THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION

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Abstract: The question of the proper way that human beings should or ought to behave within and outside of democratic institutions has been a key issue in social and political philosophy throughout all ages from ancient Greece to date. The problem is that, in Nigeria today, some serious cultural and sociopolitical deficits of poor public ethics and public trust in the key institutions of society have vitiated democratic principles of rights, freedoms and participation, and so have compromised the major institutions and values of democracy. Evidence shows disobedience to the rule of law, institutional marginality, bad governance, corruption, abuse of power, godfather syndrome, political violence, electoral fraud, bad electoral laws, impunity, terrorism, banditry, hate speech, intolerance, lack of social justice and fair treatment, ultra-ethnicity, religious extremism, ignorance and anachronism, insecurity, instability, disorder, and disrespect for human dignity and well-being of individuals and groups. We find out that there is a link between some dimensions of institutional inefficiency and human nature, as well as the attainment of a view of human society imbued with democratic participation and responsibility. Bearing this in mind, we focus on the analysis of those processes and structures that affect the capacity of individuals to significantly contribute to the consolidation of the democratic society for the promotion of justice and empowerment as core human and democratic values.

Keywords: democracy; Nigeria; institution; marginality; values; participation; human nature.

Introduction

This paper examines the links between some dimensions of institutional inefficiency and the possibility of attaining democratic participation and responsibility. There is a focus on the analysis of the processes and structures that affect the capacity of individuals to significantly contribute to the consolidation of the democratic society. Central to this issue is the connection between the constitutive interpersonal foundations of the democratic society and the wider processes of social engineering. To this effect, the essay focuses on the issue of the capacity of institutions to ensure democratic participation on a reliable basis. It examines the types of institutional obstacles confronting the quest for democratic participation in an African nation-state. Special reference is made to the capacity of the democratic society to provide personal and collective security through effective social engineering. Although we substantially argue against the approach that defines democracy exclusively as a set of institutions, we examine the factors necessary for effective institutional efficiency, social stability, and national security. The issues

of participation and responsibility are central to our essay; philosophically speaking, this issue borders on the way the human being can achieve a balance between their exercise of freedom and the fact that the freedoms and needs of both the self and others need to be considered as well.

Presently, a number of Nigerian interest groups have proposed a wide range of solutions to the problems of social justice in a democracy negatively triggered by the logic of marginality and disunity. These strategies include pursuing a sovereign national conference to renegotiate the commonwealth (pro-democracy civil society groups in the southwest); political-party instigated regional development master plans (the Action Congress Party in the southwest); regional social movements and militia groups for the protection of ethno-cultural interests (the Oodua Peoples Congress /OPC/ in the southwest and the Arewa Youth Group in the north); violent secession and destabilization of the existing social order (Boko Haram, Ansaru, Yobe Taliban and other insurgents in the Middle Belt, north-central and northeastern Nigeria); peaceful secession (Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra /MASSOB/ in the southeast); reconsideration of the federal revenue generation and allocation principles (the Niger Delta communities and tribal youth movements in the oil producing south such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People /MOSOP/, the Ijaw Youth Congress /IYC/ and many others), etc. The sheer diversity of methods and objectives suggest that Nigeria in its present form has not addressed the fears and interests of the constituent groups and social formations. Hence, given the lack of DSP and the social justice that undermines unity and security, the toughest question of urgent national importance today is what measures should be developed to establish social justice for a sustainable democratic nation-state project.

An Objection to Adversarial Politics and Inefficient Institutions: Insecurity, Disorder and Terrorism as Threats to Key Democratic Institutions

There is a concern about the problems of infrastructural collapse, insecurity and participation within a democratic polity. Ake (1996, 7) has rightly pointed out that since Africa's state structures are susceptible to abuse and detrimental to democracy. Due to the certification and consolidation of immense state power, the internal constitution of the state nurtures and accredits a form of politics imbued with lawlessness. In our view, this type of politics can only be put in the service of personal aggrandizement, nepotism, and the cult of personality. These attitudes are clearly guiding principles that are contrary to the democratic way of life. Thus, we can agree with Gyekye (1997, 197) that the lack of an efficient or adequate legal and institutional framework explains the widespread incidence of corrupt behaviour, inadequate institutional checks, and ineffective law enforcement capabilities. And all of these clearly vitiate the potentials of democratic conduct and social ordering.

These issues are important because they have far-reaching consequences for "the survival of Nigeria" (Beckett & Young 1997, 1) as a socio-political entity. Though Ifeka (2000) rightly argues that development in Nigeria is seen in terms of the creation of subnational territories and political processes that individuals assume will bring about social and economic development in the affected areas, the truth is that such processes have not always led to genuine and enduring development (Ifeka 2000, 120). Indeed, political action has not always led to social and economic transformation of the conditions of life. Thus, the development and security of the various interest and segments of the Nigerian society continue to be hindered by social ills like institutional corruption, poor national planning, and invidious selfishness in the society. The truth remains that Nigeria's national security is threatened by the problem of inefficiency, collusion and despondency of its major institutions and structures as instruments of social action and rectification. This has ensured that the various governments and the state agencies have been unable to consistently and institutionally guarantee the adequate protection, peace and well-being of their citizens (Ujomu 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2008, Ujomu & Olatunji 2013).

This has assumed frightening dimensions as the years of oppression and manipulation by the political elite have translated into a quasi-religious challenge to the state in some parts of it. Moreover, the vulnerable and marginal peoples nationwide, such as the low-income earners, government workers, pensioners or retired workers, rural peoples, uneducated people, unemployed and underemployed youth, physically challenged persons, destitute children, and area boys, suffer the shortfalls of justice in Nigeria the most. There is a deterioration of some agencies of government (e.g., police, national assembly agencies of

government, law courts, prisons, etc.) due to inefficiency of public services, agency underfunding, public image crisis, ethnicity and politicization in managing social affairs and general dissatisfaction with the quality of life – notably healthcare, infrastructure, and education, among others.

The problem of national security in Nigeria is mainly seen in the inability of the various governments and state agencies to consistently and institutionally guarantee the adequate protection, defence, peace and well-being of the citizens. The *CDHR 2000 Annual Report* (2001: ix) states that, despite the democratic environment that supposedly pervades the nation, there still exist fatal forms of institutional deficiencies like extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, and sundry forms of degrading treatment. These acts are perpetrated within a "democratic society" by the state or by its security apparatus. The following cases are sufficient to illustrate the point we are making. This crisis is particularly prevalent in Nigeria as a local case study where incidents of poor public ethics and public trust have triggered corruption, abuse of power, terrorism, instability and disorder, disrespect for human dignity and human achievements, as well as low commitment to the well-being of citizens at different levels of society.

A prevalent problem adversely affecting Nigeria is the character and consequences of the gap in its nation-building aspiration, leading to an unfinished national or nation-state project. Specifically, the state of affairs across Nigeria gives us some cause for real concern, given that it is a key player in Africa. The country is beset by a plethora of recurring, man-made, socially endangering problems that grievously threaten the existing social and political order. Such problems include: inequity and conflicts about land ownership and distribution among Nigerian tribes (Ife–Modakeke in the southwest; Aguleri–Umuleri in the southeast; Eleme–Okrika, Ijaw–Itsekiri and Ijaw–Ilaje in the south; Tiv–Jukun, Tiv–Igede and Birom–Fulani in the north-central region and in the northeast); natural water source (mis)management and (mis)use across northern (the Lake Chad basin, the upper Niger and Benue River basins) 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 due to irrational cultural beliefs and customary practices; civil disturbances by cryptic religious sects; forceful ejection and land grabbing by individuals, tribes and government institutions (civilian, paramilitary and military) due to discriminatory and expropriating land use; indigenous settler controversies in northeastern Nigeria; herder-farmer issues (Fulani and Udawa) across the six geopolitical zones of the country, but mostly in the Niger and Benue River basins; religious and/or ethnic inclinations and conflicts leading to a crisis in northern Nigeria.

Also, there is a general North–South dichotomy and segregation seen as a real or perceived conspiracy theory of a Fulani and Arewa domination agenda in the government, institutions, and groups; varied grievances and frustrations occasioning clamour for a reform of federalism and resource control; entrenched South–South agitations for self-determination by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND); secessionist uprisings by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Biafra Independence Movement (BIM), the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM), the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), and by regional security outfits such as Amotekun, Bakassi Boys and the Niger Delta Avengers; varied oppressive, restive, conservative, sectarian and irredentist northwestern and northeastern traditional and political institutions triggering religious extremism, terrorism, instability and disorder through spectral banditry by insurgents like the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), Ansaru, Boko Haram (Nigerian Taliban), bandits, as well as by militia groups such as Ombatse, Bassa, and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN); economic recession and instability due to the overwhelming national demand or stress arising from an inequitable focus on a regionally driven mono-economy, substantially depending on the export of raw materials like crude oil from the Niger Delta region.

It should be emphasized that institutions are important to any conception of national security that Nigeria has, whether it is in terms of the desire and capacity for national self-defence (Ray 1987, 248–249) or in terms of the preservation of a nation's frontiers and the maintenance of a government's sovereignty (Goldstein 1999, 79). The different approaches to national security depend on the development of structures and institutions related to these approaches. The military approach to national security is determined by

the development of institutions linked to "the amassment of military armaments, personnel and expenditure" (Ochoche 1998, 106). The human resource/capital development approach depends on the development of institutions linked to the entrenchment and appropriation of teaching and research, starting from the general to the most specialized levels. These human resource development institutions facilitate the socioeconomic mobility, productivity and development of individuals and the society (Singh 1997, 125; Tilak 1997, 75–76; Hogendorn 1996, 62, 310–311). There is a need for the integration of these different approaches in view of the overall development of society.

The widespread phenomenon of institutional decay in Nigeria can be linked to the interface of ethnic, political, religious and socioeconomic factors that have undermined the quest for human and national development. These factors have been aggravated by the prolonged periods of military dictatorship, the abuse of human rights, and the depreciation of human dignity arising from this situation. Central to the crisis of institutions and security confronting the nation has been the general trend of degeneration of the quality of personal and social life. This is clearly seen in the diminishing capacity and prospect for the assurance of interpersonal cooperation and tolerance, respect for the rights and opportunities of others to seek acceptable means of assuring social survival and social mobility within the society. The goal of our analysis is to achieve the conscious rectification of our core social institutions.

The Idea of an Institution

Every human society has institutions of different kinds: political, economic, social, educational, religious, and cultural. An institution can be defined through its logical and empirical properties. This idea can be divided into two parts or questions that seem to be of relatively equal significance: First, what is an institution? Second, how are institutions formed? Let us examine the first question. An institution is easily known by the values it upholds and defends. It strongly champions these values because they are generally accepted by its members and by those who have thoroughly internalized or imbibed them. So, an institution ensures that its members assimilate its core values, i.e., a complex cocktail of duties, obligations, norms, expectations, relationships, meaning that there is a process of inculturation or institutionalization. To put it simply, an institution is a carrier or driver of values; it is a value system (Johnson 1961, 15–16, 20–21) or a system of values (McLean 2004, 209), a goal-oriented formal organization with its own voice, plans, mission, structure, officers, choice and action (Van Reken 1999, 198). It is also defined as a public agent of the State, a purposive organization with a set of well-defined features. For an institution to be effective, it needs to be capable of being institutionalized. Institutionalization suggests that the institution and all that it embodies have taken root (Ujomu 2004, 33).

Let us examine the second and more important question of the formation of an institution. An institution arises from the manner in which a nation arranges its values, i.e., what it desires, chooses, considers important or of interest. Such an institution needs to emanate from the people's freewill, voluntariness, as well as innate and acquired abilities. A people's values arise from their behaviour, choices and experiences; thus, the institution(s) arising thereof must be capable of meeting the social expectations and needs of the people, of providing social order, a guiding principle, and stability. So, an institution is a signpost or mirror of the values of a people or nation; a product of choice and performance (McLean 2004, 209–212). In other words, this institution must be reliable, viable, and predictable in ways that enable it to respond to the needs of the people who formed it. This means that a person or institution cannot give what it does not have. So, when we set up institutions, we seek security, efficiency and continuity of the more general rules of social living that people have adopted and adapted. In Nigeria, however, the institutions are not able to attain these goals of decision-making for the common good of all. They have rather been perverted, violated, hijacked and relegated, thus posing a threat to collective survival (Ujomu 2004, 31–33).

Institutionalized Deception and the Eclipse of National Development

The prolonged periods of bad governance of military dictatorship and civil governments have led to the depreciation of Nigerian national institutions, thus ensuring that the security and stability of the nation could not be assured. Many of the previous regimes had unviable ideas of what institutions are

and how to manage them. The institutions have thus been submerged into politics, creating cognitive state ethnic maps identifying groups that can be misted or otherwise, and those loyal or marginal to the ruling circles. There has been a conscious vitiation of the efficacy of national institutions through the acts of rulers and the elite, who distorted the goals of these institutions. The military institution that is traditionally designed to provide security has not been spared either (Luckham 1998, 589–592).

Due to general institutional inefficiency, people, goods and services cannot be easily moved around without incurring severe costs either in losses or in the provision of security. There is evidence of the lack of social preparedness to tackle important affairs of life. Actually, fuel scarcity can almost bring social life to a standstill, leading to a breakdown and long-term disruptions of socio-economic infrastructure such as telecommunications, transportation, etc. The problem of institutional incapability in Nigeria compels us to agree with Schochet (1979, 2) that there is a sense in which our institutions have betrayed us and can no longer be trusted in Nigeria; it is clear that the state has failed to fulfil a key function, understood as the obligations for the citizen's welfare (Thimmaiah 1988, 65).

The Nature of Democratic Institutions

The institutions created by democracy seek to provide some form of security for the democratic society. They simply aim at its efficient practice and continuation. The extent to which these institutions and aims are attained is actually another issue. On the issue of institutions, Busia (1975, 455) argues that the characteristic of a democratic society is the existence of institutional arrangements that ensure that rulers understand and try to realize the general interest of all in society. Ghali (1995, 6) notes that democracy "draws substance from its citizens who in turn exercise their will through procedures and institutions which must be shaped, sustained, and strengthened on a continuing basis". According to Apter (1991, 463–464), democracy in its different forms (parliamentary or presidential) is the embodiment of more general rules that are institutionalized and have self-evident validity. These rules facilitate exchanges between the rulers and the ruled, the accountability of the elected to the electorate. The conception of democracy as a set of institutions has been most consistently defended by scholars like Schumpeter (1982, 153–173) who holds that democracy or the democratic method is "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will." To this effect, democracy implies "a political method or an institutional arrangement for arriving at political, i.e., legislative and administrative decisions by vesting in certain individuals the power to decide on all matters as a consequence of their successful pursuit of the peoples vote" (Schumpeter in Held 1987, 165). According to Barletta quoted in Touraine (1991, 268), the fundamental requirements for democracy include the possibility of the people's participation in the choice of government and the ability of political parties to gain or lose power through elections, etc. For Nzouankeu (1991, 381), democracy is seen in terms of structures that require recognition and guarantee. These include parties, the judiciary and power transfer or alternation through procedural and efficient management of political competition (Clapham 1994, 423). Held (1993, 23–24) also reinforces this approach when he notes that democracy is committed to the structure of public power, such as the constitution as a means of assuring rights and defining the mechanisms of political activity.

However, there has been a strong opposition to the views of Schumpeter and others. In rejecting the idea of democracy as exclusively a set of institutions, Ghali (1995, 6) notes that, although many states are committed to democracy and free elections, the mere holding of elections does not indicate that democracy is in place. We can add that it is very likely for us to have a set of institutions that are purportedly democratic, in the sense of embodying its principles and ideals, but yet in actual fact, the institutions will not be effective or functional. There is always the real threat of hijack, perversion, relegation, and abuse of democratic institutions. Hence, it is clear that the institutions themselves can, at best, be a means rather than the end of democracy. Moreover, the externalized character of these institutions makes them prone to violations. Thus, Hermet (1991, 256–257) rightly observes that, in the context of the search for democratic consolidation, the process of institutionalization does not indicate in any way that the affected institutions have taken root. The reason is that, sometimes, these institutions serve as a mere façade or smokescreen, and actual or far-reaching political dealings take place outside of

them. Hence, "within democracy there could be aberrations, such that institutions designed to promote accountability could also be used to make it void" (Apter 1991, 470).

A Maximalist View of the Democratic Society

The democratic society aims at its own notion of the common good through greater opportunities for participation and responsibility among citizens. Underlying this feeling of mutual responsibility is, presumably, the attitude of trust or faith in a unique pattern of political administration and social conduct that seeks the inclusion of as many people in the management of national affairs as possible. This inclusion is premised on certain structural, normative, and practical considerations. The structures of representation seek to ensure the dignity of the human being as occasioned by responsible and responsive conduct among the electors and the elected, based on the just and fair treatment of all. Of course, the idea of fair treatment is premised on the equality of all people according to their humanity. Democracy requires the participation of as many citizens as are responsible, committed, or willing to make their contribution to national governance and social affairs. In modern times, this idea has partly been institutionalized through the system of representative government. It should be pointed out here that representative government is itself based on other assumptions, such as shared feelings of purpose and feelings of mutual responsibility, which are understood by the two broad groups: the electors (the represented ones) and the elected (the representatives).

However, in order to comprehend the processes involved in sustaining the democratic society, we need to examine, in a systematic way, the key democratic principles that facilitate the provision of security for the society. Although the idea of democracy entails "constitutional arrangements and the structural organization of central parliamentary organizations, democracy is much more than this" (Worsley 1967, 206). Indeed, democracy is "an irrevocable and final dedication to the dignity of man" (Stevenson 1968, 388). Democracy "is a reflective capacity of all human beings for intelligent judgment and action if the proper conditions are furnished" (Dewey in Bernstein 1985, 49). There is an emphasis here on the capabilities that people bring to bear on their individual and collective acts and on how these affect the effectiveness of institutions. In fact, Aiftinca (2001, 16) has rightly noted that, in everything that we do, "freewill must be supervised by responsibility in order to eliminate the arbitrary." We always need to ask ourselves which values we should choose and uphold in order to make sense of our lives as human beings.

Responsibility and Responsiveness in a Democratic System

It is clear that democracy upholds consent and participation as its core principles. The idea of representation properly construed is therefore intended to achieve, on the one hand, a high degree of responsibility in people as the custodians and beneficiaries of political power. On the other hand, it seeks to ensure that the function of government will be conducted in order to attain the maximal benefits from the discipline and training of superior intellect (Syntopicon 1990, 243), but the idea of responsibility must operate at the individual and collective levels if it is to be effective in the democratic society. Raphael (1979, 145) states that the idea of common responsibility, which is fundamental to democracy, implies fraternity or the responsibility for others on the one hand, and liberty or the responsibility for oneself on the other hand; these two must work together for the good of all in order for security, peace and harmony to be achieved in society. These two notions of responsibility are combined to facilitate the entrenchment of the principles of inclusion, recognition, and positive growth in society. These principles are central to the effectiveness of democratic representation. The aim is to ensure that all interests in society shall retain their benefits, and that they shall also be protected within the system. Thus, democracy creates and sustains institutions that seek to assure freedom of political choice and the representation of interest. Participation does not refer to mere voting, but includes consultation and recognition of wider interests and groupings. More importantly, it implies the opportunity for greater public commentary and criticism (Nnoli 1994, 4) and a commitment to structures that protect rights (Held 1993, 23), as well as agencies that foster rule-guided political competition. These rules need to be in accordance with the broad concerns and consent of the ones affected. A cardinal virtue of democracy is self-direction and initiative, which

suggests that people should not be unnecessarily constrained by the imposition of any person's perceived superior wisdom.

Institutionalizing Democracy or Democratic Institutionalization

The process of institutionalization is about the way the affected institutions have taken root. The excessive emphasis on institutionalization leads to the loss of a personal dimension that is equally important in successful democratic practice. This type of deficiency creates the capacity for people to disengage from responsibility. This is because when there are problems with democratic practice, individuals can act surreptitiously and submerge under the canopy of institutions. Hence, the acts of the individual will be covered by the broader practices of a system that is faulty or defective. How can we separate the acts of the individual from those of the institution or system? Who is even the system? If the latter can be no other than a plethora of positions occupied by individuals, then what is the place of the individual in the acts and operations of these institutions? How do rules and regulations facilitate the entrenchment and attainment of institutional purpose? These questions are important in the face of recent evidence of the collapse or failure of institutions in society and of the short-term and long-term consequences of this for the sustenance of the democratic society.

A classic example of the eclipse or submergence of the individual within the institutional framework is seen in the phenomenon whereby public officers and other people acting under institutional direction, protection and subterfuge, adamantly violate the legal acts of key institutions and compromise the institutional framework by abusing their positions of authority through the denial of the freedoms and dignity of citizens without recourse to due process. The leaders of these institutions are often unwilling to take responsibility for the activities of their members. Inquisitions into the identity and motive of the perpetrators will either be stalemated or undermined. Eventually, none of them will be apprehended or indicted. So, impunity and lack of accountability have taken root. We notice the malicious or intransigent lack of imputation of political, moral, legal or institutional responsibility. We need not cite the numerous cases that illustrate our point. In Nigeria, in many cases, the failure of the institutions and practice of democracy created opportunities for tyranny and deprivation to set in on the citizens. Given such a scenario, democratic conduct and principles cannot easily survive. This phenomenon is evidently an abuse of the very principle of responsibility that democracy seeks to affirm and uphold. It illustrates the entrenchment of lawlessness and disregard for due process that democracy itself stands for.

Institutional Restructuring and the Conditions for Sustainable Democracy

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that there is a need for the creation of a theoretical model that can guarantee the restructuring of institutions in view of strengthening their efficiency and focus. Kieh (2001, 213) holds that "the reconstitution of the scale mm center on the formulation of a new constitutional order replace with democratic institutions and processes." While we partially agree with this view, we need to point out the role of democratic values in the transformation of the institutional focus and efficiency. These issues are crucial to understanding the character of a truly democratic society that can ensure the positive integration of the members of society, greater participation and opportunities for actualization at the personal and social levels. In other words, a government needs to effectively promote the public good by attaining institutional competence. The federal government, government agencies, the police force, universities, companies, the home, and even churches and mosques all need to take positive actions to assure institutional efficiency, to realize the common good and to improve the well-being of all in society. This requires both intellectual and moral capacities for the proper utilization of physical infrastructure. It also requires that governments and public officials ensure that effective planning and execution of national development plans are attained. Consequently, there should be adequate plans for infrastructural development, such as the position and maintenance of MAD networks, schools, pipe-borne water, and electricity.

Resources and revenues need to be effectively used in the quest for socioeconomic development, so as to have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of Nigerian people. The task of national development cannot be realized unless trust in the vital social infrastructure, necessary for the establishment and

maintenance of national security in Nigeria, is in place. Foremost among these social structures and institutions are efficient education, military, transportation, and industrial systems. Hence, in a more positive sense, the government or state must be responsible for the bulk of all socioeconomic activities, employment, contracts. etc. Hawthorn (l993, 335–336) rightly holds that so much economic life is dependent on the state. This point raises more pressing questions about the role of some state institutions in enhancing the social status of the individual and the quality of his/her life. There are also concerns about how institutions and structures can uphold and maintain individual and collective accountability, responsibility, and transparency. There is the need to develop a means for the national government and its various institutions to be able to perform a check on corruption and exceptional incompetence (Dent 1995, 138).

In examining the notion of institution, its activities and the character of its officials, we need to focus on the idea of the most positive view of the state, which, as Clapham (1991, 92) holds, is a means of supplying the opportunity for people to pursue their own happiness. The state is the essential foundation for the pursuit of public benefits such as peace and welfare, all of which can be described as public goods. For Shepsle (1980, 35), examples of these include national defence, interstate highways, etc. These features are vital requirements for human well-being, peace, and progress. The state and its officials need to be aware that large numbers of people depend on government protection from criminal threats, fuel and food shortage (Edelman 1975, 14). All of the above features are illustrative of what the government seeks to achieve when it aspires towards the common good. The idea of the common good is "attached to objects and policies that are beneficial to the whole, taken collectively" (Schochet 1979, 24). If government is to be seen as a rational device for satisfying people's needs, it must be capable of proper operation using the rules of good governance.

The issue of efficient institutions draws attention to what Leftwich (1993, 610–611) calls the underlying elements of good governance, such as accountable administration of public funds, efficient public service, etc. The requirements of good governance, embodied in the official acts of social responsibility, raise normative and practical issues that are at the core of viable moral and political philosophies which ought to guide the society. These raise fundamental questions about our idea of membership in society, our interests, duties and commitments. There is a focus on the character of our behaviour, especially where our actions will have an impact on the interests, needs, and entitlements of others. The question then is what is the link between our actions as citizens and public officials, operating through and on behalf of institutions vis-a-vis the demand for security and nation building in its holistic dimension (Thomas 1987, 1). The focus is on how these institutions affect the guarantee of rights and opportunities available for the peaceful and legitimate use of private and public goods such as freedom, peace and well-being. Robstein (1987, 143) holds that the state must meet the growing demand for internal development by choosing a strategy that does not undermine harmony, actualization, effectiveness, and stability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we may argue that, in the search for institutional efficiency, the best guarantee of collective actualization is full education, responsibility and sharing on the part of each person who is capable of contributing to the society (Dewey 1963, 475). There is a need to define the social institutions in line with the objectives of social life such as mutual intercourse, security, peace, cooperation, etc., as well as to create and maintain beneficial and lawful ways of arranging social interactions (Dewey 1963, 192, 497). Dewey (1994, 156) holds that human relations must focus on the concrete impact on one's personal and social life in all its ramifications, so that every individual has a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of groups to which one belongs and in participating according to the needs and values which the groups sustain. If the society is capable of establishing a set of institutions that respect and pursue policies that develop human resources and encourage productivity and growth, it will require the generation of technocratic capability and skills necessary for redefining these institutions. With such skills or knowledge at its disposal, it will seek the right attitudes and values needed for the effective and positive transformation of these social institutions. The thrust is to evolve a

political culture that can install and sustain political attitudes and values that are conducive to harmony, cooperation and stability (Cammack 1997, 92).

Finally, as a way of redirecting institutional focus, we may hold that democracy gives people the self-confidence and opportunity to make their contributions to the organization and sustenance of society. It ensures that each person and group has a sense of belonging and responsibility to the community. Democracy nurtures a sense of participation in social life and ensures that everyone retains a stake in the society and its resources. Therefore, democracy's ultimate goal is the establishment and promotion of a stable society where people can achieve their genuine human potential. Democracy can only make sense when it seeks to provide the widest access to education and training, as well as to equal opportunities for people to exercise their talents, retain security of income, work and enjoy good health.

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