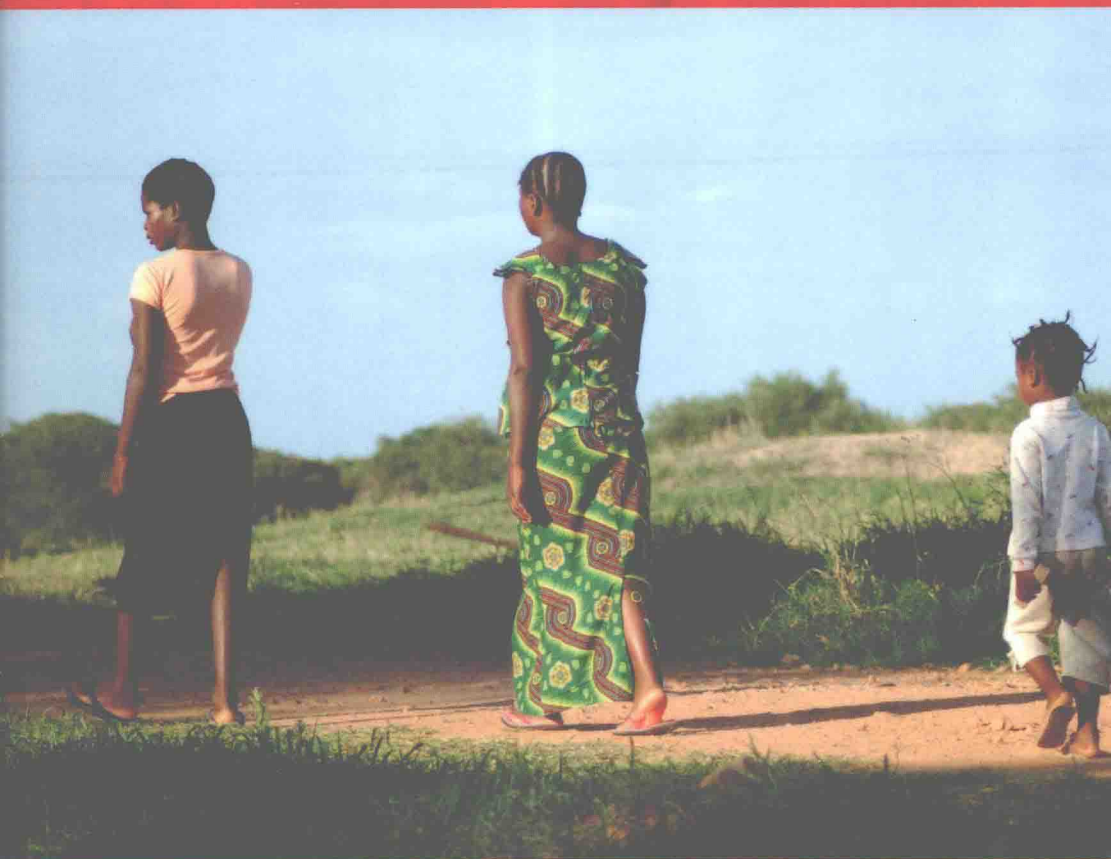


Citizenship Education and Social Development in Zambia



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INFORMATION AGE PUBLISHING, INC.
Charlotte, NC • www.infoagepub.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Abdi, Ali A., 1955-

Citizenship education and social development in Zambia / Ali A. Abdi,
Edward Shizha, Lee Ellis.

p. cm. -

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-60752-392-5 (pbk.) - ISBN 978-1-60752-393-2 (hardcover) -
ISBN 978-1-60752-394-9 (e-book)

I. Citizenship-Study and teaching-Zambia. 2. Democracy and
education-Zambia. 3. Education-Zambia-History. I. Shizha, Edward. II.
Ellis, Lee. III. Title.

LC1091.A24 2010

370.11'5096894-dc22

2009048044

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Printed in the United States of America

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Citizenship Education and Social Development in Zambia

An Introduction

Introduction

Zambia, a landlocked, south-central African country of about 11 million people has not been that different from the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in terms of its liberation from European colonialism, its postcolonial one-party political system in its first three decades of independence, and its adoption of the new democratization projects that reached many parts of the continent in the post-Cold War period (roughly from 1990 to the present). In contextualizing Zambia also, one should not detach the country from the still active problems of socioeconomic and political development, that is, general institutional weaknesses that have characterized the overall regions in the past several decades. These issues have been abundantly discussed elsewhere (see *inter alia*, Abdi, 2006; Ake, 1996; Ihonvbere, 1996; Sandbrook, 2000). Beyond any previous governance and public resources management deficiencies, there is a discernible popular expectation that the end of 27 years of former President Kenneth Kaun-

da's rule in October 1991, and with the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) led By Frederick Chiluba assuming power that things would improve for the general public. Zambia's record of democracy in the 1990s has been much criticized, at home and abroad. The government of the ruling party, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), has been accused of perpetuating the hallmarks of the *de jure* one-party state of the Second Republic (1972–91) (Burnell, 2001a). Indeed, with Zambia being one among several Sub-Saharan African nations where domestic mobilization led to democratic governance, the thinking of the people was pragmatically responsive to democracy, even if its meanings and central tenets were poorly understood, with expectations that at least, it would lead to better livelihood outcomes for all.

Contrary to Zambia's more promising political "transformation," in most other African countries, as Joseph (1998), Ihonvbere (1996) and Sandbrook (2000) note, the much heralded early 1990s pronouncements of democracy might have simply "constitutionalized" so much of the pre-reform state and elite formations, eventually establishing and sustaining what Zakaria (2004) would term as "illiberal democracy." Critics claim that one-party dominance by the MMD under President Chiluba's leadership almost returned the country to a *de jure* one-party state. Here, and to the detriment of the rightful aspirations of the masses, old rulers who have no time for anything that dilutes their power, simply realigned previous political structures, labeled themselves as the new democrats and in simple descriptive terms (even if the implications and outcomes are so expansive and complex), stayed in power, in many cases suppressing any possibilities for the still elusive platforms of transparency and accountability. For instance, in the mid to late 1990s in Zambia, there was deep concern, both domestic and international, about serious charges of corruption at all levels of government, major restrictions on press freedom and constitutional changes which were seen specifically undermining human rights. The tendency by these "democratic" governments to believe they have absolute sovereignty (that is, power) has resulted in the centralization of authority, often by extraconstitutional means and with grim results, thus leading to a new rise of illiberal democracy with autocratic rulers realigning old structures and loyalties to stay in power.

In Zambia's case, there were some specific factors that should have helped its more viable move to a more democratic prospect. With a relatively medium sized population, Zambia has been described as the second most urbanized country in SSA (with South Africa ahead of it in this case), and as having one of the subcontinent's highest literacy rates (at about 88%), which was expected to reach 88% in 2000 (Mwansa, 1995). In addi-

tion, Zambians, at least at the onset of the democratization processes, have had an above average per capita income (in regional standards) of close to US\$1,000. Definitely, such characteristics, as should be gleaned from the history and the development of democracy, can help, albeit to a limited extent, the establishment of more open systems of public relationships that could achieve the desirable results for the populace.

As in the cases of most SSA, Zambia's democracy did not meet the expectations of the people leading toward quite pessimistic conclusions, or what Carothers (1997) calls "democracy without illusions." Indeed, with governance arrangements extensively favoring the elite and the politically powerful, with economic conditions deteriorating in the mid-1990s and beyond, and with the encumbered liberalization and privatization of public enterprises (especially during the Chiluba years), for many Zambians, democracy became an elusive phenomenon synonymous with declining standards of living, and with people's understanding of both the conceptual and practical structures of democracy not so advanced, the level of disappointment grew. While the popular enthusiasm for the first unfettered, democratic majoritarianism (Zakaria, 2004) elections of October 1991 were great and participation was wide and generally inclusive, the observed weaknesses of political participation in most political activities that took place after 1991, speak about a huge disengagement from public forum politics. And that continued into the late 1990s, where for example, when Zambians were asked to what extent they were active politically, close to 75% said they were either not politically active at all, or minimally involved in political issues such as voting, organizing electoral programs or registering voters (Bratton, 1999). Mphaisha (1996, p. 79) refers to this political disengagement as a historically produced "near absence of democratic values in Zambia's political culture."

Clearly, this was the beginning of a problematic political apathy that should not bode well for the development of Zambia. Indeed, with the international community, especially the United States of America and its international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), mainly demanding some pronouncements of democracy while really lowering the standards for the practical implementation of these democracies for Africans, the public disconnecting from the political processes could assure the continuities of the highly unequal distribution of resources and means of power between the haves and have-nots in Zambia and elsewhere. The issue can also rekindle, as it has done in a number of SSA countries (e.g., Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone) civil discord and strife, which could always rescind any democratic gains (small and scattered they may be) that have been achieved since the 1990s. To use some

examples here, with political apathy growing in the country, a number of things that had the potential of directly endangering democracy has actually occurred. Among these were opposition groups refusing to participate in the electoral processes, former President Chiluba attempting to devise counter-constitutional schemes that would have allowed him to run for a third term, and some junior army officers undertaking an unsuccessful *coup d'état*. However, Burnell (2001b) warns that in Zambia's case, aside from any inferences we might make from behavioral trends like voting we simply do not have enough reliable information concerning the political attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of a significant cross-section of society.

And as if all that political discontentment was not worrisome enough, it was complemented by a continually weakening economy, and rational fears about the state of subsequent elections (especially the 2001 elections). And while levels of participation were much higher than was feared, mainly due probably to people's desire to voice their disappointments and expectations, democracy, as it had been introduced from early 1990s did not achieve the expected social development for the overwhelming majority of the population. And as it has been the case, there was some conflict between the government and the main opposition groups with respect to the rigging or lack thereof, when especially in the December 2006 elections, there were a number of violent demonstrations when the results were announced and the government of Levi Mwanawasa and his party were declared the victors. When that might have been the case, there was also at least some concerns that came from the European observers, who generally represent the all knowing, all judicious voice in these matters. Here again, the main point is that even if people are still voting, despite all its imperfections, livelihood platforms are not changing for the people, and the long awaited "democracy dividend" is not seemingly on the horizon.

Despite these understandable disappointments, though, one need not contemplate an expansive rescinding of the possible democratic project in SSA or for that matter in the Zambia of early 21st century. While the masses are not yet benefitting as much as expected, the case should be contextualized in several pointers that might explain the observed weaknesses of the situation. First, political transformations take a lot of time, and with Africa's recent past, that is in the overall course of history, so interactive with harsh regimes of colonialism and the almost demented leadership that dominated many zones of the continent, the constructive processes of change could take longer than would be otherwise desirable. This point is also related to the fact with power being the most important variable in human relations (Rodney, 1982), those who have been in power will continue using different, at times effective, schemes to restructure and re-label things without

necessarily changing or advancing people's relationships with either the political nature of governments or the important public institutions these governments control. The pace of effective political transformation is also related to the international support people garner so that their autocratic rulers and their attached political elites adhere to more systems of public life. As indicated above, that support was not extended to the African people. To the contrary, all standards of public transparency and accountability, which were demanded by Western powers when they were dealing with political reforms in post-Soviet Eastern Europe, were downgraded when the issue was focused on what was expected of African leaders. And although Zambia, as said may have fared better than many other places in the continent, there is much more that can still be done there. But even with the weaknesses still inherent in both the historical and current realities of the case, one would still want the continuation of one form of democracy in Zambia and elsewhere in Africa. As such, the general idea that democracy needs the presence of a sizable middle class, even if that may still be a future project in most African countries, would not be achieved without long-term social development that affects the lives of many people.

Definitely, the relationship between mass marginalization and open systems of government is a very frequent one. One can even talk about the possible formations of closed dictatorial regimes as a result of public despair that is, for a major part, related to large scale economic weaknesses that cause unemployment and lack of hope for personal and community advancement. As such, there is something valid about the expectation of Zambians and others in the continent to expect better from almost 20 years of democracy, nominal or quasi-real that may be. After all, when Zambians look over their national or continental fences, they can see that those countries that are seen as democratic are doing better than the rest. That of course, does not mean that democracy, especially liberal democracy and Western intentions of individualism and marketization, will always fit and work well in African contexts. What we can say, though, is that with market forces fully penetrating the African landscape and with the rapid urbanization of the continent, democracy, especially if it can be selectively indigenized, might hold more promise for the establishment of relatively accountable political systems than anything attempted in the last little while.

Here, one must not suspect that we are buying into the much discussed main items in Francis Fukuyama's (1993) project of triumphalism where the world is making the best political choice by fully adapting the liberal democracy, and nothing better should even be contemplated. Indeed, after 15 years of examining the case, many should have some doubt whether Fukuyama himself still believes in what he was talking about. Indeed, many

observers who advocate for the total supremacy of Western liberal democracies could suffer from the same analytical ailments that afflict the proponents of globalization as good, and needed by everyone on planet earth. As we can effectively say now, unlike mechanical or mechanizable items of our world, people's lives and expectations, especially those that are socio-economically and politically marginalized (Zambians and others in similar contemporary trajectories), cannot be wishfully transferred from deprived zones to the promised land (albeit with so much unattainable assumptions) of globalization. One select fact remains that when life systems that affect the contexts of millions of people are to be shifted, TIME has to become the most important component of the equation. A quasi-organized global misunderstanding of the simple concept of time and its eventful and expansive practices could be the main reason for the marginalization of the majority of the world population, including Zambians and other Africans, who instead of being given the time they need to adapt to the "developed" platforms achieved by the West and few other select places in the world, are told to become what they cannot suddenly become.

As Majid Rahnema (1997) noted, it is this misplaced pressure and attached expectations that sometimes ruin people's lives, rendering them, both in mental and material characterizations as underdeveloped and by extension, inferior, to others in the rest of the world. The main reason for the observations is to localize the attention we need to pay to Zambian possibilities in terms of achieving something that may be described as democracy, or even more practically effective citizenship that, while it may not be similar to what is practiced in the West, could still instill and operationalize political and economic inclusiveness that also selectively assures equal access to, and the accountable management of public resources. In fact, if something akin to that perspective can be undertaken, then despite any labeling, Zambians will endeavor for, and eventually attain some desirable intersections of political and economic citizenship. Indeed, the pure politicization of citizenship discourses is problematic in the sense that, as was indicated above, the new meanings and undertakings of democracy, especially in poor countries, should have as much economic intentions and aspirations as all the political connotations of the case. That is, democracy as a viable citizenship platform for the people of Zambia should constitute possible schemes of social development that horizontally transform, we dare say, the lives of people.

To qualify our observational deployment of the terms "social development" which we are using in place of the singular "development," we seek a more inclusive prospect in the betterment of the postcolonial and post-Cold War livelihood contexts characterized by individuals' and groups'

habits. So borrowing from the UNDP (1991) definition of development as giving people life choices they can aspire for and attain, we are socializing the general intentions by pulling all notions and pragmatics of economic, political, educational, cultural, technological and even emotional development (more directly, well-being) of peoples irrespective of their historiographies, current conditions and related categories of their overall *habitus*. And just to corroborate the analytical trajectories we are adopting here, we are not minimizing, via all the counter-conventional criticisms (with respect to democracy and globalization) the primacy of the political component, i.e., political and citizenship and development, as almost the *sine qua non* for the social advancement of the Zambian people. With the political system, especially in today's Westphalian global governance structures, controlling public policy, which is the management as well as the distribution of public resources, societies can move forward when national political arrangements are transparent, accountable and segmentally inclusive. It is on this basis that we will agree with Kwapong (1992) that getting the political component right in the current African context is as important as anything else, if the continent's developmentally problematic landscape is to be recast.

So to achieve the desired political enfranchisement and from there, achieve the greatly needed social development, an extended critical line of analysis must be adopted. That is, none of these may happen without some remaking of the relationship between political and citizenship development and the Zambian public. This should actually connote more than it sounds. It is true that if we survey a group of Zambians in the middle of Lusaka, the capital city, most of them will be mentally very active in their comprehension of the situation, and they can even point out what they think the shortcomings are. In most cases, their observations will be directly related to the problems they are describing. In fact, when one of us spent sometime in Zambia for fieldwork, he was very impressed with the political understandings of the common man and women, but the sense is that there is still some need for citizenship education in the country. Hence our main theme and suggestions in this book, is that in order to achieve more popular projects of citizenship and by extension, viable livelihood intersections, a more elevated *apprentisage* of the case is needed. And that should warrant expanding citizenship education possibilities that can come in many forms including enhancing citizenship learning programs in public schools and universities, using the media to enhance the situation, making literacy less mechanical and more inclusive in terms of people's current situations and problems and how these could be changed. This last point on achieving some form of political literacy should be related to what the late Brazilian philosopher of education, Paulo Freire (2000 [1970]) would call raising

people's awareness of the historical and actual causes of their marginalization, seeking effective solutions to their problems, and based on the means available, designing new and socially sensitive ways of attaining their constructive life objectives. Freire called this process *conscientização* or *prise de conscience*, and its primary constitutive elements will be both reflection and action that lead to multi-corner social transformation.

In theorizing about these issues we realize and appreciate the complexity of the issues we are talking about. Citizenship development is itself more complicated than just pointing out what people need to grasp. As Mahmood Mamdani noted in his book, *Citizenship and Subject* (1996), in most postcolonial African spaces, the post-independence de-subjecting of citizens did not materialize, and it was not, one must state, for lack of the rhetoric of democracy. But again, the emphasis for educating for citizenship cannot be underestimated, for even at the level of primary ideas, creating what we could call "reminder regimes" in terms of people's rights and responsibilities, can stimulate the thinking of people, potentially sustaining in the process, new concerns, questions and debates to elevate the number as well as the quality of societal transformations that can usher in novel practices of citizenship and democracy in the country. As John Dewey, in his classic, *Democracy and Education* (1966), emphasized, one of the best ways to achieve democracy is to expand general platforms of education, complemented by deliberate programs of educating for democratic life. In other words, for people to become democrats, or more appropriately to achieve full citizenship, they must be taught about the intentions, contents and probable outcomes of democracy. In the African context, one might characterize Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* programs (situationally translated as villagization) as one attempt to construct select versions of African citizenship for what he called the right African development (see Nyerere, 1974).

This was a clear response from Nyerere's side as well as his understanding because Africans have a different relationship with their environment, a relationship that is more community oriented than it is individualistic, they should not rely on false schemes of progress that have been designed by colonialism, which will never meet the authentic needs of postcolonial African populations. To achieve this type of unique citizenship and social development, Nyerere suggested what he termed "education for self-reliance" (Nyerere, 1968), which could be described in the context of our discussions, one form of citizenship education with specific contents and intentions. While a more detailed discussion of the case should not be warranted here, suffice to note that Nyerere's counter-colonial projects of citizenship and citizenship education were eventually overwhelmed by combined forces of global capitalism and the increasing currents of individualism that have

been creeping into the conscience of the Tanzanian men and women who have to function and achieve in the open, competitive environments of contemporary societies. Indeed, with our co-realized “locatedness” in these *post-facto* moments of life (that is, with respect to triumph—at least for the time being—of the cultural and politico-economic continuities of colonialism), a revival of African ways of learning and developing may be more complicated than ever, and a select mixture of the cases may become functional. With these introductory notations on the possible dimensions of the case, we now bring in a succinct theoretical focus on citizenship education.

Select Conceptualizations and Theories of Citizenship and Citizenship Education

In general terms, citizenship may be spoken about or associated with some national identity, which is mainly about being a member of territorially definable nation-state. In the Zambian case, therefore, a Zambian citizen would be someone who is recognized, in the simplest terms, by the country’s legal, political and related structures. Here, as in other geographies and jurisdictions, it will be the Zambian state that creates, defines and regulates the identities of its citizens and controls individual and social rights and responsibilities. As such, the state may say, for example, to be a citizen, people must carry national identity cards, passports, or other documents that affirm the citizenship of such carriers within the boundaries of Zambia or when they are traveling outside the country. Here, some mention of the state’s power in controlling these processes of citizenship is important. With the state recognized (or perforce accepted) prerogative to exercise its power, *vis-à-vis* the citizens, the latter usually do not directly, or on a day-to-day basis, influence the trajectories of defining either citizenship or its bestowment or denial thereof. While the membership issue has been strong historically, citizenship contexts and categories may be changing now. In that vein, citizenship has become a multidimensional construct and practice with more complex and interconnected spaces and intersections of life, and may be currently colored by a number of social and other elements that sustain different levels of contestations that are contiguous and continuous. And while there has been a plethora of emerging discourses on the now fashionable (with some legitimate possibilities) of global citizenship (see Dower, 2003), the danger of celebrating the world case may be difficult especially for Africans whose citizenship realities would be less effective in the emerging cosmopolitan, quasi-universalistic intentions of the new project. Indeed, discussions on viable citizenship contexts should be directly attached (especially at the local level where people’s lives are being imme-

diately defined and operationalized) to the promise or problems of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and social justice. Again, these would be related to what we mentioned above, i.e., the indispensability of correcting Zambian and African political platforms so as to effect sound public policies. It is the case that these areas remain sites of struggle within the context of individual Africans and collectivities such as civil society associations with most still fighting for basic political freedom, which, as mentioned above, would be the key for any effective reconfiguration of the present African condition. In fact, it is nothing short of equal citizenship that has precipitated and, in many cases, sustained the disastrous and primarily political or politico-economic upheavals in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Rwanda, and Somalia.

Select Theoretical Perspectives

According to Soltis (1988), all aspects of learning or learning programs might be seen as having some notions and practices of citizenship training. With most education aiming to improve the lives of people, one may even label it as social development, needless to add that some forms of education (e.g., colonial education) would have been detrimental to the needs of the public. Although the two may be used in different contexts, citizenship education is, more or less, similar to political education (Torney-Purta, 1990), even if the former sometimes carries descriptions within its sphere of analysis and observations. As such, the two could be used interchangeably. As Cogan (1998) noted, the moral, ethical and social objectives and implications of citizenship should give citizens the ongoing capacity to understand the *raison d'être* of the national and global structures in place. Here, it will be useful to refer to Eamonn Callan who, in his excellent book, *Creating citizens* (1997), notes that in order to create full citizens, those citizens must be able to identify with the complete political traditions and all their observable and latent attachments so as “to make a claim about one’s *moral identity*; [and] to commit oneself to continuing a particular story because one thinks it is morally worthy of continuance” (p. 125). When that happens, it could lead to an elevated popular participation in the political process, and in the Zambian and related African context we have been describing, this participation, not only in voting during elections, but in actively contributing to the political dialogue (indeed, aiming to shape the political dialogue) is needed as much as anywhere else in the world. As we have indicated above, though, the participation will always be limited unless citizens acquire a comprehensive understanding of the contours and functions of their country’s political and economic structures, which can be effectively achieved through ongoing programs of citizenship education. As such, we

once again welcome the point that whether it is in Zambia, Africa or elsewhere in the world, the real practices as well as the sustainability of viable democratic regimes would depend on the citizenry's desire and acquisition of the nature, the virtues and the operations of democracy.

Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1966), even if it was not fully focused on citizenship education, was still an important watershed in the way we see and analyze the important interconnectedness between democracy and education, and should continue to inspire us in the coming years and decades. Dewey's emphasis on the positive relationship between mass education and the sustainability of some form of democratic regimes can now be extrapolated to the global scene, for even if the focus is not on citizenship, all education, as we saw above will still have a kernel of civic training in it. After Dewey, Paulo Freire's work (2000 [1970], 1998, 1985), despite its origins in the philosophy of education, continuously and critically responds to learning terrains that are politicized, and therefore, fully interwoven with the citizenship rights of people. Beyond his *opus magnum*, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000 [1970]) which aims for collective social action by both the oppressed and the oppressor to achieve the project of social justice, his other works continue to highlight the need for the rightful education so as to accomplish a less violent and marginalizing world for the excluded and oppressed billions of our world. Freire who visited Africa and had an important working relationship with Julius Nyerere, effectively understood, as much as anyone else, that in achieving a pragmatic program of citizenship, a deep and inclusive understanding of the histories as well as the current structures of the disenfranchising project was to be, *prima facie*, acquired. As such, even when deliberately designed programs of citizenship education are not in force, an ongoing attachment to his philosophy of education for horizontal emancipation and empowerment, by community and civil society associations in Zambia and elsewhere in the world may be important. Here, as Freire's ideas first germinated in Latin America and were selectively operationalized there, one may raise the question of context, a very important possible question, indeed, but the context does not have to be the same as long as the ideas and their probable practices could be adapted to the needed ameliorative platforms of political and economic development in Africa or other places.

Related to the above contextual argument is the point raised earlier; that even if democracy in its current dominant forms, is not purely African, it might be extensively indigenized, or even when that is done, it may still yield better results than other political ideologies that have been hitherto tried. As such, we may agree with Bishop and Hamot (2001) that democracy, despite all its imperfections and highly Westernized intentions, might be