

This paper uses the ideas of Paulo Freire to explore the role of social studies in African schools. In particular it examines the extent to which social studies can achieve a key aim of the African Social Studies Programme—the development of a critical perspective on society. The evidence does not give rise to a great deal of optimism in this regard. Factors such as the political environment, the content of teaching materials, school and classroom organisation, teacher training and resource provision severely hamper the potential of social studies to educate for critical consciousness.