

Webinar Series

**BEYOND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY:
AFRICAN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVES IN DIALOGUE**

Hosted by

Participatory & Deliberative Democracy Specialist Group (PSA, UK)

in collaboration with

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Nairobi (Kenya)

Background

A growing branch of democratic theory and practice diagnoses that liberal democracy is in crisis. Nevertheless, academics are divided with regards to the roots of, and the potential cure for, this crisis: Should we do our best to ‘rescue’ liberal democracy and its underlying normative and organisational principles, or is it time to search for alternative ways of ‘doing democracy’?

At present, strategies for reinvigorating democracy through participatory and deliberative processes (‘democratic innovations’) are a major subject of debate among western scholars, who focus primarily on the situation of the Global North. Citizen participation in Africa has often been implemented and studied as part of western-led development projects, under the neoliberal rhetoric of good governance (World Bank, 1992). This line of research has mostly sidelined issues of white privilege and structural racism entrenched in western liberal democracies, and also limited engagement with critical race theory. However, a growing number of African political philosophers and political scientists are taking critical stances towards practices of liberal democracy from the perspective of their own cultural and political contexts, and are engaged in the quest for alternative ways of ‘doing democracy’.

Nevertheless, so far there have been few attempts at bringing the perspectives and research endeavours of Western and African political theorists into a dialogue. This situation is surprising, particularly in the light of the ambition of Western deliberative and participatory democracy scholars to expand the scope and reach of democracy towards greater social inclusion and social justice.

Consequently, in this webinar series, we will engage in this much needed dialogue between African and Western democracy scholars, with particular focus on democratic reform which moves beyond the “western gaze”. We will address critical perspectives on contemporary liberal democracy (webinar 1) and viewpoints on alternative ways of ‘doing democracy’ (webinar 2). Subsequently, we shall invite all webinar participants to engage in lively debates and exchanges with a view to enriching the presentations, as well as to strike out in new, innovative directions.

Webinar 1: No “End of History” – Critical Perspectives on Liberal Democracy**DATE: 13 October, 2021****TIME: 5:00-6:30 p.m. (Nairobi); 3-4:30 p.m. (London)****LOCATION: zoom**

Speakers**Kevin Olson**

Professor of Political Science, University of California, Irvine (kevin.olson@uci.edu)

THE WEIGHT OF WORDS: (POST)COLONIAL HISTORIES OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE**Tayo Raymond Ezekiel Egunlusi**Senior Lecturer in Political Philosophy, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria
(treegunlusi@futa.edu.ng, kingadetayo@yahoo.com)**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE REALITY OF AN AFRICAN ALTERNATIVE
TO LIBERAL DEMOCRACY****Emifiena Ezeani**Senior Lecturer in Political Science, Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, Nigeria
(emefiena3@gmail.com)**AFRICA AND THE SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE TO PARTISAN DEMOCRACY:
DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY VS. COOPERATIVE COLLEGIAL DEMOCRACY****Deva Woodyly**Associate Professor of Politics, The New School of Social Research, New York
(woodyld@newschool.edu)**DEMOCRACY AND THE POLITICS OF DESPAIR**

Webinar 2: Perspectives for Democratic Alternatives in Africa and “the West”
DATE: 27 October, 2021

TIME: 5:00-6:30 p.m. (Nairobi); 3:00-4:30 p.m. (London)

LOCATION: zoom

Speakers

Rod Dacombe

Director of the Centre for British Politics and Government, Department of Political Economy, King’s College London (rod.dacombe@kcl.ac.uk)

**RETHINKING CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN THE UK: THEORY, PRACTICE AND
 NEW PERSPECTIVES**

Dannica Fleuss

Research Fellow and Lecturer in Political Theory, Department of Political Science, Helmut-Schmidt University Hamburg, (dannica.fleuss@hsu-hh.de)

**“ASK CITIZENS, NOT PHILOSOPHERS!” – RADICAL PROCEDURALIST
 REFORM AND FIRST RESULTS FROM PARTICIPATORY EXPERIMENTS IN
 GERMANY AND ICELAND**

Reginald M. J. Oduor

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies,
 University of Nairobi (rmjoduor@gmail.com)

**MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: HOW POLITICISED ETHNICITY WITHOUT
 ETHNICALLY-BASED FEDERALISM KEEPS KENYA IN
 PERPETUAL UNCERTAINTY**

Brenda Ogembo

Deputy-Head, Senate Liaison Office, Parliament of Kenya
 (BAO614@student.bham.ac.uk)

**INTERPRETING KENYA’S PUBLIC DELIBERATION PRACTICES THROUGH THE
 CONTEXT OF ITS PRE- AND POST-COLONIAL GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCES**

Registration

To register free for Webinar 1, do the following -

1. Click the following link:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/beyond-liberal-democracy-african-western-perspectives-in-dialogue-sem-i-tickets-163474258909>
2. You will see a page that has “General Admission” on it. On the right side of the page is a box with a "0" in it. Please click on the box and select "1".
3. At the bottom of the page, you will see an orange button that says "Register". Click on that to move to the next stage.
4. Finally, enter your contact information, ensuring that you fill in all the boxes that have red stars. Once you do that, click on the orange "Register" button at the bottom to complete your registration.

To register free for Webinar 2, do the following -

1. Click the following link:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/beyond-liberal-democracy-african-western-perspectives-in-dialoguesem-2-tickets-163475787481>
2. You will see a page that has “General Admission” on it. On the right side of the page is a box with a "0" in it. Please click on the box and select "1".
3. At the bottom of the page, you will see an orange button that says "Register". Click on that to move to the next stage.
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