Advancing 'Nurturing Pedagogy paradigm' for Democratic and Economic Growth in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study discusses the place of 'nurturing education model as a form of indigenous educational paradigm in Nigerian classrooms and the ways in which this approach could help to produce politically-aware students who will become committed citizens and promote democracy. Firstly, the paper begins by defining the concept of democracy and analyzing its minimal and maximal formulations to distinguish the form most suitable for Nigeria from its more autocratic or "illiberal" forms. It then discusses the concept of education as well as the three competing educational agendas to show why the agenda of democratic equality is superior to other, now counterproductive forms. A review of the four elements of nurturing education defined as the actions of teachers and curricula most likely to foster the intellectual, social, political and spiritual lives of all students shows how this model can best promote the ideals of a well-functioning democracy. The paper moves on to discuss the crucial role of classroom dialogue in affirming student's humanity, solving problems and sharing experiences in a constructive atmosphere. This concept harmonizes with the closing discussion on how indigenous African educational practices which emphasize development of the individual to inculcate communal obligation complement the goals of nurturing education and make it an inherently better way for Nigerian schools to develop democracy-minded students than the colonially imposed, paternalistic educational system now in place.

INTRODUCTION

The three key concepts explored in this study (nurturing, education and democracy) are complex, challenging, wide-ranging and vast in scope when considered independently. In combination, however they arguably represent what it takes to bind individuals together, foster community relationships and bring about a global neighborhood of world order. Although, these concepts have each become common and prevalent in social science discourse and have increasingly focused upon explicating their goals and their general

contributions toward a peaceful and healthy world order, social science scholars still grapple continuously and assiduously to find ways in which they are intertwined as they pursue solutions to the ever-increasing problems of our contemporary world. These problems include youth apathy toward real national and international social and political issues a rising dearth of political culture as evidenced in perennial inter and intra-ethnic violence and tribal frictions.

Ideally, scholars recognize the need for a deeper understanding of the common goal of all these concepts. To have a proper framework for my discussion, therefore, let me begin with the concept of democracy. First, I clarify the concept of democracy and analyze the usage of the concept indicating its widely employed variant notions and the difficulties such variant usages pose to a clearer understanding of the concept. I expand my analysis by outlining two contemporary formulations of democracy one minimal, the other maximal to advance the ongoing discourse. Following that, I itemize what I consider the essential elements that characterize democracy and analyze the distinctive features that notably distinguish it from other political frameworks such as autocracy or "illiberal democracy," to use the concept put forward by the Indian American CNN anchor[1].

Next, I discuss education in general, highlighting three competing agendas social efficiency, social mobility and democratic equality and analyze how the first two, although, they served laudable purposes in the past, now undermine the growth of democracy. I review the concept of democratic equality which despite some debatable deficiencies, remains a credible education agenda needed to sustain the functioning of democracy and to prepare individuals to live side by side with others.

Following this, I discuss the notion of nurturing education a specialized education paradigm likely to promote the functioning of democracy or rather minimize the major political and social challenges to it. In particular, I review the idea of nurturing pedagogical strategy, described in this paper as a dialogue that can facilitate the development of the cognitive, affective, social, political and ethical skills needed to grapple with the increasing challenges to democracy.

Last, I discuss the viability of nurturing education in particular and dialogue within the African cultural context and argue that dialogue is not the exclusive prerogative of Western pedagogical practice. I concretely defend some remnants of African cultural heritage as being amenable to dialogical practice contrary to popular belief and further argue that 'nurturing education paradigm' indeed offers a robust platform for addressing the challenges to democracy in Nigeria. These challenges include violence, corruption, ethnic wars, territorial greed, political apathy and a deepening lack of political culture that has remained the bane of democratic growth in Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature search: I conducted a methodic, systematic search in several search engines and databases from October, 2018 till December, 2019. Google, copernicus, Open J-Gate, Ulrich Scopus databases were explored for scientific papers related to keywords such as nurturing, education, pedagogy, democracy in Nigeria dialogue and indigenous education in Nigeria.

Selection criteria: From the sample, I selected research articles, review papers and published works related to keywords such as nurturing, education, dialogue, pedagogy, democracy and indigenous education in Nigeria.

Data collection: To collate the requisite date for the research analysis three researchers were asked to independently appraise and sort out the date of the major reports.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploring the meaning of democracy: Although, every literate adult can use the word democracy correctly in a sentence, it appears that there is no consensus regarding its meaning and there probably never will be Keech[2]. Indeed, democracy has become a buzzword and a primary term of approbation in every sociopolitical debate but it has remained the most elusive concept in political discourse because each writer or researcher defines it slightly differently. Plato, the father of philosophy, once noted that if there is one true meaning of democracy, it is stored in Heaven; unhappily, it has not been communicated to humans. Gallie[3], a British philosopher and social and political theorist, describes democracy as one of those examples of an "essentially contested" concept an inherently controversial term that we can never agree to define because each definition carries a different social, moral or political agenda[4].

This problem with definition was compounded further by the varied experiences of the modernizing and contemporary eras following the industrial revolution and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and recently, the Arab Spring, all of which led to the establishment of various democratic forms of government worldwide. These new governments often are not based on what democracy should be or could be or on a specific interpretation of it but on people's varying experiences. In the past, the concept of democracy was often thought to be exclusive to nondictatorial systems of government, however, we have seen illiberal dictators such as "Mugabe of Zimbabwe and "Buhari of Nigeria" appropriate the concept as a means to decorate their regimes. Democracy

appears to have become all things to all people. Crick[4] called it a civic ideal and Dewey[5] called it a way of life. Tocqueville (1835/1994) saw it as a synonym for equality, whereas Carnegie tagged it a celebration of a mobile free enterprise. Some people call it majority rule, whereas others equate it to rights or justice.

Despite this widely and varied usage of the term democracy and the lack of any coherent definition thereof, to advance my discussion, I must examine its historical roots. Its first usage is found in Greek, in Plato's attack on it and in Aristotle's robust defense[4]. Derived from two Greek words demos, meaning "the people" and kratein, meaning "to rule" demokratia means rule by the people or the masses. Thus seen, democracy arises from the fundamental fact that all humans are born free and equal and have a right to live in a free society. This notion underscores Abraham Lincoln's popular definition of democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Pericles' (431 B.C.) age-old qualification of democracy supports Lincoln's notion. He wryly notes:

Our constitution is called democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law, when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibilities. What counts is not membership of a particular class but the actual ability which a man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state is kept in political obscurity because of poverty we are free and tolerant in our private lives but in public affairs we keep to the law. This is because it commands our deep respect.

Like Pericle's ancient Greek conception, modern and contemporary democracies emerged as reactions to extreme concentration and abuse of power and alienation of fundamental liberties. Two formulations of democracy within the contemporary discourse underscore this. The first is the "thin" or minimalist formulation mostly associated with Schumpeter[6] for whom the hallmark of democracy is its representative framework. Within this formulation, democracy becomes an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote. The second and perhaps "thicker" formulation is the maximalist one advanced by Held[7] whose Marxist and liberal insights led to a conception of democracy based on the principle of autonomy. Held acknowledges that elections are essential to the democratic process but he argues that democracy requires a bill of rights that extends beyond the right to vote to include equal opportunity for

participation and discovering individual's preferences as well as citizen's final control of the political agenda[8].

Whichever way democracy is defined, three interconnected characteristics must emerge. First, there must be a nation-state, a civil society in which every person enjoys membership via participation. Thus, in modern democracies, colonial territories, military dictatorships or illiberal polities in which the people have no rights to participate in the political process wouldn't be considered democratic. Second, the people (demos) must make political decisions freely, by some form of individual or collective procedure in an environment conducive to decision making without coercion (In modern democracies, the demos is the nation and citizenship is usually equivalent to membership). Third, there must be goals perhaps people's preferences for the good life and decision-making procedures to pursue such goals.

Apart from these elements, Dahl[9], a top political scientist has identified other characteristics such as the opportunity (or what I term the ability1) every citizen has to participate in the democratic process being the crucial factor in determining the quality of any democratic process. At this juncture, the question of which of the four elements (i.e., my three and Dahl's) is the most significant in shaping the destiny of a quality democratic process, requires our attention. My reaction is that a nation-state in which every member participates is ideal as is the demos/people who freely participate in political decision making and likewise the pursuit of the people's preferences and goals toward the common good. But the people's ability to participate in the democratic process always stands at the center of this concept. Alone, every other element can amount to nothing but participation in the democratic process can make a difference, when this element is deficient, a society risks failure in implementing true democracy. Put another way, I suggest that democracy becomes more responsive and responsible to the extent that its participants (i.e., the citizens) are equally informed and freely willing, without coercion to engage in democratic politics. Hartoonian[10] agrees with this point:

In a democratic republic, education [is] critical since, our system is built upon the concept of the "enlightened citizen" that is an individual in touch with the cultural heritage who possesses a working knowledge of the economic, political and social factors that make up the human ecosystem in which we all must function, an individual who understands the principles of rule of law, legal limits to freedom and majority rule with minority rights and an individual who possesses the attitudes

Table 1: The difference between illiberal and liberal forms of governance

Sources of variation	Illiberal democracy	Democracy
Authority	Hierarchical framework	Contestation and participation
Relationship	Passive compliance	Reasoned interaction
Nature of commitment	To those in power	To the principles and ethos of democracy
Control	Censorship and the will of the executive	Rule of law
Decision-making procedure	Highly centralized competitive and rivalry	Co-determination cooperation
Mood	Closed	Open
Governing strategy		

of fair play, cooperation and (a demand for) quality in the character and work of self and others. Without a conscious effort to teach and learn these things, a free republic will not long endure. For if our human ecosystem, our institutions and our citizens are without the qualities cited above, it really does not matter what else is done since our reason for being as a people will be gone.

The lack of such "enlightened citizenry" among many Nigerians is clearly shown in the increasing culture of apathy towards Nigerian politics in the growing dearth of political culture among the youth in the rise of violence, maiming and gruesome killings during elections which are mostly polarized along regional, ethnic and religious lines, in the senseless power struggle among Nigeria's elite in the intra-class struggle to have access to power and resources for parochial interests and in the widening structural and superstructural imbalances, to name a few. This situation has become more dire, especially within the last two decades and increasing numbers of Nigerians are wishing for the return of the military to power.

For me, two options are open to Nigerians: either pursue a democratic agenda, mostly through an educational framework that inculcates civic virtues and other democratic values in the next generation of Nigerians or continue with a deficient political process sustained by the existing traditional educational agenda. Curiously, experience has shown that most political conditions or processes, if you will are endogenous to the educational framework.

To facilitate my discussion further, a simple illustration will suffice by listing the characteristics of each option in a table (Table 1). A critical appraisal of this table, given the spirit of this study, convinces me to favor democracy as an option with better prospects in guiding Nigeria or any nation-state through the challenges of peace, global order, security and self-determination. The basis for my hypothesis and perhaps, my philosophical standpoint is that democracy is better equipped than any alternative system to provide the institutional framework (contestation and participation) for members of a state to pursue the good life for which the state exists[11]. Democracy arguably is also best able to promote equality, justice, happiness, fraternity and liberty generally the goals of a good life as opposed to illiberal democracy or autocratic governance. Furthermore, democracy also encourages wide participation in the form of control by the people on the grounds that politics is not an expert skill as Plato and the neo-Platonic Aristotelians claimed, but a process in which all citizens are equally competent. In addition to this, democracy endorses autonomy as well as commitment to community (fraternity), based on the philosophy that the fundamental value of any system of social relations ought to serve the freedom of individuals to realize themselves through acting with others[12, 13, 5, 14, 15]. Lastly, democracy is my preferred option because it promotes rational methods of thought in addressing peaceful pathways to disputes and conflicts in society. It has the capacity to promote diversity and free participation in politics and governance.

Although, the last argument is often associated with Aristotle, it echoes Socrates' consistent demonstration of the self-corrective character of reason. Both Socrates and Aristotle were convinced that democracy despite being, like human reason, potentially deficient embodies the dynamics of rational self-correction (homeostasis) to solve its own problems. These self-corrective mechanics ensure the constant progress of reforms or changes aimed at addressing a society's existing sociopolitical problems. Besides this, they engender a progressive readjustment and replacement of weak and incoherent policies or corrupt, less competent, ineffective leadership with more coherent policies and effective leadership without the result hinging on the constitution. A good example is the Permanent Voter's Card used during Nigeria's last election. If this is sustained as a reliable voting method and the people participate actively in elections, the democratic process will inexorably do its work namely, readjustment and replacement of incompetent and corrupt leaders with competent ones. In this sense, democracy harbors a certain internal strength of dynamism and fluidity.

Once I have accepted a democratic model in my rank-ordering, then by implication I am supporting an education agenda that is likely to promote a democratic process or rather one that encourages development of the rational capacities for effective participation in a democratic process. Again, if what matters in my earlier argument about the democratic process is among other things, the citizen's inherent ability to participate in a democratic process, then effort in that direction must be made paramount in light of Aristotle's philosophy of the

highest human functions. Shaker and Heilman[16] corroborate this argument, reaffirming their faith in the ability of human beings to participate in the democratic process, given the inherent capacity of human reason as a requisite element for effective functioning of democracy. They further elaborate their points by discussing: the idea that all people are capable of enough reason, ability and character to make legitimate and functional institutions. [Thus] this inherent human capacity justifies government of by and for the people. Citizens have the capacity, right and duty to create and challenge all public policies and they have the capacity, right and duty to engage in dialogue, resist egocentric thinking, take into account multiple and opposing viewpoints and aided by public institutions to arrive at suitable compromises to create a more just society. Democracy then seems to require education to develop both our personal and our collective democratic capacities and also to develop our understanding of this democracy.

Interestingly, although, scholars concede that educational attainment is one of Lipset[17] social "requisites of democracy" either as a basic lever of democracy or one of a complex set of conditions supporting it[18, 19] or as important to the functioning of democracy[20] they disagree on the ideals of education needed for democratic growth. In the following section, I clarify the ideal of education that I think is most likely to support the growth of democracy. I first examine the meaning of education generally and analyze three competing educational theories that have battled for citizens' souls by claiming to have solutions to the problems of individuals and their socio-political conditions. I defend democratic equality (or democratic education, if you will) which is most likely to foster basic democratic principles or what Tocqueville (1835/1994) called "habits of the heart" the cognitive and affective dispositions necessary for democracy to work. Specifically, I defend nurturing pedagogy as central to an adequate pursuit of democracy. At this juncture, two questions confront us: What is nurturing pedagogy and what is education? I will start with the latter.

Analyzing the meaning of education: My approach here is to explain the term education and present a brief analysis of what I think is its main purpose. The term has become so mundane that everybody uses it without much thought. Yet it has remained a most curious concept that continues to evoke complex meaning. In the classical Greek conception, we are left with two broad notions, often attributed to the Sophists and Socrates namely educare and educere, "to bring up or teach" and "to lead or draw out," respectively. Neither of these notions provides adequate clue to the meaning of education. Even when combined as some scholars have suggested,

classical notions give minimal clue to the practical meaning of educating. Education was idealized in both notions, given Greek ontology and culture which privileged the mind over the body and provided educational opportunities for select individuals[21]. For the Greeks, education involved expanding and training one's intellectual capacity and was offered only to a privileged few. As such, Greek classical education says little or nothing about education for the global world or for democratic citizenship.

Whereas the Greek formulations of education tended primarily toward aristocratic application, the contemporary conception was shaped to meet the expanding needs of the modern world. Recently, two somewhat competing models with their corresponding rationales characterized the contemporary formulation: social efficiency and social mobility[22]. The former, a dominant model grounded in neoliberal rationality, emphasizes managerial efficiency to meet needs driven by the society's workforce. As Labaree states, the goal of social efficiency dictates that students should be prepared in their education to supply the workforce. The latter and less dominant model is grounded on social science theories that emphasize the effectiveness of molding students to the industrial and technological imperatives of their contemporary world. The advocates of social mobility dictate that the purpose of education is to provide students with training to promote themselves in the market economy[22] whereas in social efficiency, education involves transmission of the skills and literacy training required to function effectively in a society oriented toward the labor market. For the latter, education involves the training or instructions in which teachers drill students much as a captain might train soldiers or a movie director might prepare individual actors needed to compete in and rise through society's social strata.

Social efficiency and social mobility agendas indeed have served a purpose at one time or the other and have helped to train students in the habits and skills that will be useful to them in their own lives and to society. Thus, these habits and skills are not mutually exclusive to the ideals of education. In a sense, both classical Greek and contemporary ideals of education remain important insofar as they aim to develop individuals who act nobly[11]. To the extent that such education agendas focus on satisfying the needs of society and emphasize the cultivation of habits and skills needed to reshape society, they remain laudable inheritances. Further, insofar as such education agendas speak to what both Kant[23] and Aristotle[11] called the moral duty that individuals owe to the community and follow pedagogical practices that encourage drilling on the skills and talents needed to improve society, they remain important for a new theory of education. Nevertheless as scholars have observed, the

agendas of social efficiency and social mobility narrow the central mission of education by undermining school's curricula culture with their market-based liberal rationalities[24-27] while tending to stratify society into social classes[28].

Lately, a new education ideal, democratic equality[22] or democratic education has emerged largely as a reaction to the strands of education that preceded it. It also arose out of a growing concern that both social mobility and social efficiency have shifted education increasingly from its central mission to ideologies driven by a profit-oriented identity and mission[26]. Instead of solely emphasizing the utility of education for economic prosperity or the pursuit of social hierarchy, the democratic equality agenda sees education in terms of its mission "to secure democracy by sustaining shared values for justice and freedom"[29]. Education is curiously conceived as a social requisite of democracy, whereas schools are seen as institutions that prepare students to become competent democratic citizens[24, 30, 31] and means to remediate social differences[22].

This idea that education leads to democracy is not new in political and social science literature[32, 4, 14, 33]. John[13] had much earlier articulated the relation between the two. His work, Democracy and Education provides an important watershed in this regard, defining education as "implied in a democratic society". As John[13] noted:

A society which makes provision for participants in its good of all members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through integration of the different forms of associational life is in so far democratic. 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 change without introducing disorder.

Nyerere[34] made a similar argument. In "Education for Self-Reliance," he enunciated a profound education program with a clear political purpose. This work which embodies Nyerere's entire educational philosophy, argues for an integration of people's lives into the entire educational process. Like Dewey, Nyerere's philosophy sees education as a crucial determinant of social and political consciousness likely to awaken and empower members of the society to participate in democratic politics. Several other scholars seem to advance arguments consistent with Dewey's and Nyerere's[35-40]. In a sense, education is conceived of as a necessity for self-realization and an effective means to prepare individuals to exist actively in their society. These thoughts largely mesh well with Aristotle's logic that the "citizens of a state should always be educated to suit the constitution of the state"[41].

The preceding discussion generally reveals that among scholars, albeit their disagreement on the ideals of democratic education there are perceptions that "high" levels of educational attainment are a social "requisite of democracy," to use Seymour Martin Lipset[17]'s characteristic phrase. Such attainment is important to the functioning of democracy[20]. Among these scholars, education is defended to promote democracy on the grounds that it enables the "culture of democracy" to develop. These perceptions have received a great deal of empirical and theoretical support, particularly among modernization theorists, who emphasize the role of education in promoting political development in general and democracy in particular[42-44, 30, 17, 45-47]. Lopset[17] in particular argues that: education presumably broadens men's [and women's] outlooks, enables them to understand the needs for norms of tolerance, restrains from adhering to extremist's monistic doctrines and increases their capacity to make rational electoral choices.

He further submits that: If we cannot say that a "high" level of education is a sufficient condition for democracy the available evidence does suggest that it comes close to being a necessary condition.

While the role of education as a social requisite of democracy has gained considerable acceptance in a large body of literature, it has remained contentious and unresolved, particularly in how education has necessarily occasioned democracy. On more specific terms, although, there has been considerable evidence on the positive correlation between education and the support for democracy in developed countries not much evidence has been generated in African societies where education is either the basic lever of democracy or just one of a complex set of conditions supporting it[19]. Said differently, there have been empirical studies regarding education and its impact on social and cognitive skills, political values and other democratic dispositions in Western countries[48]. Equally, there is some theoretical evidence of such a relationship in Eastern Europe[49-51]. On the contrary, the evidence that demonstrates that the growth or decline of democracy in any of the African countries has a correlation with education is very scanty. To be sure, the inferences derived from these studies are hardly transferable to Nigeria or a place where education for the most part has taken place in nondemocratic colonial setting and where a major percentage of its citizens are either not educated at all or educated beyond elementary level.

Moreover, the situation is complicated by distinctive nature of African politics, identified in terms of variety of "neopatrimonialism"[52] in which the chief executive

maintains authority through personal charisma rather than through ideology or law[53] or where politics or struggles for any positions of office is driven by "prebendalism"[54]. Indeed, some literature has advocated for a more robust theory incorporating within-country variations, in addition to the possible correlation between education and democracy[18]. What this implies is that we must look deeper at the factors influencing education and democracy rather than at the casual relationship between them. These factors might include joint evolution of economic and political development[18] or they might depend on what knowledge is taught and what method is used[13] or historical and cultural factors[55, 56].

From the previous discussions, it has been established that education is of central importance to creating a democratic society. The democratic equality theory of education, unlike the previous education theories, embodies what it takes to provide individuals with what John[13] called "a personal interest in social relationships and control and the habits of the mind which secure social change without introducing disorder". In what follows, I discuss nurturing education, also called 'caring pedagogy' how schools and teachers can facilitate the development of care and the implications of caring pedagogy for global thinking and democratic politics. In particular, the relationship between nurturing education and democracy suggests that educating students in aspects of care is an essential component of a democratic agenda[57, 58]. Given that most current educational systems place too much emphasis on the technical aspects of learning, there is a need for educators to consider "developing relations of truth, talking with students about problems that are central to their lives and guiding them towards greater sensitivity and competences across all domains of care"[59].

Understanding nurturing pedagogy: Interest in nurturing pedagogy clearly has widened in social science discourse. Nurturing pedagogy simply refers to those actions of teachers, school practices and classroom acts that are most likely to foster not only the intellectual life but also the social, political, emotional and spiritual life of every student in the class. It means certain relationships in the classroom that strive to preserve the "uniqueness"[60] of the other, "the student." Gilligan[61], a prominent scholar in the ethics of care, explains this by pointing out that such relationships are rooted in the primacy of actual relationships and the interdependence of self and others.

Whereas recent studies of nurturing center on orchestrating a reasoned, caring encounter between a teacher and his or her individual students in the modern conception of nurturing pedagogy these works echo, however indirectly, the ontological orientation to caring that Martin[62] explored in most of his writings. For Martin[62], although, caring certainly implied preserving of the uniqueness of the other, it is not confined to or solely defined by that. Besides maintaining the uniqueness of the other (the teacher or student), nurturing is first and essentially accentuated by recognition of the "otherness of the other"[62] in a relationship. This recognition, Martin[62] argued, is largely made possible "only when I open myself to the [other] in the present and in the concrete situation and respond to his need even when himself is not aware that he is addressing me".

In a sense, nurturing pedagogy engages a specific, situated reason and body of knowledge, emphasizing the importance of "commitment to receptive attention and willingness to respond helpfully to legitimate needs"[63].

Whichever way you tend to look at nurturing pedagogy, four salient elements emerge. First, there must be a positive relationship that involves more than autonomous rational agents or interaction limited only to social engagement. I shall come back to this point. Second, there must be full receptivity or what scholars in the ethics of care call welcomeness, relatedness or responsiveness an attitude of the mind described by Noddings[58] as engrossment which opens the teacher to nonselective receptivity to the student's feelings or what the student is trying to express. In fact, the teacher allows himself or herself to be transformed by the other. Weil[64] employs the word attention to describe the attitude of the mind that characterizes receptivity and says that "attention" allows "the soul to empty itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is in all his truth." I illustrate this further using Buber[12]'s word presence to illuminate the state of mind needed for full receptivity to take place. Presence, Buber says, allows the teacher and the student to show their true selves in "genuine and unreserved communication". Being receptive or present to each other demands as Rogers[65] puts it, authenticity and being congruent. It calls for a true meeting between the teacher and the student a readiness for honest involvement that allows the teacher to be authentic and to be who he or she is while also allowing the student to be who he or she is. Indeed, it is not so much a question of one's personal attributes as it is a set of practices that must become part of the relationship[59]. When I (a teacher or a professor) care, I really hear, see or feel what the other (my student) tries to communicate. To that extent, care for the other must be differentiated from merely emotional feelings that regard the other in terms of roles or functions. On the

contrary, care must be rooted in receptivity, concerned with a search for deeper understanding of the other and how both parties can meet each other morally.

The third element is what Noddings[59] calls motivational displacement: a tendency on the part of a teacher to suspend his or her own needs and enter those of a student, even if only momentarily. As I adopt the needs and goals of my students and empty myself of my own immediate needs and goals and become more receptive and attentive to the student's immediate needs, I experience a motivating energy that drives me toward student's needs. As Noddings[59] puts it, engrossment occurs as the teacher becomes more receptive and attentive to a student's immediate needs whereas motivational displacement happens as the teacher replaces his or her own immediate needs with the student's. For engrossment and motivational displacement to occur there must be a tendency or willingness on my part as a teacher to allow myself to be "seized by the needs of [the student] other" Noddings[60] and to respond to the "call of the [student] other"[12].

Several scholars in the ethics of care seem to agree on a fourth element or facet of caring: that the one who is cared for must be open to receive or recognize the effort of the Caregiver[66, 61, 51, 58]. In this sense, caring is not unidirectional. Drawing perhaps from Aristotle[11]'s discussions on friendship which argues that friendship entails reciprocal goodwill, these scholars shed some light to clarify this element. For instance, Buber[66] employed the word reciprocity to explain the responsive participation of those involved in the caring (dialogic) relationship which implies that each person truly enters the relationship that each responds to and is prepared to contribute to it. For Buber, "relation is reciprocity inscrutably involved we live in the currents of universal reciprocity". To an extent, Buber seems to be saying that just as we cannot think of dialogic relations without mutuality and reciprocity, the vitality of a caring relationship depends on mutuality and reciprocity. Although, this element requires "interdependence"[61], it is not an assumption of equivalency or equality. Rather, it is an appreciation of the value of the other that evokes presence and connectivity. Reciprocity does not imply that each must contribute as much as the other. As Arnett[67] explains it further, "reciprocity is not some of caring demand but Buber's emergent reciprocity [means] a natural dialogic response that offers interpersonal meaning between persons".

From the foregoing, nurturing pedagogy arguably has a different focus than the current pedagogical orientations of Nigerian schools whose mission is driven by the labor market. At the heart of nurturing education is existential subjectivity. Simply stated, the uniqueness of those involved (teacher and student) is paramount; a disposition that eschews the tendency to forge a relationship based on rational objectivity and demands that those in the relationship be receptive to each other only by virtue of having previously defined the essence of value as one's rational nature or calls to duty. Thus, in nurturing education "[as] so much depends on the subjective experience of those involved in ethical encounters, conditions are rarely sufficiently similar for me to declare that you must do what I do"[58]. To that regard, nurturing education is not focused much on finding fault with the other for failing to act as duty requires[68] or forging a paternalistic kind of relationship but rather on creating an environment that fosters creativity and encourages dispositions to collaborate with others.

Going further, the remainder of this study stretches the implications of nurturing education for democracy and presents additional concrete support for nurturing education (what seems to be rather straightforward), nurturing pedagogical styles and behaviors that promote democracy or that support social and political actions. The challenge is to pretend that this discussion offers one pattern among many others that can promote the aforementioned values and so does not homogenize or rather impose a standard curricular material or lesson plan. It does offer some ways in which nurturing education could perhaps be implemented as part of school curriculum, to acculturate individuals with requisite skills for political and social actions individuals who will indeed possess critical thinking skills who will deploy their learning and knowledge in the service of others who can construct models of civility who have democratic character and who can embrace the responsibilities of citizenship.

Creating a dialogic classroom: Dialogue is an aspect of nurturing education and several scholars have pointed out its importance as an educational practice for democracy[31, 69, 70]. In particular, Freire, in his work Pedagogy of Freedom, explains how dialogue affirms what it means to be fully human and animates democratic growth. According to him, "to exist humanly is to name the world, to change it". This implies that for students to name the world, they must be able to discern, reflect and understand their sociopolitical and environmental conditions which often alienate them from their true selves. For Freire, dialogue remains student's most critical tool for identifying, clarifying, naming and proposing solutions to their problems. Before Freire, Dewey had in mind (perhaps inchoately) the impact of dialogue on democracy when he defined democracy as more than a form of

government he considered it primarily a mode of associated living, a conjoint communicated experience. Others, Buber[12], Burbules[71], Burbules[72], Hooks[73], Lipman[74] and Sharp[75] have also championed dialogue as a platform upon which the imperatives of democracy can be reconciled with facts of varying sociopolitical conditions such as diversity and conflict. They share the same sentiment with Freire[31] that dialogue is "a process through which people as communicative beings enter into relations with one another and create their world, an encounter between men mediated by the world in order to name the world."

Curiously, dialogue is not fundamentally a specifically communicative form of encounter but at heart a kind of social relation. Although, its nature is often characterized as "strangeness"[76] because it can unveil unpredictable data and new information, bring divergent opinions and evoke sudden emotions, dialogue is also a social relation undergirded by reciprocity, a give and take between two or more minds. Characterized as it often is by somewhat contentious verbal interactions, dialogue is nonetheless a condition of intersubjective relations[12, 77, 78, 58, 79] and can bring what Gadamer calls "the fusion of horizon"4 .

In light of this, dialogue is considered a useful nurturing educational tool. Among other things, it allows participants to share their experiences in a caring and constructive atmosphere, providing a comfortable environment for students to freely express and identify their problems without fears of being scrutinized, condemned, judged or held accountable to unfairly variant rules. The focus is to foster affective interest: the feeling of concern and commitment that draws participants into a dialogue and holds them within it. Thus, apart from possibly contentious verbal interactions, dialogue affords participants the opportunity to move beyond the intense and particular feelings of their own deeply held values and beyond the specific beliefs to which these feelings are attached to the realization that the other who feels intensely about a point every dialogue participant does not believe is still one to be received[80]. In this sense, dialogue must embody "profound love for the world and for people, humility, hope and mutual trust"[31].

Although, affective interest is an important component of dialogic relations, it can only be fruitful if it is coupled with the cognitive interests that may drive or underpin student's deeper understanding of their learning. Affective interests connect participants in the dialogue to each other, student to student and teacher to student and help them maintain respectful, caring relations. Cognitive interests, by contrast, push for a deeper inquiry into and understanding of why things are the way they are. They

give students the opportunity to search more deeply for explanations of their immediate personal, sociopolitical, economic and environmental problems. Freire[80] expresses this thought elegantly when he calls dialogue an "epistemological relation sealing together the teacher and students in joint act of knowing and re-knowing the object of study".

By participating in dialogue, students have the opportunity to connect to one another, to construct a new world and a new conception of individuals who can live together under one roof one state, nation or world, regardless of their racial, ethnic, regional or tribal differences and as Habermas[81] puts it, to create a vision of citizens who are guided by shared commitment and moral consciousness. They have the opportunity to regard citizenship more like the cultivation of a shared fellowship and to bond with one another as they bind their social commitments like a covenant[82].

In a situation where students or citizens are guided by moral consciousness and shared commitment, the impacts are profound. The students or the citizens are likely to critically think and rethink their intentions, assumptions and beliefs when confronted with ambiguity or faced with a different way of thinking related to the pursuit of such shared commitment. With dialogue as a tool, they can realize that "the objection that my interlocutor raises to what I say draws from me thoughts I had no idea I possessed, so that, at the same time that I lend him thoughts, he reciprocates by making me think too"[83].

That is the role of dialogue which "requires critical thinking and at the same time is capable of generating critical thinking"[14]. For students-citizens-to share their society meaningfully, they need to posses the critical thinking skills to adequately discern and confront real-life situations and what Freire[31] called the contradictions of the personal, socio-political, economic and environmental conditions that present great challenges to their everyday life. They must discern and confront the contradictions of oppressive conditions, inequality and poverty as well as the crime, corruption, injustice and apathy toward participating in civic duties which historically has alienated individuals from one another and from their community. Participating in dialogue can help students discern and rethink the indivisible connection between themselves and the socio-political and economic contradictions that alienate them from one another and from the real conditions of their society. It can offer students the opportunity to perceive their reality not as a given but as a process subject to transformation and to see themselves not as static entities inseparable from their actions but as Freire[80] says "individuals who immerse themselves in temporality without fear of the risk involved.

In sum, nurturing education paradigm embodies two essential components of democracy by fostering dialogic relations in the classroom. First, it permits students to openly investigate and critically probe issues about their lives and worlds, gain critical insight and better understanding of the issues and arrive at well-informed decisions. Second, it provides students the opportunity to learn from and know one another and creates an environment that brings people together in caring relationships and a shared commitment that supports a sense of community or rather, community building and democratic growth. Such a "feeling of community," argues Hooks[73], "creates a sense that there is a shared commitment and a common good that binds us".

Nurturing education in an African context: But what is the viability of nurturing (pedagogy) education within African indigenous cultures? Put another way, can African indigenous culture facilitate a nurturing education framework? Skeptics raise these questions, as do education theorists whose arguments are that African indigenous education and particularly colonially oriented African societies, can impede or rather can hardly support the development of nurturing and critical thinking. On one hand, they criticize nurturing education as implying that individuals within such a shared commitment framework are not allowed to engage in rational thought to determine, on their own, what is reasonable and what is not. On the other hand they are highly skeptical as to whether the dominant, traditional, highly teacher-fronted, top-down educational system would support the development of critical and affective thinking. So, is dialogical relationship possible within paternalistic African cultures? To address these questions, I would like to state up front that the underlying reasoning of nurturing education is not inconsistent with the idea of thinking for oneself or making judgments for oneself as the skeptics claim. On the contrary, nurturing education must be distinguished from the colonially oriented education system in most African societies, characterized by individualized forms of childrearing practices consisting of physical and emotional coercion. In most cases these practices rarely bring about significant change. On the contrary, they reinforce and perpetuate the social problems they intended to solve through compliance. This formative lived educational experience of young people seldom facilitates inquiry rather, it typifies the knowledge-transmission methodology of traditional classrooms and works in tandem with what Freire[14] called "paternalistic social action" to create an undemocratic political environment. According to John[13], to the extent that individuals remain in such "entrenched dispositions," they are dependent on others for knowledge and education.

As to whether nurturing education is a viable option within African indigenous culture, it is pertinent to know that the idea of individuals who can think for themselves but with guidance from others is not foreign to Nigerian or African indigenous education or ways of life rooted in traditional African culture. It is important to understand Africa's social and educational structure, particularly before colonialism, to appreciate how feasible it is for nurturing education to work within the Nigerian and African contexts. Conceptually, the structure of African societies can be examined in two different ways: first, the traditional, communal, social and educational structures and values that existed before colonialism and second, the colonial social structure values that emerged from Africa's colonial experience[84-86]. For the sake of brevity, I will concentrate on the former the indigenous African communal social structure as a hope for nurturing education for democratic growth in Nigeria.

African indigenous education: a hope for nurturing education for democratic and economic growth in Nigeria and Africa? Indigenous African education focused largely on molding individuals in a communalistic social environment. In principle, this indigenous education which was largely oral, emphasized the education of young people about the different aspects of communal life in helping them to grow into autonomous and rational adults[87]. In addition, it placed significant emphasis on communal obligation based on appreciating culture, ethnicity, gender and race[88]. With such an agenda, the aim of indigenous education was no more than to foster the development of the individual so he or she could be integrated into his or her communal responsibility.

Thus, the logic behind indigenous, communalistic African culture is significantly related to the sort of reasoning behind nurturing education. As in the nurturing education agenda, education in African indigenous culture involved communal processes and principles, an endeavor that demanded reliance on tradition and placing oneself in the community. Much like the nurturing educational framework, the moral reasoning behind the principle of indigenous African culture and education assumes the idea of human autonomy, in addition to the idea that one's rationality can be shaped, cultivated and nurtured by the community in which one is raised[89, 56, 87]. Both educational frameworks emphasize personal as well as community developments. The relevance of a community principle is thus partly determined by the practical relevance of the actions it specifies and the consequences of those actions for the community[87].

In the same way, the underlying reasoning in African indigenous culture involves a rational process of justifying an action by harmonizing the individual's

interests with those of their community. By demanding that people care for one another and be sympathetic to other people's interests and welfare such moral reasoning or consciousness[81] can enhance people's lives by encouraging them to live harmoniously within a community. To be sure there may be notable limitations of the African traditional education, particularly the fact that it existed largely in an oral format and perhaps that it was informally conflated with formal education. Still, this form of education has been recognized as a crucial element with the potential to enhance nurturing education and by extension, democratic growth. The conception of the African traditional education, for instance that emphasizes that the raison d' etre of power and communal relationship is the collective good of all members of society, provides a strong philosophical framework for establishing a respectable and accountable community political platform[85].

In sum, African indigenous education, like nurturing education, places significant emphasis on communal obligation, based on appreciating differences cultures, ethnicity, gender, race and the like. By contrast, Nigeria's current educational system ignores this emphasis. Thus, there are fundamental differences and conflicts between African ways of life and the principles underlying Nigeria's current sociopolitical and educational structure. These differences indicate that we cannot solve the increasing social and political problems, such as violence, crime and growing apathy among the youth toward engaging in the political process, by maintaining the current system of education. It reinforces rather than solves these problems. The viability of democratic education and nurturing education in particular within the Nigerian context is supported by the fact that the indigenous African culture (and its methods of education) is coherent and consistent with the values of nurturing education and its shared-commitment agenda. Although, colonialism did great damage to indigenous African communalistic values and political structures what remains of our tradition could provide a robust framework for democratic education in general and nurturing education in particular to achieve reform. Whereas the traditional classroom as it exists is likely to reinforce and reproduce attitudes that foster inaction and lack of participation in the political process, nurturing education, by tapping into what is left of the indigenous African education tradition, could provide the pedagogical procedures and content needed to facilitate a critical mind, openness to different points of view and the ability to participate and collaborate with others in the search for common sociopolitical problems. Thus, nurturing education is more likely to provide students with a better chance to learn how to be independent, develop critical thinking skills become committed citizens, in addition to learning the essential social skills that individuals need to live in a civilised society.

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