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An African conception of servant leadership: a consensus-based approach

Zondi, Nombuyiselo Caroline

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Name of Student: Nombuyiselo Caroline Zondi

Student Number: 533765

Degree: Masters in Education (Course-work)

Division: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS)

Supervisor: Dr. Motsamai Molefe

Research Topic: An African conception of Servant Leadership: A consensus-based approach

Abstract

‘Servant leadership’ is a burgeoning research area and a novel approach to leadership, which links the issue of leadership with questions of morality and virtues. Robert Greenleaf, the originator of the theory, describes servant leadership as a theory that ‘begins with a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to first serve, and then lead as a servant’. Scholarship on servant leadership has increased in recent years, with a growing trend for it to be practised in private and non-profit organisations. However, there is still a lack of research on the topic. Some studies have found servant leadership to be a relevant and effective leadership style, and have therefore suggested that educational leadership programmes adopt the principles and apply the practices associated with it. Part of what is intriguing about servant leadership theory is the application of this unique leadership approach in organisations. But to contextualise and apply this approach correctly, we need to understand its Western character and origin. My objective in this project is to understand what servant leadership would mean in an African context, and to evaluate its plausibility in South African school organisations. In other words, my aim is to translate the concept of servant leadership to fit the South African paradigm.

DECLARATION

I, **Nombuyiselo Caroline Zondi**, declare this research report **An African conception of Servant Leadership: A consensus-based approach** abides by the following rules:

1. The ideas reported in this mini dissertation, excepts where otherwise indicated is my original work.

2. This mini dissertation has not been submitted for my degree or examination at any other university.

3. This mini dissertation does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

4. This mini dissertation does not contain other person's writings, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other sources have been quoted, then

    a) Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.

    b) Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

5. This mini dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the References section.

_____

Nombuyiselo Caroline Zondi

4th of July 2019

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation is submitted with/without my approval

Dr M. Molefe (Supervisor)

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My imaginary unborn child, in life nothing comes easy and everything worth having comes through making sacrifices. I am not sure when we will meet but I want to give this spiritual advice. Dreams have a tendency to lead you where you want to be, but God places you where you need to be. No matter how difficult, challenging and painful life could be, always put your faith in him. In my spiritual journey I've understood that every path I take He formed and He will not make me suffer but He will assist and strengthen me wherever I go or in whatever I do.

‘The will of God will take you where the Grace of God will not lead you. Talk to God in everything you do.

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Dedication

A gift to the Zondi family

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Introduction

This research concerns itself with the idea of leadership. In this project, I will specifically be focusing on the concept of servant leadership. Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) state that leadership can be understood as an influential social process through which intentional influence, aimed at structuring relationships and activities, is exerted by an individual or group over a group. However, how we define or perceive leadership may differ depending on our social context. This study focuses on leadership in South African schools.

Contemporary schools are plagued by systematic problems, such as abuse of power, unethical practices, social isolation, the violation of teachers' rights, and alienation in the workplace (Blase & Blase, 2003). These problems are often a reflection on the quality and style of leadership. In his writing, Greenleaf (2007) examines the need for a better leadership model: one that encourages serving others (i.e. customers, employees and the community) by making them the priority of the leadership approach. This approach is called 'servant leadership'. It emphasises increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, the promotion of a sense of community, and a deepening understanding of spirit in the workplace (Spears, 2002, p. 4).

Servant leadership is unique among other leadership styles because it is linked to morality, ethics and virtue (Parris & Peachey, 2013; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson & Jinks, 2007; Russell & Stone, 2002; Stewart, 2012; and Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010). It is, furthermore, rooted in charismatic leadership theory, which calls for leaders to exercise power through their follower's beliefs and the leaders' personal identification with their followers (Washington, Sutton & Field, 2006). This concept was exemplified by Jesus Christ, who was the first to teach servant leadership to his disciples. Jesus taught servant leadership by applying the concept concretely – engaging in the humble act of washing the feet of his disciples (as reported in John 13: 1–17). The importance of this act is magnified when we consider the culture in which it was enacted at the time. Therefore, the Biblical narratives of servant leadership were practised and taught more than two thousand years ago (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2008).

In developing this concept, Greenleaf (2008) frames some features as skills and others as tendencies. Different authors have expanded this concept in various ways, yet their work reflects

comparable divisions into certain characteristics and practices (see, for example, Laub, 1999; Wong, Davey & Church, 2007; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008; Sendjaya, Sarros & Santora 2008; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011; and Frick, 2004). For example, after considering the work of Greenleaf, Spears (2002) added ten characteristics of servant leadership which he views as critically important. These characteristics, he claims, constitute the essential features of a servant leader. They are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears, 2002; Russell & Stone, 2002; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011; Reinke, 2004; Washington, Sutton & Sauser, 2014; Hays, 2008; Hale & Fields, 2007; Thakore, 2013; and Joseph and Winston, 2005). He further claims that the ten characteristics of servant leadership are 'by no means exhaustive', leaving room for future writers on servant leadership to identify other attributes (Spears, 2002, p. 6).

In contrast to Spears, Russell and Stone (2002) developed twenty attributes of servant leadership. Some of these include those identified by Spears (2002) (such as listening, persuasion and stewardship) while others are novel (Russel and Stone, 2002, p. 146). Russell and Stone separate their twenty attributes into two categories: the nine 'functional attributes' of vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment; and the eleven accompanying attributes of communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching and delegation. The functional attributes are viewed as characteristic of servant leadership and enabling of it. Russell and Stone find repeated examples of them in the literature (ibid., p. 6). In sum, the attributes reciprocally influence each other even though they are different from one another (ibid., p. 146).

Considering the above literature, it seems that servant leadership is predominantly discussed in terms of Western culture (Hale & Fields, 2007; Brubaker, 2013; and Joseph and Winston, 2005) in which this theory is morally interpreted against the backdrop of Christianity. What has not been done is to consider servant leadership from an African perspective. In this project, I want to adopt this new perspective and offer an African interpretation of servant leadership.

To pursue this project further, I will discuss some of the following considerations. Readers might be more familiar with the notion of Western philosophy than that of African philosophy,

developed around 1970s. To clarify the notion of African philosophy I will use the 'fourth child of African philosophy' framework given by Odera Oruka (1981). He identifies four ways of defining African philosophy. The first is as an ethnic philosophy that refers to folk tradition, fairy-tale, narratives, the wisdom of sages, and which survives in both oral and written form in the postcolonial period. The term 'ethnic philosophy' was coined by Kwame Nkrumah and involves viewing the world through a system of thought centred on communities and language groups. (Lesteka & Venter, 2012).

The second way of conceptualising African philosophy on Oruka's classification is as 'sage philosophy'. Sage philosophy can also be understood as individual wisdom (Waghid, 2014). It is defined as the spoken words and teaching of a few intellectual men currently documented in writing. Oruka adds that these were the words of the elderly who, while being illiterate, were nonetheless seen as critical thinkers. The sages guide their thinking and judgement by reason and inborn insights and are often concerned with communal issues (ibid.).

Thirdly, African philosophy can be seen as a nationalist-ideological philosophy, represented in the works of politicians such as Steve Biko, Julius Nyerere, and Kwame Nkrumah (Bodunrin, 1981). Oruka argues that national ideology can produce new and possibly distinctive theories of politics based on the inherent socialism of and focus on familyhood in African traditions (ibid.). He further contents that authentic and purposeful freedom must go hand in hand with true mental liberation and a return to a genuine and true African traditional humanism, which is always possible and desirable (ibid., p. 162).

Lastly, African philosophy can be conceptualised as professional philosophy involving the work of academics educated in Western philosophy but originating from African institutions, which are intellectually in contact with each other (Lesteka & Venter, 2012). This conception is associated with the writings and professional contributions of academics such as Hountondji, Wiredu, and Gyeke, to mention a few (ibid.). In order to examine this concept in more depth in the current project, I am going to focus on the philosophical work of one of the leading scholars of African philosophy, Kwasi Wiredu.

In his book *Philosophy and an African Culture* (1980) explores the plausibility of permitting philosophy an African orientation in the pursuit of establishing a full-blown African philosophy.

He contends that such an orientation is vital, incorporating a transition from the worldviews of African traditions and beliefs to modernisation. This orientation requires a universal approach, which involves scientific methods and attitudes. He argues that philosophy does not necessarily have to be scientific, but it is necessary that it adopt the methodology of science – characterised by consistency, classification and critical thinking. On the one hand, he states that philosophy could be considered universal if it adopted science's methods as its universal techniques. This ought to be the goal of philosophy or rather, its ideal. On the other hand, Wiredu realises that philosophy has been culturally and historically relative and not universal. Furthermore, he argues that it is not advisable for African philosophy to be culturally relative; acquiring the intellectual virtues and techniques associated with science are useful for examining the African worldview, problems and beliefs. Philosophy should modern, scientific, and orientated to the African situation (Wiredu, 1972). This view is similar to that of Hountondji (1997), who states that African philosophy should only be considered philosophical if it meets the philosophical-scientific methodology of analysis, strictness and eloquence, and if it makes the discovery of new truths possible. He also takes universalism to be a feature of philosophy (ibid., p. 47).

In the discussion which follows in this paper, I will focus on Wiredu's notion of 'consensus democracy' drawn from the Akan West African concept. This idea of democracy is one exhibiting a certain style of government and political participation previously practised by the Akan. I am located in South Africa and have selected a theory founded in the African culture in which I am immersed. Wiredu's theory is particularly appropriate because he produced great work in African philosophy and is one of the leading African philosophers. I think that the idea of consensus democracy contains a promising conception of leadership that can amend our understanding of servant leadership.

This dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter one provides a discussion of consensus democracy. I engage in this discussion because this particular conception of democracy might give us insight into how to interpret servant leadership. The section is split into three subsections. In them, I first give a brief general understanding of the concept of democracy before providing some historical background to the Akan people from whom Wiredu develops his theory. Finally, I discuss the theory of consensus

democracy directly, and address three major issues that Wiredu raises. First, he is concerned about issues in postcolonial Africa which he believes make majoritarian politics ineffective. Secondly, he finds the idea of majoritarianism to be incompatible with traditional values. Finally, he thinks that the idea of consensus democracy best captures the idea of leadership – specifically in its capacity to correctly conceptualise the right to political participation. The aim of the first chapter, then, is to provide an objective theoretical abstract to the project.

In chapter two I engage in two main tasks. First, I explain how servant leadership has been defined and developed in the West. Secondly, I make a case for an African perspective on servant leadership. The idea of servant leadership has been discussed in the West through the lens of attributes, characteristics and morals, which I take to have been a successful exercise in so far as it has proceeded. However, there are limited studies on servant leadership from an African perspective and I offer such an interpretation by utilising the notion of consensus democracy, which I develop in the chapter.

In chapter three, I offer an application of a consensus-based conception of servant leadership by evaluating its plausibility in the South African context. I utilise three policies to do so, namely: the Batho Pele policy (1997) – a national framework policy embedded in school polices – the SACE Research Policy (South African Council of Education, 2000b, p. 3) and the Standard of Principalship (1996). I give a brief definition of each policy and its purpose before applying the consensual model – drawing on the notions of reasonableness and culture in the writings of Yusef Waghid.

Chapter 1: An exposition of consensus democracy

In this chapter, I discuss Wiredu's alternative approach to democracy – 'consensus democracy'. I do so largely because I believe that this way of thinking about democracy might give us insights regarding how to re-interpret servant leadership. Before I give an African interpretation of servant leadership in the light of the basic moral value of consensus, I will first critically discuss the idea of democracy and its origin. Secondly, I explore Wiredu's idea of the Akan conception of human rights. Understanding this notion puts us into a better position to appreciate how Wiredu developed the idea of consensus democracy. Lastly, I conclude by giving a detailed account of consensus democracy. In doing so, I address the three concerns that I have mentioned Wiredu raises (post-colonialism hampering the effectiveness of majoritarian politics;,incompatibility between traditional values and majoritarianism and the relationship of consensus democracy to leadership and political participation). My interest is not evaluative but is instead exploratory or interpretive – I aim to understand what an African perspective on servant leadership would look like.

1.a. Definition of democracy

It is a commonly accepted view that the concept of democracy is an essentially contested one (Arblaster, 1987, p. 5; and Collier, Hidalgo & Maciuceanu, 2006; and Teffo, 2005, p. 443). To say that a concept is essentially contested means that various meanings are attributed to it, rather than the concept having an agreed-upon definition. Examples of essentially contested notions are rights, freedom, equality and justice, to mention a few. Democracy is, for many, a valued political principle above all else and, so, it is unlikely to achieve a single agreed-upon meaning (Arblaster, 1987). This may be viewed as inconvenient but should not be a matter of regret (Teffo, 2005). Furthermore, Arblaster (1987) posits that democracy is one of the most central and resilient ideas in politics. I understand his interpretation to mean that democracy is unlikely to lose its centrality but not that its meaning is likely to become stagnant or fixed (Arblaster, 1987). However, democracy is likely to remain both a critical and contestable concept; it acts as a world-view through which reality is verified and often found wanting (Arblaster, 1987, p. 6).

Given the above disagreement about the concept of democracy, I will utilise one definition of democracy that is less controversial and is basic enough to allow for a meaningful discourse – that of Abraham Lincoln. He defines democracy as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people' (Teffo, 2005) or '*Motho ke Motho ka batho*' – a term often used in relation to the concept of Ubuntu, but which is also very close to Lincoln's definition. To me this definition entails that governmental decisions should be based on collective participation which includes both the rich and poor. These collective decisions are not based on individualistic interests and desires but rather communal principles of equal consideration of interest. Equally importantly, all levels of government should be accessible and responsive to the people, rather than only to an elite (Collier et al., 2006).

Although there are many academics that have written and contributed to the definition of democracy, a majority of authors quote Abraham Lincoln's definition. Teffo (2005, p. 443) posits that this is not because Lincoln's definition is better than others, but because it is accepted and utilised by many scholars. We can understand discourse about democracy to operate one two levels, then: the level of conceptual analysis and the level of application. In this study I will focus on the conceptual analysis of democracy. I aim to understand democracy, its historical background, purpose, motivation and critique. And I understand this concept as being applied differently by different countries based on their developmental history (ibid., p. 443).

Democracy is a term originating from two combined Greek words, *demos* and *kratos* (Donnelly, 1999, p. 615; Arblaster, 1987; and Fayemi 2009). For Arblaster (1987), both terms have more than one meaning. He refers to *demos* as referring to the whole body of living citizens within a city (*polis*) or as referring to the mob, rabble or lower orders. *Kratos* refers to power or rule (Arblaster, 1987, p. 13). Having defined these terms he argues that it is impossible to convince a group of people (who have the actual power) to follow one's commands without them having a stake in ruling. Therefore, a formal democracy in which people, or their representatives, at least appeared to rule might be seen as a democratic distribution of the actual power (Arblaster, 1978, p. 13).

Given the above conceptual background to democracy, one could ask what motivated this concept – how did it come about? According to Beetham and Boyle (2009), democracy was

formed in Athens in the fourth and fifth centuries BC. Its seed was in the idea that ordinary people should have a voice in the decisions that affected their lives. This idea inspired various societies in history (ibid.). However, critics of democracy often rejected this idea on the basis that providing ordinary people with a say in their affairs – they claimed – would produce a society of dull uniformity or an irresponsible government (ibid., p. 5). It is important to realise that democracy falls under two basic categories: direct and representative. In a direct democracy, citizens without the mediation of appointed representatives take part in making public decisions; whereas in representative democracies citizens select representatives to make political decisions, create laws and manage programmes for the public on their behalf (ibid., p. 6).

The former could be argued to be Western-based while the latter could be seen as African-based. In his article *African perceptions of democracy*, Bradley (2011) states that African political systems were observed to be essentially democratic throughout the pre-colonial era. He elaborates that African systems exhibited similar (democratic) characteristics to Western democratic ones – of emphasising the importance of the consent of the people, and of acting to impede the abuse of authority by individuals (by creating a balance between centralised and decentralised power) (ibid.). He mentions that African proponents of this democratic style of governance insisted on principles that are essential to all forms of democracy – namely, popular participation, consent and accountability. These elements were seen as vital ingredients in articulating the African vision of democratisation and governance (ibid.) Furthermore, these ideas were generated from the experiences, historical knowledge, values and capabilities of the African people, themselves.

The African consensual perspective differs from the Western perspective on democracy, however. Consensual democracy is maximalist: positing that democracy is not characterised only by competition between political parties, for example (Matolino, 2013). Minimalist (Western) democratic theorists – such as Russel Hardin, William Riker, Karl Popper, Adam Przeworski and Joseph Schumpeter – on the other hand, see democracy as not setting conditions for its outcomes. Democracy does not characterise itself as anything but an electoral system on this interpretation (Fayemi, 2009, p. 104). Przeworski, Stokes and Manin (1999) define minimalist democracy as a system where political parties lose elections. They perceive the fundamental value of democracy as being its ability to enable the peaceful transfer of power through the

mechanism of continual elections. Schumpeter (1950) contends that 'democracy' does not refer to rule by the people but is instead a method of decision making where individuals gain power through a competitive struggle for the votes of citizens. In contrast, Popper (1945) argues that democracies are systems where one administration is replaced by another without violence, through the mechanism of elections. He also de-emphasises the importance of sovereignty in favour of that of elections, stating that the deformities and unreliability of ballots are preferable to the prospect of autocracy within a jurisdiction (Fayemi, 2009, p. 104). This, to me, entails that majoritarian democracy renders power to winners based on majority rule. In this situation, losers' needs are not met and are prescribed to oppositions. Therefore, a plausible reason for favouring consensual democracy is that the necessity of the majority's approval for power may lead to autocracy and the exclusion of the minority, while democracy by consensus provides a maximal representation for voters (Matolino, 2013).

Based on the above interpretation of African and Western democratic perspectives, one could argue that democracy was defined and practiced differently in the Western and African worlds. Africans seem to define democracy as 'coalition' and practiced it through consensus, while Westerners defined democracy it as an electoral system, practiced through secret ballots where individuals voted for representatives. In other words, the representatives were selected by majority vote and the minority was excluded. This system seems brutal and demeaning, especially to the minority voters. Furthermore, I believe that Western 'democracy' did not exemplify truly democratic principles as Westerners did not truly understand the meaning behind the concept. Secondly, based on the type of 'democracy' conceived by the Athenians, one could have doubts about whether Westerners did indeed invent democracy. Put differently western democracy seem as an arrangement in which individuals have some equality in political power. But the principle of equal well-being is not concerned with the method by which decisions are made. It does not say anything about who has a right to rule. And it does say anything about the distribution of power (Estlund, 2002, p. 34). I therefore support Wiredu's principle of substantive representatives were the right of every participant to have his or her will to reflect in any given decision and consensus is important for securing the right of every participant to have his or her will reflected in any given decision. Kalumba (2015) also mentions that consensus is a moral requirement of every representative governance system.

In support of the above analysis, Arblaster (1978) states that democracy was not universally accepted by most famous Athenian philosophers and writers, who critiqued and opposed it. He mentions that Plato was one the most radically ruthless critics of democracy. He further indicates that the Greeks did not invent the term democracy to capture our modern meaning of the term. The concept was originated to describe a developing reality: the kind of city-state in which the citizen body governed itself (Arblaster, 1978:14).

The concept of democracy seems to promote inclusion. But some authors indict Western democracy as exclusive (Bradley, 2011; and Collier et al., 2006). Western theories of democracy have historically excluded women from politics (Bradley, 2011, p. 457). They do the same to foreigners and slaves (Beetham & Boyle, 2009, p. 6). This, to me, indicates a lack of decision making, a lack of collective participation, and a segregation of people. This contrasts with African democracy, where women in precolonial Nigeria contributed to democratic efforts (Bradley, 2011). For instance, Yoruba women had great opportunities to take part in economic activities such as trade and manufacturing. The work of these woman was considered by their society to be complementary to the work of men. Moreover, the women in Yoruba society had power by means of their lineage or through marrying into the royal family. They also obtained implicit political influence and had a greater public role because of their economic and political rights (ibid., p. 457).

Colonial rulers, in contrast, belittled the economic aspirations of women. Colonial rulers introduced the European notion that women belonged in the household, nurturing family members (ibid.). Comparatively, the same discriminatory behaviour occurred in South Africa during the period of missionary education, where black women were restricted from being independent and educated, being perceived instead as inferior and fit only to be housewives.

Based on this differentiation between the ancient African and Western concepts of democracy, it could be argued that African perceptions of democracy coexisted, unlike those of the West. However, nowadays in African countries – especially in South Africa – the democratic system has adopted the ancient Greek perspective, where democracy is more focused on the electoral system than on a consensus-based, African approach. Currently in the South African state,

several political parties run for government, each with a different vision, and each claiming to serve the interests and desires of the people. However, these political parties lack logical sense; they are ignorant, corrupt and greedy; they promote power over the minority and serve their own interests. These poisonous factors cause problems in the current democracy, such as ineffective government, the tyranny of the majority, conflict, the mask of oppressive rule, demagogy, and the empty space of democracy (Cunningham, 2002). As a result, these lead to the development of political instability, fraudulent elections, mob rule and government oppositions (Collier et al., 2006).

In line with the aforementioned problems, Plato identifies and analyses several problems with democracy: 1) Democratic cultures celebrate freedom excessively – as an end in itself – while rejecting the notion that some ways of living are better than others (Williamson, 2008). This results in much of the population leading lives devoted to pursuing pleasures and acquiring materials to meet their desires. 2) The emphasis on all types of satisfaction characteristic of democracies affects the kind of characters that democratic societies produce. This includes the character of leaders. Democratic cultures predictably produce people who struggle to master their desires. 3) Democratic societies are normally governed by unqualified rulers, for two reasons – people not selecting the right individuals, and qualified individuals refusing to serve. 4) The best candidates are unlikely to serve or be chosen; and elected democratic leaders are unlikely to be motivated by concern for the good of the whole. 5) Conflicts of interest between the private and public spheres in democratic societies are likely to be regional, turning political democracy into a clash of self-interested factions. This only benefits the politically influential, who characterise the situation as ‘justice’. (ibid., p. 406).

I understand the above criticisms to be suggesting that we cannot expect democracies to be governed wisely and effectively. This is partially because of the suggestion that effective leaders with genuine knowledge about the world, who could advance the interests and well-being of communities, are rarely in positions of leadership. This is the case when: a) claims based on superior knowledge and insight are routinely devalued and ignored by the population; b) people who are talented and have the potential to lead have no interest in nurturing the common good through the system and are disengaged; c) leaders surrender to the temptation of self-interest, in which case they are less likely to develop the capacity for seeking the good of the whole rather

than groups and constituencies that share their interests; d) leaders are punished when they challenge the existing ways of life or other aspects of the status quo; or e) leaders wishing to improve the system cannot do so because of the conservative views of citizens, meaning that the leaders must sacrifice their judgmental independency in order to comply with the needs of the masses (ibid.).

To me, Plato's critiques provide resources for a reconstruction of democratic theory and practice. Plato shares the ends which contemporary democratic theorists aspire to: the demand for a united community; the idea that leadership is about serving the good of the whole; the idea that the state should value knowledge over ignorance; the idea that autonomous leaders must be properly self-motivated and free of corruption. Williamson (ibid.) argues that the challenge of democratic theorists is to provide an account of democracy that can provide better ends than those proposed by Plato. While this may seem to be an easy task – especially for democratic theorists who favour a popular, widespread participation in politics, and believe that ordinary people have the ability to engage in logical deliberation about the public good – it, in fact, constitutes a substantial research programme for 21st-century theorists of democracy and democratic leadership (ibid.).

Williamson argues that considering Plato seriously will have substantial benefits for future studies in leadership. First, and foremost, Plato questions moral character and self-control; what we acknowledge, how we behave and how we lead is shaped by our character and whether our souls are well-formed and properly governed (ibid., p, 407). By focusing our attention on moral behaviour, Plato helps us situate morality at the centre of the education and evaluation of leaders. Secondly, Plato argues that the key form of knowledge for leaders is knowledge of the good and of the good life – moral, rather than technical knowledge (such as 'management studies'). Thirdly, he argues that we cannot expect moral character or knowledge of the good to develop on its own. It requires the consistent support of social and educational institutions aimed at producing moral leaders (ibid.).

Another way of enriching our understanding of leadership is to consider Wiredu and Gyekye proposal for a viable African political rule, based on consensus (Bradley, 2011). Democracy in modern times is seen by Wiredu and Gyekye as defined by liberal-democratic tenets. These

tenets include: 1) the central principle of an impersonal, public structure of power – of a constitution to protect rights; and 2) the principle of creating institutional support for open dialogue and debates between different agendas and viewpoints, diversifying power within and outside of the state (ibid.). Because of these tenets, the African political order is considered undemocratic because it is seen as lacking key ingredients for democracy (ibid.). The African political order was based on kinship and guided by oral traditions and a body of unwritten conventions (ibid.). The traditional African democratic order consisted of three components. First, power was derived from the people, whom the order trusted. This dimension of democratic governance is exemplified through the removal of monarchs, as occurred with the Akan people of Ghana. Secondly, a reliance on dialogue and its central role in decision-making was, and still is, a key component of the African democratic order (ibid.). This entails the general will of the people, which is the third component of traditional African democratic order. Decision-making is based on consensus rather than (the Western democratic model of) majority rule (Oladipo, 2001). The best democracy is defined as the consensual one, with no party formation and with a political structure that assures generous sovereignty to different group in multi-ethnic, multi-religious African states (ibid.).

In sum, I understand democracy to be a system that must be modified to adapt to the current socio-economic developments of the time. The problem is that the meaning of democracy is subject to interpretation and, therefore, what one country deems to be democratic doesn't satisfy another country. The basic essence of any democracy should be freedom. Freedom of employment, from war, inequality etc. As the singer Immortal Technique has said, 'democracy is just a word when the people are starving' (Coronel, 2003). Democracy without material benefits for the people is futile.

I have considered the historical background to the concept of democracy above in order to provide the reader with a sense of what the concept previously and currently entails. This background is also vital to my project as I utilise Kwasi Wiredu's notion of consensus democracy in opposition to the various styles of democracy that the reader might be familiar with. I want now to turn to Wiredu's thought. Before providing a broad explanation of his notion of consensus, I will explore his idea of the Akan conception of human rights. Exploring this

notion shows how Wiredu developed the idea of consensus democracy, drawn from the primary notion of kinship held by the Akan people.

1.b. The Akan conception of human rights

Human rights refer to those rights that are enjoyed by all human beings by virtue of their humanity (Fayemi, 2010). Kwasi Wiredu (1996) attempts to analyse the essentials of human rights in the discourse of democracy. To proceed with this, he first examines what he calls the 'Akan conception of the person'. The Akan conception of a person has both descriptive and normative features – not limited to the notion that human rights exists but extending to the question of what those rights are (ibid.). According to Akan thought, a person is formed from three elements: the *okra* (life principle), *mogya* (the blood principle) and the *sunsum* (the personality principle). *Okra* is an element of God that all human beings possess. All human beings have intrinsic value. This value can be associated with the concept of human dignity, which implies that all human beings are entitled to an equal measurement of basic respect (ibid.).

Analysing the relevance of the concept of a person's *okra* to human rights, Wiredu (ibid.) states that *okra* is a principle that comes directly from God. Akans believe that this entails that we all belong to God, and not the earth, as recipients of a destiny; we should all pursue the unique destiny assigned to us by God. In other words, everyone has the right to do pursue life in their own way and to accept the consequences of their own choices (ibid., p. 158). Through the possession of *okra*, *mogya* and *sunsum*, a person is situated in a network of blood relations that create a structure of rights and obligations (ibid., p. 158).

According to Wiredu (ibid.) when one first appears in the world, one is totally vulnerable and dependent on others. This is the time when one needs to receive love, care, assistance and affection the most. All of these can be grouped under the concept of the right to be nursed. The *mogya* principle is held by the Akan to come from the mother and is based on lineage. It is associated with other rights, such as a right to land – normally a plot of land based on one's from ancestral holdings. These human rights are sacred to every Akan by virtue of arising from one's human nature. On the other hand, Wiredu (ibid.) notes that in traditional Akan society there was

no state enforced punishment for violators of these rights. However, generally, these rights were complied with and experienced as a felt obligation by members of Akan society (ibid., p. 159).

Wiredu (ibid.) observes a panoply of human rights in traditional Akan society. These include – to mention a few – the right of any political organisational to sovereignty, the right to have a say in the enstoolment or removal of chiefs or elders, the right to participate in formulating governmental policies, the right to freedom of thought and expression in all matters (i.e. political, religious and metaphysical), the right to trial before punishment, the right to remain in any region or to migrate (Fayemi, 2010, p. 4).

Based on the above, Wiredu (1996) considers there to currently be a general climate of human rights abuse in the African political world. This human right abuse consists in denial by governments of the right to the political representation of their citizens. Many governments are guilty of this (Fayemi, 2010, p. 4). Considering this, Wiredu (1996) argues that the majoritarian democracy encouraged in and practiced by various African countries is responsible for many violations and human rights abuses. In order to remedy the situation, Wiredu (1995) proposes an alternative democratic system which he calls ‘consensus democracy’.

1.c. Consensus democracy

Consensus systems of government rule worked well historically. A consensus system was one of a limited and not an absolute nature. The monarch ruled through councils of heads of clans, which included heads, sub-heads, chiefs and representation from different levels of society. The main aim of political debate was to reach consensus. This was central to the operation of democracy in Buganda society and in many other African societies. (Wamala, 2005, p. 440).

Wamala (ibid.) mentions that kings hardly took the initiative in the deliberations themselves, for the reason that the monarch should not be biased or influence the proceedings. Democracy demanded that kings should execute the decisions made by the council. The only time a king could contribute was through suggestions to his closest advisors who would then pass these on for discussion. Consensus was a guiding principle both at the highest level of government and through lower levels of the societal structure – down to the household level. This indicates that traditional Ghana democracy was different from modern forms of democracy (ibid.). An

overruling vote did not exist in the Ganda or Akan system; neither kings, queens, nor anyone else had a veto. The notion of veto, nowadays, refers to the constitutional right of a president to reject decisions of the legislature under certain conditions (ibid.).

Wamala (ibid.) states that modern Africa has been encouraged to democratise, introducing party-political pluralism. This system has not worked well on the African continent (Offor, 2006, p. 270). Similarly, Wamala (2005) argues that although the political party system promised many benefits, countries adopting it inherited many problems. The political parties demolished consensus by emphasising the role of individuals in political action. Encouraging the rise of the party led to parties replacing people. This resulted in individuals no longer identifying as men and women of blood and flesh. Furthermore, the elected became representatives of the party and not of the people-as-holders-of-power. Party members are not loyal to their electors and this is evident when we consider the practice of political delegation. Loyalty is shown to the party that ensured a successful election instead (ibid., p. 440).

Wamala (ibid.) believes that parties are morally defective. Political parties have another intrinsic problem – they come into power to implement their own programmes. In order to come to power, political parties have to resort to opportunistic strategies, which Wamala labels as 'Machiavellian' (ibid., p. 441). Being a member of a party does not entail wielding power in the party hierarchy. Only a few members, seated at the top of the structure wield power. Even those parties that command the majority and form the government are ruled by a handful of people at the apex of the party. Those powerful party bosses, personalise power and therefore those seeking favour have to do so under the wings of the bosses (ibid., p. 441). Multiparty politics, although conceivably good for the advancement of plural interests in individualistic societies, is problematic in communalistic societies because party systems foster corruption and nepotism. The challenge then becomes how traditional consensus societies with a preferred method of decisional making can apply democracy in the modern world (ibid.).

Kwame Gyekye, Kwasi Wiredu and Olusegun Oladipo are African scholars who, through their writing, establish a consensus-based approach for decision making, a constitutional amendment regarding the rule of ethnic groups, and a delegation of political power so that local and provincial sovereignty become possible (Bradley, 2011).

Kwame Gyekye (1992), a prominent African philosopher, makes an argument for the relevance of the traditional political notion of democracy in modern African life. He suggested that there was a democratic order in precolonial Africa that could be beneficial for modern Africans to revisit. Another eminent African philosopher, Kwasi Wiredu (1996) makes an argument for non-party politics in Africa. He views the Western model of multi-party politics based on majority rule as morally defective both in the Western and African context. Its defects are more acute and apparent in African countries like Nigeria, though (Bradley, 2011; and Offor, 2006). To support his view, he contends that a potential democracy based on consensus exists in some African traditional systems of politics, and that countries can utilise it as an effective model. Correspondingly, Gyekye and Wiredu propose that manageable political institutions can be developed based on African traditions of political rule, such as consensus (rather than on Western-style majority rule) (Bradley, 2011; and Offor, 2006). They claim that there were democratic features from which new political system can benefit in precolonial, traditional systems of government (ibid., p. 459).

There is a tendency to instantiating what is effectively a one-party system in multiparty politics based on majority rule, because of the concentration of power that this majority causes (Wiredu, 1996). For Wiredu, this implies another limitation to the multiparty system – the party that wins the majority of seats or takes the most votes, consistently remains in power. He questions how democratic this is. This breeds a constant struggle for promoting power, creates conflict and disaffection, rather than consensus and cooperation. Moreover, the minority is forced to submit to the whims and wishes of the majority (Wiredu, 2007, p. 460).

African countries should build on the notion of traditional consensus found in some African traditional system such as the Akan system (Wiredu, 1996). A lack of political parties was the norm, and decisions were based on consensus and elected representatives. The African take on political parties made it feasible for everyone to take part in power and reduce conflict (and conflict is an inherent feature of multiparty electoral competition). The Akan system of governance created a union of citizens, whose rights to representation were respected. Local conditions should be considered more carefully in democratic efforts in Africa (Bradley, 2011, p. 460).

As mentioned above, Wiredu (1996) believes that human rights abuses are rife in Africa because of governments' denial of proper political representation to their citizens. He proposes an alternative to the majoritarian democratic model which he believes is at the root of this, which he calls 'consensus democracy'. Using the methodological perspective of 'conceptual decolonisation', he explores the hypothesis that a consensual democracy and non-party system are exceptionally good at forestalling multiple the causes of human rights violations and social-political problems in Africa. For him, a non-party system based on consensus as the central principle of political organisation could prevent the problems of multiparty and one-party systems mostly practiced by Europeans (Wiredu, 2007).

According to Wiredu (1996), the Akan practice of traditional political decision-making reflected an idea of consensus, which was seen to be conducive to securing important human rights. In fact, he calls it 'the Akan consensual culture'. This attribute was also shared among other identifiable African cultural systems of government such as those of the Bemba, Bankole, Yoruba, Swazi, Zulu, and the Ewe (Bradley, 2011; Wiredu, 1996; and Fayemi, 2010). This illustrates that democracy existed in Africa both concretely and as a concept and is not alien to the continent.

But what does the concept of consensus entail? Kwame Gyekye defines consensus as the consideration of people's views and opinions before making important decision; the esteem and fostering of mutual liberalism, fortitude and an attitude of conciliation (Gyekye, 1992). From this, we can conclude that consensus presumes a genuine diversity of people and opinions. Beyond this, Wiredu (1996) identifies characteristics of consensus using concepts such as faith, resolution, goodwill, and morality.

Consensus is a dialogue that can function to produce cooperation. It should be agreeable to all and not intolerable to any one person. To produce good political decisions, Wiredu (ibid.) states that consensus requires, in principle, that each representative be persuasive – if not for optimal decisions then at least for practical necessity. He draws on the Akan traditional system, which was built based on kinship. Every lineage in a village or town would have been chosen by consensus, based on seniority, intellectual reputation and rhetorical abilities (ibid.). Lineages for the Akan people entail common ancestry. Despite this, deliberation was an essential feature of

the traditional system of decision-making. It had two methodological aims: first the dialogue prompted different opinions and, secondly it presented them for consideration in order to reach an ultimate consensus (Fayemi, 2010). The Akan system discredited the notion and practice of majority rule as an acceptable basis for decision-making. Though reaching consensus was not as easy a process as making a decision based on a simple majority vote, consensus was preferable (Wiredu, 1996).

Representation in the Akan political system had two facets: first, each lineage council was represented; and, secondly, representatives had a real say in decision-making. The effectiveness of the representatives' say was secured through the requirement of consensus. This addressed the problem we see nowadays in the right to decisional representation in majoritarian democracies not being observed or not existing (Wiredu, 2007).

A majoritarian democracy is a multiparty political system in which the party with most electoral votes becomes the government (ibid.). In this system, the minority are seen as opponents of the government. Wiredu posits that in a majoritarian democracy, a minority of representatives cast votes. This entails that the rights of the majority and their constituencies represented in final decision-making is perceived as unimportant (ibid.). I understand this as likely to lead to a struggle for power and as generating conflict and disaffection instead of promoting consensus and cooperation.

The above alienation of representative rights is argued to be one of the most persistent causes of African political instability (Wiredu, 2007; Wamala, 2005, Offor, 2006; and Bradley, 2011). Currently, in Africa, certain group of individuals have found themselves in a consistent position of minority – that is, politically and statistically – and this entails that they will always be cast out of the corridors of power. Such situations lead to enmity in society. This also leads to a condition were fundamental human rights involving the decisional representation of the minority are denied (Fayemi, 2009).

Attempting to address and correct this situation, Wiredu (1996, 2007) argues that a one-party system is not an alternative. It does not, he believes, leads to the promotion of humane conditions or social order. The best alternative is democracy based on consensus and non-party politics, as

exists in some traditional African societies. Based on this, Wiredu (1996) makes a plea for a non-party consensual democracy in modern African.

In making his plea, Wiredu (1996) contends that consensus plays an essential role in decision-making and governance in African tradition (Wiredu, 1995). Importantly, consensus is not just an unusual political phenomenon restricted to arbitrating political questions. In Africa, consensus characterises political decision-making, but is also the demonstration of a fundamental approach to social interaction. Generally, in interpersonal relations among adults, consensus is seen as the basis of joint action, and is taken as a self-evident requirement (ibid.). Furthermore, resolutions represent an accomplishment of reconciliation, which forms part of consensus. Consensus is perceived as a restoration of benevolence through a reassessment of the significance of the initial causes of disagreement. It does not necessarily entail a complete identity of moral and rational opinions. But it serves to make all parties feel adequately accountable for their viewpoint in any projected scheme of future action (ibid., p. 53).

Consensus does not entail total agreement either (ibid.). However, it requires a diversity of opinion. Dialogue is always valued and enables the production of an outcome that is acceptable to all. Furthermore, Wiredu states that where there is a will to find consensus, dialogue can lead to a temporary suspension of divergent viewpoints, making agreed actions possible in the absence of agreed notions (ibid., p. 54). Moreover, he traces how consensus could work by validating its purpose in the Ashanti traditional system. According to Wiredu the basic political element of the Ashanti system is the clan (ibid., p. 55). Every unit has a head and such heads are automatically members of the council, which is the governing body of the village or township. The prerequisites for lineage-leadership are ‘seniority in age, wisdom, a sense of civic responsibly and local persuasiveness’ (ibid.). Wiredu mentions that all of these qualities are to be found in the eldest (non-senile) member of the lineage – which made electing a person a routine task (ibid., p. 55). Equally importantly – if these requirements could not be found in any person, there was a process which could be followed to find an individual who possessed such qualities. The chosen individual would remain in office until physical, moral or intellectual degeneration set in. In Wiredu’s view, this constituted consensus in the Ashanti political system. Wiredu emphasised that this process was not based on any formal act of voting; there was no word in the

Ashanti language that carried the connotation of voting – the concept of voting did not exist in their vocabulary (ibid.).

The chief could only come from royalty, which entails that his position was hereditary. He presided over the council and his words were not final on matters brought before the council, without the consensus of council. Once consensus was reached, the chief's pronouncements could be considered law (ibid. p, 56). Furthermore, the chief's position was religious as well as political. The chief represented the link between the population and the gods (ibid.).

Consensus operated at all levels of government (Wiredu, 1996). It worked because the principle of consensus was a pre-existing option. The principle of consensus is based on the belief that the members of a society have the same interests, although their immediate perceptions of those interests may differ (ibid., p. 56). Wiredu (ibid.) argues that human beings have the ability to put their differences aside and focus on the same interests, which they can achieve through dialogue. The Ashanti people valued rational dialogue because logical persuasiveness was a key requirement for holding office. The decision to hold the principle of consensus as pre-eminent was a decision to go beyond majority rule by seeking to represent the will of the minority. This is what Wiredu (2007) calls consensual democracy, in opposition to majoritarian democracy. Majoritarian democracy seeks to protect the will of the majority – which is much easier to do – as opposed to reaching a consensual position (Motalino, 2009, p. 35).

The philosophy of consensual democracy is attractive for Wiredu (1995) because it encompasses both formal and substantive representation. The former focuses on the representative's presence while the latter focuses on the people's will, exercised through the representatives (ibid., p. 57). Equally importantly, this notion of consensus democracy is related to Bujo's (2001) concept of 'palaver'. He argues that to understand the concept of palaver, individuals must recall the function of the concept in black Africa. Words possess enormous power which can destroy or develop the community. The palaver therefore signifies death or health (ibid.). Bujo further explores this concept by providing a historical background to it.

I will focus on Bujo's three forms of palaver to show the reader the relationship between the concepts of palaver and consensus democracy. The three types of palaver include the healing (or medical) palaver, the family palaver, and the administrative palaver. (ibid., p. 48). The palaver

notion suggests a reconciliation or forgiveness aimed at finding peace and fostering communal participation. This is based on an African tradition of ethics. These African ethics, in turn, encourage the adoption of African traditional politics.

But first, what is a palaver? A palaver is a ritual practice comprising the principle expression of a community. Different to the Western dialogue, the palaver does not include conversation only but is more robust, including dance, riddles, mythology, storytelling, body language and proverbs. The key component of the palaver is listening to and passing down ancestral traditions. These traditions enhance and promote the community.

In the healing palaver, the sick patient traces an illness he is suffering from to unpleasant behaviour in the past or a deceased member of the family. The patient confesses his guilt and accepts his responsibility in bringing the illness about. He also reconciles himself with a member of his family whom he hurt (Bujo, 2001). The cause of illness may lie within other family members, so the confession is necessary for the discovery of a healing relationship. Bujo (ibid.) indicates that consensus forms part of the palaver through the healing process. We can extend the process of palaver to politics. First, for this process to take place, we need to consider our postcolonial history and find out what worked or what caused certain failures or unpleasant behaviours. To reach reconciliation, we must accept our unpleasant behaviour and confess to it, so that we can begin the journey of establishing healing relationships. In the African case, we have to look back to our traditional African democratic principles, because this system did not isolate individuals, was inclusive, and encouraged communal participation. There existed a dialogue between representatives and those who mandated them through means of questions and answers, challenging representatives to supply information about their communal needs and to provide opinions about them.

The second palaver occurs in a family context. ‘Family’ is understood broadly, as an extended family that includes the deceased and the unborn, rather than a nuclear family (ibid.). This palaver is a mechanism that aims to resolve conflicts between family members. In this case, the palaver includes a rite of reconciliation. Moreover, the palaver plays an effective role in uniting people in learning the art of listening to one another, developing tolerance and a new approach to relationships (ibid.). In the family, the palaver is a process of growing together closely, resolving

conflicts peacefully, and preparing family members for contribution to open discourse in the broader community. In a consensus democracy, the community forms part of the palaver. Through dialogue, people are brought together so that they can learn to listen to each other, accept one another and develop new communal relations based on shared interest and desires. This fosters united growth; it helps to resolve matters peacefully and formulate open discourse in the community.

Lastly, the administrative palaver operates in the wider community. This palaver functions to inspire trust and affection in the community and to reinforce the community's commitment to justice. All of these values are vital to protecting the vital force of the community (ibid.). This palaver is the most ritualised of the three. It always includes lengthy questions and answers aimed at uncovering the central reasons for a given conflict within the community. Additionally, myths, proverbs, and storytelling shared by ancestors are employed in persuading judges and elders to make wise decisions that accord with past traditions (ibid.). This process relates to consensus because the palaver is not focused on the *solutions* that it presents but on the dialogue itself. This leads to the belief that open dialogue nurtures good relationships, reconciliation and reasonableness – that discourse is a good, vital force for building the life of the community.

The consensus decision-making approach should not be glorified overly much, as it has its own flaws (Wiredu, 1996). For instance, in the past, consensus was not always attained; it triggered conflicts between ethnic and lineage groups. It should be noted that arguments could be resolved without achieving resolution. Wiredu further notes that reconciliation forms part of consensus while democratic tendencies manifest in a form just short of war. War is the extreme denial of consensus and the most deliberate form of revolution (ibid., p. 460).

I find consensus democracy to be a robust approach. It allows for a more prominent role for citizens as they participate in the governance and decision-making processes of their country or community. It builds a more united society, as divergent views are accepted and consolidated into one view which aims to represent them all. Nevertheless, it is very complex and is difficult to implement in a country with a history like that of South Africa.

There are, of course, criticisms regarding the notion of consensus democracy. Some scholars in African traditional societies have criticised the notion of consensus in tribal societies because it posits a unanimity that never existed (Wamala, 2005). Wamala argues that these criticisms misunderstand the important point that consensus entails *dissensus* and entails reaching a point of agreement on opposing views that needs to be reconciled (ibid., p. 459).

Kalambu (2015) shares his frustrations of multiparty democracy and states that beyond the non-party alternative entails serious problems. For Kalambu it is difficult for him to see any attempt to institutionalise non-part democracy by outlawing political parties can escape the charge of infringing on the right to freedom of association, which is regarded as essential for various democratic process (2015, 110).

Wiredu non-party is found to face serious ethical and pragmatic problems. Kalumba (2015) states that, any law form by the system to contain the political association aspirations in acquiring political power are arguably infringements their right to pursue self-chosen goals in a peaceful manner. Second, even if ethically unobjectionable, it is doubtful if Wiredu's non-party system stands a better chance of getting typical African decision-making bodies closer to consensus and its desired outcomes of peace and stability than its multi-party competitor. For this reason that, unless there are demographically no presentational, the decision making bodies of non-party systems in typical African countries will end up being dominated by members of the large ethnic groups (ibid., p. 110).

Wiredu's biggest problem might simply be that is too quick to deflate the majoritarian democracy as a framework for pursuing consensus. He does however admits that in countries such as Switzerland and Belgium there are constitutional arrangements that have pointed away enough majoritarianism to attract the designation consensual (Kalumba, 2015 cited in Wiredu, 2012: 1065: 112). Despite the aforesaid problems, Kalambu acknowledges Wiredu's project that is a welcome contribution to African philosophy and therefore he disagrees with Matolino who belittles the contribution of Wiredu's project of recovery to the growth and debates in African political philosophy. Besides, Matolino's discussion of consensual democracy suffers serious distortions (ibid., p. 112)

Matolino (2012) attributes to advocates of consensual democracy the view that problems such as corruption and nepotism, underdevelopment, ethnic wars, poverty, illiteracy, ill-health, etc. are solely to be blamed on majoritarian democracy (Ajei, 2016, p. 457). Wiredu does not regard pursuit of consensus as the panacea for all of Africa's political problems (Kalumba, 2015). His only hope is that pursuit of consensus in the non-party environment will reduce the problem of marginalisation and thereby contribute to the creation of peace and stability. Once again, in the opening sentence of this passage Kalumba makes it clear that Wiredu does not pretend to propose blueprints for his non-party consensual synthesis. Indeed, as we have seen, he exhorts African intellectuals from a multiplicity of disciples to join hands in the process of designing this synthesis (ibid., p. 113).

Equally unfair and for the same reasons, is Emmanuel Eze's complaint that Wiredu fails to articulate new suitable grounds of legitimacy for consensual democracy in today's Africa (Kalumba, 2015). Establishment of new grounding is essential, according to Eze, because consensual democracy's mythological sources of legitimacy (appeals to gods and ancestors) are anachronistic and some of what Wiredu takes to be its rational justifications are controversial. Kalumba (2015) finds among these allegedly controversial justifications Eze mentions the beliefs that ultimately the interests of members of society are the same, although their immediate perceptions of those interests may be different and human beings have the rational ability eventually to cut through their differences to the rock bottom identity of interests. Again, Kalumba states that Wiredu does not deny that new grounding might be necessary for non-party consensual democracy. However, instead of facing the formidable task of articulating these grounds independently , he urges other concerned African scholars to join hands in exploring, among other things, consensual democracy's rationale and conceptual basis (ibid., p. 114).

Eze criticizes Wiredu for defining democracy in terms of its ultimate goal or moment of consensus. While Eze might be right in claiming that the meaning of democracy cannot be exhausted by any one of its moments, Kalambu (2015) contends that his characterizations of democracy fails to distinguish democracy from other decision making frameworks. Any characterization such as Eze's that divorces it from its outcomes fails to distinguish it from alternative decision-making procedures like patriarchies, Oligarchies and meritocracies. (ibid., p. 115)

I am not interested in the critiques, objections and suggestions made by above-mentioned authors. But I am interested in the consensus as a value. I believe that it might bring change such as peace and stability. In support of my view, Kalambu (2015) is a proposing retains overarching the goal of Wiredu's synthesis namely promoting peace and stability by reducing the political marginalisation of minority ethnic groups. In light of aforesaid problems, his proposal rejects the non-party system as a viable pathway to the goal. What he propose instead is a constrained system of multiparty majority democracy designed to empower minority ethnic groups the system is constrained in two ways. First, a federal rather than unitary system of governance . Which elevates each ethnic group to the level of a semi-autonomous entity within a federation by giving it some say regarding many of the important regional issues that affect them immediately (ibid., p . 117)

It is with noting that the federalism is not alien to the African continent (Kalumba, 2015). He states that it is key to the long-term stability and prowess of such pre-colonial African nations as Buganda and Asante. The second limitation on the proposed system is that of having a two-tiered legislative assembly. Whereas membership in the first tier is by delegation from the different ethnic groups, according to each group's preferred procedure. Institutionalisation of the Council of Elders ensures that every ethnic group has an effective voice in all the major national decisions. Additionally, to ensure that each ethnic group has a chance of producing the Chief Executive Officer, He then proposes that the president be elected by and from the members of the Elders. Choosing the President by popular vote is likely to favour candidates from larger ethnic groups and effectively undermine the delicate I desire to achieve (ibid., p. 117). This call has also been taken by various thinkers such as Ajume H. Wingo (2004); Helen Lauer (2012a, 2012) and Kwame Gyeke (1992).

My study focuses its attention on Wiredu's notion of consensus democracy and its *conceptual clarity*. Furthermore, although this concept is drawn from political philosophy it has application to our understanding of Africans.

Chapter 2: An African conception of servant leadership

The aim of this chapter is to provide an African conception of servant leadership. In this chapter, I follow the logic that informs Wiredu's interpretations of an African-inspired model of democracy – a model that he believes is more consistent with the culture(s) and post-colonial situation of Africa and which he names consensus democracy. Wiredu intervenes in the efforts to internationalise the practice of democracy by grounding it on the value of consensus, which he believes offers a robust and more suitable form of democracy for the African situation. I apply the same logic to the idea of servant leadership – an idea that is usually construed through religious (Christian) and secular values dominant in Western culture. In this chapter, I aim to articulate a conception of servant leadership grounded on the value of consensus. As such, I anticipate what we may call a consensus-based conception of servant leadership.

To achieve the purpose of articulating a consensus-based conception of servant leadership, I structure this section as follows. I begin by discussing the idea of servant leadership as conceived in the Western tradition. I do so because this information will be crucial for a comparison with the anticipated African conception of servant leadership. This kind of exposition, I believe, is important insofar as it will lay bare some of the assumptions (be they cultural or moral) that undergird the Western view of servant leadership. Secondly, I proceed to offer a metaphysical and moral exposition of the value of consensus in African philosophy. With regards to the metaphysics, I will demonstrate that the central ideas of balance, order and harmony that tend to be a feature of this system inform a moral commitment to consensus as a central value in African cultures. With regards to morality, I will draw from the discourse on Ubuntu (specifically the philosophical elucidations of Thaddeus Metz) that underscores the value of consensus and demonstrate the value it attaches to social harmony. I will proceed in the third section – on the moral insights regarding the value of consensus – to articulate an African conception of servant leadership. I will conclude the chapter by contrasting the Western and African conceptions of servant leadership.

Before I launch into the discussion of an African conception of leadership, it is important for the reader to appreciate the following points. First, to base a conception of servant leadership on the value of consensus is not the same as implying that the value in itself is self-evidently true or

plausible. Secondly, to offer an African conception of servant leadership is not tantamount to arguing that it is better than the Western conception of it, or any other extant or possible conception of it. This project is decisively interpretative. It seeks merely to contribute an African view of the ideal of servant leadership, that in future could be compared against the Western view and other approaches to leadership in the literature (like approaches involving emotional intelligence). Finally, I am pursuing this expository project for the sake of the implications it might have for school leadership in the context of South Africa.

2.a. The Western context of servant leadership

Servant leadership is grounded on the belief that *service before self* is a powerful moral truism that builds trust between a leader and her followers, and not just a mere slogan. Servant leadership is an approach to leadership that is grounded on moral values such as care and compassion. This approach to leadership is applicable in both the public and private sectors and in religious and secular contexts. The virtue of servant leadership is that it imagines leadership carried out by principled, open and caring individuals, in the context of a society fraught with an apathetic and cynical public that is characterised by scandal and incompetent bureaucracies (Spears, 2002, p. 31).

In the light of the above, we might want to ask 'what is a servant leader?' Drawing directly from Greenleaf's 1970 essay 'The Servant as Leader' we note the following (2007, p. 7):

> *It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being servant. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?*

The above quotation puts emphasis on service dominant characteristic that a servant leader must demonstrate. Such a leader does not rely on status, prestige or position. A servant leader does not derive her authority by insisting on her position. She does, however, have the competence to deal with complex issues emanating from power-relations, privilege and position. Servant leaders do

not shy away from power but tend to emphasise the use of it in a way that serves others (Thakore, 2013).

Some Western scholars that have contributed to this discourse observe that Greenleaf's audience was the general public, rather than academia. As a result, they complain that his account of servant leadership does not clearly define and specify features that characterise or constitute it. The upshot of this is that it is not entirely clear how it differs from other theories of leadership. Furthermore, Greenleaf's account of servant leadership is not extended to explain how it might speak to organisational issues, specifically, how it might account for improved organisational performance (Reinke, 2004, p. 31; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Russell, 2001; Stewart, 2012; Parris & Peachey, 2013; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011; Wong, 2007; Spears, 2002; and Thakore, 2013). In addition, Reinke (2004) argues that Greenleaf does not provide empirical evidence to ground his account of servant leadership. Instead, the reader is left with the theoretically bereft assertion that *a servant leader serves first*. To leave matters with this assertion is to provide an open-ended rhetoric or slogan that is still far from giving us a precise sense of the solution to the question 'what is servant leadership?' (ibid., p. 32).

As a response to this question, some scholars have developed models that specify the nature of leadership embodied in the idea of servant leadership. Alternatively, they have gone on to elaborate the characteristics, attributes and values that account for it. Larry Spears (2002) was the first to build on the concept of servant leadership by incorporating ten characteristics of a servant leader. Spears (ibid.) concluded – through rigorous readings of Greenleaf's work – that these characteristics were central to servant leadership. They include: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (ibid.; Russell & Stone, 2002; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011; Reinke, 2004; Washington, Sutton and Sauser, 2014; Hays, 2008; Hale & Fields, 2007; Thakore, 2013; Joseph & Winston, 2005). Spears (2002, p. 6) claims that the ten characteristics of leadership are 'by no means exhaustive'.

In contrast to Spears, Russell and Stone (2002) observe that if servant leadership is distinct from other leadership forms, then we should be able to observe distinct behaviours and characteristics in such leaders. They observe that subsequent writers on servant leadership have identified

various attributes, which are consistent with Greenleaf's writings and are included in a review of servant leadership. In their research, they revealed twenty distinguishable attributes of a servant leader – however listening, persuasion and stewardship are specifically listed from Spears' (2002) characteristics and incorporated under broader categories (Russell & Stone, 2002).

The twenty attributes are classified into two categories. The first category includes *functional* attributes like vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others and empowerment. However, these functional attributes are repeatedly seen to be influential in the literature, suggesting that these attributes are commonly used within servant leadership (ibid.). The second category includes accompanying attributes like communication, credibility, stewardship, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching and delegation. Russell and Stone (ibid.) mention that the accompanying attributes are complementary in nature and not secondary. These are the attributes that Russell and Stone (ibid.) use to identify a servant leader and they are separated into two further categories to indicate that they are different yet interrelated. For instance, listening and trust can fall under the 'vision' category.

The attributes developed by Russell and Stone (ibid.) are not just considered to be interrelated concepts but serve as the model for servant leadership. However, Van Dierendonck contends that the problem with this model is that it is not clear why specific attributes are allocated to the functional rather than accompanying category, or vice versa (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011). I don't agree with this argument, however. I think Russell and Stone's model of servant leadership separates the two attributes because a leader is not only identifiable through her actions. For instance, the functional attributes may refer to the leader's behaviour and the corresponding effect that she has on the group, while accompanying attributes refer to the inner or personal qualities that make an effective servant leader.

Russell, Stone and Spears are not the only contributing authors who develop models to define servant theory. There are various other authors who have introduced key characteristics of servant leadership, adding them to the measurement dimensions of Spears or the attributes introduced by Russell and Stone. These include: developing people, sharing leadership, displaying authenticity, valuing people, providing leadership, and building community (Laub,

1999); serving and developing others, consulting with and involving others, possessing humility and selflessness, modelling integrity and authenticity, inspiring and influencing others (Wong & Davey, 2007); altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, organisational stewardship and wisdom (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2005); empowering and helping subordinates to grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, emotional healing, conceptual skills, creating value for the community and behaving ethically (Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008); transforming influence, voluntary subordination, possessing an authentic self, transcendental spirituality, building covenantal relationships, and responsibility (Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora, 2008); empowerment, humility, standing back, authenticity, forgiveness, courage, accountability, and stewardship (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011); and empowerment, trust, humility, *agape*, love, and vision (Dennis & Bocarnea 2005). All of these models encompass a minimum of five to ten characteristics and are based on the interrelatedness of the concepts they regard as models.

Synthesising these ideas, Van Dierendonck (2011) analysed and combined all the conceptual models gained from empirical research and measurements of servant leadership into six key characteristics. He believes his model provides a comprehensive overview of servant leadership behaviour. His six characteristics are: empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. He argues that these six characteristics form an operationalised definition of servant leadership drawn from different conceptual models described in the literature (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011, pp. 1232-1234). Although Van Dierendonck considers his model to be effective for servant leaders, it does not provide a specific and central value or virtue that could form the basis of all six features. It would be interesting if one could articulate a monistic theory of servant leadership that specified a ground value that explains servant leadership, or which explains what the virtue that accounts for a life of leading through serving is. Below, I attempt to offer such a monistic interpretation of the Western view of servant leadership.

Servant leadership views in the West place emphasis on: (1) a life of service; and (2) serving first. They make the fundamental motivation for leadership a desire to serve (Russell & Stone, 2002, p. 149). In my view, one useful way to interpret servant leadership as a monistic theory is to ground it on the overarching value of *care*. Of the candidate attributes for servant leadership

mentioned above, I will focus on those developed by Russell and Stone and suggest that they be reduced to the value of care. This is because they focus on the acts of service of servant leaders. We can say that a servant leader, from the Western perspective, is an individual who is essentially caring, because a major function of care is to be of service to others. To expand on this notion of care I will utilise Carol Gilligan's notion of the 'ethic of care'. This notion is divided into four stages, namely: 'moral injury', 'a triptych of development', 'the love laws', and 'reframing the conversation about differences'.

To begin my discussion, I will first give a brief definition of care. According to Tronto (2001) care is described as a species of activity essential to humanity. Tronto suggests that how people care for one another is one of the features that make people human. I understand this notion to mean that we become human when we give or show care for others because care can foster, magnify and promote the dignity of others (Miller, 2017). Secondly, care is a practice, not a set of principles or rules. The concept of care also entails a disposition of concern for others. The standard may vary - the understanding of what constitutes care depends upon one's way of life, and the set of values and conditions of the people engaged in the caring practice (Tronto, 2001). When we consider this definition, we can conclude that care has a dual set of meanings: first, it refers to a mental disposition of concern, and secondly, it means the actual practices that we engage in because of these concerns (ibid.). For instance, a leader's care involves both being sympathetic (showing concern) and the concrete practices involved in e.g. listening to others.

Caring is a process that occurs in different institutions and settings (ibid.). The demonstration of care is found in various places such as in the household, in services rendered and goods sold in the market, in bureaucratic organisations and in general, contemporary life. I am focused on care as it is enacted by leaders in school organisations, however. This will be discussed directly in the next chapter. For now, I turn my attention to the four ethics of care suggested by Carol Gilligan.

Gilligan (2014) defines the ethic of care as an ethic grounded in human voices and relationships – one that acknowledges the importance for everyone who has a voice to be listened to attentively and be heard with respect. She further notes that an ethic of care directs human attention to the need for openness in relationships by highlighting the importance of paying attention, listening, and answering. In the absence of care, she points out the costs of losing

connection with oneself or with others (ibid., p. 90). This argument could be seen as logically inductive – psychological rather than deductive. To make sense of Gilligan's ethic of care, she discusses four notions. The first is 'moral injury'. Gilligan explains the ethic of care through the lens of healing, drawing on the idea of the 'communalisation of the trauma'. In this scenario, care is shown to be based on listening to others. The individual tells a story to someone who is listening, and that person should be able to retell the story accurately to others in the same community. This entails that before an individual analyse, classify, think, or provide any solution to a problem being conveyed to them, they listen first (ibid.).

The concept of moral injury put emphasis on listening before providing solutions to problems. Applying moral injury as a value of servant leadership means that a servant leader should demonstrate acts of care through listening to her followers first. Nonetheless, to listen to others or to share with others we need to learn to trust each other. I believe that trust is built among and within individuals. Russell and Stone (2002) mention that the only direct means of developing a deep connection to others is through our basic trustworthiness, and to do so, we must earn their trust. In a similar vein Gilligan (2014) states that listening creates trust. This practice is essential to our ability to truly hear different voices – so that a voice not fitting what is expected from prevailing categories can still be heard and interpreted (ibid. 91). The value of both trust and listening are constantly mentioned and interchangeably used. Listening and trust also appear on Russell and Stone's models – listening as an accompanying attribute and trust as a functional ones. Both terms are interconnected and interdependent. To make sense of Gilligan's notion of moral injury, I suggest that we look at Russell and Stone's model and reduce it to the value of care.

The value of care should not be gender specific but should be applied both to male and female servant leaders. Gilligan (2014) notes that ethic-of-care conversations are not based on the individual or on a specific gender but include conversations held between both genders. This notion then suggests reconsidering the role of listening in servant leadership, as a shift from moral truth or cultural relativism requires listening to others and being listen to.

Gilligan (2014) observes that the only way to move the discussion beyond the old arguments of moral truth versus cultural relativism is to begin by paying attention to listening. Listening, she

states, creates trust rather than destroying it. For Gilligan, we can see the concepts of moral injury and the ethic of care as providing guidance in preventing us from the betrayal of what is right. This then leads to the recognition that within culture there are voices that resist culture, which might be hidden or hushed – pushed to the margins. These voices hold the power to transform conversation (ibid.). For example, patriarchy is an order of domination elevating men above women. It is given moral and religious sanction by our culture, where honour and goodness are bestowed in exchange for the sacrifice of love and voice (ibid.). This implies that men are more powerful than women are; their voices are more dominant. Patriarchy seems to implant itself into the psyche by attaching itself to gender, so that becoming a man or woman – an authentic man or woman – means internalising its binary division, but psychology resists this belief (ibid.). This used to be actively seen in post-colonial African cultures where women were not allowed to share their voices. Only men were allowed to have a conversation among themselves and make decisions on behalf of the their families or in parliament, an institution which used to be dominated by males rather than females. This understanding is also relevant, as we will see, to Gilligan's third stage of 'reframing the conversation about differences'.

To resolve the issue of male dominated bureaucrats, Gilligan (ibid.) states that we need feminism guided by an ethic of care. This would be, she argues, the most radical liberation movement in human history. We need to be released from gender binaries and hierarchies. Feminism is not a women's issue or a battle between men and women but rather a movement to free democracy from patriarchy (ibid.). This implies that servant leadership should not be male dominated. Both males and females should be involved in managerial positions as representatives and leaders of organisations. It implies that caring should not only be applicable to domestic duty or associated with women's characters. For instance, servant leaders (females or males) participating in an organisational meeting should be allowed an equal opportunity to express or share their views without being judged based on their gender. Consensus should be reached without excluding women but rather by allowing them to take part in decision making and listening to them. This is because listening is a critical way that servant leaders demonstrate respect and appreciation of others. Listening is also a critical aspect of delegating and empowering others (Russell & Stone, 2002). Gilligan (ibid.) encourages a full range of voices within and around people to be heard by our society becoming a society of listeners. This, to me, suggests that active listening requires

being attentive, asking open-ended questions, asking probing questioning, requesting clarification and paraphrasing. She concludes that rather than sympathising with others, we would do better by going to the other to learn about their situation from them (ibid., p. 104).

Offering care is not only sympathising with others but learning from them. It is also important to understand that care is reciprocal in leadership and among people in organisations. Although listening and trust are emphasised in moral injury, leaders need to have display integrity and honesty toward their followers. Integrity and honesty can be associated with Gilligan's second notion of the 'triptych of development'. Russell and Stone (2002) cite honesty and integrity as a fundamental part of good leadership. I observe these two concepts to be synonymously related to one other, but Russell and Stone relate honesty with truthfulness and integrity with adherence to a general moral code (ibid., p. 4). Put differently, organisations need servant leaders who demonstrate integrity through their actions, and leaders who have the courage to be honest in challenging situations, even when honesty is self-damaging (ibid.). To lead with honesty and integrity also requires a leader to embody compassionate love – to lead with love. Compassionate love has been viewed as a cornerstone of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2011). It helps us to understand Greenleaf's emphasis on serving others and being a selfless leader. A servant leader with compassionate love has an attitude toward others that is focused on caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the leader's followers, particularly when the followers are observed to be suffering or in need (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015, p. 21).

The need for love is also echoed by Winston (2002), who claims that love causes a leader to consider kind deeds toward others. Winston (ibid.) provides a distinction between good deeds (to benefit the follower) and doing good to be seen to be good to others, which is prevalent in other leadership styles (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015, p. 21). I understand compassionate love to be about doing good with a clear motivation of concern for one's followers, performing acts of kindness that are intended to benefit the followers and not the leader. This can be associated with Gilligan's third stage – the 'love law'. Based on the above, I believe that Gilligan's stages indicate that servant leaders in the West are understood to be responsive, relational beings, born with a voice and a desire to live in relationships. They indicate that servant leaders have within themselves a love for citizenship in a democratic society. The ethic of care involves both rational

explications of needs and the sympathetic appreciation of emotions. It requires not an abstraction from the concrete case to universal principles, but an explication of the full story. We can also conclude from the above that servant leadership theory in the Western tradition is based on the value of care. This care is imagined in an individualistic context though. Its emphasis is on the nuclear family, and individual's needs, interests and desires. Going beyond this, I want to now offer an interpretation of servant leadership from an African perspective by singling out the value of consensus.

2.b. The value of consensus

According to Motsamai Molefe (Imafidon & Bawaji, 2013), moral theories are generally grounded on some metaphysical claims. This is typically the case in the African moral tradition. For instance, Wiredu discusses consensus democracy because he believes that the value of consensus gives an interesting view of democracy. This value is dominant in African traditional cultures. It informs us how Africans observe the world metaphysically.

The value of consensus is informed by an African metaphysical system. The claim is that reality is best understood in terms of social relations. To elaborate on this view, Molefe (ibid., p. 94) mentions that we need to understand that African metaphysical systems are grounded on three features, namely: metaphysical monism, holism, and vitality. For the purposes of this section, I will only focus on the idea of holism because I believe it offers a metaphysical grounding for the value of consensus.

Typically, African scholars construe reality in holistic rather than analytics terms (Imafidon & Bawaji, 2013). 'Holism' is the view that things-in-the-world should be understood in terms of their interconnectedness and interdependence. On this view, the defining essence of existence just is being caught up in relationships. This view is well captured this way (Verhoef & Michel, 1997, p. 395) –

> *Everything – God, ancestors, human, animals, plants and inanimate objects is connected, interdependent and interrelated.*

For another, consider Bénézet Bujo's (2005, p. 424) assertion that –

> *Africans are traditionally characterized by a holistic* type of thinking and feeling. For them, there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular; they regard themselves in close relationship with the entire cosmos.

According to Bujo, Africans typically view the world through holistic lenses. They do not emphasise things as they stand in themselves, apart from each other. Rather, they seek to understand how things hold and function together. This holistic view is best captured in terms of the analogy of a hierarchy. Laurenti Magesa (1997, p. 39) comments in this fashion –

> *The conception of African religion is that the universe is a composite of divide, spirit, human, animate and inanimate elements, hierarchically perceived but directly related and always interacting with one another.*

The whole existence of things is understood in terms of interconnectedness. This conception of reality has direct implications for why harmony – which is a crucial moral feature of African moral thought – tends to stand out in African philosophy. Reality is generally conceived in terms of connectedness and the purpose of morality 'demands a point of view best described as one of beingness-with-others' (Menkiti, 2004, p. 324; see also, Louw, 2004). This is not surprising given the common view that African moral thought defines its essence in terms of *relationality* (see, Mbiti, 1969; Metz, 2012; Horsthemke, 2018). This relationality in the discourse of Ubuntu is captured in terms of social harmony. Harmony, as an account for Ubuntu, posits certain relationships as constitutive of the good – relationships that a moral agent should set out to promote (Tutu, 1995). What is right connects the people together whereas what is wrong separates them (Metz, 2007). Below, I rely on one interpretation of Ubuntu as a embodiment of a moral view to give concreteness to the ideal of consensus.

According to Desmond Tutu (1999) and Thaddeus Metz (2007) the moral idea of ubuntu can be reduced to the value of social harmony, which I take (stipulate to the same as that of consensus). the idea of shared identity essentially involves a common sense of self, which includes the following elements: first, an individual considers herself as being part of a group – a reciprocal sense of 'we'. Secondly, the group shares certain aspirations, ideals and goals – a common sense of destiny. Finally, it involves a joint effort to pursue common goals or a common destiny. The idea of goodwill involved refers to certain caring or supportive relationships (Metz, 2013). One has a relationship of goodwill insofar as one wishes others well (conation); believing that others

are worth helping (cognition); aiming to help other people (intention); helping others (volition); acting for the sake of others (motivation) and feeling good about the knowledge that others have benefited and sympathise upon learning about others harmful situations (Metz, 2007, p. 335).

The social relationships of identity and goodwill (solidarity), Metz informs us, are logically distinct social relationships. That is, one can have one without another. Metz (2007, p. 336) further informs us that relationships of solidarity are more valuable than ones of shared identity. Metz informs us that social harmony, as the defining essence of ubuntu, is constituted by combining the two relationships. To make this conception of social harmony captured in terms of shared identity and solidarity concrete, Metz (2007, p. 336–337) understands these two relationships to be the same as friendship or love. A person that has Ubuntu is one that is characteristically friendly insofar as one shares herself with others and cares for those with whom she shares herself. In other words, a person with Ubuntu always builds communities (shared identity) and promotes the well-being of those communities by being supportive and caring.

Considering the above, we come to the view that consensus in the moral discourse ubuntu is reducible to being friendly or loving. As instantiated in Ubuntu, consensus amounts to the relationships of shared identity and solidarity. To seek consensus requires that one build a community and simultaneously behave in ways that support that community by improving the quality of the lives of those within the community for their own sakes. In the light of this rendition of consensus, it is urgent to inquire how it might explain servant leadership.

2.c. Consensus and Servant Leadership

The major difference between the standard Western ethic and the standard African ethic concerns what Metz (2013) calls ‘identity’. Community, as an ideal in the African tradition, is the combination of identity and solidarity; it would be fair to think of solidarity as care. Community includes everything that care ethicists prize, it also includes relationships that they typically do not prize (ibid.). This means that African moralists are mainly value caring for others’ quality of life and sharing a way of life with others. Identifying with others or sharing a

form of life with them involves forms of cognition, emotion, conation, intention, volition and motivation that differ from those inherent to caring relationships (ibid.).

My analysis of harmony by Metz (2007) (or rather than 'harmony', the value of Afro-communitarianism) suggests that a servant leader in an African perspective is primarily a leader who cares for others and promotes the communal sharing of trust. To analyse this further, I first refer to the idea of a caring leader. Waghid (2014) states that the idea of humanness is evident in the care displayed by African people – who are encouraged to exercise care towards each other especially to those who are weak and underprivileged. Ubuntu is seen among African people as a concept that refers to life, with an emphasises upon human interest and values; Ubuntu encompasses modes of living characterised by empathy and deliberation and being compassionate toward human beings (ibid.). My interest in Ubuntu-as-caring is focused on its emphasis on being considerate and attentive to people and not only being sympathetic towards them. Being considerate towards others does not simply mean understanding the emotions of different individuals, but instead entails responding to the individual by evoking her capabilities to do something about modifying her vulnerable condition. This view emanates from Waghid, who perceives caring not just as an empathetic response towards another but as the ability of one awakening the potential of another to modify her vulnerable condition by becoming conscious of her situation, becoming open to constructive criticism, or being more receptive to taking risks (Waghid, 2014, p. 16).

Tronto (2001) posits that a leader who acquires the virtue of caring (rather than mere affection) can nurture in others the capacity to reach their own justifiable conclusions. Leaders will be held accountable by and to others for those conclusions. Caring therefore involves evoking the ability to evaluate or modify and reject one's practical judgements. To me this means that caring is not limited to a demonstration of empathy but, rather, encompasses an authentic self-reflection and guidance towards a greater understanding, which leads to self-accountability. The practice of caring through Ubuntu can be illustrated as follows. In an African culture, building relationships with others is a hallmark of good leadership in general, but concerning Ubuntu, it is an absolute necessity (Ncube, 2010). When leaders build relationships, they also build trust, thereby fostering collaboration and reciprocity. This entails that by accepting our interconnectedness, servant leaders operating from principles of Ubuntu will have the desire to empower others.

Empowering others entails strengthening them, allowing them to act on their own initiative and believe in themselves (ibid., p. 80). This, then, speaks to the concept of interconnectedness, interdependency and empowerment. Caring does not simply mean doing something for others out of affection. Rather, caring through Ubuntu, is about developing one's capacity (or that of an organisation) by fostering innovation and obtaining the best for everyone – it is about the development of human potential. Everyone grows from experience. I understand Ncube to be saying that Ubuntu-as-caring empowers leaders to act and nurture their growth and creativity through mentoring and building relationships. Ubuntu, then, recognises the contribution of others and empowers them (ibid.).

In essence, Ubuntu-as-caring is not only aimed at encouraging others to make appropriate decisions – whether intellectual or moral – but about evoking in others the capacity to re-educate themselves, develop vision, and return care to others. This entails that care does not merely involve cultivating our affection towards others but, rather, encouraging people to develop the capacities of empowerment, evaluation and modification (Waghid, 2014). I shall now return to the second view – that of Ubuntu-as-community-sharing.

According to Waghid (2014, p. 63), an African form of community is one of sharing, which encompasses two concepts. First, community sharing is regarded as a moral good, and is an obligation that people in communities have towards each other. This idea of communal sharing is supported by Gyekye who posits that a human being cannot develop and achieve her potential without the concrete act of relating to another individual person (Waghid, 2014 citing Gyekye, 2000, p. 326). This to me entails that the individual does not have priority over the group or vice versa but, rather that the individual cannot live in isolation from other people – she is oriented toward others and must therefore have a relationship with them to live properly (ibid.). Therefore, in an African community an individual is bound by social relations with the group and the group in turn expresses its attentiveness to the values of the individual so that the individual and the group are attuned to one another through social commitments and duties of self-attention. Waghid (ibid.) mentions that this idea of communal sharing is not the narrow view that a sense of community takes precedence over the realities of the individual's life – focusing on the community of people rather than their autonomy (Waghid, 2014 citing Menkiti, 1984, p. 71). He points out that if we prioritise groups over individual autonomy and we refer to this as

‘communal sharing’ then the group’s aspirations will be in conflict with the individual’s (Waghid, 2014). Therefore, he concurs with Gyekye that communal sharing implies an appreciation of and commitment to both the community and the individual who is constitutive of it, without bringing the individual and her community into conflict, violence or hostility (ibid.).

Secondly,Ubuntu can be said to take the essence of human being-ness or existence as relational. One reveals this relational essence by embedding oneself in community, developing humane relations and demonstrating certain virtues. That is, on this relational essence you as a human are bound up with me and with other humans in a deep sense. Moreover , a person with Ubuntu can be understood as affirming her humanity of others, on the one hand and on the other hand would be expected to say things like: ‘ I am what I am because of who we all are’ or ‘ we all are, therefore I am’ or ‘I am a human because of your humanity’ (Eiytiebo, 2017, p-318).

If an individual has this deep sense, then she established humane relational with others when she maintains the communal bind, and she maintains such communal binds because she observes one’s humanity as bound together with the humanity of others. This for Thaddues Metz provides us with morality one of the principles of Ubuntu, which accordingly aims to produce harmony and reduce disagreement, and develops community (Metz 2007, p-334)

This idea of a communal bind or of being communally bounded states clearly why Ubuntu is not perceived as an individualistic (Western) philosophy, but rather a communalistic (African) philosophy. The idea of Ubuntu community is not just about the collection of individuals in some social spaces. Neither is it the idea of aggregate of people that live lives that impact on one another. Rather, the idea of Ubuntu community is deeper. I understand Ubuntu community as a community that takes individuals to be deeply connected or inseparably linked. It is a community of deeply shared life in virtue of the bounded humanity of individuals. Based on view of community, I believe one could be seen to establish humane relations with others when one maintains the communal bind that exists between her and others. Such a person maintains the communal bind with others when she deeply cares and shares with others. This introduces are two values of Ubuntu: the values of sharing and caring (Etiyiebo, 2017).

What does it mean to say a person cares and shares with and for others or that a person has a shared humanity and concern with or for others? According to Etiyiebo (2017) it simply says: that one does a number of things with and for others. This includes supporting others in what they do, participating in their projects, considering their projects as one's projects and so on. This is often expressed as " your pain is my pain', my wealth is your wealth and your salvation is my salvation". If your pain is my pain, my wealth your wealth, and my salvation your salvation, it means that I am more than just care about you. It means that I deeply care about you. It means that I take your problem as mine. It means that I take your success as part of my success. In my endeavours, I share them along with you. In the efforts I expand to achieve success or salvation, I bring you along or save you as well. I do not leave you behind and you do not leave me behind. This is also beautifully captured in the Urhobo proverb "if you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together". The key idea is that if I want to succeed in life you have to be part of my life (Etiyiebo, 2017, p. 319).

I have just described what is called a consensus-based conception of leadership (a consensual-based leadership approach). A consensus-based conception of servant leadership in Africa has two components. It fosters a sense of togetherness; it takes all human beings to belong to a single community that we are one people of a one world. Furthermore, on the other, it fosters solidarity – creating enabling conditions for people to lead quality lives. What is important about this is that the function of a leader is essentially related to facilitating particular kinds of relationships. A consensus-based leader is one who facilitates those kinds of relationships. Therefore, the leader's interests lie in creating relations implicitly directed toward education.

Based on the consensus-based conception of servant leadership and the value of Ubuntu, one can draw differences and similarities between the consensus-based conception of servant leadership and the ethic of care. I will show the reader both the similarities and differences of these care theories. There are two major respects in which the theories of the ethic of care and the Afro-communitarian ethic are similar. One deals with the content of right action and good character – both approaches often prescribe the same sorts of being and doing. The other concern moral epistemology – the way an agent should come to a decision about how to be or what to do (Metz, 2013, p. 82).

First, the care ethic and African ethic ground relational accounts of right action. Permissible acts for both are a function of participating in certain kinds of desirable relationships – either caring or communal. The critical explanation of why a certain action is wrong or why one has a moral reason to avoid performing a particular act involves one's failure to relate (Metz, 2013). This is a different evaluative basis than that of utilitarianism, in which morality is a function of the individual's capacity for pleasure and pain; or from Kantianism in which it is matter of the individual's capacity for autonomy (ibid.). Of course, utilitarianism and Kantianism commend certain actions, as they require agents to treat others in a certain way. This is the point of view that treating others well is a function of responding to something good that is intrinsic to an individual's pleasure or autonomy (ibid.). In contrast, typical adherents of the care- and African ethic believe relationships between people to be what is essentially good and hence advocate for these relationships to be sustained, promoted and respected (ibid., p. 82).

Secondly, when we speak about good character or the ethical self, both of these (care and African) theories think of it in relational terms. In African tradition, morality is routinely linked up with maxims: 'A person is person through others' or 'I am because we are' (Letseka, 2012; Ruel, 2011; Metz, 2013), which means that one lives a truly human life only insofar as one is in relationships with others (Metz, 2013). The proverb 'I am because we are' speaks to the idea of social interdependence.

Thirdly, both ethical approaches tend to model moral norms on family relationships or naturally ideal ones. The ethic of care is often grounded on desirable forms of communication between mothers and children, or, generally, between women and the families they nurture. In addition, African ethicists mostly conceive of community in terms of the way members of a family do or should relate to one another (ibid.).

Fourthly, African ethics and the ethic of care are interpreted as forms of partialism, differing from the imperialism of standard forms of utilitarianism and Kantianism. Phrases such as 'family first' and 'charity begins at hom' are commonly encountered in African ethical thought. In the African tradition, one's own existing relationships have priority relative to others' relationships and relationships that one could but does not yet have. Similar remarks, of course, apply to the

standard from of the ethic of care: actual caring relationships of which one is a part should be one's foremost concern as a moral agent (ibid., p. 83).

Fifthly, there is substantial overlap between the nature of a caring relationship and a communal one as construed in the African tradition. Essential to both are other-regarding orientations such as sympathy, compassion and benevolence (ideally present for altruistic motives). For Letseka, these orientations are regarded as values for solidarity (Letseka, 2012).

In light of the above, literature on Western ethics, when depicting moral theories as being relational, do not focus on a sense of community. The theories are imagined from a space in which community does not exist. In Afro-communitarian ethics, one cannot imagine the welfare of a community separated from the self (by community, I mean people who share one's way of life). People need to be trusted; people must understand themselves through a common sense of identity – a sense that we are one. This shared sense of identity, at a metaphysical level, is what we could call 'humanity'.

A consensus-based conception of servant leadership in an African context is a new leadership approach which is interested in nurturing communities and making sure that those living within a community are well taken care of. The Western concept seems to promote taking care of people but forgets that people live together in a community. With this in mind, I promote the notion of harmony enacted through South Africa's post-apartheid policies, mindful that South African has emerged from political era marked by discrimination, race segregation, human rights abuse, violence, exclusion and power.

I have utilised the value of consensus and discovered a new way that we can look at servant leadership from an African perspective. This leadership approach is a consensus-based conception of servant leadership. This concept was contrasted with the ethic of care (servant leadership in the West) to show differences in practices. In the West, servant leadership is, admittedly, based on forming a care relationships. But in Africa, it is contextualised in both communal relationships and a sharing community. In the next chapter, I will show how I re-imagine school polices in the light of a consensual-based leadership approach.

Chapter 3: Consensus-based leadership in South African schools

In this chapter, I will offer an application of the consensus-based conception of servant leadership through evaluating its plausibility in the South African school context. Three post-apartheid educational policies will be utilised, namely: the Batho Pele policy (1997); the Standard of Principalship (1996); and the Code of Professional Ethics (2000), introduced by the teacher's council, SACE (South Africa Council of Education). I want to reimagine how these apartheid policies will affect the idea of a consensus-based approach in the context of school education. The purpose of utilising these polices is to encourage school teachers and school principals to apply the principal of leadership I advocate in their daily work experiences, in order to run the school organisations more effectively and efficiently.

To achieve the purpose of applying a consensus-based conception of servant leadership, I structure this chapter as follows. I begin by giving a brief definition of each policy and its purpose. I do so because each policy has a distinct purpose, despite sharing the goal of communal relationships. I also believe that this kind of exposition will show that a consensus-based conception of servant leadership can be found in South African post-apartheid educational policies. Secondly, based on a consensus-based interpretation of the post-apartheid educational policies I want to see how this way of thinking about servanthood will affect school leadership. Hereafter, I will place sharing and caring under the term of kindness.

3.a. Educational policies in post-apartheid South Africa

The South African Department of Education believes that it is important to establish a direct and agreed upon understanding of what the South African education system requires of those who are in school leadership positions, or who are entrusted with the management of schools (Department of Education, 2005, p. 8). Three policies are utilised in this study: the Batho Pele policy, the Standard of Principalship; and the Code of Ethics. The reader should note that although I refer to the Batho Pele principles (policy) as an educational policy, it is a national legislative framework adopted and applied by all governmental and private organisations, including both public and private schools.

The Batho Pele policy is a public policy that was introduced by the government of South Africa to offer effective and efficient services to the citizens. This policy was introduced as a new approach to service delivery aimed at encouraging those working in government organisations to serve the needs of the citizen first (hence the slogan 'batho pele' which means 'putting people first' (Nzimakwe & Mpehle, 2012, p. 281). The policy further stipulates that public servants should be service orientated, responsible, committed to continuous improved service delivery, and in possession of a sense of duty (ibid., p. 279). To me, this entails that government employees should offer quality service to the citizens, that service can be achieved when public servants have a sense of belonging, and that government employees should appreciate those being served (ibid.).

The Batho Pele policy is informed by eight principles, namely: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress, and value for money (ibid., p. 282). This policy embodies an attitude, or a set of values, that shapes the behaviour of the public service through its officials. Therefore, school principals and school teachers are expected to practise these principles in their daily working environments by: providing regular consultation with customers (students, parents and the community); providing a service standard understood by customers; and by ensuring a high level of courtesy – demonstrating a high quality of behaviour and attitude. Moreover, principals and teachers, as government employees, are expected to provide more and better information about services, increase openness and transparency about services, provide a remedy for their failures and mistakes, increase access to services, and give the best possible value for money (ibid., p. 283). I believe that by incorporating these principles in schools, school heads, teachers, parents and learners can build trust among one another. Doing so can help the school and staff members become open about all of their decisions and actions, and can provide clear and coherent information to those involved (ibid.). I also believe that these principles can be reconceptualised as characteristics of a consensus-based conception of servant leadership. I articulate these principles as constituting a communitarian morality of friendship.

To support the above articulation, Nzimakwe and Mpehle (2012) state that when public servants work hard to please clients and serve their interests first, a good rapport will be developed which lays the foundation for trust. This means that public servants should concentrate on a customer-

focused organisation, based on the following principles outlined by Nzimakwe and Mpehle (ibid., p. 284): listening to customers, providing one's full attention to them, providing good training on services rendered, and being 'a step ahead'. With regards to the Batho Pele policy, I suggest that we reimagine the policy as a set of principles encouraging identity and solidarity. These principals encourage government associates (i.e. school teachers and principals) to engage in mutual aid. They should be positively orientated toward each other (Metz, 2013), and toward learners, teachers, parents, community members and districts officials. Promoting such actions will lead to honesty, harmony and compassion for each other by honouring communal relationships which form part of consensus-based leadership.

The South African Standard for Principalship fully defines the role of school principals – the key aspects of professionalism, image, and the competencies required to be a principal. This policy serves to address professional leadership and management's developmental needs (Department of Education, 2005, p. 8). I understand this policy to expect of school principals that they work with the school management team, school governing body, learner representative councils and the broader community by effectively managing, supporting and promoting the highest quality of teaching. The purpose of this is to enable learners to achieve success for their own good, the good of their communities and the country as a whole (ibid.). Although this policy focuses primarily on the role of principals, as the leading professionals in schools, it also puts emphasis on shared leadership. Simultaneously, it provides recognition and gives praise to principals who do not act in isolation but lead their schools professionally, in ways founded on and embracing the principles of Batho Pele and Ubuntu (ibid.). This policy, to me, emphasises the distribution of duties between school heads and teachers. It also influences team interactions related to providing direction, support and motivation. Based on these factors, I interpret the policy to encourage a consensus-based leadership approach.

The Code of Professional Ethics is complementary to the Standard of Principalship. It governs teachers who is registered or provisionally registered with the South African Council for Educators (South African Council of Educators, 1997). I believe that this code of ethics assists teachers to understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in their school communities. Drawing on Metz (2013), we can say that these ethics are underpinned by the idea that an act is wrong when it fails to support a valuable community. The Code of

Professional Ethics states that educators should acknowledge their calling as professionals by educating and training learners in the country. They should acknowledge the attitude, commitment, self-discipline, ideals, training and conduct of the teaching profession, and determine the quality of education. Furthermore, they should acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights as stipulated in the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996). They must exercise authority with compassion by avoiding any form of humiliation, refrain from any form of physical or psychological abuse that promotes gender inequality, and refrain from any sexual harassment of learners (South African Council of Educators, 1997). This implies that teachers are not conceived only as teachers but also as playing a co-parental role. In this role, they form social relationships with learners and provide guidance about academic issues or life in general. Such a role, I argue, can be identified with the role of a consensus-based leader.

With regards to the above code, the reader should note that this policy does not relate to teachers only, but applies also to school principals. School principals are also teachers, even though their role differs from that of an ordinary teacher in the school context. Schools heads are focused on leading and managing the school while teachers are focused on teaching and learning. On another side the Code of Professional Ethics does not focus on the behaviour of educators only but includes all the relationships of both the teacher and the school stakeholders to one another and to the learners, described in the language of conduct (ibid.). The conduct applies to relationships between the educator and the learners; the educator and parents; the educator and her colleagues; the educator and her employer and the educator and the council – as well as the educator's general professionalism (ibid.). Based on this, it can be concluded that the educator has to serve all of the stakeholders in the school system as a consensus-based servant leaders. The interests of the students should be the first priority but all interests must ultimately be served. The educator is expected to incorporate both moral and ethical principles in consensus-based servant leadership. With this in mind, I now turn towards a consensus-based interpretation of educational policy and how school heads and school teachers are expected to apply in their daily work environment.

3.b School heads and school teachers as servant leaders

Kindness, as a value, is important for human and social relationships. Kindness is associated with virtues such as benevolence, generosity, compassion and hospitality. I believe all these virtues to be instantiated by the values of caring and sharing. Because referring to someone as kind, or to speak of them as benevolent, hospitable, generous or compassionate, is to perceive them caring and sharing or to say they caring and do share. Since I consider kindness to be a core value in school leadership, an approach to leading with morals and values that helps us best realize this value has to be pursued. I want to suggest that consensus based approach can shine its light on the school leadership and teaching of the values of caring and sharing in schools. In chapter two of ubuntu's value of caring and sharing, I took the values of caring and sharing to understand the virtues of compassion and generosity. This is so because a generous and compassionate school leader cares and shares what they have, and participates in the problems and successes of others.

Like kindness, the value of sociability is also important for human and social relationships. To be friendly or to be respectful to or of others is to treat people as important members of society, rather than mere means towards our individual ends. If I am a respectful school head or teacher of other members in the school community or I act in ways that enhance social cohesion and in that case I am for example, not just friendly towards you, but also respect you (even though I may disagree with you about certain things).

Ubuntu foster the core value of philosophical thinking in the context of educators engaging with some stimuli, as a community of enquirers, and that this is underpinned by the Ubuntu values of a shared humanity and concern. However, it must be pointed out that in their engagement with the stimuli, school heads and school teachers in consensus based approach communities are not just required to think critically, creatively, collaboratively and imaginatively, but are also expected to exhibit attitudes and values such as those of caring and sharing, to be friendly and respectful towards others.

In Ubuntu communities, in the learner's sense of caring and sharing, friendliness and respect for others comes from the recognition that the other child in the group are like them, that their humanity is bound or inextricably linked together. For instance, learners should listen to each

other when making contributing in school project because this indicates respect for other opinion and demonstrates a sense of caring and sharing. For this reason, our humanity is bound or inextricably linked together is emphasised to learner's by way of the idea that everyone is part of their school family. This explains why, in ubuntu school communities, everyone is a mother or father, brother or sister, aunt or uncle. So, although learners are not yet in a position to fully affirm their own humanity and that of others, they do see the other as a relative and as part of their humanity. And insofar as they see this, they do understand to an extent that their humanity is bound or inextricably linked together with the humanity of others.

Consensus based approach (Ubuntu), and the values that emerge from it, can assists learner's to develop the value of kindness and sociality because these values cannot be taught directly or exposed to the moral content of these values or by way of description or by defining them (which is often rote-like), but by being part of a school community of enquirers or embedded beings where they are exposed to the practice of sharing and caring, pursuing with others deliberative excellence. In this way consensus based approach through pedagogical teaching can be said to be of the indirect teaching strategy (which does not give complete autonomy to students), namely the "philosophical" approach (Etiyiebo, 2017). Since the pedagogy in consensus based communities is one that aims to develop the value of philosophical thinking, learners should be made to realise that learning is not an individual project or task, but it involves others in the school communities. Since the learner recognise that other embedded humans or beings are an essential part of the joint project of meaning-making and in the development of deliberative excellence, they learn to develop the value of kindness and sociability. That is, because they share with others in the group, care for them (kindness) as well as being friendly towards them and show them respect (sociability), in the process of the pursuit of deliberative excellence, they come to realise the importance of these virtues in human and social relationships. Consequently, they can be encouraged to pursue friendly and respectful deeds and to care for and share with others.

If we promote a consensus base approach community in schools, we will be placing learners in the context of embedded beings, of a community of enquirers, namely an environment which presents their humanity to be bound with that of others. Such an environment will help them to not only care about others and to share with them, both in the school community and the

community at large, but also to be friendly and respectful. If a salient, idea in consensus based approach is that the best way "to go far is to go together" (as captured by the Urhobo proverb), then schools that foster "a community of virtue" along with school activities that help develop philosophical thinking (Farland, 2007, p. 356-363) in children which will help them develop, the core value of kindness and sociability at the same time.

So, take a classroom setting, for instance, where the children sit in a group and gather around the teacher to explore some common stimulus or topic. Since the pedagogy of embedded beings which consensus based approach communities recommends aims to realise the core value of philosophical thinking, the children know that although they have to think individually, namely display and develop critical, creative, and imaginative thinking, they are only able to effectively do this and to move the class activity forward by collaborating with others in the embedded community (Farland, 2007, p. 356-363). In the process of doing this they are likely to realise that they are bound with others in some joint project or tasks, consequently, may begin to appreciate not just the need to care and share with them, but also to be friendly and to show respect to others. They share with others and are friendly to them because they know that these values and attitudes drive progress and the development of deliberative excellence on two fronts: in their individual thinking and in communal meaning-making. As well, they care and are respectful because they realise that being implicated in a joint project with others where their humanity is bound with or inextricably linked to the humanity of others, the other students (participants or enquirers) in the embedded community are not only a constitutive part of them, but an essential part of the joint project of meaning-making.

In sum, I began by explaining the three South African post-apartheid educational policies and placing the virtues of sharing and caring under the umbrella of kindness. I show that in the context of the development of these virtues in consensus based approach. School head and school teachers can manage successful schools which inspires the social value and Ubuntu school communities and respect for others is nurtured.

Conclusion

The main objective of this project was to reinterpret servant leadership through an African perspective. I think this objective has been met. In Chapter 1, I discussion the idea consensus, drawing from Kwasi Wiredu's notion of consensus democracy. By the end of that chapter I had made several observations.

The first was to give a brief definition of democracy. I utilised the most popular definition of democracy – that of Abraham Lincoln – because I believe that his definition relates to the notion of consensus democracy. This puts emphasis on the representation of people in government, or 'government by the people'. I then turned to the Akan conception of human rights, from which Wiredu draws his notion of consensus. Lastly, I focused on his concept of consensus by analysing it. I did so because his idea of consensus democracy best captures the idea of leadership – specifically the right to political participation.

In addition to this, I articulated a conception of servant leadership grounded on the value of consensus. To achieve this purpose, I offered a metaphysical and moral exposition of the value of consensus in African philosophy. With regards to the metaphysics, I demonstrated that the central ideas of balance, order and harmony that tend to be features of this view of reality inform a moral commitment to consensus as a central value in African cultures. With regards to morality, I drew from the discourse on Ubuntu (specifically the philosophical elucidations of Thaddeus Metz) to demonstrate the value of consensus in a paradigm which attaches the highest value to social harmony. Through this evaluation, I anticipated what I call a consensus-based conception of servant leadership: a leadership approach that consists in forming *communal* relationships with others rather than focusing on relationships only, as in Western approaches.

Finally, I evaluated the plausibility of applying a consensus-based conception of servant leadership to the South African school context. Three post-apartheid educational policies (the Batho Pele policy, the Standard of Principalship and the Code of Professional Ethics) were utilised to do so.

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