AGAINST CONSENSUAL GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: A REPLY TO BARRY HALLEN

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Introduction

The universal suitability of majoritarian democracy is contentious in contemporary scholarship. This contention owes much to the supposition that majoritarian democracy is rooted and grounded in Western culture (Anglo-American and European). As a consequence, some non-Western scholars are beginning to question the extent to which Western values in democratic practices and discourse ought to be applicable across cultures. In African socio-political philosophy, for instance, Wiredu is one of the foremost scholars raising criticisms against the espousal of majoritarian democracy in African political space.

For over a decade now, Wiredu has been systematically defending a democracy rooted in African cultural-political practices and values. In what he calls 'consensual democracy', Wiredu has consistently advocated consensus as the cardinal moral and political value embedded in indigenous African conceptual understanding and practice of democracy.[1] He maintains that the flavours of consensual democracy can be found in African's cultural norms and

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[1]Wiredu's defense of consensual democracy can be found in his works, including: Kwasi Wiredu, "State, Civil Society and Democracy in Africa (Vol. 1)." In *Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities through African Perspectives*, edited by Helen Lauer and Kofi Anyidoho, Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012; Kwasi Wiredu, "Society and Democracy in Africa," *New Political Science,* 21: (1999) 33-44; Kwasi Wiredu, "Democracy and Consensus in Traditional African Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity." In *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader,* edited by Emmanuel C. Eze, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1997; Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective.* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996.

values. Interestingly, Wiredu unmasks some African democratic cultural credentials for the reformation and restructuring of contemporary African politics. Using the Akan culture as a foil, Wiredu explicates and conceptually decolonises the concept of democracy and articulates the democratic norms and values in indigenous African societies that can be beneficial to contemporary Africa.

However, consensual governance is yet to take deeper root in contemporary African political space. Rather, it is attracting more critical blows from African scholars. Despite its supposedly promising features that Wiredu defended, it seems that consensual democracy is being silenced as an alternative political model. Amidst the severe criticisms against Wiredu's notion of consensual democracy, the question of the need for reconsidering consensual democracy arises. Are there substantive grounds for revisiting the proposal of consensual governance in Africa? Barry Hallen in a recent article, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Governance in Africa," answered this question in the affirmative. He responded to aspects of the popular criticisms against the idea of consensual democracy in Wiredu's scholarship to come to the conclusion that "consensus as an alternative form of governance for the African nation-state again deserves to be taken seriously"[2] for its intellectual cogency and potential practical implications of changing the narratives of poor governance in Africa.

In this paper, I attempt a critical assessment of Hallen's case for reconsidering consensual democracy in Africa and argue that it is unconvincing. In furthering the discourse, I argue against a case for consensual democracy by exposing some other salient problematic aspects of Wiredu's model of consensual governance. Contra Wiredu and Hallen on non-party consensual governance, I make a case for enriching majoritarian democracy through a fusion of some moral-ontological aspects of indigenous political practices for good governance. This eclectic model, I argue, is more

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[2] Barry Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," *Second Order: An African Journal of Philosophy (New Series),* 3/1: (2019) 19.

appropriate for post-colonial African polity and should rather be taken more seriously in the ongoing conversations on how best to organise the African *polis.*

Hallen's Defense of Consensual Governance in Africa: A Conspectus

In the light of the serious political instabilities being experienced in liberal democratic experimentation in post-colonial Africa, Hallen argues the necessity of revisiting the conversations around consensual democracy in African public states. Concerned about the serious underrating of consensual governance and its viability in post-colonial African states, Hallen provides reasons for an urgent reconsideration of consensual democracy as a "more suitable and sensible alternative for sub-Saharan Africa than the so-called *liberal democratic* form of government."[3] In achieving this aim, Hallen draws largely from Kwasi Wiredu's exposition of consensual democracy. Wiredu has been one of the foremost defenders of consensual democracy as a viable governance model for post-colonial Africa. He consistently focuses on providing an African variant, consensual democracy, to the problematic "majoritarian democracy" that has been internalised in many post-colonial African states. Wiredu's claim is that consensual democracy is rooted in African historical past where key political decisions were often reached through consensus among differing opinions and disagreements. He urges a reactivation of this form of government in the political structure of post-colonial Africa.

While Hallen notes that Wiredu's postulation of consensual democracy has been variously attacked by scholars who have "dismissed it as unrealistic,"[4] he aims to forcefully defend this idea. Hallen provides a conceptual elucidation of the possible meanings of consensus in the political architecture of traditional African societies. His favoured interpretation is that consensus is the

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[3] Italics original, Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 19.

[4] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 2, 15.

"intentional, negotiated, rational exchange that are taken as a conventional part of everyday life."[5]In this sense, the notion of consensus is not strictly a negotiating tool in the political space of power contestations; it is indeed a common instrument in the service of social harmony and exchanges in the day-to-day activities of the people in pre-colonial African societies. Consensus promotes "a willing suspension of disagreement, making possible agreed actions without necessarily agreed notions."[6] Hallen recapitulates Wiredu's description of a culture of consensus in many traditional African societies by observing that "Interpersonal relationship in African societies have always *generally*—on any level—prioritized consensus."[7]

Opposed to the above understanding of consensus is what Hallen calls the stereotyped community conception of consensus. In this sense, pivotal reference is given to the community and the authoritarian proclivities of the tribal heads that necessarily suppress the voice and participation of the subjects in matters that concern them in ways that they are conditioned to endorse the wishes of the chiefs or kings personified as the community. Hallen offered a "revisionist view" of African traditional societies, which he thinks has been wrongly characterised as "authoritarian" and lacking in "abstract thinking" by the likes of Kwame A. Ninsin and Robin Horton.[8] For Hallen, such questionable labelling have among other things, created a kind of uncertainties on the notion of consensus in precolonial societies and in turn stifles the potential effectiveness and efficiency of consensual democracy in contemporary political

[5] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 5.

[6] Wiredu, "Democracy and Consensus in Traditional African Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity," 304.

[7] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 12.

[8] For details, see their works: Kwame A. Ninsin, "Ghana since the Mid-Twentieth Century: Tribe or Nation." In Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanities Through African Perspectives, edited by Helen Lauer and Kofi Anyidoho, Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2012; Robin Horton, *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

discourse. But Hallen thinks that the stereotyping of African communal societies as lacking historical consciousness of consensus can hardly succeed as a strategy for disproving the immanent existence of consensual practices amongst the Africans.

Hallen supports Wiredu's cultural reconstructionist conception of consensus that defines interpersonal relationships in African societies as primarily consensus oriented. Traditional African societies were essentially communalistic in form. At the base of such communalism is interactive communication. This interaction is a form of communalism which involves a sense of belonging, collectivity and sharing. Such communalism, ultimately, rests on kinship as its cornerstone. Extended kinship plays an important role in moral and political ordering among the traditional Africans as it "provides a broad domain of human relations in which a sense of obligations and rights and of reciprocity is developed on the basis of natural feelings of sympathy and solidarity."[9] An underlying principle in such communal attitude is sympathetic impartiality that roughly means "be ready to abridge your interest so that they can harmonize with the common interest."[10] Working towards consensus is one of the political values deriving from traditional African communalism.

Elemental to such understanding of consensus are dialogues, rational conversation aimed towards harmonisation of sometimes differing and conflicting interests, negotiations and compromises, freedom of thought and respect for other person's opinions. Thus, consensus in traditional African societies were reached through a "compromise" between differing opinions without each member necessarily changing their personal beliefs; what is required on the negotiation table is a suspension of disagreement. The beauty of the consensus process, according to Hallen, is that the voice of the minority is heard and incorporated during decision-making process.

Hallen introduces the Portugese-derived term, "palaver," to describe the consensual nature of some traditional African societies

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[9] Wiredu, "State, Civil Society and Democracy in Africa," 1056
[10] Wiredu, "State, Civil Society and Democracy in Africa," 1057

including Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo. He argues that palaver "has the positive sense of organized and open debates on various issues in which everybody, regardless of age or sex, is encouraged to participate, with a view to reaching *consensus* and keeping the community closely linked."[11]

On the strength of 'palaver' patterned social communication, Hallen hopes to negate the charge of authoritarianism levelled against the political structure of the precolonial African societies. Appealing to Wiredu's account of consensus as a harbinger to harmonious relations in traditional African *polis*, Hallen writes:

> Whether centralized with a king or chief or decentralized with limited formal governmental structure, African societies functioned on the basis of consensus. Kings and chiefs or nomads do not live in splendid isolation. They lived on the basis of consultation and compromise.[12]

Having established that consensus is integral to decision-making process of precolonial African societies, Hallen then sets to show its relevance to the postcolonial African quest for cogent and workable political governance model. Following Wiredu, Hallen argues that "consensual governance" in African traditional societies was "essentially democratic" and that "majoritarian form of democracy" as practised in postcolonial Africa "is essentially antithetical to both [indigenous]traditions of democracy and the complexities of contemporary situation [in Africa]."[13]

He claims that the "incompatibility" between the traditional African notion and practice of democracy and the modern Eurocentric version dominantly adopted in Africa subtly explains

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[11] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 16.

[12] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 12.

[13] Wiredu, "State, Civil Society and Democracy in Africa," 1058; Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 12-13.

the multifaceted problems—corruption, ethnic crisis, civil war, refugee crisis, terrorism, poverty, bad governance—confronting post-colonial Africa today. Among the numerous infelicities of the majoritarian democratic model are: it does not encourage continuous and true participation of the citizens in governance; two, its periodic elections alienates the minorities (or election losers) from the governance process; three, its great emphasis on "political parties" as a way of gaining governmental power in a multi-ethnic region like Africa encourages African leaders to identify the parties with more politically dominant ethnic group and this in turn creates room for "ethnic rivalries and unrest" in African nation states.[14]

Hallen is optimistic that consensual democracy will help African nation states overcome these challenges associated with liberal democracy in contemporary times. His reasons for such optimism are, firstly, that consensual democracy is a "non-party" system, which encourages individuals' gaining governmental power through their personal qualifications and how suitable they are for the political position they are running for. Secondly, consensual democracy promotes and sustains effective participation of the citizens in governance through the regular participation of the "elected or selected" representatives in constituency meetings that will discuss "diverse ideas relevant to a particular issue and thereby carry with them to the next level of government once at that level of government."[15]

Hallen dislodges the often-expressed fear by the critics of consensual democracy on how suitable, effective and efficient it will work in multicultural and multi-ethnic African nation states. He believes that this charge is less forceful both at the ideological and practical levels when we realise that consensual democracy is a non-party system that functions by sublimating "ethnic identities in the name of national consensus."[16] In showing how this would be achieved, Hallen extrapolates the model of "overlapping consensus"

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[14] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 13.

[15] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 14.

[16] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 17.

from John Rawls' *Political Liberalism* and applies it to the context of making diverse and competing ethnic groups be committed to the ideals of consensual democratic model. The idea of overlapping consensus, as postulated by Rawls, is to reach a political agreement about justice and the principles of social organisation, among plurality of ideas that cut across different individuals' belief systems such as religion, ethics and aesthetics. Incorporating this idea, Hallen strongly believes that just as political justice in Rawls, "political consensus would overlap cultural differences"[17] in post-colonial Africa. In this way, the "different ethnic groups…commit to the consensual nation-state as a mutually beneficial platform to promote their interests despite differences arising from ethnic identities."[18]

Reconsidering Consensual Democracy in Africa: A Critique of Hallen

Having stated Hallen's case for reconsidering consensual democracy in post-colonial Africa, let us turn our attention now to the imperatives against consensual democracy. Hallen channels more intellectual energy in establishing, in consonance with Wiredu that African societies functioned based on consensus and that such picture of consensus was not mythological. Such a historical fact, though still contended by scholars that think that partly or wholly, traditional African societies were more organic with authoritarian governance, is a less forceful question in the African intellectual debate on consensual democracy. More forceful, deserving urgent attention, but which Hallen was seemingly silent about, is the concern about finding plausible and pragmatic ways of translating the ideals of consensus into institutional forms in contemporary sub-Saharan *polis*.

Given the facilitative roles of kinship in traditional communal consensus and the near absence of kinship affiliations in power interplays, political interests and representations in post-

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[17] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 18.
[18] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Government in Africa," 18.

colonial African politics, the question is: how can the political ideals of consensus translate and transform the political landscape in contemporary African politics? How, in factual terms, can consensual democratic theory hold practical sway in Africa today? If the problem confronting the African states is fundamentally that of how to effectively make democracy work in terms of resulting in sustainable development, would the adoption of consensual democracy be a panacea to the plethora of crises confronting Africa?

While Hallen seems not to provide suggestive answer to the above questions, it is apt to consider how majoritarianism can accommodate consensus elements and vice versa in order to develop Africa. The instructiveness of this consideration is in the light of the African conceptual scheme of complementarity. Complementarity is a framework that accommodates and accepts seeming dichotomies as possibly ontologically relational when explaining reality, and formulating principles of social values and actions. As contributory as Hallen's intellectual labour on establishing historical evidence for the truth of consensual governance in traditional Africa, it is more imperative to address the task of what is next after such historical grounding of consensual governance in pristine Africa.

Though Hallen sees the idea of consensual democracy in Wiredu's scholarship as incisive and worthy of being taken seriously, he does not provide reasons for the plausibility of Wiredu's advocacy for traditional African model of consensual governance over other overlapping models of consensual democratic theory (such as the Switzerland or Netherland variants) or non-consensual majoritarian democratic options. Hallen is convinced that given Wiredu's profound scholarship in African philosophy, he was not externally influenced in his thoughts on consensual democracy. Two questions can be raised here that have less to do with the originality of the notion of consensual democracy in Wiredu's writings: (1) given the role of proportional

representation in Arendt Lijphart's consensual democratic model,[19] for instance, in reducing the marginalisation of minorities, what kind of institutionalisable representation does Wiredu's consensual governance model promise? (2) What are the essential and distinctive features of indigenous African consensual governance that make it so worthy of adoption in its pristine form without any sort of eclectic adaptation with other models of consensual democratic options in other non-African climes? Further reflections on these questions might better help in strengthening Hallen's defense of Wiredu's argument for consensual governance in Africa.

To the extent that Hallen attempts to defend Wiredu on the empirical question of the status of consensus in traditional African societies, it is arguable to conclude that he provides a successful defense of Wiredu in this regard. Consider Wiredu's claim that because lineages were the traditional basis of government, the representation of a lineage by the lineage head was by common consent.[20] This position is somewhat contradictory when juxtaposed with his earlier view in *Philosophy and an African Culture* that African traditional society was authoritarian, the Akan inclusive.[21] If traditional African societies were authoritarian, the political sphere can hardly be adjudged to experience some measure of rational persuasion or consent as the gerontocratic posture of the lineage elders would have overwhelmingly taken lead as representing the ideas and views of other members of the lineage in political discussion of matters affecting them.

Perhaps for Hallen to salvage Wiredu from this contradiction, he might have provided clear distinctions and examples that "differentiate between the diverse levels that make up the traditional African political system, such as the individual,

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[19] A. Lijphart, "The pros and cons -but mainly pros-of consensual democracy," *Acta Politica* 36/2: (2001) 129-39

[20] Wiredu, "State, Civil Society and Democracy in Africa." 2012: 1062.

[21] K. Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.pp2-5.

family, village and national levels,"[22] and the corresponding different practices of authoritarianism at each level. While authoritarian imposition of ideas is prevalent at the family and village level, at the national governance level, which is Wiredu's and Hallen's interest, ideas and decisions are not authoritatively imposed rather, they are deliberatively and collectively agreed on. Perhaps this is the case, further sociological explanations are required to establish why this is historically so. Though, Hallen did not provide such; yet he chose the path of linguistic consideration – palaver - as an index to the historical fact about consensus in traditional African societies. While 'palaver' in West African pidgin denotes troubling atmosphere and not a public sphere of debate and reconciliation of different views on issues of communal importance, in the context of Hallen's usage, some fundamental problem arises.

Instead of than providing sound explication of the practice of consensus as traditionally understood among Africans, the notion 'palaver' obfuscates it. To the extent that the word 'palaver' might be a synonym for consensual practices in some African traditional societies as Hallen noted, adopting a foreign word in lieu of traditional terms can hardly qualify as an acceptable pointer to the historical reality of consensual governance among the traditional Africans. Even if Hallen had provided indigenous words approximating 'palaver' such as *Mbongi* in Kikongo, *Kgotla* in Botswana or *Izu* in Igbo,[23] *"*linguistic considerations alone cannot in themselves be decisive in establishing historical fidelity of consensual democratic culture. In view of this, there is need for caution in using purely linguistic facts in support of a thesis.[24]

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[22] K. Appiagyei-Atua, "A Right Centered Critique of African Philosophy in the Context of Development". *African Human Rights Law Journal,* Vol. 5 (2) (2005): p. 249

[23] U. Okeja, "Palaver and Consensus as Metaphors for the Public Sphere". In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory*. Edited by Leigh K. Jenco, Megan C. Thomas, and Murad Idris. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) 565.

[24] A.G.A. Bello, "Philosophy and an African language". *Quest.* Vol. 1. (1) (1987): 1.

Palaver, for instance, has been construed as a metaphor for the public sphere involving "the participation of all those affected by an issue to be discussed through substantive and formal representation. As a metaphor for critical dialogue aimed at justice [and prudent management of anger in the public sphere], palaver reflects the interaction that is meant to deliver justice within the shadows of reconciliation."[25] Unlike Hallen's claim on palaver "as a synonym for consensus"[26] and as "organized open debate" of a rational kind, palaver is an idiom for a space with confluence of emotions, angers, reasons, eloquence and wits of a moderator with oath of allegiance to the ancestors by all participants, which is aimed essentially at achieving justice, reconciliation, and political action.

Besides Hallen's efforts in providing counter arguments against the views that traditional African societies were consensual in political and non-political orientations, one of the most fundamental tasks deserving more attention is finding ways of integrating some of the salient democratic values of indigenous African societies with the institutionalised democratic models in order to save post-colonial Africa. Should we adopt the consensual decision-making process and principle in legislative business in liberal democracies in Africa or do we adopt some democratic credentials such as the king-in-council system in traditional African polity within the contemporary political institutions? Do we need to adopt more of the spirit and less of the letters of consensual governance in post-colonial Africa such that the component of non-party arrangement, for instance, that Wiredu advocated will be silenced not for lack of logic but for the sake of praxis complexities?

Hallen, just like Wiredu, does not explore the possibility of appropriating and harnessing the most salient aspects of both majoritarian and consensual democracy for better governance in Africa as he thinks both are necessarily opposites. I accept that some aspects of majoritarian democracy may pose a great challenge to

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[25] Okeja, "Palaver and Consensus as Metaphors for the Public Sphere", 572.
[26] Hallen, "Reconsidering the Case for Consensual Governance", 16.

effectiveness and efficiency of governance in Africa, but it is implausible to think that all aspects of it do. Contrary to Hallen, the elements of consensual democracy and majoritarian democracy should not be treated as mutually exclusive just because of different responsibilities they confer on political decision making. There is a thin line of convergence between both, and as such, there is no need of a real tension between them. The supposed tension which comes to light as a result of their different democratic principles is fundamentally significant.

Most salient in Wiredu's and Hallen's consensual democratic framework is the spirit of consensual principle, which is about "a willing suspension of disagreement, making possible agreed actions without necessarily agreed notions."[27] The minority-majority tension in majoritarian democracies in African states, for instance, can be minimized if governance is guided by the consensual precept that allows reaching compromise on matters of divided interests for the sake of agreed positive actions that would improve the conditions of wellbeing of the citizenry. For a more cogent democratic option in contemporary Africa, the representative nature and communitarian structure of consensual democracy should be infused in the majoritarian democratic system operative in Africa. The epistemically relevant question is how best can this synthesis proceed?

Firstly, there is a need to create autonomous town or village assemblies and district councils in towns and villages in contemporary African democratic institutions that will foster the participatory nature, liberal values and communitarian structure of traditional African democratic practices. This will facilitate equal and substantial participation of the local people in decision making other than during only national or general elections.[28] This suggestion can be likened to equal representation of the lineage in consensual democracy and local government in majoritarian

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[27] Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars,* 183.
[28] K. Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflection on the African Experience.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 138.

democracy, though with a slight difference in degree and not in kind. In traditional consensual democracy, village council was headed by a hereditary chief who was elected by the regal lineage to wield the highest political authority; in a majoritarian democracy, local government is a "de facto agent of administering regional projects and programs at the local level."[29] Local government decisions are strongly influenced by the state government. Similar to both, district councils and village assemblies bring government nearer to the people. But unlike both, district councils have sufficiently large room to proportionately accommodate many representatives, and autonomy to have the final say in political matters affecting them.[30]

Secondly, in order to revitalise the consensual nature of decision making in modern African democratic system with a multi-party structure, heavy emphasis must be placed on referendum. The justification for reviving consensus-oriented decision model is that it "would best avoid creating legislative minorities and their constituencies who repeatedly lose out to the majority, becoming marginalised, alienated and losing out."[31] Referendum aims at achieving equal and fair consultation, inclusion and representation of the true ideas of the people. This can be achieved when the representatives of each constituency are made to be present during the village and towns general assembly meetings. Thus, a referendum can be organised either by a forum discussion of the few political propositions or by efficient, effective and fair electoral system.[32] Unlike in the current majoritarian system where representative of the people at different levels of bi-cameral legislation and local government level hardly converse and meet regularly in town general assembly meetings, an eclectic democratic

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[29] I. Diejomoah, & E. Eboh, "Local Governments in Nigeria: Relevance and Effectiveness in Poverty Reduction and Economic Development," *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development,* 1/1: (2010) 14-15.

[30] Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity,* 138.

[31] T. Metz, "*Ubuntu* as a moral theory and human rights in South Africa," *African Human Rights Law Journal,* 11 (2011) 555.

[32] Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity,* 139.

option would prize such interactive engagements between the led and the lead guided by consensus principle of arriving at agreed actions regardless of agreed notions.

Thirdly, super-majority method and simple-majority method of decision-making should be symbiotic. Simple-majority method is the "first-past-the-post" decision making, and super-majority method is the unanimity or near unanimity two-thirds majority of decision making. The deficiency in super-majority method, on one hand, is that it may hamstring the process of reaching decisions and, on the other hand, simple-majority decision is influenced by the dominant group at the expense of the minority group. In convergence, while super-majority decision-making will equally place the views of the majority with that of the minority, the simple majority decision makes sure that the process of decision making is not minority advantaged.[33]

Fourthly, there is a need to complement the political and economic rights of majoritarian democracy with the social rights of consensual democracy in order to arrive at fair consideration of the basic needs and interests of the people.[34] To this end, an eclectic model takes civil societies as having significant roles in democratic performance. Civil societies are to have civil motivations and shared social imageries of the common good of the society. Rather than being state regulated or serve as political units for consensual decision-making and representation in the polity, civil societies should have subsidiary and mediating relationship with the state by strategically organizing the public sphere for deliberative reflections, mass mobilization and critical engagement with government policies and actions that are considered anti-people. The formations of civil society should be broad-based reflecting not atomic professional units or sections of the society but a matrix of common interests across different social strata, class, creed, and professions independently agitating for the social good.

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[33] Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity,* 139.
[34] Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity,* 142-143.

Conclusion

This paper has revisited Hallen's argument in support of consensual democracy as an alternative to the majoritarian governance model in postcolonial Africa. Hallen's intervention in the debate is quite instructive as he demystifies some of the conceptual intricacies surrounding the notion of consensual democracy in traditional African cultures while he also defends Wiredu against two key charges. To the extent that Hallen's reconsideration of the plausibility of consensual democracy is timely, it is a call for further critical inquiry. This paper has critically engaged Hallen's grounds for reconsidering consensual democracy in Africa with the conclusion that a fundamental case can still be made against Hallen's defense of consensual governance. Contrary to Hallen's efforts in establishing an empirical historical ground for the reality of consensual governance in traditional Africa, this paper argues that it is important to move beyond such archival exercise on legitimacy to a consideration of institutionalising the credible elements of traditional consensual democracy in post-colonial African states. While Wiredu seems to agree much with this imperative, Hallen agrees more with Wiredu on the exclusionary route of a non-party consensual governance. Against this 'logic of consensual democracy as an alternative to majoritarian democracy', I make a reasonable case for enriching majoritarian democracy through a fusion of some moral-ontological aspects of indigenous political practices embedded in traditional consensual democracy for good governance in post-colonial Africa. This eclectic model grounded on the complementarity logic of inclusion, I argue, is more appropriate for post-colonial African polity than Hallen's exclusive consensual governance option. There is an overlap between consensus and electoral votes in the world of practice. To this end, more work should be done on balancing elements of indigenous political practices in traditional Africa with majoritarian democracy in pragmatic ways that will be beneficial for sustainable governance in post-colonial Africa.

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