

The Potential for and Limitations of Deweyan Participatory Democracy within a Democracy of Representation: Pragmatism and UK Politics

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Overview

In this paper, I will be unpacking and critiquing *my* interpretation of John Dewey's formulation of participatory democracy. I will question whether Dewey's participatory democracy was simply a naive fantasy or if it could in fact be successfully implemented and embraced within a democracy of representation, such as that of the United Kingdom. I will begin by detailing what I believe Dewey meant by "democracy as a way of life" and the conditions necessary for such a democracy, one of which is democratic education. I will briefly explore what I consider to be a possible manifestation of the Deweyan educational model and conclude that on-going adult education within the social environment is crucial for democracy as a way of life to succeed, but is not necessarily achievable. Following from this, I will consider and evaluate the pluralist objection to Deweyan democracy when it is embraced as a first-order moral value. I am of the view that Dewey has presented a democracy that can be a superior and successful way of life, if and only if, the correct conditions are in place and it is *not* considered to be a superior *moral* value, but a second-order value that is necessary for the facilitation and preservation of first-order values. I will support my view by presenting two cases in recent UK politics: the first is the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections; the second is the postponement of legislation to allow for a mass badger cull. These cases have demonstrated a clear desire for participatory democracy in the United Kingdom: the first case held clear participatory intentions but resulted in failure of practice; the latter case demonstrated that when the correct conditions are enabled, such as the use of e-petitions, the outcome can be a successful, democratic dialogue between opposing citizens, the scientific community and the representative government, thus demonstrating democratic practice as a way of life that is compatible with pluralism.

Introduction

The question of what constitutes "participatory democracy" and the "proper conditions" for such a democracy is highly problematic. Dewey did not elaborate on what he meant by "proper conditions" and as such was criticised for not being "able to constitute participatory democracy as a working end".¹ I understand Dewey to be unflinching in his faith in a democracy of lived, shared experience that embraces and facilitates pluralism; a democracy inclusive of all citizens, of all backgrounds, irrespective of "personal endowment,"² with the freedom to engage with one another to enrich further experiences. Dewey rightly stated that democracy itself cannot succeed if treated as a

¹ Westbrook, RB (1991) *John Dewey and American Democracy*. Cornell University Press, p. 318

² Dewey, J (1939) *Creative Democracy – The Task before Us*. In Talisse, RB and Aikin, SF (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 152

“kind of political mechanism that will work as long as citizens [are] reasonably faithful in performing political duties”;³ one can easily see, as I shall discuss with regard to the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, the practical implications of treating democracy as nothing more than an instrumental tool without proper participatory democratic conditions in place. I shall also demonstrate, through a second case study referring to the use of e-petitions, the benefits embracing a fully communicative participatory democracy, the type that Dewey advocates.

My colleague, Lydia Wraw, in a forthcoming paper discussing Deweyan democracy of education in relation to “Free-Schools”, states that “pluralism alone isn’t enough [for democracy to thrive]; [citizens] must share their ideas freely and constantly among each other to be able to gain from their different experiences,”⁴ it is in this way that Dewey’s democracy is unique, for it is based on more than pluralism. It is a democracy of living; an on-going process to be embraced in every sphere, not limited to the confines of the political machine. Wraw later interprets an aspect of Dewey’s democracy that may, in my view, conflict with pluralism in the pursuit of a shared notion of societal progress “progression meaning a group improving itself due to its diversity” and as such, “features that are undesirable, maladaptive or hindering the community’s progression can be identified and eliminated.”⁵ I will discuss the issue of a shared notion of progress, and the further pluralist objection later in this paper and will conclude that, only if Deweyan democracy is embraced as a first-order moral value, superior to all other moral values, does it conflict with pluralism.

I assert, in response to the pluralist objection that at the core of Dewey’s participatory democracy is the belief that democracy “is a way of *personal* life controlled not merely by faith in human nature in general but faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgement and action”.⁶ This may seem idealistic, but Dewey sets out a democracy built upon a deep foundation of education, communication and engagement among different parties and citizens which can only be realised when it is embraced as “a commonplace of living”.⁷ Robert Westbrook considers Dewey the “most important advocate [...] of the belief that democracy as an ethical ideal calls upon men and women to build communities in which the necessary opportunities and resources are available for each individual to realise his or her particular capacities and powers”.⁸ As such, the proper conditions for participatory democracy should enable the cultivation and nurturing of each individual’s capacities for intelligence, to live an enriched life, in a process of constant participation in political, social, and cultural life. This is not a faith that any citizen can do whatever he or she wishes, regardless of talent or skill, rather “every human being has the right to equal opportunity with every other person for development

³ Dewey, J (1939) *Creative Democracy – The Task before Us*. In Talisse, RB and Aikin, SF (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 151

⁴ Wraw, L (forthcoming work) *Deweyan democracy and the “free” schools: What constitutes a good education and what social conditions are conducive to it?* *Pragmatism Tomorrow*, p. 4

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 4

⁶ Dewey, J (1939) *Creative Democracy – The Task before Us*. In Talisse, RB and Aikin, SF (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 152

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 153

⁸ Westbrook, RB (1991) *John Dewey and American Democracy*. Cornell University Press, p. XV

of whatever gifts he has.”⁹ Again, the hope of democracy lies with the individual, the individual in their community, taking responsibility for their own self-governance and as such is perfectly in accordance with pluralist ideals. I will conclude that I do consider Dewey’s vision of democracy to be a working end for I feel it encompasses and utilises the core principles that drive communities; communication, personal responsibility and the shared will to live better, enriched lives. Where the pluralist conflict arises, I will argue that the shared will of citizens is to live better, *individual* lives in a community, based upon an ethically, not morally superior ideal that enables differing individuals to thrive equally, rather than enabling only the most powerful to thrive.

What are the Proper Conditions for Participatory Democracy?

In the political sphere, Dewey’s participatory democracy may seem all too vague a vision for effective democratic governance; indeed, while Dewey sets out his goals of democracy, he does little to explain what the proper conditions for achieving these may be. The aim of democracy is not simply to ensure that all citizens engage in the customary annual, bi-annual, national or local elections out of necessity, but to really *live* the democratic process and to engage in active, rational discussion and more importantly a shared experience as part of day-to-day life. I interpret Dewey as placing more emphasis on the *individual’s* capacity for self-governance which has wider implications. The conditions for participatory democracy should enable the individual to freely and intelligently engage in democratic process, be it on a personal level in everyday life or in the structured, political sphere. The conditions for participatory democracy should also involve another element of Dewey’s democracy that encapsulates the very nature of pragmatism; his insistence that each individual is very much a product and embodiment of their experiences. The political conditions should therefore recognise that individuals cannot be removed from their experiences and circumstances that have led them to believe what they believe and as such the only way to engage with one another on matters of disagreement is to do so rationally, through communicative processes and through the identification of shared experiences. I perceive this communicative process as the enabling of local community “in free gatherings of neighbours” in which “free enquiry, free assembly and free communication”¹⁰ can flourish.

Dewey’s emphasis on freedom, I believe, is representative of not only freedom of speech to engage in political debate, but also the freedom to learn, to educate one’s self fully on the issues and topics that are relevant to his or her community; be it the immediate community in which one lives or the wider, international community. This can only happen when there is free access to education and information and while Dewey is very clear about what he means by education with regard to children, he is somewhat vaguer in his conception of the educative process of adults. In a more holistic sense, Dewey believed in the natural education that occurs when a person interacts with their social environment,¹¹ which helps them to function in their individual situation; in a democratic society such interaction should happen constantly. Dewey does however take for

⁹ Dewey, J (1939) Creative Democracy – The Task before Us. In Talisse, RB and Aikin, SF (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 152

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ With thanks to Lydia Wraw for drawing this specific element of Dewey’s educational theory to my attention.

granted the prospect of a democracy having already been built upon the foundations of a democratic education in childhood. In my formulation of participatory democracy, I assert that transparent education in the form of informative materials is the crucial component to the participatory process, opening up the political sphere to free deliberation of policies of governance among peoples. When there are no conditions enabling intelligent citizen engagement and debate, there can be no participatory democracy and no democracy as a way of life.

Education as Foundation for Participatory Democracy

In his development of childhood democratic education, Dewey emphasised “The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning”¹² and as such I believe it is necessary to re-educate and continue to educate adult citizens on the ever changing policies that influence theirs and others’ lives, so that their desire to partake in democracy is not diminished. In the current social climate we live in, where many different lives of individual backgrounds and aptitudes coexist, democratic education could take form in the sharing of individual experiences as a method of establishing shared experiences; from those in the scientific world engaging with ordinary citizens in order to break down the barriers of expertise, to the sharing of manual labour-focussed jobs with those working within the financial sector. Perhaps if all citizens were given the opportunity to step into one another’s shoes from time to time, each would gain a better understanding of the core values that unite a community of differing individuals, such as the desire for social progress. What I believe Dewey attempts to create in childhood education, carried through to a democratic adulthood, is a democracy of empathy; an education centred on shared experiences of individuals to allow them to intelligently choose the best courses of action in light of their understandings of other’s experiences as well as their own. The need for constant, informal education of “personal initiative and adaptability”¹³ is, according to Dewey, in a mobile society, such as ours, vital in preventing citizens from becoming “overwhelmed by the changes in which they are caught and whose significance or connection they do not perceive”.¹⁴ I believe that what Dewey is referring to is the current state in which many citizens find themselves, affected by voter apathy, and ultimately the growing sense of disassociation from political policy and governance. In her forthcoming paper, I believe Wraw has highlighted a problem which mirrors the problem of voter apathy in adults, in relation to the educational system in which proper methods of teaching are not tailored to the individual. It necessarily follows that without appropriate methods of communication, students without an aptitude for a specific subject become overwhelmed and “lose the desire to go on learning”;¹⁵ the same could be said of inappropriate communication of government policy.

While voter apathy did undoubtedly have a role to play in the poor attendance of the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, it was less a case of poor public response

¹² Dewey, J (1947) *Experience and Education*. NY: Macmillan, p. 49. *With thanks to Lydia Wraw for drawing this quote to my attention.*

¹³ Dewey, J (1916) *The Democratic Conception of Education*. In Lewis, D. and Shapiro, I. (Eds.), *The Middle Works, Vol.9 of The Political Writings of John Dewey* Hackett. Hackett, 1993, p. 111

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ Wraw, L (forthcoming work) *Deweyan democracy and the “free” schools: What constitutes a good education and what social conditions are conducive to it?* *Pragmatism Tomorrow*, p. 4

than it was a symptomatic reaction to a failure in the educative process of citizens. At no point leading up to the election was any citizen given proper motivation to engage with the policy at hand or one another; as such citizens became “overwhelmed” and disenfranchised by the new policies being presented. It is at this stage that I feel it is important to recognise the instrumental value of Dewey’s democratic model. It is evidently clear that in an ideal situation, each policy should be presented for public consideration through the sharing of experiences to ground the policy in each person’s horizons of significance, yet in practice this seems to be impossible to achieve and rather a lofty concept.

Another problem arises from the Deweyan model with regard to those members of a community, who, in spite of the best efforts in a model democratic society, simply do not wish to engage with democratic life, or share in the same values that Dewey believes all should possess; such is the problem of pluralism. What appears unavoidable is a democracy of exclusion; exclusion of any citizen who does not wish or feels unable to take part in the type of activity and discussion that characterises participatory democracy; the simple fact is that not every citizen holds democracy as the highest moral value above all else. It is only in the idealistic Deweyan vision of each citizen embracing democracy as a core, first-order moral value that such an on-going educative process could be possible; sadly, one must recognise that no matter what conditions are in place for the type of education Dewey is championing, it will never be the case that all citizens will embrace such an education with the same zeal, for there will always be moral values that take precedence over democracy.

The Pluralist Objection to Dewey’s Participatory Democracy

Robert Talisse, among others, has presented a strong objection to Dewey’s participatory democracy, which I have just highlighted in the previous section; the problem of pluralism.¹⁶ Talisse’s rigid interpretation of pluralism considers it to be more than simply an acknowledgment of surface disagreements, but a deep, permanent state of disagreement among peoples that is “endemic to the human condition”¹⁷ as such; some of the differing beliefs regarding “Big Questions” should be accepted as “irreconcilable, irresolvable, and non-contingent”.¹⁸ Talisse identifies Deweyan democracy as a “substantive” theory that treats democracy as a moral, first-order value, a value which is normative in itself; “a moral ideal in its own right”¹⁹ and as such renders it incompatible with pluralism. With this rigid conception of pluralism in mind, I feel Talisse is asserting that ultimately, beliefs are fixed and so democratic dialogue is futile for it cannot unite irreconcilable differences. This is surely an unworkable theory of pluralism, rejecting democratic decision-making altogether. I believe Deweyan democracy is not at odds with pluralism; rather the very pragmatist conception of pluralism is inconsistent with Talisse’s rigid conception of pluralism. While it may be the case that differences are not merely a problem of surface level inconsistencies but are deep rooted in the moral psyche and ultimately irreducible, that is not to say that through a process of open, free communication and democratic education, these differences cannot coexist and thrive

¹⁶ Talisse, RB (2003) Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 1–22

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 3

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 1

within a participatory democracy. Indeed, Richard Rorty has praised Dewey's dedication to pluralism and "to the maximisation of opportunities for individual variation", in which the only homogenisation required is "the agreement among groups to cooperate with one another in support of institutions which are dedicated to the providing room for as much pluralism as possible";²⁰ the institution to which he refers is undoubtedly the democratic institution.

It is only when one addresses the deeper problem of treating democracy as a superior normative value that Talisse's argument seems plausible; for if we accept Dewey's belief that participatory democracy is *the* superior way of life and further that it is a moral value that *must* be embraced by all citizens, then it cannot be consistent with pluralism as a whole. Dewey calls upon all to embrace the democracy as the overriding moral contract to govern all other beliefs; as such "only it can satisfy the consent requirement, and if pluralism implies that no [normative] principle could win the consent of an entire population, then pluralism requires that we abandon the view that democracy is normatively best".²¹ However, I feel that Dewey's democracy does not have to be so different from the proceduralist theory of democracy that stems from the view that democracy is a second-order value that facilitates and sustains first-order "normative requirements with regard to the individual, such as autonomy, liberty or equality."²² I agree that autonomy, equality and liberty are indeed superior, first-order moral values however; I assert that Dewey's framework creates the basis for a way of life that sustains and allows such values to thrive. The pluralist objection can be overcome when one reinterprets Dewey, and considers democracy as a non-moral way of life that can be embraced instrumentally as an ethical ideal, as I shall now go on to demonstrate through two case studies.

A Response to the Pluralist Objection and an Exploration of the Potential for, and Limitations of Deweyan Democracy in Practice

Only when Dewey's model for participatory democracy is viewed in the strictly narrow sense in which Talisse is objecting to so fiercely, do we see the core problems that arise from Dewey's democracy. Talisse's objection that it is simply inconsistent to attempt to reconcile a democracy as a way of life and pluralism at once is not problematic at all once one considers Dewey in the broader sense, as an advocate of a basis for democracy rather than a cast iron set of rules; indeed the very nature of pragmatism is the constant evolution and revaluation of principles and truths. I find the pluralist objection far too rigid in its condemnation of a democracy that first and foremost advocates the discussion and evaluation of all viewpoints of individual citizens. In what follows, I shall consider the practical implications and limitations of participatory democracy in the United Kingdom in two cases which I feel bear strong resemblance to the types of intentions that Dewey may have shared in building his model for democracy as a way of life; even if, in these cases the lack of appropriate conditions prevent them from having optimal results.

²⁰ Rorty, Richard (1996) *Philosophy and Social Hope*. Penguin Books, p. 237

²¹ Talisse, RB (2003) Can Democracy Be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 39, No. 1, p. 3

²² *Ibid*, p.1

The Police Crime Commissioner Elections 2012: Participatory Intention

Dewey did not ignore the potential, even inevitable failure of democracy, recognising that simply throwing more democracy at the problem is not the solution, changes need to be made to facilitate in the participative process, as will become clear in my critique of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections. The decision to hold the elections does appear to have come from a Deweyan intention for a participatory democratic process to democratise an institution of authority, so citizens may engage in the policing within their own community. Instead, however, the elections themselves became one of worst attended local elections in recent years in which, of the 41 forces across England and Wales outside London, voting turnout averaged 15% – below the previous 24% low recorded in the 1999 European elections.²³ The elections demonstrate that clearly, something in the participative democratic process went badly wrong in the filtration from government intention to participative electorate practice. The government aimed to create democratically elected roles of governance to oversee police forces across the UK to ensure that the needs of local citizens are prioritised and that funding is used wisely and appropriately. In practice, this role would engage with “local partners, such as social landlords, local councils, health, drug and alcohol organisations”,²⁴ these are the types of community organisations that would embody democracy as a way of life by bringing crucial, personal, lived experiences to platforms of deliberation. I believe this type of role would enable more communicative relations with ordinary citizens about their needs, opinions and beliefs about the shared intention for a safer community, encapsulating the very conditions necessary for lived, participatory democracy that Dewey alludes to. The intention was not simply to engage with citizens through voting, which has limitations, but for the ultimate Deweyan goal of creating a “freer and more humane experience which all share and to which all contribute”.²⁵

Non-Participatory Practice

We must return to the Dewey’s model for participation if we are to see where participative intention can fail in practice. Firstly, the election itself was treated as a political mechanism, not a platform for communication and the facilitation of free individual governance. The government did not allow for sufficient discussion with communities and individuals about the need for a democratisation of the police force and such a participative process should have been enabled well before the consideration of a candidate for the role. The government may have identified a need for better policing in response to statistics relating to crime, but without the consideration of citizens’ shared experiences, a new role appointed to improve those statistics is rendered futile. To return to my previous consideration of the educative model as a foundation for democracy as a way of life, it is clear to see how citizens, without the appropriate educative materials or appropriate conditions for the sharing of experiences and opinions relating to the new policy could have become “overwhelmed” and dissociated

²³ Source: The Guardian Online, 16th November 2012: Direct link: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/nov/16/electorate-david-cameron-police-polls?intcmp=239>

²⁴ Partners of Campaign Briefing: Source: Home Office. Direct link: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/police/pcc/campaign-resources/campaign-briefing?view=Binary>

²⁵ Dewey, J (1939) Creative Democracy – The Task before Us. In Robert B. Talisse, Scott F. Aikin (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 154

from the instrumental democratic process. The decision to carry out a rushed, ill-conceived election does nothing to facilitate participative democracy, for it “limits the contacts, the exchanges, the communications and the interactions by which experience is steadied while it is also enlarged and enriched”²⁶. In view of the many spoiled ballots, choosing not to vote was clearly an act of passive protest against an election rather than voter apathy, displaying a shared belief in a superior form of democracy of intelligent, enriched interaction. The educative, informative process leading up to the elections left citizens ill-informed and detached from the original participative intention, rendering them incapable of taking responsibility for their own governance. The cost of the election was a staggering £75m, a figure that has arguably inspired greater public response than the election itself, although there seems to be little to show for this cost; a distinct lack of educative materials, information about candidates and even guidance as to how to operate a new system of the Supplementary Voting, a system that had not been tested previously. Even if it may be argued that the new elections were first and foremost intended to bring about better conditions for participative democracy, as Bogason, Kensen and Miller have highlighted, such intentions are futile if not practiced effectively: “Directly participative forms [of democracy] are often attempted, but such alternatives lack the institutionalized history and hence the authority and prestige enjoyed by the formal representative model. Authority is not granted automatically to participative forms of democracy.”²⁷

One might argue that proper conditions to preserve the sanctity of participatory democracy are facilitated by non-governmental institutions, such as the Electoral Commission who actively engage with the government in intelligent, rational discussions to reflect the needs of citizens. The Electoral Commission did indeed have a part to play in the decision making process, although its views were ignored and treated as a mechanism for democracy, rather than an end. In a briefing dated Tuesday 11th September, the Electoral Commission alluded to a disagreement with government officials to continue with an election without taking the correct preparatory measures of informing citizens of the reason behind the election in the first place, the new system of voting and the candidates in question. This is the crux of the breakdown between participatory intention and participatory in practice. The government was advised by members of the Electoral Commission to follow a number of important legislative and communicative procedures, all of which had the potential to facilitate in the execution of proper Deweyan participative democracy. The solution consisted of the postponement of the election to allow for proper conditions for a participatory democratic election to take place and in response the “the Government decided not to pursue [the] proposal”.²⁸ Instead the government opted for a small amount of ill-conceived, rapidly generated television commercials that did little to inform its citizens and instead, through vivid, violent imagery attempted to coerce citizens into voting for the sake of voting; a far cry from their original intention for a participatory democracy, so denying citizens “freedom

²⁶ Dewey, J (1939) *Creative Democracy – The Task before Us*. In Robert B. Talisse, Scott F. Aikin (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 154

²⁷ Bogason, Kensen and Miller (2002) Pragmatic, Extra-Formal Democracy. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 675

²⁸ The Electoral Commission (2012) *Briefing on Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, September 2012*, p. 2. URL: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/150503/Briefing-on-PCC-elections-September-2012.pdf.

and fullness of communication”.²⁹

The Potential for Participatory Democracy through E-Petitions Case Study: Petition against Proposed Badger Cull

As I have already discussed, I do not regard apathy as a plausible problem to participatory democracy, for I do not believe it is actually the case that citizens have no desire to engage in the democratic process; voter apathy is simply a reactionary response to lack of appropriate conditions for democracy. I will account for this belief by critiquing the e-petition that successfully suspended the carrying through of government policy that would allow for a mass cull of badgers to prevent the spreading of tuberculosis amongst cattle. For nearly a decade, the subject of a badger cull has been addressed repeatedly, with the spreading of bovine tuberculosis being attributed to badgers. In 2011, the threat of bovine tuberculosis resulted in the mass slaughter of 26,000 cattle, costing UK tax payers £90m and threatening the livelihood of farmers across the UK and the on-going debate of whether a badger cull would prevent such a contagious disease. From the point of view of the farming community, a cull seemed to be the only preventative measure that could be taken in order to prevent another bout of tuberculosis and following this, animal rights protesters incited mass uproar in asserting that such a cull would be mindless and serve no desired end. From independent scientific investigation, evidence has come to light to suggest that a cull would in no way solve the problem of bovine tuberculosis, making it an unnecessary, excessive action to take when other, better treatment and prevention procedures would serve better, more effective ends. I do not wish to delve deeply into all of the issues that this case raises, for it is manifold in its complexity; I will, however, critique one very important aspect of the case, that of public involvement in a matter of policy through the democratic vehicle of e-petitions, perhaps the most direct manifestation of Deweyan participatory democracy.

The evolution of e-petitions has enabled ordinary citizens to not only voice their own sentiments, but also participate in the debates of others that they ordinarily would have had no contact with; this is the type of self-governance that I believe gives real credence to Dewey's democracy as a way of life. This type of democratic sharing of opinions and experiences is not something forced upon individuals as in the case of the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, but comes from the individual, determining their own expression of belief. In addition to being readily accessible, the outcome of e-petitions is not immediate policy change, but the opening up of the issue for debate in the House of Commons following the achievement of 150,000 signatories. It is debate that I feel is the most prominent manifestation of Deweyan democracy, and the most successful interpretation of the conditions for successful democracy as a way of life. In addition to securing signatories, the animal rights activists- including a small number of members of parliament- were able to instigate an independent scientific investigation to support their beliefs that a badger cull would be grossly excessive and ineffective. The very fact that citizens were and continue to engage with other members of society, particularly those of the scientific community as well as the agricultural community, demonstrates a Deweyan sense of self governance and the sharing of experiences; all vital in the participatory process. This case study demonstrates how, when the appropriate conditions are in place, many citizens do express a will to engage in participatory democracy and the shared intention for a better society. The case study also demonstrates a willingness to

²⁹ Dewey, J (1939) *Creative Democracy – The Task before Us*. In Robert B. Talisse, Scott F. Aikin (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 153

embrace participatory democracy on the part of the representative government, who listened to and engaged with the citizens to whom it is answerable to. One possible criticism that does arise however, is the recurrent problem of those citizens who are excluded from such forms of participatory democracy, not because they do not believe in democracy, but because they are simply part of a minority; surely, not every policy that affects citizens should require the arguably excessive amount of signatories before it may be raised for public debate; I will not address this further but wish that it be considered in future debates.

Conclusion

Through this critical analysis of two attempts at a participatory democratic policy, I believe I have shown that behind UK representative democracy lays a real potential for Deweyan participatory democracy, driven by belief in democracy as a way of life and a shared hope in societal progression. However, as has become clear, without the sufficient conditions for participatory democracy, such Deweyan intentions are limited to unachievable utopian idealism. The intention for a democracy as a way of life is only practically achievable when it is not embraced as a first-order moral value; as such I have concluded that my own manifestation of participatory democracy is likely to come into conflict with the strict Deweyan democracy that Talisse has objected to. I consider the conditions for participatory democracy to be free, continuous and open education, that is, transparent, easily accessible information and communication that allows each citizen to govern themselves and engage intelligently with their community and the wider political sphere in addition to sharing in experiences if those who live different lives within their own and the wider community. I believe such conditions would facilitate the enrichment and enlargement of citizen communication and the continuous exchange of beliefs and ideas, all of which would contribute to the betterment of society as a whole. Just as in Dewey's time, we are at risk of becoming apathetic if we and the government continue to treat democracy as a fixed, political mechanism that will simply "perpetuate itself automatically"³⁰ rather than a living, changing, continuous way of life. Judith M. Green, states that "actively embracing participatory democracy as a vital ideal for our times [...] can give meaning and energy to our way of democratic living as individuals and as citizens",³¹ encapsulating the need for such a democracy in today's society. I do find that, in spite of the pluralist objection, all citizens do have a desire for the betterment of their individual lives and their communities in the context of their lived experiences and this, I believe, is the shared intention that drives individual democracy. At its core democracy is the deep faith, of every individual in the enrichment of future experiences and the unending task "is forever that of creation of a freer and more humane experience in which all share and to which all contribute",³² in other words, social progress. In spite of this however, I do not feel that participatory democracy, indeed democracy as a way of life is by any stretch constitutive of first-order moral values; as such, it does not conflict with pluralism. I assert that Dewey's participatory democratic model merely creates a structure for democracy as an integrated way of life that

³⁰ Dewey, J (1939) *Creative Democracy – The Task before Us*. In Robert B. Talisse, Scott F. Aikin (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 151

³¹Green, JM (2004) *Participatory Democracy: Movements, Campaigns, and Democratic Living*. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, New Series*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics, Published by: Penn State University Press, p. 61

³² Dewey, J (1939) *Creative Democracy – The Task before Us*. In Robert B. Talisse, Scott F. Aikin (Eds.) (2011) *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce Through the Present*. Princeton University Press, p. 153

facilitates and sustains first-order moral values such as autonomy, liberty and equality.

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