

**AN APPRAISAL OF JAMES FISHKIN'S CONCEPT OF
DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AS A PANACEA
FOR DEMOCRACY**

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Abstract

Man is a political being that exists within the confines of a state. The affairs of the state are handled by a system or machinery known as a government. The human person always searches for a system of government that is more convenient and better suitable to his way of living. Thus, many states and government have adopted and practiced different political ideologies and systems such as monarchy, socialism, communism et cetera. Democracy is one of the most favoured and adopted systems of government that is practiced, because it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Yet, democracy is not without its faults and limitations. Owing to this fact, various theories and trends of democracy have emerged over the years in advancing how democracy can be a more viable option for the government. Amongst these trends and theories that have emerged, deliberative democracy is one of interest that is pragmatic in nature. The concern of this essay is to critically examine the understanding of deliberative democracy of James Fishkin. Using the analytic and evaluative methods, this essay seeks to reconcile the value of deliberation with other core democratic principles. This paper concludes that more deliberation can make our democracy better, bringing to focus all its major attributes and components, and why it is the best form of democracy to practice.

Keywords: Deliberation, Democracy, Government, Inclusiveness, State, System, Thoughtfulness.

Introduction

In the society where man finds himself, there is a need to coordinate and take care of his affairs and activities as he correlates with his fellow men. Thus, to live peacefully with others, man organizes a system of government to oversee every aspect of his life. This leads to what we know as a social contract between a sovereign and the people. Nevertheless, social contract produces a form of government that rules the people in a state. According to Aristotle, the human person by nature is a political being. He or she cannot do without an aspect of politics in his or her life. He/she is always interested in how he conducts his affairs; this propels him to come together with fellow humans to form a society for cooperation and benefits. To further strengthen this co-existence in the society with other human beings, there arose a need for a leader, one who will oversee the general issues that bother all members of that society.

The government as an institution for handling the affairs of the state has undergone different forms also. We have monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, dictatorship, military *et cetera*. Democracy is also among these various government systems that man adopted and has become popular among the states and adopted by them. Democracy has gone through various stages from its crude form of direct democracy. We have a representative democracy, liberal democracy which is championed by the United States of America. In all of these, there seems to be a loophole between the government and the governed. It is the neglect of consultation of the governed through deliberations to determine what they need at a particular instance.

In the African political sphere and particularly in Nigeria, a large number of the citizens are disinterested in the affairs of government due to the above factor, among others. There seems to be a great vacuum between the people and the government in a democratic system of government. This is a result of the lack of adequate deliberations before decisions between the people elected into government and the citizenry who voted them into power are made. In political philosophy, it is said that internal sovereignty lies in the hands and will of the citizens; hence the government owes a responsibility to its citizenry.¹ Thus, in Nigeria, representative democracy has not yet met the needs of grass-root deliberation with citizens on issues that affect the state with her citizens before discussing them in the legislature. Hence, where there is a communication divide between the government and its citizens due to a lack of deliberation, the function of the state is impaired. It is this backdrop that we wish to draw upon as the background of our research to expose the urgency of deliberative democracy. This paper seeks to argue consultation with the people who in the first place voted the government into power in a democratically elected government, and

¹ Julius Azelama, *An Introduction to Political Science for Public Administration Students in Nigeria*, 2nd Ed. (Benin City: Ever Blessed Publishers, 2016), 145.

whom true sovereignty lies with as the government owes a responsibility to need to be interacted with. Using the thought of James Fishkin, this paper holds that deliberative democracy is more tenable today in our society, and it is what needs to be adopted as the new status quo in democracy.

The Meaning of Democracy

Democracy is a household term, it is common to us in our *locale*, but what is democracy? Where did it originate from? This is the first hurdle we seek to cross in this intellectual voyage. Etymologically, the word democracy is from two Greek words, “*demos* meaning 'the people', 'the poor people', 'the mob'; and *kraitia* meaning 'rule or authority'. *Demokratia* means, therefore 'rule by the people', 'rule by the masses.’”² There are two keywords to take note of from the etymological definition of democracy, the first is; 'people', that is, it is a system that involves the people. Thus, people come together to form a democracy. The second word is; 'rule', which means that it involves the running of a state. Taking this into cognizance, the most important element of democracy is a rule of a state that is of the people. It is interesting to note that the concept of democracy dates to the ancient Greek City-State, but today “the concept of democracy has been variously subjected to re-definition by philosophers, scholars, politicians, and practitioners of democratic governance”³ Thus, it is not unusual that we have no one definition of democracy, as various schools, politicians and individuals define democracy in their own opinion but stress its core proponents.

Furthermore, scholars in their contribution have given their concept of democracy. For Barry Holden, “democracy is a political system of government of which it can be said that the whole people positively or negatively are entitled to make the basic determining decisions on important matters of public policy.”⁴ As a system, it is an organized body put in place to cater for the affairs of the people. Thus, decisions made by the government whether negative or positive are to be obeyed by the people since the people in the first place have given power and legitimacy to the government. For Jagdish Chandra Johari, democracy is peculiar in three senses; firstly it is a form of a state, secondly, it is a form of government being practiced, thirdly, it is a form of society and, above all, it is an ethical idea or a way of life.⁵ As a form of state, democracy emerges where people are powerful or when sovereignty is vested in the people. As a government, the people come together to constitute it. As a way of life, it suggests that there are no inequalities among some parts of the community in variance with the others.

² Gregory Ogbenika, *A Discourse on Democracy: Western and African Perspectives* (Benin: Mindex Publishing Co. Ltd., 2019), 2.

³ Oyekunle Adegboyega, “Social and Political Philosophy.” (Course notes for PhL 253, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja), 169.

⁴ Barry Holden, *The Nature of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row Publication Inc., 1972), 2.

⁵ Jagdish Chandra Johari, *Principles of Modern Political Science*, 2nd Ed. (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2009), 329.

The most popular definition of democracy is by Abraham Lincoln. For him, democracy is simply “the government of the people by the people and for the people.”⁶ This definition by Abraham Lincoln pegs the sovereign with the people, that is, it is the people who own true sovereignty. Therefore, the government is formed by them, for them to manage their affairs, and the government owes a responsibility to the people.

Tracing its origin, “democracy as a political ideology and system of government has over the years become the most heralded, most spoken about and acceptable, and turns out to be a household terminology in the political space.”⁷ Democracy has sumptuous popularity amongst countries and governments. Every system of government, no matter the type of ideology has a bit of democratic undertone to it. Democracy as celebrated today has its origin and historical development. The beginning of democracy unarguably can be traced to the ancient Greek City-state of Athens. All adult free male citizens usually gathered at the city square to take decisions collectively on what affects them.²³ In the Athenian practice, all citizens were entitled to attend the legislative assembly at which each was entitled to participate by discussion and voting. This system of democracy permitted freedom of speech, and political offices are open to all citizens who were chosen by lot.⁸ By all citizens, we mean all adult free males, as the franchise excluded women and slaves. The Athenian system upheld the freedom and the rights of its citizens. Democracy as a system of government has undergone many reforms and changes.

The quest and need for a better democratic system that is well acclimatized to the people's life cannot be overemphasized. Various theories have been posited, and as time evolves, there was a need for a review. Schumpeterian theory opines protection of the citizen from dictatorship through the replacement of one government with another.⁹ Representative democracy recommends representatives are voted to represent the people in government to govern them. Liberal Theory holds the protection of the natural rights, property and freedom of the people. Social Theory posits more economic and social equality for the working-class citizens.¹⁰ However, from the foregoing, and tracing the origin of democracy, we can observe intently that, the first form of democracy was deliberative, even if it was not well refined or defined. It shows the need for robust and grassroots deliberation on political issues as they concern the state and its citizens.

⁶ Abraham Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address of November 19, 1863” accessed 01/03/2022, <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm>.

⁷ Adegboyega, “Social and Political Philosophy.” 168.

⁸ Andrew Uduigwomen, *Studies for Jurisprudence* (Calabar: Ultimate Index Book Publication Ltd., 2010), 301.

⁹ Remi Anifowose and Francis Enemu, (eds.), *Elements of Politics*, (Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications, 2008), 142.

¹⁰ Gregory Ogbenika, *A Discourse on Democracy: Western and African Perspective* (Benin-City: Mindex Publishing Co. Ltd., 2019), 46.

¹¹ Oyekunle Adegboyega, “Social and Political Philosophy.” (Course notes for PhL 253, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja) 173-175.

Deliberative Democracy as a Model of Democracy

In all the forms or models of democracies thus far, they seem to have issues and enter into a dilemma of not meeting the democratic needs of the people. In the current models of democracies as being practiced in the modern-day, there is always a representation, but these representations are not enough or all-embracing. This could be inferred from Alfred Smith's ¹² statement when he says, "the only cure for the evils of democracy is more democracy."¹³ What then could be more democratic? We have noted already that representation did not solve this issue. This difficulty has led many defenders of democracy to search for new solutions to the question posed, and this is where the idea of deliberative democracy arose.

Deliberative democracy solves the issue of democracy by placing a huge emphasis on deliberation. "Deliberation in this context refers to a process, or more often processes, of rational argumentation...democracy will only be sustained by people participating in debate and discussion, intending to reach a reasonable consensus on the contested political issue."¹⁴ Through rational discussions in the forms of debate and deliberation, the citizens of a state can make decisions that transform their preferences and opinions with one voice. Deliberative democracy ensures that people make decisions after they have considered the opinions of other delegates that are involved in the process of deliberation.

James Bohman beautifully elucidates the definition of deliberative democracy when he says:

Refers to any one of a family of views according to which the public deliberation of free and equal citizens is the core of legitimate political decision-making and self-government. Beyond this fundamental agreement, each of the terms of this definition is hotly debated among deliberative democrats, who have put forth a variety of conceptions of the deliberative process and its normative constraints.¹⁵

At the core of deliberative democracy in any of its forms, is the idea that deliberation essentially involves publicly giving and demanding reasons to justify decisions, policies, or laws. Deliberation depends on finding sound reasons, in the hope that everyone, despite their divergent starting points, will find them convincing. Thus, through a process of deliberation, justification is being given to decisions arrived at. Debates are held in strategic places, wherein the citizens can participate fully. Deliberative democracy is pragmatic, in the sense that, it aims at providing what can work amid the shortcomings of democracy.

¹² Alfred Emanuel Smith was an American politician who served four terms as Governor of New York and was the Democratic Party's candidate for president in 1928.

¹³ Iain MacKenzie, *Politics: Key Concepts in Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2009), 112.

¹⁴ Iain MacKenzie, *Politics*, 114.

¹⁵ James Bohman, "Deliberative Democracy and the Benefit of Epistemic Diversity," *Episteme*, (2006): 177.

James Fishkin's Concept of Deliberative Democracy

James Fishkin defines deliberative democracy as “efforts, in both theory and practice, to reconcile the value of deliberation with other core democratic principles, such as political equality and the avoidance of tyranny of the majority.”¹⁶ We realize that democracy has some shortcomings due to political inequality and tyranny of the majority in contemporary models of democracy. Deliberative democracy aims at deliberation by the citizens to bring about political equality. For Fishkin, the concern is whether deliberation is achievable despite the conflicting values of citizens. Deliberation is aimed at reconciling these differences.

For Fishkin, “modern debate about deliberative democracy can be thought of as an exploration into the compatibility of three principles; deliberation, political equality, and non-tyranny.”¹⁷ Deliberative democracy in Fishkin's idea entails deliberation by a representative microcosm of the citizenry. The opinion of the citizens can be achieved from a well-informed organized deliberation. Hence, political equality is attained as the voice of the masses is considered. Tyranny of the majority is avoided because, unlike elite democracy, deliberative democracy picks ordinary citizens representing various interests in its process of deliberation.

Deliberative Democracy as Practical and Consequential

From all indications, it is lucid that Fishkin's concept of deliberative democracy is both theoretical and practical. Thus, he defines deliberative democracy as the fusion of deliberation with core democratic ideas. This is to eradicate the glaring weaknesses of other models of democracy such as political inequality and tyranny of the majority. To achieve this democratic deliberation, Fishkin proposes a representational microcosmic citizenry who would represent various societies and interests in the state to deliberate on salient issues that affect them.

Primarily, a deliberative democratic theory seeks to propound principles that can establish fair terms of political cooperation in a democratic society.¹⁸ This is what Fishkin's deliberative democracy seeks to achieve by bringing together the deliberative microcosm to deliberate on issues and policies that concern them in their society. This will lead them to make resolutions on which policy to implement. Joseph Omoregbe says that contrary to popular belief that theory and practice are two opposite concepts when it comes to politics, it would be wrong to downplay the importance of theory in trying to postulate a political theory. For him, a theory is a bedrock on which the foundations of practice can thrive. The theory is indispensable

¹⁶ James Fishkin, “Deliberative Democracy,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. Robert Simon (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2002), 221.

¹⁷ Fishkin, “Deliberative Democracy,” 221.

¹⁸ Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, “Deliberative Democracy beyond Process,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002): 153.

as it acts as a guide to practice.¹⁹ Thus, though Fishkin's deliberative democracy emphasizes making deliberation practical, nonetheless it is founded on theory. This theory is based on inclusiveness and thoughtfulness. Inclusiveness ensures that everyone can become a part of the deliberative process and consultation, and is not an avenue for some form of elitism. The thoughtfulness of the process entails that all the necessary information needed for deliberation, and to give value judgments are available, considering the peculiar situation of their society.

The fundamental basis of Fishkin's deliberative democracy is how democracy can be more inclusive, and thoughtful.²⁰ It is inclusive in the sense that, it seeks to bring in the various microcosms of the society to deliberate on policies. Inclusiveness in the deliberative process entails that there is no form of domination by organized interests who hijack the process.²¹ Inclusiveness is geared towards the representation of all and sundry involved in any issue, that is, the general public on whom these policies will have effect. So, to ensure a deliberative process that is not distorted by dominating interest groups, deliberative democracy must be all-inclusive to all. Deliberative democracy is thoughtful because it seeks to give careful and due consideration to issues and policies to be discussed from the various perspectives of a well-informed deliberation. Some required conditions to aid thoughtfulness that improve the quality of deliberation include: information, conscientious participation, substantive balance, diversity of viewpoints represented, and the merits of ideas presented.²² Social, racial and economic inequalities among individuals should not be used as a basis for evaluating ideas brought forward, but solely merit. There must be ample information about matters to be discussed. There must be a diversity of ideas and opinions.

Other models of democracy lack these two principles that democracy demands today. There is a wide divide between representatives in government and the citizenry, this creates a gap that needs to be filled, and can be achieved with deliberation. Hence, James Bohman notes that “the point of inclusion however is not to find the right perspective but to have such perspectives interact and inform each other, and in that way open up deliberation, as it is currently constituted to correction.”²³ One may be quick to conclude that inclusiveness in Fishkin's deliberative democracy is merely bringing in different perspectives and opinions, but it transcends, in the sense that, these various perspectives are meant to be interacted with, analyzed, and criticized to bring about well-informed policies.

¹⁹ Joseph Omoregbe, *Socio-Political Philosophy and International Relations: A Systematic and Historical Study, Vol. 1* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 2007), vii.

²⁰ James Fishkin, *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 95.

²¹ Fishkin, *When the People Speak*, 99.

²² James Fishkin, *When the People Speak*, 99.

²³ James Bohman, “Deliberative Democracy and the Epistemic Benefits of Diversity,”³⁹ *Episteme* (2006): 179.

Deliberative democracy in Fishkin's thought is supposed to produce a positive effect. It ought to bridge the vacuums that other models of democracy had failed to bridge. So, Fishkin posits that deliberative democracy should provide a change in policy attitude.²⁴ This change can be achieved by well-informed microcosmic representatives who represent the voice of the people. For well-informed decisions, a mere majority does not produce this effect, but a justified outcome based on well-informed decisions backed by principles does.²⁵ Information is crucial in every deliberative process and must be readily available at all times. Deliberative democracy empowers the civic capacity of her citizens to be politically active and more public-spirited. It aims at public-spiritedness because it is geared toward making citizens more concerned about public affairs.

To achieve inclusiveness, thoughtfulness, and effective deliberation, a necessary factor that ought to be considered and present are the right, and proper conditions for deliberation to occur. There must be some form of mutual justification during deliberation, "mutual justification means not merely offering reasons to other people, or even offering reasons that they happen to accept (for example, because they are in a weak bargaining position). It means providing reasons that constitute a justification for imposing binding laws to them."²⁶ Fishkin notes that these conditions must take into cognizance the fundamental principles that they share, issues bothering communication and language, an avenue for mutual trust and respect which must be created, and none the least, a conducive and serene environment to ensure that deliberation goes on smoothly. These factors must be duly considered when proposing a deliberative consultation to determine the tenability of deliberative democracy in different conditions.

To ensure that deliberative democracy produces a consequential effect, Fishkin examines the role of representatives and how they are selected. Representatives should be selected from a random sampling, and given the opportunity to air their opinions without any form of prejudice against them due to class, race, gender, status, *et cetera*.²⁷ Fishkin posits that representatives should be a considerable number to meet up with the criteria of being 'the voice of the people', that is, to represent a larger facet of the citizenry. Also, the deliberative microcosm is provided with the much-needed information they need to make value judgments. Vulnerability to manipulation is non-existent because choices and decisions are adopted based on their merits.

²⁴ James Fishkin, *When the People Speak*, 102.

²⁵ James Fishkin, *When the People Speak*, 102.

Gutmann and Thompson, "Deliberative Democracy," 154.

²⁶ Gutmann and Thompson, "Deliberative Democracy," 156.

²⁷ James Fishkin, *When the People Speak*, 112.

A deliberative poll with a human face provides the opportunity for gathering qualitative as well as quantitative data. The participants are privy to weigh the prospects and consequences sincerely. This they do regardless of who is offering them. A careful assessment of deliberative polls with a human face will point out two problems faced in other models of democracy which deliberative democracy tries to solve according to Fishkin. These are: the wrong conception that the public is incapable of dealing with complex issues, and secondly the vulnerability to manipulation which is quite evident and problematic in African democracies. To tackle the first problem, Fishkin says that deliberative polls permit the interrogation of panels of competing experts to explain what they believe. The inputs of these experts make a balance on-site deliberation. Thus, balance information is available. On the second issue, he says that when citizens are thoughtfully more employed, they are less likely to be manipulated.²⁸ With more information available, there is more context for evaluating both candidates and policy proposals. Misinformation is to be replaced with a better account of what is known and what is contested by experts from different points of view. Thus, justified statements that are more reasonable have more effect on opinion change, rather than those that express support for a position.

Fishkin proposes that democratic ideas must be considered to be more democratic. This does not mean one particular thing as it is essentially three in *praxis*. First, it could mean increasing the opportunities for mass participation through more referenda, primaries, or other forms of direct consultation. More avenues for deliberation and participation should be put in place. Secondly, it could mean improving the degrees to which the votes or preferences of everyone are considered. This advocates that the preferences of the masses should be taken seriously. Thirdly, it could mean increasing the extent of voter information and deliberation.²⁹ Summarily, it could mean more participation, more political equality, or more deliberation. These are the principles that should be adapted to order to achieve the implementation of democratic ideals.

The Relevance of James Fishkin's Deliberative Democracy

James Fishkin's deliberative democracy is realistic, accordingly, Nicole Curato *et al* states that “skeptics have questioned the practical viability of deliberative democracy. Its ideals have been criticized as utopian, and its forums have been dismissed as mere experiments, with no hope of being institutionalized effectively.”³⁰ Contrary to this claim, Fishkin's deliberative democracy has proven to

²⁸ James Fishkin, *When the People Speak*, 125.

²⁹ Fishkin, *When the People Speak*, 190.

³⁰ Nicole Curato, et al., “Twelve Keys Findings in Deliberative Democracy Research,” *Daedalus: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 146, no. 3 (2017): 29.

be both a theory and practice which has been implemented in various countries on a national level e.g the United Kingdom, Australia and Denmark, and in difficult conditions like China's that is not open to democratic practices. This shows that Fishkin's deliberative democracy can be extended to a larger scale which can bring about more informed practices.

Fishkin's deliberative democracy is all-inclusive; it seeks to include all persons irrespective of gender, race, colour, and social and economic stratification, and the powerful; or as exploitation of the people, by the powerful, through the parties.³¹ This implicitly shows the failures of democracy in Nigeria, whereby those in office politically and economically exploit the citizenry for their selfish gains. There is no form of deliberation in the real sense with the citizens to determine which policy needs to be adopted. Thus, more than ever, there is a need to adopt Fishkin's idea of deliberative democracy to imbibe its principles where a microcosm represents the citizens to make well-informed decisions for the country.

Deliberative democracy gives voice to the people. Chris Osegenwune notes therefore that democracy in Africa is faced with weak structures, institutions, and high cost of organization. This has created a system whereby the political class is favoured. Thus, the underprivileged are unable to participate in the political process of the country.³² Unlike the democratic practice in Nigeria where a few influential minorities dominate the political scene to the detriment of the citizens, deliberative democracy creates an avenue that gives political sovereignty to the citizens. Hence, instead of decisions and policies being adopted by these few individuals, deliberative democracy allows a public consultation and deliberation for a wider and more informed microcosm to take these decisions. Thus, it becomes expedient to adopt Fishkin's deliberative democracy.

Deliberative democracy is instrumental in achieving sustainable development in a country. Underdevelopment has made Africa in general, and Nigeria, in particular, to be unfavourable and difficult. Thus, most African countries are referred to as third-world countries. Gregory Ogbenika hinged the reason for this underpins to the problem of leadership.³³ Nigeria's present system of governance has failed filled with corruption and self-interests. Hence, the crisis is that the intended development plan of the government is quite different from that of the people. The argument is that long

³¹ Godfrey Onah, "Africa and the Illusion of Democracy," in *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa*, ed. Josephat Obi Oguejiofor (Enugu: Delta Publications Limited, 2004), 281.

³² Chris Osegenwune, "Democracy and the Quest for Human Rights in Africa", *Journal of Philosophy and Development* 16, no. 1 (2016/2017): 60.

³³ Gregory Ogbenika, *African Philosophy and the Quest for Development in Africa* (Benin City: Mindex Publishing Co. Ltd., 2020), 101.

term development will be more sustainable in an open and secure society.³⁴ Before any country's developmental plan is proposed and implemented, there is a need for public consultation, which will usher in a diversity of ideas on which way the country can be better developed, and how they can be implemented. It will streamline the preference of the citizens for the most important developmental needs such as job creation, education, agricultural innovation and technology, *et cetera*, thereby bridge the divided society in which they exist. Deliberative democracy criticizes elitism in which only privileged educated citizens have access to the deliberation. Deliberative democracy is characterized by inclusiveness.³⁵ Fishkin's theory seeks inclusiveness for all citizenry who have already been politically alienated and leaves no avenue for political alienation. Thus, there is more political participation.

One importance of Fishkin's deliberative democracy is that it combines political participation and deliberation. According to Carole Pateman, "deliberative Democrats have shown little interest in the last thirty years of participatory promotion, but focus on mini-publics or new deliberative bodies".³⁶ As opposed to this view held by Pateman, Fishkin beautifully combines political participation and deliberation to tackle this divide between political participation and deliberation by making deliberative democracy more inclusive. This brings about more public-spiritedness.

Fishkin's deliberative democracy is centered on public deliberation, this public deliberation has an educative power. Hence, "the benefits of participation in public affairs are primarily personal. Participation improves the moral, practical or intellectual qualities of those who participate."³⁷ This makes them not just better citizens, but also better individuals. When there are better individuals, it contributes generally to the overall growth of the country. Closely related to this is the epistemic benefit of diversity in deliberation. For James Bohman, "it is more salient than opinions and identities for making deliberation fully public."³⁸ There is a diversity of perspectives that is not reducible to differences in opinions or interests, rather is it based on the distributed character of social knowledge and experience which can help the whole society. Thus, more information is achieved from epistemic diversity brought about by inclusiveness. This inclusiveness covers diverse cultural, social, and epistemic axes.

³⁴ James Fishkin et al., "Applying Deliberative Democracy in Africa: Uganda's first Deliberative Polls," *Daedalus: The Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 146, no. 3 (2017): 141.

³⁵ Curato et al., "Twelve Key Findings," 31.

³⁶ Carole Pateman, "Participatory Democracy Revisited," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (2012): 8.

³⁷ Maeve Cooke, "Five Arguments for Deliberative Democracy," *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 948.

³⁸ Bohman, "Deliberative Democracy," 176.

It is pertinent to evaluate the relevance of Fishkin's deliberative democracy to Nigeria. Although it is not surprising that the system of government practiced in Nigeria cannot be termed a democracy in the real sense. According to Godfrey Onah, modern democracy is an illusion; what we practice in Nigeria as democracy contrary to Lincoln's definition of democracy is a government of the people, by the parties, for the powerful; or as exploitation of the people, by the powerful, through the parties.³⁹ This implicitly shows the failures of democracy in Nigeria, whereby those in office politically and economically exploit the citizenry for their selfish gains. There is no form of deliberation in the real sense with the citizens to determine which policy needs to be adopted. Thus, more than ever, there is a need to adopt Fishkin's idea of deliberative democracy to imbibe its principles where a microcosm represents the citizens to make well-informed decisions for the country.

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³⁹ Godfrey Onah, "Africa and the Illusion of Democracy," in *Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa*, ed. Josephat Obi Oguejiofor (Enugu: Delta Publications Limited, 2004), 281.z

⁴⁰ Chris Osegenwune, "Democracy and the Quest for Human Rights in Africa", *Journal of Philosophy and Development* 16, no. 1 (2016/2017): 60.

⁴¹ Gregory Ogbenika, *African Philosophy and the Quest for Development in Africa* (Benin City: Mindex Publishing Co. Ltd., 2020), 101.

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public consultation, which will usher in a diversity of ideas on which way the country can be better developed, and how they can be implemented. It will streamline the preference of the citizens for the most important developmental needs such as job creation, education, agricultural innovation and technology, *et cetera*.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to postulate a suitable and practicable model of democracy that will strengthen democracy as a system of government as practiced. We have observed that democracy is more acceptable to people due to the freedom, rights, and protection from leaders in positions of authority. Over the years various models of democracy have sprung up, but they are not free from various shortcomings. Even the most acclaimed and popular systems now being practiced, (liberal and representative democracies) also face their challenges. Thus, we recommend that James Fishkin's model of democracy which is deliberative democracy be adopted and practiced as the tenable model of democracy in which deliberative microcosms deliberate on issues and policies in a thoughtful manner. Inclusiveness in Fishkin's idea is aimed toward reducing the cries of marginalization of various minorities, groups, and facets of society. Thoughtfulness further reduces the incompetence of current models of democracy that are not well informed on policies, since most decisions are taken based on how it will be favourable to them and not the citizenry whom they represent. This can occur where there is mutual trust and justification.