Citizenship and Citizenship Education in Zimbabwe: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis

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Abstract

Civics, citizenship, and citizenship education are currently issues of attention for a number of state education systems over the world. Yet, because civics and citizenship education are contested and controversial concepts, it is sometimes not clear as to what the intentions of state authorities are in introducing civics and citizenship education in the curriculum. This chapter discusses the position of civics and citizenship education in Zimbabwe. Firstly, it looks at the different theoretical conceptions associated with civics and citizenship. It then traces the historical position of this subject in the country's education system focusing mostly on why the subject has taken different forms at various political stages. The chapter then focuses on the current position of civics and citizenship

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education in Zimbabwe as of 2018 and tries to respond to the question as to why it is the way it is. It concludes with a summary regarding the subject in the country.

Introduction

Civics and citizenship education is generally regarded as important in teaching citizens of a country to be politically, socially, and economically active members of society (Olssen 2004; Lawson 2001; Tibbitts and Torney-Purta 1999; Crick Report 1998). However, in many cases, negative macro-socio-political factors can negatively impact on attitudes of these same citizens (young and adults) and the extent to which they can participate in the socio-political activities of the country. In Zimbabwe, citizens have become distrustful of the political environment. They are disillusioned with the political system and are unhappy with the economic developments in the country (Sigauke 2011b). Introducing a citizenship education program in such a politico-socio-economic atmosphere of mistrust may neither change the attitudes of learners, nor alter their participation levels now and in future. In support of this view, Matereke (2012) notes that the official perception of civics and citizenship education in Zimbabwe has

> "rendered both the school system and teachers as mere functionaries of the status quo, thus constricting the public sphere and eroding civil liberties, these being the very elements which enable citizens to fully participate in the political process and to hold public officials and institutions accountable. It is these developments that bring the dual crisis of citizenship and education into purview" (p. 97).

Over the years, since independence in 1980, a number of attempts have been made to introduce civics and citizenship education in the curriculum in Zimbabwe but without success. This failure to a successful implementation of the subject is a result of conflicting interpretations between government (ruling party) on one hand and teachers and the general public on the other concerning the nature and role of civics and citizenship education in the Zimbabwean society.

This chapter discusses the position of civics and citizenship education in Zimbabwe's education system. Firstly, it looks at several relevant theoretical conceptions and controversies associated with civics, citizenship, and citizenship education in general. It then traces the historical background of the subject in Zimbabwe's education system focusing mostly on how and why it has taken different positions at various political stages. The chapter then looks at the subject in Zimbabwe as of 2018 and tries to respond to the question as to why it is the way it is. The concluding section summarizes views raised in the chapter.

Civics and Citizenship Education: A Brief Theoretical Background and Some Pertinent Controversies

There is as much controversy about what constitutes citizenship education as there is about citizenship itself. Arthur and Wright (2001: 8) identify three different views often presented in discussions concerning citizenship education, that is, "education about citizenship; education for citizenship and education through citizenship," what Kerr (2003: 14) calls the "tripartite division of *about-for-through*" citizenship. A distinction is also often made between a citizenship education that empowers the learner and that which is tantamount to indoctrination, that is, involving teaching someone to accept that something is true in spite of evidence to the contrary (Sears and Hughes 2006). Indoctrination is used as a useful means to an end for people in positions of political power. Citizenship education thus can be used to control young people so that they do not question the status quo and to mold, manage, and reform young people for the benefit of people in positions of power. In such cases, citizenship education does not develop active citizens who are capable of thinking critically, questioning and making decisions about issues that concern them. At the political level, this narrow sense of citizenship education neither raises nor offers political empowerment to young people, keeping them passive and ignorant of political, economic, and other social issues that benefit the powerful ones. Davies (2001) observes that in many cases the nature of citizenship education a country adopts is greatly influenced by the political context and ideology of the state. Osler and Starkey (2005) and Magudu (2012) add that if citizenship is as controversial and as contested a concept as noted above then being a "good citizen" is therefore similarly controversial and contestable. In this sense, and as defined by any government, a good citizen could mean someone who unquestioningly accepts and conforms to values, norms, and beliefs as defined by authority.

In contrast, authentic citizenship education enables learners to engage in critical discussions of issues, using evidence, exploring alternatives and developing dispositions and skills that allow them to act on other possibilities. Authentic citizenship education goes beyond the development of passive citizenship and seeks instead citizens who are justice-oriented and who critically analyze and address social injustices. Authentic citizenship education involves teaching and learning about social and moral responsibility, involvement in the community, and about political literacy (Olssen 2004; Westheimer and Kahne 2004). It is a citizenship education that sharpens critical thinking capacities important in the analysis of political, social, and other issues, a preparation of young people for their roles and responsibilities and for the challenges and uncertainties of life through provision of relevant education (Kerr 1999). The main goals of this deeper, thicker sense of citizenship education are thus to provide political socialization and to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and values to participate effectively in a democratic society (Kisby and Sloam 2009 cited in Magudu 2012).

Authentic citizenship education, especially at the classroom level, may require a methodological and pedagogical shift, especially regarding the medium of

instruction, given that it involves an emancipatory and transformative model of instruction that promotes questioning of knowledge as well as awareness of social injustices that are inherent in society. In addition, authentic citizenship education includes making students aware of power and political differences (Panganayi et al. 2017). Authentic citizenship education or education for democracy aims at predisposing and developing students' skills, attitudes, beliefs, and values that will empower them to participate and remain engaged and involved in their society's culture, politics, governance, and general democracy (Runhare and Muvirimi 2017). In the case of civics and citizenship education in Zimbabwe, which is the focus of this chapter, it is important to have some understanding of the background to this subject.

Civics and Citizenship Education in Zimbabwe: A Historical Background

Political, Social, and Economic Context Prior to the Introduction of Civics and Citizenship Education

Over the last four decades, that is, since independence from United Kingdom in 1980, Zimbabwe has been going through a downturn in political, social, and economic conditions. This downturn can be attributed to the introduction of harsh legislation against democratic dissent by the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party. This legislation has targeted and restricted civic organizations, labor movements, opposition political movements, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), churches, and student demonstrations which demanded a recognition of their rights as citizens and citizen organizations (Hammett 2010; Zeilig 2008). As a result, the country has been characterized by hyperinflation, social hemorrhage, and political conflict. Specifically, the year 1998 was characterized by radical political opposition to the ruling party evidenced by the formation of the main political opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), an alliance of civic society, and groupings of labor movements (Raftopoulos 2002). Prior to and beyond 1998, student political discontent and activism had also been on the rise especially at the tertiary education level. Zeilig (2008) notes that student voice reconstructs historical events and should therefore be interrogated in order for the public to understand the meaning of student activism. For most of the 1990s and beyond, Zimbabwe has been characterized by a gradual economic decline characterized by rising unemployment, underdevelopment, and disillusionment with elite corruption. Thus, the political upheavals of the 2000s resulted in the dwindling of the democratic space and an upsurge of populist rhetoric from the ruling politically powerful aimed at justifying their positions (Hammer et al. 2003). That is, to silence the general public from openly voicing against these socioeconomic hardships and elite corruptions, the ruling party became more and more autocratic.

These political events in Zimbabwe since 1998 may be summarized as follows: the referendum of February 2000 which rejected the government's proposal for a new constitution; the popularity of the opposition party as confirmed in the June elections of that same year when the MDC got a number of seats in parliament followed by what has been generally regarded as "controversial" presidential elections in 2002, parliamentary elections in 2005, and the 2008 elections (Raftopoulos 2002; Chimhowu 2009). As suggested above, Zimbabwe's continual political crisis up to the present day (2018) has further exacerbated the country's economic decline, political instability, and social divisions resulting in a lack of trust in the political system from some sections of the population locally and internationally. In addition, the political crisis has resulted in a rise in conflict between citizens as illustrated by some public violence between members of the ruling and opposition parties.

Over the years, and in the context of these worsening conditions, the ZANU-PF government's popularity has continued to decline drastically as evidenced by rising support for the opposition party (i.e., the rise in the numbers of citizens who voted for opposition party members in parliament). The response of authorities to these events has, in some cases, been further political suppressions including the closing of the space for democratic debates through various legislation and measures. The 2002 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), for example, allowed state media to broadcast ideological messages on behalf of the state. The Land Designation Act, also known as the "Fast Track Land Acquisition Reform Programme," led to violent occupation of farmland and the displacement of farm owners and workers (McGregor 2002). In 2001 the judicial system was restructured. Significant too have been the appointment of military personnel to lead some state institutions, what has been described as "the militarization of state institutions" (Chimhowu 2009: 19), and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) which extended the powers of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) (Raftopoulos 2007a; Raftopoulos 2007b; Raftopoulos 2002; Bond and Manyanya 2002). Added to the above was "Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order" or "Clean-up Operation" (Tibaijuka 2005) of 2005, euphemistically described as the "tsunami." While this was meant to "restore order" by destroying unplanned and illegal accommodation and business structures, it was violent and indiscriminate. In addition to making society submissive to the state, it also ended up making people, mostly those living in the low income residential areas, homeless (Fontein 2009).

These events, regarded as an "evolution of a repressive political governance culture characterized by violence, insecurity and political paralysis" (Chimhowu 2009: 19), worsened relations between the state and civil society. It is within this socio-political context that citizenship education was to be introduced in schools in 2007, raising significant questions for and from Zimbabweans about what it means to be a citizen, who is a citizen, and whether citizenship is about practicing democratic values such as tolerance, participation, and empowerment (Tshabangu 2006). To engage with, and to seek to answer such questions, it is necessary to examine how the events in Zimbabwe help in understanding the operationalization of citizenship, including the form it takes within curricular programs.

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (1999)

It was within the above context that in 1998 the Government of Zimbabwe established a commission whose task was "to inquire into and report on education and training in Zimbabwe" (Presidential Commission 1999: i). Prior to 1998, no such comprehensive review had been carried out on the education system. According to the commission, during public debates, young people were blamed for antisocial behavior, and such behavior was attributable to a lack of citizenship values, relevant ethics, morals, and individual and collective responsibility towards property. Furthermore, young people were blamed for lacking knowledge about the meaning and qualities associated with good citizenship. The commission also noted that during its hearings "people expressed concern about the absence of citizenship education in the school and tertiary education curricula" (Presidential Commission 1999: 350). The commission thus recommended a compulsory and statutory citizenship education in the entire school curriculum.

As noted earlier, citizenship and citizenship education are controversial and sometimes subjectively defined concepts (Osler and Starkey 2005). In such a deteriorating political context and given this controversy, the claims made by the Presidential Commission about young people were politically motivated and sought to silence young people on the ruling party's political abuses. One such example of the indoctrination or silencing of young people is the infamous National Youth Service introduced in Zimbabwe at the peak of the socio-political instability in the country (Nyakudya 2007; Mashingaidze 2009; Ranger 2004). Furthermore, claims about young people's lack of citizenship values and the need for citizenship education were based on information collected from the public and not directly from or through research on young people themselves. By excluding the voices of young people, the Commission's review presented a narrow conception of citizenship.

A critical discourse analysis of the citizenship education chapter of the Commission's report (Sigauke 2011a) shows bias in the agenda for the appointment of the commission and that this was influenced by the socio-economic and political events in the country. In addition, various statements from the report demonstrate the Commission's concern about the socio-economic and other problems in the country at the time of its operation. It concluded that these problems could be addressed through education because:

> Education is a fundamental strategy to prepare Zimbabweans for socio-economic well-being in the new millennium and to be competitive in the global era dominated by information technology. (Presidential Commission 1999: i)

> Citizenship education curriculum would enable children to grow into good citizens who *conform to certain accepted practice (italics: author's emphasis)*; train them to hold beliefs; to ensure the reception and acceptance of our values, ethics and civic processes by all our youth; and to enlighten our children of their civic rights, obligations and responsibilities (Presidential Commission 1999: 353).

The suggested curriculum would also focus on such aspects as "Our Heritage, Legal Education (learners learning about human rights, responsibilities and obligations); National Identity: a study of our culture. . .a close study of our democracy" (Presidential Commission 1999: 252).

The report was, however, not specific about the disorder in the country, and it was deliberately general and nonpartisan in its arguments. However, the report implicitly advocated for public commitment to the ruling party's ideals. While the Commission says it consulted widely before arriving at its conclusions and making recommendations for citizenship education in the curriculum, in addition to not finding out student positions on the subject, the report did not consult the teachers who were to implement the citizenship education program. Large-scale surveys elsewhere have shown that where teachers are not consulted and if they hold negative views about the subject, this may lead to significant issues, and even failure in its implementation (Losito and Mintrop 2001; Wilkins 2003).

Content/Focus of the 2007 Civics and Citizenship Syllabus

In between 1999 when the Presidential Commission Report was released and 2007 when the civics education syllabus was implemented, there is no official policy document directing the Ministry of Education and Culture to develop the civics syllabus (*Source: Interview with official at Curriculum Development Unit (CDU); May 30, 2006*). Subsequently, 8 years later (in 2007) a "Civics Education" syllabus was designed by the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Education and Culture initially to be taught at the secondary education level. Consistent with the Commission's suggestions, the first aim focused on the need to develop in young people the quality of *unhu/ubuntu* which the Commission describes as

> the human being in the fullest and noblest sense; a good human being; a well behaved and morally upright person (Presidential Commission 1999: 61–62, 349).

The assumption is that through the civic education syllabuses, these qualities can be "cultivated" and "sustained" Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) (2007: 4). The inclusion of these qualities in civics and citizenship education is in response to the Commission's observation that "*unhu/ubuntu* is currently lacking in society and in the formal education system" (Presidential Commission 1999: 353). However, the Civics syllabus was only "allocated one period per week" (GoZ 2007: 6). A number of different teaching/learning approaches were listed in the syllabus including community participatory methods, again in response to the statement that "the subject encourages the use of a variety of methods with particular emphasis on participatory methods. . ." (GoZ 2007: 4). These observations, combined with government's apparent sudden interest in citizenship education in schools at a time when the same government was experiencing political, economic, and other social difficulties, raise questions about whether or not there were other motives for the introduction of citizenship education in schools at that time.

Civics and Citizenship Education in Zimbabwe: Current Position (2018)

Debates on Ideological Implications of the Current Program in Zimbabwe

The current position on civics and citizenship education in Zimbabwe, which is offered as a cross-curriculum theme rather than a stand-alone subject (as of 2018), is outlined in a number of documents of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Ministry of Higher Education (see Ndhlovu 2016; Mushava 2014; Magudu 2012; Matereke 2012; Mapetere et al. 2011; Makanda n.d.; Chabikwa n.d.). A stand-alone or statutory citizenship education subject in the school curriculum, as recommended by the Presidential Commission (1999) and introduced in schools 2007, was not successful as it was unpopular with teachers who were worried about teaching sensitive political issues in a politically sensitive environment (Sigauke 2011b). The section on "The Nature of Civics and Citizenship Education Programme in Zimbabwe" which comes next provides details on the suggested content and teaching approaches on the subject. However, before discussing the content and teaching approaches, it is important to be aware of ideological implications of the current program in Zimbabwe.

Writing of the Zimbabwean context Matereke (2012), citing Gutmann (1999), believes that political education, that is, the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation has moral primacy over other purposes of public education in a democratic society. According to this position, the role of citizenship education or political democracy (Gutmann 1999) should be the development of a "deliberative/democratic" character. The current curriculum in Zimbabwe does not match these ideals and is too narrow and focused on political knowledge rather than active participation. The question then is: to what extent has citizenship education in Zimbabwe bequeathed individuals with what Milner (2002: 1) terms "civic literacy" or the knowledge, ability, and capacity of citizens to make sense of their political world? Writing about education for citizenship in Zimbabwe Matereke (2012) further points out that education in general should cultivate students for critical citizenship emanating from the undeniable fact of pluralism: we live in a world that is characterized by multiple identities (ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, etc.), different and often competing (thus incommensurable) conceptions of the good. This "fact of pluralism" makes it unreasonable to expect that national borders should coincide with a single homogenous community. Thus, as Matereke (2012) argues, education should prepare all citizens, especially the young, by imparting critical skills to engage with plurality. The fact of pluralism requires Zimbabweans to question how they can achieve political stability in the polity. Rather than promoting critical dispositions that allow citizens to hold public officials accountable, through various processes, including those specifically connected to citizenship education examined in the next section, education in Zimbabwe at the moment has fostered intolerance and heightened the risk of political instability through a curriculum which prioritizes conformity and commitment to

existing political structures. Therefore, it can be argued that the political polarization, economic decline, and social strife that characterize the Zimbabwean crisis are a manifestation of an instability that stems from an education system that demands an acquiescent citizenry (Matereke 2012). As Giroux (1998a: 173) points out, there is need for educators to define "schools as public spheres where the dynamics of popular engagement and democratic politics can be cultivated as part of the struggle for a radical democratic state."

At present in Zimbabwe, as in other parts of the world, educational reforms have tended to assign teachers and schools the roles of reproducing the political society and creating a predetermined political consensus by imparting specific kinds of knowledge in order to buttress the ruling party's hold on power. The ideology that underpins the postcolonial education reform in Zimbabwe does not question the "relationship between knowledge and power" (Giroux 1998b: 6). Zimbabwe needs a citizenship education that raises citizens' critical consciousness (Freire 1987), one that transforms teachers and students into intellectuals who conceive teaching and learning as "an emancipatory practice" and who "work relentlessly, dedicated to furthering democracy and enhancing the quality of human life." They should not behave as functionaries "whose labor is to benefit those in political power" (McLaren 1988: xviii). Through various processes, ruling elites have stifled the role of teachers and lecturers as transformative intellectuals.

The Nature of Civics and Citizenship Education Program in Zimbabwe

More recently new programs that incorporate some aspects of civics and citizenship education have been introduced at various levels of the education system. These include, for example, the "National Pledge" in primary and secondary schools, the "National and Strategic Studies (NASS)" in teachers' and polytechnic colleges and a compulsory course on "Peace Leadership and Conflict Transformation" in universities (Ndhlovu 2016). At the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education level, Magudu (2012) notes that the History curriculum remains central in the delivery of aspects of citizenship education. In addition, attempts have been made to introduce Human Rights education as a stand-alone subject, but this failed due to the same reason that teachers are hesitant to teach issues they regard as politically sensitive that would get them in trouble with the ruling party (see Sigauke 2011b). In the primary school, the HIV/AIDS and Life Skills Education Primary School Syllabus was introduced in 2003. Although the content of the syllabus focuses heavily on HIV/AIDS education, it includes aspects of citizenship education such as values and beliefs, participation in community programs, and conflict resolution. It should also be noted that citizenship education initiatives in Zimbabwe primary schools have not generated much debate, perhaps because they do not focus on obviously controversial issues.

In his work, Makanda (n.d.), a Principal Director of the Curriculum Development and Technical Services unit of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Zimbabwe,

identifies three key content areas for the new civics and citizenship education curriculum which at the moment is being treated as a cross-curriculum subject: concepts of *hunhu/Ubuntu,* values and national identity, all three also mentioned in the Presidential Commission Report discussed above.

Hunhu/Ubuntu denotes a good human being, a well-behaved, and morally upright person characterized by qualities such as responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, a commitment to hardwork, integrity, a cooperative spirit, solidarity, hospitality, devotion to family, and the welfare of the community (Sigauke 2016). *Ubuntu/hunhu* also means a well-rounded and respectable human being, one with particular characteristics of care, good mannered and with regard for others, self-disciplined and courageous, diligent and tolerant. These are characteristics treasured by other cultures and are upheld and promoted as virtues of good citizenship.

On values Makanda (n.d.) further adds that values denote what humanity is; they give weight to humanity and must therefore be shared, especially when they are acceptable to society. Values are what people cherish as guiding principles and act as a main reference for their choices and behaviors. Any system without values lacks order and has a very limited shelf-life. The new curriculum, it is believed, will inculcate positive ethics and values in every learner. So, learners in the school system are expected to exhibit acceptable values such as discipline, integrity, honest, and *Ubuntu/hunhu*. If learners enter society without these values, they become a threat to the social fabric and socio-economic development. Incidences of corruption, infidelity, theft, lying, murder, and natural environment and property destruction become rampant. This preparation of learners, it is believed, will enable them to rise to the challenges they inevitably face as they grow into adulthood. Principally, some of the key life values relate to peaceful resolution of conflicts, employment of sound judgment and principles at critical moments and integrity, conviction and commitment to do what is right (Makanda n.d.).

On national identity, learners are expected to exhibit a Zimbabwean identity in every respect of their life, a manifestation of patriotism, a recognition of and respect for national symbols, and voluntarily engagement in participatory citizenship. However, while these are genuine qualities expected of any citizen in any nation, currently in Zimbabwe participatory engagement in political activities that are critical of the ruling party (ZANU-PF) is generally punishable. This discourages citizens from engaging in these same activities that are suggested here. It appears that only activities that are supportive of the ruling party are acceptable. The process of building consciousness and patriotism through citizenship education is also viewed as only being possible through drawing on *hunhu/Ubuntu* (see expected qualities of *hunhu/Ubuntu* as described above). Furthermore, learners should be grounded in their culture, show respect for life, diversity, environment, property, laws, and the dignity of labor, and have a clear identity, confidence, assertiveness, and be enterprising with reference to opportunities offered by new knowledge, technologies, and circumstance. Again, the weakness of the current curriculum is that some of the above ideas are missing. These views are perhaps best summarized in the document *Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education: The New Curriculum Framework* (Chabikwa n.d.) which outlines the curriculum aims as being to promote and cherish

the Zimbabwean identity, prepare learners for life, and work in a largely agro-based economy and an increasingly globalized and competitive environment, foster life-long learning in line with the opportunities and challenges of the knowledge society, prepare learners for participatory citizenship, peace, and sustainable development, and to prepare and orient learners for participation, leadership, and voluntary service. However, while the aims set out in the document are appropriate, wide ranging, and democratic for civics and citizenship education, the actual lived political environment in the country makes it unlikely that these would be achieved since they may only be enacted in a much narrower way. The narrow enactment of these aims is because the ruling party often enforces conformity to its political wishes which are different from the stated aims.

The introduction of the National Pledge in primary and secondary schools in 2016 was, again, one of the responses to the Presidential Commission Report. The pledge was designed to encourage a patriotic work ethic among students and is intended to uphold honesty and hard work, while affirming freedom, justice, and equality as national values. These are regarded as fundamental features of citizenship education meant to equip students with basic rights, values, duties, and responsibilities. Students are expected to sing the pledge like a national anthem at school assemblies pledging their respects and acknowledgments of various national symbols (the flag, fallen national heroes, natural resources, traditional cultures, etc.) and qualities associated with good citizenship (Ndhlovu 2016).

The content of the pledge is, however, currently the subject of religious and civic controversy. Opponents to the pledge (parents, church leaders and others), as it is presently constituted, say that debate must have preceded the pledge. There was no public debate about what should make up the pledge. By citing the phrase "*Almighty God*" at its introductory stage, the pledge is viewed like a prayer which elevates secular symbols such as the national flag and deceased liberation war heroes, scenarios which opponents to the pledge equate to idolatry and ancestral worship rather than to God. Using the phrase "*Almighty God*" is tantamount to giving respect to idols (Ndhlovu 2016). Implementing the pledge requires an oath from minors (school children) which is tantamount to forcing someone to act against their will (indoctrination). Furthermore, presenting the pledge as a compulsory requirement is a violation of the liberty of conscience, a value provided for by Zimbabwe's Constitution. Given that its content was not consulted upon and is missing a plural dimension, the current pledge is viewed as falling short of its "national" adjective (Ndhlovu 2016). Government, on the other hand, argues that the pledge was reached upon consultatively since the principle and much of its content are drawn from a nationally ratified constitution, technically developed and endorsed by elected representatives at cabinet level.

At tertiary institutions in the country (i.e., the Ministry of Higher Education's teacher education colleges, universities and other tertiary levels) a new compulsory subject, the National and Strategic Studies (NASS) program was introduced in 2004, also as a response to the 1999 Presidential Commission Report. This was meant to accomplish the goal of *producing socially relevant individuals with desirable values and attitudes* (*italics: author's emphasis*) and who would be effective role models for

future generations (Moyo et al. 2011; Zvobgo 1986). In addition, another program, Peace, Leadership and Conflict Transformation also covers issues of civics and citizenship education. However, as Mapetere et al. (2011) point out, the introduction of NASS has also been surrounded by controversy. Some have viewed NASS as unnecessary and an attempt to indoctrinate the youth (student teachers) along the same lines as the infamous National Youth Service introduced in Zimbabwe at the peak of the socio-political instability in the country (Nyakudya 2007; Mashingaidze 2009; Ranger 2004). Other observers have viewed NASS as another attempt to advance the political agendas of people in power. On the other hand, those who support the program see its aim as "to produce skilled personnel with a sense of patriotism . . ." (The Herald 11 May 2016). Yet other commentators argue that there is no education that is apolitical; all education is designed to achieve certain political and economic ends and so are these programs in Zimbabwe (Maravanyika and Ndawi 2011; Apple 1990 and Jansen 1991). Such a lack of consensus on the relevance of the subject is likely to manifest itself among the implementers (teachers) and the consumers (students) of the NASS curriculum as well as other stakeholders outside the education system.

Concluding Summary

This chapter has discussed the theoretical, historical, and current position of civics and citizenship education in Zimbabwe's primary, secondary, and higher education levels. The general impression from the reviewed literature on the current position of civics and citizenship education in the country provides a diversity of opinions on this subject. The discussion demonstrates a lack of consensus on the relevance of the subject to the country. This is a result of perceived political interferences in what exactly should be involved in civics and citizenship education. For instance, in a study on Zimbabwean teachers' and students' views on the subject, Sigauke (2011b) found out that teachers consistently expressed fears that teaching about some issues could lead to victimization especially if these issues were seen as being politically sensitive and controversial. For students in that study, it seems that taking part in political activities does not constitute a measure of democracy or good citizenship. Students do not regard discussions of political issues and following political discussions in the media as indicators of good citizenship. Students have a low trust in political institutions of the country, perhaps a result of their experiences of political conflicts in the country (Sigauke 2012). Unless current political tensions change, this may have negative implications for future levels of political action by young people in the country indicating the beginning of future political apathy. As Print (2007) points out, political apathy arises where citizens are distrustful of politicians, where they are skeptical of government institutions, and where they are disillusioned about how democratic processes work. Introducing a citizenship education program in such an environment seriously undermines its possibilities.

In the case of the NASS program noted in this chapter, research points to a significant level of antipathy towards the program in teacher training colleges where

the top to bottom approach makes it difficult for some NASS lecturers and students to identify with the program. Researchers have suggested a number of improvements that can be made to and for the success of the program (see Mapetere et al. 2011). At the secondary school level, Magudu (2012) notes that civics and citizenship education in Zimbabwe is generally characterized by dichotomies and what Sears and Hughes (2006) describe as a tension between education and indoctrination in both discourse and practice. The need to educate the youth to be informed and responsible is recognized but a narrow conception of citizenship is enacted. The prevailing socio-political environment in the country does not allow for the proper implementation of the citizenship education curriculum. What passes for citizenship education in the country today is inconsistent with the principles of experiential and service learning. Indeed, some of the features of indoctrination are manifest, for example, a narrow or "jingoistic view" of nation building (Magudu 2012: 187), demonization of opponents and gross over-simplification of both problems and solutions (Sears and Hughes 2006). Consequently, the legitimacy of the discourse in the school curriculum has been compromised. Clearly, there is a need for a de-politicized approach where citizenship education is not seen as a political ploy but where stakeholders can begin to freely appreciate its relevance. In view of all of the above observations, it is recommended that, if the goal of citizenship education in Zimbabwe is to be realized, there is need for fundamental changes in the way the subject is conceptualized, perceived, and taught. Also, there is need for the involvement all stakeholders – the curriculum planners, teachers, and the community to be engaged in developing a model for citizenship education that all conceive to be the best for the country, Zimbabwe.

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