thrive over generations in a more or less just constitutional democracy, where the criterion of justice is that political conception itself (Rawls 1987:20).*

Following John Rawls's interpretation of consensus, he characterises agreement on basic principles of justice among individuals embracing a plurality of different, occasionally conflicting, comprehensive moral, religious, and philosophical outlooks (Rawls 1996:385). Evidently, it could be inferred that Rawls's overlapping consensus could be interpreted as a form of deliberative

consensus. Thus, this kind of consensus is not inconsistent with Wiredu's view. Also, the view that consensus and democracy are not mutually exclusive was reinforced by Joe Teffo, who underscores the argument that the principle of consensus is a feature of democracy (Teffo 2004:445). Not only does this view support the position maintained in this paper; it also serves as a critique to Wiredu who defended a contrary opinion.

Now, what do we make out of the above analysis? What should be our concern next is that, given that consensus can be described, practised and achieved in different ways, we need to examine the sense in which Wiredu used the term "consensus". Wiredu himself did not tell us expressly the sense in which he employed the word. But in the first page of Chapter Fourteen of his *Cultural Universals and Particulars*, it could be inferred that Wiredu appeals to a kind of consensus that is born of total agreement though rational deliberation. For him, consensus is reached through rational deliberation (Wiredu 1996: 185). One question is: is Wiredu consistent with this version of consensus? In my view, the problem of inconsistency is present in this case. Now, how does this inconsistency undermine his defence of consensual democracy? We shall return to these under the topic assessment. Meanwhile, let us consider next Wiredu's defence of consensual democracy.

Wiredu's defence of consensual democracy

Argument 1

The argument here is that consensual democracy takes care of the interests of the minority. According to Wiredu, the pursuit of consensus or consensual democracy was a deliberate effort to go beyond decision by majority … majority opinion in itself is not a good enough basis for decision-making, for it deprives the minority of the right to have their will reflected (Wiredu 1996:186).

The argument can be summarised thus:

P.1. Any system of government that takes care of the interests of the minority is better

P.2. Consensual Democracy takes better care of the interests of the minority than majoritarian democracy

Therefore, consensual democracy is better than majoritarian democracy.

I will come back to this in the next section.

Argument 2

According to Wiredu, consensus is not just an optional bonus, it is essential for securing substantive, or what might be called decisional, representation for representatives and through them for citizens at large (Wiredu 1996:189). Similarly, on another page, Wiredu repeats the view that consensual democracy is better than majoritarian democracy because for him, it offers what he calls a substantive representation over and above the former representation (Matolino 2012:112). The question here is whether substantive representation is a true reflection of fundamental human rights in a democratic setting. One thing that Wiredu has taken for granted is that one person is elected to represent a group or community does not necessarily mean that such a person will truly represent their will or interests when he/she gets there. Example abound in African politics where representatives of the people end up representing their own personal interests through their corrupt practices. For instance, in 1995, Tom Lodge wrote extensively on the widespread political corruption in South Africa (Lodge 1995:157). Similarly, in *African Leaders and Corruption* Khalil Timamy also exposes how African democratic leaders in quasi-democratic regimes (Bongo's Gabon, Biya's Cameroon, Chiluba's Zambia, Muluzi's Malawi, Moi's Kenya, Mugabe's Zimbabwe, etc.) have used their political position, as the representatives of their people, to embezzle the economic resources of those nations (Timamy 2005:383). These

political leaders were supposed to be the representatives of their people, but they ended up fighting for their private purses.

One question that calls for critical reflection is whether majoritarian democracy necessarily eschews the idea of substantive representation. We return a negative answer. I shall come back to revisit this under the heading assessment.

Then there is this important question, raised by Harry Lloyd: does consensus democracy improve the quality of government? (Lloyd 2016:1) This question is important to this paper as we need to understand whether adoption of consensual democracy in present-day African politics will remove the prevalent socio-political challenges such as corruption, poverty, and the marginalisation of the interests of the minority. Our view in this paper is that it is not clear whether it has succeeded in these areas. The reason behind this sceptical attitude is that if it has succeeded in the past, why change the winning formula? Let us now turn to the next section for more elaborate explanation and a critical assessment of Wiredu's view.

Assessment of Wiredu's argument

This section engages the existing view presented in the literature review. It also points out what is problematic about Wiredu's claim, in accordance with our earlier statement of the research problem.

Argument concerning the problem of coerced agreement

In the previous section, I discussed Wiredu's argument in defence of consensual democracy in traditional African society. In **Argument 1**, Wiredu argues that consensual democracy is better than majoritarian democracy simply because he feels that the former takes care of the interests of the minority. However, there are objections against this view. On the one hand, it is not proved whether the interests of the minority have been denied at any point in time due to the incidence of inter/intra-ethnic crises and conflicts even in traditional African society. Given human nature, a clash of interests is inevitable in any human society. According to Richard Sandbrook, inter/intra-ethnic crises have been proved to be the basis for fierce rivalry for economic resources and political power in traditional Africa society (Sandbrook 1972:106-107). I agree with Sandbrook for the fact that, on several occasions, a clash of interests (economic or political) between the majority and minority groups is always the cause of inter/intra-ethnic conflicts in any human society.

Arising from the above development, it should be noted that Wiredu, in his explanation, did not make provision for the possibility of clashes of interests or irresolvable differences between the majority and the minority in a traditional African society, even in relation to the decision-making process. My worry is that in case of irreconcilable differences due to a clash of interests, how will consensus be reached? And if consensus is not reached, how will the interests of the minority be protected in the face of unsolvabe differences between the majority and the minority? These are vital issues, worth ruminating over. As a matter of fact, this may be the reason Eze accused Wiredu of porttraying an exaggerated harmony in traditional African society (Eze 1999:213).

On the other hand, contrary to Wiredu's submission, a majority can even be dominated by the minority. In other words, it is not impossible for the interests of the minority to dominate the interests of the majority, even in the so-called democratic settings. The argument is that it is not practically impossible for the minority to dominate the majority by coercing them to agree with their proposal in order to reach consensus. For instance, in traditional African society that Wiredu talked about, there were sages or so-called wise, powerful and respected people more confident than others, good at speaking, and with a good command of language. This set of people, though always in the minority, often dominate discussions when decisions are to be made. Odera Oruka describes these kinds of people as

... men and women (sages) many of whom have not had the benefit of modern educa-
tion. But they are, nevertheless, critical, independent thinkers who guide their thoughts
and judgments by the power of reason and inborn insight rather than by the authority of
the communal consensus. They are capable of taking a problem or a concept and
offering a rigorous philosophical analysis of it, making clear rationally where they
accept or reject the established or communal judgment on the matter (Oruka 1991: 11).

What does this suggest? These people with superior arguments, though in the minority, have what it takes to manipulate the majority. Thus, these people (the 'loudest voices' in the society) can coerce the remaining majority to agree with them in order to reach consensus since they have the charisma and sugar-quoted mouths to convince the majority. The implication of this is that the so-called consensual democracy will end up jettisoning the interests of the majority. This is due to the fact that the minority who can use their wisdom, or power of oration, to their own advantage in order to coerce the majority into reaching consensus. In addition, social pressure and fear could deter some people in the majority from speaking against the view of the "loudest voices" in the society in a decision-making process and thus to be forced to remain silent, which will be counted as consent in order to reach coerced consensus. The point we are making is that, philosophically speaking, silence may not necessarily mean consent in all cases. More importantly, one problematic question that comes to mind is whether complete consensus really exists in Africa or anywhere in the world? The answer to this question is controversial.

Similarly, despite the fact that scholars including Wiredu often discuss consensus alongside the idea of equality and human rights in traditional Africa, the truth remains that traditional African society was not a classless society in practice. This view is in contrast with Nyerere's view that traditional African socialist society was a classless society (Nyerere 1968: 11). My point, in line with Eze, is that the kind of equality that Wiredu and Nyerere claim was exaggerated. Consequently, following Karl Marx's dominant ideology thesis, Marx argues that "the ruling class in every epoch has the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" (Marx 1974:64). What this suggests is that in every society there are always dominant views, and the dominant view is always the view of the dominant class. Essentially, I do not think that the case is different in traditional African society.

Majoritarian democracy and majoritarian consensus

Is consensual democracy really antithetical to majoritarian democracy? I return a negative answer. My argument here is that majoritarian democracy that Wiredu rejected is not necessarily antithetical to consensual democracy. There are different types of consensus such as an imposed consensus, an acclaimed consensus, and a basic consensus, which are compatible with majoritarian democracy. Let us start our analysis from the first type of consensus. In an imposed consensus, for instance, we have a claim (e.g. by the chairperson that presides over a particular meeting) that consensus has been reached with no opportunity for the meeting participants to oppose this claim. This is not different from a majoritarian democracy where the majority wins. Also, in an acclaimed consensus, there is an explicit opportunity for participants to express their views, but its official purpose is not to express dissent but consent. The question is, how is this form of consensus different from majoritarian democracy? Furthermore, in basic consensus, participants are explicitly asked if there is anyone who disagrees, and a stretch of "audible silence" passes before the consensual decision is confirmed. In fact, I consider this to be a dubious way of reaching consensus. The reason for this is that the idea that silence means consent could be a fraud. Silence may not mean consent in all cases. The fact that people are silent over a decision does not necessarily mean that they have agreed or consented. They may be indifferent.

Thus, so long as imposed, acclaimed and basic consensus are versions of consensual democracy, they are not really antithetical to majoritarian democracy. This view actually leads us to what I have called **majoritarian consensus**[1]. Wiredu's idea of consensus is not too far removed from what we call majoritarian democracy, because Wiredu himself admitted that "consensus does not in general entail total agreement" (Wiredu 1996:183). Thus, if "total agreement" is interpreted to mean complete, full or entire agreement, then what follows is that the same sentence could be read as: Wiredu's kind of consensus does not in general entail complete, full or entire agreement. To illustrate this, let us assume that there is a particular society called society X with a population of three million people. In this society, decision is to be made through rational deliberation and two million, seven hundred thousand people agreed or consented to the outcome of the deliberation while three hundred thousand people disagreed. Now, going by my interpretation of Wiredu's claim that consensus does not in general entail total agreement, it actually means that consensus was reached in society X even though it was not a product of total agreement but a product of majority agreement. Now, the point I am driving at is that from empirical assessment, Wiredu's notion of consensus or consensual democracy is not different from what I called majoritarian consensus. As the name suggests, this is a kind of consensus that is reached by the decision-making process of the majority. The argument in essence is that, in a careful reading, the gap between consensual democracy and majoritarian democracy is not as wide as Wiredu has suggested. In other words, majoritarian democracy is not incompatible with consensual democracy.

Majoritarian democracy and substantive representations

In **Argument 2** above, Wiredu argues that consensual democracy is better than majoritarian democracy because for him it offers what he calls a substantive representation over and above formal representative (Wiredu 1996: 185, Matolino 2012:112). The question is: what is this substantive representation? And how do we measure substantive representation in traditional African society? In *The Concept of Representation*, Anna Pitkin defines substantive representation as a process of "acting in the interests of the represented in a manner responsive to them" (Pitkin, 1967:209). In view of the above definition, it is obvious that some African political leaders and politicians do not really act in the interests of the people they represent. Similarly, Karen Celis and Sarah Child also define substantive representation as a kind of representation that captures a relationship between the represented and representative in which the represented are 'logically prior', whereby the representatives must be responsive to the represented and not the other way around (Karen, 1998:100). In *The Concept of Representation* mentioned earlier, Pitkin basically identified four main type or categories of representation, namely: formal, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive representation (Pitkin, 1967). Wiredu's preference for substantive representation above formal representation actually finds support in Pitkin's work; Pitkin also defended the view that substantive representation yields better results than the other three. Now, the question is whether substantive representative is achievable under majoritarian democracy. Going by the above definitions, my answer is that it is achievable. In a majoritarian democracy where an election is held and someone with the highest number of votes emerges as a winner in order to represent his people, such elected representative is actually expected to represent the interest of the represented in a responsive manner. Thus, Wiredu's claim that consensual democracy is essential for securing substantive representation for the people does not necessarily undermine majoritarian democracy. The reason is that majoritarian

1. Majoritarian consensus will be a form of consensus by the majority of the people, that is, consensus that is reached by the decision-making process of the majority. This is in line with Brian William's analysis and notion of 'simple majority' consensus as opposed to unanimous consensus. "Simple majority" consensus level would be fifty percent plus one vote, while a unanimous consensus level would be when everybody agrees.

democracy also permits substantive representation for the representatives. In other words, the idea that substantive representation is mainly achievable under consensual democracy as portrayed by Wiredu could be contested.

Possible objection and response

One possible objection that could easily be raised against the above position in this paper is whether African traditional life is still in existence or whether the whole discussion has merit at all.

This is a valid observation. However, the relevance of this discussion is tied to the valuable insight it offered the inevitable problem which Africa has, to sooner rather than later consider given the way democracy is being practised within the continent in comparison with the Western world. Now, the rejoinder to the question of whether African traditional life is still in existence is not really a threat to the view that I maintain in this paper. Instead, as a matter of fact, it poses a further threat to Wiredu's argument that the method of governance used in traditional Africa could also be effective in modern Africa society. In essence, the above observation and response further reveal possible weaknesses of Wiredu's argument.

Conclusion

The article has sought to analyse and juxtapose consensual democracy with its majoritarian democracy counterpart, particularly as it affects the issues of minority interests and better representation. Are consensual democracy and majoritarian democracy mutually exclusive? My answer in this paper is that they are not. This article has argued that the implications and challenges of majoritarian democracy identified by Wiredu do not necessarily undermine majoritarian democracy, neither do they make his suggested decision by consensus a workable decision-making process in contemporary African society. Furthermore, this article has not claimed that majoritarian democracy is a defensible position; rather, our claim is that at certain levels of discussion, Wiredu's idea of consensus (consensual democracy) has some similarities and also faces similar challenges to those that (majoritarian) democracy faces.

Acknowledgement

References

Benjamin, M. 1995. "The Value of Consensus", in *Society's Choices Social and Ethical Decision Making in Biomedicine*, Ruth Ellen Bulger, Elizabeth Meyer Bobby, and Harvey V. Fineberg, (eds.) Washington: National Academic Press.

Bernard, M. 2009. "A Response to Eze's Critique of Wiredu's Consensual Democracy" in *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 28:1, 34-42

Eze, E.C.1997. "Democracy or Consensus? Response to Wiredu." In *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader.* Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Hallen, B. 2019. "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Governance in Africa" in *Second Order*, vol. III, no. 1, 2.

Harry, L. 2016 "Does consensus democracy improve the quality of government?" in *Lady Margaret Hall*, vol. 2,1 Haug C. 2015. "What Is Consensus and How Is It Achieved in Meetings? Four Types of Consensus Decision Making" in *The Cambridge Handbook of Meeting Science,* Edited by Joseph A. Allen, Nale Lehmann-Willenbrock and Steven G. Rogelberg Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Orwell, George.1968. *In Front of our Nose, 1945-1950: The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, vol. 4*, New York: Harper and Row.

Mandela, N.1994. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, Pretoria: Little Brown.

Martin, B. 1995. "The Value of Consensus", In *Society's Choices Social and Ethical Decision Making in Biomedicine*, Ruth Ellen Bulger, Elizabeth Meyer Bobby, and Harvey V. Fineberg, (eds.) Washington: National Academic Press.

Karen, C., Sarah, C., Johanna K. and Mona L.K. 1998. "Rethinking Women's Substantive Representation", in *Representation*, vol. 44, no., 2,100

Lauer, H. 2012. "Wiredu and Eze on Good Governance" in *Philosophia Africana*, vol. 14, no. 1:41-59

Lodge, T. 1998. "Political Corruption in South Africa" in *African Affairs*, vol. 97, 157-187.

Mandela, N. 1994. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, Pretoria: Little Brown.

Marx, K. and F. Engels. 1974. *The German Ideology*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Matolino B. 2012. "Democracy, Consensus and Africa" in *Philosophica Africana*, vol. 4,112.

Nyerere, J. 1968. *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*, Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press.

Oruka, H. O.1991. *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*. Nairobi: ACTS Press.

Oruka, H.O. 1983. "Sagacity in African Philosophy" in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol.23, 4, 383-393

Pitkin, H.F. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rawls, J. 1987. "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus" in *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, Vol.7, No. 1, 1-25

Rawls, J.1993. *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rawls J. 1996. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Sandbrook, R. 1972 "Patrons, Clients, and Factions: New Dimensions of Conflict Analysis in Africa" in *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.5, No.1:104-119.

Teffo, L.J.1995. "Kingship and Democracy in South Africa," in J. Malherbe (ed.), *Decolonising the Mind,* Pretoria: UNISA

Timamy M.H.K. 2005 "African Leaders and Corruption" *Review of African Political Economy* vol.104/5:383-393

William, B.D. 2012. "Institutional Change and Legislative Vote Consensus in New Zealand" in *Legistlative Studies Quarterly* 37, no.4, 559-574.

Wiredu, K.1995. "Democracy and Consensus in Africa Traditional Politics: A Plea for Non- Party Polity" in *The Centennial Review*, vol. 39, no.1, 53-64.

Wiredu, K.1996. *Cultural Universals and Particulars*. Indianapolis: Indianapolis University.