

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE: A REVIEW OF CIVICS, CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

J.O. Kuye

School of Public Management and Administration

University of Pretoria

ABSTRACT

This article examines the ability of civic education as a concept to respond to governance imperatives in a modern state. Whether it is in democracies or non-democracies, governance imperatives require citizen electoral participation, government stability, and political order which determine in turn, the success and/or the performance of a government. It could be argued that the purpose of civic education is therefore to insure the continuity of a society. If this is the case, then civic education becomes relevant to governance imperatives when it creates an environment that is capable of allowing citizens to abide to the principles of truth, inquiry, critical thought which presumably transcend allegiance to any particular political-legal units.

INTRODUCTION

It can be argued that civic education is possible only when there is consciousness and increased awareness by institutions of higher learning, schools and teachers on the issue of continuity and change. For it is only through citizens' heightened consciousness of the forces that act upon them that they may come to understand, delineate, and actively pursue alternative possibilities; *i.e.*, become the politically informed and involved person who political educators say they aim to create (Shaver, 1976:38-39). The ultimate aim of this article is to analyse civic education's ability to respond to governance imperatives in a modern state, particularly in the 21st century. This endeavour is guided by questions

such as: is there any relationship between civic education and the attainment of governance imperatives?

CIVIC EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRATIC STATE

In the attempt to examine the significance of civic education towards the attainment of governance imperatives in the context of a modern state, it is essential to define the concept of citizenship before emphasising civic education. Defining the term *citizenship* is a complex task as it can have multiple connotations in the judicial, statutory, national, psychological and social senses of the word. It frequently denotes an official state of the individual in a national environment, where he/she also holds a variety of rights and duties, privileges and obligations, liberties and responsibilities. For example, Aristotle argued that citizenship was born in Greece's city-states, small enough to give their members the chance to *know one another's character*. He identified citizenship as citizens all who share in the civic life of ruling and being ruled in turn, but emphasised the importance of and participation by which citizens could influence their leaders and the governance process, thereby affecting their environment as well as their day-to-day life (Aristotle, 1948:1326). Centuries later, Machiavelli used the term *civic virtue* to describe the obligations a citizen has toward his/her state and community. These obligations should be acquired through education, religion, and a healthy fear of the dereliction of civic duty (Oliver & Heater, 1994:14). This can only be achieved through the establishment of an adequate system of civic education. After civic, education, and citizenship have been defined the next section contemplates the concept civic education in a contemporary regime in order to clarify its meaning in the attainment of governance imperatives.

CIVICS

Civics may be regarded as part of the science of comparative government with the sole aim of creating public trust. Whether defined in terms of political activity, or more broadly in terms of living the *good*, the moral life, understanding the concept of citizenship must be a central concern of the schools, institutions of higher learning and agents of democratic societies. Shaver (1976:97) contends that while it appears that citizenship education in the schools may be having some impact on attitudes, there is still reason for concern about the inadequacies, especially in terms of the problems to be faced.

APPROACHES TO CIVIC EDUCATION

In the contemporary age the form of political association known as liberal democracy makes extraordinary cultural demands on those who live under it. For instance, the state commits itself to treat all citizens as individuals and to treat all individuals equally. But, in a developmental sense, human beings are never free and equal individuals. Free and equal individuals (i.e., human beings who effectively regard themselves as such, and

behave accordingly) are made, rather than found. According to Bridges (1994:1-2) free and equal individuals are produced through the influence of a special kind of political culture. Human beings (in a developmental sense) first are members of families and communities distinguished by ethnic, class, religious and cultural perspectives. Ethnic, class, and religious communities shape human desire and self-understanding in accordance with some more or less coherent world view or concept of the good life. As such, they introduce values and standards of conduct that establish a system of *preferences*; differentials of rank, status, and relative worth.

Cheru (2002:64) considers education as the cornerstone of human development in every society. A sound development strategy aimed at promoting economic development, democracy and social justice must be fully cognisant of human resource development. For, when all is said and done, development is about people: their physical health, moral integrity, and intellectual awareness. Through education, citizens become aware of their environment and the social and economic options available to them. In a liberal democratic regime, for example, the state rules in the name of free and equal citizens. The free and equal citizens who are ruled are ruled in their own name: they rule themselves. But the state itself must play a role in the cultural creation of the free and equal citizens in whose name it rules. In such regimes, governments rule over the entire course of human life in the name of the ethnic, class or religious values that govern human desire (Bridges, 1994:2). This is not the case in democratic regimes. In this type of regimes there are organisations and associations such as political parties and civil societies that endeavour to promote citizens' rights. In most cases people are taught about their rights, but there is no consistent emphasis on citizens' duties. It is in this instance that civic education plays a meaningful role in society. Civic education is anchored basically on two following aims: the raising human consciousness and creating the basis for social criticism. These goals are briefly outlined below:

THE RAISING OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

The primary aim of political education is the raising of consciousness. That involves helping students to view the circumstances of their daily lives and the possibilities for action in terms of the perspectives of others, not only specific others, but using George Herbert Mead's (1934, 1938) concept, in terms of *generalised others*, in terms of values, beliefs, and images of the future that are represented in a variety of cultures, within and among nations and people of the world, past and present traditions of knowledge and knowing. Yet, it is the awareness and understanding of these other perspectives that are requisites to the development of alternative possibilities *i.e.* change (Shaver, 1976:40). In this era of globalisation in which the international community has established so many organisations to promote human rights while there is not much emphasis on human duties, civic education can assist a particular government to instill its ideology in communities and help them use their rights in a responsible manner. As a result, citizens will be able to abide with government's plan of actions and particularly to its different programmes and then become committed in the implementation phase.

GOVERNANCE IMPERATIVES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Governance can be described as the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions (Olowu & Sako, 2002:19). Before examining governance imperatives, it is essential to consider the concept of good governance for it is the main determinant of governance requirements in any modern state. Furthermore, the concept has been expanded by the World Bank and other international aid donors, non-governmental organisations, academics and Western governments and politicians to encompass a much broader and more generalised range of ideas and policies, to the extent that it is not always clear what, exactly, is meant when one is using the term (Najem & Hetherington, 2003:2). Essentially, the concept of good governance as it is currently used, includes all of the following: economic liberalisation and the creation of market friendly environments; transparency and accountability with respect to both economic and political decision-making; political liberalisation, particularly democratic reforms; rule of law and the elimination of corruption; the promotion of civil society; the introduction of fundamental human rights guarantees, especially with respect to political rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom from arbitrary imprisonment; and the adoption of policies designed to safeguard long-term global interests like education, health and the environment (UNDP, 1995). The most important requirements consist of the following (Pierre & Peters, 2005:3-5):

ARTICULATING A COMMON SET OF PRIORITIES FOR SOCIETY

The first and perhaps most essential task for governance is articulating a set of priorities and goals for society that can be agreed upon by that society. This set of goals, in turn, provides the principal place for government (in the traditional sense) in governance. Perhaps no other set of institutions in society is capable of articulating collective priorities, especially in a democratic manner. The market, for example, provides a mechanism for exchange but assumes that sets of complementary and competitive goals are already in place. Likewise, networks may have common goals for their members, but are not capable of setting goals more broadly. Governance therefore, refers to some mechanism or process through which a consensus, or at a minimum, a majority decision on social priorities and objectives can emerge. Such a process must logically include a mediating role exercised by institutions that are perceived as legitimate.

COHERENCE, STEERING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As well as having goals clearly articulated, there is a need for those goals to be consistent and co-ordinated. It may be possible to govern at a minimalist level through incoherent and unco-ordinated processes across polity sectors, but it will be inefficient and excessively costly. Much of that cost may be economic, but some also will be political. If citizens believe that their governing institutions are incapable of acting

in a responsible manner they will tend to lose confidence in them, further exacerbating difficulties in governing. Given that authority and legitimacy make governing through inexpensive instruments, such as information, more possible than maintaining confidence as an important goal for governing institutions.

Another requirement for governance is a capacity for steering. Once a set of goals is established there is a need to find ways of achieving those goals and steering the society to attain those goals. The conventional means of governance has been for the public sector to use regulation, direct provision, and subsidies (among other policy instruments) to achieve those goals.

The final requirement of governance is some means of holding those actors delivering governance to the society accountable for their actions. Again, this requirement is a particular weakness for the non-governmental actors involved in the governance process, given that markets in particular tend to have little or no concept of accountability. Contemporary governments have notable problems of implementing accountability, but this concept remains deeply ingrained in the public sector.

In sum, governance imperatives are represented by the following traits: responsibility, adequacy, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, high ethical professional standards and public participation. Any state that establishes these factors in its government will be classified among those nations that meet the requirements of good governance. This will end up enhancing its opportunities for a sustainable development. After all have been said about civic education and governance imperatives, the next section intends to examine the use of civic education in attaining governance imperatives.

GOVERNANCE IMPERATIVES IN A DEMOCRATIC STATE

In the ever-changing environment of the world many modern states have experienced various difficulties in attaining their traditional roles. As a result, state bureaucracies are being considered as an icon of red-tape, ineffectiveness, ineptitude and heavy-handedness. This reality places a great demand for bringing about change in the management of public affairs. Attending to this matter means creating an environment that promotes the conditions for rule of law, responsibility, accountability and public participation that will in turn establish good governance in the management of public sector institutions and organisations. For instance, in an article titled *From responsiveness to collaboration: Governance, citizens, and the next generation of public administration*, Vigoda-Gadot (cited in Vigoda-Gadot & Cohen, 2004: xviii) states that civic education's prominent contribution to governance is the enhancement of collaborative actions by governments, administration bodies, and *good citizens*. This article suggests that the evolution of the New Public Management (NPM) movement has increased the pressure on state bureaucracies to become more responsive to citizens as clients. This trend is perceived as an important advancement in contemporary public administration, which finds itself struggling in an ultra-dynamic marketplace arena. However, together with such a welcome change in theory building and in practical culture reconstruction it is argued that modern societies still confront a growth in citizens' passivity. Putting it another way,

citizens tend to favour the easy chair of the customer over the sweat and turmoil of participatory involvement. As a result, civic education strives to promote the idea of the citizen as a vital construct for the formation of the new managerial spirit, and at the same time as a major future for governance. Thus, civic education helps citizens to distinguish their own impulses and desires. Hence, they learn to be public as well as private citizens. That is to say that civic education is very significant to any modern government which endeavours to instill governance imperatives in citizens. It is only when the population abides to government's programmes that they can become able to voluntarily participate in the phase of realisation. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of leaders and public officials to insist on values such as voluntarism and spontaneous involvement for they can promote a healthier public service, a more efficient bureaucracy, and a richer life in prosperous modern communities. This will end up creating an environment that allows citizens to become involved in various government programmes. This will end up creating a strong partnership between rulers and the communities that can promote the betterment of all and the advancement of the state. It is through participation that individuals learn that they are part of a society and develop a sense of justice.

When considering a country such as South Africa, civic education can play a meaningful role in assisting the community to cope with the legacy of the past political regime of Apartheid. When one looks back it would have been so difficult for other race groups to accept the white group for what happened in the past. It is through mass education, the promotion of reconciliation and a culture of acceptance that peace among people of different races was possible. Coping with the challenges faced by civic education requires rulers to be responsible and they should establish structures that represent the interests of all. Coincident with, and a consequence of, this renewed interest in the topic, there has been an institutionalisation and, to some extent, professionalisation of political education, leadership imperatives and governance issues. In essence, this is nothing new. From its very beginning education has had a political purpose. It has been intended to train people to take their place within a particular society, to give them whatever skills, knowledge and values were thought necessary for the continuation of their society.

This kind of formulation, of course, ignores the divisions within society by speaking rather of society *as a whole* and thus ignores the role of education in enabling one group within a society to control or manipulate others. Nonetheless, public education is and has been inevitably political. Its mandate is to train citizens, in the widest sense of the term. Despite this long tradition, however, the recent interest in political and policy education represents something new. If nothing else, it is giving new emphasis and directing renewed attention to the citizenship role of education. It is trying to define – or redefine – more precisely the nature of that citizenship and to suggest ways by which institutions of higher education and schools of Public Administration and Management can contribute more effectively to it. It is rising to the level of conscious awareness and deliberate planning by creating many assumptions that have long been taken for granted and unexamined. In doing so, it is turning primarily to the academic discipline of both Public Administration and Political Science for many of its concepts and frameworks and,

at least by implication, is turning away from history, which has long been assigned the main role in citizenship education and training.

There can be little doubt that recent interest in public and political education is a response to developments which characterise the changing geo-political times in which we are living in. In particular, it is a response to what could be called and described as *democracy in crisis* with all its suggestions that the liberal democratic system has become ungovernable. A recent ten-nation survey reports that nowhere has the system proved capable of producing the ideal goal of a well-informed citizenry, with democratic attitudes and values, supportive of government policies and interested in civic affairs. The inclusion of the phrase *supportive of government policies* in this list is intriguing. It does not fit with the others. Obviously, a well-informed, democratic and interested citizen need not be at all supportive of government policies. One wonders if the research team was simply cataloguing all the various aims of civic education, regardless of logical consistency, or whether it saw, in fact, some correlation between civic education and support for government. In any event, it may indicate that civic education is intended to produce citizens who will be more supportive of their governments or, if not of their governments, then at least of their political systems. Certainly, the fear of youth alienation runs through much of the literature on political education. Supporters of the movement see it as making the youth more understanding of the potential and limitations of politics, as leading them to participate in and become committed to a particular political system (or regime, to use Easton's terminology). At the same time, however, they tend to ignore those structural forces which are bearing most heavily on the young, and, in particular, those forces which are producing high levels of unemployment. Political education is in danger of treating the victims while ignoring the causes of their disease.

Before going any further, it will be best to devote a little time to semantics. Just what is political education? There are two strands to the view that political education should lead to a more highly political citizenry. One sees it as a way of saving the system. Alarmed by the persistent findings of alienation, apathy and cynicism among various sections of the population, and especially by the antipathy felt by many people for politics and for politicians, some people hope that through more effective programmes of political education the system can be saved.

The second strand takes no position on whether the system should or should not be preserved. It concentrates upon the individual citizen and sees a more broadly based and active political involvement as a matter of simple justice. If this results in radical political change, so be it. The first approach sees a wider citizen involvement in politics as a way of reducing alienation and cynicism and so preserving the system. The second sees it as simply worthwhile for its own sake. It accepts the premise of classical democratic theory that participation serves to educate and humanise those who participate. There is, of course, a tradition in modern democratic theory which sees virtue in the passiveness of the majority, arguing that too much political involvement would politicise every issue and, so to speak, overload the system. The point that is being made here is that there is a tendency within political education which rejects the theory of elite democracy and

which instead supports a much more participatory form in politics and civic education both as good in its own right and as a way of achieving greater adjudicating purposes.

All this is to say that political education is itself highly political. It is the application in educational terms of a political philosophy. The same cannot be said, or not to the same extent, of another term which is often heard: *civic education* or *civics*. It is true that the term is being used nowadays with something of the same meaning as political education, but it has overtones which suggest a rather different approach. Civics portrays a consensus view of politics in which questions of conflict and power play little part. Interestingly, all three approaches – politics, civics, and citizenship – can often be found in recent discussions of political efficacy and participation, for greater civic knowledge and commitment, for a heightened sense of community and social obligation, and for the improvement of the political system. It is usually assumed, however, that all this can be done within the political system as it is. Nearly all the discussions of political education accept the political system as a given fact and aim at teaching students to play their part actively and effectively within it. To this extent, at least, political education may be more accurately described as political socialisation. Most discussions, for instance, see politics as an arena in which all are potentially free to compete on more or less equal terms, with government serving as a neutral arbiter whose main concern is to enforce the rules of the game

It is not something to be introduced to students indirectly, in the wake of, or as part of, some other topic. Rather, it is to be taught to them directly and explicitly and at the same time built into all the work they do, so that they are required to use it in every topic or unit. In simplified form, it looks like this:

- recognising a problem;
- formulating hypotheses;
- recognising the implications of the hypotheses;
- gathering data;
- interpreting data; and
- evaluating the original hypotheses.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR.

- Similarities and differences in political behaviour (culture, socialisation, socioeconomic status and the relationship of all three to political behaviour; also political loyalty and alienation)
- Elections and voting behaviour
- Political decision-makers
- Unofficial political specialists (interest group leaders, news commentators, expert consultants and party leaders)

A review of recent political training projects in the teaching of civic responsibility in South Africa contains a number of useful lessons. For example, *firstly*, one needs to have some conception of politics in order to be sure what it is that one should be teaching. All of these projects see politics in terms of conflict and its management, a mundane enough

Traditional civics	Recent Approaches to Political Education
Concentrates on government to the neglect of other aspects of politics	Includes local and informal political contexts (e.g. the school, family and community)
Emphasises the formal structure and institutions of government	Describes what actually or really happens
Focuses on government at the federal and provincial levels; has a macro-orientation	Sees conflict (which is not the same as violence) as the core of politics
Describes the ideal or what is supposed to happen	Emphasises personal opinion and argument
Stresses consensus, downplays or avoids conflict	Uses discovery/inquiry strategies, Increasing attention being paid to action projects
Emphasises factual knowledge and the one right answer	Emphasises current controversies either as worth studying in their own right to as examples of enduring themes
Relies mostly on conventional teaching methods (e.g. textbook, chalk and talk)	Turns to the academic discipline of Political Science for concepts and insights
Tends to avoid current controversies; reluctant to bring politics into the classroom	Sees good citizenship as a topic for analysis and debate, although insists upon certain procedural values
Uses commonsense categories and knowledge, relies heavily on history	
Sees good citizenship as a set of specific virtues to be inculcated	Goes beyond voting to more active forms of participation
Postulates the informed voter as the most desirable model of political participation	Is very conscious of the impact of the hidden curriculum and works to remodel it

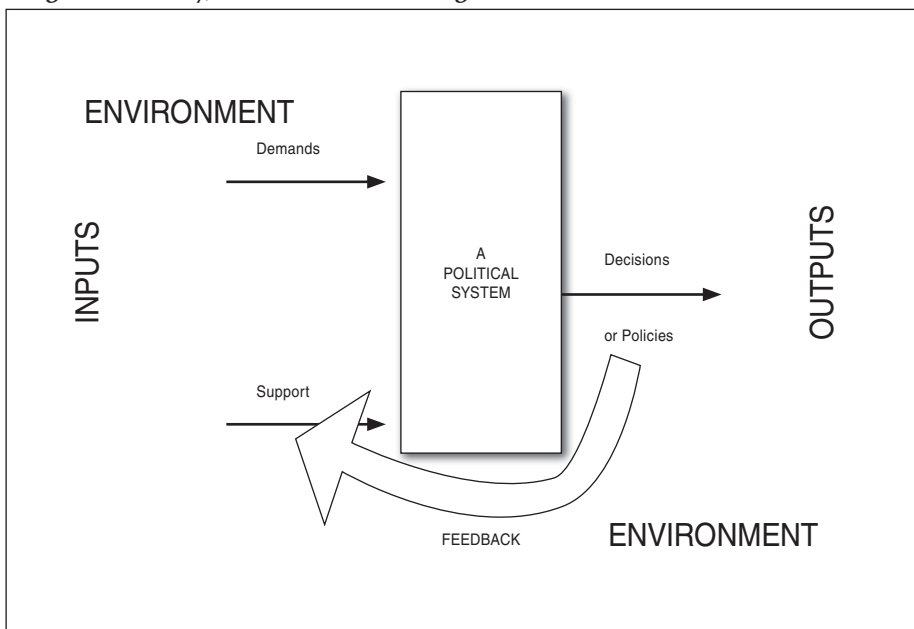
Traditional civics	Recent Approaches to Political Education
Largely ignores the impact of the hidden curriculum (school rules, classroom climate, teacher attitudes)	Promotes (often implicitly) obedience, trust and conformity
Concentrates on politics and the political system of which government is only a part	Tends to avoid normative questions of what might be, avoids value-issues
Emphasises political processes and behaviour – the political culture	Promotes personal autonomy, efficacy, a critical spirit, a suspicion of power-holders

point, but one which many textbooks still avoid. *Secondly*, one needs to have some kind of conceptual framework upon which to base the curriculum in order to avoid a headlong dash into descriptions of political institutions which more often than not serve simply to confuse students. *Thirdly*, the academic discipline of Public Administration and Political Science can serve as an invaluable source of information and insight in connection with both the previous points. This is even more important than it seems, given the fact that many of the trainers charged with teaching politics, public administrations and policy studies in schools may not have the vital skills needed to infuse a civics oriented programming.

There is, however, another approach which may have more to offer and this is to organise a programme around the idea of a political system. The best known version of a systems approach is that of David Easton (Easton 1965). At its simplest, Easton sees a political system as a process through which inputs are converted into outputs, with these outputs in turn influencing further inputs. For example, any political system has two kinds of inputs: *one*, demands made by citizens that some decision or another should be made (or annulled), and *two*, a generalised feeling of support for, or opposition to, the system.

In both the Canadian and South African contexts, there are obviously many kinds of demands being made in the political arena and these demands will often turn into political issues. At the same time there is a high level of general support (or diffuse support as Easton calls it) for the political system of parliamentary democracy so that, even when people's demands are not satisfied. They continue to support it. In other societies, of course, this may not be the case at all, so that dissatisfied demands lead to alienation from, rejection of, and even struggle to overthrow the whole system. Thus, one can envisage a five-step model of political and public policy analyses; *one*, the environment within which the political system exists and which influences people's attitudes to and expectations of it; *two*, the inputs which enter the system; three, the process of converting inputs into outputs (i.e., policy formulation, decision-making and so

Diagrammatically, it all looks something like this (Easton1957:383-400)



forth); four, the outputs of the system, in the form of decisions and policies; and, five, the feedback process by which these decisions and policies create further inputs.

This has obvious appeal as a teaching device, since students can apply it to any political system, past, present and future, and, in consequence, have a key for unlocking the complexity of events. For instance, the diagram has proved to be useful in helping students conceptualise and make some sense out of the confusion of events as they see it.

Easton (1957:383-400) went further than this and elaborated upon what he saw as the fundamental ideas (the *structure*) of Political Science. In summary, they are:

- people in a society have many wants;
- some of these wants are matters for the political system (as opposed, say, to the family system, the economic system);
- as wants enter the political system, they become political demands;
- these demands are screened by *gate-keepers* (e.g. trades unions, political parties, interest groups), some are screened out, but others go on to become political issues;
- these issues are affected by existing cleavages in the political arena so that people take sides and form opinions;
- the authorities translate these issues into binding decisions (laws, policies) and in this context, a decision not to do anything on an issue remains a binding decision.
- these decisions create positive or negative support for different levels of the system, which Easton distinguishes between the political community (e.g., the national group,

- and country or region); the regime (i.e., the particular political or constitutional apparatus) and the authorities (i.e., those who happen to be in power); and
- these decisions generate new wants which seek once again to enter the political system.

Here, then, is an attempt to simplify and clarify the fundamental ideas of Public Administration and Political Science so that they can be adapted for civic education curricula. In particular, it is an attempt to elucidate the concept of a political-administrative *system*, as opposed to some of the other projects discussed in this section which concentrate rather on issues, problems or concepts. The underlying supposition is that if students learn to analyse one political system they will know how to analyse others, thus reducing and simplifying the complexity of politics.

Obviously, the concept of a political system, especially if it is expressed in pure Eastonian language, will not hold the interest of civic learners. It is too abstract for them to understand without some concrete aids. The technical language of interest articulation; interest aggregation; regulative, extractive, distributive and responsible functions; and all the rest are clearly of little service in the learning process. This is, of course, no criticism of the political and policy scientists themselves. However, it is important to turn their insights into language that society can understand. The goal is to enable students to understand how political and policy systems work and for this, they need some vehicle by which to arrive at the abstract ideas involved. For this purpose, issues and problems are extremely useful.

To argue that the concept of a political system should be the foundation of a politics-civics curriculum is not, of course, to argue for the traditional rehearsal of the institutions of government which for so long characterised civics. Nor is it to accept the conservatism that some critics have charged is inherent in the functionalism of the systems approach. Rather, what is being argued here is that some analytical framework is needed to help students understand how political systems work. Upon this framework, they can then build whatever specific structure they wish to examine. The aim is that they acquire a key to unlock whatever political and policy mysteries they may encounter.

All these considerations point to Easton's approach to the analysis of political systems as being worthy of serious examination. Admittedly, the model has to be simplified to the point where a self-respecting scientist may cringe in horror, but simplification lies at the heart of good teaching and training. And, in its essentials, stripped down to the bare bones, Easton's analysis is both simple and persuasive. Just as important, experience – albeit personal rather than scientific – suggests that it can work with students at all civic levels. The essentials, as described earlier, are the:

- *environment* within which the political system exists and with which it interacts;
- *inputs* that enter the political system;
- *conversion process* by which the inputs are turned into outputs;
- *outputs* of the political system; and
- *feedback loop* by which those outputs in turn create further inputs or modify existing inputs.

The language is rather arid. It might be helpful to see what is involved in practice. What follows is not exhaustive and could certainly be presented differently, but it does indicate how the examination of a political issue can be used to show the workings of the political system. In the long run, hopefully, students will then learn to apply the analytical framework themselves. The basic idea is that an issue arises in the environment, becomes an input into the political system and is then converted into an output which has further impact upon the environment – and so on.

The Environment

- Why is the subject an issue at all? What is there in society at large that makes this particular topic (say capital punishment, abortion) an issue at this particular time? For instance, is there a precipitating incident? Do the media draw attention to the issue? Does some group or individual agitate upon it for whatever reason?
- What are the stands taken on the issue? Who holds what viewpoints? What group identifications are noticeable – e.g. by class, religion, ethnicity, occupation, region? Why do people take the stand they do – e.g. the influence of parents, friends, church, media? What functions do opinions and attitudes serve for those who hold them – e.g. prestige, group-identification, scape-goating, reduction of dissonance?

Inputs

- How does the issue enter the political arena? For example, what pressure-groups exist and how do they operate? Do the media have a role? What part is played by politicians and political parties (e.g. do they take up an issue and promote it)?
- Once an issue is in the political arena, what happens? For example, what alliances are formed? What arguments are advanced? What is done to publicise the issue or some group's view of it?
- What demands are made for government action? How? By whom?
- What are people's general feelings about both the government and the political system? How do these feelings affect their thinking and acting on a particular issue?

Conversion of inputs into outputs

- What is the response of those in power? For example, do they try to ignore the issue, to block it, to take a stand, to find a compromise, to seek a way out?
- Who is in power anyway? Who are the decision-makers: elected representatives or permanent officials? Which particular members of the decision-making groups have influence and why?
- What forces influence those in power? For example, how were they recruited? What is their background? To whom do they listen? What considerations other than the issue itself do they have to worry about?
- What are the procedures – official and unofficial – by which decisions are made?

Output

- What decision (law, policy, etc.) finally emerges?

Feedback

- How does this decision affect the various groups initially involved? For example, are they satisfied? Do they undertake further action?
- How does this decision affect people not previously involved? For example, people who did not care too much about the original issue may have very strong feelings about the decision made to settle it. If so, what happens?
- How does the decision affect the decision-makers? For example, is their political future more or less certain? How are they perceived by the people at large? Are their bases of support altered, strengthened, weakened?
- How does the decision affect the political system at large? Is people's faith in the system affected? Do they support it less or more? What further demands are created?

It is not suggested that this outline and all the questions it contains are either especially elegant or exhaustive. Indeed, the questions and sub-questions can be multiplied almost indefinitely. Nonetheless, whatever its imperfections, the approach does suggest a way by which students can be led from the study of some particular issues to a wider consideration of how a political education system works and, along the way, they will also necessarily consider various dimensions of political behavior.

At its best, this approach may give students an intellectual grasp of politics; it will enhance their understanding and insight. It will not, however, do anything directly to develop any sense of political efficacy, let alone lead to greater political participation. One may reasonably assume that no course of study by itself will achieve this. Rather, as argued earlier, political efficacy and competence are aspects of a wider sense of personal effectiveness and this is achieved not so much by studying anything as by acting upon things. It is this that makes how politics is taught to students as important as what is taught to them.

Assuming that a student has something to contribute can work wonders, but it is not just a matter of blind faith. Obviously, classroom climate and quality of teacher-student relationships are vital. There are, generally speaking, three ingredients in successful teaching: expertise in one's subject, pedagogical skill and empathy with students. If this last quality is missing, then students will obviously be unwilling to contribute much of anything. It is important to work with what students already know – and if one thinks of politics in conceptual terms as power, authority, obligation, rights, fairness and the rest, then there is no problem in linking politics to what even young children know. Politics and policy inculcation are about rules, which, of course, also imply power, authority, enforcement, obedience, resistance and so on.

A recipe for the possibilities of teaching politics, civics and political education in society is put forward (Anderson *et al.*, 1977:61-72):

- students should see the *political* in their everyday lives in family, school and so on;
- political education should deal with problems common to the world of both youth and to the adult world of institutionalised politics;

- political education should link the study of problems to the development of behavior;
- political education should reflect the many contexts of political learning (e.g. ways must be found of relating to society, government and community groups, the media and so on);
- the *hidden curriculum* must be examined for its political messages;
- political education should reflect the fact that no one theory of learning satisfactorily explains the development of major issues in society implying that there is a place for civic education as well as cognitive learning, for modelling, reinforcement and the rest;
- political education should reflect the diversity of society; and
- political education should recognise that children are becoming citizens of a global society as well as of their own country

Politics is not a matter of knowledge alone. Obviously, knowledge is an important component of political literacy, competence or whatever one chooses to call it, but, on its own, it is not enough. The acquisition of political knowledge, for example, has no necessary connection whatsoever with support for democratic principles, nor with political participation. One learns to be active – politically or otherwise – by being active. One learns a skill by practicing it. Political education, therefore, if it is seriously concerned with developing political efficacy or competence, must concern itself with the appropriate skills and attitudes, as well as with knowledge. It must attend also to the involvement and activity of students. Research into political education suggests that the curriculum on its own is a limited medium of political learning. Educational research has drawn attention to the importance of the hidden curriculum. Students may acquire their political attitudes and assumptions more from the way we teach than from what we teach. To no one's surprise, research indicates that political competence and a sense of political efficacy are aspects of a more general sense of efficacy.

In any event, there are at least three criteria to be met if students are to understand politics: *one*, that they should see the political in their everyday ordinary lives; *two*, that they should deal with problems common both to their world and to the adult world of politics; and *three*, that from this personal, experiential base they should arrive at an understanding of politics in the bigger arena.

Efficacy is, of course, the goal of those who see political education as best done, at least in part, *via* planned, out-of-school experiences. There is a small but growing trend to see political education in terms of getting students involved in some sort of political action outside the school. The word *political* here should be interpreted generously with the intent of getting everyone to take part in community and public issues.

In short, student action can occur in at least five forms:

- voluntary service with social agencies;
- community projects;
- political action with political parties or interest groups;
- community study and surveys; and
- internship in a community organisation.

In all cases, advocates of action programmes insist that such activities are not extracurricular but rather are part of the curriculum, integrated with more conventional courses and offered for credit. All such programmes, of course, are forms of political education in that they are all founded upon a particular concept of citizenship. They lament the inactivity and lack of participation in public affairs displayed by the public at large and amply documented by political scientists. Instead, they offer a picture of the informed and active citizen.

CONCLUSION

In any event, contemporary approaches to political education are attempts to deal with a number of considerations. *Firstly*, they take account of the research into cognitive development and try to convert the often abstract subject matter of politics and policy formation into terms that students can understand through concrete, personal experience. *Secondly*, they take note of the findings of political socialisation research that conventional approaches have not in fact proved very successful. *Thirdly*, they tend to recognise the findings of political educational researchers as to the impact of the hidden curriculum. *Fourthly*, they are grounded in a political theory which takes popular participation seriously and which sees politics as consisting primarily of issues and problems. At the same time, however, they do not always avoid the dangers of simply becoming another form of socialisation rather than of political education.

The role of politics is to minimise it, to balance interests, to lessen tension to resolve conflict. In the same vein, one can juxtapose political education as the creative realignment of differing interests in a complex societal and political arena. Thus, political education still views the state, and particularly government, as the impartial arbiter of competing interests. Although political education has gone some way to adopting this second view, it has not yet fully come to terms with its implications of the modern society and the cryptic machinations of the environment. It is, therefore, no coincidence that those who fail to come to grips with the whole question of ideology are not failing in their responsibility to educate civics but are creating a panacea of confusion within a rudderless ship. It would be wrong, however, to see them as simply more sophisticated defenses of the status quo. They do represent a significant advance and one that hopefully can be taken even further.

Civic education becomes more effective when it trajects citizens to abide with the principles of inquiry and critical thought which presumably transcend allegiance to any particular political-legal units. This, in turn can create an environment that enables the attainment of effective governance imperatives.

The great dialogue and debate continues.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, L.F. *et al.* 1977. Criteria for Improving Political Education in Elementary School. *International Journal of Political Education*.

- Aristotle. 1948. *Politics*. Translated by E. Baker. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Bridges, T. 1994. *The culture of Citizenship: Inventing Post-modern Civic Culture*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Cheru, F. 2002. *African Renaissance*. London: Zed books.
- Easton, D. A. 2005. *Framework for Political Analysis*, New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Easton, D. 1965. *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, New York.
- Easton, D. 1957. An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems. *World Politics*, Vol. IX(9).
- Gastil, J. & Levine, P. (eds.) 2005. *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook. Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Giuliani, R.W. 2002. *Leadership*. First Edition. New York: Hyperion, Miramax Books.
- Mafunisa, M.J. (ed.) 2000. *Public Service Ethics*. Kenwyn: Juta & Co.
- McLaverty, P. (ed.) 2002. *Public Participation and Innovations in Community Governance*. Burlington, USA: Ashgate.
- Najem, T.P. & Hetherington, M. (ed.) 2003. *Good Governance in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Oliver, D. & Heater, D. 1994. *The Foundation of Citizenship*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Olowu, D. & Sako, S. (eds.) 2002. *Better Governance and Public Policy: Capacity Building and Democratic Renewal in Africa*. Bloomfield: Kumarian.
- Pateman, C. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pierre, J. & Peters, B.G. 2000. *Governance, Politics and the State*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Pierre, J. & Peters, B.G. 2005. *Governing Complex Societies: Trajectories and Scenarios*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- United Nations Development Programme. 1995. *Public Sector Management: Governance and Sustainable Human Development*. New York: UNDP.
- Shaver, J.P. (ed.) 1976. *Building Rationales for Citizenship Education*. Bulletin 52. Arlington, Virginia: National Council for the Social Studies.
- Venter, D. & Neulan, E. 2005. *NEPAD and the African Renaissance*. First Edition. Johannesburg: Richard Havenga & Associates.
- Vigoda-Gadot, E. & Cohen, A. (ed.) 2004. *Citizenship and Management in Public Administration: Integrating Behavioral Theories and Managerial Thinking*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- World Bank. 1989. *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. 1992. *Governance and Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.