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ARTICLES

A global perspective of the critical role of the state, schools and parents on the political education of youth

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Abstract

There is a concern that countries have become bedeviled with the youth disengagement from participation in the political processes expected of the citizens. This perceived participation conundrum is described by Manning and Edwards as the 'Civics deficit'. I contend that the solution lies in political education of youth. Political education is an important component of a nation's educational system which aims to cultivate in youth; citizenship knowledge, skills and values for their effective and responsible participation in public life in general and in democratic processes in particular. This theoretical paper, therefore, explores the broad contexts, global and other perspectives on political education of youth as well as the critical roles which the state, schools and parents have to play in order to establish the contributions of this study to the body of the literature.

Keywords: *Citizenship skills. Democracy. Parents. Political education. Schools. The state.*

Introduction

Education has been defined as the inculcation of the societal values, norms and beliefs into individuals for the purpose of preparing them skilfully and mentally to solve a myriad of problems confronting the society and contribute meaningfully towards its well-being and developmental projects (Asemah, 2010). The societal norms, customs, needs and desires are transmitted to the people through education. Education is a necessary instrument which provides students with knowledge about functions of the civil society (Bennion, 2006) and helps them to adjust to its way of life from time to time. This implies that education serves as an instrument to construct and reconstruct the minds of individuals through the learning of their society and how to adapt to societal ways of living. Politics, on the other hand, is a democratic process that allows citizens to freely express themselves on political or public issues, formulate their expectations, programmes or requirements without any fear of repression, vote in elections, engage in civil society organisations or political parties, and vie for an elective post as candidates in an election.

People learn about politics through their education in schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities. Those aspects of education that equip people with the political knowledge, political skills and political values that empower them in the performance of their civic responsibilities are referred to as political education in this study. Crittenden (2018) argues that schooling is not only responsible for the political education of youths. He believes that there are several other institutions such as families, mass media, religious bodies which are equally involved in educating the youths for the understanding and performance of their civic duties. Intermittently, political education may be used interchangeably to mean civic education, citizenship education or education for democratic citizenship in this study. Nwankwo (2012) opines that no matter the name given whether political education or civic education, the two terms can be

used interchangeably. He further submitted that the two terms (political education and civic education) are written together as 'Political/Civic Education' in the school curriculum of the German education system. It is therefore appropriate to call political education other names such as the civic education or citizenship education in this study.

Crick (2008) describes civic or political education as the basic way through which the individuals' acquisition of relevant competencies for their participation and engagement in the democratic processes is facilitated and ensured. He notes further that that civic or political education is incorporated into the public education curriculum, as a means to inculcate political knowledge and skills to understand the necessary tenets of government and become familiar with democratic norms and values in a country. In short, political education has the objectives of cultivation of virtues, acquisition of relevant knowledge, development of necessary skills required and anticipated for citizens to meaningfully participate in all spheres of national life. Higher education (most especially universities) has enormous responsibilities to perform to encourage participation and engagement in political life (Campbell, 2006; Misa Anderson & Yamamura, 2005).

According to Crittenden (2018), civic education, no matter when and how it is accomplished, has the objective of preparing citizens of a country, especially the youth, to become responsible in civic duties. In the same vein, Vasiljevi (2009) asserts that the *Civic and Ethical Education* is given various names in several countries which include civic culture, education for democratic citizenship, civic engagement, civic education, political education and citizenship education. "Citizenship education typically refers to specific civic education programmes; as in many countries, educational curricula include subjects such as 'citizenship studies' or 'history' with explicit political education content" (Luescher-Mamashela, 2011: 10). Citizenship or political education is offered as an academic subject in schools in a way that is similar to politics or sociology being offered as a course of study in higher institutions of learning such as the universities. Its curriculum may be planned in various manners with different nomenclatures in different countries.

The general goal of political education is to equip the learners with the sense of civic responsibilities and ultimately grow their interest in taking active part in the political activities of the state. More importantly, learners have to learn about their democratic societies so as to develop the interest to participate in them and that way the society can guarantee the survival and further development of its democratic way of life. By implication, political education as suggested by Leung and Yuen (2009) is intended to serve various needs of government and citizens in various political systems. For democracy, it is taught and learnt as a form of knowledge to provide developmental support for a representative government and adherence to rule of law including respect for human rights. It therefore implies that, the aims and objectives of political education would include allowing students to develop political awareness, political interest and independent capacities to make informed judgment about political issues of local, national and international concerns.

Why is political education of youth important?

Bennett (2018) summarizes the importance of youth political education when she remarks as follows:

> …*an improvement in mandatory political education would, in a matter of a few years, increase the number of young people at the polls, increase political engagement as a whole and decrease the levels of vitriol and misinformation that seem to be pervading through our current political landscape* (Bennett, 2018:1)

Political education of youth is important because it equips them with the knowledge and skills for understanding of politics as well as relevance and challenges facing democratic societies. It is a school subject that formally and consciously promotes youth's engagement with the media, civil society, the economy and the law relating to national and supranational politics and governance. Political education is highly beneficial to the youth as they would be prepared to develop keen interests in performing their civic duties such as voting for selection of new representatives to carry out governmental functions. The youth would also become capable to discuss politics with so much passion and interest at home, volunteer themselves for community services, become much more confident to participate in public debate on issues of concerns especially those related to politics, and freely establish communication with their elected officials in government. Litvinov (2017) argues that political education equips the youth with the critical thinking skills, civil debate skills, and classroom confidence skills for academic purposes.

An overview of historical development of political education

The origin and development of political education dates back to the ancient Greek city-state, Athens with the aim of creating active and participating citizens for the then Athenian direct democracy (Bayeh, 2016). Civic/political education has a parallel development with democracy. Hence, it is apposite to conclude that Athens served as the foundation for modern civic education. Subsequently, the dawn of revolutions in Britain (1688), America (1776) and France (1789) contributed a great deal to the development of civic education (Bayeh, 2016), in that those revolutions brought forth new democratic concepts and principles which, in turn, paved the way for the advancement of Civic/Political education in Europe and the rest of the world.

Historically speaking, schools have long been regarded as the vital institutions where democratic citizens can be groomed in the interest of all democracies. As argued by John Dewey, no democratic nation would ever exist without citizens being educated about the democratization process (Kuş & Tarhan, 2016). He submitted further that educational institutions played a crucial role in the moulding of individuals who would be conscious of their democratic duties, rights and obligations. The democratization process introduced a lot of changes across the globe as far back as the 1980s and through the early 1990s as world leaders had to embark on the quest whereby the school systems were saddled with the onerous responsibilities of imparting knowledge and values of the democracy. Consequently, the teaching and learning of political/citizenship education resurfaced and its importance was largely emphasized for the survival of democratic processes (Kuş & Tarhan, 2016).

However, civic/political education became very popular in the 1990s as an instrument for promoting democracy (Bayeh, 2016). A number of factors necessitated the delivery of civic education such as the emergence of democratic states and multi-cultural societies, global injustice and inequality, concern about civic and political engagement, and the anti-democratic and racist movements (Birhanu, 2012). Modern Civic education was first practised in the educational system of the United States at the beginning of the 20th century (Vasiljevi, 2009). Today, it has been expanded throughout the world including African countries. Most African countries had to introduce political education in the form of subjects such as citizenship education, history or civic education that would teach political knowledge for the purpose of building the democratic culture and practice in their youth.

Political education in international context

Internationally, studies on political education in educational institutions are largely restricted to the analyses of the curriculum and course materials (Børhaug, 2008). Political education has, however, been criticized from the international perspective over the approach to its study. Biesta and Lawy (2006) contend that international approach to the political education research has been concentrated on the content which has to be learned by the students as against its context and practice. These authors argue that learning about political education is not enough, but also the content and lessons have to be put into practical use in a way that is beneficial to the individual students' active involvement in the nation's democracy and participation in the global politics. They therefore advocate for change in the international approach to the study of political education by shifting the research attention away from the content to the practicability of the political education lessons. In other words, it is more important to study how the knowledge of political education is fostering or not fostering the participation of students in the democratic governance at all levels, be it in the schools, colleges, universities, provincial or national levels of politics (Biesta & Lawy, 2006).

Political education teaching is intended to arouse the political consciousness of the students in a way that they may become politically interested in the affairs of the state and be encouraged to contribute meaningfully towards the stability of their country's democratic governance and political system (Børhaug, 2008). To this end, political education has gained some international recognition in a number of countries across the globe (Frazer, 2010). Most of the European countries have long been facing problems of declines in political participation due to increased and continued political apathy causing decreased voter turnouts. Political education has received so much attention as an antidote to the problems of declining interest and participation in politics. European countries' national curricula have included the citizenship education which is taught either as a distinct and separate school subject or as an integral part of another school subject/learning area, or in most cases as a general theme cutting across various school curricula and programmes. Political education is taught as a separate mandatory school subject in not less than twenty European countries beginning from the primary level and more importantly at the secondary school level (De Coster *et al.*, 2012).

Interestingly, most of these countries in Europe devote a considerable amount of time to the teaching and learning of political education. For instance, citizenship education is taught for a period of 12 years in France while Bulgaria and Turkey have devoted duration of 12 months to the teaching and learning of citizenship education. The multi-dimensional diversity of the nature of citizenship in Europe is well

considered and articulated in their school curricula in such a way that their educational objectives are theoretically defined in terms of the knowledge acquisition, development of skills, attitudes and values including the encouragement of active participation of students in activities within and outside of schools. The curricula of the European countries' citizenship education are indeed very broad covering a wide range of issues such as the well-established principles and characteristics of democracies, cultural identities and diversities, sustainability of societal development and understanding of European and international politics (De Coster et al., 2012).

Germany: Political education in the Federal Republic of Germany was introduced as a post-war initiative with a view to inculcating values of democracy, pluralism, solidarity and tolerance into the citizens' social practices (Cremer, n.d). Political education programmes are provided for all citizens in Germany but much more attention is given to the young ones. The German political education aims at imparting knowledge of politics and society into citizens, enabling citizens' judgement and encouraging them to participate in political processes. These are the goals declared by the German government believing that democracy can only thrive when citizens responsibly and actively participate in the democratic processes. The official declaration reads as follows:

Political education shall impart people's knowledge about society, state, European and international politics and socially important developments in the fields of economy, culture, technology and science. It shall enable forming judgement on social and political events, enable one to claim one's rights as well to discharge one's tasks, assume responsibility towards fellow citizens, society and nature and encourage participation in the creation of free and democratic social and state order (Cremer, n.d:1).

Children and youth receive political education as an integral component of the official curriculum in schools. The schools also serve as an avenue for the learning and practice of democratic participation as the students are allowed to choose their own leaders through election. Student leaders also serve on various school committees in order to participate in the decision-making processes concerning their own affairs. In addition, there are a number of agencies of government and non-governmental institutions that provide all Germans some sort of citizenship education. These organizations include German Federal Agency for Political Education, Trade Unions, Youth Organizations of the bigger Parties, and political Foundations. They are all working for the promotion of effective understanding of issues relating to politics and citizenship, fostering political awareness and increasing citizens' interest in political participation in Germany (Cremer, n.d).

Political education in Germany has the goal of inculcating relevant knowledge of politics in the learners for the purpose of increasing their interest and participation in the democratic processes. The German society relies on its system of political education to facilitate the development of a citizen that is mature, responsible and interested in political activities. This helps to have a sound capacity to exercise some influential judgment on public policies and actively participating in all forms of political engagement (Bruen, 2014). In addition, German political education is designed to foster and develop skills, knowledge and capabilities in individual learners to be able to come to terms with their civic rights and obligations under the constitution of the country as responsible and participatory citizens. Previous studies, however, demonstrated that German political education programmes in schools have not successfully led to increased political interest and adequate participation in politics (Bryan & Bracken, 2011; Bruen, 2014).

England: The subject of citizenship education became a mandatory part of the National Curriculum in September 2002 as recommended by the 1998 Report (famously known as the Crick Report) submitted by the Citizenship Advisory Group (CAG) ably led by Professor Bernard Crick to the authorities prompted by the perceived deficient youth participation in election and political engagement in England (Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010). To confront this situation headlong, political education is offered to all learners who fall between the ages of 11 and 16 years old in England (11-16 years). Undoubtedly, the Citizenship Education at the national level in England is making a lot of contributions to the general aims of the public education. All learners are expected to grow and become successful, courageous and responsible nationals capable of contributing positively towards the societal growth and development. The national curriculum is built around important issues and themes which include among others; concept of democracy, justice, human rights and civic duties, identities and diversity, to mention but a few, necessary for the learners to develop an understanding of the democratic processes, critical thinking skills and enquiry, and abilities to take well-informed decisions. The curriculum therefore is aimed at developing learner's cognitive skills that would enhance participation in communities as socially and politically responsible individual citizens (Hamdan, 2017).

Ireland: In the 1990s, political education was introduced in the form of citizenship studies in the Irish Republic. It is simply regarded as 'Civic, Social and Political Education' (CSPE) and is offered to learners between 12 and 16 years old. However, a new subject named "Society and Politics" was introduced in 2009 and was meant to be taught as an additional school subject to learners aged 16-18 years in the Irish Secondary Schools (Hamdan, 2017). Faas and Ross (2012) in their study noted that there was a disconnection between the Irish political education goal and the material contents of the political education curriculum and the available textbooks for the teaching and learning of political education in Ireland. The general aims of the Irish political education include preparing the young ones to become personally and socially confident and responsible, be able to develop morally, participate actively in the political life, and acquire skills, knowledge and capacity for making judgmental decisions as citizens (Bruen, 2014). Previous research shows that the Irish political education programme has not yielded any success in positively affecting increased political interest and participation in the democratic governance in the country (Bruen, 2014).

France: In France, political education is simply called as Education Civique, Juridique ET Sociale (ECJS) in the high school and "education civique" in the middle school and primary school. Following the terror attacks in Paris that occurred between 7th and 9th January, 2015, the French government made the decision to reintegrate political education into the country's education system with the view to making students become responsible and right thinking citizens. By implication, the decision of the government is expected to return teachers' authority, strengthen the values and ideals of the country; ensure the promotion of societal values and principles through the community services. This new educational plan involves training of teachers, signing of an annual agreement by students and their parents or guardians for students to engage in community service, undertakings as punishments for their wrong doings and to also observe a day of *laïcité*, or secularism on 9th of December every year (Hamdan, 2017). A study conducted on students in college by Almond, Powell, Strom and Daltons (cited in Amoateng, 2015) found that the students became disinterested in politics for lack of trust and confidence in the political actors and the system of government in France. The young ones had negative feelings towards the governance and

the political leaders who ran the system in a suspicious manner. This attitude of the youth had adverse effect on their participation in the political processes in France.

Poland: In Poland, political education is simply referred to as Wiedza o Spoleczeństwie (WoS) which literally means "Knowledge of Society" and it is studied as one of the secondary school (*matura)* subjects. *Matura* (meaning mature) is a Latin name for the high school final examination in polish system of education which is similar to *baccalaureat* in France (Pacewicz, 2004) or "maturity diploma" in various other nations such as Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria; among others. This is a matriculation examination taken at the end the secondary school education by students whose age is between 17 and 20 years old. It is mandatory for them to pass the examination before applying for admission to a university or any other higher institution for their tertiary education. In other words, the subject of 'Knowledge of Society' is a form political education or education for democratic citizenship to which young citizens of Poland are exposed for them to be equipped with the knowledge of their society in terms of systems of government, economy, and history etc. As at the time of independence in 1989, civic education was never taught in the Polish schools. This was because the school was used for the state propaganda under the communist regime.

Eventually, civic education programs became an integral part of the formal school curricular for all grades in the polish schools largely made possible due to the joint efforts of both the national education authorities and non-governmental organizations. Interestingly, civic education has now been given a place in the national school curriculum at the level of primary school having its components in the subject of (history and society). In addition, it has been introduced at the middle school and high school levels- subject-matter concerning knowledge about society which students must choose to write and pass while sitting for the *Matura* examination as earlier explained. However, there is evidence that civic education is never regarded as being equally important like other school subjects by a lot of students, parents and even their teachers (Pacewicz, 2004).

According to the Polish Ministry of National Education and Sports Decree of 26th February, 2002, political education became obligatory at all levels of education from primary to high school. In the first three years (lower classes) of primary school, children are taught about positive relations with others, attachment to local community, region, country and their primary duties and rights as citizens while in their upper (fourth-sixth) primary classes, children are exposed to topics and disciplines in connection with civic or political education. They are taught topics which include among others upbringing in family, regional education, patriotic and civic upbringing. The subject of 'Knowledge of Society' is introduced at the level of the high school as earlier mentioned. It is taught to secondary school students to acquire knowledge about activities in an economy, society, local community and family and civic attitudes and abilities (Radiukiewicz & Grabowska-Lusinska, 2007). Polish students are expected to learn about exercising their rights as young citizens in a democratic system; internalise the rules about their democratic society and its civic culture. "Civic culture and democracy intertwine in a symbiotic relation" (quoted in Radiukiewicz & Grabowska-Lusinska, 2007: 21-22). This implies that both democracy and development of civic culture depend on each other. Democracy may even take place under any kind of civic culture but there can never be the development of civic culture without a democracy or democratic system being in place.

Spain: The Spanish administration led by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero recently introduced a law which made a provision for Education for citizenship and Human Rights as a school subject for learners at the primary and secondary education levels. The subject came into being as a result of the Council of Europe's recommendation that favourably argued for the introduction of political education expected to foster and encourage the promotion of civic and human values. Although, conservative leaders of the Catholic Church in Spain have been against it; labelling it as totalitarian. The Spanish Organic Education Law of 2006 made provisions for the inclusion of the citizenship education as a distinct but separate school subject for children to be taught; and as a cross-curricular topic in other school subjects at the primary school level.

More importantly, citizenship education and human rights was made available at the lower high school level and was offered by the children at Grade four (4) while at the Upper high school level, citizenship education was part of the subject of History in the Spanish schools. As a result, high school students had to learn about the historical knowledge of the past which was aimed at creating critically conscious minds about the world they live in; and allow them the freedom of participation in their democratic society. Subsequently, the Spanish Supreme Court also ruled in January 2009 that attendance for citizenship education course would be compulsory for all the learners. Surprisingly, the school subject of citizenship education had to disappear from the school curriculum following the introduction and successful implementation of the new Organic Improving Quality of Education Law (2013) (Navarro-Medina & de-Alba-Fernández, 2015).

Australia: Political education was made a national priority in 1993 by the government of the Prime Minister Paul Keating having felt the need to educate the Australian to become much more informed and capable of making meaningful contributions towards the independent and solidified identity of their country (Lewis, 2009). The situation in Australia in terms of the youth apathy was not different from the challenges confronting other western democracies some two decades back. Voting during elections is a mandatory civic duty with a heavy sanction on defaulters for non-compliance in Australia. Yet, this country is bedevilled with the youth disengagement from voting and electoral obligations expected of the citizens (Print, 2007). This perceived participation conundrum was called 'civics deficit' by Manning and Edwards (2014). Political education in Australia is offered in the form of 'Civics and Citizenship Education(CCE)'. The CCE can be described as a learning experience aiming at equipping the students with the knowledge of the country's political system and governance structures, human rights and the rule of law, citizenship rights and responsibilities, and other relevant knowledge and skills required for the making of responsible and participatory citizens (Print, 2007).

China: There is a strange kind of citizenship education in China popularly known as the "Peopleship" education (Xiao, 2013). By implication, 'Peopleship' education regards and considers political education as a fundamental foundation for the socialization of young people (Chinese citizens) into the main doctrines of the People's Republic. The political education in China deals with the people's moral education; that is, education required for good governance in China for the purpose of ensuring stability and social order in the state. The Chinese state aims to instil in young people the values and legitimacy of its system of political-cultural paternalistic governance that tends to impose duties, obligations and Confucian customs and culture (Kennedy, Fairbrother & Zhao, 2014). Political/civic education in China was conceived as a reaction against the threatening influence of the western democracy and modernity

and as a response the desire to develop a national character in the young Chinese people against the Western domination was fulfilled. Put differently, Peopleship education is a system of political education which is a process of nation-building and modernisation aimed at inculcating western concepts of "the people", "the nation" and "the citizens". This is an attempt to ensure the preservation of the tradition of developing civic qualities and shaping modern citizens with virtues and awareness of their responsibilities and obligations to the Chinese state (Kennedy et al. 2014).

In Confucian tradition, rights of the people were not given much attention but rather emphasis was on their duties and obligations to society, obedience and loyalty to the authority as it was in the ancient Athens and Rome. Eventually, democracy as a system of government was embraced in China in the 20th Century. Consequently, the People's Republic of China was formed in 1949. Political education under the regime led by Mao Tse-tung focused on loyalty to Mao until 1978 when Chinese leadership came to realise that a market economy needs a democratic and rule of law-based education. Then, the objectives of Chinese schools had to be revisited to ensure that students were taught some moral education (Xiao, 2013; Hamdan, 2017).

United States of America: Political education in the United States of America is also known as the citizenship education or simply as civic education. The term 'political education' is not usually used outside the US academia because it is believed to suggest an act of political indoctrination (Nucci, Narvaez & Krettenauer, 2014). Political education often takes place formally in schools through the study of government course on the US political system and governance as well as through the exposure of students to the activities of the Student Representative Council (SRC), participation in the SRC elections and the act of reciting the US Pledge of Allegiance.

Political education is also well delivered through the teaching and learning of a course on history in the US schools. In 1968, a study conducted by Langton and Jennings found that students' exposure to citizenship education in classrooms was not significantly correlated with their civic knowledge or political behaviour. Unfortunately, the findings of this study had led to the death of the citizenship education course in the US schools for about three decades between the 1960s and 1990s. In 1998, another study by Niemi and Junn came to limelight with the presentation of finding which was quite different from that previously reported by Langton and Jennings' study. Niemi and Junn found that there was a correlation between student's political knowledge and civic education courses. In other words, the greater the exposure of students to civic courses the greater their knowledge of politics. This finding saw to the return of civic education courses to the classrooms in high schools. Not only that, it also ignited and renewed the research interest in and scholars' attention on the study of citizenship education in the United States (Nucci et al. 2014).

Political education from African perspectives

In African context, political education is aimed at inducting new and young members of the African societies into the process of acquisition of the knowledge and pride of their cultures (Mhlauli, 2012). The nature of the African citizenship education is targeted at the training of the individuals to become useful and acceptable members of their traditional society. The Africa's colonial masters did away with the programmes on citizenship because their colonial agenda never aimed at building and developing critical

thinking in African citizens. Not many of the post-colonial African states were able to consider the need for critical political education because of the long stay of the military in African politics. The military dictators only promoted some sort of public education that demanded loyalty from the learners and citizens. Political education in the post-colonial African states was later refined based on the ideals of the western democracies with the identified characteristics of nation-state, human rights, citizenship obligations and democratic participation in voting exercises (Mhlauli, 2012).

A lot of efforts have been made by the African nations to reform and make some constitutional improvement for educating their young citizens to actively engage them in the governance of their respective nations (Alutu & Ifedili, 2012). These authors further reported that sub-Saharan African nations' policies of education and school curricula have not adequately addressed the need from the development of critical thinking in their citizens. Most African countries at the time of their independence had educational policies that retarded growth, development, equality and democratic principles necessary for their citizens' participation and involvement. However, increased educational access to the young Africans is intended to empower them with the requisite skills and knowledge to be able to perform their civic responsibilities and facilitate their participation in the global knowledge economy.

Political education in national contexts

Nigeria: Citizenship education has been undertaken formally and informally in Nigeria. It was formally introduced into the teacher education and preparation curriculum in 1990. Moreover, the subject of Social Studies was made a compulsory part of the Nigerian education at both the primary level and the first three years of the secondary education with a view to inculcate the knowledge and practice of citizenship education into the young Nigerians (Alutu, 2012). Civic education has been introduced as one of the compulsory school subjects for the senior secondary schools (SSS 1-3) curriculum and it is one of the mandatory school subjects the students have to write and pass at the level of the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Nigeria. At the tertiary level, political education is introduced as a general course of study in different names.

For instance, it is simply called citizenship education at the colleges of education and polytechnics while it bears other names at the Nigerian universities. A survey conducted by Adelabu and Akinsolu (2009) reveals that the university is capable of inculcating political education and awareness in the students. Their findings confirm that the university's sources of political education are good platforms that bring about increased levels of political awareness to engender increased students' participation in the political processes. They found that the university played an influential role in the political behaviour of the students.

Ghana: Traditionally, the family consisting of parents and other relatives were responsible for the preparation and training of the young Ghanaians for participation in the community life. Citizenship education in Ghana is both informal and formal. The formal school system is charged with the responsibilities to inculcate the knowledge about rights, civic duties, traditions and norms of the societies into the young ones through the teaching and learning of citizenship education. In 1992, Ghana's National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) was created with the objectives of inculcating in the younger ones the awareness of their rights, responsibilities and freedom to participate in the political life of their country.

For the citizens who may not be privileged to acquire knowledge of citizenship education through the school experience, the NCCE has initiated a lot of programmes through the media organizations for the purpose of building the culture of democracy among the citizens (Kankam, 2016).

South Africa: In South African context, it is on record that the national government and the ruling party-African National Congress (ANC) did institute programmes aimed at inculcating political education in South African citizens (Thebe, 2017). Prior to 1994, in South Africa, the apartheid regime only permitted an indirect teaching and learning of political education as an integral part of the school subjects such as History, Right Living, Inkatha Studies and Youth Preparedness. South African students were exposed to the learning experiences and political knowledge that would not provoke critical thinking and raising their consciousness and awareness about their material conditions and political rights. They were prepared and taught to be subservient and obedient citizens who would not rise against the authorities (Schoeman, 2006). This nature of the citizenship education denied the young South Africans a chance of having an understanding of the human rights and democratic responsibilities. As a result, the South African youth of today are still very much oblivious and ignorant of the type and structures of governance in their country. They simply do not have the requisite knowledge, awareness and skills with which to really engage in the democratic governance as their civic rights and obligations (Schoeman, 2006).

Political education of youth and the role of the State

With reference to the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle, the concept of political education usually was discussed in relation to the system of government (regime type) and type(s) of political culture found to be popular among the citizens in the state (Parker, 2014). For instance, every democratic state requires, for its survival and further development, its citizens to develop democratic knowledge, competences, skills and values (Zafer & Tarhan, 2016). The state not only has responsibility to educate its citizens but also have to ensure that they are adequately sensitized to their duties and obligations; as there hardly any democratic regime that would ever exist without a well-educated and responsible citizenry (Garcia, 2010).

The state, therefore, has a constitutional obligation to provide educational opportunities to children and youth. The constitutional mandate of the state for provision of educational opportunities also requires provision of the needed infrastructure, seasoned, qualified and experienced teachers to impart the right values of education to the children and youth (Sarda, 2016). Plato, in his book *The Republic,* argued in favour of the publicly funded educational system whereby the state would take the burden of the child's education away from the parents. It then became the state's exclusive responsibility to educate the children and youth according to their abilities and in the end Plato believed that the most educated ones should emerge as the governors (philosopher-kings) over the affairs of the state (Parker, 2014). Apparently, Plato's idea of political education was one whose responsibility had to be placed upon the state for the purpose of identifying the potential leadership skills and traits in the youth. Even regimes in non-democratic states such as China, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Nazi Germany of the 1940s have had to encourage political education programmes for their youth. In and out of school, China and Saudi have the interest in political education to instill in their youth citizenship skills and obedience to the constituted authorities. Under the government of Nazi Germany which was a known dictatorship, youth were consciously educated to become subservient to the state and to participate in "militarism, patriarchy,

heterosexism, love of Hitler, hatred of Jews and racism" (Parker, 2014:3). Political education of the youth is therefore considered a desideratum to foster the kind of citizenship as desired by any type of regime.

Democratic states are concerned about the needs, aspirations and desires of their citizens. A responsible and responsive state has a critical role to promote the political education of its youth. This is a potent tool with which the state can foster political knowledge, skills and civic values in the youth for them to show interest and participate in voting exercise, "governmental roles, citizens' rights and duties, ecological activism, community services, social networking for future citizenship engagement" (Idowu, 2017:26). Youth political education is a critical and essential responsibility for the state to be able to confront citizenship issues such as the youth apathy towards participation in electoral activities, moral decadence such as acts of disorderliness, drug abuse, drug trafficking, restlessness and violent protests among the youth; which may strangle a nation's democracy and also dent its image among the comity of nations on the global stage.

Going forward, it is pertinent for the state to concentrate more efforts, formally and informally, by investing in the youth political education as a way to tackle all of these and many other problems. The state's concern to make the youth responsible citizens should be addressed by instilling in its youth the spirits and practices of patriotism, toleration, integrity, citizenship values, national consciousness, principles of rule of law, democratic duties and obligations, national identity, social norms and national ethics through formal teaching and learning of political education. The next section addresses the role of schools in fostering political education of the youth.

Political education of youth and the role of schools

The role of educational institutions, such as schools, colleges and universities, in transmitting political education cannot be over-emphasized. There is a concern in schools that political education can be an instrument for teaching certain political beliefs to children and youths. The school helps one to understand political events, and affects his/her appropriate role opinion as a citizen. Children and youth are introduced to political system, political parties, political leaders, political concepts and phenomena in the schools and discuss matters related to politics in other subjects like History and Geography more often in the secondary/high school (Nilgun *et al.*, 2015). Schools are prime contexts for civic development given that young people spend much of their lives there, they represent microcosms of broader society, and historically their mission was to educate and develop socially responsible citizens (Homana, Barber & Torney-purta, 2006).

Political education has been the primary mode by which schools have attempted to socialize youth for their roles and responsibilities as citizens. Through civic courses, curricular materials, and field trips, schools educate students about the government, political processes, and political leaders. Research suggests that people who are most knowledgeable about politics are more likely to participate in it than those with less knowledge. However, knowledge alone is not a sufficient precondition for civic engagement (Delli Carpini & Keeter, cited in Watkins, 2009). Student leadership and service-learning courses offered at schools provide youth with meaningful opportunities to engage in civic processes. Student leadership positions (on councils or governments) expose youth to the structure, processes, and roles associated with democratic participation and governance. Thus, hierarchical structure, competitive ethos, and

neutral/apolitical orientations to civic engagement may delimit the ability of schools to socialize young people toward democratic participation (Watkins, 2009).

The major political function of the elementary school is to foster compliance with governmental rules and authority. This is also corroborated by (Pandey & Kumar, cited by Nilgun *et al.*, 2015) when they state that the political function of the school and education is to bring up good citizens. This, in fact, is particularly the common and fundamental purpose of political, democratic and citizenship education. The awareness and responsibility of citizenship is gained by people's living it in practice and through the political education process (Nilgun et al, 2015). The formal curriculum and instructional programs generally underemphasize the children's rights to participate in political decisions and overemphasize compliance with the government and uncritical loyalty toward the system. Higher levels of education seem most likely to encourage citizens to participate meaningfully in politics. Education also affects the political skills and resources of the public. Educated people are more aware of the impact of government on their lives and pay more attention to politics. The better educated people have mental skills that improve their ability to manage the world of politics. They also have more information about political processes and participate in a wider range of political activities (Almond et al., 2008 cited in Olasupo, 2015).

Campus socialization provides political knowledge to students. It is hereby confirmed that political education could be shaped by what is transmitted through the official curriculum. The curriculum dictates the knowledge system of each student. It can also widen the cognitive experience of students. Undoubtedly, many agents of political education would have influenced university students before and by the time they are in the university. Schooling itself has been known to function as an ideological vehicle for political socialization but the more extensive an individual's education is, the more likely he is to have more political information to possess a wide range of opinions on political matters and to engage in political discussion with a wide range of people and to feel a greater ability to influence political affairs (Almond & Verba, cited in Adelabu & Akinsolu, 2009). "The university has now been reported to be the dominant model and central instrument of political education, surpassing even the traditional bond of the family" (Adelabu & Akinsolu, 2009).

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that the schools have a critical responsibility to impact in the youth; citizenship values, critical thinking skills, practices of toleration, national consciousness, national identity and unity, fundamental human rights, duties and obligations of duties, constitutionalism and rule of law, political history and democratic representation, social issues, electoral system, peace and conflicts resolutions and national development, federalism, media and pressure groups, separation of powers and political parties. When this responsibility is diligently carried out by the schools, the youth are consciously encouraged to become politically aware and knowledgeable and thereby develop keen interest in participating in the nation's political processes.

Political education of youth and the role of parents

Parents, like the schools, also play a crucial role in the political education of the youth by transmitting politically related knowledge, awareness, interest, norms and values to them. Research has provided examples of how the politicization of parents affects the political development of their children and youth. When parents are more politically sophisticated, more politically consistent, and politically unambiguous,

their children are more likely to share the parents' political views (Jennings, stoker & Bowers, 2009). When parents' political views are not clear, the children's attachment to any political party is weak. In fact, politically unaware parents seem to lead to politically unaware children (Armstrong, 2015). Furthermore, parents have significant influence over their children's political involvement and civic participation. Politically-involved parents usually translate into politically-involved children.

Within the family, parents play an important role in the political socialization of their children. Parents transmit political knowledge, awareness, interest, norms and values to their children. While in some families, political discussion will occur quite frequently, in other families political topics tend to be avoided. Parents clearly stimulate the willingness and ability to acquire information (Quintelier, Hooghe & Badescu, 2007). Families play a significant foundational role in the civic development of young people. It is within the family context that young people first become aware of civic life and their relation to it. Family member, specifically parents, transmit knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours regarding civic life to children through consumption of particular media, discussion of civic affairs, and participation (or not) in civic life. Early theories of parents' political socialization efforts positioned children as passive recipients of civic affections and understandings (Watkins, 2009). Recent theories however clarify that political values are not deposited into youth; but rather youth play an active role in making sense of their social worlds and exercise choice in the values they subscribe to at any given point in time (Flanagan, 2009). Parents' socialization messages do not reflect clear, authoritative perspectives on civic life that are easily transmitted to children and the familial context is aided by schools and other community institutions in socializing youth about civic life (Watkins, 2009).

Research has provided examples of how the politicization of parents affects the political development of children. When parents' political views are not clear, the children's attachment to any political party is weak. In fact, politically unaware parents seem to lead to politically unaware children (Dawson & Prewitt, cited by Armstrong, 2015). Furthermore, parents have significant influence over their children's political involvement and civic participation. Politically-involved parents usually translate into politically-involved children. Without parental political communication and political signaling, children are more susceptible to outside influences (Armstrong, 2015).

The politically richer the home environment, the more likely an adult is to undertake some political activity other than voting. With regard to behaviour too, it is possible to distinguish direct and indirect causal mechanisms (Fridkin, Kenny & Crittenden, 2006). Direct influence can occur as a result of parents providing information to their children, of talking in a positive and encouraging manner about politics with their children, or by explicitly stimulating them to participate politically. Indirect influences have also been documented in the literature. Children will be more likely to participate in civic and political life if their parents tend to participate in elections (Martikainen, Martikainen & Wass, 2005), in electoral campaigns, participate in politics in general (McFarland & Thomas, 2006); or if they are actively engaged in voluntary activities. We can refer to this as an indirect effect since the participation of the parents self-evidently does not have the intention to influence the behaviour pattern of their children. A more likely explanation is that parents function as a political or social role model for their children, who pick up the habit of playing an active social role. Put differently, parents socialize children into a civic culture and encourage participation in youth groups through their own involvement (Quintelier, Hooghe & Badescu, 2007).

Furthermore, children's party identification and political participation have been largely influenced by their parents' political orientations, party preferences and political ideologies (Kroh & Peter, 2009). Studies have clearly shown that children's level of political awareness is determined by their parents' influence which is reflected in the political characteristics within the home environment (Neundorf & Semts, 2017; Jennings et al, 2009). Parents who are highly conscious politically have the tendency of fostering a positive political orientation capable of stimulating and encouraging political participation. Similarly, parental socio-economic status (SES) is another way through which parental influence on their children's political participation is manifested. The socio-economic status (SES) of parents has a direct influence on children's SES and their participation in political activities. It is assumed that higher parents' SES means that the children would likely have high levels of education. It then follows that the higher the level of children's education, the higher their levels of political awareness, political interest and beliefs about politics (Jennings et al, 2009).

Conversely, Dinas' (2014) study found that children may likely embrace their parents' political ideologies and party preferences as adolescents but may however likely review their political choices and party identification as they grow into adults as a result of having exposure and access to new political orientations in early adulthood. As noted by Quintelier et al. (2007), parents' direct influence on their children's political participation can be through the provision of political information during informal discussion about politics at home in a way that positively encourages and makes politics more appealing and interesting to the children. The indirect influence, on the other hand, may occur as a result of parents participating in voting, election campaigns and other political activities.

More so, parents indirectly encourage children's participation in politics through their active involvement in voluntary associations. In this way, parents are therefore regarded as the political role models to their children either consciously or unconsciously (Quintelier et al. 2007). In Pakistan, parents have influence on their children's political choices and decisions as voting are usually influenced by ethnic considerations (Yaseen, Mamdani, & Siddiqui, 2018). It is also presumed that children mostly acquire their political orientations and understanding from their families. It is understood that the youngsters spend much more of their time with their parents than any other individuals outside their families. Parents are greatly influential in shaping their children's political attitudes and voting behaviours. Hence, family is the most significant agent of political socialization (Yaseen, et al., 2018).

To cap it up, parents have to show a sense of greater responsibility towards their civic duties and obligations. They should be critical of their participation in all of the political processes in such a way to lead by good examples for their children and youth to follow and emulate. I contend to see parents' political influence as the primary mode of impacting political learning and skills into the youth due to their presence and availability around these youngsters in the homes and within the families. The youth usually look up to their parents. They always want to follow in their paths. They certainly would want to practice their parents' dispositions and worldviews regarding politics and democratic activities. It is, therefore, expected that parents themselves should develop positive political dispositions and orientations towards their civic duties and obligations in order to implant such political interests in the hearts of the youth around them.

Concluding remarks

The challenge of the decline in the youth political engagement is apparently a global phenomenon confronting all types of regimes, be it, developed or developing democracies. Political education is one solution to effectively tackle the conundrum. The state has a critical role to play by providing enabling environment for the teaching of political education in schools and encouraging non-governmental actors interested in inculcating political education knowledge in the youth. The schools also have responsibilities to impact those relevant citizenship values and skills in the youth to become responsible and participatory citizens in the state affairs. Parents also have to show strong democratic values and responsibilities in a way that would motivate their children and the youth in general to emulate and practise. Beyond doubts, political education is indeed a desideratum for building, enhancing and solidifying the democratic culture of any nation through her youth.

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