

Critical Reflections On Wiredu's Consensual Democracy

Tayo Raymond Ezekiel Eegunlusi

Department of General Studies

Institute of Technology-Enhanced-Learning and Digital Humanities

Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria

kingadetayo@yahoo.com

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/tp.v8i2.2>

*Thought and Practice: A Journal of the Philosophical Association of
Kenya (PAK)*

New Series, Vol.8 No.2, December 2022, pp.1-27

thoughtandpractice@gmail.com

<http://ajol.info/index.php/tp>

ISSN: 2076-7714

Abstract

This paper argues that Kwasi Wiredu's consensual democracy is an inadequate alternative to liberal democracy in contemporary Africa because it neglects the beliefs in supernatural realities underpinning governance and political decisions in traditional societies on the continent. The paper holds that as evident in their worldviews and activities, traditional Africans do not depersonalise entities or segregate physical realities from spiritual ones. Deploying historical and conceptual analyses, the paper contends that, essentially, the deficiency of Wiredu's argument lies in his declining to acknowledge the roles oaths and covenants play in the sustenance of Africa's traditional governance systems. The paper thus holds that Wiredu's discountenancing of the role of beliefs in supernatural realities in African societies generally may have resulted in this gap in his understanding of indigenous African political thought and practice.

Keywords

Consensual democracy, covenants, oaths, governance, liberal democracy, supernatural, Wiredu

Introduction

The quest for an African alternative to liberal democracy is gaining ground, with the subject dominating the thought of political scholars and practitioners on the continent. Contributing to the debate by looking at the Akan¹ model of governance, Kwasi Wiredu claims to have identified consensual democracy in traditional African monarchical institutions that can serve as a viable alternative to the failing liberal democracy in Africa. Nevertheless, while not denying that consensus-building is common in traditional African societies, this paper argues that Wiredu's neglect of supernatural realities that underpin governance and political processes in traditional Africa renders his whole scheme of consensual democracy an inadequate alternative to liberal democracy in contemporary Africa. As evident in their worldviews and activities, traditional Africans do not depersonalise entities or make a distinction between physical and spiritual realms or realities (Idowu 1973, 173). In this respect, spiritual reasons are usually adduced for physical occurrences. Thus, by deploying historical and conceptual analyses, this paper argues that Wiredu's alternative is not suitable for democratic governance in contemporary Africa, and therefore does not satisfy the quest for an alternative to liberal democracy on the continent. Essentially, the deficiency of Wiredu's argument is in not acknowledging the roles that features such as oaths

¹ Wiredu's example of Akan is significant because the people group is big, covering several countries in West Africa including Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo. According to F. K. Buah, Akan is the largest people group in Ghana, including the Bono, Asante, Adanse, Twifo, Asen, Fante, Akuapem, Akyem, Akwamu, Kwawu, Sehwi, Awowin, Nzima and Ashanta. These groups are also big. For instance, the Asante claim eight clans (Oyoko, Bretuo, Agona, Asona, Asenie, Aduana, Ekuona and Asakyiri). Twi and fante are the two main dialects of the Akan language, with four other dialects - Nzima, Ashanta, Awowin and Sehwi. The Akan have about seven or eight matrilineal groups (abusua or extended families) and seven patrilineal groups (ntoro/kra or animating spirit). The Akan belong to their mothers' abusua by birth and their fathers' ntoro or kra by inheritance (see F.K. Buah. 1998 (1980). *A History of Ghana*. Revised and Updated. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., p. 8; "Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ghana: The Asona clan, Including Languages, Geographical Locations and Whether Men Are Forced To Marry Their Uncle's Daughter, Age Of Marriage, Reasons for Marriage, Consequences Of Refusal and State Protection (2003-2005) , 27 May, 2005, GHA100109.E. From <https://www.refworld.org/docid/42df60ed2.html> Retrieved, 7th October, 2022).

4 Tayo Raymond Ezekiel Egunlusi

and covenants play in sustaining Africa's traditional governance systems² (Nana 2020, 201). The paper contends that Wiredu's discountenancing of the role of beliefs in supernatural realities in African societies generally may have resulted in this gap in his understanding of African traditional political thought and practice.

This paper makes a distinction between a covenant and an oath. For instance, according to Ogunleye (2013, 81), "Yorùbà people do not have just a single word for covenant. Thus, Yorùbà words for covenant include; promise, oath, vow, bargain or agreement The basic theme of such a covenant is 'what is mine is yours'". Therefore, betrayal is considered abominable. Reflecting on the complexity of the word covenant, this paper regards the idea of "covenant" as having a deeper significance than an oath. It considers a covenant as a legally binding mutual promise or exchange of oaths between two or more persons as a result of a shared commitment to diligently attend to an issue or preserve a particular thing in consideration of future mutual benefit. It conceives an oath as a promise that may not necessarily be mutual. Individuals may swear oaths without the persons or things they swear it to/before swearing in return. The paper holds that covenants and oaths are not mere expressions of words, but serious declarations made with the considerations that supernatural entities are witnesses who grant a just recompense or retribution, depending on the faithfulness of the parties involved. On the ground that Wiredu does not account for the beliefs in supernatural realities underpinning political decisions and governance in Africa, the paper concludes that his "consensual democracy" is not appropriate for governance in contemporary Africa, and therefore does not qualify as a viable alternative to liberal democracy for the continent. While citing instances from a number of African people groups to substantiate its claims, this paper uses numerous examples from Yorùbà culture for this purpose.

² Although oaths and covenants are part of cultural norms, which may be thought by scholars to be part of the 'fear categories' or norms worked out to have impact on people's psychological attitudes or ways of interpreting reality, this paper considers these as part of the metaphysical realities, loosely though, because of the supernatural practices and connections underpinning them. Oaths are sworn and covenants cut using tokens dedicated to deities or before the shrines of such deities, with the understanding that the deities are witnesses of the oaths as well as agents to administer justice whenever such are violated.

The section following this introductory one discusses the quest for alternatives to liberal democracy in Africa. Next, there is a presentation of Wiredu's core arguments for a consensual democratic model in place of liberal democracy in contemporary African polities. Thereafter, the paper reflects on the shortcomings of Wiredu's consensual model of democracy, citing instances from other African cultures, especially the Òyó Mesi and traditional Igbo political institutions. The paper then highlights the influence of supernaturalism in the form of oaths and covenants on contemporary African politics, citing the example of Nigeria, followed by some concluding remarks.

On the Quest for an Alternative to Liberal Democracy in Africa

Several political scholars and practitioners have argued for the possibilities of alternatives to liberal democracy on the ground that liberal democracy, a governmental system prioritising and protecting the rights and liberties of individuals as well as allowing the exercising of political powers in accordance with the rule of law, has failed Africans.

Doubtful of the kind of democracy being imposed on Africans, Ake (1996, 132-133) thinks that the kind of democracy Africa needs should be one taking care of its socio-economic realities, viz: its "social pluralism, its poverty, its relatively low level of literacy, and the emphasis in rural communities on solidarity and cooperation." In these respects, the democracy should involve "some real decision-making over and above the formal consent of electoral choice." It should be a "social democracy" taking care of people's diverse socio-economic and political interests, emphasising the collective rights of people in contrast to liberal democracy's stressing of "abstract political rights". By this, equal emphasis must be put on both individual and collective rights such that everyone is able to participate well in the political, social, cultural and political processes in society without feeling marginalised or alienated. In all these, the structure put in place ought to restrain African elites from corrupting, frustrating or dominating the political and developmental system.

6 Tayo Raymond Ezekiel Egunlusi

On his part, Teson sees the failure of liberal democracy in Africa as emanating from its incompatibility with the ‘quasi-democratic features’ of African institutions. He thinks that post-colonial autocratic regimes limit human freedom and frustrate individual empowerment in Africa. His reason is that the alien democratic system Africa was expected to imbibe is a far cry from the thriving liberal democracy practiced in the West. Obviously, Africa’s “*quasi-democratic* institutions...lacked certain features that were essential for the success of western democratic systems.” Besides, Africa’s efforts at democratisation are not succeeding and its religious and ethnic conflicts not abating because its states are not sufficiently liberal, if judged against the tenets of liberal democracy. Over time, liberal democracy’s “unrestrained majoritarian rule” degenerates to the worst form of despotism “because the exercise of political power is unchecked by effective institutional constraints, or an independent judiciary that protects individual rights” (Teson 1999, 31).

Apart from highlighting the deleterious effects of the majoritarian winner-takes-all outlook of liberal democracy, Oduor (2019, 108-109; 2022, 2) contends that in the African context, the liberal content of liberal democracy is threatened by a communitarian outlook which downplays the rights of the individual. He further avers that liberal democracy has not only been found to be problematic by Africans, but also by other non-Western scholars and practitioners who have argued for alternative democratic governance models that suit their cultures: “more than a century ago, Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi had already questioned the suitability of liberal democracy for the Indian context. Similarly, Bell argued for morally justifiable alternatives to liberal democracy in East Asia. Along the same lines, several Latin American countries have been experimenting with their own indigenous models of democracy in place of liberal democracy. Such experiments presume alternative theoretical and ideological frameworks” (Oduor 2019, 109). Oduor also suggests that many of the ideas described as Western may not really be Western after all, but rather borrowed from other parts of the world:

... the process of knowledge production and exchange knows no political or geographical borders. Thus while ancient Greek thought is considered to be the foundation of Western culture, it borrowed heavily from ancient Egypt. Similarly, while paper and gunpowder are central to Western culture, the ancient Chinese invented them.

Besides, the West borrowed the so-called Arabic numerals from Arabs, who had borrowed them from India (Oduor 2019, 109).

If we go by Oduor's views above, we may be uncertain about the origins of democracy. However, we are not in doubt that the liberal democratic model in its contemporary form is largely American³.

The Core of Wiredu's Arguments for a No-Party Consensual Democracy

Just like the concerns bothering Teson and Ake, which Oduor also mentions, the concerns relating to majoritarianism in liberal democracy, its potential to degenerate into despotism, an acknowledgment of social pluralism and community cooperation and agreements in traditional African adjudicative and governance procedures, are all part of what bothered Wiredu. He thinks that since liberal democracy is majoritarian in nature, or that governments in it are constituted by majority votes, and can therefore lead to the tyranny of the majority, an alternative is necessary.

According to Wiredu (2001, 227-232), since democracy is 'a government by consent', the multiparty and majoritarian nature of liberal democracy is antithetical to genuine democracy. He thinks that the partisan and majoritarian nature of liberal democracy occasion frustrations and present human political existence as one bedevilled with continual agitation for power among the many existing political parties. Since power has corrupting influence, the pursuit of

³ Although the liberal model is championed by the U.S.A., it was borrowed from the pre-enlightenment and enlightenment works such as Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* (1690), Baron de Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762), Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1792), and other writings on human emancipation. The avalanche of ideas from these works supports the ideals of freedom/liberty, equality and justice. The enlightenment writings of the eighteenth century were in reaction to Edmund Burke's 1790 work, *Reflection on the Revolution in France*, which broadly opposed the French Revolution. Inspired by the above works, particularly those of Locke and Baron de Montesquieu, the American founding fathers such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison developed the structure of modern liberal democracy. Thus, as outlined in the Federalist Papers by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison, the Madisonian Federalist democratic structure which provides for constitutionalism and for the propagation of the democratic ideals is widely emulated in many contemporary nations.

power is also corrupting in nature. Matters may worsen in the practice of liberal democracy when the unpleasantness of the struggle for political power foils the possibility of good, positive and unbiased political discourses and fair dealings in human interactions. Thus, irascible activities and moral flaws may put tensions on people. As an alternative to partisan majoritarian liberal democracy, he advocates a no-party, consensual type of democracy. He thinks that in such a framework, an agreement may easily be forged on the question of what the society should do through a compromise free from concern for the need to arrive at the same opinion on the subjects of truth and morality.

In an earlier work, Wiredu (1995, 53-64),⁴ in line with the Akan traditional system of governance, prescribes a no-party consensual model of democracy for contemporary African states so as to avoid the problems associated with majoritarian liberal democracy. To him, such a model prevents the “tyranny of the majority” and keeps institutionalised disaffection at bay. He asserts that in such a model, the rulers and adjudicators of the people make choices based on consensus and present the same to everyone, thereby enabling everyone to meaningfully participate in governance and to be comfortable with the decisions made.

Consensus in Traditional African Governance Systems and Wiredu’s Consensual Democracy

As pointed out in the previous section, Kwasi Wiredu proposed a no-party consensual model of democracy for contemporary African states (Wiredu 1995, 61; 2001, 229-231). Wiredu informs us that among the Akan, chiefs in the company of their paramount ruler would take decisions based on consensus, thus precluding the majoritarianism necessarily engendered by voting. Wiredu (1995, 55) acknowledges that apart from the Akan, there are other African ethnic groups, such as the Zulu, who arrive at decisions by consensus. Although he does not mention the Yorùbà, Igbo and a host of others, these also make decisions by consensus. For instance, for some of these peoples, a king and his chiefs cultivate the habit of reaching agreement by consensus: the chiefs meet and talk secretly.

⁴ See the same 1995 article in his 1996 work, *Cultural Universals and Particulars*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.182-190.

Whenever the chiefs agree on anything during their discussions, they send one of them as a spokesperson to relay their decision to the king who is sitting on his throne waiting for it.⁵ The king sends the spokesperson back to the chiefs with his input, and the chiefs again send him back with theirs, and this goes on until the decision is fine-tuned. Thereafter, the king authorises the spokesperson to announce the decision to the waiting public. I am uncertain if Wiredu was familiar with this practice.

The Fusing of “Consent” and “Consensus”

It is noteworthy that both the ideas of consent and consensus are fused in Wiredu's presentation of his no-party consensual democracy (Padmanabhan 2005, 8). However, in the thought and practice of traditional African political formations, consent and consensus are not necessarily coterminous.

Generally, to consent is to agree to do something. Consent may then be either involuntary (negative) or voluntary (positive). Negative consent may result from physical/material, spiritual and/or emotional pressures or inducements. For instance, the urge for material possessions may make a girl consent to marriage. Similarly, an armed robber may induce fear in an innocent girl to force her to consent to her being raped, or hijack a car by telling its owner to “kiss the floor” while incapacitating him/her. Clearly, action induced through such duress does not arise from genuine consent, and this is why persons subjected to duress seek redress. In case of positive consent, reason and good judgment are appealed to. For instance, if the merits of a position, policy or legislation are presented, a person may voluntarily support it.

On its part, consensus is the unanimous agreement of a group reached after a process of open, free deliberation. Such consensus is presumed to be based on the mutual positive consent of each and every individual participating in the deliberation. It is not possible to arrive at a genuine consensus if deliberations are dominated by fear, especially the fear induced by the positions of strong

⁵ I once watched these proceedings during a conflict resolution activity by the Ewi-in-Council in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria.

individuals or the majority in a group. All the members of a group may not necessarily consent wholly for the group to reach a consensus, but it is important that possibilities of negative consent induced by fear be eliminated for a consensus to be termed general or widespread. In this respect, even though people disagree to a certain extent, they still appeal to reason and a sense of good judgment and thus consent in the overall best interest of the group. In short, genuine consensus cannot be achieved without positive consent (Taiwò 2004, 251-252; Bello 2004, 268-269).

Apparent rather than Genuine Consensus

Although Wiredu correctly identifies apparent democracy by consensus among African societies, he does not recognise that what he calls consensus may not really be consensus, but rather a dramatized, faked or make-believe consensus imposed on individuals involved in traditional governance systems in Africa. In the first instance, Wiredu does not pay attention to the roles of influential or charismatic and wealthy individuals in determining the outcomes of what appears to be joint decisions of traditional councils. In other words, there are instances in which the views of charismatic or wealthy individuals may dominate the deliberations in such councils. Besides, the views of kings may dominate such deliberations while the society thinks it is being led through genuinely consensual processes in the council. I will expatiate on this below by examining the social and cultural practices, histories, orientations and worldviews of the peoples of Africa.

Besides, Wiredu's position on consensual democracy contradicts the African experience. In Yorùbàland, the spiritual orientation in governance is strong. It is a common practice for chiefs to pay homage to the *Oba* (King) on arrival in his court: they prostrate before his stool, whether or not he is sitting on it. This is in line with the oaths of allegiance they swore to the stool on the day they were made chiefs. The chief sees himself as respecting the ancestral stool and not just the king. The king sitting on the stool is not only the ruler, but also the representative of the ancestors. Thus to offend him is tantamount to offending the ancestors whose spirits he sometimes perceives to be with him. In some cases, because of

the fear of the powers wielded by the king, it may be difficult to tell the truth. As Haggard (1923, 18) maintained, “woe betide those who tell the truth to kings or to any who wield the sceptre of their might.” In explaining this, Haggard told the fictional story of a character, Noot, who told the truth to Pharaoh, resulting in his (Noot's) own downfall and banishment. It is common for kings to prefer to listen to sycophants than to hear the truth. What, then, if decisions and agreements reached by the chiefs are from the fear of the king and the stool?

The Igbo governance system often allows decisions by consensus. However, unlike the Yoruba one, it is acephalous in nature. In this respect, the family heads form the group which takes binding decisions on behalf of the community. Identifying the way in which considerations based on belief in the supernatural realm play important roles in decision making among the Igbo, Ugwu (2014, 35-36) notes that ofor, an “insignia of office of an *Ozo*-title holder in Igboland”, has multiple uses such as “for prayers to God and to the gods, for swearing an oath in all grave cases, for making speeches by titled men indicating they are truthful especially as they kiss it before the speech, used to indicate the presence of the ancestors, for removal of evil or any kind of abomination from the community by the priests, (sic) endows on the lineage head both political and social authority used as an apparatus for divination and used for prohibition and sealing of decisions at family, lineage and village levels.”

In certain cases, the priests or votaries of deities and the masquerades influence decisions among the Igbo. However, depending on the prevailing situations and circumstances, consensus may not be reached, especially when varying interests are involved.

By asserting that the Akan Council of Chiefs arrives at decisions by consensus, Wiredu does not take adequate cognisance of the fact that the enormous powers wielded by paramount rulers in traditional Africa may or may not permit any consensus. For instance, still citing the example of the Yorùbà, if we take the linguistic route, the meaning of *Kábíyèsí* in Yorùbáland is “*Kàábí kòsì*” (“the unquestionable one” or “Who is to ask him?” or “Nobody can query him”) (Eegunlusi 2022, 199). The *Kábíyèsí*, that is, the King, is considered to be the one who cannot be questioned, and who therefore does what pleases him. The mind

frame of traditional African kings was best captured by Mobutu Sese Seko's accolades "*Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga*", meaning "the all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake" (Loffman 2017) or "a rooster that leaves no hen intact" (Kabwit 1979, 382, 389). Generally, every Yorùbà *Oba* is known as the *Aláse èkejì òrìsà* (the one who makes decree and is next to the gods). However, the case of the Òyó, who are part of the Yoruba, was different. In ancient times, if the Òyó *Oba* was giving a speech, no one dared interrupt him. He would then say, "*S'òyó ò fée fèsì ní?*" (Are Òyó people refraining from responding?). The people still did not reply. He went further to ask, "*S'òyó ò mèsì ní?*" (Do Òyó people never know/understand the reply to give?) to which the people would reply "*Òyó mèsì*" (Òyó people understand the reply to give). With later development of the Òyó kingdom, the saying became a referent to the seven council members of Òyó Mèsì, who could be said to be the actual individuals that may be called Òyó for being the pillars holding things together and dominating the structures of the different quarters of the Òyó Empire (Egunlusi 2022, 199-200). Because of the powers of the Òyó *Oba*, his panegyric was "*Ikú bàbá yèyé aláse tó jé pé òhun gangan lòdà, omo ikú tí ikú ò le pa, omo àrùn tí àrùn kò le se, omo òfò tí kò le sòfò. Aláàfin tí n fì esè ire te ojúde tí è, tí n fì esè ikà te ojúde omo olómo. Kò rí eni bá jà ó n wo ògiri ràkòràkò*" (literally, "father and mother of death or Lord/controller of death, the authoritative one who is the real deity, death's offspring that it cannot kill, disease's offspring that it cannot afflict, the child of waste or disaster whom waste or disaster cannot befall. *Alaafin*⁶ that threads the frontage of his palace mercifully or benevolently but threads another person's frontage mercilessly or wickedly. One who sees no one to fight with and stares defiantly at the wall for an opportunity to start a fight").⁷ In certain cases,

⁶ *Alafin* means "the one who owns or occupies the palace".

⁷ Olanrewaju Adepoju's 1974 rendition compiled by Abiola Jagunmolu and Oluokun Salman Abiodun, translated by Toonsday's, offers a good grasp of the panegyrics. See "Oriki (Panegyric) of Aláàfin of Òyó, ó Ọba Lamidi Adeyemi III", *Ebiographer*, <https://ebiographer.wordpress.com/2022/06/13/oriki-panegyric-of-alaafin-of-oyo-oba-lamidi-adeyemi-iii/>

people shorten the panegyrics to “*Ikú bàbá yèyè, omo ikú, omo àrùn, omo àdánù, omo òfò*” (literally, “the all powerful one who holds the powers of death, sicknesses, loss and wastefulness”) (Falola 2021, 50). Thus, those he wished to punish were already condemned to death, sickness and loss of human and material things because he was expected to make them suffer to these extents.

To buttress the above, as told by Johnson, one particular Òyó king, Ayíbí, requested her favourite wife to help scrub his back in the bathroom. The wife jokingly said: “So you are not more than this that everyone fears you.” The next day, the king, in council of his chiefs, summoned the woman and told her to open each of the two platters covered on the floor before the council. On opening them, the woman discovered that her parents’ heads were cut and put in the platters. While she was crying, the king reminded her of what she said the previous day and told her that his ability to do and undo was the reason why he was feared (Johnson 1921, 172)⁸. Who was to question the unquestionable among the chiefs in that society?⁹ It would be difficult for the council of chiefs to arrive at an unbiased consensus under such circumstances. Consensus is usually reached in the enthronement of the *Oba*, where chiefs or king-makers agree on whom to make the king. Nevertheless, after the enthronement, the king is not subject to the people anymore since he is now their Lord, and his speeches are commands. This is why the Àdó Ékìtì part of Yorùbàland often affirms that “*àse l’oba í pa oba i*

⁸ Legend claims that the panegyric “*iku baba yeye*” derived from this decapitation story, when Ayíbí’s wife referred to him as the “*iku to pa baba ati yeye mi*” (the death that killed my father and mother).

⁹ In the article titled “The Òyó Empire and Basorun Gaa”, online platform, *Swift Talk Limited* says: “From Odarawu (who was bad tempered) to Kanran (an unmitigated tyrant) then Jayin (the effeminate and dissolute) down to Ayibi (the cruel and arbitrary) and Osinyago (the worthless) the Alaafin’s in the second half of the 17th century were despotic.” See: https://swifftalk.net/2021/08/18/the-oyo-empire-and-bashorun-gaa/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=the-oyo-empire-and-bashorun-gaa

dìpè” (the king decrees and never appeals or pleads).¹⁰ In the post-enthronement matters, the public would be deceived into thinking that the ‘consensus’ reached is real consensus, whereas it is false, non-consensual and dominated by the advantaged person during the decision-making process. It is obvious that what is termed consensus is violated by traditional norms, social hierarchies, and considerations based on beliefs in the supernatural realm.¹¹

Disregard for Beliefs in Supernatural Realities

Wiredu neglects Africans’ conviction regarding the existence of, and interactions with, supernatural realities. Africans do not depersonalise entities (Mbiti 1975, 17, 36-38; Hallen 2002, 30): every action and reaction has supernatural underpinnings. Of great relevance to our reflections is the fact that Wiredu does not acknowledge the place of oaths and covenants in the consideration of how Africans sustain traditional governance systems. There are mutual and non-mutual oaths. Mutual oaths are sworn to by at least two persons, while non-mutual ones are one-sided. For instance, as usually involving pregnant women, barren couples, women discriminated against for inability to produce heirs for their husbands’ families, etc., it was common for people in dire need to swear to masquerades or before deities, promising to give them cocks and other items, if their desires were granted (Mbiti 1975, 136-138; hallen 2002, 14). As different from mutual oaths, these oaths were to the masquerades or deities who never swore to the people concerned in return.

Given the preceding observations, the possibility exists that what Wiredu calls consensus may really be a make-believe exercise imposed on the members of the councils through their respect for the oaths they have taken or the covenants they have entered into affirming their unflinching allegiance to their paramount rulers.

¹⁰Although not alien to me, this came to the fore during my discussion with Níyi Fágúàrò. Fágúàrò is a close friend and an Ekiti based teacher deeply interested in cultural issues relating to Africa, especially things involving Ekiti people and Yoruba in general. I sometimes run my ideas through him to be sure I have not misplaced the things I think I know. He often comes out explaining things to corroborate my views.

¹¹ In testing the strength of my arguments, Niyi Fagbuaro was helpful in corroborating my views on the extent of the powers of the Yorùbà Oba, and in providing new insights.

If so, what really occurred was a double-sided monologue instead of a robust process of consensus-building, with the paramount ruler's views thriving while his chiefs' standpoints are suppressed, contained or unheard. The people who swear oaths of allegiance typically wish to stand by such oaths because of the fear of the repercussions arising from breaking them. In what clarifies this, Adotey (2018) examines the rituals among the people of Ave-Dzalele in Ghana and Edzi in Togo:

Among the Edzi it is the Adefo, the *dutor* (landlord) of Edzi in Togo, who performs the enstoolment rites for all the chiefs of the Ave-Dzalele traditional area in Ghana. The Adefo, as the custodian of the land, is customarily designated to enstool all Edzi chiefs in both Ghana and Togo, and the legitimacy of these chiefs depends on his having enstooled them. One of the enstoolment rites involves dipping the feet of the chief in the blood of a ram, as occurred during the enstoolment of Togbe Hodzi IV as chief of Ave-Atanve in Ghana Another important aspect of the relationship between the bisected communities is evident in the swearing of oaths (*atabu*). Oaths highlight the reproduction of chiefly relations following the imposition of the international boundary, as some of the chiefs who swear the oath or respond to it reside on the opposite side. Oaths within the chieftaincy institution are sworn during the enstoolment of chiefs and at their burial to show allegiance between chiefs as well as between chiefs and their subjects. A subject can also take a chief's oath to prove his innocence or to bring a case before the chief. The *atabu* places a responsibility on the person who says it and on the respondent. The swearer declares that if he did or does something forbidden, or reneges on his responsibilities, then he has broken the oath (Adotey 2018, 566-568).

Similarly, despite Wiredu's discountenancing of supernaturalism, the Akan model he proposes is actually underpinned by considerations of supernaturalism. Obeng (1998, 334-348) sheds light on the process of installation of kings and oath-taking among the Akan people by looking at the leadership/kingship installation practices of the Ghanaian immigrants in New England, U.S.A., duly supported by the home Akans in Ghana (Obeng 1998, 343). According to Obeng, as part of the ceremonial rites, after the "queen mother or stool mother" has been duly consulted, the kingmakers show the elected king to the people through the *akyeame* (spokesmen) led by the *akyearnehene* (chief spokesperson) who requires the king-elect to pay a customary fee to obtain useful information. The *gyasefuu* (advocates) negotiate the fees until a fair deal is agreed. The king-elect is introduced to the elders of the people through the *gyasehene* (head of the Gyase group). He uncovers his shoulders and lowers his cloth to the waist at this to pay homage to the elders he is presented to. He is then allowed to swear the oath of

office to the queen mother, by pointing the *ufonu* (ceremonial sword) to her, and to the chiefs who are to serve with him. Concluding the rites, the king sits on his throne while the women, whether royal or servants, give thanks to the “Supreme Being” and congratulate the king. Powders of either white clay or talc are sprayed on him and he dances to the *fontomfrom* (the king’s drum). On returning to his seat, all chiefs approach in turn to swear oaths of allegiance to him. The enstoolment rites are then performed. Led to “a stool house” to be in “contact with the stool”, his sacredness is affirmed as being “infused with the sanctity and power of the royal ancestors. He becomes a *nana* (elder, chief, or ancestor) The ancestors are asked to endow him with courage, wisdom, fertility, and other virtues that will make him command respect in the land” (Obeng 1998, 342).

In the process described above, certain things are worth emphasising. *First*, there is the mutuality of the oaths: the king swears oaths to the chiefs who swear in return. These oaths define the responsibilities of the king and the chiefs to one another and to other subjects. However, despite the mutuality of oaths, by infusion “with the sanctity and power of the royal ancestors”, the king gains advantage over the chiefs. What if he wields his spiritual influence and imposes his decisions on his subjects, giving the impression that the decision stems from the agreement between him and his chiefs? Many instances abound in African kingdoms where the chiefs wholly defer to the king and his decisions pass as the decisions of the king-in-council. *Second*, there is no mention of oaths of allegiance from the queen mother to the king. Situations abound where powerful queen mothers in some kingdoms put the kings and the chiefs in their shadows. Being highly influential and untouchable, they make the final decisions which the people unknowingly consider as naturally consensual. Thus, Wiredu’s account of “consensual democracy” fails to properly identify the elements constituting decision making in the Akan political structure that have serious implications on the grounds on which his arguments rest.

Unlike Western societies where an oath is sworn in a few statements that the person who swears it may not even remember after a while, African oath-taking is in stages, and sometimes rigorous. Objects believed to be links to the supernatural realm are used. These might include special staffs, things dedicated to votaries of

deities, or what those saddled with the duties of the administration of oaths commit those swearing them to hold, appear before or swear with or by (Obeng 1998, 344). In a way, before the oaths are finally administered, there are training curves to sensitise oath-takers about the significance of the oaths, the importance of leadership chains of command and other essential matters. The oath-taking ceremonies evoke in those taking part in them the histories of what befell those who violated them. Thereby, they are neither expected to forget their oaths of allegiance nor to violate them because of the repercussions (Obeng 1998, 334). In situations warranting deference to a higher authority, even if displeased with the undermining of their decisions by these superiors, the fear of repercussions keeps the subservient oath-takers from protesting. In some cases, kings invoked curses on chiefs who contradicted their decisions (Prince 1960, 66-67; Mbiti 1975, 112; Clarke 2004, 180)¹². In other situations, chiefs were forcefully removed or demoted on the king's orders. In some societies where chiefs use strung beads as symbols of their offices, kings could order the chiefs closest to them to forcibly cut the offending chiefs' beads before other chiefs or the community to communicate suspension or removal from chieftaincy, a strong message to others on the consequences of opposing the king or contemplating rebellion.¹³ Thus the king's opinion dominated the deliberations of the councils as other chiefs avoided losing out.

However, in other cases, kingship supremacy in decision making was reversed, with the king becoming a stooge of the more supernaturally powerful among the chiefs of the society. A little clarification is necessary here. Among the Yorùbà, the strong chief might be the *Àgbà* (elder), the oldest and more experienced or one who was empowered by other powerful chiefs or people (Bamikole 2013, 146). Charismatic chiefs or elders hell-bent on achieving their aims existed in traditional

¹² Prince showed the procedures involved in invoking these curses.

¹³ The practice of kings punishing some chiefs as deterrence for others is a common strategy for obtaining subservience. For example, among the Banyankole of southern Uganda, "Judicial authority was vested in the king, with certain judicial powers exercised by Bahima [Pastoral Banyankole] and Bairu [farmers] extended families. The king could administer punishment to his subjects in the form of death, exile, beating, torturing, and cursing. He had the right to confiscate the cattle of his subjects, could override the judicial decisions of chiefs and kinship groups, and was the only one who could grant the right of blood revenge" (Encyclopedia.com n.d.).

Yorùbà societies (Aladesanmi II 1977, 71). Subsuming the opinions of the younger persons, they considered any youth as rude, garrulous and stupid who attempted to raise his opinion above theirs. These elders used proverbs to explain the consequences of the younger person's acts with expressions such as "*B'ómodé s'òkò lu agemo, kò ní kú kò ní rùn a sì máa pón láso*" (If a child stones a chameleon, he won't die or be sick but have dirty clothes). This communicates the idea that evil things befall erring children to the extent of being poverty stricken or never measuring up to their mates in society. Even in our day, young people hearing this kind of utterance know when to cease arguing with an elder because it is a tacit or open expression of his intention to harm them through supernatural means. In some cases, a young person may be believed to be an *Àgbà*, not because of his age but due to an exposure to supernatural powers which makes him qualified to sit in the council with elders. He is, thus, counted as an *Àgbà* because of the spiritual and non-spiritual knowledge he possesses about the way things are done by elders.

In view of the observations above, since there are hierarchies among chiefs, with each at different levels of spiritual prowess, it is possible for the views of an *Àgbà* to dominate in decision making in the king-in-council, with the dominant view perceived as consensus by the public, while chiefs who could challenge them are hesitant to do so because of the fear of possible harm from showing perceived antagonism towards the charismatic elder with intimidating spiritual prowess.

Thus, it was common for some chiefs to outlast many kings and acquire wealth, spiritual and political power. Such might see a new king as inexperienced and usurp royal authority. For reasons like these, kings normally belong to powerful social, political and religious/spiritual groups and cults in their domains that pledge their loyalty to him. As Uweru (2010, 166) notes, "cults and secret societies provide means to satisfy the need for success and importance - and in some cases, passage to nobility. In certain parts of West Africa and Central Africa, the *Ogboni* and *Owegbe* fraternities¹⁴, and the panethnic sodalities are secret

¹⁴ *Ogboni* is a fraternity with socio-political and spiritual roles among the Yorùbà, led by the *ìwàrèfà*, a council of six men regarded as the wise six that are powerful in the king's

societies made up exclusively of men and women. Like our college or university fraternities and sororities, these associations have secret initiation ceremonies.” According to Apter (1995, 371), in Yorùbàland, “nearly all great *orisha*¹⁵ are associated with great kings who enlist the support of the deities and embody their power (*àse*)” through their priests and priestesses regarded as kings of their cults. By the support of these groups, the king easily superintends over the body politic in full spiritual authority and socio-political powers. In Òyó empire, the Bashorun served as the equivalent of the contemporary Prime Minister. The Bashorun presided over the *Òyó Mesi*, the Council of the Seven involved in the day-to-day administration of the Òyó empire. In the past, there were *Bashoruns* that were more powerful than the *Alaafin* (the *Òyó Oba*, that is, the Oyo king). One of these was Bashorun Gaa (or Gaha). Regarding him Johnson (1921)¹⁶ writes:

Gaha had great influence with the people, and a great many followers who considered themselves safe under his protection, from the dread in which they stood of the Kings, because of their cruel and despotic rule. Gaha was also famous for his "charms" he was credited with the power of being able to convert himself into a leopard or an elephant, and on this account was much feared. He lived to a good old age, and wielded his power mercilessly. He was noted for having raised five Kings to the throne, of whom he murdered four, and was himself murdered by the fifth ... He did not aspire to the throne, for that was impossible of attainment, but he demanded the homage of all the Kings he raised to the throne (Johnson 1921, 178-187).

domains and are his advisers. *Owegbe* is a fraternity among the Edo people of Nigeria. Among the Efik and Kalabari peoples there are also Egbe and Ekine cults. These cults have influences within and beyond the shores of Nigeria.

¹⁵ *Òrìshà* or *òrìsà* means deity.

¹⁶ M.C. Adeyemi's short history of Òyó (1914) has been affirmed to have corroborated Johnson's claims. According to Falola, Doortmont and Adeyemi (1989, 304, 311), "Adeyemi's text is a representative example of Qyo traditions as they existed at the beginning of this century. The text is historiographically useful as a complement and cross-reference to Johnson's History of the Yorubas, where both describe the same events ... We have avoided the refutation of any of Adeyemi's assertions on the basis of internal analysis of the contents of the book. Rather, the text has been evaluated on evidence external to it, especially coming from similar and contemporary work (e.g. Johnson's The History of the Yorubas) and studies published which have made extensive use of contemporary sources that Adeyemi was probably not aware of. That local chronicles are useful is no longer disputed." See Falola, Toyin, Doortmont, Michel R. and Adeyemi, M. C. 1989. "Iwe Itan Qyo: A Traditional Yoruba History and Its Author", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 301-329.

Besides Gaa showcasing a charismatic, powerful or influential person wielding enormous influence on a society and its social institutions, many wealthy and charismatic people with cultic and occultic influences have dominated societal affairs at different times, making decisions perceived as consensual by people (Garaf 1982, 42-51; Falola and Genova 2006, 16-17; Falola 2006 183-164; Harnischfeger 2006, 56-58; Jensen and Buur 2004, 193-195). As such, Wiredu's neglect of supernatural considerations makes the democratic alternative he proposes inadequate.

Oaths, Covenants and 'Consensus': Wiredu's Alternative and Democratic Practice in Contemporary Africa

In most of his writings, Wiredu rejects anything tagged "spiritual" or "supernatural" and favours physicalism/empiricism (Wiredu 2003, 341; Ani 2019, 225-238). Thus Molefe (2016, 91) considers Wiredu's rejection of "spiritual (supernaturalist) foundation of African ethics" as difficult to accept. Wiredu's rejection of supernaturalism is responsible for his neglecting the spiritual considerations Africans give to decision-making. However, an instance of his own violation of this policy suggests his either picking the things he considers necessary to stress or not giving the issue thorough consideration. Referring to human integration into the community, Wiredu (2003, 341) asserts that "a person has a well-structured social identity even before birth. Thereby, when an Akan maxim points out that when a human being descends from on high he or she alights in a town (se onipa siane fi soro a abesi kuro mu) the idea is that one comes into a community in which one already has well defined social affiliations." What does Wiredu mean by "when a human being descends from on high"? Besides this statement being open to a supernaturalist interpretation, it may point to one of the ontological issues he did not think critically about, despite the fact that similar ideas or creation stories from various African cultures clarify it (Eegunlusi 2019, 64). For instance, as common among Africans who believe that humans migrated from another world inhabited by deities, a Yorùbà creation story holds that *Orisa nla* (*Olodumare*/supreme deity) sent *Obatala*¹⁷ down from

¹⁷ "Obatala" means "King of White/Pure Cloth". Obatala is the Yoruba Deity of clear or fair judgement, humility and purity.

heaven through a chain to create the world. Suspended by a chain in the sky, *Obatala* held three items: a bag of sand, a cock and seedlings. He poured the sand on the earth, dropped the cock on the sand, let it spread the sand to fill the earth with land and planted the seedlings for food (Onyibor and Eegunlusi 2019, 9; Azekwo 2017; Oladipo 2003, 242).

Granting that the supernatural is well recognised in Africa, the swearing of oaths of allegiance underpins control of affairs in most contemporary African states. As earlier mentioned, possibilities of having the dominant influence of charismatic individuals or bullies whose ideas are imposed on the people, due to making those within their spheres of influence swear oaths of allegiance or enter into covenants that they must not violate, abound. In partisan politics, especially in Nigeria, there are individuals who have constituted themselves into god-fathers who make holders of political offices swear oaths of allegiance to them or enter into covenants with them grounded on traditional spiritual elements, thereby making them do their bidding. They have succeeded in their efforts because they command wealth, spiritual power and therefore have substantial influence on people. A common saying among the Yorùbà is “*Ohun méta la fi ñ s’omokùnrin: owó, oògùn àti asoòbora*”, literally, money (*owó*), charm (*oògùn*) and cover cloth or wrapper (*asoòbora* or *aso ìbora*) are essential if a person is to be regarded as a (strong or real) man.¹⁸ While the meanings of *owó* and *oògùn* are easy to glean, *asoòbora* is a metaphor for *people*. Thus, properly interpreted, the saying means that three things are required to exhibit manliness: money, charms and people. Those who weave their political ideologies around these three things really understand control and have been wielding strong influence among the people.

The swearing of oaths of allegiance, the invocation of covenants, and the use of charms for control or for creating fear in others account for the manner in which many people in the circles of contemporary politicians do their bidding without due concern for those outside those circles. This is why extensive political corruption and injustice prevail. In a leaked 2020 video clip involving the

¹⁸ This is a common saying among the Yorùbà.

People's Democratic Party (PDP), several individuals swore oaths of allegiance, with curses invoked, to Ayodele Fayose, a former Governor of Ekiti State, Nigeria.¹⁹ The summary of the curses accompanying the oaths the people swore was that they wished themselves death in the hands of the land deity if they ever betrayed the politician. This kind of situation has for long been prevalent among Nigerian politicians. In certain cases, those who have control over others are not politicians, but people who simply desire to have their way at all cost and pose a threat to others. Based on intimidation, people agree to their proposals to avoid trouble while giving the public the impression that a consensus has been reached. Also, in certain instances, a malicious majority may agree on a position and silence the minority, giving the impression that a consensus has been reached. Consequently, the problems that Wiredu's no-party consensual democracy attempts to prevent may still subsist.

Furthermore, there are instances in which 'Elders' Consultative Fora' are constituted comprised of elders believed to be capable of moderating political events. Oath-swearing and covenant-making are means of guarding against betrayal in these groups, and especially in maintaining secrecy. In case their members become members of the political parties that the fora are interested in supporting, the oaths and covenants are used to further protect their interests. It is in this sense that god-fatherism and cabal politics thrive in countries such as Nigeria (Uweru 2010, 162-170). It is therefore easy to see that Wiredu's no-party consensual model of democracy does not satisfy the quest for an alternative to liberal democracy in Africa.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to show that Kwasi Wiredu's "consensual democracy" is not appropriate for governance in contemporary Africa. Through an examination of historical instances and the presentation of conceptual analysis, it has argued that Wiredu neglects beliefs in supernatural realities underpinning governance systems in traditional and contemporary Africa. The paper has explored the role of oaths and covenants in the sustenance of Africa's traditional governance systems

¹⁹ See "May We Die If We Betray Fayose, Ekiti PDP Chieftains Take Oath of Allegiance." <https://youtu.be/ah2vDcAQ4o0>. Retrieved 19th April, 2022.

and their influence on governance in contemporary Africa. Obviously, actions and reactions in African political circles were and still are mostly determined by considerations of the implications of violating oaths or covenants. Politicians in contemporary Africa exploit this situation, thereby easily taking advantage of the people. Consequently, a viable democratic alternative to liberal democracy must take cognisance of the African world view, which includes belief in the supernatural realm, rather than ignoring it as Wiredu does.

References

- Adeduntan, Ayo Kayode. 2010. "Yoruba Hunter and the 'Sin' of Narrative Performance". *Text and Performance Quarterly*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 103-121. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10462931003602444>
- Adotey, Edem. 2018. "'International Chiefs': Chieftaincy, Rituals and the Reproduction of Transborder Ewe Ethnic Communities on the Ghana-Togo Boundary". *Africa: The journal of International African Institute*, Vol. 88 No. 3, pp. 560-578. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/6991C3B18B59E322687B63370D695FCA/S0001972018000220a.pdf/international-chiefs-chieftaincy-rituals-and-the-reproduction-of-transborder-ewe-ethnic-communities-on-the-ghana-togo-boundary.pdf>
- Aladesanmi II, Oba Daniel Anirare. 1977. *My Early Life (Part 1): An Autobiography by Oba Daniel Anirare Aladesanmi II, Ewi of Ado Ekiti*. Ado Ekiti: Omolayo Standard Press and Bookshops Co. (Nig.) Ltd.
- Ake, Claud. 1996. *Democracy and Development*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Ani, Emmanuel I. 2019. "On the Non-worship Character of the Akan of Africa". *Sophia* Vol. 58, pp. 225-238.
- Apter, Andrew. 1995. "Notes on Orisha Cults in the Ekiti Yoruba Highlands: A Tribute to Pierre Verger". *Cahiers d'études africaines*, Vol. 35 No.138-139, pp. 369-401. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3406/cea.1995.1454>. https://www.persee.fr/doc/cea_0008-0055_1995_num_35_138_1454
- Azekwo, Anthony. 2017. "Tales by the Fire". <https://anthonyazekwoh.medium.com/table-of-contents-cde5d9645111>
- Bamikole, Lawrence. 2013. "An Indigenous Socio-Political Yoruba Model of Conflict Resolution". *Philosophy Study*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 144-152. <https://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/59702434c28cb.pdf>
- Bello, A.G.A. 2004. "Some Methodological Controversies in African Philosophy". Wiredu, Kwasi ed. *A Companion to African Philosophy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 263-273.
- Clarke, Kamaris M. 2004. *Mapping Yorùbá Networks: Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Eegunlusi, Tayo Raymond Ezekiel. 2022. "Critical Reflections on the Quest for a Monolithic Democratic Alternative to Liberal Democracy for Africa". Oduor, Reginald M.J. ed. *Africa beyond Liberal Democracy: In Search of Context-Relevant Models of Democracy for the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 191-212.
- Encyclopedia.com. n.d. "Banyankole". <https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/africa/uganda-political-geography/banyankole>
- Falola, Toyin. 2006. "Power, Status, and Influence of Yoruba Chiefs in Historical Perspective". Falola, Toyin and Ann Genova eds. *Yoruba Identity and Power Politics*. New York: University of Rochester Press.

- . 2021. "Alaàfinology: The Ideology and Epistemology of Kingship". Oyeweso, Siyan and Olutayo C. Adesina eds. Oyo: History, Tradition and Royalty: Essays in Honour of His Imperial Majesty the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba (Dr.) Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III @ 80. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, pp. 1-90.
- Falola, Toyin and Ann Genova. 2006. "Introduction". Falola, Toyin and Ann Genova eds. *Yoruba Identity and Power Politics*. New York: University of Rochester Press, pp. 1-28.
- Haggard, Henry Rider. 1923. *Wisdom's Daughter*. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company.
- Hallen, Barry. 2002. *A Short History of African Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 2021. *Reading Wiredu*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Harnischfeger, Johannes. (2006). "State Decline and the Return of Occult Powers: The Case of Prophet Eddy in Nigeria". *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 56-78. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/236418>
- Idowu, Bolaji. 1973. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. London: SCM Press Ltd.
- Jensen, Steffen and Lars Buur. 2004. "Everyday Policing and the Occult: Notions of Witchcraft, Crime and 'the People'". *African Studies*, Vol. 63 No. 2, pp. 193-211.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00020180412331318733>
- Johnson, Samuel. 1921. *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*. Lagos: CMS Bookshops.
- Kabwit, Ghislain C. 1979. "Zaire: the Roots of the Continuing Crisis". *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 381-407.
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/abs/zaire-the-roots-of-the-continuing-crisis/85E79B23E8742E35B762FCE73FEEB8C7>
- Loffman, Reuben . 2017. "In the Shadow of the 'Great Helmsman': Mobutu Sese Seko's Life and Legacy in the DR Congo". Africa at LSE, 7th September.
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2017/09/07/in-the-shadow-of-the-great-helmsman-mobutu-sese-sekos-life-and-legacy-in-the-dr-congo/>
- Mbiti, John S. 1975. *Introduction to African Religions*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- Molefe, Motsamai. 2016. "A Critique of Kwasi Wiredu's Humanism and Impartiality". *Acta Academica*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 91-110.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313412404_A_critique_of_Kwas_i_Wiredu's_humanism_and_impartiality
- Nana, Aniekan Etim. 2020. "African Traditional Religion Oath Taking and Resource Management in Nigeria". *International Journal of Religion & Human Relations*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 201-215.
<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jrhr/article/view/197458/186276>
- Obeng, Pashington. 1998. "Re-Membering Through Oath: Installation of African Kings and Queens". *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 334-356.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/002193479802800304>
- Oduor, Reginald M.J. 2019. "Liberal democracy: An African critique". *South African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 38 No 1, pp. 108-122.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02580136.2019.1583882>

- . 2022. "Introduction". Oduor, Reginald M.J. ed. *Africa beyond Liberal Democracy: In Search of Context-Relevant Models of Democracy for the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 1-9.
- Ogunleye, A Richard. 2013. "Covenant-Keeping Among the Yoruba People: A Critique of Socio-Political Transformation in Nigeria". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 3 No. 9, pp. 81-85.
https://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_9_May_2013/9.pdf
- Oladipo, Olusegun. 2003. "Metaphysics, religion, and Yoruba Traditional Thought". Coetzee, Pieter H., and Abraham P. J. Roux eds. *The African Philosophy Reader, Second edition: A Text With Readings*. London: Routledge, pp. 237-247.
- Onyibor, Marcel Ikechukwu Sunday and Tayo Raymond Ezekiel Eegunlusi. 2019. "A Critique of Traditional Igbo and Yoruba Moral Perspectives on Evil". *Canadian Social Science*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 62-75.
<http://cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/10966>
- Owomoyela, Oyekan. 2005. *Yoruba Proverbs*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Oyeweso, Gafar Olaiya. 1982. "Traditions of Origin and Growth of Ede Up To 1960". B.A. Dissertation at the University of Ife, Ile Ife..
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354223830_Traditional_Authority_and_Religious_Change_The_Role_of_the_Timi_in_the_Religious_History_of_Ede
- Padmanabhan, Sudarsan. 2005. "Two Models of Consensus". Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Philosophy, University of South Florida.
<https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1802&context=etd>
- Premium Times. 2020. "May We Die If We Betray Fayose, Ekiti PDP Chieftains Take Oath of Allegiance". 20th July. <https://youtu.be/ah2vDcAQ4o0>.
- Prince, Raymond . 1960. "Curse, Invocation and Mental Health Among the Yoruba". *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 65-79.
- Taiwò, Olúfèmi. 2004. "Post-Independence African Political Philosophy". Wiredu, Kwasi ed. *A Companion to African Philosophy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 243-259.
- Teson, Fernando. 1999. "A defence of Liberal Democracy for Africa". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 29-40.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09557579908400270>
- Ugwu, Christopher Okeke Tagbo. 2014. "The Demise of the African Gods: Fallacy or Reality?" The 84th Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nigeria Nsukka delivered on the 14th of August, 2014.
- Uweru, Bethel Chuks. 2010. "Cultism and Democracy Made Easy: The Cabal Theory in the Nigerian Politics, 1999-2009". *African Research Review*, pp. 162-173. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/afrrrev/article/view/69219>
- Wiredu, Kwasi. 1995. "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity". *The Centennial Review*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 53-64.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/23739547?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- . 2001. "Democracy by Consensus: Some Conceptual Considerations".
Philosophical Papers, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 227-244.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/05568640109485087>
- . 2003. "The Moral Foundations of an African Culture". Coetzee, Pieter H ., and Abraham P. J. Roux eds. *The African Philosophy Reader, Second edition: A Text With Readings*. London: Routledge, pp. 337-348.