

DEMOCRACY AS A SYSTEM OF VALUES IN JOHN DEWEY *VIS- A VIS* NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY

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Abstract

This paper examines John Dewey's theory of democracy as a system of values in relation to Nigeria's democracy. It holds that the motivation for the shift to democracy by most nations in the contemporary era is underwritten by the fact that as a system of government, democracy promotes liberty, freedom, equality, justice, uplifts standard of living and allows for majority of the citizenry to participate in government policies and decision-making. While this appears sacrosanct or seems to be a given in many developed democratic countries, it is not the same for many democratic countries in Africa, especially Nigeria. The periods of intermittent democratic practice in Nigeria from 1960 to 1966, 1979-1983, and 1999 to date in Nigeria, for instance, show that the country still contends with terrorism, authoritarianism, anachronism, bad governance, lack of social justice, disobedience to the rule of law, poor resource distribution, harsh socio-economic living conditions, abysmal infringements on human rights and freedom as well as inability to sustain human and humane values for proper social living for common good in the polity. Thus, the problem is that the principles of democracy are merely theoretical and are unable to be translated into practice in the Nigeria democratic system. The finding is that there exists a dislocation which is both paradoxical and contradictory between the values of democracy and the actual living conditions of the majority of the citizenry of Nigeria, and so the recommendation is that Dewey's conception of democracy which upholds the articulation of the social, moral and humane values of democracy should be explored for the rectification of the distortion or deficits in the Nigeria's democratic experimentation.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the problem of why certain kinds of political systems claim to submit to the principles and ideas of democracy, yet paradoxically, these same systems have operated in real life, in ways that have undermined and compromised the main ideals of democracy: freedom and human rights. This is the case in many societies such as Nigeria where democracy is still struggling with establishing core values. The main principles of inclusion, recognition and representation are central to the effectiveness of democracy; representation ensures that the interest of all components of the given society is protected and their freedom assured, recognition and inclusion refer not just to mere voting, but includes consultation and acceptance for wider interests and groupings. These unfortunately are yet to find a pride of place in Nigeria Democratic polity.

With such shortfalls, the Nigeria democracy sometimes is referenced to as an emerging one. The idea of emergence describes a situation where the conceptualization of democracy as an ideal seems different from its application in real life situations. Nigeria's democratic system is not yet mature, consolidated, institutionalized and entrenched. A lot of threats that will be listed in the course of the analysis will illustrate the emerging nature

of this particular democratic experiment. A huge gap is noticed in the claim to uphold freedom and human rights and the reality of the oppression, repression and subjugation that abound. One of the greatest democratic experiment and pragmatic political ideology of modern times is credited to John Dewey.³ Though he focused on the stalemate seen in American democracy; precisely the inability of the ideas of the founding fathers of American democracy and also that of the classical traditional philosophers, to meet the challenges of the time and change as it affected America, yet other races and cultures have a few things to learn from him. As a prominent voice for liberal and progressive democracy, he was vehement in his advocacy that democracy must go beyond government and governance to becoming a culture, a way of life and translate to pragmatic good.⁴ As a strong believer in the dictum “knowledge is power,” with an unenlightened and uneducated populace he further argues, democracy can never thrive. That is why education for him is a sine qua non for the flourishing of democracy. This was the magic he brought into the American democratic space that yielded the result of more democratic gains and dividend. With this background in mind, this paper now will proceed to the statement of problem. The method of analysis is adopted in this work which is divided into an introduction, John Dewey's Critique of Democratic System before him and exposition of democracy in John Dewey, Education and Democracy in Dewey, an exposition of Nigeria's crisis of value. Then an application of Dewey's idea to the search for inclusive democracy, evaluation and conclusion.

2. John Dewey's Critique of Hitherto Existing Political Traditions And The Quest For Democracy As A System of Values

This section examines the political thinking and arguments that led to Dewey's critique of the old restrictive political notion of democracy and his desire to surpass this. Given the gaps that he noticed in the moral, political and economic life of his society, Dewey maintains that the defense of individual liberties and property rights against abuses of political power of America's first decades of democracy no longer addressed the people's real needs. Subsequently, Dewey focused his pragmatist approach to democratic politics. Dewey saw democracy as the political manifestation of scientific method, with its combination of purposefulness and objectivity, freedom and discipline, individual speculation and public verification. He believed that it is only through experience that man learns about the world, and as well can maintain and better himself in the world, and thus make the world a peaceful prospective and progressive place.

Against the backdrop of the flaws of the American democratic experimentation of his time, Dewey himself averred that: America needed a paradigm shift, a change in her social, political inter-relational life, because the old system is no more tenable. Dewey objected to certain elements of the traditional political systems, mainly that such systems were tyrannical and restrictive in their political pursuits. In one dimension to the perception of Dewey and his ideas, Manicas holds that Dewey's social philosophy represents a departure from traditional social philosophies in the sense that the social philosophy of Dewey embedded in it two features; namely, that the level of action fixed by embodied intelligence is always the important thing and that democracy is a way of life individual and social.⁵ The significance of the project of Dewey is that he transited from one reform to another in his search for creative intelligence. He showed the legitimacy of a concentration or emphasis on processes.⁶

Dewey believed the most serious danger for democracy arose from an internal dimension. This was clearly seen in the distortion and erosion of the very conditions required for the flourishing of democracy.⁷

Although, the idea of democracy entails “constitutional arrangements and the structural organization of central parliamentary organizations, but democracy is much more than this.”⁸ Indeed, democracy is “an irrevocable and final dedication to the dignity of man.”⁹ Democracy “is a reflective capacity of all human beings for intelligent judgment and action if the proper conditions are furnished.”¹⁰ There is an emphasis here on the capabilities that men bring to bear on their individual and collective acts, and how these affect the effectiveness of institutions. Philosophically speaking, this issue borders on the way the human being can achieve a balance between his exercise of freedom and the fact that the needs of both self and others must be considered.

According to Bernstein, Dewey construed the central concern of our times to be the character of our moral and political existence or life. Dewey was an exponent of progressivism.¹¹ He focused upon the clarification of the character and immediacy of the social and moral crises facing the modern world. According to Cywar, Dewey brought to the fore the ancient hierarchical problem of class structure and the problem of the misdistribution of wealth. Dewey contextualized the international and domestic aspects of the crisis and thus offered an idea of social reconstruction that stressed individual responsibility and education. Dewey showed interest in, and concern for the American society.¹² Dewey desired to socialize America by transforming the psychology of its populace. His aim was to improve democracy, not to destroy it; he sought to make the individual responsible for the welfare of the society. The greatest reliance for the creation and sustenance of the new society depended on the change that will occur in the minds of men when they are still children.¹³

Given some of the short comings of the idea of democracy as a political method or regime, there is need to go further to examine the idea of democracy as a system of values. One of the foremost critics of the idea of democracy as a form of government is John Dewey. He maintains that the identification of democracy with political democracy is responsible for most of the failures of democratic theory and practice. Thus, he presents a different approach which views democracy as a social ideal or system of values. For Dewey, political philosophy had tried to restrict its attention to narrow political issues like the state and other institutions of government. His intent for the development of a democratic philosophy was to encompass the whole traditional concern of politics, and then go on to provide a democratic understanding of ethics, education, logic, aesthetics and other areas of knowledge. Dewey’s philosophy is unique in its desire to address the true end of philosophy namely; social progress and the contemporary state of affairs.¹⁴

Dewey insists that democracy as a system of value is broader than a special political form, a method of conducting government, or political system. It is broader and deeper than a political regime. For him, “democracy is the best means so far found for realising ends that lie in the wide domain of human relationships and the development of human personality.”¹⁵ Therefore, Dewey concludes that democracy is a way of life; social and

individual. The keynote of democracy as a system of value may be expressed as “the necessity for the participation of every mature and responsible human being in the formation and preservation of the values that regulate the living of men together.”¹⁶ For him, these values are necessary if human beings are to achieve the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals. According to Dewey, society as the composition of individuals affords us an acceptable way of viewing it. It may be that society and individuals are correlative or organic to one another, in which case, society requires the service and subordination of individuals, while at the same time, it exists to serve them. Society is a word that embraces or covers all the ways in which by associating together, men share their experiences and build up common interests and aims.¹⁷ Thus society is made up of many associations not a single organisation. It embraces the many associations coming together in joint intercourse and action for the better realisation of shared experiences. Therefore, he holds that society by association ensures that experiences, ideas, emotions, and values are transmitted and made common. For him, the individual and institution are truly subordinate to this active process.¹⁸

Dewey argues further that the best guarantee of collective efficiency and power is liberation and the use of diversity of individual capacities and initiative, planning, foresight, vigour and endurance. He says that personality must also be educated. Full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person in proportion to his capacity to contribute to shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he belongs. According to Dewey, the above point endorses the significance of democracy which cannot properly be conceived as a sectarian or racial category. For him, democracy cannot properly be conceived as a consecration of some form of government which has already attained constitutional sanction.¹⁹

3. Democracy As A Way of Life

Dewey holds that

democracy is but a name for the fact that human nature is developed only when its elements take part in directing things which are common, things for the sake of which men and women form groups – families, industrial companies, governments, churches, scientific associations and others.²⁰

It is clear that the common factors he implies here are mutual intercourse, security, peace, co-operation and partnership among others. Once we admit this fact, then it necessarily follows that the interrogation of social order, morality and democracy make sense because, man must seek humane, beneficial and lawful ways of arranging such social interactions.

Dewey maintains that democracy signifies on one side, that every individual is to share in the duties of social affairs. On the other side, he holds that social arrangements are to eliminate the constraints of status, birth, wealth, sex and so on, which restrict the

opportunity of each man to attain full development. Democracy then operates at two realms; the individual and the social. For Dewey, democracy at the individual level takes as the criterion of social organisation, the release of the potentials of individuals. At the social level, democracy demands co-operation, instead of coercion, and voluntary sharing in a process of mutual give and take, rather than authority imposed from above.²¹ According to Dewey, the method of democracy requires positive toleration or the sympathetic regard for the intelligence and personality of others, even in those cases where they hold positions or opinions different from our own. For him, the democratic method also demands the scientific interrogation of facts and the general testing of ideas. As such, Dewey maintains that democratic political structures are not enough to capture the essence of democracy. Rather, there must exist the democratic method in all social relationships because, democratic habits of thought and action are part of the fibre of a people. When this method is absent, then a democratic political system is not secure.²²

Dewey goes further to say that though the factors or institutions of democratic government like universal suffrage, regular elections, etc. are means that have been found expedient for realising democracy as the truly human way of living, yet, these are not a final end and a final value. He maintains that democracy is rooted in the idea that no man or limited set of men is wise, educated or good enough to rule others without their consent. According to Dewey, the positive implication of the above view is that all those who are affected by social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them. Therefore, he stresses that the foundation of democracy is a conviction and faith in the capacities of human nature, faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and co-operative experience. Dewey points out that the faith or belief expressed in these things is not to say that they are complete qualities, but if they are allowed, they will grow and be able to generate progressively, the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide collective action.²³

Also, Dewey holds that the belief in equality is an element of the democratic credo. He points out that this is not a belief in the equality of natural endowments. He insists that it is the belief that all individuals are entitled to equality of treatment by law and its administration. For Dewey, each man should have an equal right to express his judgement, and should also be entitled to equal opportunity of developing his capacities.²⁴ Therefore, Dewey states that the democratic faith in equality is the faith that each individual shall have the chance and opportunity to contribute whatever he is capable of contributing. It is through this means he says, that democracy is often naturally associated in our minds, with freedom of action. Dewey points out that the democratic idea of freedom is not the right of each individual to do as he pleases. He insists that the freedom in question is far more substantive and elaborate. It refers to the freedom of belief and conscience; or expression; of opinion; of assembly for discussion and conference; of the press as an organ of communication. According to Dewey, democracy guarantees these freedoms so that individuals be free to develop and also that society can benefit from their contributions.²⁵

4. Democracy As A Moral Ideal

According to Dewey, democracy as a moral ideal or an ideal of social life, is much wider

than any form of government, although it includes government in its scope. Democracy as a moral ideal is that very attempt to write and combine two ideas which often in history are related antagonistically. These are the idea of liberation of individuals and the idea of promotion of a common good. The democratic ideal poses rather than solves the great problem of how to harmonise the development of each individual with the maintenance of a social state in which the activities of each, will contribute to the good of all the others. For him, democracy expresses a demand to be achieved. Thus he says that democracy like every true ideal, signifies something that is yet to be done, and not that which has already been done.²⁶

Dewey argues that there can be no genuine democracy outside of a clear consciousness of a communal life with its implications. Fraternity, liberty and equality isolated from communal life are hopeless abstractions. Dewey argues that fraternity viewed in the context of communal life is capable of yielding some important social goods if it is based on mutual contribution and the recognition of liberties. For him, liberty implies the secure application and realisation of those potentials afforded by fraternal relationship. While equality refers to the recognition of the distinct and unique qualities of human beings irrespective of their different psychological and physical make up.²⁷ Dewey holds that these values are absolutely important for the establishment of viable social order in which the end results of human actions are directed by feelings of community. Dewey argues further that community cannot be achieved by mere associated activity or aggregated collective action. The fact that individuals participate in activities and share in results does not portray the existence of community. For Dewey, communication is a prerequisite for community. Communication implies a common or mutually understood meaning. It creates new relationships and transforms conjoint activity into a community of interest and endeavour,²⁸ which can guarantee the existence of social consciousness. Dewey criticizes democracy as both a political system and a set of institutions as means that have been found expedient for realizing democracy as the truly human way of living yet, these are not a final end and a final value. In one viewpoint, it is very possible for us to have a set of institutions that are purportedly democratic, in the sense of putatively embodying its core principles and ideas, but these institutions will not be effective or functional unless we have a holistic view of the meaning of democracy that looks beyond its values to the historical and cultural contexts of establishing such values.²⁹

5. Education And Democracy

For Dewey, education is the key to the success of democracy, hence, modern education must be developed and designed to nurture democratic habits in both the young and the old without class barriers. According to him, "... a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governance are educated."³⁰ Dewey observed that in an industrial society the school should be a miniature workshop and a miniature community by teaching through practice, and through trial and error. For him, "it is the main business of the family and the school to influence the formation and growth of attitudes and dispositions, emotional, intellectual and moral."³¹ The inculcation of qualitative education to the individual by the school would reduce attitude such as apathy to participation in democracy.

Subsequently, Dewey emphasized that real education comes after we leave school, in other words, real education lies in experience and not limited to the classrooms. As an educator, he opposed the traditional method of learning by memory under the authority of teachers. To him, education should not be concerned only with the mind. He believed that it is essential for students to develop manual skills through which current problems in democracy can be solved. In consequence, Dewey thought that educational growth consists in combining past experiences with present experiences in order to receive and understand future experiences. Learning occurs as a result of an activity, which arises from the personal experience of grappling with a problem. Dewey regarded the transmission of civilized life into the young as the sole responsibility of the school as an institution of society. Nevertheless, he argued that, a way of life cannot be transmitted by words alone. Essential to acquiring the spirit of a way of life is immersion in ways of living. Hence, the school should provide students with the opportunity to experience democracy in action, in other words schools should be places where theory is put into practice.³²

Dewey described a worthwhile society as a democratic society in which education has removed barriers such as: class, race, religion, colour, politics, or nationality among groups, besides, where meanings, values, interests, and goals are held in common. According to him, it will be a society

That makes provision for participation in the good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life.... Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder.³³

Dewey emphasized that the only environment in which any individual can really grow normally to his full stature, is a society of free individuals in which all, through their own work, contribute to the liberation and enrichment of the lives of others. Hence, the school must provide such an enabling environment to ensure all individuals realize their goals.

6. Dewey And Some Key Values For Inclusive Democracy

The key values of Dewey's theory of democracy can be conceptualized thus: That Dewey sought to use human intelligence as a probe, an implement for handling issues arising from human behavior and social life constrained by traditions, history and culture. Dewey preferred to see democracy as a way of life, a system for running human, social and political affairs using education to imbibe a scientific orientation and critical disposition for handling life's predicaments. Democracy is seen to go beyond governmental administration, to the level of a mode of human association. Learning and democracy must go together. Democracy should not be left to the politicians or government alone. Rather democracy needs to start from the school system and permeate all other spheres of life.³⁴

A new way of looking at democracy requires us to have faith in the nature of human beings as learning and developmental beings who can comprehend and defend traditions of

dialogue, communication, freedom and respect for the human person. Dewey's conception of democracy aims at the ideal of community or the search for the principles by which human beings can attain a peaceful and humane living together in a cooperative atmosphere. Every mature human being needs to partake and participate in forming the key values that guide human social existence in an atmosphere of freedom, creativity and criticality.³⁵ Democracy is based on consent of all participating interests as no man is superior enough to govern over others without their consent. A democratic system must be open and tolerant of criticism, and allow for checks and balances, responsibility, freedoms and equality of opportunity.³⁶ Given this view of democracy, all categories-individuals or institutions must be assessed by their productivity or results.

Dewey offered a futuristic conception of democracy; the things that ought to be desired and worked for, are the values of the human essence- freedom and action for social living.³⁷ As such he showed that democracy seemed to be the most suitable means of achieving the ideal of community allowing all human beings irrespective of creed or race to make their contribution and live in dignity.³⁸ So Democracy must be seen in an expanded learning mode as a way of human living, a system of social interaction whereby barriers, differences and dualism are replaced with life-enhancing, binding and collective human values and interest³⁹

7. Value Crisis In Nigeria Democratic Experiment

Value refers to what a thing is worth; values are things that are desirable, our choices and things that are of interest to us. A value is something desired or chosen or preferred. It is something important or of interest. A value is a norm; a standard of behavior and of measuring behavior.⁴⁰ A purposive behavior or action portrays or depicts a value, understood as something to be desired, aspired towards and accomplished. A society defines and defends certain values that are generally accepted such that the society is a carrier or driver of values; it is a value-system⁴¹ or a system of values.⁴² A society's core values emanate from the freewill of social members, their behavior, choices and experiences, which meet the social expectations and needs of the people, so values reflect the choice and performance of social members.⁴³ A conglomeration of values known as Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) is needed for a well ordered society to be established and sustained. DSP is the totality of the values of a society. The DSP problem of a specific country is easily seen in such shortfalls as "corrupt leadership, warped state centric security, ethno religious conflicts"⁴⁴ In Nigeria, DSP problems/threats to democracy include crime and criminality, corruption, poor infrastructure, insecurity, impunity, injustice, insurgency and unemployment. Such factors negatively affect inclusive politics which democracy as a system of value encourages.

This value crisis or value dislocation is most easily seen in the aspect of deficits in human values and national value system. Nigeria's value system crisis is clearly seen in a prevailing warped dominant social paradigm that triggers value clash, conflicts, insecurity, injustices, institutional inefficiency, widespread corruption, militarism, militia violence and general vulnerability that undermines human dignity and the value of human life. Furthermore, this value crisis is also seen in incidences of poor public ethics and public trust, abuse of power, terrorism, instability, disrespect for human dignity and human achievement as well as low commitment to the well-being of the citizens at

different levels of society. Specifically Nigeria, a key player on the continent of Africa, is beset by a plethora of recurring man-made socially endangering problems that grievously threaten the existing social, political order. Such problems include; some inequity and conflicts about land distribution and natural water sources management and use across northern and southern Nigeria; other questionable resource distribution strategies leading to violent conflicts such as communal clashes among ancestrally warring tribes, civil disturbances by sects, forceful ejection and land grab by individuals, tribes and government institutions due to discriminatory land use decree, indigene- settlers controversies in north-eastern Nigeria, farmers- herders (Fulani and Udawa) issues across the six (06) geopolitical zones of Nigeria, but mostly in the Niger and Benue river basins; prominent religious and, or ethnic inclinations and conflicts leading to crisis in the northern Nigeria.

There is also a general North- South dichotomy and segregation seen as real or perceived conspiracy theory of a Fulani and 'Arewa' domination agenda in the government, institutions and groups; varied grievances and frustrations occasioning entrenched south-south agitations for secession, regional security outfits, self-determination; clamour for a reform of federalism and resource control by IPOB, MASSOB, BIM, BZM, Amotekun, Oo'dua agitations, Bakassi boys and Niger Delta Avengers; varied oppressive, restive, conservative, sectarian and irredentist north western and north eastern traditional and political institutions triggering religious extremism, terrorism, instability and disorder through spectral banditry, militias and insurgency by ISWAP, Ansaru, IMNL, Ombatse, Bassa, Shi'ites IMN, Nigerian Taleban and boko haram among others; economic recession and instability due to the overwhelming national demand or stress arising from an inequitable focus on a regionally driven mono-economy depending substantially on a primary export of a raw material such as crude oil from the Niger delta region.

A prevalent problem adversely affecting the value system of Nigeria is the character and consequences of a gap in our nation building aspiration. Specifically, Nigeria gives us some cause for concern: As a key player on the continent of Africa, Nigeria is beset by a plethora of recurring man-made socially endangering problems that grievously threaten the existing social order and political order. Such problems in Nigeria include: some inequity and conflicts about land ownership and distribution among Nigerian tribes (Ife-Modakeke in the southwest, Aguleri-Umleri in the southeast, Eleme-Okrika, Ijaw-Itsekiri, Ijaw-Ilaje in the south-south, Tiv-Jukun, Tiv-Igede, Birom-Fulani in the northcentral and northeast) and natural water sources (mis)management and (mis)use across northern (lake Chad basin, upper Niger river and Benue river basin) and southern Nigeria (Niger delta waterways); other questionable resource distribution strategies leading to violent conflicts such as communal clashes among ancestrally warring tribes, jungle justice by tribes and citizens owing to irrational cultural beliefs and customary practices, civil disturbances by cryptic religious sects, forceful ejection and land grabbing by individuals, tribes and government institutions due to a discriminatory and expropriating land use decree, indigene- settlers controversies in north-eastern Nigeria, farmers- herders issues across the six (06) geopolitical zones of Nigeria, but mostly in the rivers Niger and Benue river basins; prominent religious and, or ethnic inclinations and conflicts leading to crisis in the northern Nigeria. So, all of the above underscores the

research question which is how can Dewey's idea of democracy contribute to the systematic reconstruction of the democratic life in the contemporary Nigeria.

Threats To Human Values And Social Values

Human beings live by values or things that are important or desirable to them. Such things or values may not always be beneficial. But when something or a value is altogether of benefit, desirable and important to man then it becomes a human value. Given that human behaviour is critical to the survival of the species or the human race, human values of freedom, human dignity, justice and responsibility that will ensure the escape from regressive manipulation and exploitation, that will help to provide the enabling social opportunities and conditions that will help the human person to develop and be productive for the good of the self and of humanity. The purpose of human and humane values is to promote humane, compassionate and productive interaction and interrelations between human beings using rules of cooperation, communication and compassion as directing principles. Human values center on human dignity, self-definition, freedom and responsibility. Human values are also social values because together these values occasion living together for a common purpose. Social life is made interesting through the establishment of laws, morality and practices that promote life. Life-promoting values and life-threatening values are always in conflict in human society. Human beings survive and thrive when they separate life-promoting actions from life-threatening actions. The former, which are acts that promote life are approved. The latter, which are acts that undermine life, are prohibited and punished. Also human values include: reciprocity, common good, peaceful relations, emphasis on human dignity, the value of human life, consensus, tolerance and mutual respect.

Threats To Cultural Values

Culture has to do with the way of life of a race or tribe or people. It encapsulates the totality of the human, social and natural environment of the peoples; how to attain understanding, adaptation and control so as to form the basis of identity and security for a people. Traditional cultural values of the Africans such as hospitality, respect for elders, compassion and communalism have been threatened and eroded by colonial and neo-colonial pillaging and destruction of her human and cultural values. Africa finds herself in a continual struggle against external and internal domination. Cultural values such as respect for elders, dignity in labour, family bond and communalism are fast being eroded. The inordinate quest for wealth and status now seem to have submerged the cultural values of uprightness, integrity and decency. In fact, one of the lowest points of colonial and new-colonial experience is that the young African generation is alienated from her culture and values.

But beyond this external threat to cultural values are also the internal threats. In Nigeria, some cultural values pose a threat to the values of modern life. There is the need for modernization of some cultural values. Indeed some cultural values need to blend with modern life but this is not the case with some cultures and tribes. Northern Nigeria for instance faces a peculiar problem of cultural anachronism, and it must be noted that anachronism and religious indoctrination are fundamental ingredients that promote terrorism /terrorist tendencies. Evidence of this propensity to nurture terrorism, is seen in the phenomenon of the *almajiri* or hordes of destitute children who have been cast out by their parents to fend for themselves. This poses a great danger to the society because due

to family orientation, poverty and illiteracy, children pushed into the streets to become pupils or followers of an *Alfa* or religious teacher, lack parental care and family bonding and commitment so they are easily recruited and indoctrinated to fuel the hordes of serial killers, militia, sects, vandals, kidnappers, armed robbers and terrorists currently disturbing the peace and security of the country. Also there is the role of the traditional rulers and religious leaders, who have immense cultural and religious influence on their followers or constituents. This creates a problem because the largely gullible people are easily swept off their feet through demagoguery, hence believing and carrying out the biddings of these cultural and religious elites. Dewey offers a possible solution through the idea of democracy as a culture; a different way of living in the human society, whereby individuals will have more voice and choice in matters that affect their lives. Society needs to be more open and tolerant and also less authoritarian and anachronistic. He also talks about the role of a progressive and participatory education that can enlighten and edify the people and promote civility, creativity and critical outlook to life.

In some parts of Nigeria, governments and citizens appear to struggle with negative traits such as discrimination, disobedience to the rule of law, egoism, intolerance, oppression, ethnicity and religious bigotry, sexism, political and financial corruption and lack of equity among groups. Also there is a lack of efficiency and fair treatment by agencies and institutions as well as an inability to be civil in utterance and conduct within the political and social order hence the threat to peace. Despite modernity and civilization in the contemporary era some knowledge and practices considered anachronistic are still being practiced. In fact some scholars of African developmental challenges have posited that there are two major threats to peace and development in most African social and political orders, impunity and anachronism. Anachronism is a threat to Nigeria so much so that some tribes do not know when something has outlasted its suitability or when a people, race, tribe or a group do not change with emerging trends or modern times. Anachronism threatens peace because it makes it difficult for specific tribes to adjust to modernity or the rules of reason, scientific disposition, civility and politeness as well as the respect for human life and tolerance. Anachronism poses a threat because the ignorance, arrogance and backwardness occasioned by an anachronistic person, tribe or religion leads to siege mentality, alienation and aggression. Once alienation sets in, a person or tribe or class can no longer see itself as an integral member of a specific human society or even as part of common humanity, then such a person or group will refuse to care about others' feelings, and will show no fear of consequences when he or she breaks the law or convention. Then impunity creeps in. Impunity breeds lawlessness, lack of accountability, disorder, Zero fear of punishment, sacred cow syndrome, siege mentality of the ruler, personal rule, use of public resources for personal gain and wanton disregard for the rule of law.

Threats To Moral And Democratic Values

Positive moral and democratic values are aimed at promoting peace, justice, harmony, co-operation, honesty and transparency among human beings. Morality is essentially about the harmonization of interests among conflicting social members. Moral values that drive this persuasive or prescriptive way of managing human beings include justice, purity, temperance, fortitude, compassion or generosity. All of these are needed in a stable, viable

and progressive society. The three moral values crucial to the establishment of democracy are the respect for human dignity, compassion and justice. The value of human life is the more appreciated and regarded when human beings show humaneness and compassion to one another as members of a specie or mankind. Compassion is a moral virtue and a moral value. Respect for others and compassion then combine together to foster consensus. Consent and consensus form the core of democratic values. Consensus is important because it fosters interaction and reconciliation. Consensus is based on recognition and consultation. These values emphasize the need to ask and receive the consent of others. Seeking peoples' consents, is not merely out of courtesy, but because such consents are understood as choice and voice required for inclusive and socially responsible and responsive decision making. When we have the urge to seek consensus or mutual accord then we are more disposed to pursue dialogue construed as conversation, negotiation or reconciliation. The end result of dialogue is to have an agreement or settlement. As such dialogue presupposes some sort of positive communication, sincerity, openness and accommodation of others. These values are the bedrock of what is referred to as tolerance. Tolerance is the opportunity we allow for others around us especially those who do not share our beliefs, ancestry, language and ways of life, to thrive and survive without undue obstruction or hindrance from the rest of us. The whole idea is to create a society whereby all parties or members can aspire to attain their fullest personal and social development unfettered by petty prejudices typical of human nature and discrimination occasioned by inimical institutionalized injustices.

At the level of democratic values in Nigeria, there are challenges of empowerment, responsibility and representation in the evolving democratic practice, which have become life threatening. There is an entrenched pattern of disrespect for basic human and social rights and the disregard for the rule of law in a Nigerian democracy that normally ought to allow for fair play within and among the elites and grassroots of political parties. As such we expose the logical and empirical grounds for the systematic disempowerment of groups in Nigeria's democratization process that have created a dismal picture of decay and dislocation in sociopolitical life.¹⁰ The character of Nigerian democracy is one whereby the people's real experiences seem threatened by a fundamental challenge of disregarding human rights and disobedience to the rule of law.¹¹ Democracy remains unable to stem the tide of negative ethnicity which unleashes insecurity, hatred, corruption and violence.¹² There exist shortfalls in the ability to harmonize divergent interests and needs to attain national development. More importantly, there is endemic mistrust between major groups and institutions, the rulers and the ruled.

The post-colonial situation in Africa in general shows clearly in the state's directing principle of carrying on the repressive tradition inherited from the colonial state. The net effect of this is alienation, resentment, inefficiency and disunity. The above creates a problem of insecurity easily seen in the crisis or problem of political morality. This focuses on the question of defining the relationship between the state and the various groups in the society. So political morality properly construed seeks to establish and sustain the essential conditions for the smooth functioning of the state and society. It is in this light that we identify the problem of the moral basis of Nigeria's democratic challenge to be a vital imperative of national reconciliation and survival in the new millennium.⁵ If these elements are not put in place then the quest for stable democracy

may be unattainable.

Ake is right to say that the quest for democracy in Africa seems to be a mirage because Africa's state structures are susceptible to abuse, detrimental to democracy due to foreign ideological predispositions.⁴⁵ There are still "many parts of the African continent where prevailing realities are still a far cry from some of the precepts of human centered development, including transparency of governance, socio-political legitimacy, the rule of law and widespread popular empowerment."⁴⁶ Gyekye a Ghanaian philosopher is also right to say that the lack of an efficient or adequate legal and institutional framework explains the widespread incidence dislocation and disorientation as seen in corrupt behavior, inadequate institutional checks and ineffective law enforcement capabilities that have typified democratic practice in a developing society.⁴⁷

This dislocation and gaps in the character of Nigeria's democracy are noticed in the entrenched patterns of instability in the polity and the bad governance of the rulers aided by ignorance and complacency of the ruled. The state is threatened by corruption of the elites and bureaucracy, subversive forces in the south-south region and in the North-Eastern parts. In Nigeria, the political culture of state-centralism has led to the socio-economic disempowerment and marginalization of a broad group of citizens such as the vulnerable peoples: rural dwellers, the low income earners, pensioners or retired workers, unemployed and under-employed youths, destitute and physically-challenged persons. There is evidence of a failure of the social welfare component of Nigeria's democratic project, thus breeding institutional marginality and systematic disempowerment of groups. There is a concentration of unaccountable power in the hands of a few privileged egoistic elite. The majority of citizens are disenfranchised due to the logic of conflict and corruption that erodes public trust.⁴⁸

Endemic political corruption involving government and public officials remains also a serious problem confronting Nigeria today because it privatizes politics, boosts costs and diverts energies to the concealment of private gain. In Nigeria, the problems of insecurity and low level of human dignity are linked to imbalances in the democratic system which fails to uphold the rule of law. Some civil society groups have characterized our democracy thus

Nigerians still face varying forms of human rights violations. The state is still largely authoritarian as security forces trample on the rights of the citizens with a surprising impunity unexpected in a democracy. This often takes the form of harassment, extortion, unlawful detention and extra judicial killings. There are reports of misappropriation and misapplication of state resources by incumbent state actors⁴⁹

as well as local authorities and foreign business interests. The common people have been driven beyond the poverty threshold. From the above, we notice the adverse logic of the Nigerian state and the primary threat that it poses to democratic values.

Insecurity, Instability And Disorder

The Nigerian situation with respect to national security, instability and disorder is dire. It is indeed multifaceted as can be thought of. Ranging from the Boko Haram insurgency in the north, the IPOB agitation in the South East, the pocket of unrest in the South-South resulting from agitation for resource control, tribal/ethnic violent clashes, arm robbery, kidnapping, banditry and whole lots of other that spread all over the nation. At some spheres the security architecture is no less the security challenge than other threat to security. The truth is that the military in Nigeria has been used for largely negative purposes involving the oppression, terrorization and repression of the citizens. The military in Nigeria has been used for the purpose of suppressing popular involvement in politics and civil liberties. It is also used to curtail the activities of unions, opposition groups and popular demonstrations and movements. In short, it is an instrument of censorship. This trend has been particularly prevalent under military regimes. Therefore, rather than be the solution to Nigeria's national security, national development and national integration problems, the military has compounded and perpetuated them.⁵³ It has been argued that the perennial and intractable problem of insecurity in Nigeria is clearly seen in the inability of the various governments and the state agencies that existed over the decades to ensure the adequate protection, defense, peace, survival, well-being and progress of the citizens, the state and the society at large. The national security thrust of these regimes focused on the maintenance of personal security and power, to the detriment of the long-term goals of national development and reconciliation.⁵⁴

Bad Governance And Corruption

Governance has to do with management of public affairs. In Nigeria some people in leadership and management positions have failed to manage public affairs properly, responsibly and accountably. This raises the corruption issue. Basically, corruption has to do with some sort of illegal, arbitrary and unauthorized use of financial and material resources of a person or group or country. Corruption comes in the various forms of bribery, graft, nepotism among others, and ultimately leads to the abuse of power, deteriorating fiscal and economic management, arbitrary policy change, deficit financing, and a chronic, unrecorded leakage of funds, the blurs of lines between private and state property, erodes public trust, invites incompetence and violates the laws and rules that stabilize the state and society.⁵⁵ Within Nigeria's democracy, corruption ensures the prevalence of god-fatherism, ethnic domination, money politics, distraction and alienation of the legislature making them distant from the people they are representing due to pecuniary gains. Corruption among the tiers of the legislature- the National Assembly NASS have obstructed this strategic body from intervening meaningfully in the daily concerns and social justice of the represented. There is also a lack of political, moral and financial independence of the Judiciary as an arm of government, which thus denies justice to the aggrieved and occludes established means for seeking redress. The prolonged delays in the judicial activities of election tribunals are sufficiently revealing of the delay of justice and absence of access to the rule of law which reflects the character of Nigeria's purported democracy at this moment.⁵⁶

Other gaps in the character and effectiveness of Nigeria's democracy arise partly due to the side effects of corruption. These include, a general inefficiency in public service

delivery, the under-funding of government agencies, a dominant role of the politicization of ethnicity as a directing principle of public affairs and also a general citizens' dissatisfaction with gross disparities in the standard or quality of life of the rich, middle class and the poor. This developmental shortfall is seen vividly in the standard of living of those in the rural areas who lack access to good access roads, free and safe water ways and so on. The reason is largely that contracts awarded to install these amenities were not executed or they were not properly done.⁵⁷

Lack of Social Justice And Tolerance

Justice in a democracy is the creation of the widest possible opportunities for social members to define themselves and make their positive contributions to the common good and social security within legal and legitimate boundaries.⁵⁸ Nielsen argues that social justice deals with how social institutions are to be arranged, as well as, how just social institutions can be established. The question of social justice is the quest for a concept of human society which can guarantee human flourishing. Indeed, a just social order cannot allow "a society of slaves where, for some people, resources external to them are properly subject entirely to communal control, such that they, having no control or very little control of the means of life, have their autonomy undermined."⁵⁹

Iris Young maintains that the central concern of social justice is to eliminate institutionalized domination and oppression.⁶⁰ Social justice is indispensable for the establishment and sustenance of democracy by providing basic principles and structures by which just distribution of benefits and burdens in the society can be achieved. The quest for justice and tolerance occasions the need for a model of inclusive democracy for social empowerment in Nigeria that can uphold basic rights and the rule of law, hence averting violations of freedoms and conflicts. Any form of democratic participation that inadvertently denies internal democracy in politicking or even within the party system shows hostility and erodes trust in ways that may not be able to promote democratic nation state project.⁶¹ And this consequently portrays the picture deficit of social justice. The syndrome of "money politics" also, that allows little or no space to the low income earners of the party in decision making and the inability of political actors to accept defeat after elections are cankerworms that are fast eating up the strong hold of social justice and tolerance in the Nigeria democratic space and so weakens the flourishing of democracy..

8. Deficits In Rule of Law And Constitutionalism

The constitution is important in a democracy because it is a document or charter that defines and limits the authority/ power of government and accordingly defines and ensures that the freedom and rights of entirety of the citizenry, leaders or led are protected. The constitution helps to ensure the separation of powers and equally ensures that political authority is restrained by a system of checks and balances. The constitution helps to reduce the fear and possibility of arbitrary and absolute power being concentrated in the hands of any one person or group.⁶² The constitution stresses the importance of rights, freedom and devolution of authority. The constitution seeks to define what is right or proper by creating a system of laws to ensure the obedience of the citizens to common values and common wealth.

A constitution in itself, no matter how well written, cannot by itself elicit adherence and

compliance to its promulgations and norms. It is good governance that ensures constitutionalism and rule of law. There is a nexus among constitution, good government or leadership, and the society. Nigeria continues to exhibit potentiality for internally creating sustainable environment for constitutionalism so as to guarantee the rule of law, security, peace and freedom. But the extent that this is able to see the light of the day is completely a different ball game. Specifically, the problem with Nigeria needs to be understood clearly. There is constitution in existence even if it may not be perfect because some rights of the citizens are not backed up by the constitutional law. Also, another problem is that the constitution does not effectively allow for the separation of power especially for appointment into some sensitive positions of authority e.g. nomination for the office of the Minister of Justice, nomination of the Inspector General of Police are prerogative of the executive especially the President. It would have been better for the National Assembly to have input from nomination to appointment so that these officials can function in the national interest rather than in a parochial cult of personality, ethnic or religious interest. Put these arguments more theoretically, the power of a constitution lies in the freedoms it upholds such as freedom to think, worship, associate and write. These freedoms are both positive and negative stating what we can do and what others should not stop us from doing. Such freedoms are embodied in our natural and human rights, which are expressly stated in the constitution and defended by the application of the constitution. But to the extent that this freedom and rights are protected or enforced is a different ball game. The absence of the rightful institution and good-will to drive this constitution when it is infringed upon denies the Nigerian democratic order its glamour.

9. Improving Nigeria'S Emerging Democracy With Dewey'S Module

John Dewey's idea of democracy offers an alternative to authoritarianism and anachronism that characterize political leadership in Nigeria. It helps bring to the fore the need for the citizens to take part in directing things which are common to them. Authoritarian leadership is anti-democratic and also anachronistic. Dewey is a strong reminder to the Nigeria democratic front that at the heart of democracy is the notion of equality, rights and freedom. Human beings tend to perform better when their ideas and resources are combined and their actions are based on cooperation rather than cohesion. Dewey argues that no man is too powerful as to govern a people without their consent and no people are so weak as to be governed without their consent. It would be right to state that the causal root of the unrest in socio-political order of the day is the negligence of this democratic creed of Dewey.

In Dewey also, education is the key to the success of democracy. It is necessary that "modern" education in the country today is developed and designed to nurture democratic habits in both the young and the old without class barriers. The inculcation of qualitative education to the individual by the school like he would argue will reduce attitude such as apathy to participation in democracy. Dewey described a worthwhile society as a democratic society in which education has removed barriers such as: class, race, religion, colour, politics, or nationality among groups, besides, where meanings, values, interests, and goals are held in common. For him, education seems to be the remover of all forms of sentiments – racial, religious, ethnic to mention just but a few. He argued that, there are ideals which transcend ethnicity and religion in an effective democratic system and only education of the citizens can help the realization of such ideals. In Nigeria for instance, the way voting is done is along ethnic, religious and party lines. People vote for a particular candidate simply because that candidate is from their ethnic or religious affiliation. In Nigeria, where three major ethnic groups (Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba) are dominant, voting

is largely done to support the major ethnic groups one has sentiment for. Again, in Nigeria where two major religious groups (Christianity and Islam) are dominant, voting is done to support either the Christian candidate or the Muslim candidate. The questions are whether these should determine one's voting direction? Are there no ideals that transcend ethnic or religious sentiments that should inform voting at elections?

Nigeria's democracy requires an effective holistic civic education. Civic education is currently being taught as a subject in the primary and secondary schools, perhaps, democracy should be emphatically taught as a distinct subject or course in the tertiary institutions. Indeed before the periods of election, sensitization and awareness programmes should be regularly embarked upon to educate the Nigerian citizens on democratic values and principles. While some non-governmental organizations and media channels are already involved in this process, more needs to be done as many Nigerians are not educated on how democracy ought to be practiced and their role in the practice.

Dewey pointed out that the values of the human essence are freedom, equality and justice as seen in social living together for achieving the ideal of community and social order. Dewey's idea of equality and justice can be seen in the egalitarian nature of the human essence and the liberalization of the social, educational and political spaces such that all human beings can compete from a common ground. Dewey's concept of democracy removes the class barrier that hinders people from very low social class from participating in government; a situation where political power is recycled among the political elites in Nigeria can only be stopped by Dewey's concept of democracy. Discrimination and social injustice that has become the hallmark of political governance today also can be stopped by imbibing Dewey's democracy. Infact in Dewey's democracy, justice is seen in the rejection of discrimination and selection in the practice of democracy. Put differently, justice is allowing everyone the maximum social as well as political spaces to participate in government in so far as that freedom does not impede the freedom of others. It is injustice and indeed anti-democratic to commence the arbitrary arrest of potential political competitors for instance before and during election periods or denying them government grounds/venue for political rallies or campaigns. Such instance is a reoccurrence in Nigeria's politics that claim to be democratic.

Still viewing from Dewey's lens, Democracy in Nigeria requires a more social contract oriented kind of political obligation. Political obligation is basically about the mutual or reciprocal expectations from the leaders and the led. For John Dewey, the idea of obligation is a part of the human nature that can be defined by the innate needs of human beings. Dewey says that this can be shown in the innate and psychological needs of man. As a psychological need it is seen in the feeling of belongingness in man; the absence of which is responsible for all kinds of problems, social and political such as: terrorism, ethnic conflict, political violence to mention a few. Nigeria's democratic system is in a predicament mainly because there is a short fall of political obligation. That is, the expectations of the people from the so called democratic government or State are not met and the people in reaction to this short fall, fail to perform their duties as citizens of state and develop political pessimism and apathy. If the Nigerian democratic government fulfills her obligation by providing the benefits of democracy which according to John Dewey includes equality, rule of law, freedom, justice and the protection of human rights,

the citizens will reciprocate with full and total obedience to the state.

10. **Evaluation And Conclusion**

This paper has interrogated the democratic experience of Nigeria and has established the fact that Nigeria like many nations of Africa has embraced democracy, yet the democratic culture that promotes freedom and human rights, tolerance and dialogue, rule of law and a sense of justice, is yet to take root in the leaders and the led. Dewey's advocacy for democracy not just as a political system but as a culture, a way of life, as has been espoused can be applied to the Nigerian condition in a number of ways but especially, to the extent that Nigerians should learn from Dewey to practice broad based, human/humane and inclusive democracy. The era of intolerance, violence and authoritarianism in politics and in governance should be a thing of the past. Like Dewey recommended Nigerians need to bring in harmonization of interests which forms the basis of morality and should focus less on greed and egoism in political affairs. There should be encouragement of dialogue and fair play at the different stages of the democratic process. The key element of Dewey's philosophy of democracy is optimism for human nature as something that could change for the better; the belief that people should be consulted before decisions are made that is to be binding on them. Lastly, that democracy needs to have a moral complexion such that certain negative traits as corruption and authoritarianism are not encouraged. This is the essence of his democracy which tried to correct the evils of injustice, inequity, intolerance and dictatorship that is found in human nature generally and in Nigeria's democratic behavior specifically.

Dewey calls for the idea of democracy as a continuous exercise in a sociopolitical order, beyond merely holding elections intermittently. This is a very important point because in Nigeria people tend to forget the values of democratic participation such as Republicanism- the idea that citizens must do things in the public interest and must be interested in serving the society whenever the opportunity arises. This situation threatens Nigeria's democracy due to apathy, anomie and alienation. These factors constitute problems to any democracy, little wonder Dewey calls for a constant continuation of the democratic participatory process in the sense that human beings must continually exercise their rationality and purpose in acting as stakeholders and contributors to the development of democratic social order.

From the above, we now understand Dewey's emphasis on democracy as something that should cover all dimensions of life. His point is that democracy cannot be merely political rather it should cover the other areas of human life such as education, economy and religion among others. In the case of Nigeria, the democratic space is limited to the operation of the political system and does not include the democratization of the family, society, economy, religion and security systems. Even in the case of the political system, Nigeria's democratic practice is far from ideal because the political party system is compromised by violence, fraud and authoritarianism. This poses a great threat to the survival and peace in the country. So, the lesson of Dewey is that Nigeria should allow democratic values such as tolerance, equity and justice to permeate all spheres of human social life.

A number of arguments seem to directly or indirectly support Dewey's position. The truth is that his arguments are appealing, largely inspiring and self-explanatory. From the

analysis above, the support for Dewey and more importantly, his ideas are germane. The sheer number of commentators and the quality of their diverse intellectual inputs suggest that the essence of Dewey's position on democracy was not lost on other scholars and statesmen. They defended the social and moral elements of his view mainly; the quest for a moral foundation of democracy; the search for democracy that can promote greater freedom and deliberation among people; the urge to respect the human dignity of all men and the fact that behavior (positive human nature) and experience (education and scientific thinking) need to play a role in the pragmatic evolution of the democratic vision and values.

Dahl, a fellow American like Dewey, also argues against the restrictive nature of democracy at the practical level. Even though at the theoretical level, the concept may be appealing yet it is clear that "in practice, democratic systems have always fallen considerably short of the criteria and values that justify democracy."⁶³ The consequences of the above are that "no democratic country has created a set of social, economic and political arrangements that achieve a satisfactory standard of liberty, justice, security and decency."⁶⁴ Therefore, he notes that the visible gap between what is, and what ought to be, tempered by what could be will continue to drive the search for alternative solutions. This view justifies or supports Dewey's quest for a holistic democratic system that goes beyond the political to embrace the logical and social dimensions. The implication of this is that Dahl also agrees with Dewey that there is a gap between the conceptualization and application of the features of democracy which reiterate the need to push for devise conditions for deepening the home grown democracy across societies, in other words to always separate the normative from the contextual. So the task of identifying the general features of any democratic society as a logical issue may be quite different from that of identifying the democratic features of a particular society as an empirical concern. This is the beauty of Dewey's effort- to open the conceptual and logical spaces in the study of democracy.

Hook was also a follower of Dewey. For Hook, the way to understand what democracy represents is to also clarify the logical consequences of holding that view. This is one of the philosophical quotients of the discourse- the logical elements of democracy. At the heart of democracy is that those being ruled have willingly or willfully granted their consent to be ruled. As such there ought to be no form of coercion or compulsion of the governed in terms of deciding or implementing the machinery of government and governance. From the above, we can deny that a democracy exists or is in place when common consent is absent in a society.⁶⁵ Also there must be the room for the exercise of personal, social and civil liberties or freedoms such as referendum, etc, and there must be no scenario where members are threatened with deprivations in order to influence or compel their actions. Again there must be freedom of education and allowance for criticism and dissenting. These are the key conditions without which we cannot talk of democracy. Democracy has some other requirements. For instance, there needs to be the active participation of the governed in the affairs of the society. There must be free discussion and consultation on public policies. In addition, there must be room for the delegation of authority.⁶⁶

Bertsch, Gary et al, argue that the principles, values and characteristics of democracy make little or no sense outside the ambits of certain enabling conditions that include a vibrant economy and high level of education among the citizens as key conditions. The connection with Dewey is that Berstch et al emphasize the place of the value of human life or the role of human dignity as a parameter for establishing and sustaining democracy. The value of human life is the core of true democracy. So, Bertsch et al argue that the values that are central to the redemption of the African life are those that raise the level of human dignity. These include the provision of goods and services, mitigation of inequality, greater national cohesion and harmony.⁶⁷ Busia, another follower of Dewey's vision and values was one of the key African political philosophers and thinkers. Busia like Dewey, argued for a compassionate, humane and open society where consensus building, obedience to the rule of law, respect for human beings, freedoms and social opportunities are the priority. For him, democracy is when people are allowed to participate in decisions that affect their lives, express opinions and criticisms of the rulers and public life.⁶⁸

It is important to note that rigorous as Dewey's effort is towards reconstructing democracy from mere political and governmental system to a system of values, Dewey still failed to address some fundamental flaws associated with the democratic practice. First is the cumbersome mode of its administrative machineries because of its principles of carrying all stake holders along. This sometimes brings about so much sluggishness in policy formulation and execution. Needless to talk about the huge financial cost demands. In the emerging Nigeria democratic situation this gap is always exploited by the ruling class. Secondly, in the democratic parlance even as expoused by Dewey, voting still remains a key element in consensus building and even in selection process of political leaders. The inability of Dewey to distinguish between quality of votes and voters in the vote counts is still a major flaw to his argument. Even with his advocacy of education for all in order for democracy to function at its optimum, it is still not very tenable to accept the submission that the vote of a professor can be equated with the vote of a market woman. Furthermore, the democratic principle that the majority will always have the day even if the minority is right has fundamental flaws which Dewey didn't attempt to respond to as it seems to posit that what justify an action to be right or plausible is because it is endorsed by the majority. That may not always be factual as the majority sometimes can be wrong.

All of the above defects notwithstanding, the strength of Dewey argument for democracy as a system of values outweigh the weaknesses.

11. Conclusion

This paper has been a conscious effort of systematically exploring and imploring the democratic and educational ideologies of Dewey for the rectification of the shortfalls in the Nigeria democratic experiment. The convictions and ideals of Dewey as a core defender of democracy and its traditions of dialogue, communication, freedom and respect for the human person is found plausible. The work appraised all the more his

conception of democracy as the pursuit of the ideal of community or the search for the principles by which human beings can attain peaceful and humane living together in a cooperative atmosphere. Education under this atmosphere as has also been espoused necessarily connects with Democracy to make human life more stable, human, humane and more progressive. **This paper** finally have argued for a conscious return to the social and moral foundations of human life and human values which will properly situate democracy as a way of life and system of values that goes beyond a mere political system. The study maintained that the methodological advantage of transcending erstwhile restrictive or minimalist conceptions of democracy is offered in Dewey's conception of democracy as a more holistic articulation of the main enduring principles and values underlying a genuine theory and practice of democracy. Ultimately, the submission is that Dewey's idea of democracy and education notwithstanding the minimal shortfalls, if explored can contribute to the systematic reconstruction of Nigeria's socio-political system, and promote human and humane values in the affairs of contemporary Nigeria and emerging democracies at large

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