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**The lived educational experiences of Zimbabwean males
who transition into English schools.**

Tendayi Madzunzu

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Leeds Beckett
University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2024

Abstract

This study investigates the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males as they moved to England, shedding light on a previously understudied aspect of educational migration during 2000-2020. At this time, many Zimbabwean males transitioned into English schools and experienced the changing dynamics from majority to minority. Understanding the significance of prior education becomes crucial. However, little attention has been devoted to the lived experiences of African Zimbabwean males within these two educational systems.

Employing the counter-storytelling research design of Critical Race Theory, this study investigates the lived educational experiences of seven African Zimbabwean males selected through purposive sampling. The data collection process involved audio-recorded semi-structured interviews conducted between December 2019 and February 2020. The narrative analysis revealed these individuals' challenges in navigating academic expectations and social and cultural shifts upon their transition to English schools.

The study emphasises the need to address educational disparities affecting racialised migrant students transitioning into English schools, especially from marginalised communities. This study fills a significant gap in the research by examining African Zimbabwean students' practical challenges and academic achievements within the English education system. The participants' stories reveal African Zimbabwean males' unique linguistic and academic identities, often overlooked within broader Black African classifications. The study also highlights how racial biases in England affect the educational potential of African Zimbabwean males.

The research emphasises how race, class, and gender intersect to shape the educational path of African Zimbabwean males. It also highlights the challenges faced by immigrants from a colonised nation in the immigration process and the English education system. This emphasises the need for policy interventions to promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their background or migration status.

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My husband for taking care of me and our family, and extended family in the most difficult circumstances, while I worked on this thesis.

This thesis is dedicated to my sons Farai, Takudzwa, Anotida, and daughter Ruvimbo. My grandsons Kutenda, Tafara, Isheanesu and granddaughter Tatenda.

My late parents Kasikayi and Dema, who inspired me to learn, I have fulfilled the vision, '*Itai setuvana tvevamwe*' I know you will be very proud of my milestone achievement. May your souls rest in eternal peace.

The final dedication is to all Zimbabweans in the diaspora navigating the education systems in the host countries. Do not despair; it shall be well with you.

Abbreviations used in this study

CRT: Critical Race Theory

COMESA: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

DES: Department for Education and Skills

DfE: Department for Education

EAL: English as an Additional Language

EMTAS: Ethnic Minority Traveller Achievement Service

ESAP: Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

FTLRP: Fast Track Land Redistribution Programme

GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education

HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

LSPYE: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England

IMF: International Monetary Fund

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change

NAEP: New Arrivals Excellence Programme

‘O’ Levels: Ordinary Level

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

ONS: Office for National Statistics

PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment

SACMEQ: Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

UDI: Unilateral Declaration of Independence

UK (or U.K. where quoted): United Kingdom

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Education Fund

UTS: United Teaching Service

WEF: World Economic Forum

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

ZIMSEC: Zimbabwe Secondary Education Certificate

ZINTEC: Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This is a study that investigates the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who transitioned to schools in England from 2000 to 2020 after a family re-union to continue and finish their education. Given the racialised and gendered ethnic classification in the UK, there remains a significant gap in understanding their educational experiences as they integrate into the English school system. The chapter begins by outlining the research problem, juxtaposed with exploring prior studies. It subsequently explains the study's objectives and contextualises its scope. Following this is a discussion concerning the education of refugees in England alongside the migration patterns of African Zimbabweans. A structural overview of the subsequent chapters follows a section on personal motivations underpinning the study. A summary concludes the chapter.

The Study Problem

Since the turn of the millennium, many African Zimbabweans have migrated to the UK. Among many of these individuals are children who have transitioned from the Zimbabwean educational system to continue and finish their secondary education in England. This unique cross-national educational transition raises critical intersectional factors, including social, cultural, and academic impacts on academic performance and educational experiences. Additionally, African Zimbabwean males born and beginning their education in Zimbabwe have increasingly been transitioning to English schools to continue and complete their education. These transitions culminate in critical examinations, such as the GCSEs, which serve as essential benchmarks for academic progression. However, the academic performance of African Zimbabwean males in the English system remains poorly understood due to their classification under the broad category of 'Black African' ethnicity.

Therefore, a study aims to investigate how transitioning into English schools influences African Zimbabwean males' identity formation, sense of belonging, and academic success. The study will assess the role of socioeconomic factors,

English language assessments, language barriers, and support systems provided by EMTAS (Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service) in facilitating successful transitions and academic achievement. Furthermore, it aims to explore the prevalence and impact of discrimination and racism on the educational experiences and outcomes of African Zimbabwean students in English schools.

Finally, the study seeks to evaluate how current educational policies and practices in England address the specific needs and challenges faced by African Zimbabwean students transitioning into the English school system. The aim is to identify areas for improvement to ensure that these students receive adequate support and achieve their full potential.

Previous Studies

Previous studies on the educational attainment of Black children have consistently tended to focus almost exclusively on the underachievement (Coard, 1971) of Black African Caribbean when they arrived in England. In the process, the previous attainment became a missing link for receiving schools to gain an understanding of their new student population to provide appropriate educational needs. Since 2000, the Black African category (ONS, 2001; 2011) has widened with the inflow of children who started part of their education outside the UK, then transitioned to continue and finish their education in England. Very few studies have attempted to reflect the change in demographics and understand the diverse ethnic nationalities that make up Black Africans. When mentioned, it is often just a passing reference without delving deeper. For example, in his study, Demie (2013) only referred to Zimbabweans as a smaller number of students whose families originate from Zimbabwe. He further argues that their views are emphasised more because of the significant number of students from families of West African heritage.

Similarly, the problem of African Zimbabwean males transitioning into the English education system is two-fold. There is a lack of knowledge among schools (English teachers) about African Zimbabwean males who started their education outside England. The second problem is social, cultural, and academic differences across the two education systems and navigating these during transition. It raises questions about the preparedness of receiving schools to take in new arrivals and

support them in maintaining the continuity of their performance. Tomlinson (1991, p.121) noted that the school a child attends makes a difference in performance and attainment than ethnicity. This assertion sheds some insights into the level and extent to which schools are willing to support African Zimbabwean males who attended different schools but could not continue in the same schools when they transitioned into English schools from 2000-2020. The question that has not been adequately answered is whether schools and educational institutions are ready to teach Black children genuinely.

In 2003, the Labour government introduced an educational reform policy called *Every Child Matters*. However, when the then Labour government considered the children's educational attainment, they were clustered under the Black African ethnic category, which did not consider the diversities and differences of nationalities, languages, political, historical, immigration, and geographical factors. Also, previous studies (Demie, 2013; Strand, 2015; Shankley and Williams, 2020) have continued to use a narrow ethnic classification of African Caribbean and Black African, ignoring other factors, for example, that human beings do not live their lives in straight-knit categories. To better understand the reasons for this shift in attainment and how best to support future African Zimbabweans, particularly boys transitioning into the UK and possibly from other countries. Seven African Zimbabwean males participated in this research. These participants recounted their stories based on their memories of their own educational experiences through semi-structured interviews, which were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The combined experiences of the participants and the researcher uncovered and discussed issues about the British education system.

Aim of the Study

This study attempts to contribute to the knowledge base of the different kinds of Black African student diversity populations in schools in England. It intends to add to the knowledge base the importance of recognising the prior educational experiences of African Zimbabweans born outside the UK who started their education in Zimbabwe and were in high academic ability groups. This study examines the direct effect of students' previous educational backgrounds (education system and educational achievement) on academic outcomes and

whether any effects may be moderated to enable a smooth transition and lived experience.

Focusing on the education of African Zimbabwean males who transition into English schools to continue their education is significant in many ways. First, it recognises that it is no longer viable to continue to regard Black ethnic identification as a homogenous group (see, for example, Pederson, 2023) but to acknowledge the diversity of Black African identity. Second, schools need to gain an understanding of the student population, including their cultural background, prior education, and educational attainment upon arrival. Third, this study highlights the need for schools to consider and track the performance of new arrivals to ensure continuity. Fourth, transitioning to schools in England, African Zimbabweans had their identity (personal, cultural and learner) replaced with the imposed identity of Black Africans. Finally, the study seeks to highlight the need to track the performance of newly arrived immigrants across their education stages and match school types with their previous ones.

Study Contexts

This study concerns the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who started their education in Zimbabwe. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a holistic educational context. The study has a two-pronged focus and is organised into two main parts. The first part provides an overview of Zimbabweans' socio-political, geographical, and historical background (an identity term for the Shona and Ndebele people). It presents the education of Africans (in this first part of the study, it refers to the indigenous people of Zimbabwe) in Zimbabwe's context through these periods, including the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. Regardless of the racism and discrimination (in the colonial period) and the economic crisis (in the post-colonial era), the Zimbabwe education system has continued to provide one of the best educational systems in Africa and the so-called developing world (Austin, 1975; Tsiko, 2018). Education is highly valued and competitive in Zimbabwe due to its colonial past. After gaining independence, education was made more accessible, but this has resulted in the dilemma of educated unemployment. (Nhundu, 1992; Moyo, 2023; World Bank, 2024). The African Zimbabwean males who participated in this study belonged to academic

ability groups 1 and 2 in Zimbabwe. They were admitted in higher year groups when they transitioned into English schools. In Zimbabwe, there is a general assumption and expectation that a child who starts school in academic ability groups 1 and 2 is most likely to progress and meet future educational attainment targets.

The Education of Refugees in England

Since the dawn of the millennium (the 2000s), there has been a worldwide increase in a rapid complex inflow of refugees, which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2016) has labelled the 'biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time'. Some of the migration has been facilitated by Britain's colonial connection with the country (Shankley et al., 2020). Previously, the UK has adopted an attitude of hostility rather than hospitality when it comes to taking in refugees (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). This hostility will likely cascade down the educational institutions in how they perceive and welcome incoming refugee student populations. The mobility of school populations, especially from African countries, is slowly becoming a common feature.

Some schools have experience welcoming new arrivals, while others do not. Some of this group of migrants include children and young people from formerly colonised countries such as Zimbabwe, who transitioned to schools in England to continue and complete their education between 2000 and 2010. These students usually arrive at different times throughout the in-year school calendar.

Migration of Zimbabweans to the UK

According to Humphris (2010), Zimbabwe has been the UK's top ten asylum-seeking nation since 2000 due to unprecedented economic decline and political instability that prevailed in Zimbabwe after the referendum vote, which rejected the reforms the government had proposed to make. While the ZANU-PF government accepted the result (BBC, 2000; Pasura, 2011; Humphris, 2010), there was a political persecution onslaught on civil servants, especially teachers, accusing them of influencing voters to vote against the government. A worldwide condemnation of these violent acts by international leaders, including the then UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was interpreted by Zimbabweans as an indication that

they were welcome to flee to Britain for safety (IRN, 2008). However, upon arrival, Zimbabweans realised they had to undergo a lengthy asylum application process, which could take two years to two years before they knew the outcome. The Home Office (2002) immigration rules prohibited asylum seekers from inviting their family members for family re-unions; consequently, many Zimbabweans were separated from their families (McGregor, 2006; Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

After receiving successful refugee status or settlement, some Zimbabweans who were accountants, engineers, mechanics, administrators, development professionals, marketing and sales agents, bankers, secretaries, hairdressers, and students or had run their businesses before relocating to the UK found jobs in the care sector (McGregor (2006). Zimbabweans had to take low-paid jobs generally perceived as menial by individuals with higher qualifications to raise airfares and visa fees for family re-unions, after long separation periods lasting from two years and above. Meanwhile, many Zimbabwean parents had to leave their children in Zimbabwe, where they continued attending school until they transitioned into the English educational system.

In contrast to the experiences and situations of other Black African Caribbeans who were born in the UK, as mentioned above, Zimbabweans (both parents and children) have had totally different experiences because they were born outside the UK. The parents of African Zimbabwean males in this study came to the UK in 2000. The African Zimbabwean males remained in full-time education schools in Zimbabwe. They were in the top performing ten in their classes at all weekly, monthly, termly, and yearly intervals. The following sections outline a brief profile of African Zimbabwe males and their families and their educational attainment before and when they continued their education in English schools. An Office for National Statistics (ONS) report in 2013 indicated that 118,000 Zimbabweans living in the UK were born outside the UK, including African Zimbabwean males born in Zimbabwe, classified as children born outside the UK. Despite this acknowledgement, there is a continued knowledge gap on the educational experiences and attainment of Zimbabweans as a separate group within the Black African ethnic classification who transitioned into English to continue their education. As mentioned above, studies on the educational attainment of African

Zimbabwean males continue to be excluded within the Black African ethnic classification because of their smaller numbers (Demie, 2013).

Personal Motivation for Research

My interest developed from my multiple lived educational experiences and encounters as a female Zimbabwean who has experience of learning in the colonial education system (1970-1980), obtaining a teaching qualification (1983-1986), and working as a teacher in the primary education sector. Relocating to England and oblivious about race, racialisation and racism, it was surprising to discover that I was Black and that nothing good came out of Black (s). I shall come to explain more about these points in due course. First, as an African Zimbabwean female, growing up in one of the worst poverty-stricken districts in colonial Zimbabwe. However, having been educated in a colonial and racially divided education system that had denied equal educational opportunities to African children, I was not conscious of how it influenced my perceptions of normalising race, racism, and racialisation and my educational expectations.

I trained as a primary school teacher and qualified during the first decade of educational expansion in independent Zimbabwe 1980-1990, towards the end of the 1980s. I started working as a qualified primary school teacher, then rose through the leadership ladder, holding acting (Deputy Head) and substantive (Teacher-in-Charge) roles in a government school for sixteen years. In response to transforming the primary education school sector and raising educational standards to world standards, under the quality reform initiative (Maravanyika, et al., 1990; Ridell, 1998), the ZANU-PF government raised the minimum teaching requirement that teachers must hold a degree qualification. Following the recommendations in the Nziramasanga (1999) Presidential Commission Inquiry into Education and Training, I enrolled on an in-service primary school degree programme. I was awarded a Bachelor of Education (Primary Education) before relocating to England in 2003.

My son stayed in Zimbabwe, where he continued full-time education in a local top-performing primary school with a reputation for quality teaching and outstanding Grade 7 (is the end of primary education in Zimbabwe, equivalent to Year 6 in England) results. In Zimbabwe, parents and teachers have a special relationship

that comes from the interconnectedness of society's structures, such as belonging to the same church denomination, tribe, and totem. My professional position allowed me to develop a special relationship with my son's teachers and we had known each other from teachers' training. In Zimbabwe, my son started school (Grade 1) as a high achiever (this is based on his initial assessments, weekly and monthly tests and first-term school results). He was consistently in the top ten - performing ability group one, in the top ten performing learners in his class of fifty-five children from Grade 1 to Grade 3. By the end of the academic year, he was among the top ten of three hundred children in his year group.

While in England, I used to monitor his performance, communicating with his teachers over the phone until he transitioned to England for a family re-union and to continue his education. He attended primary school in England and then moved on to secondary school. After getting into an outstanding Church of England school, he became the first person from his primary school to attend it. Sadly, his academic performance started to decline due to poor marking, lack of corrections, and no follow-up on incomplete work or corrections. Meeting with other mothers and engaging in conversations about how their sons were performing in school, a pattern of disquiet soon emerged. The disquiet extended to other parents from the refugee and migrant community regarding the seemingly deteriorating learning standards and difficulties encountered in trying to engage with our children's teachers.

My curiosity increased following my participation in an Education Conference titled "Black Parents Children and Young People" held on Saturday, October 17, 2009, at a nearby university. This conference offered valuable insights into the educational experiences of Black children in England, which contrasted with my educational background originating from a former British colony. Moreover, my observations of Zimbabweans returning from their studies at English universities led me to believe that academic success was attainable for all individuals.

Also, as an African outsider from the so-called third world and former British colony, the United Kingdom (UK) has a reputation for its world-class education provision. It is a leading world provider of quality education across all phases of education provision. This is because historically, and during the British Empire, the

UK has spread its education system to its colonies, and it is the education system that was left long after colonisation had ended (Coates, 2012). Education provision, especially in former colonies and third-world countries, has continued to use the British education system (Gomba, 2018). For example, the continued use of Cambridge International Examinations (Cambridge International Assessment, 2020) and GCSEs are still highly regarded in Zimbabwe.

In England, education provision from primary to secondary school is free, and there is colossal learning support ranging from free education (non-fee paying), well-resourced (stationery, textbooks, classroom assistants, and free school meals) to name a few in comparison with Zimbabwe standards. Consequently, with all these resources at students' disposal, a higher percentage will be expected to reach their attainment target levels. However, still as an outsider but now living in England, one of the four countries that make up the UK, a closer look at student academic achievement from early years to GCSE level paints a different picture. Educational attainment is not only dependent on a student's academic ability but is based on such factors as ethnicity/race, gender, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Free School Meals (FSM), and No Free School Meals (NFSM) (DfE, 2022). At the same time, it excludes other factors such as immigration status (refugees, immigrants) and students who started education outside England. Further details on this topic are discussed in the relevant sections of this study.

Study Questions

The central research question is, 'How did some African Zimbabwean males perceive and navigate the cultural, social, and academic differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems during their transition?'

Consequently, questions that arise are:

- 1.1. What are the key cultural differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems as perceived by African Zimbabwean males?
- 1.2. How did African Zimbabwean males experience the social differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems during their transition?

1.3. What are the academic disparities between the Zimbabwean and British education systems, and how did African Zimbabwean males perceive and navigate these differences?

Outline of Chapters

This thesis is divided into nine chapters.

Chapter 2 presents the Critical Race Theory framework as a lens for the inquiry. The chapter then discusses the processes of selecting and justifying the use of CRT, and how it underlies the thesis's theoretical framing, methods and ethical perspectives.

Chapter 3 gives an overview of the country of Zimbabwe and the history of its education system, focusing mainly on the education of African children starting from pre-colonial times, then colonial, and subsequently post-colonial. It considers the history of Zimbabwe's economic, educational, social, and political policies throughout its varying stages. This chapter also advances how colonisation exported British values, culture, and language throughout the British empire and had an enduring influence on the way of life. It presents the history of Zimbabwe as a country, followed by historical, social, and political aspects of the development of education in Zimbabwe.

In Chapter 4, a review of the literature is presented and analysed, starting with an overview of education in England. This is followed by contrasting the education systems across both countries, including international assessment data from PISA, TIMSS, and SACMEQ. The chapter moves on to address race and racialisation, Black students and their educational experiences and attainment in English schools, and immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seeking children's education. This includes the role of EMTAS in supporting the transitions into the English education system.

Chapter 5 accounts for the qualitative research methodology, research design, data collection and data analysis processes and procedures undertaken in this study. The chapter discusses the CRT counter-story to address the research question on education experiences of transitioning from Zimbabwe's education

system into the English education system. It also discusses the researcher's reflexivity, particularly ethical issues about bias and mitigating potential distress.

Chapter 6 introduces the participants in the study by providing pen portraits of participants.

Chapter 7 advances the findings from the data analysis in three parts, presenting participants' educational experiences and attainment in Zimbabwe in diverse educational settings that reflect the diverse types of education provision, including government (urban and rural) former Group A schools, church boarding schools and private schools. It provides some insights into learning, teaching, and assessments. It then focuses on Zimbabwean males' experiences of being Left-Behind Children when their parents migrated to the UK.

Chapter 8 develops the discussion of the research's main findings, focusing on three main themes and sub-themes, explaining and interpreting their meanings. It also discusses the research limitations and how they were mitigated in the study.

Chapter 9 concludes the study by drawing conclusions and recommendations for further research and implications for practice. This final chapter reflects on the extent to which this study has provided insights and new knowledge about African Zimbabwean males as a stand-alone sub-category within the broader Black African ethnic category in England. It also reflects on the notion of 'all children' and who represents that 'all'. Finally, it highlights the often-missed student population of children who start their education outside the UK.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced an overall outline of the research covering the problem statement, the colonial background of Zimbabweans in the UK, theoretical framework and strategies, position statement and personal motivation. It then provided how the research is structured. The next chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks used in this study to address and make sense of the lived educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who transitioned into English schools.

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework: Critical Race Theory

Introduction

Before discussing critical race theory (CRT), it is worth pointing out two crucial issues. The first issue is that the inclusion of CRT was not initially planned because of a lack of personal consciousness of how race and racism are framed and normalised, especially in American and British societies. In addition, the normalisation of racism and White supremacy to a certain extent in former colonised and structural institutions in Zimbabwe became apparent and justified this approach. Second, the lack of full appreciation of the racially formulated and segregated education system and the educational experiences of the colonial education system were deeply ingrained in everyday life experiences (Richards and Govere, 2003). This racial positioning may need to be understood by individuals not from an African majority society like Zimbabwe, growing up in the margins of society, the rural areas, unlike postmodern cities. While identifying as Black African (Zimbabwean) now, growing up in Zimbabwe, race was not part of my discourse. Therefore, it is vital to provide this background as it informed the decision to include CRT as an integral part of this study.

Although I was coming from a former British colony, whose education system was structured after the British education system inherited at independence, the issue of race was not overt but covert in Zimbabwean society. Whilst there was an acceptance of racism in Zimbabwe during the colonial era, this was abolished when Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, through the reforms in educational provisions for African education 'Education for All policy' (Nhundu, 1992; Richards and Govere, 2003; Kanyongo, 2005).

Importantly, since race is a social construction as clearly argued by Ladson-Billings (2013), I never questioned my racial identity until I arrived in England. The reason for this was that, in Zimbabwean society, race was not an everyday identification marker. What was used were different shades or shadeism (Obeyesekere, 2018) in Blackness. and the Zimbabwean cultural concept of the totem system (Tobayiwa and Jackson, 1985). The time I found that I was 'Black', which is different from shadeism, and that somehow, my Blackness carried the baggage of deficit, was

when I was drawn to the term 'Black' when filling out the ethnic monitoring forms. This experience has been reported elsewhere (Roberts, 2013).

Black is also highly illuminated in the media whenever DfE reports GCSE examination results are released and analysed, for example, the most recent 2021/2022 GCSE progress report for those between 11 and 16 years old (DfE, 2023). In UK studies of education, it is almost acceptable as an irrefutable fact that Black boys are underachievers in British schools (Taylor, 1986; Demie, 2001). This realisation sharply contrasted with personal experiences and that of some African Zimbabwean boys, who had relatively privileged socio-economic backgrounds and schooling conditions in Zimbabwe (Lynn, 2002). Also, while researching literature on Black boys' education in England, it became apparent that race and racism, class, gender, immigration, and globalisation are key concepts in this study. It became unthinkable to continue dismissing CRT as a guiding framework for this study. This chapter discusses, first, the definition of CRT, then moves on to discuss the origins of CRT and its application to education in England. The value and tenets of CRT are then considered before the discussion turns to issues such as the permanence of racism, whiteness as property and white supremacy, counter-story-telling and majoritarian narratives, interest convergence, and intersectionality.

Definition of CRT

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017, p.3), the CRT movement is “a collection of activists and scholars studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power”. Lander and Santoro (2017) argue that CRT is a valuable lens in understanding racism as it:

asserts that racism is more than acts of violence, hatred or name calling, but [that it] is also prevalent through inaction, omission or deletion, exclusion or apparent innocent, polite inclusion that fails to acknowledge the racialised experiences of BME or White people. (Lander and Santoro, 2017, p.1011)

Gillborn too has made use of CRT in his work on education in the UK (see, for example, Gillborn, 2013). Other writers (such as Maylor et al., 2021) have suggested that CRT is valuable to understand racialised experiences in education

and is an approach that “allows for in-depth research and analyses of human experiences” (Maylor et al., 2021, p.556). One approach that Maylor et al. (2021, p.556) consider valuable in coming to understand such experiences is storytelling, and specifically, counter-storytelling. Drawing on work by Berry and Cook (2019), Pillow (2003) and others, they argue that counter-storytelling “gives voice and strength to communities of colour” (Maylor et al., 2021, p.557) and this view informs the approach of this thesis.

Capper (2015) offers a brief history of CRT. One context for understanding the origins of CRT lies in contemporary legal debates concerning the effectiveness of past civil rights strategies in the political climate. For example, the principle of colour blindness runs deep in American civil rights discourse as reflected in Martin Luther King's desire that his children be judged by the "content of their character" rather than the "colour of their skin" and equal opportunity. In addition, many legal and political scholars of colour (Lawrence, 1995; Wilkins, 1996; Williams, 1992) question whether the philosophical underpinnings of traditional liberal civil rights discourse (that is, the colour blind approach) can support continued movement toward social justice.

The origin of CRT is linked to a more prominent critical theory (CT) that focuses on the causes of and supposed remedies for the problem of racial oppression perpetuated by dominant groups over subordinate oppressed groups. According to Ladson-Billings (1998), CRT originated in the leftist legal movement of the 1970s, known as Critical Legal Studies (CLS). DeCuir and Dixson (2004, p.26) add that CRT emerged during the mid-1970s as a response to the supposed failure of CLS to adequately address the effects of race and racism in U.S. jurisprudence. Similarly, Brown and Jackson (2021) explain that CRT emerged because CLS did not adequately address the struggles of people of colour, particularly Black people. CRT emerged out of dissatisfaction and the shortcomings of CLS in tackling the reality of racism experienced by many scholars of colour such as Derrick Bell (Bell, 1992), Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 2022; Crenshaw et al, 2024); Richard Delgado (Delgado and Stefancic, 2011), Cheryl Harris (Carbado and Harris, 2019), and Patricia Williams (Williams, 1992). Consequently, a group of scholars in this movement sought to analyse and deconstruct conventional liberal approaches to

legal ideology and discourse to understand better how structural class inequalities were perpetuated and maintained in American society.

Since race has historically been and continues to be a significant factor in all aspects of society, CRT is a framework that offers researchers, practitioners, and policymakers a race-conscious approach to understanding educational inequity and structural racism to find solutions that lead to greater justice (Critchlow, 2015). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) add that CRT considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up but places them more broadly, including economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, emotions, and the unconscious. For Lander et al. (2024, p.438) CRT “forms the epistemological lens that enables the analysis of how racism is embedded and enacted in social processes”. This understanding is important for the theoretical framing of this study and its research design.

In terms of education, writers such as Kozol (1967; 1991) highlighted stark inequities between the educational experiences of White middle-class students and those of poor African American and Latino students. However, the formal integration of CRT into the field of education in the US can perhaps be dated to 1993 (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Ladson-Billings' transformation in understanding civil rights and race issues was, Ladson-Billings writes, significantly influenced by Crenshaw's 1988 article, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-Discrimination Law" (Crenshaw, 1988). The works of Ladson-Billings and Tate (such as Tate, Ladson-Billings and Grant (1993) helped to develop the application and significance of CRT in education and establish a critical framework for examining educational inequalities through the lens of CRT, moving it from its USA base to the United Kingdom.

CRT in Education: England, United Kingdom

Warmington (2020) argues that England had a history of civil rights legislation different from that of the USA. From the 1950s onwards, as Britain's post-Windrush migrants became settled communities, activists and intellectuals waged anti-racist struggles that focused on street politics and government policy rather than legislation, because during the 1950s and 1960s there was a lack of anti-

discrimination legislation (Judge and Priestley, 2023). The legislative situation evolved only slowly, so that by “the mid-1960s racism was a fact of British political life” (van Hartesveldt, 1983, p.134) as well as a social reality (Lidher et al. 2021). The dominant narratives, Lidher et al. (2021) argue, ignored “Britain’s role in a global system of transatlantic slavery, empire and its aftermath” (Lidher et al. 2021, p.4222) as well as the two thousand years of migration to Britain, and ‘flattened’ “the histories of postcolonial communities in Britain” (Lidher et al. 2021, p.4222). These dominant narratives found their way into teaching in schools in England, even after the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1991 (Lidher et al., 2021, p.4228) and continued to play a role in debates surrounding subsequent versions.

Warmington (2020) suggests that 2003 marks the emergence of CRT in UK educational research when David Gillborn presented his first CRT paper at the BERA conference (later published as Gillborn, 2005). Gillborn argued that the then “contemporary English education policy plays an active role in supporting and affirming ...racist inequities and structures of oppression” (Gillborn, 2005, p.492) and that “race equity has constantly to fight for legitimacy as a significant topic for education policy-makers” (Gillborn, 2005, p.493). Gillborn’s view was that “racism in schools works differently for different ethnic groups” (p.495), and that

One of the most consistent findings in research on school-based selection processes is that, when asked to judge the potential, attitude and/or motivation of their students, white teachers tend to place disproportionate numbers of Black students in low ranked groups ... These decisions frequently have a cumulative effect whereby the initial decision compounds inequity upon inequity until success can become, literally, impossible. For example, where students are placed in low ranked teaching groups they frequently cover a restricted curriculum; their teachers have systematically lower expectations of them; and, in many high-stakes tests in England, they are entered for low ‘tiered’ examinations where only a limited number of grades are available. (Gillborn, 2005, p.496)

He concluded that race inequity and racism were “central features of the education system” (Gillborn, 2005, p.498).

Since Gillborn’s paper, CRT has been used by others to examine education policy and practice. In 2011, Lander wrote that, in England, “it is an emerging theory

which researchers and scholars are just beginning to explore in terms of its applicability to the UK context” (Lander, 2011, p.61), and further work has followed – see, for example, Chakrabarty et al. (2012b); Race and Lander (2014); Warmington (2020). In England, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has faced criticism, as Warmington (2020, p.20) has pointed out. It has been negatively criticised by Marxists (Cole and Maisuria, 2009; Cole, 2009), confronted with White working-class identity projects (Collins, 2004), and challenged by Kaufman (2005), who argued that there is something unique and specific about racial oppression in the US. Similarly, Warmington (2012) makes a distinction between the socio-historical contexts between the US and England, arguing that in the USA, Black public intellectuals are a longstanding, if embattled, feature of national life. In contrast, in the UK, they are often marginalised in public debates and historical accounts.

However, despite its critics, CRT scholars still argue that it is crucial in the English (the UK) context to establish an academic identity and as “a means of proving and developing the credentials of an international CRT” (Chakrabarty et al., 2012, p.1). CRT has also begun to gain traction and credibility in the UK, especially in education and spreading to other disciplines like sport and leisure, and sociology. Warmington (2020, p.28) points to the breadth of educational research issues to which CRT has been applied. CRT has been used to interrogate disproportionate exclusions among Black pupils, racialised patterns in streaming, inequalities in examination achievement, and policy scholarship around the racialisation policy discourses around education and national security (Chakrabarty and Preston, 2008). Although there will be social and cultural differences between the US and England, CRT has a role in understanding the operation of race and racism especially given its idea that racism is an inherent aspect of society, whether that is in North America or Europe. The Warmington example of the marginalisation of Black public intellectuals is a good one as it shows the necessity to have a CRT analysis of societal racial structural which shows us that White supremacy is at play in both marginalisation and being embattled.

The value of CRT

CRT is an academic framework centred on the idea that racism is systemic beyond individual bias. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) state that, CRT offers an account of society based on systemic, deep-rooted racist oppression that saturates our judgements to the extent that all but the most extreme racism appears normal and unexceptional (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). CRT theorists endeavour to expose how racial inequality is maintained through the operations of structures and assumptions that appear ordinary and unremarkable (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). With its explicit embrace of race consciousness, CRT aims to re-examine the terms by which race, and racism have been negotiated in the American consciousness (Crenshaw et al., 1995) and elsewhere to, as Crenshaw et al. express it (quoted by Persaud, 2003, p.85):

recover and revitalise the radical tradition of race-consciousness among African Americans and other people of color, a tradition that was discarded when integration, assimilation and the ideal of colorblindness became the official norms of racial enlightenment. (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xiv, cited by Persaud, 2003, p.85)

In the context of this thesis, race consciousness takes the form of developing a perspective that develops critical thinking and developing a new perspective (Arthur, 2023). What follows is a discussion of some possible tenets of Critical Race Theory.

Tenets of Critical Race Theory

Different writers offer different suggestions as to the tenets of Critical Race Theory. Solórzano and Yosso (2002, pp.25-27), for example, highlight, in their words, the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, the challenge to dominant ideology, the commitment to social justice, the centrality of experiential knowledge, and the transdisciplinary perspective. These categories have close similarities to those suggested by Capper (2015) who drew on the work of Horsford (2010) to propose six tenets of Critical Race Theory, namely the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), Counter Storytelling and majoritarian narratives, Interest convergence, critique of liberalism, and Intersectionality (Capper, 2015, p.795).

Dixson and Rousseau (2005, p.9) outline the six themes that characterised CRT as it emerged in legal scholarship in the work of Matsuda et al. (1993) which (in summary) recognises that racism is endemic, that it “expresses skepticism [sic] toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy”; that it “insists on a contextual/historical analysis”; that it “insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin”; that it is interdisciplinary; and that it “works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression” (Dixson and Rousseau, 2005, p.9).

Another perspective is provided by Malagon et al. (2009) who propose as tenets of CRT, the intersectionality of race and racism, the challenge to dominant ideology, a commitment to social justice, the centrality of experiential knowledge and a transdisciplinary perspective (Malagon et al. 2009, pp.256-257). These tenets are also those identified by Yosso (2006, pp.7-8).

Drawing on such perspectives, this study engages with six prominent tenets and explains how each is relevant to this study. Although these tenets are discussed individually, they often intersect and overlap. These tenets are:

1. Permanence of Racism and its ordinariness
2. Whiteness /White Supremacy
3. Majoritarian narratives and the centrality of experiential knowledge/Counter narratives/Counter-storytelling
4. Interest Convergence.
5. Critique of liberalism: Colour Blindness and Critique of Equity Policies and Practices
6. Intersectionality

Permanence of Racism and its ordinariness

Before delving into the concepts of the permanence and ordinariness of racism, it is essential to first underscore the social construction of race, which is integral to Critical Race Theory (CRT). At the heart of CRT lies the notion of the permanence of racism, a concept grounded in two key principles: the social construction of race

and racism, and the process of differential racialisation (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

Omi and Winant (1994, p.11) argue that race is a socio-historical concept that gained prominence in the 18th century, as described by Gossett (1965, p.16) when European explorers in the New World encountered people who appeared different from themselves. It has been argued (Paret and Levenson, 2024) that, according to Robinson (Robinson, 2000), race and racism emerged much earlier in Europe itself. In fact, Wynter (2003) suggests that “Black Africans had been already classified (and for centuries before the Portuguese landing on the shores of Senegal in 1444) in a category ‘not far removed from the apes, as man made degenerate by sin’” (Wynter, 2003, p.302).

This period marked the beginning of the social construction of race. Delgado and Stefancic (2017, p.9) further contend that the social construction thesis posits that race and racism are products of social thought and relations of domination and subordination as we see in colonialism, enslavement, indenture, and Indigenous genocide. Although these constructs are neither objective nor inherent, with no biological or genetic basis, races continue to be used in formulating categories that society creates, manipulates, or discards as needed (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Gilroy, 2003; Ifekwunigwe, 2020). For example, people of similar origins may share physical traits such as skin colour, physique, and hair texture, representing only a tiny fraction of their genetic makeup. The vast human similarities overshadow them and have little to do with distinctly human traits like personality, intelligence, and moral behaviour (Omi and Winant, 1994; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Annamma et al., 2017). In addition, Lopez (1998, p.969) explains that race must be viewed as a social construction through human interaction rather than natural differentiation and must be seen as the source of continued basis for racial categorisation and racism.

It has been argued that, historically, some sectors (religious, scientific, and social groups) of society debated whether natives of the New World were human beings with redeemable souls (Giovannetti-Singh, 2022). These debates had significant implications, not only for the prospects of conversion but also for determining the treatment of these individuals, such as the expropriation of their property, the

denial of political rights, and the introduction of slavery and other forms of coercion (Omi and Winant, 1994). Such a worldview was necessary to justify why some individuals were free while others were enslaved. In addition, Omi and Winant (1994, p.11) describe this as 'racial formations,' wherein racial categories and their meanings are given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical contexts in which they are embedded. Ladson-Billings (2021, p.36) illustrate a prominent example of race as a social construct in the case of Barack Obama, the former U.S. President, in debates surrounding his Blackness, considering his upbringing and parental heritage. Another example of social construction was illuminated at the time of writing this thesis by the former president Republican Presidential candidate, Donald Trump, who questioned the race of his 2024 presidential campaign opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, by declaring:

I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black, and now she wants to be known as Black, so I don't know," he said on the stage next to three Black reporters. "Is she Indian, or is she Black?". (Philo, 2024, n.p.)

Another classic example of racial formation is the Black/White (Gillborn et al., 2017) colour line that has been rigidly defined and enforced in the United States, with 'White' equated to purity and 'Black' to impurity or non-whiteness. This also applies to the UK and Europe. Another perspective of racial formation is drawn from Lopez (1998, p.969), who describes and illuminates the four critical facets of the social construction of race:

First, humans, rather than abstract social forces, produce races. Second, as human constructs, races constitute an integral part of a whole social fabric that includes gender and class relations. Third, the meaning systems surrounding race change quickly rather than slowly. Finally, races are constructed relationally against one another rather than in isolation. (Lopez, 1998, p.969)

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995, p.57) argue that since much of reality is socially constructed, naming one's reality is crucial for conducting political and moral analysis in legal and educational scholarship. For CRT theorists, social reality is constructed through formulating and exchanging stories about individual

situations. This approach informs the methods used in this thesis in terms of sampling, data collection, analysis, and ethics.

The second concept embedded in the permanence of racism is 'differential racialisation' and its consequences (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Differential racism is the way the dominant society racialises different minority groups at different times in response to shifting needs, such as the labour market. It has been argued (Heng, 2018; Heng, n.d.) that racism has changed very little since the Middle Ages onwards, at least in England. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) explain that at one period, U.S. society may have had little use for Blacks but much need for Mexican or Japanese agricultural workers. Certainly, enslavement has baked Black inferiority into North American and European societies (Roediger, n.d.). Fluidity in racial meanings over time and between societies is a testament to the dynamic nature of racial categorisation (Davenport, 2020).

The social construction of race is applied when considering the Black African categorisation of Zimbabwean males who transition into the English education system. Unlike Black males born in England, these individuals, due to their distinct educational backgrounds (beginning in Zimbabwe and then moving to England) are African continental rather than African diasporic and cannot be easily categorised as Black African underachievers or fit other generic perceptions about Black boys' education in England. This complexity, caused by class, their migration status as newly arrived refugees and being African continental, and having been educated in an education system derived from the British colonial system left in Zimbabwe, challenges simplistic racial labels, and underscores the need for a nuanced understanding.

There is consensus among CRT scholars that racism is ordinary. According to Bell (1992), one of the founding fathers of 'CRT', racism is a permanent component of American life. It is further argued that racism is endemic and deeply ingrained, legally, culturally, and even psychologically, in American life (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Lynn and Adams, 2002). It should be noted here that racism is not exclusive to the U.S. but transcends all racially stratified societies (Christian, 2019, p.169), including, as will be argued in this thesis, in Europe, and, specifically, in the UK and England. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995, p.55) argued in 1995 that racism

is not some random, isolated act of individuals, or of those in schools, behaving badly. Racism is not aberrational; it is the usual way society does business, and is the common, everyday experience of most people of colour (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, pp.6-7). CRT can be used as a lens for analysing how such structures allocate the privileging of Whites and subsequent Othering of People of Colour in all areas, including education (Bell, 1995; Lawrence, 1995; DeCuir and Dixson, 2004). CRT regards racism as so profoundly entrenched in the social order that it is often taken for granted and viewed as natural. Similarly, racial hierarchy in education is apparent where success is measured against the achievement of White students. The permanence of racism is used to demonstrate the inequalities in the whole processes of assessing Black children in tiering of subjects at national, international PISA and TIMSS and across education systems are based on race. It is not surprising that there is overrepresentation of Black students in lower sets (foundation tier) reinforcing the notion that race instead of their ability is a key determinant of achievement.

The permanence of racism is applied in this study to demonstrate how it has extended to the UK and other former colonised countries. The lingering remnants of racism are still felt in post-colonial societies like Zimbabwe through the education system inherited at independence in 1980. It is also to argue that racism existed long before the theorising of CRT (see History of Zimbabwe and Race and Racialisation). One cannot talk about colonisation without referencing racism, White supremacy, and the language used to achieve it. Racism does not necessarily operate in crude, explicit forms but in a socio-political context where it is becoming more embedded and increasingly nuanced (as argued, for example, by Walton, Priest and Paradies (2013).

The permanence of racism is used to understand African Zimbabwean males' experiences of transitioning into English schools, the shift from majority to a minority Zimbabwean in the whole school or class. CRT explores the permanence of racism in classroom interaction experiences, classroom behaviour and discipline, and teachers' attitudes towards African children in resolving conflicts, setting low expectations, misallocation of schools, and ability to transition into English schools.

The next section examines two fundamental Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenets: Whiteness as property and White supremacy.

Whiteness as property/White Supremacy

A key aspect of CRT is the notion of Whiteness as property, as argued by Cheryl Harris (1993). Harris posits that the historical and persistent influence of race and racism in the United States, reinforced by legal judgements, allows Whiteness to be conceptualised as a property interest, where there is the right of possession, the right of use and enjoyment, and the right of transfer and disposition (Harris, 1993, pp.1731-1736). Harris (1993) further suggests that these functions and attributes of property have historically been deployed to establish and maintain Whiteness as a form of property. Likewise, Dixson and Rousseau (2005, p.8), explain that 'property' in this context does not only refer to some material resource but as assumed *rights* such as the right to have power, the right to have control, and the right to exclude others. In the context of this research into education, it is argued that aspects of the experiences of the participants can be seen as examples "of the property value of whiteness through the operation of a two-track system characterised by de facto segregation" (Dixson and Rousseau, 2005, p.8), and where the "White curriculum" is seen and defended by some as "White property" (see Ladson-Billings, 1998). This being so, "leaders can expect White resistance when seeking to address race in the curriculum" (Capper, 2015, p.795).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) emphasise the necessity of employing a CRT perspective to analyse educational inequity. They highlight that access to high-quality, rigorous curricula has been predominantly reserved for White students, effectively segregating schools and ensuring that students of colour have minimal access to high-quality curricula. Likewise, DeCuir and Dixson (2004) argue that various policies and practices restricting access for students of colour to high-quality curricula and safe, well-equipped schools reinforce the notion of Whiteness as property. This is evident in how the rights to possession, use, enjoyment, and disposition of educational resources have been predominantly enjoyed by White students. While some students of colour have managed to overcome these barriers, they argue that more studies are needed to examine the experiences of high-achieving students of colour, underscoring the need for a deeper

understanding of their challenges. In the UK too, it has been argued that the same issues apply, and include underachievement, differential rates of exclusions, adverse streaming, and an impoverished curriculum (Knowles. 2011, pp.4-5; Lander, 2011, pp.62-64).

Rollock and Gillborn (2011) emphasise that understanding the role and power of White supremacy in creating and reinforcing racial subordination, as well as maintaining normalised White privilege, is central to the Critical Race Theory (CRT) imperative to uncover and expose racial inequality. White supremacy, as they argue, extends beyond the explicit racism of White supremacist hate groups. Instead, as Ansley (1992, p.592) describes, it denotes a socio-political framework in which White individuals overwhelmingly control power and access to material resources. Such a view chimes with the view of Bourdieu's work in education which sees schools not as "simply places where individuals proved their innate talent and worth" but as providing a mechanism by which elites were perpetuated and transformed – in a word reproduced – themselves" (Grenfell, n.d., online).

Harris (1993) further argues that the institution of slavery linked White privilege to the subordination of Black people through a legal regime that commodified Black individuals as property. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1995) contends that the settlement and seizure of Native American lands reinforced White privilege through a system of property rights that rendered Native American possession rights invisible, thereby justifying conquest. This parallels the colonisation of Zimbabwe, where African Zimbabweans were displaced by the 1930 Land Apportionment Act.

In the context of education, Harris (1993, p.1731) introduces the concept of the "property functions of whiteness". Whiteness can be conferred upon students based on their conformity to perceived "White norms," rewarding those who adhere and sanctioning those who deviate. This is evident when students are rewarded for conforming to White cultural norms and penalised for diverging from them (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.59). The second right, the right to use and enjoyment, allows Whites to benefit from the privileges of Whiteness, encompassing social, cultural, and economic advantages. In educational settings, this manifests as disparities in school resources and facilities. For example, in

post-colonial Zimbabwe, African schoolchildren were often crammed into overcrowded schools with inadequate facilities, while their White counterparts enjoyed more favourable conditions (Nhundu, 1992). The situation in the UK will be explored in this thesis.

The third right pertains to reputation and status property, commonly demonstrated in libel and slander cases. According to Harris (1993), damaging someone's reputation is akin to damaging their individual property. In education, labelling a school or programme as non-White diminishes its reputation and status. Urban schools often lack the prestige of suburban White schools, and when urban students transfer to or are bused to suburban schools, these institutions can lose their perceived status. For instance, when African Caribbean children arrived in English schools, there was widespread "White flight," as parents feared a decline in standards (Stone, 1985). Similarly, desegregation in the U.S. led to an increase in White flight (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). In the Zimbabwean context, refraining from calling former White-only schools 'Group A' might carry connotations of White reputation and status.

The fourth and final function is the absolute right to exclude, which constructs Whiteness as the absence of the "contaminating" influence of Blackness. In education, this right to exclude was historically demonstrated by denying Black people access to education entirely and later by maintaining separate schools (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; McIntosh, 1990; Gillborn, 2008). Similarly, in colonial Zimbabwe, schools were racially segregated, as enforced by the 1930 Land Apportionment Act (Richards and Govere, 2003). In post-colonial Zimbabwe, access to former White-only schools was restricted through stringent requirements, including entrance examinations and prohibitive school fees (Kanyongo, 2005). This analysis aligns with the Critical Race Theory notion of Whiteness as property and educational inequity. Harris's (1993) framework elucidates how historical and contemporary practices perpetuate racial educational disparities.

In this study, White supremacy is applied to explain the provision of a racially segregated education system in colonial Zimbabwe from 1890 to 1979, which guaranteed White privilege and protected the settlers' economic advantage. For

example, most Euro-Rhodesians believed that contact with Africans should be minimized and controlled and that differential rights and privileges for the two cultural groups were necessary (Hungwe, 1994; Richards and Govere, 2003). On the other hand, Whiteness is used to interrogate the formal ways that selection and admission into grammar schools in England ensure that students from minority backgrounds are less likely to access a high-quality curriculum (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Harris, 1995; Solórzano and Ornelas, 2002). The next section discusses participants' counter-stories.

Majoritarian narratives and the centrality of experiential knowledge/Counter narratives/Counter-storytelling

Counter-storytelling involves the idea of a unique voice of colour. This view holds that writers and thinkers from Black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino communities may be able to communicate matters to their White peers that they are unlikely to know because of their different histories and experiences with oppression (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Rollock and Gillborn (2011) provide another perspective to the voice of People of Colour, emphasising the importance of their first language. In telling their stories, CRT scholars are not making up these stories but are constructing narratives out of the historical, socio-cultural, and political realities of their lives and those of People of Colour (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). In addition, these stories of marginalised individuals provide insight into existing inequalities and function as counter-narratives. This perspective, which highlights the links between the historical, socio-cultural, and political realities of the lives of People of Colour, is expressed as below by Solórzano and Yosso (2002):

critical race theory in education is a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyse, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom. (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.25)

There is a consensus among CRT scholars that renaming one's reality is crucial for preserving the psyche of marginalised groups, as self-condemnation contributes to their demoralisation (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Members of

ethnic minority groups often internalise the stereotypical images that dominant societal forces construct to maintain their power (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Matsuda, 1991). By naming their own reality through storytelling, marginalised individuals can challenge these stereotypes and impact the oppressor. Oppression often does not appear as such to the perpetrator because the dominant group justifies its power with "stock explanations"—narratives that construct reality in ways that maintain their privilege (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Counter-storytelling, therefore, becomes a method of questioning and undermining the validity of widely accepted ideas or myths, particularly those upheld by the majority (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995).

Solórzano and Yosso (2002, p.28) term "majoritarian" stories as those generated by "a legacy of racial privilege" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.28), and because of the links to other social, cultural and historical factors, "they are also stories of gender, class, and other forms of privilege" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.28). In contrast, CRT does not view Black people as deficient, lacking or having a problem that needs to be fixed. Instead, it recognises how race has shaped their everyday lived experiences. This perspective on counter-storytelling therefore has the potential to change fundamental understandings of dominant ideologies, privilege, and racism, as well as developing greater understanding of "personal or individual experience" (Merriweather Hunn et al., 2006, p.249). As Loonat et al. (n.d.) put it:

The goal of storytelling is not to make accessible or convey experiences or arguments of discrimination to the majority but to resist and deconstruct the dominant racial narratives through the powerful telling of counter narratives. (Loonat et al., n.d., p.2)

In this study, counter-storytelling serves as a powerful tool for uncovering diverse perspectives and challenging the dominant discourse surrounding the education of Zimbabwean Black boys in England. As Delgado and Stefancic (2017, p.46) note, one premise of legal storytellers is that Whites in the United States often struggle to fully understand the experiences of non-White individuals. Similarly, in England, the White majority may find it difficult to comprehend what it is like to begin one's education in a non-White environment, that inherited a British colonial education system including the unique educational experiences and attainment of

Zimbabwean boys. Delgado and Stefancic (2017, p.11) further challenge the assumption that minority status alone confers an inherent competence to speak about race and racism. For instance, African Zimbabwean males, while categorized as part of the Black African ethnic minority, do not automatically possess the competence to address race and racism due to their distinct backgrounds and experiences, which differ from those of other Black individuals.

In this context, African Zimbabwean males act as counter-storytellers, sharing their lived educational experiences both before and after transitioning to schools in England. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) argue that counter-storytelling is an effective means of exposing and critiquing the normalised dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes. For Zimbabweans, utilising counter-stories in this study allows them to challenge the dominant narratives of the majority and give voice to marginalised students. Moreover, counter-storytelling aids receiving schools and academic readers in understanding the educational experiences of Zimbabwean males before they arrived in the UK and “recognises that the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analysing, and teaching about racial subordination” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.26).

The counter-story-telling in this study can thus be seen as examples of personal stories comprising “direct reports of experiences of persons of color and how they experience racial discrimination, insult, injury or disadvantage” (Merriweather et al., 2006, p.245). Counter-storytelling is used to analyse and interpret African Zimbabwean males as Black Africans as they narrate their educational experiences in both educational contexts (Zimbabwe and England). Counter-storytelling allows for critical analysis and reflection on the precarious position of being the only African Zimbabwean male attending predominantly White schools and being a minority within the minority groups. It also challenges the ethnic categorisation of Black African used in English schools that subjugates the diversity of the term ‘African’. As mentioned earlier, counter-storytelling acts as a powerful means of enabling racially minoritised groups to ‘speak back’ about racism and facilitate ‘psychic preservation’ (Tate, 1997, p.220). The following section describes interest convergence.

Interest Convergence

This section defines and describes interest convergence and how it is applied in this study. Taylor (1998, p.123), explains that the interests of Blacks in achieving racial equality have been accommodated only when they have converged with the interests of powerful Whites. Bell (1980) highlighted that civil rights advances for Black people always coincided with changing economic conditions and the self-interest of elite Whites (Bell 1980; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Mohammed et al., 2021). Similarly, Gillborn (2014, p.28) asserts that Critical Race Theory (CRT) views policy not as a tool for increasing equity but as a process shaped by the interests of the dominant white population.

Since racism advances the interests of both White elites (materially) and the White working class (psychically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Bell (1980) argues that civil rights gains within communities of colour, particularly African Americans, should be interpreted with measured enthusiasm. Early civil rights legislation granted African Americans only fundamental rights that Whites had enjoyed for centuries. Consequently, civil rights were deemed superficial 'opportunities' because they were basic tenets of U.S. democracy. Bell (1980) further argues that these fundamental rights came only as much as they converged with the self-interest of Whites.

Interest convergence is applied to explain and understand how the colonial education of Africans was allowed only if they did not compete with the Whites in employment and other socio-economic areas. It is argued that interest convergence was the basis for forming and providing African education in colonial Zimbabwe. (see The History of African Education in Zimbabwe). However, there are times when greater race equality operates in the perceived interests of White people, and this notion of 'interest convergence' helps to explain how advances can be achieved: the 'interest of Black people in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges to with the 'interest of Whites (Bell, 1992; Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). Similarly, it is no different for Black African Zimbabwean males in this study. In the section that follows, critique of liberalism is discussed.

Critique of liberalism: Colour Blindness and Critique of Equity Policies and Practices

This section introduces a critique of liberalism, another tenet of CRT, that draws on the work of Crenshaw (1988) to critique notions often “embraced by liberal legal ideology” (Horsford, 2010, p.293) such as colour-blindness, meritocracy, and the supposed neutrality of the law. These were aspects also identified by Solórzano and Yosso (2002, p.26) who argue that those who make these claims about colour-blindness, meritocracy, and the supposed neutrality of the law are doing so to develop “a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.26). At face value, all these notions appear to be desirable goals to pursue to the extent that in the abstract, colour-blindness and neutrality allow for equal opportunity for all (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p.29). However, the urgency of addressing racial oppression in education cannot be overstated. Importantly, DeCuir and Dixson (2024, p.29) argue that CRT scholars are critical of three basic notions that have been embraced by liberal legal ideology: the notion of colour blindness, the neutrality of law, and incremental change.

Thus, this section focuses on the three basic notions related to liberalism and the ways these liberal policies and practices can perpetuate racial oppression. Capper (2015, p.816) explains that the concept of colour blindness can be manifested in two ways. The first concerns educators who claim not to see a student's colour or claim that race does not matter. Educators use these phrases to defend their colour-blindness perspective: "I do not see a student's colour", "I treat all students the same", and "A student's race does not matter to me". Yet all these efforts not to 'see' race suggest that recognising race is problematic.

The second is when educators do not realise the way their school is not race-neutral and reflects White culture and, in turn, when they expect students of colour to assimilate into and blend into existing White school culture (Capper, 2015). These assertions go against the rhetoric of serving all, regardless of their background, if the culture of the non-white student population in schools is muted or disregarded.

Given the history of racism and how it is normalised in the U.S., Marx and Larson (2012, p.298) explain that educators believe their "colour-blind glasses" prevent them from seeing any differences among children of varying racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Rights and opportunities were both conferred and withheld almost exclusively based on race; therefore, the idea that the law is indeed colour-blind and neutral is insufficient to redress its deleterious effects because it fails to consider the persistence and permanence of racism and the construction of people of colour as Other. As a result, colour-blindness has made it nearly impossible to interrogate both the ways that white privilege is deployed and the normalising effects of Whiteness in the process. As such, the word 'difference' in the colour-blind discourse always refers to people of colour or the Other. Ultimately, colour blindness can be perverse when it comes to considering differences to help people in need (Delgado and Stefancic 2017), highlighting the negative impact of this concept on addressing racial oppression. Similarly, in this study, colour blindness in English schools contributes to the oppression of African males by reducing their identities to a singular classification as 'Black African,' ignoring the complexities of their individual experiences.

Additionally, CRT scholars argue that colour-blindness has been adopted as a way to justify dismantling race-based policies that were designed to address societal inequity (Gotanda, 1991). Arguing that society should be colour-blind ignores the fact that inequity, opportunity and oppression are historical artefacts that will not be easily remedied by ignoring race in contemporary society. Again, adopting a colour-blind ideology does not eliminate the possibility that racism and racist acts will not continue.

The neutrality of law suggests that educational leaders be critical and discerning about equity policies and practices to ensure that these policies and practices do not perpetuate racial inequity. Capper (2015, p.817) refers to the case of how Texas equitable school policy perpetuated inequities. In England, the introduction of English Baccalaureate (E.Bacc) is viewed as perpetuating inequality. Gillborn (2014, p.34) explains that to attain E.Bacc, students must gain higher pass grades in English, Mathematics, two sciences, a modern or ancient foreign language, and humanity (history or geography). Gillborn (2014) further argues that teachers' pre-

conceptions, stereotypes, and expectations of Black students and their White working-class peers make it challenging to access high-status courses. Black students' chances are further reduced as they are disproportionately placed in the lowest teaching groups and tiers, where teachers cover less of the curriculum, which results in fewer chances of achieving the highest grades (Gillborn, 2014).

DeCuir and Dixson (2004, p.29) explain that under the notion of incremental change, gains for marginalised groups must come at a slow pace that is palatable for those in power. In this discourse, equality rather than equity is sought. The processes, structures, and ideologies that justify inequity are not addressed and dismantled in seeking equality rather than equity. Solutions based on equality assume that citizens have the same opportunities and experiences. In reality, they are based on race and are not equal. Therefore, experiences that people of colour have concerning race, and racism created an unequal situation. In contrast, equity recognise that the playing field is unequal and attempts to address the inequality (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004; Capper, 2015). Incremental change, therefore, seems to benefit those who are not directly adversely affected by social, economic, and educational inequities that come because of racism and racist practices.

These three concepts of Critique of liberalism (colour-blindness, neutrality of law, and incremental change) are applied to analyse the transition policies, processes, and practices for transitioning into the English system. Importantly, they are applied to interrogate 'liberal commitment' during the transition process and continuing of Zimbabwean males' education in English schools. Liberal commitment is illuminated in the admission into higher classes than they arrived at and the misallocation of schools that matched the schools they had attended in Zimbabwe.

Intersectionality

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017, p.58), "Intersectionality means the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation and how their combinations play out in various settings". This tenet too draws on work by Crenshaw (1991) and "considers race across races and the intersection of race with other identities and differences" (Capper, 2010, p.795). This aspect has

resonance with the view of Solórzano and Yosso (2002) when they argued that race and racism need to be considered “at their intersection with other forms of subordination” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.25), including “race, gender, class, immigration status, surname, phenotype, accent, and sexuality” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.25).

In addition, Ladson-Billings (2021) argue that, since society is organised along binaries, intersectionality is a difficult concept to research, because people see things as black or white, east or west, rich or poor, right or left. However, when we move into the complexities of real life, people recognise that they each represent multiple identities—race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, and many more. People perform their identities in myriad ways and can never be certain to which of those identities’ others react. However, since race has been such a flashpoint in this society, we almost always believe that our challenges stem solely from racial injustice.

These categories can be separate disadvantaging factors. An enduring question is asked: What happens when an individual occupies more than one of these categories, for example, is both gay and Native American or both female and black? Individuals like these operate at the intersection of recognised sites of oppression (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017, p.58). In this study the same question can be asked: what happens in the English education system when a student is both Zimbabwean, male, Black African and started their education outside the UK? What Delgado and Stefanic (2017, pp.59-61) are highlighting by using their hypothetical black woman example, is that when movements for racial justice prioritise broad concerns over those of particular subgroups, many needs, may go unaddressed. This is because many races are divided along socio-economic status, politics, religion, sexual orientation, and national origin each of which generates intersectional individuals.

Another related critical tool that has proven useful in this respect is the notion of multiple consciousness, which holds that most people experience the world in different ways on different occasions, because of who they are.

So, in this study these are the some of the questions that intersectional analysis seeks to address. Categories and subgroups are not just matters of theoretical interest. How they are framed determines who has power, voice, and representation and who does not. Intersectionality is utilised to encourage paying attention to the multiplicity of not only social life but also educational life.

Another perspective is taken from Evans-Winters (2021) who argues that intersectionality born out of Black women's and other women of colour's praxis centres the lived experiences of girls of colour who are confronted by multiple forms of oppression, due to the mutually interlocking identities of race and ethnicity, gender, social class, age, and other social factors within an education system that privileges and sustains White supremacy patriarchy capitalism. In this study, intersectionality is utilised to showcase how the education of African Zimbabwean males who transition into English schools are impacted in a similar manner. In the section that follows, critique of CRT is presented.

Critique of CRT

CRT has a significant role in illuminating the social inequalities within the structure of the educational systems in the US, the UK, and broader society. Unlike other theories that analyse systemic oppression, CRT aims to break the silence of people who have been systematically oppressed (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004). Although many scholars, like Gloria Ladson-Billings, William Tate, Nicola Rollock and David Gillborn, have used CRT as an analytical tool, it is not without its critics. For example, as early as 1997, as Ledesma and Calderón (2015, p.207) highlighted, pointing to the work of Crenshaw:

mainstream legal scholars, such as Richard Posner, dismissed Critical Race theorists and CRT as the "'lunatic core' of 'radical legal egalitarianism'". (Crenshaw, 2011, p.1310)

Ledesma and Calderón (2015, p.207) also bring forward the work of Darder and Torres (2004) who they say, "are among the researchers who contest what they perceive to be CRT's hyper-emphasis on race and who criticise "CRT's use of race ... as "the central category of analysis" (p.97) to the exclusion of "a substantive critique of capitalism (p.99). (Ledesma and Calderón, 2015, p.207).

Another criticism of CRT, according to Ledesma and Calderón (2015, p.207, quoting Darder and Torres (2004, p. 99) is that “the use of 'race' has been elevated to a theoretical construct, even though the concept of 'race' itself has remained under-theorised”. This was a view expressed in 2005 by Dixson and Rousseau (2005) who were reflecting on the situation as expressed by Ladson-Billings and Tate in 1995, race was at that time “under-theorised as a topic of scholarly inquiry in education” (Dixson and Rousseau, 2005, p.8) Ledesma and Calderón (2015, p.207) counter this criticism by arguing that CRT research provides an opportunity to develop a theoretical understanding of ‘race’. Another critique, as presented by Christian (2019, p.169), argues that Critical Race Theory (CRT) is inherently U.S.-centric, with its foundational concepts and analyses continuing to be deeply rooted in the specific context of the United States This limitation may restrict CRT's applicability on a global scale, especially in addressing the persistence of racism within the structural and ideological frameworks of white supremacy (Christian, 2019), in former colonies that have inherited and continue to use colonial education systems.

It is claimed that these criticisms are due to the view that CRT holds on race and racism, which has been and is still normalised in America since the slave trade era. Also, given that racism is an essential aspect of the Eurocentric structure, it is most likely to be disturbing when people are trying to dismantle and work against the system. Nevertheless, doing so is an important step that society needs to progress. By acknowledging racism, members of the Eurocentric society may recognise that laws like the Race Relations Act (2000) and the Equality Act of (2010) in England improved their lives and that of Black ethnic minorities as well.

Another criticism is that CRT does not include social class and gender as part of its framework because of its emphasis on race. However, CRT and other scholars have addressed the intersectionality of race and other social identities within their analysis (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004; Patton et al., 2007). From literature and other scholarly articles, it is evident that one cannot exclusively think about race, class, or gender independently of each other. Instead, there is an auto-recognition interconnection between these social constructions, which, if ignored, can leave many questions unanswered (Henry, 2011). For example, what happens when

thinking about the educational experiences of Black children born outside the UK? When do diverse identities (within Black African ethnic categorisation) not align with the social norms of the dominant White group? Or what happens when they converge?

Fundamentally, CRT places race at the centre of the theory; however, this does not necessarily mean other identities are ignored. Although race might be thought of in terms of individual bodies and racism as only regarding individual prejudices, CRT helps understand race and racism as an interwoven tapestry of social history, including broader social and institutional structures.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has discussed CRT as the study's conceptual framework, focusing on race. It has provided the definition, history, and origins of critical race theory (CRT). It has also discussed CRT's central tenets, that are useful in analysing racial inequity in education more broadly and the education of ethnic minority students who transition into English schools from outside the UK. This chapter has outlined the six core tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) that underpin this research: the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property/White supremacy, counter-storytelling, interest convergence, critique of liberalism, and intersectionality. CRT was chosen as a framework because the study participants, already a racialised group, encountered these forms of racism explicitly or implicitly within educational contexts through policies and interactions with teachers in English schools. Furthermore, CRT is essential in analysing and interpreting African Zimbabwean males' conscious and unconscious experiences of race and racism as they transitioned into the English school system. This will be further explored in the methodology chapter.

Chapter 3: The development of education in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, colonial Rhodesia, and independent Zimbabwe

To the Africans, education is never an ending process, and age is no limit. Men over 40 think nothing of entering courses and examinations during their spare time. For many of them, it is a difficult task, but their determination evokes our admiration. (Rep. Director. Native Education, SRG, 1960, p.19)

The above quote accurately assessed the attitude of African Zimbabweans towards education, in the 1960s, and this assessment remains pertinent even today.

Introduction

This chapter introduces an overview of the country of Zimbabwe and the history of its education system, focusing mainly on the education of African children starting from pre-colonial, pre-colonial, and post-colonial. This chapter discusses the history of Zimbabwe's economic, educational, social, and political policies throughout its varying stages. This historical background helps the receiving schools unfamiliar with African Zimbabwean males understand their educational background better. The chapter is underpinned by the principles of the legacy of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial experiences Zimbabwe has experienced and the tapestry of race and racism in CRT's counter-storytelling.

The chapter consists of four sections, with the first section being a brief overview of the geopolitical background of Zimbabwe country. It focuses on the population demographics, language, and culture. The second section focuses on education provision in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, known as traditional education, Indigenous knowledge, or indigenous ways of knowing. The third and crucial section covers education provision during the colonial period, regarded as the foundation of

African Zimbabweans' formal education in colonial Zimbabwe. The colonial period was characterised by incessant racial discriminatory policies aimed at shaping the education of the African child to fit for their pre-determined place in life primarily, that of labourer or servant destined to serve their White masters (Hungwe, 1994; Richards and Govere, 2003). The fourth section discusses the post-colonial era and the attainment of independence Zimbabwe in 1980, which marked the beginning of equal educational access for the majority of African Zimbabwean children, who had been deprived of such opportunities for 90 years, from 1890 to 1980. The educational reforms and expansion for Africans under 'education for all' during the first ten years of independence, followed by a reversal of almost all the success of education reforms as the result of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), economic package the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) from 1990-2000, followed by the failed land reform policy, economic and political turmoil resulting in Zimbabweans migrating again extending access to international education. This latter period forms the basis of this research. A summary concludes the chapter.

Geography of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has an area of 390759 sq. km and is a landlocked country in southern Africa, surrounded by Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zambia. (Maravanyika, 2014; Boender, 2021). The country lies on a high plateau between two river basins: the Zambezi to the north and the Limpopo to the South. The subtropical climate and abundance of rich soils have supported thriving agriculture (Mlambo, 2014), which gained the term 'the breadbasket of Africa' until the land reform programme started after the 2000 referendum result.

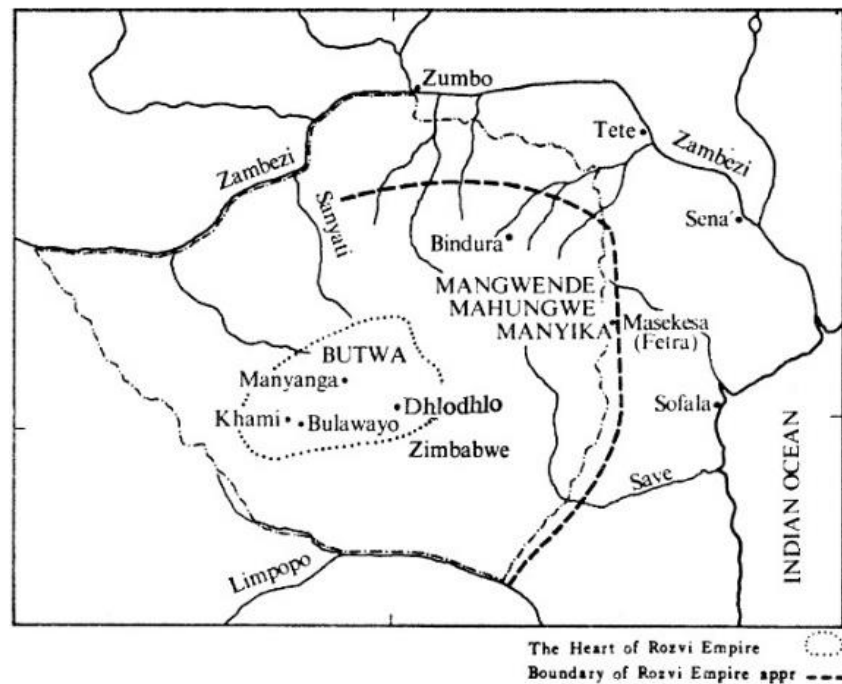


Figure 1: Pre-colonial Zimbabwe: courtesy South African History Online

Historical Background

In pre-colonial Zimbabwe, geographical boundaries did not exist, only kingdoms. The Rozvi kingdom/empire was the last before colonial occupation by the British Empire, which introduced geographical boundaries and changed the name to Rhodesia. Until the British colonial occupation in 1890, the country, now known as Zimbabwe, had no history, nor was it a single entity (Mlambo, 2014; SAHO, n.d.). Zimbabwe was home to Indigenous African people, beginning with Stone Age hunter-gatherers, the San, from 200 BC, whom the Bantu-speaking peoples, the ancestors of present-day Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe, later displaced. (Mlambo, 2014). Later, and at the beginning of the 19th century, Zimbabwe witnessed a series of incursions from two groups of Bantu-speaking Nguni ethnic groups from present-day South Africa, the Ndebele people who settled in South-Western Zimbabwe and the Nguni group (Gaza-Nguni) settled in South-Eastern Zimbabwe (Mlambo, 2014). Several kingdoms (empires) ruled Zimbabwe; the last one was the Rozvi kingdom and Empire.

White settlement: 1890-1980

According to Hungwe (1994) the colony of Southern Rhodesia, also known simply as Rhodesia, emerged as a result of 19th-century British imperialism, beginning in 1890. He further explains that a relatively large and stable White settler population coexisted with a majority African population and sought to make the colony their permanent home, although this goal was ultimately unrealised. In addition, the White settlers' occupation of Zimbabwe can be traced back to 1888, when foreign mining interests, led by Cecil John Rhodes and based in South Africa, began pursuing northern expansion. This expansion was facilitated by a controversial treaty with King Lobengula, which allowed entry into the country and the establishment of mining operations (Hungwe, 1994; Mlambo, 2014; Britannica, n.d.; SAHO, n.d.).

Despite the controversy surrounding the treaty agreement, Hungwe (1994) argues that Rhodes' forces moved into the country in 1890 after the British government had granted his British South Africa Company (BSAC) a Royal Charter to run the colony and the power to all responsibilities of government. It is not surprising that these powers violated the limited terms of the Rudd Concession. Given the circumstances, a declaration of war was made feasible by the increasingly militant resistance of Africans to White domination. In 1893, war broke out, resulting in the triumph of White settlers and the collapse of King Lobengula's kingdom. In 1894, Jameson, the territory's Administrator, "formally declared that the King being dead, the White government had taken his place" (Keatley, 1963, quote in Hungwe, 1994, p.4).

This victory and realisation of the death of King Lobengula culminated in a series of legislations, including the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, passed to cede tracts of land from Africans to the White community; thus, the country became divided into European and African areas. The Land Apportionment Act became the cornerstone of the Native (African) policy, whose objectives were described as follows:

The objectives of our Native policy are the development of the Native so that he will come as little as possible in conflict or competition with

the White man, socially, economically, and politically. (Wilson, 1923, quoted in Hungwe, 1994, p.5).

Hungwe (1994) argues that the racially segregated educational system of Rhodesia was developed in pursuance of this policy. Another mix into this, as Mlambo (2014) rightly argues, was the ideology of European superiority that justified European expansionism, variously known as the White man's burden, the idea of the duty of the Anglo-Saxon race to civilise the dark corners of the world, also known as the 'civilising mission' and manifest destiny. This ideology proposed that the Anglo-Saxon race was the most advanced and, therefore, had a God-given mandate to rule the lesser and to spread the benefits of their superior civilisation to the rest of the world.

Initially, boundaries were non-existent in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, but it was known as the Rozvi kingdom/Empire by then, as illustrated on the map above (figure 1). All this changed under the mandate of the British Empire with the arrival of White settlers who introduced geographical boundaries (SAHO, online). This change marked the beginning of colonial rule in colonial Zimbabwe. The country underwent many political periods that emboldened the establishment of permanence of racism and White supremacy as reflected in its former names: Southern Rhodesia, 1911-1964, each time pushing native Africans to the margins by implementing legislation and oppressive laws. These ideologies were further enhanced when the country changed its name to Rhodesia after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965 by the then Prime Minister Ian Douglas Smith and establishing a colonial minority rule, 1964-1979 (Boender, 2021). To appease the African majority, the name changed to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia during the transitional period 1979-1980. This was followed by a return to its present-day name, Zimbabwe, after the first democratic elections 1980, which ushered in an African Zimbabwean government. (In this section of the study, the word 'African' refers to the indigenous native people of Zimbabwe. This is because in the Rhodesian Education Act, the term 'African' was used to refer to the indigenous people).

Demographics

According to the World Bank, Zimbabwe's population in 2022 was 16,320,537. Mlambo (2014) notes that Zimbabwe's population is mainly African, made up of 70 % of Africans living in rural (the ancestral) areas, with those living in the urban areas concentrated in the cities and towns of cities: Harare approximately 1.5million, Bulawayo approximately 700,000, Gweru, Kwekwe, Masvingo, Mutare among others. While almost a third (32%) live in urban areas, they still maintain strong rural family connections. By ethnic composition, the population consists of Shona (80%), Ndebele (16%), White (1%), Asian and Mixed (1%) and others (3%). Within the Shona group are several subgroups, such as the Karanga, Kalanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Zezuru, which speak closely related dialects that make up the Shona language. Other dialects include Barwe, Chewa/Nyanja, Chikunda, Hwesa, Nambya, Sena, Sotho, and Xhosa (Mlambo, 2014; ZimStats, 2017). The main languages spoken in Zimbabwe are Shona, Ndebele, and English, which are also used as a medium of instruction in schools, business, and parliament. Before and after independence, official policy was characterised by continuities rather than change (Hungwe, 2013; Nhongo, 2013). In addition, the English language has, over the years, become a preferred language and a status symbolising how affluent and educated a person is among Zimbabweans in both rural and urban areas. In the rural areas, English and Shona mix in conversations and schools, particularly in the early years.

Zimbabwe's statistics on religious belief are as follows: 84.1% Christian, African Traditional Religions 4.5%, No religion 10.2%, and Islam 0.7% and other 0.5%. In addition, the Zimbabwean society subscribes to a wide range of religions, with Christian denominations (Dutch Reformed Church, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist) making up the majority, followed by other Pentecostal churches, Assemblies of God, and African Apostolic Mission (Chitando, 2018; Togarasei, 2018).

Economy

Until 1990, Zimbabwe was one of the emerging economies in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) region. It enjoyed a relatively successful agricultural

system that earned its breadbasket in Africa. The World Bank reports that Zimbabwe's economy has excellent human capital, comparable to upper-middle-income economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, although some skill shortages are emerging in some sectors. (World Bank, n, d). Zimbabwe enjoyed a relatively large industrial, agricultural, mining, tourism and manufacturing economic base until 1990 when political anarchy plunged the country into further civil unrest. All these social, economic, and political policies impacted education achievements gained at independence.

The History of Education in Zimbabwe

This section discusses the history of African education in pre-colonial, and the development of formal during the colonial, and post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Education in Pre-colonial Zimbabwe

Education was largely informal and variously known as traditional African education, indigenous ways of knowing, or knowledge systems. African Zimbabwean is a collective term mainly representing Shona, the Ndebele, and other African ethnic cultures. This section provides a brief chronology of the education of African children across three phases: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Zimbabwe.

In pre-colonial Zimbabwe, just before White settlers occupied Zimbabwe, the education system was largely informal in structure and informed by indigenous knowledge systems or indigenous ways of knowing, and in the Zimbabwean context, commonly known as traditional African education (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002; Mapara, 2014). Similarly, Masaka and Chingombe (2013) argue that education from the African worldview involves more than attending schools. It is essential to declare that for this study, the discussion on culture is situated in the African Shona tradition worldview, which the researcher is more familiar with, still bearing the regional dialect differences discussed above. This perspective is based on the long-held strong belief that Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are a body /or bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of a particular geographical area that have survived for a very long time and that knowledge is unique to a given culture or society (Mapara, 2014; Mawere, 2015).

Although Indigenous Knowledge systems fall under pre-colonial education, this does not reduce its value, but it is still relevant and in use in African Zimbabwean societies and others. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008) rightly argue that Indigenous peoples have sustained their unique worldviews and related knowledge systems for millennia while undergoing major social upheavals due to transformative forces beyond their control. Fundamental core values, beliefs and practices associated with those worldviews have survived and are finding relevance for today's generations just as they did for generations past. In addition, Neeganagwedgin (2019) further acknowledges the role of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders in transferring knowledge to the next generations.

Similarly, the African traditions of Shona society and culture have sustained their worldviews and related knowledge systems just as the colonisers have done over the years. For example, knowing originates from the natural web of kinship systems of relationships among people, including the totem system, animals, the earth, and the cosmos. A long-held African knowledge that has stood the test of time is that it takes a village to raise a child. Seroto (2011) sums up this African worldview by explaining:

The African child is raised by the community and educated in the community's culture and traditions. The curriculum of Indigenous education during the pre-colonial period consisted of traditions, legends, and tales, as well as the procedures and knowledge associated with rituals handed down orally from generation to generation within each tribe. (Seroto, 2011, p.77)

The above quote places responsibility on everyone in the family network of kinship relations (aunties, grandparents, uncles, village Headman, chief and sisters), the broader community, and their expert role in raising a child. Seroto (2011) further argues that the process is embedded in the Indigenous peoples' social, cultural, artistic, religious, and recreational life. This education system was developed from the principles of the Zimbabwean African philosophy of Unhu/Hunhu/ Ubuntu or African holism (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Shizha, 2013; Dhliwayo and Jita, 2023).

Similarly, the African traditional education system and structure adopts the Vygotskian (1978) social-cultural learning approach. The purpose of education is

to prepare them for future adult roles they will undertake. Unsurprisingly, the education was structured and delivered from a gender-based perspective (boys and girls). Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2014) argue that the overall aim of education was to prepare young children for future adult roles (males and females) and responsibilities in communalism, functionalism, and holism. In their article, Vanguard (2018) further argued that traditional African education was generally for induction into society and preparation for adulthood and was, therefore, purpose-driven according to the needs of that society.

Clearly, Seroto (2011) argues that the traditions, legends, tales, procedures, and associated knowledge were a central feature of the curriculum. Also, the delivery process is integrated into Zimbabweans' social, cultural, artistic, religious, and recreational life. Although these aspects have been developed, framed, and renamed into what is currently known as curriculum subjects, Indigenous knowledge has primarily influenced the content. The following section focuses on the history of Native African education during the three phases of colonial rule in Zimbabwe.

Education in Colonial Zimbabwe

This section presents the introduction and development of formal education for Africans from 1890 to 1980, over ninety years of colonial rule. It reveals how racial ideas of Black races (see section on Race and Racialisation) were instrumental in establishing an inferior education system to that of Whites, as rightly articulated in the 1923 issue of Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA):

The object[ives] of our Native policy ... are the development of the native in such a way that he will come as little as possible in conflict or competition with the White man, socially, economically, and politically. (Wilson, 1923, p.88)

From the above quote, it is evident, as argued by Hungwe (1994), that in pursuance of this policy, a racially segregated system evolved in colonial Zimbabwe. Despite several legislations, African education during the colonial period remained the same for Africans, as will be discussed in the following sections.

The education of African children consists of three periods marked by legislation that sought to restrict access to learning. The first phase considers the structures and processes of governance, the role of colonial government and missionaries in providing formal education, and the accompanying legislation enacted to control African education so that missionaries would not overeducate them (Nherera, 2000). Formal education was formulated and implemented by what came to be thought of as the critical tenets of Critical Race theory, namely, the permanence of racism, White supremacy, and convergence interest. The following section discusses the origins of African education.

Origins of Formal Education for Africans

It is important to note that for this section, Rhodesia is used for consistency to refer to any of the Rhodesian political experiments in Southern Africa. The origins of the formal structures and processes of governance of the education system in Rhodesia can be traced to the end of the 19th century (Hungwe, 1994) when the country was colonised by British expansionist Cecil John Rhodes, a staunch believer in white supremacy and British civilisation (Mlambo, 2014).

In addition, Shizha and Kariwo (2011) argue that formal education in colonial Zimbabwe was formulated and structured around the nineteenth-century British middle-class education system and has continued to be so since independence. It was also a creation and product of a foreign dominant culture that had a hegemonic and demonising effect on the Indigenous education system (Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). This circumstance resulted in a new formal education system that supplemented and gradually replaced traditional non-formal education that had existed before (Challis, 1973; Hungwe, 1994; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011; Mlambo, 2014). In a territory where Africans formed a large and rapidly increasing majority, the goal of providing an efficient education system was to secure the future of the White settlers.

According to Hungwe (1994), The 1930 Land Apportionment Act is the cornerstone of the Native African policy as it defined the subservient role the African people would play in Rhodesia (Challis, 1973). Further, Richards and Govere (2003) explain that the formulation of the first Rhodesian Education Ordinance (18 of

1899) was unique because local factors, such as contemporary ideas on education, mainly from England and the Cape, were of some influence. The formulation of the Education Ordinance demonstrates the extent to which England has, from the onset, influenced its contemporary ideas on education provision in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. Generally, this influence and alignment of contemporary ideas on education continues to be a consistent feature of Zimbabwe's education system. Notable features include the curriculum structure, English language policy, and qualifications.

Legislation and the Education of Africans

Richards and Govere (2003, p.137) argue that a series of legal, economic, political, and social structures enacted by the colonisers profoundly affected the education of African children beyond the colonial period. This section considers five key legislations (the 1899 Education Ordinance, the 1929 Department of Native Development Act, the 1930 Compulsory Education Act and Land Apportionment Act 1930, the African Education Act 1959, and 1973 Education Act) that marked each of the educational policy in the provision of education for Africans which without doubt was a more significant component of the colonial project to dehumanise Africans by imposing both inner and outer colonisation. Shizha and Kariwo (2011) rightly argue that this assumed that Africans would assimilate into European lifestyles and values that were a threat to the identity and self-perceptions of the Indigenous people. This assumption contradicted the White man's burden and the civilising mission; it was inevitable that Africans were not going to assimilate yet, and this was the initial purpose.

Education Ordinances: 1899-1929

Between 1899 and 1929, Rhodesia witnessed a plethora of ordinances and Acts (the Education Ordinance, the 1903 Education Ordinance, the 1907 Education Ordinance, and the 1929 Department of Native Development Act) in an attempt by the White settler government to tighten its grip on ensuring a seamless racially segregated education system.

According to Challis (1973), in April 1899, Rhodes advised W. H. Milton on formulating the first Rhodesian Education Ordinance and predicted rightly that

what was being decided on then would 'practically be the country's educational system in the future'. Quite clearly, this Ordinance was formulated to protect White domination and maintain African subordination as reflected in its content:

By this Ordinance, disproportionate emphasis was placed upon the development of education for Europeans compared with that for other races. A segregated system of schools for the various races in Southern Rhodesia was established, and the initiative for the provision of schools for Africans was left exclusively in the hands of Christian missionaries. (Challis, 1973, p.57)

In addition, Richards and Govere (2003) argue that the 1899 Education Ordinance gave the colonial rulers total control of all (European and non-European) schools in Rhodesia. From the onset, schools were divided into governmental and non-governmental, under missionary and private control. The 1899 Education Ordinance had two diametrical purposes: on the one hand, it provided education opportunities for European students only; on the other hand, it restricted the education of African students. Richards and Govere (2003) argue that this Act also provided the ways and means of government control over what was taught to African students. A well-established purpose of educating Africans was to prepare them to serve the White settlers.

Richards and Govere (2003) point out that schools were further divided into categories as follows. The first category was non-denominational government and public schools for European students only. The second category was the voluntary denominational under government management for European students. The third was Native (the term refers to Indigenous people of Zimbabwe) mission schools for African students. This categorisation of schools prohibited Africans from attending designated European schools. However, Richards and Govere (2003, p.138) argue that this categorisation of schools was implemented to prevent African students from obtaining academic education or artisan skills. The government's overriding objective of the Rhodesian education system was designed to prepare African children for their pre-determined status in life – that of labourer or servant who would serve his/her White masters (Hungwe, 1994; Zindi, 1996; Richards and Govere, 2003). Africans were continually kept at the margins of the education system meant to benefit them.

Regardless of harbouring fears of African assimilation, the colonial government continued with the policy of civilising Africans and turning them away from the so-called barbaric traditional worship by establishing the first mission school in 1895 at Inyati. Although the government offered small grants to mission schools, these had an ulterior motive of controlling the education of African students to avoid economic competition between Africans and Europeans (Kadhani and Riddell, 1982). At the same time, the government realised that it could only partially stop the education of Africans (Summers, 2002). Despite these challenges, Hungwe (1994) Africans showed interest in formal education as reflected in the enrolment figures at the time. An estimated 8,577 African pupils attended grant-aided schools in 1912, reaching 108,752 in 1929.

Determined, the government devised other ways to prevent African education by controlling the subjects taught at schools and allocating study time. Richards and Govere (2003) argue that more than fifty percent of the African schools' time was devoted to industrial training by a government approved teacher. In contrast, Shizha and Kariwo (2011) argue that European males were provided purely academic education at best-resourced schools. In addition, student numbers per school were set as follows: 25 for Europeans and 50 for Africans. Clearly, the education budget was another means of crippling African education, as evident in the annual budget for European schools, which was ten times more than African schools (Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). Consequently, the Act sanctioned and set a precedent for subsequent Education Acts in its bid to deny equal educational opportunity to most Africans and legitimised the oppression of African people.

The 1903 Education Ordinance replaced the 1899 Education Ordinance. However, African children continued to be excluded from accessing education; instead, the Ordinance was a continuation of tightening policies that would ensure they were kept at the margins. This is reflected in restructuring the school system into three separate systems based on race. The only positive was the inclusion of mixed-race children who had previously not been catered. However, the Ordinance reinforced strategies for African children that would continue denying equal access and opportunity. Richards and Govere (2003) explain the different types of schools available to Africans. First-class schools were voluntary, non-denominational public

schools, mainly boarding schools for Europeans only and under European supervision. Second-class schools were day schools also under European supervision. Third-class schools were split into two, one denominational mission school for natives and the other for mixed-race children.

In the context of racial hierarchies, it is not surprising that the only criteria for establishing African schools was to confirm the number of students being taught to speak and understand English. Additionally, African schools were required to enrol 40 students, provide up to 4 hours of teaching per day, and have 150 days of attendance per year. The students were systematically taught in the following order: 1) to read and speak the English language, 2) to be taught habits of discipline, and 3) cleanliness and industrial work. (Richards and Govere, 2003). Despite criticism of aiding colonialism, Christian missionaries, in the case of Zimbabwe, have been credited for conducting the first formal education and providing education for Africans (Ngundu, 2021). Nonetheless, most restrictions for African students mentioned in the 1899 Ordinance remained unchanged, instead increasing the conditions to be met by Africans only before they could receive government funding. Nevertheless, the Act continued protecting and providing for European students through various unconditional entitlements such as special allowance for students who studied subjects and scholarships.

It is, of course, recognised that subsequent education policies were implemented to reinforce White supremacy, perpetuate racism against Africans and deny them any opportunity to be educated above their White colleagues. These ordinances were also in response to the colonists' growing fear regarding the education of Africans and Coloureds that it would produce economic competition between the Europeans and Africans. For example, Palmer and Birch (1992) argue that Africans who had been trained as farmers were becoming more successful farmers than their European farmer counterparts. It is obvious that this success created fears in the European community regarding having to compete economically with Africans. Similarly, Richards and Govere (2003) argue that the whole purpose of these Acts was to protect the white settlers' economic advantage and the then-held belief of controlled and minimised contact with Africans. Thus, comparative educational attainment between Whites and Africans was unthinkable

because of the widely held belief that Africans, as a race, were intellectually and culturally inferior to European people at the time.

Keigwin (1924) clearly argued the concern about 'a native problem' when he said:

They (Africans) will be our servants, our neighbours. We shall need their assistance. If only to ensure that assistance to us, we must face our duty towards them. Because we wish to keep our race pure, because we wish to preserve our cherished institutions, because, in effect, we are resolved to build a sound White community, it does not mean that we shirk our obvious duty towards these backward people whose place we have taken in the land. In this light, considering our underlying policy of segregation, let us consider a new question of their education and industrial training. (Keigwin, 1924, pp.54-45 quoted in Hungwe 1994, p.9)

Undoubtedly, the 1929 Department of Native Development Act was established in keeping with the policy of purity, preservation of cherished institutions, and building a sound white community, and in response to European unemployment that occurred for the first time in Rhodesia because of the worldwide economic depression. Given this circumstance, it is unsurprising that European unemployment created further resistance to training Africans in any manner that would create competition for jobs between Africans and Europeans. Mungazi (1989) concludes that this Act secured job reservation for Whites. Thus, racism and White supremacy (Atkinson, 1982; Rollock and Gillborn, 2011; Kariwo and Shizha, 2011) were underlying principles reflected in the establishment of the department of native development, separating African children's education from that of their European peers. Likewise, the appointment of Europeans to be directors suggests that Africans could not take on supervision roles, as reflected in the composition of the African education directorate, which was all White (director, school inspectors, and other officers). Following the establishment of the Department of Native Development Act, 'The Rhodesian Labour Party put pressure on the government to solidify the Europeans' status and offer protection to Europeans from economic/job competition by Africans, thus ensuring job reservation for Europeans (Richards and Govere, 2003; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011) White ideas influenced all these pieces of legislation about the Black race and the inferiority status they have ascribed on them.

1930 Land Apportionment Act and the 1930 Compulsory Education Act

The enactment of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act and the 1930 Compulsory Education Act continued to have profound consequences on the education of African children. These two Acts tightened restrictions on access to education, thus denying Africans educational and economic opportunities. Richards and Govere (2003) point out some ways the education policies directly promoted racially segregated educational policies favouring White children over native African children, by making it compulsory for all White children aged 6-15 to attend school (Austin, 1975). Secondly, government spending on the education of a European child was ten times that spent on an African child, despite Whites constituting less than five per cent of the Zimbabwe population (Hungwe, 1994; Richards and Govere, 2003). Thirdly, free education was available for White Day scholars but not for African children, who were still required to pay school fees irrespective of government or mission school. In contrast, African children's education remained at most voluntary and were not allowed to attend.

Likewise, under the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, total control of all the land in Zimbabwe was given to Europeans. In practice, Europeans allocated themselves most of the productive land while Africans were allocated less productive areas. Hungwe (1994) is right to argue that land acquisition divided the country into European and African areas, with the small European population getting about half of the country's land resources in the most agriculturally productive areas. The government could confiscate the land allocated to Africans for several reasons the government deemed fit. (Richards and Govere 2003). All these measures were implemented to frustrate and deny African children any opportunity to get an education. The Act also revealed inherent fears of competition between white and African children. Hungwe (1994) highlights that the Land Apportionment Act became a cornerstone of the Native (African) policy, whose objective according to Richards and Govere (2003, p.139) was, 'the development of the Native in such a way that they would come as little as possible in conflict or competition with the white man, socially, economically, and politically'. It is indisputable that, with such goals, a racially segregated educational system in Rhodesia evolved and emboldened along the way, as shown in the following sections. Subsequent

legislation automatically paved the way for the establishment of low-quality education for African children (Hungwe, 1994; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). For example, access was a struggle because of the restrictive conditions African children had to meet to access education, and educational resources were considered a priority over educational attainment.

In addition, there are two conditions African parents were to fulfil before their children could start learning. In addition to the conditions mentioned earlier, African parents needed to demonstrate an ability to build schools and to pay five per cent of the teachers' salaries (Austin, 1975; Richards and Govere, 2003). This set a precedent for the payment of school fees, which has shaped the education of African Zimbabweans to date. A third condition required the local council to take over the school within five years, and if not, the government would close the school. These conditions were recurrent in subsequent legislation.

The African Education Act 1959: Chapters 97 and 233

The African Education Act 1959, Chapters 97 and 233, was hailed as a historic educational reform because it aimed to provide academic education for African children. This provision was not free, but once again, African students attending government schools paid a general-purpose fund (Richards and Govere, 2003). This fund was earmarked to provide African pupils with spiritual, physical, and intellectual welfare. Although this new educational reform was expected to bring substantial educational and economic gain for African children, it did not match the reality in schools. Until then, the government had five secondary schools and forty-six primary schools for African students, and none of these schools were in rural areas where most Africans live. Therefore, Mungazi (1989) rightly argues that most Africans still need access to academic education. Based on Parker's 1960 statistics, this time, only 15 % of the African population was in any type of education. There was no academic education provision for Africans, yet the Act was specifically for Africans.

Instead, White privileges were expanded, recognising female students and female teachers for the first time. The first clause allowed European students and teachers to attend and teach in African schools. When Europeans were to be

enrolled in African or non-European schools, they were to be given priority over Africans, thus taking African students' places through the backdoor. Yet, the same privileges were not extended to Africans. Given these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that this provision was not extended to African teachers or students. A second clause in the African Education Act of 1959 was the compulsory teaching of Religious Education to African children. Challis (1982) points out that including the compulsory element served two purposes: coerce Africans to conform to the colonial middle-class culture (Hungwe, 1994). Two, to enforce the earlier assertion by Rhodes that missionaries were better police officers and cheaper and that Christian influence would pacify Africans (Challis, 1982). Also, this responsibility was transferred from religious leaders to the secretary for African education, thereby effectively enforcing the coloniser's unique form of Christianity for Africans, while Religious Education remained an optional subject for European students.

Chapter 97 was replaced by Chapter 233, which defined the role of the government in African education until then, which remained the responsibility of communities and church missionaries. In Chapter 233, a new policy, the school governing board was introduced, with powers to charge and collect school fees, suspend any student for non-payment of fees, use the money to pay for costs and councils who could not afford risked their schools closed. For the first time, the government agreed to pay teachers' salaries to African schools (Richards and Govere, 2003). In addition, a provision was made for an appointment of a secretary for education, which allowed for continued inspection of African schools. These legislations were meant to tighten control overregulating African education.

The 1966 Education Act extended the discriminatory policies that had existed since the White settler occupation of Zimbabwe. The whole purpose was to restrict access, transition, and progression through various educational levels. For example, secondary schools were divided into the F1 system, the academic system imitating British grammar schools. (Zvobgo, 1996; Shizha, 2006; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). The F2 system, at the industrial and agricultural levels, had a stigma placed on it (Dorsey, 1989; Zvobgo, 1996; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). The F2 system stigmatised students who enrolled in this system as incapable of coping with the complexities of academic work and only fit for practical subjects. There

were bottlenecks throughout the system; the most significant was the transition from primary to secondary, pegged at 12.5% for students who intended to complete four years of academic education. Less than 37.5% of primary schools enrolled in poorly designed F2 education systems. The remaining 50% were left without provision for formal education and expected to use the informal education sector. (Zvobgo, 1996; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). Under this policy, colonial administrators strictly enforced a pyramidal system that reduced transition rates and promoted dropout rates among Africans (Shizha, 2006a; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). The 1966 Education Act introduced cuts in government expenditure for African education. It is evident how these policies were implemented by the colonial government's reduction in the African budget from 8.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1965 to 2% in 1967 (Zvobgo, 1996; Richards and Govere, 2003; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). Again, Africans were required to demonstrate the ability to pay or risk school closures.

Govere (1993) explains that by 1971, the Rhodesian colonial government continued its effort to control mission schools as it became suspicious; they were becoming centres for subversive anti-government activities. This suspicion led the government to take over nearly all mission schools (Siyakwazi, 1995). Still, the government offered to maintain schools if parents would pay five per cent of the teachers' salaries, and those who could not afford to pay were barred from attending school (Zvobgo, 1996; Richards and Govere, 2003; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011).

Nherera (2000) argues that until 1973, the colonial government allowed mission churches to provide education for Africans, provided they adhered to not overeducating them. The unintended consequence of this arrangement was that education for Africans in colonial Zimbabwe became the preserve of the established schools of church missionaries. Richards and Govere (2003) rightly argue that the 1973 Education Act, like previous Acts, was explicitly for European students, guaranteeing educational privileges not extended to African students. The 1973 Education Act gave the minister of education authority to establish, equip and maintain European schools and to secure the provision of a varied, comprehensive, and constantly developing education service. The Act also

provided special schools for European students with special educational needs and White students who would have been suspended or expelled from government schools. However, these same provisions were not extended to African students, and they continued to be in an educational system that provided minimal opportunity and resources such as textbooks, laboratory equipment and other educational materials, and qualified teachers.

Faced with these challenges, unqualified teachers taught voluntarily in African schools. Any support from the colonial government was tokenistic and, as Austin (1975) points out, although African education was qualitatively inferior, Africans' demand for education continued to increase. This demand for education demonstrated Africans' resistance to racism, White supremacy and being treated as inferior. Summers (2002) commented that even if education was one area in which the state felt it could make concessions to create a loyal African elite without improving conditions for the masses, education worked to destabilise the colonial system. This comment sums up Africans' resistance.

The 1979 Education Act

Given the legacy of incessant series of legislations that denied and restricted Africans' access, progression, quality education and equal opportunities, it is unsurprising that by 1978, the war of independence was waged mainly by the youth to whom the Rhodesian Government had denied an education (Richards and Govere (2003). This war devastated the colonial system, and the colonisers were forced to accept African people as equals and legitimate owners of the country. A hasty agreement was made to form a new government and to hand over power to moderate African Zimbabweans. The agreement resulted in a name change only to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa.

In its last effort to preserve privilege for European school children, the Rhodesian government passed the Education Act of 1979. The primary objectives were heavily skewed towards ringfencing education for White children. The first objective focused on establishing educational resources such as equipment, maintenance and regulation of government schools, private schools, community schools, government teachers' colleges, private teachers' colleges, and other

government facilities of private education institutions. Shizha and Kariwo (2011) rightly argue that the segregated and discriminative education system which disadvantaged African children was maintained as it resurfaced in a different form. Similarly, Richards and Govere, 2003) argue that the legislation was so crafted that, in practice, it continued to provide for separate and unequal educational opportunities for Europeans and non-Europeans.

Previously, the education system followed a two-tier structure, distinguishing between African and European schools. However, a new policy introduced three categories: government schools, community schools, and private schools. Furthermore, schools were categorised into groups, as documented by Atkinson (1982), Dorsey (1989), and Shizha and Kariwo (2011). This classification sorted schools into five hierarchical levels, with 'A' representing the highest tier. Group A schools comprised prestigious institutions, including high-fee paying private and government schools that historically catered exclusively to White students. In addition, the schools were far superior in resources and trained teachers compared to the mission and government-funded African schools. These schools were in European suburbs where Africans could not own houses (Shizha and Kariwo, 2011).

In contrast, Group B schools were low-fee paying government schools for African children in African residential areas. The infrastructure was substandard compared to that in European areas. Group C schools were mainly non-fee paying in Tribal Trust Lands where most Africans live (but parents contributed building materials and paid for uniforms, books, and stationery). Community Schools were formerly reserved for European, Asian, and mixed-race communities). Private mission boarding schools were fee-paying for African schools, and admission into these schools was subject to church denominational membership (Dorsey, 1989; Richards and Govere, 2003; Kariwo and Shizha, 2011). This structuring not only restricted entry into each group by imposing a zoning policy but further disadvantaged and discriminated against Africans from accessing quality education.

In another classic example of retaining an exclusive racially segregated education system, the Rhodesian government enforced a raft of conditions, including ability,

age, language, monetary and residential preconditions for the admission of children to White-only schools (Richards and Govere, 2003). While the new policy was designed to promote integration, this was different for African children, as access to Group A schools was strictly based on residence (Dorsey, 1989; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). Most African students could not meet all these preconditions because, as has been discussed so far, African education was not regulated. An illustration is the requirement that the student should be of an appropriate age. African children would have started their education at the age of seven instead of the compulsory age of six, which was stipulated for White children. (Richards and Govere, 2003).

The demand for academic ability and proficiency in written and spoken English (Atkinson, 1982) overlooked the fact that English was not the first language for African students, and, of course, their proficiency was out of the question, given the separate education systems. Therefore, it was unrealistic to expect African students to meet the requirements. Thus, most Africans were again excluded from accessing quality education except for a tiny student population. Richards and Govere (2003) argue that Africans occupied the poorest residential areas and farmed the least fertile and poor rainfall land. In terms of occupations, they were at the tail end of professions, and many were not allowed to enter. Overall, the African majority were unemployed (Richards and Govere, 2003; Mlambo, 2014).

Underlying this section are the enduring discriminatory practices that characterised the colonial education system before Zimbabwe's independence. Shizha and Kariwo (2011) rightly observe that the scale of racial discrimination and racially segregated provision of social services such as education led to a revolt and war of liberation in Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

Education in Post-colonial Zimbabwe: 1980-2020

The colonial experience discussed in the last section helps explain four significant issues characterising education in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The first issue is that post-independence educational policy was influenced not only by the ideological goals of national policy but equally strongly by inherited colonial capitalist infrastructure (Maravanyika et al., 1990). The second one explains why the

transformation in educational policies has been more quantitative than qualitative since 1980. The third describes the intervention and the implementation of the economic structural adjustment programme by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the impact of globalisation on Zimbabwe's education system. Before examining education in post-colonial Zimbabwe, it is crucial to briefly outline the post-colonial theory (PCT) as the lens used in examining education in post-colonial Zimbabwe, the period after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

Post-colonial Theory (PCT)

Post-colonial theory tries to understand the power and dominance of knowing. Burney (2012) posits that post-colonial theory operates on the notions that imperialism and colonial domination have affected the entire world, not simply the colonised nations but the colonising nations themselves. Similarly, Elam (2019) adds that post-colonial theory is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule worldwide from the 18th through the 20th century. Further, Abraham (2020) argues that PCT is used to explain the effects of colonialism on the cultural, historical, social, political, and economic life of people in former European colonies and their descendants forcibly removed from their original homes. Post-colonial theory accounts for all the effects of the colonial period's aftermath. In some ways, it is the inherent continuation because of the power and dominance of deep conscientisation of the colonisers' way of knowing.

PCT shows that political independence from colonisers does not mean the end of colonisation. Elam (2019) highlights that PCT is also concerned with the lingering forms of colonial authority after the Empire's formal end. These forms continue to dominate former colonies, including the inherited colonial education system, neo-colonial policies, and the continued use of English, a colonial language. The following sections focus on the origins and key characteristics relevant to this study.

According to Bhabha (1994), PCT emerged from the colonial testimonies of so-called 'third world' countries and the discourses of minorities within geopolitical divisions in the East, West, North, and South. Post-colonial theory draws from

diverse interdisciplinary studies. The theory was developed mainly from the works of Fanon (1963/2001), Memmi (1957/2021), and Said (1978). Significant contributions were made by scholars Bhabha, 1994, and Spivak (1988) and others such as Hoogvelt, (1997) and Tikly (2001), who are using post-colonial theory in their studies on the effects of colonialism on specific countries.

Burney (2012, p.42) argues that PCT is used increasingly to research issues of cultural identity, gender, race, social class, ethnicity, and nationality in post-colonial societies. In addition, questions of language and power and the subjectivity of the subaltern are also key concerns. This section uses PCT as a critical tool for deconstructing the underlying layers, structures and forms embedded in the colonial past and post-colonial present, particularly in education in post-colonial (post-independent) Zimbabwe. Some of the main concepts relevant to this study are the lingering forms of colonialism that continue to reflect the Zimbabwe education system, including mimicry embedded in the inherited British education system, the English language, varieties of Othering, and globalisation.

Given the legacy of colonisation, education in post-colonial Zimbabwe becomes a challenge because it inherited the colonial education system (Kanyongo, 2005; Nherera, 2000; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011; Gomba, 2018). Despite the colonial education inherited by Zimbabwe was regarded as racist, individualistic, competitive, and Eurocentric, as discussed in the previous section, it has given Zimbabwe an advantage as one of the best education systems with the highest literacy rates in Africa (World Bank, 2018; BBC, 2018). While the notion of 'best' (i.e., high measurements of literacy rates) has become dominant, there are other ways, such as holistic development, global citizenship, and critical consciousness, in which the best education might be envisaged. Despite the government's efforts to address the disparities in education, colonial policies persisted. Similarly, Nherera (2000) notes that although Zimbabwe was an independent state, colonial legacies continued to influence education and training provision in the country.

Post-colonial education in Zimbabwe is based on educational expansion and access for African Zimbabweans, considering they were emerging from almost a century of being consistently denied equal education compared to that of their White peers. Nhundu (1992, p.80) explains that while colonial education policies

and practices were aimed at invalidating Africans' demand for education and labelling it irresponsible, the unintended consequence was instead it emboldened Africans to view education as their only way for upward economic and social mobility. Also, the few Africans allowed access to education inspired the majority who aspired to lead the same life as their educated fellow citizens. Generally, this perspective defines Zimbabweans' attitude towards education. The post-independent education provision is divided into three phases: 1980-1990, Education for All, 1990-2000, the impact of ESAP on education and 2000-globalisation, migration, and its impact on the education of Zimbabweans.

Education for All: 1980-1990

Zimbabwe gained independence from British colonial rule on 18 April 1980. At that time, most Africans did not have equal opportunities to access education (Kanyongo, 2005; Mlambo, 2014). The new ZANU-PF government inherited the colonial education system. However, its priority was to right the educational wrongs of the colonial past by reforming the education system into a single non-racial system, making education accessible to all children. Therefore, it was also practically impossible to replace the education system for several reasons. First, the government did not have the time to effect these changes. Two, capacity and resources were not readily available. The government's focus was access and quantity of students through the education system, not assessment outcomes. (Nhundu, 1992; Kanyongo, 2005; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). The new Zimbabwe government adopted a socialist ideology driven by 'Growth and Equity' principles (Shizha, 2006). These principles were implemented under the educational reform 'Education for All' to provide educational growth and equity (Dorsey, 1989). Additional reforms included equal educational opportunities for students of all races (Richards and Govere (2003) and making education a fundamental human right (Nherera, 2000). These reforms were deemed necessary strategies to redress the existing imbalance and achieve scientific and industrial progress (International Labour Organisation-ILO, 1993).

Education for All Africans

This educational reform expanded building schools, especially in marginalised rural areas destroyed during the liberation war and disadvantaged African urban areas (Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). The number of primary schools rose from 2,401 in 1979 to 4,504 in 1989, and the enrolment figures increased from 819,586 in 1979 to 2,274,178 in 1989. The secondary school sector also increased from 177 in 1979 to 1502 in 1989, whilst enrolment rose from 66,215 to 695,882 during the same period (The Ministry of Education, Sport, and Culture 1999; Kanyongo, 2005). Richards and Govere (2003, p.148) rightly argue that the new Zimbabwe government achieved universal primary education within the first three years of independence. The significant change was the massive increase in the enrolment, particularly of African Zimbabweans who had been subjected to years of incessant denial of equal education opportunities compared to their White peers. 'Education for All' introduced the compulsory education requirement for African children whose education was previously voluntary. To repeat what has been mentioned already, this achievement led to Zimbabwe's education system being identified as one of the best in Africa (Richards and Govere, 2003; Mlambo, 2014; BBC, 2018; World Bank, 2018).

Another significant reform the new Zimbabwe government embarked on was the training of African teachers; previously, untrained teachers had taught in African schools, impacting the quality that was already inferior compared to European schools with qualified teachers. Colclough et al. (1990) argue that to cope with demand and improve quality, the new ZANU-PF government introduced an accelerated sandwich teacher training course, the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC). Following this teacher education reform, a teaching qualification became required for teaching in African schools to improve quality and standards. Despite this development, unqualified teachers continued to teach to cover the teaching workforce gap, particularly in remote rural areas that struggle to attract qualified teachers because of poor infrastructure and transport networks (Kanyongo, 2005).

Dorsey (1989) argues that although there was a policy shift from an elite education system to one of 'mass education for all, in practice, it retained its elitist outlook

because the new ZANU-PF government inherited the British colonial education system. For example, for African children to secure admission to White schools, they still needed to meet the eligibility conditions, academic ability, English language proficiency, and ability to pay school fees and related levies, as well as write entrance examinations. It is another example of the enduring legacy of admission in Zimbabwe schools. Schools were still very selective in their admission processes, making it difficult to secure admission at government, mission, or independent schools (boarding or day). Schools continued to reflect the colonial outlook; for example, former White schools retained their names 'Group A' schools, continued to receive more funding, and had more qualified White teachers, thus retaining their White supremacy and the lingering remnants of colonial domination and power (Elam, 2019).

Despite the government's increasing spending on African schools, they remained mainly at low levels compared to former White-only schools because of systemic spending, which meant they continued to receive their grants as per pre-independent levels Kanyongo, (2005). The government's continued use of the British colonial education system in independent Zimbabwe more than a century after its formalisation demonstrates the enduring remnant of colonialism (Francisco, 2014). In the case of Zimbabwe, it is difficult to undo the education system because, from its formulation, it was designed to be the country's educational system in the future (Challis, 1973), and it has remained so.

It is worth noting that the successes of the first ten years, 1980-1990, were challenging, given the educational promises the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front ZANU-PF had pledged to the African masses. Education provision might have been compensatory, especially for those whose successive colonial-era regimes had denied them the opportunity. However, Dorsey (1989) argues that some challenges, such as hurried and highly centralised policy formulation, goals, and targets, were essentially acts of faith and not tied to the availability of the required resources to achieve them. A study by Chivore (1989) had a different perspective. It was found that the most popular ambition of 'O' Level students was to pursue 'A' Level schooling followed by professional training. The same study found that looking for a job was the third priority, while self-employment was the

least preferred option after O' Level. This created another challenge: demand for 'A' Level places increased, but the places available remained stagnant.

In addition, the automatic progression accompanying Education for All impacted student performance at the end of secondary school. Nhundu (1992) explains that the measure of the quality of education is student performance at the end of O' Level. Given Zimbabwe's unhindered progression from Grade 1 (primary) to O' Level, examinations provide a safe measure of educational quality. Students who passed five or more subjects (including English) with a 'C' grade or better are considered to have passed. This was the first-time examinations of African children came under the spotlight. However, historically, the issue was not considered because the main concern was to avoid competition at all costs.

The performance results between 1981 and 1984 indicate a steady decline in pass rates. Nhundu (1992) provides some statistical pass rate figures: In 1981, 70.8% passed with five or more subjects, and in 1984 only 22% passed. Despite declining performance, automatic progression from primary to secondary raised Zimbabwean students' expectations for post-O Level training and employment opportunities (Nhundu, 1992). As students progressed to A' Level, the requirements for admission became increasingly competitive. In most mission boarding schools, former Group A schools, and private schools, the minimum requirement rose from five O' Level passes at grade C to straight A's (Nhundu, 1992; Nherera, 2005). However, over the years, significant pass rate improvements have been made. For example, in their most recent report, Global Partnership (2018, p.42) highlighted that some improvements in the O' Level results pass rate in 2015 was 27%, rising to 32% in 2018.

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was officially admitted as the 153rd member of the United Nations and its other affiliated organisations and to comply with agreed terms and conditions (UN, n.d.). Organisations such as the World Bank monitor the economic aspect of world governments. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is responsible for monitoring the government's implementation of the right of every child to go to school and learn. It affirms that education is a fundamental right for every child regardless of race, gender, religion, or background. World Economic Forum (WEF) and the

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) monitor and evaluate the performance of students in reading, Mathematics and Science. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) evaluate each country against set target goals. All these agencies work collaboratively to monitor the state of children's welfare globally (UN, n. d).

As a member of the UN, the challenge before the Zimbabwean government is to meet the yearly UNICEF targets for equitable education as a global benchmark on educational standards to be achieved by school children across the globe, especially children in poor, economically developed countries, or third-world countries. This required each responsible government to align its policies with set guidelines. At the same time, this was the first time Zimbabwe's education has been scrutinised internationally, monitoring and evaluating how it compares with other countries. By the end of the first independence decade, Zimbabwe had made impressive advances in promoting mass education, having educated ten years more Africans than had been educated by colonial regimes in the previous ninety years.

Such achievements led the United Nations Educational and Scientific Coordination Organisation (UNESCO) to commend Zimbabwe's educational system as a revolutionary system built on modern and enlightenment principles of education that consider the country's particular circumstances, opportunities, and constraints. (UNESCO, 1987; Mlambo, 2014). Naturally, this increase put pressure on government spending on public education. Consequently, the government could no longer sustain providing educational resources. Unsurprisingly, by 1989, there was a real threat to the accelerated success of the '*Education for All*' policy.

The Impact of ESAP on Education: 1990-2000

The last section argued that the expansion of African Zimbabweans' education in the first decade of independence was made possible by implementing *Education for All* and making education a *fundamental human right*. This educational euphoria was short-lived because of the financial limitations and slowing down of economic growth that resulted from the drought that hit Zimbabwe and other Southern African countries at the start of the 1981/82 farming season (Makoni,

2000; Shizha and Kariwo, 2011). This was a short honeymoon period because, according to Nhundu (1992), the government's initiative to universalise Zimbabwe education by providing all children with 11 years of free education created unintended consequences that threatened to ruin the educational achievements made so far. Some of these consequences included the crisis of unmet expectations, as Muzondidya (2009) clearly argues, that the massification of education led to the school system dumping approximately 100,000 school graduates onto the employment market in the late 1980s. Nevertheless, the economy was producing only 10,000 jobs a year. According to Nhundu (1992, p.85), this situation gave rise to a new dilemma that has come to be known as 'educated unemployment' declining educational quality and wastage, teacher shortages, unmanageable educational budget and increased social differentiation towards the end of the 1980s.

The successful expansion of '*Education for All*' in the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence proved costly, as reflected in these government expenditures on education (primary, secondary, and teacher education) which rose by 414 % between 1980-1990. (Nhundu, 1992; Makoni, 2000). As a proportion of annual budget expenditure, the nation's educational budget rose from 14.8% to 23.1% during the same period. Overall, the total expenditure on education was still higher. Therefore, this expenditure was no longer sustainable. Given the prevailing circumstances, the Zimbabwe government was eventually forced to accept financial support from the World Bank. Kanyongo (2005) observes that by the end of the 1980s, it became evident that the government's socialist ideology adopted in 1980 was no longer sustainable for the changing world and was placing a heavy financial burden on the government (Shizha, 2006; Mlambo, 2014). Also, the fall of communism in the late 1980s forced the government to move towards a more capitalist society.

According to Tikly (2001), globalisation is a feature of post-colonial theory that defines power relations and tropes of domination between First and Third World countries, ironically replacing colonising and former colonised nations, respectively. Globalisation has also contributed to the economic packages of post-colonial education that glorify Western education by showcasing it as the universal

best way of doing things. A classic example is the return and preference of Cambridge examinations in Zimbabwean schools. In their article *Africa Briefing* (2023), they commented that 95 British Council Partner Schools are currently in Zimbabwe. In addition, the international recruitment of highly skilled immigrants and international higher education are essential indicators of the quality of Zimbabwe's education system.

According to Burney (2012), globalisation concerning the economies of former colonies is the legacy of Western imperialism and colonialism, which is reflected in the domination by global forces (World Bank, World Economic Forum, United Nations) and the powerful industrialised Western states of the economy, communications, and technology of the underdeveloped parts of the world.

Tikly (2001) explains that although nation-states have retained much power over what happens within their territories, their power is transformed in relation to new institutions of international governance and international law. A prominent example in Zimbabwe's case is how the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) coerced Zimbabwe into accepting the financial package. Tikly (2001) makes a similar point: the World Bank and IMF have responded to Africa's economic woes by imposing structural adjustment policies. Despite being reluctant, the new Zimbabwe government sought and accepted advice from the British by introducing a financial package, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), implemented in 1990 (Nhundu, 1992; Gomba, 2017).

Part of ESAP conditions was the removal of subsidies on social services, essential commodities, currency devaluation, price controls, labour, and commodity market deregulation (UNDP's Human Development Report, 2003; Nherera, 2005). As a result, the implementation of ESAP in Zimbabwe ended the era of free education as the government introduced cuts to education and removed funding for primary education. While massive education had a bearing on the quality of education, especially in the rural areas, tiny, if any, is mentioned of children from African middle and upper-class backgrounds in urban areas.

While ESAP was meant to improve the economy and create wealth through liberalisation and alleviation of poverty, instead, Kanyongo (2005) argues that it

created more widespread poverty, leaving most parents in rural areas and the working class in urban areas finding it difficult to afford school fees for their children. Similarly, Mlambo (2014) argues that the gains in education made in the first decade came under threat during ESAP, as the government, through the 1991 Education Act, introduced school fees at primary schools. Consequently, cost-recovery policies led to school children dropping out, as parents could not afford school fees (Nhundu, 1992; Nherera, 2005; Richards and Govere, 2003; Kanyongo, 2005). In addition, a GOZ/UNICEF (1999)-supported survey by the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) on SDA monitoring found that failure to meet school costs was the main reason up to 47% of children were not in school. Despite the costs, this did not affect African Zimbabwean males because of the male privilege in African Shona society. In addition, Mlambo (2014) argues that some parents withdrew their female children when a choice had to be made between educating sons or daughters at a time of scarce resources.

The reality of implementing this package was a return to the colonial period where education was a preserve of White students and a privilege to most African students. The only difference in independent Zimbabwe was that middle-class and wealthy African parents could now enrol their children into schools of their choice, provided they could afford to pay the skyrocketing school fees. The removal of racially discriminatory legislation, which had previously barred Africans from enrolling at White-only schools, allowed middle-class African parents to send their children to former White-only, Group A schools and other private schools (Kanyongo, 2005; Nherera, 2005). Nevertheless, education for African Zimbabweans remained the only pathway and tool for modernising a Zimbabwean society in a modern world, where Zimbabweans could compete with others on an international stage. Given the reality the new Zimbabwean government faced, they had to accept an IMF loan to expand the secondary education sector, which resembled colonial policies in practice.

As mentioned earlier, Nhundu (1992), argued that the uninterrupted or automatic progression from primary to secondary school had raised Zimbabwean students' expectations for post- 'O' Level, educational training, and employment opportunities. Unfortunately, these opportunities were neither readily available nor

corresponded with their educational qualifications. At the end of their 'O' Levels and depending on their results subject pass grades, students chose from three progression routes (Nhundu, 1992; Kanyongo, 2005). The first progression route follows a linear model primary, 'O' Level, 'A' Level, University, and employment. In Zimbabwe, the linear route is the most popular, highly valued, and generally high-ability children, especially those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are most likely to take this option because they can afford tuition fees. Nevertheless, as tuition fees skyrocketed with the introduction of ESAP, so education became a preserve of the wealthy. This option is available to students who would have excelled in their studies, and in most cases, those who were in ability groups one and two would progress to university. In his study, Chivore (1989) found that 65.5 % of 934 students surveyed wanted to proceed to the 'A' Level. However, in the same survey, the 'O' Level results in 1987 showed that of the 11 898 qualifying students, only 6000 found places in 'A' Level schools, meaning the remainder had to look for alternative routes such as vocational courses. These results revealed the competitive nature of the Zimbabwe education system, and the high value placed on education in the face of limited professional opportunities.

The second route was progression to various colleges (teachers training, technical, agricultural, and nursing). According to Nhundu (1992), this was an alternative for some students who would have qualified to proceed to Lower and Upper Sixth but whose parents or extended members could not afford school fees. The last progression option would be to get straight into employment. This category includes students who would have qualified in the above categories but could not progress because of inability to pay school fees. However, most employed students would self-fund by attending weekend courses or classes (Chivore, 1989).

Education in Post-liberal Zimbabwe 2000-2020

In the previous section, it has been argued that the impact of ESAP was price increases and hikes in school fees. This section focuses on the political and economic decline circumstances that resulted in African Zimbabwean males becoming Left-Behind children as their parents emigrated to the UK. This section briefly overviews Zimbabwe's economic and political background from 2000 to

2008. A discussion on the education of Left-Behind children follows this. It concludes by focusing on the eventual family re-union in England.

Following the unsuccessful ESAP, the turn of the new millennium, as Mlambo (2014) argues, Zimbabwe found itself in the throes of a severe political, economic, and social crisis that reversed the gains and achievements of the 1980s and worsened the problems and challenges facing the majority population which had begun in 1990s with ESAP. Like Mlambo, Kufakurinani (2021) maintains that the year 2000 marked the beginning of a turbulent time in Zimbabwean politics, one characterised by mounting opposition to ZANU-PF rule and increasing repression of opposition forces, especially the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Zimbabwe witnessed two key events that resulted in the mass exodus of Zimbabweans in 2000. First, the result of the constitutional referendum in February 2000, the government suffered a humiliating blow when the people rejected the constitutional draft.

In reprisal, the US Department of State (2001) reported on human rights practices in Zimbabwe in 2000. Persons perceived as supporting the opposition, including teachers, civil servants, health workers, and labourers in the manufacturing sector, were singled out for assault or intimidation. In addition, Mlambo (2014) argued that the ruling party embarked on an all-out double campaign. The first one was vilifying the opposition MDC party as a puppet of the Western countries. Civil servants, particularly teachers, were accused of contributing to the unsuccessful referendum result by spreading misinformation to parents.

A systematic onslaught on the White-dominated commercial agricultural sector resulted from another failed Fast Track Land Redistribution Programme (FTLRP), which added to the crisis that witnessed the mass exodus of Zimbabweans to neighbouring countries and overseas. Political violence targeted at teachers became the push factor in the migration of teachers to South Africa and overseas, including those from rural areas. Hove and Ndawana (2019) add that the exodus of professionals across different professions, including education, is going abroad (Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA). As the economic sanctions began to bite, Zimbabwean parents from diverse non-professional backgrounds also left Zimbabwe, searching for job opportunities to support their children's education.

In Zimbabwe, *Left-Behind Children* is a recent phenomenon that emerged in the late 1980s when the HIV/Aids pandemic hit the country and wiped out many households, leaving behind a trail of child-headed households, but a daily occurrence. However, the 2000s witnessed a new type of Left-Behind children of diaspora parents. Pasura (2008) estimates that between three and four million Zimbabweans live outside Zimbabwe, and this group has become known as the 'Diaspora'. However, most Zimbabweans left behind their children, creating a new identity, '*The Left-Behind Children*', a term loosely describing children left behind by their parents or guardians who migrate outside their country of birth for a lengthy period of up to ten years. Left-Behind in this study context includes orphans who were left behind and found themselves in the care of extended family members or siblings while their parents or siblings relocated abroad. Differences lie in the length and circumstances surrounding being left behind, and it is the norm that, in most cases, families do not travel together at once (Halpern-Manners, 2011). Some family members travel first, with the rest following later to join them.

Participants in this study are part of *Left-Behind Children* from a privileged middle-class African background. As a result, they were able to continue with their education uninterrupted, while most of the children from less privileged backgrounds were struggling with very high school fees, thus mirroring the colonial period, when attendance was subject to payment of school fees and additional fees to cover for activities such as textbooks, stationery, classroom furniture (desks and chairs), sports, and school trips as discussed earlier.

Chapter Summary

The chapter has provided an overview of pre-colonial and formal education development during the colonial period. From the beginning, racism was deeply ingrained in education, as seen in the discriminatory Education Ordinances and Education Acts. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 further influenced Africans' political, economic, and social aspects in both colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. The chapter also discussed the education of African Zimbabwean children after independence and the opening of educational opportunities through the implementation of the educational reform 'Education for All' in the first decade

of Zimbabwe's independence. However, the second and third decades of Zimbabwe's independence saw a gradual reversal of these gains back to colonial times through the implementation of ESAP. The unintended consequences of economic and political instability were the emigration of African Zimbabweans to the UK and the eventual transition of their children to English schools to continue their education. The next chapter focuses on education in England and comparisons with Zimbabwe.

Chapter 4: Education in England and comparisons with Zimbabwe

Introduction

The student population in England is constantly changing because of the country's imperial and colonial history of various parts of the world, which resulted in large immigration movements from the mid-20th century. Therefore, to better appreciate and understand the education system that African Zimbabweans are transitioning into, it is crucial to have an insight into the influences and decisions that have occurred in the past to inform and develop it. The primary purpose of this review is to understand the academic disparities between the Zimbabwean and British education systems and how African Zimbabwean males perceive and navigate these differences. It is also essential to understand how educational policies have improved the educational standards and attainment of African Zimbabwean males, an ethnic minority within the Black Africans classification in England.

This chapter, therefore, presents a brief overview of the educational system in England for Black children from 1980 to date that reflects a complex interplay of social, political, and educational factors. During this period, there were significant shifts in policy, changes in societal attitudes, and efforts to address issues of racial inequality within the education system—some key developments and trends during three considerable periods. The 1980s saw ongoing efforts to promote racial integration within schools following the Race Relations Act 1976, which outlawed racial discrimination in education. However, many Black children continue to encounter challenges in accessing quality education due to institutional racism, including discriminatory practices in school admissions, discipline, and academic tracking (Richardson and Vil, 2015; Alexander and Shankley, 2020).

Education Policy and Structure in England

This section outlines the three tiers' statutory structures and responsibilities: the Secretary of State, Local Education Authorities, and school governing bodies

(Meredith, 2002). First, the Secretary of State, and the Central Department for Education (DfE) are responsible for policy on education, children, and youth issues up to 19 years (Fry et al., 2008). An overriding duty under the Education Act 1996 was to promote the education of the people of England and Wales. In addition, an overarching responsibility is to set the vision for learners, made through a pledge:

We are a department that recognises the potential of all children and learners. We strive to protect the vulnerable and ensure excellent education, training, and care standards. This helps everyone realise their potential, which powers our economy and strengthens fairness (DfE, 2021).

Changes in school governance have also been a defining feature of education reforms since the devolution (Whitty and Wisby, 2016). These changes are set against an evolution in national performance indicators, such as league tables at the end of GCSEs and international performance comparatives, such as the Programme for International Student Attainment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (DfE, 2016). In addition, the Secretary of State is responsible for exercising their power to improve standards, including intervention in the affairs of LEAs and schools (Meredith, 2002), encouraging diversity, increasing opportunities for choice, and promulgating the National Curriculum (Education Act 1996). The rhetoric was about increasing opportunity and encouraging diversity, but at the same time, imposing a National Curriculum meant less choice and less diversity.

Second, the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) responsibilities are to contribute towards the community's spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development by ensuring that efficient primary education, secondary education, and further education are available to meet the needs of the population in their area (Education Act, 1996; Meredith, 2002). LEAs must secure sufficient primary and secondary schools to ensure enough, character, and equipment for all pupils' education. This is appropriate because it considers people's different abilities and aptitudes. LEAs are responsible for distributing funds to schools, formulating staffing-related policies, and providing critical services, including school transport and educational welfare services. (Fry et al, 2008; DfE, 2013 a). Overall, LEAs are responsible for helping schools set and meet their targets. A symbolic

responsibility for LEAs, enshrined in the School Standards and Framework Act 1988, is that they perform their duty to promote high standards in primary and secondary education.

The third key player is the school governing bodies, as set out in the School Standards and Framework Act 1988. Historically, governing bodies, like the LEAs, had the same obligation to promote high educational achievement standards at school. However, with the new Labour government in 1997, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) responsibility was handed over to schools advocating for partnership with LEAs and Ofsted for effective governance (DfEE, 1997). At the level of the individual school, one of the keys to improvement in standards, as set out in the 1997 White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*, stressed the setting and subsequent monitoring of challenging targets for improvement. As part of the governing body, the headteacher plays a significant role in the day-to-day running of the curriculum, discipline, and the overall smooth running of the school, which is advised and supported by the governing body. After providing a brief overview of the structure, the following section delves into the education organisation in England.

Types of schools in England

This section discusses the types of schools in England, as it is widely acknowledged that the type of school determines the quality of educational experience and subsequent academic attainments. Reay (2017) argues that the education system in England has historically educated the different social classes for different functions in society. Therefore, it is not surprising that in England, there are two main types of schools, State (Government) and Public (Private) schools, that reflect the different social classes, despite efforts to remove social classes. Public schools in England are selective and fee-paying, potentially creating inaccessibility, especially for Black African children who might have attended private education before transitioning into the English education system and would have wanted to continue in the same educational environments.

Each type of school warrants individual consideration, starting with publicly funded institutions known as maintained schools (Fry et al., 2008) or State schools (DfE,

2013 b). These schools receive financial backing from the Department for Education (DfE) through government funding directly from their local authority or the central government. Furthermore, within the State school category are several types of schools, including academies, faith schools, city technology colleges, state boarding schools, comprehensive schools, and grammar schools, which are academically selective. In 2010, the newly formed Conservative-Liberal Democrats coalition government added another school type, free schools (Courtney, 2015; Gillard, 2018). Despite this reform's intention to give parents greater choice and control over their children's education, thereby improving their educational, social, and economic outcomes, not all parents, particularly most Zimbabwean parents, had that choice. This will be discussed in detail in the Admission into English Schools section.

The second category is the Public or Independent schools, which are non-grant maintained nor grant-aided schools, including independent grammar schools, independent and private schools, and boarding schools. Independent schools are funded by private sources, predominantly fees generally paid for by parents of their students. Children from upper-class and middle-class backgrounds mostly attend these schools. In addition, public schools in England charge costly tuition fees. In their article, *'Middle-class families 'priced out of private schools' for their children as fees' go up and up'*, Clarence-Smith (2023) found that public schools charge twice as much as their income as a generation ago. However, some independent schools provide means-tested bursaries, scholarships based on merit, grants accessed from Education Trusts, LEAs, and philanthropists), sibling discounts, reductions for certain professions, employer support, paying upfront and contributions for those who cannot afford to pay tuition, fees. (Good School Guide, n.d; Fry et al., 2008). There is an unequal distribution of these schools across all Local Education Areas.

Gillard (2011) argues that children from higher socio-economic status, previously known as the upper class, attend preparatory schools, which prepare them for education at prestigious English public schools. In addition, public schools have the autonomy to select their pupils through assessment tests and offer a better teacher-pupil ratio. It resembles the colonial education in Zimbabwe, which was

elitist for White children, and segregation education in America, where middle-class African American parents bus their children to affluent White areas (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004) in pursuit of quality education. However, African Zimbabweans who had attended private schools find this option is not always readily available when transitioning into the English education system.

Education Policy in England: National Curriculum

This section describes and discusses education policy regarding the national curriculum since education systems work with curriculum frameworks. Wyse and Torrance (2009) argue that before 1988, there was no statutory state control of the primary curriculum nor a national system of statutory testing. In 1988, the Conservative government passed the Education Reform Act (ERA), which was considered the most significant Education Act since 1944 and significantly impacted primary schools. (Fry et al., 2008; Oates, 2011; DfE, 2013 c; Shaw, 2014). Following the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988, all primary school pupils in England aged 5-16 can now access a balanced education.

In 1993, the national curriculum was reviewed, following the Dearing Report's (1993) recommendation that a curriculum should be slimmed down and time given for literacy and numeracy as expressed in the then Prime Minister Tony Blair's speech:

Nevertheless, the curriculum does not meet all school pupils' needs, particularly those who started their education outside England. Educational needs of the student population that transition into English schools. (Blair, 1996).

The National Curriculum consists of three core subjects, English, Mathematics, and Science, as well as ten foundation subjects: design and technology, modern languages, history, geography, art and design, physical education, music, and computing. State schools are legally required to teach these subjects separately (DfE, 2013 d). Embedded within the National Curriculum are three main aims. Firstly, the school curriculum should provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve. The second aim is to ensure that pupils across the country are entitled to the same broad curriculum. Primary education is free for all children, particularly those attending state schools up to 15 years old (Shaw, 2014).

Since 1988 the government department responsible for education (now known as the Department for Education) has aimed to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and prepare them for various opportunities, responsibilities, and life experiences. Shaw (2014) rightly argues that these aims were drawn from Callaghan's Ruskin Speech - Great Education debate in 1976 when he decried the educational system deemed out of touch with the country's needs. Furthermore, Waugh (2015) contends that the National Curriculum was designed to address the discrepancy between the educational system's outcomes and the workforce's demands regarding education's economic function. The National Curriculum is generally structured into Key Stage One, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, and Stage 4. Testing and assessment at the end of primary school Key Stage 2 marks the end of primary school and the transition to secondary school. Secondary school, Key Stage 4, also known as GCSEs (DfE, 2011; Standards and Testing Agency, 2018). The curriculum for each subject is set out in Statutory Subject Orders, which specify the programmes of study (content, skills, and processes to be taught) and attainment targets (knowledge, skills, and understanding to be acquired); these are hierarchically arranged on a ten-level scale (DfE, 2013 e; Gillard, 2018). In addition, these levels define the academic progress pupils can make between ages 5-16. Typically, a pupil is expected to advance two levels every two years. Due to a lack of research, little is known about the baseline for measuring advanced levels of children transitioning into the English education system. The more significant part of the literature on the National Curriculum shows State control of the curriculum, which is a one-size-fits-all approach unless one is privileged. A lip-service paid to diversity and inclusion. Education is viewed as achieving targets and in terms of 'standards'.

Structure of Schools in England

In England, schools are structured into three compulsory educational phases: early years, primary, and secondary. Children typically begin their schooling at the age of 5 and continue until they are 16 years old. The following sections will examine each of these phases individually.

Early Years Education

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted in 1989 and is considered the blueprint for early childhood education worldwide. Since then, member states have incorporated it into their education policies, establishing the foundation for the current state of education. The NCRC outlines children's rights and ensures they are protected, allowing them to reach their full potential. Before this convention, Early Years Care and Education were, to an extent, the preserve of the upper class and middle class in society. Early Years education was available in preparatory schools (Gillard, 2011). Where provision was available, it was loosely structured and not under government control.

Since 1989, Early Years Education has had a legal framework that governs the provision in England (DCSF, 2008). In England, children between the ages of 3 and 5 receive early years education through various settings such as nurseries, pre-schools, and reception classes in primary schools. The early Years/Foundation Stage is divided into two stages. The first stage is optional nursery education for children aged 3-4. The second stage is reception education for children aged 4-5, which marks the beginning of compulsory education (DfEE, 1999; Long, 2002; Faulkner and Coates, 2013).

Initially, the government introduced free early years education for all four-year-olds in England. The entitlement offered five 2.5-hour weekly sessions for 33 weeks per year. In 2004, all three-year-olds received a free place. In 2006, the free entitlement was extended to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year for all three- and four-year-olds. A new system was introduced to increase flexibility for the entitlement implemented in September 2010. It now provides five three-hour sessions, and children can attend nursery for two full days at a stretch if needed. This allows mothers to work part-time without any hindrance. In 2010, towards the end of its period of office, the government proposed extending free education to include two-year-olds from deprived areas to provide this service to 130,000 children (Faulkner and Coates, 2013; DfE, 2014 a; Roberts-Holmes, 2016).

From September 2010, the new all three- and four-year-olds in England were entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year. In recent

years, there has been a significant expansion of Early Years education and childcare (DfE, 2014 b). The Education Act 2002 extended the National Curriculum for England to include the Foundation Stage, first introduced in September 2000 and covering children's education from 3 years to the end of the reception year, when children are five. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) came into force in September 2008. It is a single regulatory and quality framework for providing learning, development, and care for children in all registered early years settings between birth and the academic year in which they turn five (Department for Children, Schools Families (DCSF, 2008). The EYFS Profile (EYFSP) is the statutory assessment of each child's development and learning achievements at the end of the academic year in which they turn five.

Although Early Years provision is not compulsory (DfE, 2014 c) most children attend these programmes. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the child's learning, development, and care from birth to 5 years old (Children Care Act, 2006; Penn, 2007). Children attending early years are mostly taught through games and play. The areas of learning involve communication and language, physical development, personal, social, and emotional development, literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design (DfE, 2013 f; Faulkner and Coates, 2018).

While this is the case, the situation is different for different ethnic minority children, particularly children of Refugees and Asylum Seekers and immigrant children. Before discussing anything further, it is essential to recognise that any discussion is impacted by underlying immigration rules, status, and ethnicity. For example, England has traditionally adopted an attitude of hostility rather than hospitality when it comes to admitting refugees (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2015). In their study, Griffiths and Yeo (2021) observed how, over the last few decades, several countries have pursued policies that bring local government officials, public servants, police officers, private companies and even 'ordinary people' into controlling migration. The spread of hostile environment attitudes has affected the entire education sector from Early Years to Higher Education. This has led to various actors being deputised to become "street-level bureaucrats" responsible for implementing immigration policies on the ground, thereby leading to a mix of

actors interpreting these policies (Home Office, 2007; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). With this in mind, the following sections will discuss how, according to Gillborn (2008), discrimination manifests in a society's structures, institutions, and social interactions.

Poulter et al. (2018) identified eight significant barriers that are known to be associated with this group of children in accessing early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings in England. The first barrier is cultural unfamiliarity and resistance. The system of pre-school and its rationale for it is unfamiliar to many Refugees and Asylum Seekers. It may not be customary for them to place young children in the care of strangers in their culture. For example, in traditional and contemporary African Zimbabwean Shona culture, the structure and set-up of the family are made up of tribal kinship villages with a network of relationships through religious affiliations, marital relationships, and totem systems. Therefore, it is most unlikely within this structure to find children in the care of strangers or to suggest this to parents. Their studies (Robinson and Jones Diaz, 2017; Signorelli et al., 2017; Lamb, 2019) found that children and families from refugee backgrounds have experienced trauma, which makes it difficult to leave their children in the care of strangers. While this is usually blamed on new arrivals, schools lack preparedness and readiness to take a leading role in understanding the culture of their newly arrived students.

The second factor concerns parental anxiety and stress that accompanies all Refugees and Asylum Seekers who have left their countries because of various forms of danger to their lives. In their study, Poulter et al. (2018) argue that Refugees who have come to the UK on settlement schemes have been selected based on vulnerability, and this often involves the healthcare needs of children. Therefore, it is uncommon for parents to be protective and reluctant to be understandably protective. By contrast, this study focuses on a group of refugees outside the settlement schemes or are children of refugees. These are the left-behind children who have never lived in refugee camps.

A third significant barrier is the lack of availability or access factors for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Early Years providers may prefer parents who want to take advantage of all full-time places rather than offer

15 hours on a part-time basis, which may leave unused provision in the afternoons. (Poulter et al., 2018). This is closely related to the fourth barrier, which concerns the inaccessibility of online information. Previous studies have shown that many refugees are coming from war-torn or refugee camps or less developed countries and are most likely to have limited or no IT skills needed to access information online (Poulter et al., 2018). However, African Zimbabwean males were not assessed for IT skills as part of their transition into English schools. In addition, while there is provision for minority languages other than English, in practice, this option is not readily available for some minority languages such as Shona or Ndebele.

In their study, Poulter et al. (2018) found that staff may need more cultural sensitivity and training to help them engage more fully with parents and facilitate the integration of refugee children. Although refugees and asylum seekers have equal rights to other children in the UK under the Equality Act (2010), they remain underrepresented in Early Childhood Education and Care settings (Poulter et al., 2018; Migration Observatory 2019). One frequently cited obstacle in literature is the English language barrier. The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) guides how provision for these vulnerable children may be extended, drawing from some inspiring practices in nurseries where refugees' specific linguistic and emotional needs are met. The responsibility for educating refugees and asylum seekers rests with individual LEAs, making it hard to have a universal provision (UNICEF UK, 2017).

Primary Education in England

The DfE (2015) stated that the legal framework in England divides primary schools into three categories: The first category is Community schools, which are established and fully funded by LAs (often referred to as 'maintained' schools). The second category consists of Voluntary schools, initially established by voluntary or religious bodies (mainly churches). These bodies still retain some control over the management of these schools, although the schools are now primarily funded by LAs. The third category is Foundation schools, funded by LAs but owned by school governing bodies or charitable foundations.

A primary school in England accommodates children aged from 5 to 11 years. Children must start full-time school the school term after they become five, although most children start school at age four (Eurydice, 2006). At the school level, governors and headteachers are responsible for daily operations within the school, including making decisions on the use of school premises, delegation of school budgets, and performance target setting concerning National Curriculum assessments (Standards Testing Agency, 2016). However, considering that primary school children are transitioning into English schools, the curriculum does not offer or provide flexibility in the compulsory starting age or how to effectively mitigate the age and year group phases. For example, in Zimbabwe, the compulsory starting age for participants in this study is six years, and they follow a seven-year primary cycle, meaning they finish at age twelve or thirteen.

Assessment in Primary Schools

Standardised testing is part of the National Curriculum, which assesses knowledge and understanding at the end of each learning stage. In England, a national assessment system was designed to help establish pupils' academic performance. These assessments use the Foundation Stage Profile, completed at the end of the Reception Year at age five before proceeding to Year 1, and through National Curriculum tests in core subjects at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, at age 7 and 11, respectively. The statutory national testing system became intensified in England following the election of the 'New Labour' government in 1997 (Wyse and Torrance 2010, p.5). The new Labour government's emphasis on improving standards, particularly in England, led to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and National Numeracy Strategies in England (NNS). These two strategies were centrally planned curriculum interventions to increase the focus on basic literacy and numeracy.

Changes to the National Curriculum and Assessment in England since 1997 were linked with international agendas (Whetton 2009; Lauder et al., 2014) the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), World Economic Forum (WEF), and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, the global reform of education systems has also increased the focus on teachers as a significant factor in enhancing learning and educational quality. In pursuit of 'raising standards,'

consecutive governments in England have increasingly influenced the curriculum primarily through statutory testing systems. However, other factors, such as changes to the inspection system, have also strengthened top-down control (Wyse and Torrance, 2010). For example, the national target was that 85% of students reach level 4 in English and Mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 "as soon as possible" (Sylva et al., 2004). Despite the existence of national targets, the testing system then lacked clarity regarding how it compares equivalence measures of targets used in other countries or their corresponding levels of literacy and numeracy on an international scale. This lack of clarity complicated the accommodation of students who enrol in-year.

Secondary Education in England

There are two types of secondary education provision in England: State schools (government-funded) and private (independently funded). State schools are non-fee paying while the latter are fee-paying. In England, most primary school children progress to State secondary schools regardless of their KS2 SATs results. This study focuses on State schools, and two significant characteristics of a State secondary school are location, and the socio-economic status attached to it through descriptive terms such as deprived areas, working class, free school meals, and position on the school league tables of performance (Early et al. 2022). Given that grammar schools are not available in deprived areas and considering that a majority of African Zimbabwean males come from privileged backgrounds, this implies they may find themselves misplaced, consequently missing out on a comparable educational experience and quality of education. More research is needed in this area.

GCSE Examinations

In England, examinations and grade passes have historically been, and to quote the words of Alexander and Shankley (2020), a site of struggle for racial and ethnic equality. In the examination grading system, it is essential to note that a grade of 4 is considered a standard pass, while a grade of 5 to 9 is considered a strong pass.

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations were introduced in September 1988, replacing the CSE and 'O' Levels. Thus, at the end

of secondary education (Key Stage 4), pupils in England take GCSE examinations in both core (English, Mathematics and Science) and foundation subjects of their choice (Fry et al., 2008; Maylor et al., 2009; DfE, 2013 g). In his article, 'The Importance of GCSEs', Gibbs (2019) argues that while GCSE is a national treasure, between 1997 and 2010, there was significant grade inflation. Nevertheless, employers were saying recruits did not have the basic skills needed to do the job. This resulted in another drive from 2010 to reform and refine the system and bring back rigour to GCSEs.

In 2017, the grading system changed from letters (A) to numbers 9-1. The new grading system is not directly equivalent to the old one. These grading reforms were gradually phased in from 2017 to 2019. In 2017, the first examinations in new GCSEs were taken in English and Mathematics. In 2018, 20 new GCSE subjects were examined for the first time. Finally, in 2019, 25 new GCSE subjects were examined (DfE, 2019). According to DfE (2019, p.2), Grade 4 is considered a 'standard pass', while Grade 5 and above is considered a 'strong pass'. Successive UK governments (Labour and Conservative) since 1988 have each tried, in one way or another, to impose a regimented curriculum and way of testing on schools in England, and this has disadvantaged some students. Despite all these reforms, there is little information available on the equivalence of subject passes for African Zimbabweans who would have completed their secondary examinations ('O' Levels) before transitioning into England schools.

Contrasting Across the Two Education Systems

Since the 2000s, there has been a consistent increase in the number of Black African students, primarily from former British colonies like Zimbabwe, entering the English education system. Consequently, it is imperative to understand both education systems to integrate these students into the English education system effectively. Also, international comparisons of education started in 1995 due to the worldwide recognition of the need to compare education systems across countries to raise standards, improve practice, and learn from each other. The following outlines the importance of contrasting education systems, the processes involved in international assessments, and the role of PISA, TIMMS, and SACMEQ.

Contrasting education across education systems has become the norm. However, the two education systems use different international assessments due to ideological factors. England, a member of the Organisation of Economically Developed Countries (OECD), uses PISA and TIMMS assessments. While Zimbabwe, a non-OECD member, uses SACMEQ, it may be viewed as an ideology that privileges the developed countries in many ways:

- High-income former colonial Europe
- Western countries
- Considered as superior both in quality of education and educational performance.

Meanwhile, to those perceived as developing countries, low-income, post-colonial countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (Tikly, 2001). Within this ideology, the West, through several organs of the United Nations, are privileged in influencing educational decisions about membership, the structure of education systems, monitoring, evaluation, and assessments. In this way, post-colonial countries continue to experience discrimination in international assessments.

While studies have focused on Zimbabwe's education system ranking at regional and international levels, the topic of educational transition is a striking omission from the current research on the comparison between the sending education system (Zimbabwe) and the receiving education system (England). Also, the education of African Zimbabweans in England, in their dual immigration statuses migrant (Refugees and Asylum Seekers) or Black African, is an under-researched area.

Educational Attainment: England and Zimbabwe

Before reviewing literature contrasting education and educational achievement across the systems, it is crucial to acknowledge a few issues first. Historically, England, as part of the British Empire, extended its education system to its colonies, including Zimbabwe, starting in the 1800s (Challis, 1973; Hungwe, 1994, 2007; Kanyongo, 2005). Two, at independence in 1980, in Zimbabwe, as in many

other former colonies, the inherited British colonial education system was modelled along grammar schools in England and existed to date with minimal reforms. Most educational assessments at the school, national, regional, and international levels rely on tests such as SATs and GCSEs in England and Grade 7 and 'O' Levels in Zimbabwe. Other assessments like PISA, TIMSS, and SACMEQ also use examinations in core subjects such as Mathematics, English, and Science.

This section explores selected definitions to foreground the framework for academic achievement. Steinmayr et al., (2014) define academic achievement as performance outcomes that show the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in schools, colleges, and universities. A further definition is given by Bolt (2008), who also defines *academic achievement* as the progress made towards acquiring educational skills, materials, and knowledge, usually spanning various disciplines. The millennium Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) take a distinct perspective, defining *academic achievement* as completing an entire course of primary schooling. These definitions are significant because they cover various critical aspects of academic accomplishment, providing a comprehensive structure for comprehending educational attainment. Thus, to compare academic performance across different education systems, these three definitions represent the broad idea of educational performance.

The education systems of England and Zimbabwe share broad similarities, as Zimbabwe's education was initially modelled after the English grammar school system. This was primarily because education in colonial Zimbabwe, established in 1899, was exclusively for the white settlers. However, an unintended consequence was that the Zimbabwean government later adopted and inherited this education system upon gaining independence in 1980. Obviously, there are slight differences, for example, in measuring educational performance assessments across the two countries. These differences are in the ages and stages at which the assessments take place, the number of subjects, the length of primary and secondary education, the examination boards and participation in the international assessments. For example, in England, primary school terminates at

age 11, while in Zimbabwe it terminates at 12. In England, pupils are assessed at three main intervals during compulsory education. The first assessment takes place at the end of reception. The Standards and Testing Agency (2020, p.4) states that pupils take the Reception Baseline assessment at five and in the second term of the school year. This is an age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication, and language (LCL) delivered in English. All pupils are assessed within six weeks of joining reception, regardless of when they join class, unless they were assessed previously. The Reception Baseline assessment provides an on-entry assessment of pupils' attainment, which is used as a starting point from which a cohort progresses to the end of Key Stage 2. A criticism against baseline assessment is, as Roberts-Holmes and Bradbury (2016b) argue, the tendency to under-assess and set low expectations for young children's abilities, particularly for groups such as English as an Additional Language learners.

Similarly, in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment (ZELA) was designed to monitor Zimbabwe's early learning outcomes (foundational literacy and numeracy) at the end of Grade 2. ZELA uses tests of language and mathematics. In their report, Cassity (2016) states that ZELA measures student performance in the main languages (English, Ndebele, and Shona) and Mathematics. The ACER data, collected from three cycles of the ZELA, indicate that socio-economic status is still a strong predictor of performance and is associated with significant differences in assessment results across Zimbabwe. Although the assessment monitors learning outcomes, the difficulty is that it does not provide in-depth analysis by ability or gender. Effectively, there is continued domination through imposing specific views about measuring the education system that keeps pushing traditional education to the margins.

Both education systems have education ministerial government departments that manage and oversee the implementation of individual national curriculums at primary and secondary school levels. (DfE 2014; Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2022). Further similarities are found in core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science. School pupils take examinations at the end of primary education, although the time scales at the end of primary and the

number of subjects differ in each education system structure. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, primary education is seven years of education structure in Zimbabwe. Primary school children in Zimbabwe take Grade 7 examinations at the end of their primary education in four subject areas: English, Mathematics, Shona, and Content (Kanyongo, 2005). Candidates receive a separate result for each subject in the form of units on a nine-point grading scale from 1 to 9, with one being the highest possible grade and nine being the lowest. Students with the best results will have four units (one point in each subject), and one with the worst results will have thirty-six units (nine points in each subject). The Grade 7 examination is a remnant of colonial education policies restricting Africans' access to education. It assesses students' educational achievements and determines their readiness to transition to secondary education.

In Zimbabwe, educational reforms implemented in 2018 increased the number of subjects in which primary school pupils are examined from four (4) to seven (7). Although participants sit examinations in four subject areas, the analysis data used for comparison reflects the current state in English, Mathematics, Shona, Social Science, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Physical Education, and Arts (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2022). The Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) collaborates with schools to develop and administer these examinations. The Grade 7 results are based on raw scores and issued in units on a nine-point grading scale from 1-9, with one being the highest possible grade and nine being the lowest. This means students with the best results will have four units (one unit per subject), and the worst will have thirty-six (Kanyongo, 2005).

GCSE and 'O' Level Examinations

Providing a contextual background to Zimbabwe's and Britain's examination systems is crucial for understanding their development and evolution when making comparisons. As discussed in Chapter 2, Zimbabwe's formal education system was established during the colonial era and persisted after its independence in 1980. It inherited many structures from its colonial past, including examination protocols. These structures serve as enduring remnants of colonisation within the education sector.

Historically, both countries shared a similar examination framework for secondary education, with students undertaking the CSE or 'O' Levels. However, significant examination reforms led to divergence in examination systems. In 1988, England transitioned to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), while Zimbabwe continued to administer the 'O' Levels, initially under the auspices of the Cambridge International Examination Board. It was not until 1997 that Zimbabwe localised its examination system under the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC), marking a significant shift in examination governance and administration. Further similarities and differences are found in terms of the subject grading systems. As mentioned before, in England, the grading system has changed from letters to numbers (9-1). The current number grading system measures pass grades differently, where four is considered a standard pass grade and 5 to 9 is considered a strong pass grade. Meanwhile, the grading system in Zimbabwe still uses letters (A to U). The pass benchmark is A-C, and within this bracket, C is considered a weak pass, while B-A is considered strong pass grades.

When analysing examination results at the end of GCSEs, England has a well-structured examination process. Results are extensively analysed through the dedicated Ethnicity Facts and Figures service (DfE, 2019). Research analysis includes various performance indicators such as gender, ethnicity (Demie, 2002; 2017; 2018), race and racism (Gillborn, 1995, 2004), and class and socio-economic status of schools and pupils, including free meals and non-free school meals.

Similarly, in Zimbabwe, 'O' Level examinations, as mentioned earlier, were the responsibility of examination boards in England until 1997, when ZIMSEC took the responsibility. It naturally put Zimbabwe's experience and perspective of analysing different because of several country focus factors and needs. Therefore, in Zimbabwe, examination analysis is limited to local factors such as gender, subjects, and dropouts. Research on secondary education for African Zimbabweans in post-independence in 1980 focused on African Zimbabweans' access to the education they had been denied during the colonial period (Nhundu, 1992; Govere, 2003; Kanyongo, 2005). These variations in assessment focus make it difficult to make like-for-like comparisons of results across countries.

However, they provide insights into quality and standards improvement measures. Overall, these sorts of ways of 'measuring' education are questionable.

International and Regional Assessment Organisations

This section discusses international assessments by providing the historical background of PISA, TIMMS, and SACMEQ, how they are conducted and an analysis of the comparisons. The end of the Cold War and the associated rise of globalisation have led to growing pressure for international comparative performance data on schooling systems and other national education policy developments (Sellar and Lingard (2013). Consequently, since 1961, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD), consisting of Western industrialised countries, set up two (PISA and TIMMS) international assessment organisations. While these assessment organisations were initially for Western industrialised member countries only, they have added key partner countries over the years. Therefore, PISA and TIMMS are exclusively for member countries, as reflected in the current OECD membership of 38 Western industrialised countries, including five key partner members from the newly industrialised countries of the Pacific Rim.

The International Association administers assessments for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), a department within the OECD established in 1995. They are held every three years, while non-OECD countries participate on the fringes under the sponsorship of regional initiatives (OECD, 2012). Given that PISA and TIMMS focus on Western industrialised countries and their significant others.

Programme for International Student Assessment-PISA

According to the OECD:

PISA is a triennial survey of 15-year-old students worldwide that assesses the extent to which they have acquired key knowledge and skills essential for full participation in social and economic life. PISA assessments ascertain whether students near the end of their compulsory education can reproduce what they have learned; they also examine how well students can extrapolate from what they have learned and apply their knowledge in

unfamiliar settings, both in and outside of school. (OECD, 2019, p.26)

The UK joined PISA in 2000. However, due to low school and student response rates, results are only comparable from 2006 onwards. By comparing results internationally, policymakers and educators in the United Kingdom can learn from other countries' policies and practices. The latest results show the UK's performance ranking at the international level. According to the DfE (2023),

England has significantly outperformed the international average, rising from 17th for Maths in 2018 to 11th, and from 27th in 2009. England has also ranked 13th for both reading and Science, having been placed at 14th and 13th respectively in 2018 and 25th and 16th in 2009 (DfE, 2023 n.p). The results build on England's significantly improved position for 9- to 10-year-olds reading ability in a separate international study earlier this year, PIRLS, where English children were ranked fourth out of 43 comparable countries – making them the best in the West. PISA enhances the influence of the OECD on global governance in education. (Jakobi and Martens, 2010; Meyer and Benavot, 2013)

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study-TIMSS

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is a significant organisation that operates globally as a benchmarking initiative. Its primary focus is on evaluating the performance of mathematics and Science. The International Association organises TIMSS for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and has played a vital role in assessing educational standards worldwide (Yee et al., 2006; DfE, 2020; Mullis et al., 2012). Established in 1995, TIMSS conducted assessments at the fourth and eighth grades in 64 countries using eight benchmarking systems. Notably, it included various distinct education systems within countries, including those that historically participated autonomously within the IEA framework, such as the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (TIMSS, 2019).

It is essential to consider the unique challenges African Zimbabwean males face as they transition into the English education system, where they will undergo

assessments at an international level using different performance metrics from those accustomed to in Zimbabwe, particularly in literacy. England's consistent participation in TIMSS since its inception in 1995 underscores the significance of these assessments. According to the Department for Education (DfE) 2020 report, England's performance in 2019 positioned it slightly below the highest-performing group of countries but notably above the TIMSS centre point in Mathematics and Science for Year 5 and Year 9 students. Notably, not every pupil is assessed; therefore, understanding such disparities is crucial for ensuring equitable educational outcomes for all students.

Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)

In response to exclusion from PISA and TIMSS assessments and growing recognition by sub-Saharan African countries on the importance of bringing Literacy, Mathematics and Science to international standards, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) was established in 1995. For sub-Saharan countries, it is also in response to Madaki's (2021 p.3) findings that forty per cent (40 %) of African scientists live in OECD countries, in Europe, the United States and Canada. SACMEQ is a consortium comprising 15 ministries of education of East African countries, including Zimbabwe (Hungu et al., 2010; OECD, 2012; UNESCO, 2017), and assessments are conducted every three years, modelled along PISA and TIMSS structures. The SACMEQ was also established because these countries were ineligible for PISA or TIMSS membership, which is subject to fulfilling specific criteria set out by OECD's Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) (2018).

Some eligibility requirements for membership to OECD is that countries must demonstrate a "readiness" and a "commitment" to adhere to two fundamental requirements: democratic societies committed to the rule of law and the protection of human rights. The second requirement is open, transparent, and free-market economies. They must demonstrate the capacity to pay the international overhead costs of €210 000.00 payable over three years at € 70 000.00 per year from 2023 to 2025 inclusive. In addition, each member country will need to provide extra costs for the administration and implementation of the assessments, complying

with OECD standards and representation at various stages of the assessment process. Most post-colonial Sub-Saharan African countries, including Zimbabwe, are classified as low-income (World Bank, 2015; Tikly, 2007); therefore, it is most unlikely to raise the required overhead costs and, by default, disqualify Zimbabwe and other Sub-Saharan African countries. Zimbabwe is currently considered a non-democratic society based on its human rights record. Nonetheless, the OECD recognises the need to improve the education systems globally and to work with non-member countries on regional initiatives (OECD, online).

The primary purpose of SACMEQ is to provide educational officials and researchers with training in the technical skills required to monitor, evaluate, and compare the general conditions of schooling and the quality of primary education. To generate information that decision-makers can use to formulate plans for improving the quality of education. The aim is to disseminate and use SACMEQ research results as the basis for policy and practice (Madzinga et al., 2017). The SACMEQ 2017 results in reading and mathematics provide an insight into the comparative achievement of pupils in reading and mathematics across participating countries.

In a cross-country analysis of SACMEQ III performance in Mathematics and Literacy, Bethell (2016, p.40-46) provides four key performance indicators Zimbabwe ranks. It shows that Zimbabwe's national average score for Mathematics, 519.8, is above the SACMEQ score of 509.7. In addition, the average score by sub-group showed that boys scored 520, while girls scored 519.0. This result is above 519.9 for the SACMEQ III score. There is a relationship between textbook ownership and Mathematics achievement (Bethell, 2016, p.45); Zimbabwe ranked eighth in percentage with its own mathematics textbook, scored 520 on scaled mathematics, and 4th in rank score. Overall, these SACMEQ results are significant as they provide insight into the quality of the Zimbabwe education system, comparable to that of the sixteen education systems.

However, the results still provide baseline evidence on the academic background of Zimbabwean children transitioning into schools in England and other Western countries. As has been shown, the establishment of SACMEQ underscores that while there is a move to measure attainment using data, an additional element is

the commitment of seemingly excluded countries to create an alternative assessment that would help improve standards. Therefore, SACMEQ ensures that member countries' education systems raise standards and attain international standards regardless of barriers. This is an example of the education systems demonstrating subtle lingering forms of colonisation, as discussed in post-colonial education in Zimbabwe. Despite differences in memberships (PISA, TIMMS and SACMEQ), the comparison has shown that the performance of the two education systems is above average in their respective assessments.

This section has argued the complexities of comparing education systems across two countries rooted in their colonial and post-colonial history. It has also shown how membership eligibility excludes countries like Zimbabwe from international assessments.

Race and Racialisation

Considering Zimbabwe's history of colonisation by the British, it is essential to acknowledge that besides imposing colonial rule, the British also enforced a racial hierarchy upon their African subjects. While African Zimbabwean males were racialised as Black because of colonisation and the global economic and political systems' forces of racialisation, it is noteworthy that, as mentioned earlier, many African Zimbabweans, like other Africans from the continent of Africa, do not rely on racial markers in their daily lives (Adichie Ngozi, 2009).

Definition and Origins of Race

In 1903, Du Bois wrote:

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line- the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the sea islands. (DuBois, 1903 quoted in Chandler, 2015, p.6)

The above quotation shows that the issue of race is one which has been of significance for over a century. Race and racialisation are the most widespread concepts in every section of Western society, including education, which have many adverse effects on educational outcomes, particularly for Black children in England and the U.S. The most noticeable effect for Black children, especially

boys, is that they have been consistently the least achieving ethnic group at the end of GCSEs over the last five decades, despite initiatives to improve and raise the achievement of this student cohort (Demie, 2002; Strand, 2007; DfE, 2018; Byrne et al., 2020).

Race matters because it is a powerful identity marker, and people are readily compartmentalised and tagged according to it (Winant, 2000) using the colour line (DuBois, 1903). Similarly, parallels can be drawn from Arday (2018), who argues that the concealed aspect of his journey as an autistic learner differs significantly from his visible identity as a Black male. This facet cannot be concealed. Race and racialisation are central to this study because, on the one hand, the introduction of formal education in colonial Zimbabwe was based on race, racialisation ideas of White supremacy and Black inferiority (Challis, 1973; West, 1975; Hungwe 1994. Kanyongo, 2005; Mlambo, 2019). On the other hand, the English education system African Zimbabwean males are transitioning into classifies students based on race and mostly their skin colour, as in Black and White British. Therefore, race and racialisation permeate the analysis of educational and other social issues. Given the broad spectrum of race and racialisation, the scope of this discussion is limited to the education and educational attainment of African Zimbabwean males up to the end of compulsory education while recognising other sectors such as higher education, employment, housing, health, and the criminal justice system.

Next is a definition of race and an outline of the ideas that inform it. This is followed by an examination of racialisation and how it is applied and experienced by Black children in everyday life in the English education system. 'Race' remains a contested concept, whether in academic or political spheres, because, as Wolfe (2002) rightly argues, race is not a category given by nature. Similarly, Winant (2000, p.172) adds that at its most basic level, race can signify and symbolise socio-political conflicts and interests about several types of human bodies.

Studies on the origins of race trace the origins of race to the eighteenth century, although it had latently existed before then. Gilroy (1999) argues that though 'race' thinking certainly existed earlier, modernity (confluence of capitalism, industrialisation, and numerous other social and cultural changes) transformed how 'race' was understood and acted upon. Similarly, Winant (2000) explains that

the idea of race began to take shape with the rise of the world political economy in post-war: the onset of global economic integration, the dawn of the seaborne empire, the conquest of the Americas, and the rise of the Atlantic slave trade were all critical elements in the genealogy of race. It is widely acknowledged that race is one instance of the much larger phenomenon of intra-human differentiating practice, a particular and distinctive instance whose origins can be dated quite narrowly from the late eighteenth century (Wolfe, 2002).

It is agreed that the world has been racialised, at least since the rise of the modern world system; racial hierarchy, even in the post-colonial present; and popular concepts of race, however variegated, remain in general everyday use almost everywhere (Winant, 2000). In a separate study by Lander (2015), it was found that racism is a normal everyday life for many Black ethnic minorities in England. Parsons and Taylor (2022) take a different view and maintain that this history includes geographical and political periods dominated by the emergence and domination of independence, post-independence, and economic sanctions resulting in international migration. For example, in the nineteenth century, the main disputes concerned where to draw the boundaries between genetically fixed and biologically discrete 'races' that were supposed to make up humanity.

Ideas about Race

According to Wolfe (2002), two core classificatory characteristics have given rise to the ideas of race being naturalised in the Western culture while indoctrinated and internalised in non-White culture during colonialism and post-colonial period. Further, Wolfe (2002) raises two critical descriptors that define the hierarchical nature of race. Difference is not neutral, and to vary is to be defective in proportion to the degree of the variation alleged to be obtained. Race links physical characteristics to cognitive, cultural, and moral ones. Therefore, race is not a negotiable condition but a destiny whose outward sign is the body's skin colour. While these racial hierarchy descriptors have permeated the everyday lives of people in Western societies, it does not reflect the everyday lives of the majority of Zimbabweans living in Zimbabwe by virtue of it being an African-majority country.

Racialisation

Winant (2000) argues that although racialisation appeals to biologically based human characteristics (phenotypes), selecting these features for racial signification is primarily a social and historical process. In societies in which "White" people have economic, political, and social power, processes of racialisation have emerged from the creation of a hierarchy in social structures and systems based on "race." Similarly, Miles (1989) rightly argues that the idea of a hierarchy of races continues to be widely used as a universal descriptive category to designate collectivities to which both self and Other belong. Also, skin colour has remained a permanent marker in the process of racialisation, as DuBois rightly prophesied in 1903 that, *'the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line'*. This problem of the colour line is still relevant and more prevalent today with the rise in global migration. A classic example of how ideas of race, race hierarchy, and racialisation are acted upon is the recent callous murder of George Floyd (History, 2020) by a Minneapolis police officer on 25 May 2020 in the USA. This horrific incident brought to prominence the depth of everyday racialisation experiences of African American people and a reminder to other non-White people in societies.

In addition, the African's Blackness reflected the Europeans' Whiteness: these two opposites were bound together, each giving meaning to the other in a totality of signification (Miles, 1989). Similarly, Murji and Solomos (2005), when Africans were later identified as constituting an inferior 'race' by Europeans, Europeans were simultaneously, if only implicitly, defining themselves by reference to the discourse of 'race', albeit with a different evaluative connotation. Thus, Self and Other were similarly encapsulated in an everyday world of European meanings. Nonetheless, Zimbabwean males may not have consciously related to their Blackness before coming to England because they were born after independence, in an African majority and were too young to comprehend or think about their race.

Racialisation in Education: England

Race and racialisation in education are terms used to explain the processes through which these raced meanings are implied. Murji and Solomos (2005)

clearly argue that racialisation has become a widely used term in discussions of racial and ethnic relations. Furthermore, racialisation has become a core concept in the analysis of racial phenomena, particularly to signal that the process by which ideas about race are constructed comes to be regarded as meaningful and acted upon. For example, since the 1950s Britain, the lowering of educational standards came to be associated with West Indian children being labelled educationally subnormal. (Coard, 1971; Stone, 1985). Similarly, in the 1970s, a particular form of street crime, mugging, came to be associated with the actions of violent young Black men (Murji and Solomos, 2005). Therefore, the consequences of low educational standards and mugging present instances of the racialisation of these two issues.

Racialisation in education is the process of association that students use where achievement of students (Black and White) are given racialised attributes chosen from a hierarchy of mythical abilities and comparisons (Solomos and Les Back, 2001; Murji and Solomos, 2005; Hylton, 2015). Parsons (2018) argues that racialisation in schools has resulted in 'lively' -and poor- African Caribbean pupils being labelled as trouble and of lesser intelligence, poorer grades, and higher rates of school exclusion. An example of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) notions of capital misrecognition and inharmonious fit is found in Strand's (2008) study on the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE). This study reveals the racialisation of ethnic minority children from more affluent families. Black African Caribbean and Bangladeshi boys from high socio-economic status homes made less than expected progress despite completing the same or more significant homework as their White British peers and having academic self-concept and high educational aspirations.

Oblivious of race and racialisation, African Zimbabwean males who transition into the English education system encounter misrecognition and inharmonious fit in many ways. This includes misclassification from Zimbabwean to (Black African, refugee, immigrant), transition not being straightforward and invalidated prior educational and low teacher expectations. However, this cohort of African Zimbabwean males is transitioning from post-colonial Zimbabwe, where they did not have direct contact with racialisation, indirectly as they continued to be

impacted through engaging with the inherited colonial education system (Nhundu, 1992; Kanyongo, 2005; Gomba, 2018; Mlambo, 2019). This may have resulted in the unconscious normalisation of race ideas and racism. African Zimbabwean males often experience racism as a regular part of their lives when they move into English schools, especially when they are the only Zimbabwean in their class or school. Lander (2015) makes a valid point that teachers who lack education and understanding about race, ethnicity, and racism are unable to effectively address the racism their students encounter.

Racialisation of Black Children in Education: England

Race and racialisation remain central to the persistence of racial and ethnic inequality, even more than a century after DuBois eloquently expressed the profound duality of identity with his evocative lamentation:

One feels his two-ness -an American, a Black person; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois 1897, quoted in the Atlantic, online)

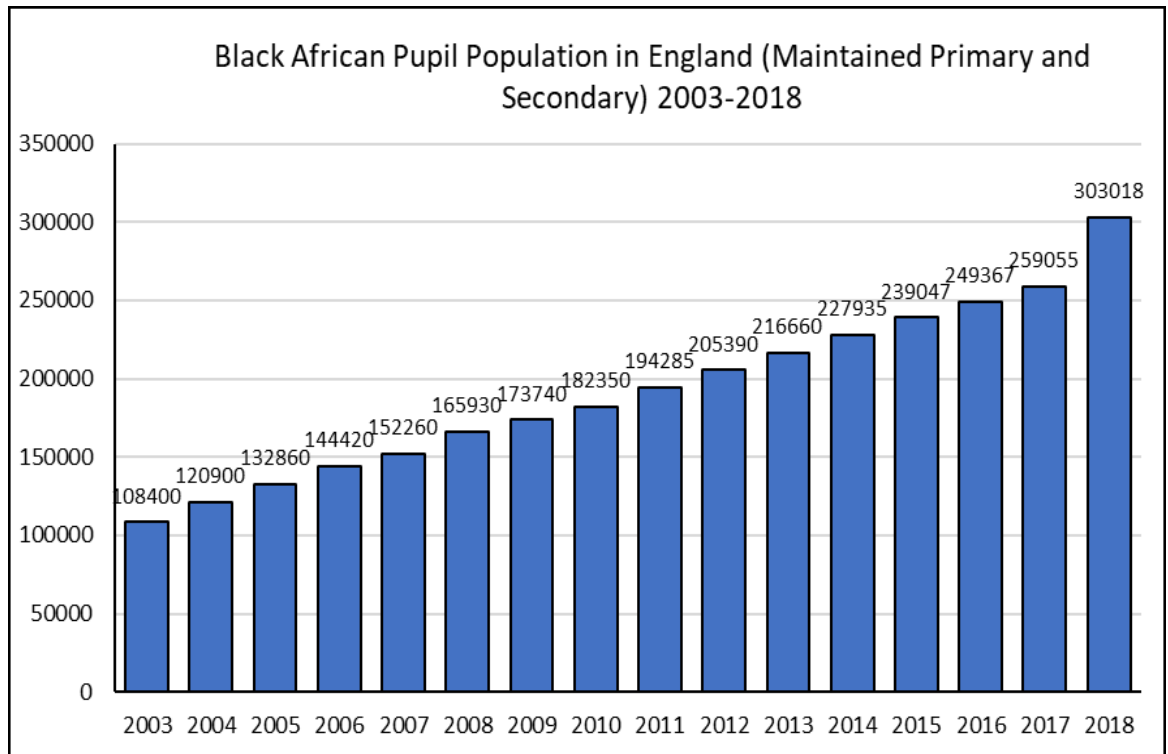
This evocative passage underscores the enduring struggle individuals face in navigating conflicting identities and aspirations within a society marked by the complexities of race and ethnicity.

Education remains a primary arena for both the maintenance of entrenched racial stereotyping and discrimination. This feeling of two-ness described above is still the same feeling experienced by African Zimbabweans transitioning into the English education system to continue their education. They are automatically forced to feel a sense of duality (being African and an immigrant). African Zimbabwean males' sense of duality exists in two contexts. In Zimbabwe, they take pride in their Zimbabwean male identity. However, in England, their identity is substituted by their new identity as Black Africans, immigrants, and refugees. These two identity categorisations will profoundly impact their educational experiences and attainment. Given the circumstances, their enduring determination to succeed keeps them focused.

The following section examines the Black African category as one of the eighteen ethnic classifications in England and other UK nations. It describes Black African students and examines their educational experiences and attainment in English schools. This is followed by the role of the Ethnic Minority Traveller Achievement Teams in local authorities, how new arrivals are assessed and the current guidelines. To determine who is classified as Black African, it is crucial to consider associated categories such as refugees, highly skilled immigrants, and international students. Furthermore, a question is raised: Do African Caribbeans differ from Black Africans? An analysis of students' academic journey at the end of GCSEs follows.

England has a well-structured assessment regime. Parsons (2018) argues that attainment data on England's school pupils are more extensive in coverage, detail, quantity, accessibility and of higher quality than monitoring statistics routinely available in other European countries. This data facilitates investigating educational attainment in England's schools and its relationship to ethnicity, gender, and poverty. The ethnic make-up of British society has changed, with, for example, an increasing proportion of and addition of the Black African classification. The 2000s witnessed an increase in the number of other Black people, Black African students, born outside the UK. They first attended schools in their birth country, then transitioned to England on family re-union as children of refugees, highly skilled migrants to continue their education. The Black African group differs from the Black Caribbean group, whose migration history relates to the *Windrush-era* immigration during the postwar period (Moch, 2003). The Caribbean group is, on the one hand, made up of second and third-generation British-born people and other ethnic minorities, including recent migrants (Refworld, 2018).

Table 1: The Growth of Black African Population in English Schools



Source: DfE, 2021.

The above table 1, illustrates the increase in the Black African student population in England from about 1.6% over a decade ago to the current 3.8% (DfE (2019; Demie, 2021). Migration Observatory (2017) argues that Britain has experienced increased immigration from Africa to Britain, with immigration levels from African countries increasing to approximately 20,000 people per year. Fernandes-Reino (2016) adds that since the beginning of the 2000s, new migration from Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe has increased the ethnic diversity of the UK, whose main non-White minorities until then were of Caribbean and South Asian descent. Currently, around 20 per cent of the population in the 2011 Census identify as belonging to an ethnic minority (Jivraj, 2012).

Further, the term 'Black African,' according to Demie (2021), is used to identify pupils with Black African heritage. In addition, Gillborn et al. (2013, p.2) argue that Black African students first appeared as a distinct pupil group in official data in 2004. The Black African category is a collective term that refers to all students from sub-Saharan Africa, which comprises forty-six countries. Still, this

categorisation does not acknowledge ethnic diversity within the Black African category. Previous studies (Demie and Mclean, 2007) found that most of these pupils in the L.A. schools have Nigerian or Ghanaian family backgrounds. This also includes a smaller number of pupils whose families originate in Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, and Tanzania. The study did not identify students born or starting their education in Zimbabwe, nor did they focus on experiences of higher academic ability grouping practices.

All the ethnic categories used in official statistics are, by their nature, approximate and, according to Aspinall (2011), within each group, there is significant variation in language, migration histories socio-economic profile and national origins. It is argued that this notion is obviously true concerning the 'Black African' category, which, according to Bloom (2013), in some parts of the UK, accounts for refugee populations who face significant economic hardship. In addition, Aspinall (2011) argues that in some other parts, the 'Black African' category refers to populations from more wealthy backgrounds, for example, in West and Southern Africa. Again, the Black African classification remains too generic and ignores the fundamental differences or diversities such as nationalities, the period after colonisation, educational systems, educational attainments at international levels (see contrasting education systems), and prior educational attainment before transitioning to England.

Individuals identifying as Black African include those from diverse countries and many asylum seekers, refugees, and international highly skilled migrants. Some have moved due to famine, conflict, and political unrest, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (Migration Observatory, 2017; Clark et al., 2018; Shankley and Williams, 2020). Another notable difference is that Black Africans come from a Black majority country, post-colonial, first generation, and had an experience of an inherited British education system.

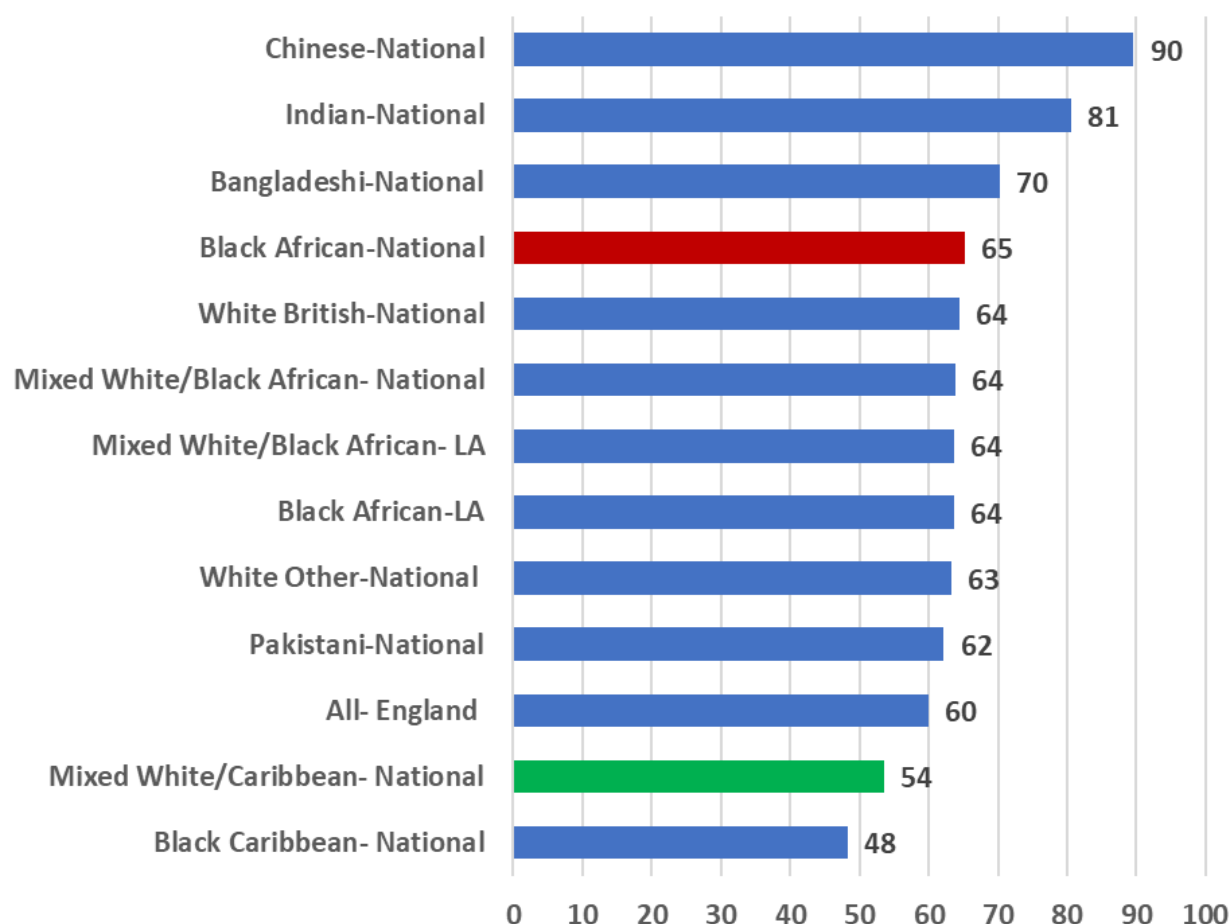
Educational Attainment of Black Africans in England

There is a body of literature on education and educational achievement of African Caribbeans that was met with disquiet about lowering educational standards

(Stone, 1985; Coard, 1971) and underachievement, particularly at the end of GCSEs (Demie, 2002; Gillborn, 1997; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). Each year, students take GCSE examinations in England and other parts of the UK, and the results are analysed and compared against ethnic groups. In England, there are eighteen ethnic categories, and educational attainment is made among these groups. From the 1950s to the 2000s, studies on Black students' educational attainment focused on African Caribbeans (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Strand, 2007; Demie, 2021). The educational achievement of African Caribbean students has consistently been that of underachievers, especially boys. However, across ethnic groups, this is complex, and different social, economic, and cultural factors contribute to this.

Very few studies focus on the attainment of Black African students. In his recent study, Demie (2021) found that, amongst those ending their compulsory education in the UK in 2018, 61% of Black African pupils achieved above the national average. This percentage figure does not aggregate for each diverse ethnic group within the Black African. For example, what percentage of the 61% is Nigerian, Ghanaian, or Zimbabwean? Also, it does not separate African heritage from those born in Zimbabwe, who started their education in Zimbabwe and the transition to continue in England. In another recent study by Alexander and Shankley (2020, p.93), the 2016/2017 GCSE grades data for Black Africans does not appear in their key findings on attainment disparity between ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the current attainment of Black Africans is an achieving ethnic group, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 2: GCSE Performance of Black African Pupils (%9-4) English and Maths 2019



Source: Demie 2021

Black Male Masculinity

Although this section is limited to examining Black African and African Zimbabwean masculinity, it draws from the dominant perspectives that are based more broadly on African American, Black African Caribbean and African literature. According to Norwitt (2022), masculinity, also referenced as manhood, is a set of attributes, behaviours, and roles associated with boys and men. However, it is distinct from the definition of the male biological sex, as both males and females can exhibit masculine traits. Connell (1998) defines *masculinity* as intimately related to power, both powers over women and power over other men. Norwitt (2022), argue that masculinity traits in Western society include independence, leadership, and assertiveness.

Milton (2020) argues that within the field of Gender Studies, Black masculinity is a distinct area of study that focuses on the typical behaviours of African American males. Scholarly literature indicates that the stereotypical characteristics attributed to Black men have evolved through centuries of enduring racial and economic oppression. Warmington (2020) clearly distinguishes differences between the term 'Black', highlighting that:

in the USA, 'Black' typically denotes African American descent. At the same time, in the U.K., its usage is more nuanced, encompassing individuals of African, African-Caribbean, Asian, and Arabic descent, often associated with the concept of 'political Blackness' emerging from post-war immigration discourse. (Warmington, 2012, p.14)

Considering the above complexities, the term 'Black' in this study, should be interpreted within the context of colonial and political histories of African Blackness, replacing the traditional tribal and totemic systems of identification. As mentioned earlier, in Zimbabwe, the use of 'Black' as a racial identifier is not as prevalent, with individuals often aligning themselves with traditional patriarchal tribal and totemic masculine systems of manhood. Milton (2020) further argues that in traditionally patriarchal societies, masculine expectations mandate men to demonstrate traits such as strength, aggressiveness, dominance over women, and sometimes violent superiority over other men. In addition, the attributes associated with Black masculinity are increasingly shaped by class status rather than solely by racial designation. In addition, in circumstances where tribal and totemic connections are available, male masculinity can be expressed through regional origins or national identity, such as identifying as "Zimbabwean" or aligning with a continental African identity. It carries unique implications distinct from the "Black African" concept within a Western context.

Historical Origins of Black Male Masculinity

Racial ideas about the Black race have continued to be used in constructing the image of Black men. Studies on Black masculinity have been socially constructed from a Western perspective situated in the legacy of slavery in the U.S. and colonisation during the British Empire. It is not surprising, as Norwitt (2022) argues that White men created the image of Black men as that of a child, not a man, and

as a body, not mind. A study by Forret (2011) found that as far back as slavery times, for masters, the ideal enslaved person (Black) man was the perpetual "boy", the childlike, dependent, and submissive Sambo. This has become a stereotypical and simplistic image of the African man that is often negatively indicated. Julien and Mercer (1988) rightly argue, masculinity is a crucial site of ideological representation, a site upon which the nation's crisis comes to be dramatised, demonised, and dealt with. In addition, this image is linked to violence, domination, abuse of power, irresponsibility, drug virility, and promiscuity (Ammann and Staudacher, 2021).

From the 1990s, studies about Black masculinity are presented in graphic detail as social identity in crisis; for example, everyday discourse about Black men has unthinkingly become associated with absent fathers, violent deaths, and crime (Mirzah, 1999). Black males are often commodified; while some individuals caricature and mimic Black appearances and mannerisms, others perpetuate harmful stereotypes depicting Black males as predatory, angry, involved in gangs, and limited in aspirations (Arday, 2022). Schools are not exempted from positioning Black young men as high-profile problems within current social and educational discourses. Consequently, the alarm is raised about Black boys' low levels of academic attainment and prominent levels of exclusions from mainstream education (Arnot et al., 2014; DfES, 2006; Archer and Yamashita, 2003; Demie, 2018; Gillborn et al., 2017). Despite the growth of globalisation and immigration from former colonial African countries, studies of Black African male masculinity seem to have been left on the margins.

Black Male Masculinity in Education: England

There is extensive evidence indicating that masculinity is a significant factor in the educational experiences of Black boys in the English education system and the U.S. education system, impacting their educational attainment (Majors, 2005; Sewell, 1997). In England, the prevailing discourse surrounding the masculinity of Black boys portrays it as an inherent issue to be controlled, a notion that is mirrored in policy. Since the arrival of African Caribbeans in England starting from the 1950s, there has been an immediate reaction characterising them as responsible for lowering educational standards in schools. African Caribbean

children were as educationally subnormal (Coard, 1971) and had low self-esteem. Above all, over seven decades now, Black boys' educational attainment has lagged that of their peers despite legislations like Aim Higher and widening participation (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) Excellence in Cities (Kendall, 2005) to the current one, Opportunity for All (DfE, 2022). Black boys have been on the margins of educational attainment, overrepresented in school exclusions (Stewart-Hall et al, 2023), and underrepresented in higher tiers.

African Zimbabwe Male Masculinity

In African literature and research from developed nations, traits associated with masculinity encompass a diverse range of qualities, including ambition, analytical reasoning, assertiveness, invulnerability, competitiveness, virility, fearlessness, physical strength, independence, leadership, and control. Men are often depicted as having the ability to endure pain, self-reliance, serving as decision-makers within their households, and a tendency to avoid behaviours perceived as feminine (Moynihan, 1998; Mutunda, 2009; Ratele, 2008a). Furthermore, the willingness to take risks is frequently identified as a defining trait in tools used to assess masculinity (Shefer et al., 2010).

African Zimbabwean manhood is an overly complex subject situated in its traditional patriarchal cultural history, including African traditional and Christian religions, colonialism, and post-colonial periods, thus showing its ever-changing nature in responding to these transformations. In the traditional, patriarchal African Zimbabwean cultural structure, men occupy a hierarchal honourable position in the family, tribe, village, and broader society as enshrined in the Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy of humanness (Muropa et al., 2013). Male masculinity is often associated with traditional or hegemonic male roles and values. Therefore, the Zimbabwean masculinity portrait includes family, tribal and societal leadership, symbol of protection and strength, domesticity, and respectability (West, 2002).

In colonial Zimbabwe, the African Zimbabwean image was presented based on the White Rhodesian self-image idea that they (Whites) were civilisers of the wilderness, taming its violence (Mlambo, 2019). Previously, Sicilia (1999) had argued that Whites saw themselves as peace-bringers and profoundly moral

beings, in contrast to the less-than-human Black Africans who embodied brute nature. Mlambo's study (2019) found that Whites generally regarded Africans as perpetual children to be firmly and strictly controlled by civilised settlers. Africans were, thus, perpetually infantilised and were routinely referred to as "boys" or "girls" regardless of their age, as in their then standard references to "houseboys" and "house girls" for grown-up African men and women (Mlambo, 2019). However, as Julien and Mercer (1988) previously rightly argue, Black men subjectively internalise and incorporate aspects of the dominant definitions of masculinity to contest the conditions of dependency and powerlessness that racism and racial oppression enforce.

In responding to the changing transformations, African men in colonial Zimbabwe, West (2002) describes the emergence of the African middle class, distinguishable from White settlers, African peasants, and the urban poor, because of its aspirations and ideas relating to domesticity and respectability. In their study, Pasura and Christou (2017) found that in Africa, debates over respectability peaked during the colonial era as an ideology to impose European middle-class values and norms on the African population.

Male Masculinity and Education in Zimbabwe

While several studies describe masculinity as a set of traits, behaviours, and roles generally associated with the male sex, it is noted that the concept is not exclusive to the male sex as some females demonstrate some masculine characteristics and behaviours as well (Connell, 1995; Ratele et al., 2010; Tseole and Vermaak, 2020). Male masculinities are not fixed and are ever-changing, responding to political, economic, cultural, and social demands that result in what Inhorn and Wentzel (2011) termed 'emerging masculinities'. A classic example African male masculinity is the educated African men who were not simply agents of the colonial government or, conversely, of the ordinary people. They functioned as individuals and members of a new, emerging category of elite Africans (West, 2002). The introduction of formal education in colonial Zimbabwe impacted African masculinity in several ways. In her study, Summers (2002) rightly observed:

Instead of apprenticing to learn his father's skills and insights, he "wanted to learn so that he would know (how to) ... read invoices and papers." Knowing how to read and understand the newly colonised world- a divining his father had never mastered - had become critical to Jonasi's survival: help his father, protect his family, and prosper. Africans' definitions of useful knowledge and schooling changed in the early twentieth century. The men who moved quickly and effectively to learn English, acquire literacy, and adopt European-sponsored skills and sometimes values were not necessarily turning their backs on their fathers. (Summers, 2002, p. xiii)

The above quotation illustrates the transformation of Zimbabwean male masculinity from traditional roles responding to colonial times by pursuing individual opportunities and new roles, rejecting the segregationist logic in which all Africans were equal and not inferior to all Whites. Summers (2002) further argues that, for these men, interwar colonial Zimbabwe was not simply a stark Black-and-White world of deepening segregation but a place where ideas, values, roles, identities, and material culture were negotiable within uncertain boundaries. Thus, African Zimbabwean males rejected being infantilised or anything that would take away their manhood identity and privileged traditional position. A trend was set in African masculinity for Zimbabweans, resisting and fighting as expected in their protective role. Given the hierarchy of men in traditional African Zimbabwean society, boys are given first preference in education. In a case study, Summers (2002) found that males like Jonasi and the many others who attended mission schools or parents who sent their male children to school made new possibilities for Africans in colonial Zimbabwe.

Wright et al. (1998) observe that young Black masculinities are not expressed in isolation but are, amongst other influences, informed and shaped by school processes. How Black male students perceive masculinity in schools influences their relationships with peers and teachers. In the Zimbabwean context, the expression of African Zimbabwean males' masculinity is influenced by the cultural expectations for them to be influential leaders of their households and demonstrate protection and strength (Dorsey, 1989). In Zimbabwean society, boys are socialised and nurtured as more intelligent than girls. Therefore, if girls in

educational attainment outperform boys, it is expected to hear comments such as "How can a girl do better than you?"

Additionally, teachers and society expect African Zimbabwean boys to perform better than girls. They are constantly reminded of their position as future leaders in their various roles as fathers, husbands, family breadwinners, and providers of financial wealth for their families and society. As a result of this socialisation, Dorsey (1989) found that Zimbabwean boys had high aspirations regardless of background (SES or class). Clearly more research is needed on this subject.

Since the 1980s, post-colonial Zimbabwe has witnessed a type of emerging masculinity that responds to Zimbabwe's social and economic transformations. For example, the HIV/Aids pandemic resulted in the formation of child-headed households (Gubwe et al., 2017), global migration and left-behind children (Tawodzera and Themane, 2019). These events changed the hegemonic masculine ideal and gradually replaced it with new forms of multiple masculinities roles (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Masinire, 2011). It created a shift where males and females share masculine roles, particularly in child-headed households (Chadema and van Wyk, 2021). In child-headed households, boys and girls take multiple masculine roles -depending on who is older- as they are left to live and fend for themselves. Nevertheless, this knowledge is either unknown or unavailable in literature and when compiling background information on new arrivals from these backgrounds in schools.

The male child is highly valued; in most African countries, the first dollar is reserved for the boy child (Mawere, 2012). Male masculinity and education discourse in the Global South take a distinct perspective on issues of education and gender. In Zimbabwean schools, males learn hegemonic masculinity in playgrounds as they display strength and challenge (Connell 1998). Thus, the experiences of Zimbabwe males in schools are generally mediated through their gendered identities, socialisation, cultural expectations, and religious beliefs. This male socialisation has an added identity feature that is highly valued through the totem system. In Zimbabwean society males are identified and called by their totems as reinforcement and validation of their masculinity. A classic example is the totem reference and identity [crocodile] of the current Zimbabwean president,

Emmerson Mnangagwa, and his totem is the crocodile. Masinire (2011) also found that the percentage of boys in primary and high school is higher than that of girls. Dropout rates for girls due to pregnancy but not for boys (Masinire, 2011; Mawere, 2012). As students move up the educational ladder into higher education, the gender gap increases privileging Zimbabwean boys. For example, girls were not performing or achieving in Science, Mathematics, and Technical subjects. It is not surprising from a Zimbabwean perspective that boys are presented through African traditional patriarchal, privileged positive notions of manhood in respectability and domesticity based on educational success, hard work, honesty, and deferred gratification. This perspective on Zimbabwean male masculinity offers different male masculinity experienced by African males in the USA and England. It is an illustration that Black male masculinity is context-based.

Refugees in England

Historically Britain has been a sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers. According to Baldwin-Edwards (2005), at the beginning of the 21st century, some two hundred million people live away from their birthplace. Every nation is a sending, receiving, or transient nation for migrants, and there is every indication that international mobility and the challenges associated with transition will continue to affect future generations (Langford, 1998; Slater et al., 2017; Özden and Schiff, 2006). The Black African ethnic category masks the immigration status diversity perspective embedded within it. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report (2015) highlights the alarming status of the world's total refugee population that about 51% are children below 18 years old. According to de Hoop et al. (2018), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has already launched a campaign called 'No Lost Generation' focusing on providing access to quality education for refugee children.

Educational Attainment of Refugee Children in England

Adams and Kirova (2006, p. xiii), rightly argue that education is at the centre of the social and cultural processes that result from and influence economic and political changes. A study by Madziva and Thondhlana's (2017) about Syrian refugees' schooling experiences in England primarily affects the kind of relationship children

will develop within the new culture and how this will begin to shape their new identities. A study by Li (2018) found that refugees' efforts to re-establish themselves in an urban context in the U.S. were subjected to symbolic violence brought upon by a precarious context of reception, monolingual ideologies and the hegemonic practices of urban schools' resettlement policies and agencies. Similarly, in a study on Syrian refugees, Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) found that, because of the increasingly more securitised immigration policies and the Conservative government's pledge to bring net migration down by 2020, the UK adopted an attitude of hostility rather than hospitality when admitting refugees. Recent political and public perception suggests that the UK's primary and secondary schools are 'stretched to breaking point' by immigrant children of Eastern European origins who do not speak English as their first language (Levy 2014; Tereshchenko and Archer 2014; Madziva and Thondhlana 2017). This position contradicts DfE's obligation not to discriminate against children in schools based on any background.

Sharples and Câmara (2020) highlight the lack of policy or guidance for teachers working with young asylum-seekers and refugees. They are often grouped with EAL learners (or 'vulnerable' pupils more generally) or within the ethnic categories, yet they have specific needs that can be understood and addressed separately. For example, a study (Gladwell and Chetwynd 2018, p.3) found that some schools were unwilling to admit older learners who arrive mid-year into upper Secondary for 'fear of negatively influencing results profiles. This contradicts the provision of non-discriminatory practices in the Equality Act 2010. In their report, UNICEF (2017), the UK's legal and policy frameworks recognise entirely the right to education. The standards are generally high, and the UK is setting a good example in the global context. However, the research suggests that although the right to education is established in law and policy, it is not implemented consistently throughout the UK, and the targets are not fully achieved.

Another study found that Refugee and asylum-seeker children do better, with low estimated rates of absences and exclusions (Hutchison and Reader (2021). However, despite these possible educational advantages, they are still subject to low GCSE attainment, comparable with other highly vulnerable groups such as

persistently disadvantaged pupils. Explanations about overall educational attainment have been analysed and measured through the lens of English language proficiency. Previous studies have also demonstrated a link between the level of fluency in English for speakers of English as a second language and under-achievement (Demie, 2018; Strand and Hessel, 2018). These studies do not consider students who learned English as a subject in former British colonies; as mentioned before, English language policy was introduced in colonial Zimbabwe in 1903. Despite the English language's hierarchy and policies implemented during the colonial and post-colonial periods (Kadenge and Nkomo 2011), Zimbabwean males still need English as an Additional Language. This is an area that might need further research.

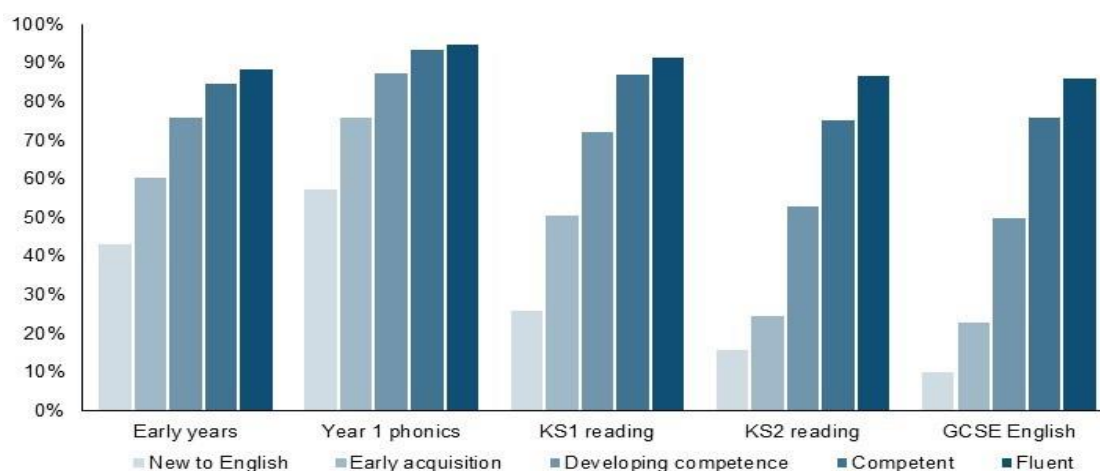
English as an Additional Language

According to DfE (2020, p.10), 'A student is considered to have English as an additional language if they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. It is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration.' According to DfE (2020), the school census collects information on a student's first language. In 2020, the DfE reported that:

In spring 2018, there were 8.1 million pupils in state-funded schools in England. Of these, 1.6 million (19%) had English as an additional language. EAL pupils are much less likely to be White than pupils with English as their first language - 30% of EAL pupils are White, 41% are Asian, and 13% are black (85% of pupils with English as their first language are White, 4% are Black and 4% are Asian). Sixty-four per cent of EAL students are in primary school, compared to 57% of native English speakers. They are like pupils with English as a first language in terms of other characteristics - 51% are male, 25% are disadvantaged, and 13% have a particular educational need. (DfE, 2020, p.4)

It is a statutory requirement that EAL pupils take an English assessment to measure their proficiency levels.

Table 3: *Summary of Attainment English Proficiency Level. Spring 2018*



Source: DfE (2020)

The Role of Ethnic Minority Travellers Achievement Service- EMTAS

International migration has witnessed a surge of children who start their education in their country of birth, then transition to another country to continue and finish their education in another country. Since the 2000s, in the UK, particularly in England, schools have had their share of receiving new arrivals children from abroad, including former colonies like Zimbabwe. In England, Local Authorities are responsible for admitting new arrivals and have a designated team to ensure a seamless transition process. These teams follow specific guidelines, which may vary with each government. Although this study examined the period between 2000 and 2010, during which the Labour Government implemented the New Arrivals Excellence Programme (NEAP), it has also included the current state.

In 2010, the Conservative Coalition government assumed power and adopted a new policy merging all new arrivals and settled ethnic minority pupils under the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) within each Local Authority in England. The role of EMTAS is to provide a transitional bridge for new arrivals whose English is an Additional Language (EAL). EMTAS is also responsible for settling new arrivals in their new learning environments and supporting them in achieving their full potential. It is committed to raising the

educational attainment of ethnic minority pupils and those at risk of underachieving. A study by Arnot et al. (2014) found that some children were possibly "invisible," outside formal education, or not yet allocated school places, so they will not appear in school statistics. In addition, some children may have been well-educated in their country of origin, while others may have had little or disrupted schooling. However, despite all these processes in place, the DfE's (2020) current evidence suggests that this group of children do not realise their full potential. Clearly further investigation is needed on this subject.

Language and Cognitive Assessments

Ethnic minority pupils transitioning into the English education system from outside the UK need special support in English as an additional language to access the National Curriculum. There is recognition that new arrivals speak their home languages, and some are bilingual. According to the DfE (2020), over one million children with English as an additional language speak more than 360 languages between them and English in the UK today. Similarly, a study by Plewis (2011) found that over 98% of Bangladeshi pupils, 94% of Pakistani pupils, and over 80% of Indian and Chinese pupils their home languages. In a recent study on home languages, Demie (2021) found that over 70% of Black African pupils speak a language other than English at home.

Cummins (1994) makes the distinction between the social English that children learn quickly, which he calls Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Children develop conversational skills first in face-to-face situations where they can hear and use language in context with lots of visual clues to meaning. Cummins (1994) further argues that children will become fluent in this social use of English in less than two years. However, it will take much longer (at least five or more years) to develop the cognitive and academic language that they need to reach their full academic potential in school. Similar findings were reported in a study by Demie (2002), who found that children will need extra support to help them develop the level of cognitive and academic language. However, the National Association for Language Development In the Curriculum (NALDIC) found that other pupils arrive at school from Europe and other world locations with some knowledge of the

English language. However, they need to gain experience with the use of English for a variety of personal, social, and academic purposes. Neither study addressed the achievement of high English pass grades by students who learned English from non-native English-speaking teachers outside of England. For instance, Zimbabwean students who took Cambridge International examinations and demonstrated exceptional performance were not accounted for (Cambridge International, 2020).

EMTAS is responsible for supporting new arrivals with language and ensuring that any new arrivals in schools in England are subject to an assessment of their proficiency in the English language. (Cumbria.org, n. d.; The Bell-foundation n. d; NASSEA n. d.). However, it is not known how the comparative English proficiency of new arrivals from countries like Zimbabwe, where most Zimbabweans speak and learn English as a subject and an additional language (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, n.d.; Thondhlana, 2000; Kadenge and Nkomo, 2011). English is the main medium of instruction throughout the education system, a measure of educational achievement and an essential qualification for higher education and employment. The current EAL assessment framework on English language proficiency levels is banded A to E (see Appendices D and E) for primary and secondary listening, respectively. The issue of English language proficiency for pupils who have learned English before transitioning to schools in England need further research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has described and discussed education in England, starting with education policy and structure in early years, primary and secondary. However, differences were observed in school policy implantation practices. Contrasting the two education systems (English and Zimbabwe) found similarities based on their colonial history, including comparing performance assessments (PISA, TIMMS, SACMEQ) at regional and international levels. However, ideas about race, racialisation, racism, and gender have continued to influence how Black male masculinity is presented in the dominant discourse of educational experiences. What was glaring was the homogenisation of the Black African category in English schools. This results in overlooking the diverse sub-categories based on

nationalities, resulting in African Zimbabwean males' being continually subsumed and their educational experiences being excluded. There is also a danger of excluding their successful performance in English schools.

The next chapter considers the research methodology, and the methods employed.

Chapter 5: Research methodology and methods

Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce the research design process for this qualitative CRT counter-storytelling case study investigating 'the lived educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who transition into schools in England'. The aim of the approach was to enable a deeper understanding of African Zimbabwean males by offering a counter-story of their lived educational trajectories across the two education systems (Zimbabwe and England)..

The chapter outlines theoretical and practical issues, methodology, research design, data collection and analysis, researcher reflexivity, and ethical considerations. The importance of counter storytelling is highlighted as one aspect of the CRT method. A summary concludes the chapter.

For convenience, the research questions are repeated below:

Research Questions

1. How did some African Zimbabwean males perceive and navigate the cultural, social, and academic differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems during their transition?

Consequently, these questions are asked:

- 1.1. What are the key cultural differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems as perceived by African Zimbabwean males?
- 1.2. How did African Zimbabwean males experience the social differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems during their transition?
- 1.3. What are the academic disparities between the Zimbabwean and British education systems, and how did African Zimbabwean males perceive and navigate these differences?

Methodology

This section discusses the theoretical and practical issues that inform the methodology, research approach and research design used in this study. In research, three main approaches (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed- methods) are advanced, although they are not as discrete as they first appear (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Qualitative and quantitative approaches represent different ends of a continuum. On the one hand, the qualitative approach is framed using words or open-ended questions about the lived experience and human perception (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Rutberg and Bouikidis, 2018). The quantitative approach is framed using numbers and closed questions or numbers and accuracy. Mixed-methods is an approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative data. Additional differences are found in the philosophical assumptions researchers bring to the study, the type of research strategies used (experiments or case studies), and specific methods used in conducting these strategies (for example, collecting data qualitatively through observing a setting or quantitatively on instruments).

In choosing a research approach for this study, each approach was weighed against the research topic and the questions the study sought to answer. Since the study topic sought to investigate the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who transitioned into schools in England to continue their studies, it aligned itself with a qualitative approach. The following section discusses the qualitative approach, its definition, historical background, and critical features.

Qualitative Approach

This section addresses the main components of the qualitative approach. According to Kirk and Miller (1986), the qualitative research approach has its roots in anthropology, philosophy, and American sociology. Historically, qualitative researchers attempted to discover cultures and groups in their own and foreign settings and tell stories of their experiences (Blackwell, n.d.). Over the years, qualitative research has spread to other disciplines, including education.

Qualitative approaches explore people's behaviour, perspectives, feelings, and experiences and what lies at the core of their lives. Qualitative methods offer an effective way of investigating lived experiences when the research aims to explain the phenomenon based on the individual participants' perception of their experience in that situation. For Flick (2014), qualitative research seeks to describe life worlds from the inside out, from the perspective of people participating. In doing so, qualitative research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to the processes, meaning patterns and structural features.

Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.4) define the qualitative approach as exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Another definition is from Blackwell (n.d. p.3), who defines *qualitative research* as a form of social inquiry that focuses on how people interpret and make sense of their lived experiences. These definitions emphasise the importance of understanding participants' meanings and how they interpret their experiences.

Characteristics of the Qualitative Approach

Although qualitative research is typically accepted and well-known in the social sciences, it is equally important to consider its fundamental characteristics relevant to the topic. Several authors (Blackwell, n.d; Hatch, 2002; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Marshall and Rossman, 2016) concur on the following essential characteristics of the qualitative approach. First is the natural setting or context where researchers immerse themselves in the natural settings of the people whose thoughts and feelings they wish to explore. (Blackwell, n.d.) suggests that it is crucial to be sensitive to the context of participants' lives or work that affects their behaviour. Therefore, researchers must recognise that the participants are grounded in their history and temporality. Second, the researcher is a crucial instrument because they collect the data by interviewing participants.

Third, the qualitative approach uses multiple data sources such as interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual information instead of relying on single data. Fourth, qualitative researchers work inductively, and when analysing data, they build patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organising the data into increasingly more abstract information units. Then, deductively, the

researchers look back at their data from the themes to determine whether more evidence supports each theme or needs to gather additional evidence (Creswell and Cresswell, 2018). It also involves the use of 'thick description', which they describe, analyse, and interpret. Participants' meanings are central to the entire qualitative study. Researchers must prioritise understanding participants' meanings rather than relying on their interpretations or existing literature reviews. Researchers uncover the meaning people give to their experiences. (Blackwell, n.d; Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018).

The research process for qualitative researchers is flexible and emergent. It allows for changes or shifts in the process stages after entering the field and collecting data. Researchers may need to modify their research study by changing the research questions, participants, or other related adjustments. Another characteristic of qualitative research is reflexivity, where researchers continually reflect on how their role in the study and their philosophical worldviews can shape their interpretations of the data. Additionally, researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issues under study, which involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying various factors and generally sketching the larger picture. This approach recognises that it is not a linear model of cause and effect but numerous factors that interact in different ways.

Using a qualitative approach, the researcher gathered and listened to the educational stories of a group of African Zimbabwean males. These stories encompassed their experiences in their country of birth, Zimbabwe, and their host country, England. The men shared their stories in a foreign setting, adding a unique perspective to their narratives. Another advantage of the qualitative approach is the effective ways of exploring the behaviour, perspectives, feelings, and experiences of African Zimbabwean males and parents and what lies at the core of their lives, namely 'education, and educational attainment'. Given their colonial education experiences (see History of Zimbabwe), Zimbabweans have long embraced education as a fundamental value and its impact on broader life outcomes such as employability, socio-economic status, and quality of life. Zimbabweans are a separate Black African nationality and have had a separate educational history. However, in England, they are classified as Black Africans, a

generic term referring to all Africans from sub-Saharan Africa, and they do not form a statistical characteristic. They arrived at various stages, in-year times and are spread-out in different schools in North-West of England, making it difficult to track their progression or make comparisons. A historical void exists in researching educational experiences and transitions across former colonised and colonial education systems. Overall, the benefit of using a qualitative approach lies in its diversity of approaches and the flexibility that accompanies it.

Social Constructivist Worldview

This qualitative study utilises a social constructivist worldview, which holds the view that how the world is understood is historically, culturally, and socially defined (Crotty, 1998; Weinberg, 2014; Burr, 2015). Further, Crotty (1998) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that constructivists believe that individuals seek to understand and develop subjective meanings of their experiences- meanings directed toward particular objects or ideas. As mentioned in the characteristics section, these meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. Meanings are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. Therefore, social constructivist researchers also focus on unique contexts in which people live and work to understand participants' historical and cultural settings. Furthermore, social constructivists reject the view that meaning is objective, but rather meaning is constructed between daily interactions between people (Crotty, 1998; Burr, 2015; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Out of several social constructivism philosophical assumptions, Crotty (1998) identified three basic assumptions that are widely agreed on. The first assumption considers how human beings (including researchers and participants) construct meanings as they engage in the world they interpret, achieved through asking open-ended questions. The second assumption recognises that humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on historical and social perspectives. The reason is that they are born into a world of meaning bestowed upon them by their culture, traditions, and values. The third assumption concerns the essential

generation of meaning that is always social, arising from interaction with a human community. These assumptions were a crucial part of co-constructing counter-stories by African Zimbabwean males. The qualitative research process is broadly inductive; the inquirer generates meaning from the data collected in the field (Crotty, 1998; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Counter-storytelling Research Design

Beyond the characteristics above are more specific strategies of inquiry, designs, or procedures for conducting qualitative research. Thus, the researcher did not only select a qualitative approach to conduct the study but also made decisions based on a type of research design within the many available choices (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Particularly challenging for the researcher was to select the most suitable design from the seemingly limitless designs available. The reason is that in qualitative research, there are extensive research designs available to choose from, such as narrative research (Clandinin and Connelly, 2006), Phenomenological research (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, 1962), Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin and Strauss, 2015), Counter-storytelling, (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001) Ethnography, (Wolcott, 2008) and Case study, (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Out of these designs, a counter-storytelling study was the most suited for this study for two central reasons. The first reason is that every research study is a story. The second reason is that African Zimbabwean males are sharing their educational experiences, challenging the prevailing narrative in England about Black children's education.

This section discusses the justification for selecting a counter-storytelling research inquiry adopted for this study. Qualitative research mainly explores and understands the meanings individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Stake, 1995; Crotty, 1998; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the study processes simultaneously required appropriate inquiry methods to address the research topic. Thus, a counter-storytelling case study was selected after carefully considering the aims and study questions.

Counter-storytelling has been mentioned earlier as one characteristic of CRT and has multiple uses, including telling the story of those untold experiences on the margins of society. Solorzano and Yosso (2001) hold the view that counter-

storytelling is a method of sharing the stories of those oppressed or marginalised by society to strengthen cultural traditions and expose and challenge the dominant narratives. Zamudio et al. (2011) aptly state that counter-stories are personal and not meant to define the universal experiences of people of colour. These three scholars emphasise the centrality of storytelling based on personal lived experience.

The use of a methodology arising from a CRT perspective is important. One reason for this is that it recognises that need for a qualitative research methodology that recognises the importance of situating “lived experience within a broader sociopolitical frame” (Malagon et al., 2009, p.253); another reason is that placing CRT at the centre of the research “transforms the types of questions we ask, the types of methodologies we employ, the way we analyse data, and most importantly, the very purpose of our research” (Malagon, 2009, p.257). Here Malagon et al. point to work by Yosso (2006) to argue that

CRT methodology must illuminate the patterns of racialized inequality by recounting experiences of racism, both individual and shared, in order to reveal multiple perspectives that have long been silenced. (Malagon et al. 2009, p.267)

Counter-storytelling is grounded in constructivism or social constructivism (often combined with interpretivism). As mentioned earlier, social constructivists assert that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work and, therefore, develop subjective meanings of their experiences based on their historical and cultural norms (Crotty, 1998; Creswell and Cresswell, 2018). Depending on how experiences are understood, interpreted, and framed, 'existence is recognised or refused, significance is assigned or ignored, being elevated or rendered invisible' (Goldberg, 2000, p.155) within racial hierarchies. Critical race theorists argue that counter-storytelling may be a valuable mechanism to challenge and change racial dominance (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995).

CRT scholar's use of storytelling as a research method originates from Bell's (1987) assertion that storytelling responds more closely to how the human mind makes sense of experience (Cook and Bryan, 2021). Solórzano and Yosso (2001)

used counter-storytelling to study the school experiences of Chicana and Chicanos students under the LatCrit theory. It is also an analytical tool for analysing and challenging the stories of those in power whose story is a natural part of the dominant discourse (Delgado, 1989; 1999).

The counter-storytelling method encourages those who experience oppression to share their stories and listen to others as a form of empowerment and realisation that they are not isolated in their marginality. Thus, stories of lived experiences told by the participants allow them to regain authorship of their own lives (Giroux, 1988; Howard, 2001). Further, counter-stories can serve at least four theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical functions. First, they build a community for marginalised groups in society. Second, they provide context to recognise and change established belief systems. Third, counter-story is essential for dismantling hegemonic knowledge and discourse (Bell, 1987; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Cook and Bryan, 2021). Similarly, Guinier and Torres (2002) add that, in the tradition of CRT, stories collected from lived experience are essential in challenging traditional explanations of power relationships vis-vis an emphasis on the role of context in meaning-making.

A third function is opening a window, opening new possibilities for those whom society has marginalised and isolated or alternative realities. Fourth, they can teach others that by combining the story and current reality, they construct another world richer than the story or reality alone. In addition, Cook and Bryan (2021) argue that counter-storytelling uses the grounded everyday experiences of marginalised people coupled with other data, such as (field notes, documents, and others) to generate knowledge by looking to the bottom, thus epistemologically centring those most often considered invisible and silent in research.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) highlight crucial aspects of counter-storytelling: theoretical sensitivity and cultural sensitivity. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), theoretical sensitivity refers to a combination of the researcher's personal qualities, which reveals an awareness of the nuances of the meaning of data. One can enter the research field with varying degrees of sensitivity depending on their earlier reading and experience with relevant data. Theoretical sensitivity is also a unique insight and capacity of the researcher to interpret and give meaning to

data, to understand and to separate the relevant from that which it is not (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Solorzano and Yosso, 2001).

The second aspect concerns cultural intuition and is slightly different from theoretical sensitivity. It extends one's personal experience to include collective experience and community memory. With reference to a Chicana researcher, Bernal (1998) argues that cultural intuition is achieved and nurtured through personal experiences influenced by culture, literature on and about Chicanas, professional experiences, and the analytical process they engage when in a central position in their research and analysis. These concepts emphasise the importance of sensitivity to the meaning embedded in the stories.

Solorzano and Yosso (2001) combine cultural intuition with critical race theory tenets to develop counter-stories based on at least four sources: the interviews conducted, the existing literature on the topic, and the researcher's personal and professional experience. Critical race scholars, such as Ladson-Billings (2020), have widely applied counter-storytelling in education. They use it to narrate the educational experiences of African Americans in the US. DeCuir and Dixon (2004) used counter-storytelling to expose and critique normalised dialogues perpetuating racial stereotypes. CRT in education recognises the centrality of students of colour's experiential knowledge as valid, proper, and critical to understanding, analysing, and teaching about racial subordination in education. Critical race educational studies view this knowledge as a strength and draw explicitly on the students of colour's lived experience by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, and narratives (Bell, 1987; Delgado, 1989, 1996; Olivas, 1990; Carrasco, 1996).

The selection of a counter-storytelling design for this study allows the collection of rich data from the often-untold stories of the experiences of different kinds of African Zimbabwean male students who transition into the English education system to continue their education. In the same way, this study uses counter-storytelling in a two-pronged approach. One is to tell untold stories and experiences of African Zimbabwean male students who transition into the English education system to continue their education. Two, it is used to analyse and challenge to challenge the current classification of 'Black African', which overlooks

the rich diversity encompassing various ethnicities, languages, and periods of colonial independence within this group.

Data Collection Procedures

This section discusses the researcher's role in various aspects of data collection. It includes setting the boundaries for the study through sampling and recruitment, conducting interviews, adhering to ethical guidelines, implementing data analysis and procedures, interpreting the data, the role of the researcher, and ensuring reliability and validity.

Sampling

This section presents the sampling and recruitment procedures and the study population. Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.185) explain that the idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants who will best help the researcher understand the research phenomenon, which requires a sampling plan. Moser and Korstjens (2018) define a *sampling plan* as a formal plan specifying a sampling method (purposeful), sample size (12 participants) and procedure for recruiting (snowballing) participants. A qualitative sampling plan describes how many observations, focus groups, cases or interviews are needed to ensure that findings contribute to rich data (Blackwell, n.d; Flick, 2018; Moser and Korstjens, 2018). Also, unlike a quantitative plan, where a researcher starts with a pre-determined sample size, qualitative research starts with a broadly defined sampling plan.

This study draws from the principles of Moser and Korstjens' (2018) sampling plan. First, participants were purposefully sampled based on the criteria that align with the topic and aims of the study. African Zimbabwean males shared lived educational experiences but varied in characteristics, including learning in Zimbabwe, and left at different stages, either primary or secondary. Participants had shared academic ability grouping [groups one and two], ranking among the top ten performers in each class or grade, and substantial achievement either at the Grade Seven examination or five 'O' Level results. In addition, everyone possessed a unique level of new insight, which varied according to their age and the schools they had attended (Flick, 2018; Morse and Korstjens, 2018).

Second, the sample size differs for each study and is small. The usually small sample size in qualitative research depends on the information richness of data, the variety of participants, the broadness of the research question, the phenomenon, and the data collection method. Third, the sample emerged during the study based on further data collection and analysis (see recruitment section). The sample was chosen based on conceptual requirements rather than primarily for representativeness. This study had multiple layers of settings spanning from Zimbabwe to England. This sampling aimed to select a group of African Zimbabwean males born, raised, and initially received their education in Zimbabwe before transitioning into English schools during family re-unions. This group was interviewed to gather information about their educational experiences in Zimbabwe and England.

The participants in this study were enrolled in a diverse range of primary and secondary schools throughout Zimbabwe. Two attended group 'A' schools, which had previously been exclusively reserved for White students in White-only residential areas. Three individuals attended group 'B' schools, which were designated for native African children and located in urban high-density African suburbs under government control. The remaining two participants attended private nursery and primary schools.

The sampling method utilised in this study was based on Patton's (2002) perspective, which suggests that determining the sample size in qualitative research has no fixed rules. Instead, the sample size depends on various factors such as the research question, the purpose of the inquiry, the significance of the study, the credibility of the findings, and the available time and resources. Similarly, Guest et al. (2020) adds that in qualitative research, sampling sizes are controlled by data saturation, a threshold for measuring and assessing sample sizes at a point where no new data is expected. The seven participants recruited were sufficient to provide the information needed to fully understand the phenomenon under investigation (Flick, 2018; Moser and Korstjens, 2018).

The next step involved deciding the recruitment strategies, including selecting or searching for participants who would provide rich data on the phenomenon (the lived educational experiences). This study was conducted in England and uses

five subject pass grades 'A*' - 'C' at the end of GCSEs as a benchmark for measuring educational attainment. In addition, England has a well-established structure for assessing and analysing GCSE performance based on ethnicity, captured through the Ethnicity Attainment Facts and Figures (Department for Education, 2024). However, ethnic characteristics tend to merge Africans into one category (Black African), making African Zimbabweans invisible in statistics. Therefore, this study used purposive and convenience sampling to reveal that ethnic categories are limited and do not accurately reflect people's lives. This approach was deemed most suitable for studying this hidden population. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Moser and Korstjens, 2018). One main advantage of using purposive sampling is that informants are available and convenient and represent the characteristics to be researched (Silverman, 2010).

To repeat the previous point, African Zimbabwean male participants arrived in England on a family re-union to re-unite with their parents who were already settled in North-West England from 2000 to 2010. They arrived at different periods of their education and were enrolled in different schools across North-West England, where they continued their education at various stages, primary and secondary. In England, most African Zimbabwean male students were often the only Zimbabwean in their school or year group, which was quite different from their majority backgrounds in Zimbabwe. In his recent study, Demie (2015) explains the term 'Black African' and highlights that this includes the smaller number of pupils whose families originate from Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, and others. This demonstrates how African Zimbabwean males remain obscure in research.

Recruitment

This study aimed to understand the lived educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who transitioned into schools in England. After ethical approval and compiling a sampling plan, the researcher detailed the practicalities of recruiting participants and subsequent interviewing. Several recruitment strategies were considered, including personal and professional connections, fliers, newspaper adverts, emails and letters, and face-to-face interactions. Out of these strategies, personal connections through face-to-face interactions were

considered suitable and applied in this study. (Roulston and Shelton, 2015; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Recruitment was based on easy accessibility and participant availability due to the dispersed nature of Zimbabweans in England. (Flick, 2018; Moser and Korstjens, 2018). Recruitment occurred through the researcher's connections with parents and potential participants. The researcher attended African Zimbabwean Shona-based church services, where they pitched their research, and afterwards, those interested provided their contact details for further discussions and more information. The recruitment process resulted in enlisting three male participants through their parents (snowballing). Parents were confident their sons would be interested in this study, so they gave the researcher their contact numbers and signed up. Two participants were recruited by chance of face-to-face encounters. One participant was recruited on the spot at an event, while the other was recruited, having travelled on the same tram. Despite this, and as Sullivan-Bolyai et al. (2007) rightly caution, even with meticulous planning, however, problems can occur. The male participant was recruited through his mother's recommendation and expressed interest in participating. He had also confirmed that he would attend his interview appointment with the researcher the day before. However, he did not show up on the interview day and was not answering calls. The researcher performed another round of sampling to find a replacement. This new recruit had attended school in England and was sent back to Zimbabwe to re-sit 'O' and then proceed to 'A' Level.

Interviews

In qualitative research, data collection procedures involve the following (observation, interview, focus group, documents, and audio-visual digital materials) four basic types. Moser and Korstjens (2018) define an interview as a face-to-face conversation between participants and the interviewer. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions (Moser and Korstjens, 2018) that are few and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018).

This study utilised counter-storytelling, so interviews were conducted to explore participants' educational experiences. Interviews also provide a way of knowing

and telling their stories as a meaning-making process (Seidman, 2006). The interviewing period had a scheduled start and end date (October 1st, 2019, to February 28th, 2020). However, it was extended until March 12th, 2020, due to some participants' availability and disruption caused by withdrawal.

What follows in the next sections is a discussion of steps taken in the interview processes the researcher developed and applied in recording and collecting data. Since most interviews are semi-structured (Moser and Korstjens, 2018), the researcher developed an interview guide with five broad, semi-structured questions to elicit participant views. (Creswell and Creswell 2018). The questions covered (1) family background, (2) education in Zimbabwe, (3) migration to the UK, (4) education in the UK, and the last question, (5) 'Do you have anything else to say?' The last question asked participants to reflect on their interview answers and provide any additional information [see Appendix D].

The next step involved developing an interview protocol adapted from Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp.190-191). The interview protocol included basic information about the interview: introduction, opening questions, content questions, probes and closing instructions (see the interview information sheet in Appendix A). The interview question schedule was prepared and used alongside five semi-structured questions (see Appendix D) to guide the interview. The researcher committed to memorising the questions to minimise reading the interview protocol and ensure flow during the interview. In addition, an interview protocol allowed the researcher to guide the interview flow and elicit participants' views and opinions in an orderly, conversational manner.

A one-off pilot preliminary interview test was conducted for several purposes. First, to give the researcher a taster interviewing practice session. Second, it allowed the researcher to meditate on what to expect and to clear assumptions that participants would engage fully. Third, to confirm coverage and relevance of the content and to identify the need to reformulate questions (Salmons, 2011; Moser and Korstjens, 2018). In the pre-interview pilot, it took much work to gather meaningful views and opinions due to the brief answers and the inability of the researcher's probing to produce the desired result.

This outcome confirms Mercer's (2007, p.8.) explanation that 'people's willingness to talk to, and what they say to the researcher is influenced by whom they think a researcher is. Although the researcher knew the participants, judging what the participant(s) thought about her was difficult. This realisation was concerning, but it reminded the researcher of building a relationship with participants and allowed the researcher to consider other ways of probing to get more information. The one-off pilot was sufficient to prepare the researcher for the actual interview and how to mitigate if a situation like this happened. The researcher read literature on interviewing (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Issues emerged, such as assumptions about insider research and informant bias.

The next step involved scheduling interviews with each participant two days in advance and a few hours before the appointment. The researcher and the participant confirmed their availability and consent in the interview. Providing the interview questions in advance gave participants an idea of what to expect on the interview day. Participants were informed that they could contribute relevant information about a particular question. This step reflects the ethical principle of being considerate and sensitive to the educational background of all participants, especially in sensitive topics (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). It was essential to acknowledge and recognise the sensitivity of this topic (Corbin and Morse, 2003; Dempsey et al., 2016) since it had an element of educational attainment.

In addition to scheduling the interview day, participants and the researcher chose and agreed on an interview site. According to Given (2008), a research setting is the physical, social, and cultural site where the researcher conducts a study. DeCarlo (n. d) argued that one way of addressing the power between researcher and participant is to interview in a location of the participant's choice where they feel comfortable answering your questions. Interviews were conducted on multiple sites, as each participant chose their interview setting, including their own houses, parents' houses, the researcher's house, and the local central library (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Moser and Korstjens, 2018). The researcher adjusted because each setting came with its benefits and challenges, balanced against the setting's safety, comfort, and privacy levels (DeCarlo, n. d.).

The researcher arranged a separate room for interviews conducted in the participants' homes or the researcher's home, where another adult was present. This arrangement complied with BERA's (2018) ethical guidelines on protecting and maintaining participants' privacy. Also, to support the data collection phase, the researcher recorded details related to her observations during the interview and used the information to account for the researcher's thinking, feelings, experiences, and perceptions throughout the research process (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The first step in the interviewing process involved developing an interviewing protocol plan. This plan included sourcing a voice recorder to record the interview because it offers the flexibility of going back to listen again. The first recorder loaned from the university's IT department had a restricted loan period of seven days, yet it was needed for five months (October 2019 to February 2020). Realising this limitation, the researcher bought a voice recorder. The researcher also took handwritten notes as backup and a precaution for unforeseen technical issues. Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.190) recommend that researchers take notes if recording equipment fails.

The second step involved the processes for each interviewing day. The researcher arrived fifteen minutes before the interview to allow time for greetings and setting up. An interview protocol plan adapted from Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.191) was used to check the documentation, including signing the Informed Consent form (see appendix B) and briefing the participant about the interview structure. During the study, an interview schedule guided the interviews (see Appendices D and E). Each interview was scheduled to last up to 90 minutes, but some interviews ran for up to two hours due to the final question, which asked the participants if they had anything else to share. At the end of each interview, the participants were thanked and informed about how they would receive the study's results. They were also asked if they would be willing to be contacted for follow-up questions.

Ethical considerations

The research received ethical approval from the University, and details are given in the Appendices A-C (see pp.296-304). All participants were aged eighteen and

above at the time of the interview. However, the researcher still needed to observe the cultural strand of respect towards parents and their family members. As a result, the recruitment of participants involved two layers of permissions: first, individual participant's permissions and second, the cultural and traditional Zimbabwean protocols of respect. Without the traditionally designated persons, the church was the nearest alternative as it incorporated the traditional tenets of respect in Zimbabwe. An adult child in Zimbabwean culture is still accountable to the counsel of parents, and it is disrespectful to approach an adult child for specific issues outside their parental knowledge.

Using the church as a gatekeeper raised specific dilemmas highlighted in the BERA (2018, p.1) guidelines. These dilemmas resulted from the cultural divide between Western and traditional African or non-Western cultures (Ribbens, 1998). They centred around protocols, power dynamics, and the divergent perception of the 'church' in both contexts. The resolution to this dilemma emerged from recognising the cultural differences approach. In compliance with BERA's (2018, p.14) guidelines on cultures that adopt a collective approach to consent, this provision allowed the researcher to seek appropriate permission from religious leaders. Thus, the church became the gatekeeper. Not much literature has used the church as a gatekeeper, especially when the participants are over 18 years old. This procedure was necessary to dispel suspicions, given that the researcher was researching their community.

There is a significant difference in the interpretation and usage of the term 'church' in the Western public domain, which seems primarily inclined towards atheism. Christianity religion (see Chapter 2, History of Zimbabwe) has become a powerful Zimbabwean cultural value. In Zimbabwean society, Christian faith and affiliation to church denomination are esteemed cultural values established during the colonial period (Hungwe, 1994; Chitando, 2018).

However, the word 'church' has multiple meanings and perceptions depending on its use and contextual meaning. As such, the Zimbabwean church in England has an extra layer of responsibility, that of a ceremonial village headman providing community welfare and safety. For these reasons, the use of the church was in line with the cultural context, protocols, and power dynamics embedded in the

collectivist cultural value '*it takes a village to raise a child*' shared by Zimbabweans living in England.

The researcher had known some African Zimbabwean males since their arrival in the UK and followed up their educational journey informally through conversations with their parents. This confirms Kenan's (2018) assertion that qualitative researchers are typically familiar with the participants. In addition, it created a unique two-way power relationship between participants and the researcher. This relationship raised issues of auto-power imbalance that needed navigating. The researcher did not fully appreciate the weight of the power issue until after it was explained to them by the supervision team.

Self-awareness of power created continuous dilemmas, especially in judging personal interpretations of participants' educational experiences narratives. Ribbens (1998, p.3) refers to the dilemma researchers exploring the lives of non-Western societies face, and this study was no exception. The researcher was investigating the lives of marginalised non-Western, statistically unknown sub-group within the Black African ethnic categorisation living in a Western country and society. These dilemmas were also rooted in differences between Western public perspectives and non-Western minority (Ribbens, 1998) perspectives considering the colonial historical relationship.

Data analysis

This section focused on data analysis and the data analysis process. Flick (2018) argues that qualitative data can serve multiple purposes, including describing a specific group's subjective experience (the lived educational experiences of transitioning into the English education system). The second aim is to identify conditions on which such differences are based. It required looking for explanations for such differences, for example, circumstances that made it more likely that Zimbabwean males achieve in an African majority education system and underachieve in an African minority education system.

After collecting data, the next stage involved analysing and making sense of it. Cohen et al. (2011, p.537) define qualitative data analysis as a process that involves organising, accounting, and explaining the data, making sense of data in

terms of participants' definition of the situation, and noting patterns, themes and categories. Similarly, Sivia and Skilling (2006) define *data analysis* as examining all the information and evaluating the relevant information that can be helpful in better decision-making. Flick (2014) adds that data analysis is the interpretation and classification of linguistic or visual material to make statements about the implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it. Meaning-making refers to the subjective nature of meanings based on historical, cultural, and social realms (Sundler et al. (2019). Data was then analysed by looking for patterns, themes, and examples of concepts to illuminate.

There is consensus among authors such as Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Lester et al., (2020) that the whole purpose of data analysis is to make sense and bring meaning to the data set. To analyse the experiences of African Zimbabwean males in the field of education, the researcher used counter-storytelling (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001) as an analytical tool to interpret and describe the data (Flick, 2014; Sundler et al., 2019). As previously mentioned, this study focused on the educational experiences of African Zimbabweans in academic ability groups one and two before transitioning into schools in England, where they were admitted into higher-year groups. The researcher needed to interpret and understand the meanings of participants' educational experiences and raise their educational issues (Cohen et al., 2011). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the same principles of data collection guided the data analysis regarding the different strategies for different research designs.

This is a counter-storytelling study which adopts a thematic analysis. When selecting appropriate data analysis methods, the researcher considered common approaches such as content, thematic, and discourse analysis. Each of these approaches was assessed for its suitability for the analysed data. The choice was informed by Strauss and Corbin's (1990) theoretical sensitivity and Bernal's (1998) cultural intuition. Therefore, utilising theoretical sensitivity, the researcher searched through data for patterns, themes, and examples of concepts that needed illuminating. For example, interview data on educational experiences in England suggests that many African Zimbabwean males expressed culture shock,

loneliness/isolation, low morale, and low expectations, yet despite the odds, they were determined to succeed. Critical race theory and theoretical sensitivity challenge the researcher to view these sentiments as legitimate and fundamental in understanding the Zimbabweans' educational experience. The researcher ensured that the participants' voices were represented throughout the text. In addition, the researcher looked for other data related to these concepts in literature on the education of African Americans and Black African Caribbean in England, social sciences, and humanities.

Upon reviewing the literature, connections were compared to previous readings and interview data. As mentioned earlier (see researcher's role and reflexivity), the researcher adds professional and personal experiences to the related concepts. It was essential to consider the perspectives of various individuals, such as family members, friends, and communities. In this counter-story study, the researcher applied the lenses of race, gender, immigration, class, and the experiences of Zimbabweans to critically examine the cultural, social and academic differences across the two education systems.

Data analysis procedures

The data analysis aims to understand patterns of meanings derived from data on the participants' descriptions of their lived educational experiences. Data analysis in this study involved using various tools, including descriptive methods and interpretations of interviews and case studies (Patton, 2002). Data analysis was administered following a combined step-by-step thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) and primarily based on counter-storytelling (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001; Cook and Dixon, 2013) that embeds Miles and Huberman (1994) and Pesch's (1990) coding steps. The first step in data analysis involved several steps of familiarising with the data set. First, data was prepared by listening and transcribing taped interviews verbatim (Cohen et al., 2011), adhering to ethical guidelines on confidentiality and anonymity, and giving each participant an anonymised name (BERA, 2018). Each transcribed interview was printed in Microsoft Word document; this allowed the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data through open-mind reading.

The second step in data familiarisation process involved multiple cycles of open-minded reading of the interview transcripts. The first cycle of familiarisation included reviewing and interpreting the data to comprehend its overall significance (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Sundler et al., 2019). The second cycle involved the researcher re-reading interview transcripts, listening to audio interviews several times, making notes, and highlighting areas of interest relevant to the research question and theoretical framework (Moser and Korstijens, 2018). While analysing individual interview data, the researcher considered the following questions: What relationship does this participant have to schools pre- and post-transition? How does this participant talk about and understand what is going on in schools and the tone of the ideas? (Cook and Dixon, 2013). How does this participant make sense of their experiences? What general ideas are participants highlighting? What is the impression of the information's overall depth, credibility, and use? What kind of world is revealed through their accounts? (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This phase helped the researcher to become intimately familiar with the data set's content and notice things of interest that might be relevant to the research question.

The third step involved generating initial codes through a systematic manual coding of all data. Coding in thematic analysis has some similarities with coding in grounded theory. The focus of thematic analysis is to identify and develop themes. (Braun and Clarke 2012). The coding process enabled the researcher to identify code labels for features relevant to the research question. Coding generated descriptions of the setting or people, including categories or themes for analysis. In addition, the researcher paid attention to the type of codes developed while analysing interview transcripts. Generally, codes tend to fall into three categories: expected codes, surprising codes, codes of unusual or conceptual interest, and pre-determined codes. (Tesch 1990; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The coding helped the researcher summarise and describe the data's content. Coding also helped to answer the analytical questions mentioned above in stage one and beyond. Clarke and Braun (2012, p.61) contend that codes go beyond the participants' meanings and provide an interpretation of data content. Further, such

interpretative or latent codes identify meanings that lie beneath the semantic surface of data. Some codes mirror participants' language and concepts, while others invoke the researcher's conceptual and theoretical frameworks. For example, no participant used the term racism to describe their educational experiences in schools in England. However, the researcher understood their meanings through the tenets of CRT.

The fourth step of the data analysis involved searching for themes, a progression from codes to generating or constructing themes. Braun and Clarke (2012, p.63) highlight that a theme captures something about the data about the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. The researcher constantly reviewed coded data through winnowing to identify areas of similarity and overlap between codes and cluster codes that shared some unifying feature. (Braun and Clarke 2012; Creswell and Creswell 2018).

This process allowed the researcher to identify any broad topics around the code. For example, the researcher identified codes that, on the one hand, focused on experiences of racism and the absence of motivation to learn as they transitioned into schools in England. Conversely, the researcher identified codes that focused on the cultural, social and academic differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems. The codes were re-examined in more detail, which helped identify where the codes' focus was. The researcher explored the relationship between themes and considered how themes worked together—for example, Blackness, Black normativity, ethnicity, and its relationship with educational attainment.

The fifth step involved searching for themes and reviewing potential themes through a recursive process whereby the developing themes about the coded data and the entire data set were reviewed (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). A cycle of checking themes against the collated data extracts and ensuring they worked in the coded data and entire data set. This was achieved by constantly asking questions (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p.65) about potential themes and collapsing or discarding the theme altogether. In addition, Sundler et al. (2019, p.736) suggest that alternating between the whole and its parts can

facilitate sensitive dialogues in writing. Also, as the analysis progressed, meanings related to each other were compared to identify differences and similarities. It was necessary to determine whether the themes meaningfully captured the most essential and relevant elements and the overall tone of the data about the research question. A final re-reading of all data was necessary to confirm that the selected themes captured the entire data set or part of it (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

The sixth and final step involved another continuous recursive process of defining and naming themes. This process allowed the researcher to clearly state the uniqueness of each theme by asking questions for each defined and named theme. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.66) suggest that each theme needs to reflect the constituents of a good theme (single focus, related, not overlap, directly addresses the research question). As a novice researcher, it was crucial to get it right because the correct naming of themes was central to answering the research questions. This phase also involved selecting extracts to quote when presenting and providing a structure for analysis. Throughout this process of defining and naming themes, the researcher constantly went back and forth, asking and answering questions about the selection process. After a thorough analysis, the researcher identified two broad themes that focused on:

- the academic, cultural, and social educational experiences in Zimbabwe
- the experiences in cultural, social, and academic differences between the Zimbabwe and English education systems during their transition.

In addition, within each broad theme are several other main sub-themes. The researcher overlaid these themes over historical/temporal codes (pre/post-transition). In addition, the study analysed emerging themes to determine their correspondence with CRT and counter-storytelling tenet (Bell, 1987; Delgado, 1989; Matsuda et al., 1993; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

Data Interpretation

Data interpretation is the final stage in qualitative research, and it aims to describe and interpret the meaning of the experience. Ngulube (2015, p.17) stresses that interpretation is the terminal phase of qualitative inquiry, which involves interpreting data to get the meaning because, without interpretation, data is

meaningless. In addition, Braun and Clarke (2006, p.67) sum up the importance of interpretation by asserting that data does not speak for itself. Further, creating meaning and making sense of the data is the primary purpose of data analysis (Patton, 2002; Flick, 2014; Ngulube, 2015). Crucially, interpretation is about what lessons were learnt. These could be the researcher's interpretation embedded in the understanding they bring to the study from a historical, cultural, and personal experience. It could be from meanings derived from a comparison of findings.

Thus, the main challenge confronting the researcher was discussing the interpretation of qualitative data. This challenge arose from Denzin and Lincoln's (2005, p.909) observation that 'interpretation' is regarded as an art that is not amenable to formal rules, as the processes that define the interpretation practices are always ongoing, emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished'. This challenge was mitigated by considering several procedures, such as summarising overall findings, comparing findings, and stating limitations and future research. The interpretation phase involved assessing, analysing, and interpreting the data collected. Ngulube (2015, p.17) highlights that the different points of view of the participants should be presented in sufficient detail and depth. This question guided the interpretation: What were the lessons learnt? Therefore, verbatim participant quotations helped reveal how meanings were expressed in their own words rather than by the researcher (Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Sundler et al., 2019). A fundamental principle of counter-storytelling is respecting the participants' experiences and stories and recognising that this is their reality, and no one has lived their lives. The interpretation comprised participants' voices, the researcher's perceptions, biases, personal beliefs, reflexivity, and a complete problem description (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Researcher's Role and Reflexivity

The researcher's role as a critical data collection instrument requires early identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases brought to the study. Therefore, considering these issues, the researcher explicitly and reflexively identified the biases, values, and personal backgrounds, such as gender, history, culture, and socio-economic status, which shaped their interpretations during the study. The researcher's input can be valuable and positive rather than negative.

A narrative of the researcher's past experiences with the research phenomenon is presented concerning the above. The researcher's perceptions of education and educational attainment in this study were shaped by their personal, cultural, historical, social, and educational experiences (in both colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe) and professional experiences gained working in the primary education sector in Zimbabwe. As mentioned earlier, in colonial Zimbabwe, Africans were generally restricted. As for girls, they had an extra restriction based on traditional perceptions about educating girls (Dorsey, 1989), except if they were from a higher socio-economic background and others who appreciated education as the way out of poverty. Parents from these backgrounds held different cultural perceptions that appreciated equitable education and allowed girls to progress to higher levels of education (Dorsey, 1989). It also resembles the middle-class African-Americans in DeCuir and Dixon (2004).

The researcher brought several backgrounds into the study: gender (female) and academic and professional qualifications (see section on personal interest). In addition, Dorsey (1989, p.5) explains that 'higher economic status is an indicator that educated parents have acquired more modern values and are interested in educating their sons and daughters.' The researcher also brought various experiences gained across the two education systems to the study. Experiences gained in Zimbabwe include being a qualified primary school teacher in one of Harare's government schools with an annual enrolment of 2000 primary school children. The researcher also has experience in school leadership roles such as Teacher-In-Charge of the Infants Department and acting Deputy Head. Additionally, the researcher has experience in educational administration, teaching, learning, attainment, and progression into secondary education. Lastly, the researcher has worked with the government's regional Ministry of Education Officers to implement educational policies to improve teaching and learning attainment standards.

Relocating to England, the researcher held several roles supporting new arrivals from Zimbabwe in primary and secondary schools across the Manchester Local Education Authority. The researcher also worked in Further Education post-16 provision and, most recently, worked on developing educational supplementary

support for African Zimbabwean boys in Greater Manchester. The experience gained in these two contexts enhanced the researcher's awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to many challenges (Mercer, 2007; Creswell and Creswell, 2018) and a general understanding of issues encountered by teachers. This experience helped the researcher to engage with the participants in this study. Also, the researcher's professional background and shared knowledge of education placed the researcher in a position of trust. In Zimbabwe and elsewhere, teachers are highly esteemed, particularly by school children and their families.

This section moves on to highlight how past experiences shape interpretations. Given the researcher's previous experience working in the education sector in Zimbabwe, they bring certain biases to this study, mirrored in the differences in educational expectations and aspirations. On one hand, this raises the issue of the researcher's objectivity and neutrality while conducting the study. On the other hand, there is a recognition that total objectivity and neutrality are impossible to achieve (Blackwell n. d). Nevertheless, every effort was made to maintain objectivity despite these biases still influencing how the researcher viewed and understood the data collected, analysed, and interpreted. In addition, the researcher was constantly faced with the dilemma of their position as a researcher (a female, African, Other, from the third world), taking peripheral educational knowledge to the centre of predominantly Western knowledge. (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). This was addressed by acknowledging the importance of amplifying the voices and experiences of African Zimbabwean males from the margins to the centre.

African Zimbabwean males in this study were known to the researcher in various ways. First, by their being Zimbabweans. Second, through extended family networks along the totem lineage. Third, through several interconnected networks, including professional, regional, and church affiliations, and lastly, as part of the Zimbabwe diaspora community settled in the North-West of England through the Home Office policy on dispersal of asylum seekers (Humphris, 2010). The researcher's background and relationship with participants automatically position them as an insider-outsider researcher. Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p.55) highlight the ever-present personhood aspect of the researcher, including their

membership status concerning those participating in the research. As an insider, the researcher shared these characteristics with participants: African Zimbabwean, Shona language, community leader, parent [includes non-biological in African Zimbabwean Shona and Ndebele cultures], teacher, and the experience of teaching and learning.

In addition to the above, the researcher, as a critical instrument, automatically takes the insider position. This position allowed the researcher to bring their knowledge, understanding, and experiences of the Zimbabwe education system and the males into the research as an insider. However, it did not mean that the researcher had the full knowledge of the sub-culture of African Zimbabwean males, nor claimed a complete understanding of it. The role of insider researchers was limited by factors such as age, environment, gender, and parental and professional responsibilities. At that point, the researcher became an outsider because male participants had their subculture, which the researcher was not privy to. Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p.5) emphasise that sometimes the researcher switches from insider to outsider. In addition, male participants had a more profound knowledge and experience of the education system in England. As stated earlier, the researcher also reflected on what influenced participants' willingness to share their experiences. Mercer (2007, p.8) states, 'People's willingness to talk to you and what people say to you is influenced by who they think you are.' Put differently, participants' sharing is inherent in elements of loyalty and how an interviewer is perceived (Fleming, 2018).

Researching one's community is synonymous with 'backyard research'. Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.184) highlight that backyard research involves studying their organisation or community. The challenge encountered is that it often leads to compromises in the researcher's ability to disclose information. In conducting a backyard study, the researcher was aware of the possibility that the information was easy and convenient. However, it may need to be more accurate and complex to extract with some degree of accuracy. Therefore, clarifying issues surrounding anonymity, data protection, and the boundaries and legal obligations was essential (BERA, 2018; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Conducting this procedure guaranteed that data was not going to be compromised. Also, several strategies

for validation were followed, including ethical approval from Leeds Beckett University's Ethics Committee Board and complying with BERA ethical guidelines, which will be discussed further in the ethics section.

Issues of power and confidentiality may arise. According to Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009):

Whether the researcher is an insider, sharing the characteristic, role, or experience under study with the participants, or an outsider to the commonality shared by participants, the personhood of the researcher, including her or his membership status concerning those taking part in the research, is an essential and ever-present aspect of the investigation. (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p.55)

Acknowledging the above statement allowed the researcher to continually reflect on their role as a critical instrument at each stage and check back and forth for the accuracy of information. A connection exists between the researcher and participants that is ongoing during the study. This relationship is regulated by following ethical guidelines on respect, not causing harm, treating participants with respect and dignity, and giving them the right to withdraw. Since participation was voluntary (BERA, 2018), these considerations were addressed appropriately.

Validity and Reliability

This section focuses on issues of reliability and validity. There is a consensus that qualitative validity means the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by applying specific procedures. In contrast, qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and projects.

Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.199) argue that validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account. Silverman (2010, pp.275–276) highlights that "validity is how qualitative researchers convince themselves and their audience, that their findings are genuinely based on critical investigation of all their data and do not depend on a few well-chosen examples?". To establish the validity of this study, the researcher used rich, thick descriptions of each setting and offered many perspectives about

the theme. By providing a detailed description of the data, the researcher aimed to transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Another strategy involved clarifying the researcher's bias by self-reflection and commenting on the researcher's background, including gender, culture, ethnicity, and socio-economic origin.

The reliability of this study draws from the procedures recommended by the authors (Yin, 2009; Gibbs, 2007). The researcher documented the procedures applied throughout the study to achieve reliability. The transcripts were checked for accuracy by listening to the audio tapes more than once, and an open reading of the text helped to ensure their accuracy.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed and presented the overall individual processes applied in this qualitative research methodology chapter. The chapter advanced unique characteristics of the qualitative research approach, the constructivist philosophical worldview, and the counter-storytelling case study as a research design. The data was collected and analysed through descriptive counter-storytelling. Three main themes emerged from the data analysis, centred on participants' ability to identify and navigate the cultural, social, and academic differences across the two education systems. It also considered the researcher's role, reflexivity, validity, and reliability. The next chapter introduces study participants' pen portraits.

Chapter 6: Introducing the participants

Introduction

This study examined the lived educational experiences of African Zimbabwean-born males who started their education in Zimbabwe and then transitioned to continue their education up to the GCSE level in England. The first five chapters covered the following: an introduction to the problem, the history of education in Zimbabwe, a review of the literature, a CRT framework, and research methods. This chapter presents the findings from the collected and analysed data using a CRT's counter-story-telling framework used for this study. Interviews were conducted with seven male participants. This study involved an in-depth study, open-ended interviews with young African Zimbabwean males aged (18-36), who were born and started their education in Zimbabwe, then came to England to continue and complete their compulsory and further education. The same researcher administered these interviews, and all names of participants and places used in this study have been anonymised.

To fully understand their whole educational experiences, findings presented in two sections: the first section presents the educational experiences in Zimbabwe, and in section two, by the educational experiences in England. The central research question asked is 'how did some African Zimbabwean males perceive and navigate the cultural, social, and academic differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems during their transition?'. What follows is a presentation of participants' pen portraits, followed by an exploration of their educational experiences in Zimbabwe, experiences as left-behind children, and finally their educational experiences in England.

Participant Pen portraits

According to Morecroft et al. (2006, p.194), a pen portrait is a "descriptive account of what is considered by the researcher to be meaningful". It serves as a descriptive or interpretive summary that represents the qualitative data for a specific participant, also known as an individual participant pen portrait. The most

common use of pen portraits is to represent the data of specific participants in qualitative research (Blundell and Oakley, 2024, p.47). In this study, the purpose of using pen portraits is to provide a holistic representation of each participant's account (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013; Blundell and Oakley, 2024), offering an overview of their key characteristics, background, and behaviours. Additionally, pen portraits are used to summarise participants' identities and experiences, emphasising the counter-narratives of the educational life stories of African Zimbabwean males, both as individuals and as a group. The following section presents the pen portraits of the seven African Zimbabwean male participants in this study. In compliance with BERA (2018) requirements for anonymity, all names mentioned in this study are pseudonyms. Additionally, all quotes are italicised to emphasise that they were spoken words rather than written.

This section presents the pen portraits of the seven participants in this study. In compliance with BERA (2018) requirements for anonymity, all names mentioned in this study are pseudonyms. In addition, all quotes are in italics to emphasise that they were spoken words rather than written.

Anotipa

Anotipa was aged 27 at the time of the interview. He was born in Glen-Norah, Harare, Zimbabwe, and is the last born in a family of three. He lived with both parents who were professionals until the age of 8, when after the death of both parents was separated from his siblings. His first language is Ndebele and speaks fluent English. Anotipa shows a considerate feeling for others and is warm and approachable. I met him at an event and after sharing with him about my research, he instantly agreed to participate. At the time of the interview, Anotipa was in his final year of a master's programme. Anotipa spent most of his formative years in Zimbabwe where he received private education from nursery, up to secondary. In primary school, he attended former Group A schools. Reflecting on schools attended and his learning in Zimbabwe he commented:

It is an old British missionary school, the missionary who used to travel like spreading the Western culture, dress. So, the school was implemented on British culture, education, and a dress code and all these things. That was the best time in my life in terms of

education. It was a boarding school, boys only, able to connect with other boys and learn (p.8).

Anotipa arrived England at the age of 16, when he was in final year to write GCSEs, on family reunion with his siblings (brother and sister), and to continue his education. Anotipa described his transition as easy because he was already integrated into schools that follow the ethos of the British syllabus though there seemed to be a tension between his experiences of teachers' attitudes in Zimbabwe and in England as expressed his comment:

In Zimbabwe, you were actually taught whereby you are handed out a brief to do but before you even explore the brief, thoroughly taught and even if it is two, three or four lessons before your actual assignment. Whereas in the UK, teachers are instructors, all you are given is a handout and they left you to figure out, that's not learning (p.23).

Anotipa describes his interest in rugby and how he used to play for the school team in Zimbabwe and other good outcomes that came because of playing rugby. He commented:

I felt as if I have been one of the best in the school and playing for the 1st team felt a sense of importance a sense of belonging because I have never really felt like that (p.9).

Anotipa describes how his interest in rugby in England took a different turn and is now filming.

I wanted to play for England. I believed it to be true, because I joined the rugby team for a few months, and I quit (p.19).

Anotipa is mature and displays a courageous heart and has triumphed over pain. He describes himself as an orphan separated from his siblings for eight years after the death of their parents, and the racism he has experience in England as expressed in his comment.

When you stop having parents, your life just becomes a big distortion, (p.6). It doesn't dishearten me, it's a like a needle, a bit of stress that I don't need. Even though I have learnt to master the strength to block out racism, I don't acknowledge it, no because it's everywhere (p.29).

Ngoni

At the time of the interview Ngoni was aged 32, He was born in Zimbabwe, he is the last-born child in a family of three boys. His parents are professionals (Headmaster and Nurse). He had a privileged upbringing attended day nursery and primary school. He attended boarding secondary school before transitioning to the UK, where he continued with his secondary and higher education, Ngoni studied a joint honours degree and was working at a financial institution. He speaks Shona and English languages.

Ngoni describes his experiences of learning in Zimbabwe and reflected on his favourite subjects in primary school (Home Economics p, 4), applying for boarding secondary, school sports (Cricket school captain, p,4) and how education is valued in his culture:

I think it's just in our culture: you go to primary school, you go to High School, you go to university and then you get a good job from that. I think that is basically our Zimbabwean culture. So, you will probably find more Zimbabwean males, so the ones who probably grew up in Zimbabwe, will go to university (p.13).

Ngoni is tall and slim built, warm, and approachable, always ready with an affectionate smile. This was also evident in his comment which sums up his Ubuntu/Unhu values and attitude to education worldview:

I have always been raised not to do that and it's something I never really do. Just because I spent a good eight, nine years education in Zimbabwe, and that was basically something that was set in my head that you don't do that. That you always need to have respect because it's your education. Because I was thirteen/fourteen, maybe about fourteen, about fourteen that time so, I think I'm already grown-up to realise that ultimately, it's my education. It's not going to help, it's not gonna help me in the long run by answering back and arguing (p.9).

Ngoni arrived in England in 2002, (with his father who later died in England) describes his transition experiences to English schools, the loneliness in a classroom being obviously the only black African in that classroom and how he struggled during the first year of his education in England:

I definitely felt obviously moving over that and not being able to obviously communicate and to speak to other people and then you end up feeling like everybody is looking at you and watching you and thinking what's wrong with you and something like that. Why is he not like other people. not in terms of skin colour like why is he not talking like other people (accent) or why is not, is he just being rude (p.11).

Ngoni also expresses his surprise on getting more prizes in England than in Zimbabwe as follows:

Funny enough, I think I got more prizes when I came over here. When I did my studies, my education here than when I was in Zimbabwe (p.6).

Ngoni describes how he found that English in England was different to the English he had studied in Zimbabwe and reflected on his discovery:

Obviously, a language barrier for me, so that was always gonna be a challenge because obviously my whole life, my first language has been Shona. So, definitely language barrier was the first to try and find out how to understand (p.9).

In terms of cultural differences, he felt not affected,

I don't think it affected me, eer, I think it was more just the case of adjusting and understanding the cultural backgrounds and the way things are that happens naturally all the time (p.8).

Ngoni shares his thoughts on Black African classification. He commented:

Yea, yaa-aa. I was definitely aware, but I don't think in Zimbabwe you would ever think yourself as black African. You know you are but it's not like someone will go you are black African. Because it will be, so are you my friend, because you're all black Africans so, you're all at home. (p.12).

Simba

Simba was aged 20 years old at the time of the interview. He was born in Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe and lived with his parents, the first born out of two sons. Although his first language is Shona, he is not fluent and instead uses English as his first language. His mother, a nurse was the first to come to England

as a highly skilled professional immigrant to work in the National Health Service (NHS). He stayed behind with his father then joined his mother in England the following year. I had known Simba's family since 2004 through church. Simba is a tall, slim, mature, thoughtful, and has a welcoming serious look. Simba, he had started nursery education in Zimbabwe, when he came to England on a family reunion in 2002. He has been living in England for over ten years now and has spent the last four years finishing his 'O' Level qualification and 'A' Level qualification in Zimbabwe.

Simba attended private nursery education in Zimbabwe, then came to England to continue reception, primary and secondary education. He went back to re-write and his 'O' Levels and finish 'A' Levels, a decision his mother made, and the tensions and conflicts associated with this move. Reflecting on his educational experiences for someone coming from England Simba describes his first year as follows:

To be fair I wasn't very positive about going. I went to a private boarding school in the city. immediate change I mean was the time because I was used to, I go to school at 8, I finish at 3. But my school in Zim, was 8am till 8pm. I wasn't very receptive to other students, but to teachers. Everyone was very keen to talk to me, but I wasn't very keen to talking to anyone. I was very angry and bitter for a long time, just from the fact that I was there (p.13).

Reflecting of his learning experiences, Simba made comparison about how education is valued in two countries comparing

Education has very big value in Zimbabwe. From everyone just valued education, the culture is, just from that you can see how different it is. If I had been the number one in my class in England. Then I don't think it would have been celebrated with my friends. Maybe I would have been even shy to tell them, it might have been embarrassing. But in Zim, it was something to be celebrated. Like everyone got up and cheered you and say, well done, you did this, you read, you worked (p.14).

In England, Simba attended reception, primary school and secondary school. He held describes his education as going well throughout, but changed:

I remember from when I was 4 till now, I remember that I went to school one day, and kids were allowed to bring in toys. So, I used to have loads of toys but I left my toys behind. So, everyone on my table bring his toy, and then there was this kid. He had this perfect little white tiger toy. It was playing about, he looked you know when you're a kid, just you see someone playing with something and you want it. So, he's playing with that, there were six people on the table, 5 people got to play with that toy at that table, and when it came to me, I wasn't included. I'm not saying it because of this but I was also the only black person on the table (p.10).

Simba went through many transforming phases regarding his identity when he moved back to Zimbabwe. Since he had lived in England aged 4, he identified himself as English as expressed in his comment:

Full English, not a drop of anything else, just English. I would say I'm from England, my parents are from Zimbabwe (p.17).

Identity mindsets change and self- discovery that occurred from going back to Zimbabwe, and finding his true identity as he comments:

Like I said the first two years, I was, I had a lot of bitterness, I was still, I think I went over the extreme of how much I did not want to acknowledge like, yaa, this is my home. But over the time you get to talk to people, you get to find a little bit about yourself, about the culture, like I found out where my kumusha (tribal village) is, my totem. where you're from, not even as a Zimbabwean but as a black person. A lot of history, a lot of our way that has been taken from us a lot of culture has been taken away, like err, even the education system, you can even argue the religion, a lot of that has been influenced through slavery and through White people colonising African countries..., So, yaa, through learning about where I came from, learning more about my culture, I have been able to better embrace it. Now, I don't hide from it anymore. I am a Zimbabwean that was raised in Britain. My blackness is rooted in Zimbabwe, I can't say I'm a black British, because my blackness isn't rooted in Britain. (p.18).

Tafara

Tafara was aged 36 at the time of the interview. He was born in Budiro, Harare, Zimbabwe. He lived with both parents, his father was a mechanic and mother's

occupation is not known. Tafara's first language is Shona and speaks fluent English too. He attended creche, primary school, and part of his secondary in Glen-Norah suburb, until the death of her mother when he transferred to rural Murambinda District, to complete his 'O' Levels and left with seven subject passes, including English and Mathematics.

Tafara came to England aged of 17, managed to complete Year 1 of college, and could not proceed because of immigration issues. He has vivid memories of enjoyed his school days and spoke highly of those days particularly about the competition which characterised his learning experiences in Zimbabwe as expressed in his primary school experience comments:

I still remember the name of the girl who was number one. Shuvai Nyika, I remember her very well. To be honest, I was jealousy, I was jealousy, I didn't like it. Shuvai Nyika was number one. I remember Shuvai Nyika like yesterday (p.4).

Tafara enjoyed the competitiveness of his learning in secondary school, and his attitude towards education especially academic achievement. He uses comments about ability classes:

But having said that, even if you go to South, which was the best, the cream of the, if you are in the South, it doesn't mean that you're if you become a distraction and your performance is not good, you will be moved from South, because South was the cream. It was very competitive. English premiership. Yea, it was among students you had to compete because one thing you don't want would be to move to West, you wouldn't want to be moved from South to West because you would be seen as you are doing really bad. Fortunate enough I never got the chance to be moved, I never gave them the chance to move me. So, the competition among students was very, very, you could see it (p.8).

Transitioning to England, Tafara expresses short lived feelings of liking the place but quickly shifts to feeling betrayal and frustration within the English education system. He describes his experiences in this way:

Because I found out that coming here, I had more independent, and more freedom at school they were not strict at all, the competition was gone. I found out for some reason their

education system was actually backwards. Their syllabus was way backwards, and way relaxed. Because when I came here, I was doing you're supposed to be what they call Form Five which is college. Things that they did, for example I had studied Accounts, things that they were doing I had done that two years before (p.11).

Tafara appreciates education, but was frustrated because teachers were ignorant about his Zimbabwean educational background as expressed in this comment:

Did they know that I had so much competition where I was coming from? No, they didn't have a clue. To them I was another brilliant child or brilliant student, but they look down upon Zimbabwean education. Here the teachers are oblivious (ignorant) especially about Zimbabwean education. They are oblivious or they just choose to, maybe they're just pompous of their own system (p.12).

Tafara has respect for elders and authority and was against anyone who did not, as expressed in his comment:

I never actually personally did that, because I found it a bit difficult because the environment that I come from you don't dare talk back to the teacher. Yet even just give a dirty look to the teacher you don't do that where I come from (p.12).

Tanatswa

Tanatswa was born in Mufakose, Harare, Zimbabwe, the first born and only boy in a family of two. He speaks two languages (Shona, his first language and English). Tanatswa lived with his parents and other extended family members. His father was a police officer and mother a secretary/clerk in Zimbabwe. Tanatswa had lived in England, since he was 7 years old, and was aged 25 at the time of the interview. He was working as an Assistant Librarian at a Local Authority library. Tanatswa is a shy-looking, soft spoken, always smiling and has a humble demeanour.

In Zimbabwe, Tanatswa attended creche and primary in former Group A schools up to Grade 2. Then he left to join his parents and to continue the rest of his education in England. Describing his education in Zimbabwe, Tanatswa has fond memories of his early years' education, and how he valued his education.

Tanatswa refers to doing his Mathematics homework, and his awareness of the consequences of not doing it. He particular fascination with handwriting, as expressed in his comment:

I was fascinated in writing like how grown-ups wrote, so everything jointed-up. So, I taught myself how to write at a young age (p.2).

In relation to his educational experiences in England he describes differences between the two mentioning learning and teachers' attitudes. Tanatswa says 'back home' if you don't do your homework you have to explain it in front of the class. While in England you write 50 lines of 'I will do my homework' and that's it. He enjoyed his primary school years, but secondary school experiences were challenging. Tanatswa expresses his anger because there were situations, he was made to deny himself as expressed in his comments:

You are on a mask all the time. Fighting back trying to fit in a society that doesn't really accept you. I was coming from being and African into British, then I said, no, no, I'm not British, I'm African (p.7).

Tanatswa referred to History lessons where he felt deeply humiliated:

You're in one room and you're watching a History session where you're only told England did this, England did that and we took slaves and the only thing you're seeing is that blacks are the only people that are being treated like---and you're the only black in class and they're saying things like they go to Africa and they found this and these guys were eating this (p.8).

Tanatswa had shown interest in his education, although he felt he was not pushed by his teachers in secondary school except by his parents. He was critical at the way Black boys were perceived. If you look at something if you see, if you hear there's a gang (emphasised tone) of people, you automatically associate with blacks. Or all these drugs and knife violence or gun violence you associate that with black. When you see like or if you hear a bomb, it could be a White person made the bomb, but you automatically associate with someone from Pakistan. That's why it feels like you're programmed to fail.

Tatenda

Tatenda was aged 26 at the time of the interview. He was born in Mabvuku, Harare, Zimbabwe, a middle child, and eldest son, out of three siblings. He comes from a family background of professionals (father a mechanic, he is deceased now, and mother a nurse). Although he is Shona is his first language, Tatenda speaks only English language. He lives with his mother and younger brother. Tatenda describes himself as an *introvert* (p,11) has warm and has a respectful manner. I met him on the tram by chance and we had a chat, about my research. His first reaction was, you have just reminded me of the school bell, and he agreed to take part. He has lived in England for almost twenty years. Relating to his identity, Tatenda acknowledges his Zimbabwean, but is conflicted with this dual identity (Zimbabwean Black British).

He attended nursery and part of his primary education in Zimbabwe. Tatenda doesn't recall much of his education experiences in Zimbabwe as expressed: I think there was kindergarten, and then there was like school, school. He left Zimbabwe aged between 9/10. Tatenda describes how he was assessed by his primary school Headteacher in English he wanted to assess how much English he knew. Tatenda knew English because he had learnt English at school in Zimbabwe. Initially placed Year 2 but eventually he was placed in Year 4. He describes his first impressions of primary school in England as:

A bit different, weird you know, just because it was a new environment. That's it, but everyone was nice to me (p.4).

Tatenda describes his primary school leaving assembly very proud of the compliments he was given. He remembered his teachers saying:

Well behaved we always knew you would go on to do greater things (p.7).

Tatenda describes his secondary school as predominantly Asian student population, and there were three Zimbabweans, but he was the only Zimbabwean in his class. In high school, he has always steered clear of trouble, choosing his friends wisely and has maintained his good behaviour. Relating to his behaviour, Tatenda expresses:

Fortunately, with me, I think the reason why I never went wayward was because I was just scared of getting into trouble, I think that was it. I'm not saying I have always known what is wrong and right. And I'm an introvert by nature, so that probably would have been the reason if I was extroverted, I don't know maybe (p.11).

Reflecting on his high school experience, Tatenda describes how he has experienced 'not strong racism' and the commendation from an exchange programme teacher from New Zealand:

He (the teacher) picked me and some other candidates like the good ones as eer well behaved and said well-done you were a pleasure to teach (p.8).

Tatenda has remained focused and well-mannered despite opportunities being there, as a boy living with his widowed mother, but had remained resolute:

I mean the opportunity was there, because she was, she would go to work she was a nurse, obviously she would leave at night. If I had wanted to, I could have sneaked out (p.11).

Tinotenda

Tinotenda was 18 years at the time of the interview. He was born in Zimbabwe and lived with both parents, but who are now divorced. At the time of the interview and was living with his father. His first language is Shona, but he mostly communicates in the English language. Tatenda's mother is a Social Worker, and his father a Qualified Mental Health Nurse, having obtained his first degree in Zimbabwe. I had known Tinotenda's father through church and he thought Tinotenda would be interested in participating in the research. Tatenda is loving, full of fun, and high spirits. He came to England in 2004, went back to Zimbabwe in 2006, and was living with his grandma until he returned to England in 2009. In Zimbabwe, he attended private primary school. Tinotenda attended nursery in England, then the first part of his primary school Grade 1-4 in Zimbabwe. Regarding his education in Zimbabwe, Tinotenda commented that he had a good relationship with both teachers and other school children. He described the teacher's attitude like this:

I remember in class there was me and this girl we were always good when it came to education. Or if we got something wrong,

she wouldn't want to do anything to us because ... she knew if we made a mistake, we've actually tried. So, it's like she kind of had kind of love for me in a way that made me feel happy and that I am doing well in education (p.2).

Tinotenda felt he was pushed to improve his performance, yet he had reservations about the disciplinary methods employed by teachers. Nevertheless, he acknowledged and internalised the rationale behind such disciplinary actions:

We just did kind of tests yes, and we also did verbal tests as well. So, it's just.... they would say you can't move on if you don't pass.... you would get hit if you misbehave or you don't get grade that you are meant to. I was hit once for, it wasn't hard because the teacher knew when like I had made that mistake, I had tried my hardest (p.2).

Tinotenda returned to England to complete his primary and secondary education. He was struck t the amount of White people, differences in subject content, and change of environment as expressed in his comment:

The amount of White people that were there.... Instead of seeing one or two White people, I'm seeing one or two Black people. so, that's something that kind of shocked me (p.6).

Tinotenda reflected on his behaviour in England and made this comment:

It (behaviour) got bit worse.... because the people I was now hanging around with, they were kind of naughty. I was like interested in sports a lot, and the boys I would play sports with were the naughty ones. Like everyone in the class had always put me in such a high place and so living up to that expectation that made me kind of want me to be the louder (p.9).

Regarding his education, although he was in trouble, this did not change his grades. He still valued education and had insight of how racism and racialisation works as expressed in his explanation:

If your grades are the same as a White person's, they would kind of look at the White person first, as especially like with your name. And if they see you, they know that's not like a white person's name, and they will kind of pick the White person's name before you. So, you should always aim to do your best when it comes to education and everything (p.13).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the profiles of each study participant, beginning with basic information such as their age at the time of the interview and their time of arrival in England. It highlighted that all participants were born and attended schools in various urban areas of Zimbabwe's major cities. The chapter also described their educational experiences in Zimbabwe, where they attended schools chosen by their parents (including boarding and former Group A schools), a choice that was no longer available to them upon their arrival in English schools. Additionally, the chapter revealed that participants felt they were not fully challenged in English schools, and many believed they could have performed better. The next chapter examines the participants' educational experiences in greater detail.

Chapter 7: Participants' educational experiences

Introduction

One of the aims of this study was to examine the educational experiences of African Zimbabwe males before transitioning into English schools. The study also investigates the educational transition from Zimbabwean to English systems, summarising key themes from participants' counter-stories. These include their experiences in Zimbabwe, challenges as left-behind children, the transition to England with barriers like culture shock and racism, and reverse transitions back to Zimbabwe. This study found that, since the 2000s, schools in England have been increasingly transformed by immigrant and minority students, particularly from African countries like Zimbabwe. Many began their education in their home countries before transitioning to England. Using a Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework, this study highlights the challenges of educating a diverse student population and issues of academic attainment. The educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males reveal the impact of race and racism in the English education system, affecting their academic competitiveness.

Educational Experiences in Zimbabwe

What does CRT counter-storytelling bring to the experiences of African Zimbabwean males in this study? It highlights their counter-stories, challenging dominant narratives about Black children's intellectual deficits (Wright et al., 2020). These stories urge majoritarian Whites to recognise the lasting influence of colonial British education, even in post-colonial Zimbabwe, and question English language proficiency as a second language. Five subthemes emerge: types of schools attended, learning experiences, ability grouping systems, examinations, and challenges faced as left-behind children.

Types of Schools Attended

Table 4: *Participants' School Type Profile in Zimbabwe*

Participant	Primary school type	Secondary school type
Anotipa	Former Group 'A'	Private boarding
Ngoni	Former Group 'B'	Mission boarding
Simba	N/A	Private boarding
Tafara	Former Group 'B'	Government Day
Tanatswa	Former Group 'A'	N/A
Tatenda	Former Group 'A'	N/A
Tinotenda	Private	N/A

At independence in 1980, the new African majority government of Zimbabwe inherited the British education system (see chapters 2 and 3,) that still used colonial descriptions schools as former Group 'A' as expressed explicitly or implicitly by their locations (urban, rural), and in types of schools (day, private, boarding). Participants in this study attended schools in former Group A, Group B, private day, private boarding, and church mission schools. This gives a reflection of education provision choices available in the Zimbabwe education system. The three participants (Anotipa, Tanatswa, and Tatenda) attended former group 'A' schools. Each participant described the types of school(s) they attended as expressed in these excerpts. For Anotipa he described the schools he attended with a sense of pride:

I went to McKintyre primary school. Which point of fact is important: it is an old British missionary school, the missionary who used to travel like spreading the Western culture, dress. So, the school was implemented on British culture, education, and a dress code and all these things (p.13). I went to Lomagundi Preparatory School (LPS) in Gwanda. Lomagundi the missionary, so I went to his prep school in Gwanda A private elite school in Gwanda (pp.8 and 16).

Here, Anotipa described the types of schools he attended by emphasising '*which point of fact is important*', he wants to draw attention to how British education is

reified in Zimbabwe. He is also confirming, as mentioned earlier that colonialism did not end with independence but had lingering remnants through the education system. Anotipa also revealed the underlying continuation of White supremacy nature of the education system, and culture.

Similarly, Tanatswa attended former Group 'A' school:

I went to what you call crèche, went to Greenside primary school, in town. We used to have a driver who used to send me, my sister, and my cousins to school. (p.1).

Tanatswa's description of his school demonstrates that he was from a high socioeconomic background, by describing himself 'we used to have a driver'. This quote revealed the racial segregation that still existed in post-colonial Zimbabwe where children from middle-class African were driven to former Group A schools were in White only affluent suburbs.

When asked about his school in Zimbabwe, Tatenda reported that:

I think there was kindergarten, and then there was like school, school (p.4).

After independence, former Group 'A' schools still maintained their structures kindergarten, was equivalent to preparatory to formal learning. Tatenda's description of school, is to give the racial segregation distinction that still existed in the educational structure.

Two participants (Simba and Tinotenda) attended private primary and secondary schools respectively. Simba reported:

I went to a school in Harare called Hill Crest College. It's a private boarding school (p.12).

As for Tinotenda, he said:

I went to Waterfall Park, private school. I think Grade One to Grade Four (p.1).

Similarly, two participants (Ngoni, and Tafara) attended local former Group 'B' schools, as mentioned earlier, former Group 'B' schools were for Africans only and

designated in African urban residential areas. The schools had different attainment levels including outstanding schools.

Ngoni attended one of the outstanding schools in his neighbourhood. He said that:

Dumbwizi primary school, (p.2). I wanted to go to Buhera (Boys High) because that's where all my other brothers went to, but I didn't get a place there. So, Mavangwe is the one that accepted me.

Similarly, when asked about his school attended in Zimbabwe, Tafara said:

I started going to what they call reception here, I was four years this is from me being told I was four years old. Then I did from Grade One to Grade Seven at Chemhondoro' (p.3). I moved to secondary school that was Nyamatsanga High School. I was there for Form One, and Two (p.6). I went to Chivhu when I was in Form Three, I did my 'O' Levels at Mukwasi High School, it's a day school (p.2).

Ngoni and Tafara attended local government schools for their primary education. Ngoni progressed to a church mission boarding school for his secondary education. while Tafara attended the local government secondary school. Overall, the descriptions of schools attended still carry connotations of unconscious permanence of racism and White supremacy, by referring to them as 'former White only schools' and inferiority former Group 'B'. The next section discusses participants' learning experiences.

Learning experiences

This theme highlights participants' perceptions of education, their attitudes, aspirations, and determination to succeed as expressed in their narratives below. Three participants (Anotipa, Ngoni, Tafara) completed primary school, with Tafara finishing secondary school in Zimbabwe. Anotipa was in his final secondary year, and Ngoni had just completed his first. The others (Tatenda, Tanatswa, Tinotenda, Simba) left Zimbabwe at various stages of primary school. Their experiences shared similarities, with some common elements emerging and others fading. When discussing their primary school experiences, participants emphasised key aspects like ability grouping, homework, sports, cooking, and learning English, expressing a mix of excitement and the sense of loss typical in transitions (Bridges, 2011). Tafara expressed his primary school experiences:

In Grade Three, they introduced something called composition and in Maths multiplication and instead of just addition and subtraction. There was multiplication, there was big addition. I liked that one very well, because it was new, and in composition, you have to write a story in English, bless the teacher, they must have seen the most broken English in their life... you write a story in English, or read a paragraph of English... the story writing developed at the very early age. I used to like that a lot (p.5).

Tafara appreciated the challenging learning tasks and the introduction of English and story writing from Grade Three, highlighting how focused the lessons were. He humorously acknowledged their beginner-level English proficiency, saying, *"bless the teachers, they must have seen the most broken English,"* underscoring that they learned English as part of the curriculum.

Similarly, Ngoni described his primary school experiences from a hot-seating system:

Home Economics, I really used to enjoy that. Where you sort of, the whole day you're cooking and you taste each other's food at the end, yea, I used to really enjoy that and the sports side of things as well. Well one of my neighbours he was the school captain, and we used to play cricket team in eer, the streets, and he basically said you should try for the school team because you're really good. That's how I end up being in the school team and the funny thing when he left, because I think he was two years older than me. When he left, he gave me the captaincy. So, I became the school captain (p.3-4).

Ngoni raises two critical issues here. The first one highlights the continued inequalities in former Group 'A' and 'B' schools regarding resources. By describing *'playing cricket in the streets'* is a classic example how school Group 'B' schools were under-resourced. However, for Ngoni, lack of resources did not prevent him from playing cricket, they had to improvise, using the street as cricket grounds.

Talking about sports in former independent White only school, Anotipa commented:

I was eleven and went to Lomagundi Preparatory School in Gwanda. Lomagundi the missionary, so I went to his prep school. I was there, probably that was the best time in my life in

terms of education. It was a boarding school, boys only, able to connect with other boys and learn. I found sports helps you to understand your body physically. You are capable, it gives you confidence if like you have ability to do something in life, it gives you like the idea of success and the possibilities...As soon as I got there, I played Rugby and I carried on and became one of the best players in the team and you felt important because rugby is such a big British cultural thing and even in Zimbabwe, in private schools it's a big thing. So, I felt as if I have been one of the best in the school and playing for the 1st team felt a sense of importance a sense of belonging because I have never really felt like that. I remember prior to that, I was like an outcast, so that really changed the experience.... A year later when I was twelve (12), I got to be a prefect, still playing in the 1st team rugby....1st team in cricket, these are British sports by the way, and football. So, basically the culture and the tradition of these schools I have been mentioning, they were very, very, British in terms of culture (p.9).

Anotipa, who attended a former Group 'A' school, called it '*the best time of my life in terms of education.*' Sports helped him feel a sense of belonging, easing his loneliness after losing his parents and his siblings emigrating. As the only participant to attend former White-only private schools, Anotipa was deeply immersed in the British curriculum and culture, highlighting how it has shaped Zimbabwe's education system.

For Tinotenda, he described the different weighting placed on subjects taught. This suggests that school subjects have different values attached to them. Tinotenda said that:

Yes, PE in Grade One, you're kind of just playing around. So, they can't really mark you seriously kind of thing. So, they wouldn't expect to get very high in PE. Whereas for example Maths you need to get like high grades (p.3).

Tinotenda explained the importance of passing Mathematics and highlighted the varying subject values in the curriculum, stressing the need for '*high grades*'. Tanatswa recalled attending the first two years of primary school (Grade 1 and 2, equivalent to Year 1 and 2). He said:

I think it was Grade 1 and 2, something like that. My writing has always been good since I was young, mainly because I was

interested in Art. So, I used to practice a lot and with a lot of stuff like that. I was fascinated in writing like how grown-ups wrote, so everything jointed-up. So, I taught myself how to write at a young age (p.2).

This section has presented a variety of participants' counter-stories, and provided insights into the dormant permanence and ordinariness of racism that still exist in the inherited British education system. The next section moves to consider ability grouping.

Ability grouping system

The ability grouping system, rooted in British education, remains influential in Zimbabwe. It groups students by academic ability, shaping their future success. Two participants, Tafara and Anotipa, supported this system, feeling motivated and appreciative of the competitiveness it fostered as expressed in their experiences. Tafara expressed:

To be honest, I was jealousy, I was jealousy, I didn't like it. Shuvai Zuze was number one. I remember Shuvai Nyika like yesterday (p. 4). At the end of every week, the teacher whatever you have been learning from Monday. The teacher will have like a little test on a Friday, and then whatever your score according to that determines which group you go to for the rest of the week. So, it was very good, it was very way of creating a competition really. So, if you are in group one you have to maintain that position in group one. Make sure nobody in group two, group three, group four group five will actually score best, better than you. because if they do, now you're moving from group one to whatever group they were. You had many tears, so many times. When I moved from group one, having people like Shuvai Nyika, she was a permanent resident to group one. Now and again, I had to renew my tenancy there, that is what it was, and it was a very good way of looking back at it. I was a permanent resident of group two, all the way through (p.6).

Tafara admitted feeling jealous of a female classmate who excelled academically, reflecting traditional Zimbabwean society's views of masculinity and the belief that men, as future leaders, should surpass women in certain skills, though these attitudes are evolving.

Although Ngoni was not overly supportive of the grouping system, he echoed similar experiences on his progression based on his ability grouping; he started in Group 'C' and moved to Group 'B.' He commented that:

I think they were grouped in terms of how well people were doing. So, you would be in Group A, Group B, Group C, Group D, Group E. so, it was like if you were in Group A, then they were the people that are really clever. And if you are in Group D, then you were struggling a little bit. I think I was in 'B' if I remember, I think I started in Group 'C' and then I moved to Group B. they moved you into groups depending on how well you were progressing. And then I end up progressing to Group B. Then, I just stayed in Group B throughout (p. 3).

Ngoni's comment suggests that he was not a competitive learner by highlighting '*I just stayed in Group B*' or that he was not ready to put himself through the rigours of competing to be in Group One/A.

For Anotipa, he is a very competitive learner, expressed his immersion in competitive ability grouping system: He remarked:

My first year was good because I made two friends they were twins. They were very intelligent as well. Three of us used to be top three in every awards ceremony. We used to be top 3 academic and alternate 1,2,3 positions, we were very competitive. Group 'A', I want to get back prizes (p.13).

Other participants' (Simba, Tanatswa, Tatenda, Tinotenda) comments are not included, as they did not reference ability grouping. Participants' references to ability grouping challenge the dominant majoritarian narrative of intellectual deficit (Wright, et al., 2020) among Black children. The next section describes teacher expectations.

Teachers' expectations

In their narratives concerning ability grouping in their learning, participants depicted their teachers as having elevated expectations of them. These high expectations were evident through various methods. Firstly, teachers maintained a consistent approach to ability grouping by administering weekly tests. Secondly,

homework assignments were utilised to extend and reinforce learning. Lastly, disciplinary actions had a ripple effect, serving as a deterrent to maintaining high standards and preventing a decline in performance. These three measures represented teachers' expression of high expectations and served as a means of motivating participants to strive for improvement. Anotipa shared his experiences as follows:

She (his mother) made an effort to teach me at home like in a very strict manner. I remember crying with both of them sitting side by side, trying to do Maths. I was crying because of the tests. Homework, I enjoyed it though. Because when you get to school you just like marks out the grades, it was one of the best because it gives you confidence. I don't think you will understand that if you focus and you give it your all, and you actually excel and get the results the confidence and self-belief is unmatched, it's a feeling no one can ever give you (p.13).

Here, Anotipa highlights some crucial points of the home-school relationship between teachers, parents, and the child, appreciating his mother's support with the homework. Despite the '*strict manner*', which may suggest physical punishment, the crying, Anotipa found the outcome beneficial, and this gave him the confidence and self-belief. Talking about homework, Ngoni provided insight into the inherent use of physical punishment in schools in Zimbabwe at the time, and was critical about how it was applied, as he reflected in his comment:

I remember more Grade Seven, we would get there in the morning, sort of do our studies, so it might be there was homework in the morning first. Did you do your homework? And then if you haven't done your homework, you get a smack and if you didn't get it right you also get a smack so, that would be in the morning. And then we go through the classes, whatever we will be doing in the morning. We go for lunch and then usually in the afternoon we would sit outside and do afternoon classes outside (p.5). If I wasn't performing very well, my dad will tell me and then like I said he will give me like extra homework and weekends work to do. So, I would finish school, I would probably want to go out and play with my friends, but my dad would say we need to do this first (p.6).

Ngoni also emphasised the importance his father's involvement, highlighting the additional support he received from him at home to complete his assignments.

Tafara recalled how his teacher provided him with the opportunity for free extra lessons, which he initially declined. It was until his teacher raised concerns with his uncle during a parent-teacher meeting that he decided to take advantage of the offer. Tafara commented:

It was not my favourite because I remember one time like this I went with my uncle, and we got there. I used to like football a lot. I remember this teacher called, she put me to leave me to dry really, she was Geography teacher Ms Kumbirai, I remember her very well a lovely lady she was. She said, I remember saying to my uncle he could actually be an A student in Geography but when we do have our extra lessons, he doesn't want to do that, he is always in the ground playing football. That's what he wants to do, he doesn't come to the extra lessons, he doesn't want to know it's as if we are forcing him. That was the end of my leisure play time at home that was the end of it. It was in other words... a way of setting up competition as well. I remember he turned around, and he said eer, so you want to play football? And he referred it to 'chikweshe' [a handmade ball]. You are here to play 'chikweshe'? is that why you are here? And I said no, I attend all the lessons. But private, extra lessons you don't? (p.9).*

Tinotenda recounted an incident where he was disciplined by his teacher for not meeting the expected standards of performance. He said:

Yes, I was hit once for, it wasn't hard because the teacher knew when like I had made that mistake, I had tried my hardest. So, she didn't hit me hard because she knew that I don't mess like, mess up normally (p.4).

Most participants emphasised the crucial role of homework in improving their academic performance and achieving the results necessary for advancement. Participants' experiences reveal that their teachers in Zimbabwe held very high expectations of them in the learning process, and in turn, they responded positively to these expectations. In the context of Zimbabwe, based on participants' academic abilities, these experiences challenge the dominant narrative that teachers hold low expectations of Black students (Gillborn et al., 2012). The next section considers examinations.

Examinations

In Zimbabwe, national examinations are used to measure academic performance at the end of primary and secondary education.

Grade 7 Examinations

In Zimbabwe, primary education spans a seven-year cycle. Only three participants had completed their primary before progressing to secondary school and eventually transitioning into English schools. When asked about their Grade 7 results, Tafara commented:

I still remember in Grade Seven, I came out with eleven units, if I'm not mistaken. when asked how many subjects: It was four. I think they grade them up to thirty -six, I think thirty-six will be the worst. Four, five, six, seven being one of the best. (p.3).

Tafara gave a vivid description of his Grade Seven results, how they were graded, and the ranking of the best and worst results. He commented that '*Four, five, six, seven [units] being one of the best*' and that he was forthright in saying the result was fair for him to get eleven units in four subjects. Ngoni shared a similar explanation regarding his Grade Seven results:

I think I got six units, at Grade Seven, and I just send out some applications. I wanted to go to Buhera Boys High because that's where all my other brothers went to, but I didn't get a place there. So, Mavangwe is the one that accepted me (p.5).

Despite Ngoni's top results (six units in four subjects), he did not secure admission to a prestigious secondary school, highlighting Zimbabwe's competitive, exam-based education system. His remark, "but I didn't get a place there," reflects the selective, tiered system rooted in colonial British influence, which remains in use.

'O' Level Examinations

'O' Level exams in Zimbabwe are taken after four years of secondary education, with a pass requiring five strong grades (A/B) passes in core subjects, including English and Maths. Of the three participants who started secondary school in

Zimbabwe, only Tafara completed his 'O' Levels there, while Anotipa left before sitting the exams. Simba returned to Zimbabwe to re-sit both 'O' and 'A' Levels. Tafara commented on his 'O' Level results, and said:

I did very well on my 'O' Level results: English, I did very badly in English, I had like a C, Maths C, in Biology I had a B, in Physics I had a B, and we had something called Commerce, which is Commercials, I had an A, and in Agriculture I also had an A. Geography I had a B. Because I wasn't very good at Maths. I wasn't very good at Mathematics at all, so it's like for me to that was a very good grade because 'C' is a pass, But in English, I wasn't as bad as I was in Maths, so I was expecting to do way better in English (p.2).

Tafara's experience underscores common concerns among 'O' Level students and parents: a 'C' grade is seen as a weak pass, especially in Zimbabwe's competitive environment, where a 'C' in English can limit further education or job prospects. Tafara accurately predicted his results in Maths and English, showing the value of self-assessment and the aspiration for higher grades.

Anotipa's educational journey was quite unique because private schools in Zimbabwe are authorised to implement a dual curriculum that includes both GCSE Cambridge International and local 'O' Level Zimbabwe Schools Examinations. Students typically take the examinations between October and December at the end of their four-year secondary education. Anotipa recalls his experience of not taking his GCSE exams, as he left before, they were scheduled to take place. He commented:

I was at Falcon High School, when I left, I had not finished my GCSEs I was in Form Four, but before writing exams (p.16).

Anotipa pointed out a couple of key observations on differences in the school calendars, processes across the two education systems.

Simba offered an explanation for his 're-sit', 'O' Levels [an equivalent to GCSEs in England]:

To be fair with you.... I didn't take it seriously because I knew that because firstly it was Cambridge International, so, I knew that if I pass this, then I will

have GCSEs from England, and I will get Cambridge International qualifications on top of that... it's a separate qualification, because I was told that if I do GCSEs this year, then I get Cs, then I write again next year, and get Ds, the Ds is that goes on my record. But because I was doing separate qualifications, I saw it as a bonus, no matter what I did here, this can only be a plus.

Simba's explanation provides insights into the return of Cambridge International Examinations and its weighting over ZIMSEC examinations in Zimbabwe.

'A' Level examinations

After 'O' Levels, students progress to 'A' Levels. Only Simba, had his 'A' Levels in Zimbabwe. He referred to the overall pass rate across the two examining boards: Simba reported that:

The pass rate for ZIMSEC, 'A' Level is actually lower than the pass rate for Cambridge, overall. Which was very surprising to me, when I wrote last year err, all of the people I wrote Cambridge with we passed.

The surprise expressed here was based on the enduring influence, British education has had on Zimbabwe's education that the local ZIMSEC examinations are overshadowed.

The next section moves on to consider Left-behind children.

Left-Behind Children

Left-behind children' refers to those who stayed in Zimbabwe with relatives while their parents moved to England, undergoing multiple transitions before reuniting. Of the seven participants, five were orphans. Anotipa and Tafara lost both parents, Ngoni and Tatenda lost their fathers, and Tanatswa lost her mother while in England. Simba and Tinotenda lived with one parent after separation. The study revealed themes of separation, death, and emotional distress, with Anotipa describing the challenge of reconnecting with his siblings after eight years apart:

But in terms of my personal experiences, I am an orphan; I was orphaned at the age of eight my father passed away when I was five. My mother passed away when I was eight, And I pretty

much spent my eight (8) years apart from them before joining them in the UK (p.5).

Anotipa continues to describe the cycles of transition, he went to stay with his mother's sister, who also died after a year, and he stayed with his uncle. By describing these events, he is also highlighting how the prolonged separation affected him:

There was a lot of pain in that place, that's why I think I haven't communicated with him. Exclusion, feeling not needed, not wanted, feeling as if you're a burden to everybody. Then you are not allowed to be human being you because I think what was bad in me, was my own I hate speaking myself in such terms, but it was my own kind of like a fast-thinking passion. I was quite intelligent as well and some people they didn't like it. Because as a child, I just observed a situation and then say something that's way above my age and the people at looking me will be offended. Because I don't have a filter for it, but I can see it. So, I don't have the understanding. You must calculate and balance what you are saying, you say it in a certain way, because that's emotional mental creativity (p.12).

Further, Anotipa described how the eight-year contributed to re-union and alienation challenges with his siblings.

So, I think in terms of that eight-year gap from my brother and my sister caused a friction between us. Because there is a generational gap, one, and second, there is just my experience that I lived. I have been different, and they have been always together. They grew up together, they came to the country pretty much proximity in terms of time, so they have always had a bond (p.5). Because education to me at that point was not very important if I'm honest. So, I didn't do great because there were just too many other things I had to deal with. Although it was easy to transition from Falcon to here, personally, and psychologically, I had a lot of weight on me. I had just arrived from dramatic experiences, and I hadn't seen my family eight years (So that re-union of 8-year gap) separation gap with my siblings (p.17).

Anotipa's account highlighted some family related emotional and psychological issues that impacted on his transition into English schools.

As for Ngoni, he expressed his closeness to his mum and how the separation made his life feel empty, although his father stayed behind with him. Ngoni commented:

I mean she used to come back a lot, on holidays and stuff like that.... But because I and my mum have always been close. There was a little bit of emptiness her not being there (p. 2).

Although Ngoni's mum used to come back a lot, the period when she was not around left a feeling of emptiness he experienced. Ngoni explained that he filled his mother's absence by adopting his nanny, whom he described that she became her second mother. He said:

I think I just had the support because I was close with eer nanny I was very close to her so; she became my second mother (p. 2).

Anotipa's narrative suggests that as an orphan, and left behind sibling, his pre-transition was a complex series of events which led him to be passed from one relative to another. He described the multiple transitions he went through and said:

I was orphaned at the age of eight; my father passed away when I was five (5), and my mother passed away when I was eight... after that my brother and sister left the country. And I pretty much spent eight years apart from them before joining them in the UK... After the passing of my mother, I was sent to live with my aunt, sadly, after a year she died in a car crash. I continued staying there I was living with my uncle (p.5).

Anotipa's experiences reveal the multiple pre-transition cycles he passed through since his father's death. First pre-transition for Anotipa preparing to live with one surviving parent. Then, after the death of his mother: one, he was separated from his sibling, two, he stayed went on to live with his aunt. Second, after the death of his aunt, preparing to live with his uncle. The last cycle preparing to leave Zimbabwe and come to England to be re-united with his siblings after eight years.

Tanatswa had a slightly different experience, because he stayed with his mother when his father left Zimbabwe, and she was the last to join them in England:

My Dad was the first to come over, he went to different countries first because of work. When his work finished there, he migrated down here, and I think he stayed here like for a year or two or

something. Then he sends tickets for me and my sister to come. We came on our own and we met at the airport. She was still at work. I lived with my parents (p.1).

For Tatenda, he described his separation period:

Initially it was Milton Park with Mama and Daddy, but then after Daddy died, we lived with Gogo (grandma) in Kuwadzana. And then, I came here to Manchester. Mama came to the UK first. I'm not too sure to be fair. It probably maybe 2/3years at best. It wasn't a long time. I was quite young to remember that (p.2).

Tatenda's reaction highlighted a fluctuation of emotions in the first phase-crying, then *it was fine*, then making a conclusion or coming to terms -assumptions on *I would have been upset*, the separation. Tatenda, is illustrating the difficulty involved in separation particularly where children are involved, because he did not understand his mother's appearance and disappearance. This crying may signal the trauma for both child and parent.

Tafara had similar cycles of transition before coming to England to stay with his aunt. He said:

I had lived with my father and mother. My own mother passed away when I was about 13.5years old. Then went to stay with my maternal grandmother in Chivhu rural area. I came to the UK when I was 17 years old, this is back in 2001. I have been living in the UK ever since with my aunt (pp.1-2).

Simba lived in Zimbabwe for a very short period in Zimbabwe before leaving to join his mother in England:

I lived in Zimbabwe for the first three years of my life. And my mum came to England, I stayed in Zimbabwe with my dad, for a few months then, we both came over to live with her (p.1).

Tinotenda first came to England in 2004, returned to Zimbabwe in 2006, then returned to England in 2009. The participants' narratives uncovered the emotional toll of strict immigration regulations on family reunification, revealing profound emotional scars.

This section has provided insights into the various cycles of transitions (letting go and preparing to stay with their extended family members or the remaining parent)

participants went through before joining their families in England. Their experiences underscore the uncertainty, emotional loss and/or separation of being left behind. These insights should be understood from the African perspective of traditional concept of extended family obligations hinged on the persistent strength and normality contingent fostering arrangements.

The section that follows will present participants' transition experiences into English education system.

Transition into English Education System

In this study, the term 'transition' encompasses not only the daily shifts within a school environment but also encompasses the movement between two distinct education systems. The theme of this study centres around the final phase of participants' transition, which involves reuniting with their families in England and continuing their education. It explores participants' knowledge and understanding of the English education system evolved through their transitional experiences. Specifically, participants reflected on the similarities and differences between their previous education and the new system they encountered. They noted aspects of their previous education that were retained, as well as new elements that emerged. For some participants, this transition involved navigating complexities, associated with moving from a familiar to an unfamiliar educational system, the shift from Black majority to Black African minority, Black Zimbabwean teachers to White teachers in England.

Type of Schools Attended in England

The types of school's participants attended in England were very different to those they had attended in Zimbabwe, both in location, student population, teachers, procedures. For example, the table below illustrates the types of schools attended in England.

Table 5: *Participants' School Type Profile in England*

Participant	Primary	Secondary	College
Anotipa	N/A	N/A	State
Ngoni	N/A	Comprehensive	
Simba	Faith	Academy	
Tafara	N/A	N/A	State
Tanatswa	Community	Comprehensive	
Tatenda	Faith	Comprehensive	
Tinotenda	Community	Academy	

The analysis of school types reveals that participants were not assigned to schools similar to those they had attended in Zimbabwe. Instead, the familiar settings of boarding schools, private institutions, and independent schools were replaced, and they were assigned to local schools within their neighbourhoods.

School Admission in England

School admissions in England pertain to participants securing a place in a school within the country. Unlike Zimbabwe, where the academic year runs from January to December, the academic year in England begins in September and ends in July of the following year. Admissions in England are meticulously structured and overseen by Local Authorities, primarily occurring in September, with exceptions made for in-year admissions. These admissions are managed according to the School Admission Code of Practice guidelines, which provide procedures for admissions outside of the standard timeframe, typically referred to as 'new arrivals.'

Different groups of immigrants, including international migrants such as children of refugees, are subject to various admission policies and language assessment procedures. Reflecting on the admission in English schools, participants shared their individual experiences and what it meant for them. Tanatswa described a lack

of comprehensive evaluation, indicating potential discrepancies in the assessment of participants' educational levels and language proficiency:

When I enrolled, I was meant to be in Year 3 but because of my education, I was kind of ahead other the kids here. So, they put me in Year 4, so I was doing like Year 4. Because of my education that I had in Zimbabwe.... I was ahead of kids here, so, I was put in a higher class so that I can learn what they're learning and I'm up to date with my learning. Transition was not scary or had a few white people around me, uncle who was mixed-race. I never saw any difference main difference was the weather (p.12).

Tatenda had a different experience, while he was enrolled in a higher class after assessment, that the final class might have been allocated based on his age he explained:

I started in Year 2. I think they were trying to figure out what my learning level was. And then they put me in Year 3, and then Year 4. So, I'm not sure if which point was the firm like yes is this one. Yes, to start off with. Then Y3, but then I don't know if it was Y3 or Y4 which was the firm one. When I look back on it, I think, they put me in the correct one with my age group like because I remember leaving at the normal times. In terms of progressing, the normal years like you start Y6, I think when you're 11, and then you go to high school Y7 when you're 12, from that, yea they put me with my age group (p.4).

In-year admissions can be prolonged, varying depending on the time of arrival and the disparities in school academic calendars. In England, the month of May marks the beginning of the final term of the academic school year, making it highly improbable for Anotipa to be enrolled or to take examinations during this period. Anotipa voiced concerns about the extended duration between his arrival and admission to school. He expressed frustration over the waiting period without any explanation and was surprised to learn about the differences in the start of academic years. Anotipa described his enrolment experience as follows:

I arrived in the country in May and waited until September to begin, which was a strange one for me because my academic year begins in January and finishes around November/December. It was a proper school but there was the college attached to it as well. So, like for 16–18-year-olds. I went to study in school

because that's where the academic I think I had to do like a small test. Plus, the thing with Falcon High School had connections with United Kingdom. So, it's easy to – you can track them to the UK. So, because of that it was verified that I was doing GCSEs, which made the transition easier. I can't remember, I think it was a general kind of assessment to see what you know (p.20).

Tafara recounted his enrolment and did not refer to any assessment. He said that:

Enrolling to a college. I remember I started going to Pendleton College (p.11).

Simba was still in pre-school, to understand the enrolment process or experience.

Tinotenda's experience was unique as he had previously attended reception classes in England before returning to Zimbabwe, and now he was returning to England for the second time. He described his admission experience:

I was in the system from like reception and nursery, they didn't really question much. They put me in Year 4 coz when I came out there was two months left. So, my mum she had already sorted out schools and everything. So, I just joined in straightaway. So, the reason they put me in Year 4 was so, I can get to grips with the schooling and everything. So, when I came back in the summer for Year 5, it's not like I'm coming like completely new to everything. So, I got to know people and my surroundings and teachers (p.7).

Tinotenda's experience suggests familiarity with the system from his previous enrolment made the transition smoother this second time. Similarly, Ngoni had comparable experiences; his uncle, who is a teacher, guided him through the transition and admission process, and he explained:

I think, I stayed with my mum for about two months, maybe, one, two months. Because obviously my Dad passed away straight after we came here. And then I moved to live with my uncle, in Bradford That's where I did most of my... high school studying. I think because my Dad had passed away at the time and my uncle, he is a teacher as well, was there for support, he's there for me. I don't remember the actual enrolment, well, my uncle took me to the school which is called Plant Hill High School. I don't remember the enrolment process. I think it was just a case of taking some documentation, and it wasn't that much of an issue. I don't think I had any school reports anyway, that I came

with. So, I don't think they even asked for it or things like that
(p.7).

Ngoni's explanation regarding enrolment and assessment indicates that he was not directly engaged in the assessment process. Instead, his uncle, who is a teacher, assumed responsibility for Ngoni's enrolment.

It has been shown in this section that participants had diverse experiences (admission, schools attended, neighbourhoods and perceptions about Black children) transitioning into English schools. The next section provides participants' narratives of learning experiences in their individual English schools.

Learning Experiences in English School

The learning experiences involved both the social, cultural and the academic differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems, and how African Zimbabwean males perceived and navigated these differences.

English as an Additional Language-EAL

This theme is comprehended within the framework of the English education system, where individuals whose first language is not English must take English proficiency assessments. African Zimbabwean participants came from an education system where they learned English as a curriculum subject and where English was the primary medium of instruction in schools. Throughout the interviewing period, participants expressed an individual understanding of the significance of English language proficiency, and based on their interpretations, their level of English language was consistent with the expected level of their educational stage. Only two participants (Tanatswa and Tinotenda) reported that they did not have language problems. However, two (Ngoni and Simba) expressed their lack of fluency in spoken English. The other three (Anotipa, Tafara, Tinotenda) did not refer to any difficulties speaking English at all. Tanatswa was one of the two participants who expressed his prior experience of spoken English language:

English language I understood, I picked up as I went to creche, prepped before, except for more advanced words 'on purpose' - incident in the playground (p.12).

Tatenda echoed similar experience that he did not struggle much communicating in English language because he already knew English from learning it in Zimbabwe. He explained his knowledge:

No, because I knew English, I learnt English in Zimbabwe, and I remember the Headteacher asking me questions you know like those photo cards like what does this say? Ass, dog, I think it was just to gauge how much English I knew (p.5).

Simba described that his first year was very difficult, transitioning from speaking in his native Shona language into English:

Well, my first school that I came and went to, I did not adjust well at all. Learning to speak fluent English, I was still used to speak in Shona all the time (p.10).

Although Ngoni had studied English in Zimbabwe, he felt he lacked proficiency in speaking fluently to his Shona first language background. The level of English competency required for his curriculum in England was higher than what he was comfortable with. He also realised that the English he had learned differed from what was expected of him, particularly differences in spelling formats -American and British. Ngoni explained:

I think the first year was a struggle. I think there was obviously a language barrier for me, so that was always gonna be a challenge because obviously my whole life, my first language has been Shona.... English was a second language to me, so I wasn't fluent, I wasn't confident to speak to people so (p.7) ... I feel like I can't join in because I can't, I don't have the confidence to speak English and to speak English well because obviously, I had studied English, back at home in Zimbabwe. But it's a different kind of a language, it's a different kind of English, which I found out because I think our English is more Americanised even like spellings and stuff. So, when I came over here, and I would be writing stuff, I would use American spellings and the teacher would be no, that's wrong. And I would like, no that's definitely not wrong, that's right because that is what I have been taught, the American spellings. So, it took a while to realise that. The spellings, this is slightly differences in spellings (p.8).

This section indicates that although participants learned English in school, they lacked confidence in speaking it fluently or with the expected accent, reflecting concerns about maintaining the perceived purity of English, as described in Whiteness as property (Harris, 1993). The next section moves on to discuss culture shock.

Culture Shock

Culture shock refers to the stark cultural differences, including behaviour towards teachers, that African Zimbabwean males experienced when transitioning to the British education system. Participants described feelings of uncertainty, especially with the reversal in racial composition—from being part of the majority in Zimbabwe to being a minority in England. Three participants (Tinotenda, Ngoni, and Tatenda) were shocked at being the only Black Zimbabwean in their class or year group. While others (Anotipa, Tafara, and Simba) did not comment on this.

Tinotenda commented on his shock at seeing the predominantly White student population and said:

The amount of white people that were there that kind of hit me kind of thing. Instead of seeing one or two white people, I'm seeing one or two black people. so, that's something that kind of shocked me (p.6)

Ngoni expressed his feelings about being the only Black in the classroom, and said:

I definitely felt obviously moving over that loneliness in a classroom being obviously the only black African in that classroom... (p.11).

Tatenda explained that he was the only Zimbabwean in his class, and said:

Like in my class, class, there weren't any Zimbabweans, I think maybe one other African from Sierra-Leone, that was it (p.8).

Participants' behaviour and code of conduct was firmly rooted in African philosophy of Unhu/Ubuntu background, it is not surprising that most of them shared their struggles in adapting to behaviour in English schools. They expressed

feeling frustrated and disappointed, and witnessing disrespectful behaviour towards teachers.

Tanatswa shared his personal experience of culture shock witnessing students talking back to their teachers in a disrespectful manner. He commented:

Children talking back to teachers. I used to tell picking the level of respect to teachers. Cultural shift: I don't think our parents were ready for it because Zimbabwean culture as a kid, you don't ask questions. Here in England, you call teachers by names and children have more power. It will affect children and schooling talking back (p.12).

Ngoni also expressed his annoyance at experiencing arguing back to teachers:

It was very, very noisy, it was different. It was very different and very relaxed, and people were doing things that I wouldn't definitely dream of when I was in Zimbabwe. They will just be like arguing back to teachers, And I was like what? What is going on here? Because in Zimbabwe you wouldn't do that. You would definitely get a smack in Zimbabwe, whereas here there is no such thing. By law you are not allowed to do that. It was a different experience (p. 8).

For Tafara, talking back to teachers was a taboo, he could not contemplate the idea, and was speechless at the idea of it. He made comparison with his Zimbabwean experience of respect between teachers and pupils. He explained:

You can just wake up and say, I don't wanna go to college today, you don't go. Even, though they will monitor you a bit, you can talk back to the teacher. I never actually personally did that, because I found it a bit difficult because the environment that I come from you don't dare talk back to the teacher. Yet even just give a dirty look to the teacher you don't do that where I come from. But here I found out that the most struggle the teachers, they were struggling to control the young people than teaching them. The students just go about their business talking, anyhow to the teachers (p.12).

Anotipa had similar experiences, students not behaving to his expectations, as someone who was familiar with British ethos, from his exposure in former Group 'A' schools in Zimbabwe. Anotipa expressed how the English schools' learning environment might have affected him:

Absolutely shocking. The poor behaviour from the students not disciplined, most of them are and how ungrateful and how they don't have an understanding of what they have is eer, is important. I feel I do the same as well because I feel I didn't do great in my education at the end, but I'm in that place anyway. It probably affected me because I'm used to be in an environment whereby you concentrates get your books seriously, you get into trouble for talking and things like that it could have been different (p.22).

Tatenda explained that he accepted it was a new environment, it was to be expected that it would be different. He commented that:

Yea, a bit different, weird you know, just because it was a new environment. That's it, but everyone was nice to me, Yea, it was very good. St Peters is a church school, Catholic (pp.4-5).

Tinotenda shared his two-way school transition experiences. First his transition to Zimbabwe, and second, his transition to England. He commented:

The amount of white people that were there that kind of hit me kind of thing. Instead of seeing one or two white people, I'm seeing one or two black people. so, that's something that kind of shocked me (p. 6).

Ngoni expressed his feelings about being the only Black in the classroom, and said:

I definitely felt obviously moving over that loneliness in a classroom being obviously the only black African in that classroom... (p.11).

Tatenda also explained that he was the only Zimbabwean in his class:

Like in my class, class, there weren't any Zimbabweans, I think maybe one other African from Sierra-Leone, that was it (p. 8).

Simba did not explicitly mention culture shock. However, the participants' experiences differed depending on their age at arrival and their degree of colour-blindness (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017) regarding race and racism in schools. The next section considers 'not pushed'.

Not pushed

Participants felt a lack of academic push and clarity about their learner identity in the English education system. Having received education in Zimbabwe's British-influenced system, they initially believed English education was superior. However, their experiences in England, marked by low expectations and teachers' unfamiliarity with Zimbabwean education, changed their views. They described feeling '*not pushed*,' which diminished their motivation, competitive spirit, and led to learning disorientation. Some participants' (Anotipa, Ngoni, Tatenda, and Tinotenda) comments are not included in this section because they did not explicitly mention '*not pushed*' in their replies.

Tafara described vividly the competitive learning environment in Zimbabwe, giving the analogy of English premier league football in a way that suggested that it was positive. Therefore, his expectation of the English education would be much better, yet he found it to be backward. Tafara described this experience rather evocatively:

At the same time the approach from the teacher side, it's more like a pay day thing. You know teachers looking for pay and they get pay and they go home. They didn't follow-up what you do (p.13). Sometimes, they're even quick to put down, they can actually put you down. Like I was coming, and I knew all these things if there was a good teacher, a good lecturer could have realised my potential were and realise that this child knows these things and mould me along that side but they didn't (p.17).

Tafara was seventeen when he came to England, at that age he was old enough to process and understand the differences between the two education systems. Tafara was constantly making comparison across the two education systems. He reflected on how he found it impossible to fail and commented:

Everybody passes here. That's what it looked like to me because it became almost impossible to fail easily that what it was because you had so many chances. Of which in Zimbabwean education you got one shot that's it. But here I found out that there are so many chances like you take one exam three, four, five times before you pass. But in Zimbabwe you have one shot, you mess that up and that's that otherwise you have another year to re-do, re-learn... But here you find out that along the way they will be telling you need to do this, you need to do this otherwise you're not gonna pass the next stage (p.11).

Tanatswa and Simba were critical about lack of push. They expressed their comments. Tanatswa said:

I was looking at it from that point of view, the teachers never pushed you to do any work. They just said yea, here's homework. Make sure you do it by Tuesday. If you don't do it by Tuesday, you probably get a phone call home. Or stay behind for half an hour or something. It wasn't really like pushing you to do much, you just sit as long as you do this and this that's enough you know. So, yea, that was more that happen in school (p.5).

Simba explained how he came to understand 'not pushed', by drawing on the comparisons across the education systems. He commented:

Because the culture of schooling, of education in England, like, fact of the matter speaking: the lessons were there, we would do lessons 8 till 3 everyday, Monday to Friday. There were options for us to stay behind to revise by yourselves but, it was never really taken seriously. The lessons were there, I can't say CA neglected giving us lessons. But there was no push, there was no drive among the students at least my group of friends.

I think because, celebrating achievements can be beneficial if it's done in the right way. Like I said, growing up, always being in top sets, like I was a people telling me or telling my mum that oh, he is really gifted, he can do really well, and I would hear that. I would take that as I don't really have to try that hard. But in Zim, the way they did it is they highlight the top 3, so they let everyone know these 3 are the people who worked the hardest for it.

Celebrating other people's achievements is what would push people to read and to work harder so they could get to the top 3. But just telling me myself oh, you're very smart you can do this. I don't that doesn't, that's not very good way to motivate me. I just end up; you will be feeding someone false narrative. Maybe you

over-exaggerate how good they really are, so they will be basing on the conversations of you. Aah! this person said that I'm really good. So, do I have to stay up and read? (p.17).

What emerges from experiences about *not pushed*, provide insights into the unique voice of African Zimbabwean males regarding their educational histories and experiences they bring into English schools that their White teachers are unlikely to know. (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). The next section discusses learning traps.

Learning traps

The concept of the "learning trap" emerges when considering the absence of participants' familiar learning experiences in Zimbabwe, and the subsequent challenges they faced in adapting to the English education system. This transition often led some participants to encounter identity traps, as described by Youdell (2004), due to the discontinuity between their previous schooling and the new environment. Initially, many participants expressed concerns about the perceived lack of discipline in English schools, particularly noting instances where White children challenged their teachers. Eventually, as they became more accustomed to their new surroundings, some felt pressured to conform and adopt negative behaviours. Opinions among the participants were varied on this issue.

As Simba put it:

So, now if I would be asked, I would say that there, it was a more laid-back approach to education. I could say I got those results without any effort on my part, never revised when I was at home, being in some of the lessons we would just be, we wouldn't be there for the lessons. It would be like a social gathering. Just a bunch of kids you would wait for this lesson because you know these friends in this lesson not because I need to catch-up on Science (p.3).

Talking about this issue, Tafara's explained how the 'too' relaxed learning atmosphere led him to shift towards conformity and copying bad habits. He said:

More relaxed, more relaxed, I thought this is simple this. A walk in the park, this is what I thought, this is a walk in the park. I did

walk in the park so to speak. But however, there were so many distractions here. There are so many distractions. You find out that at that age, you're actually legally entitled to a lot of things. We used to have something called CMA, something like that. Some money they used to give you. And you find out that you can do a lot of things. You can just wake up and say, I don't wanna go to college today, you don't go. Even, though they will monitor you a bit. For me it was like difficult for a start take but then I was more at the other hand like a kid in the sweet shop you know. I just found myself sweets, I used to be given one at a time and all of a sudden there is this shop, oh' take as much as you want. That was what it was more like. It became easier a lot easier, for us, it was for the wrong reasons because must I have stayed in the same discipline environment that I was, I probably would have progressed even more. I'm sure of that (p.12).

One participant out of seven, Ngoni, commented specifically on his upbringing values and uncompromising value towards his education. He said:

I think I have always been raised not to do that and it's something I never really do. Just because I spent a good eight, nine years education in Zimbabwe, and that was basically something that was set in my head that you don't do that. That you always need to have respect because it's your education. Because I was thirteen/fourteen, about fourteen that time so, I think I'm already grown-up to realise that ultimately, it's my education. It's not going to help, it's not gonna help me in the long run by answering back and arguing (p. 9).

Tanatswa commented on the teachers' attitude to teaching as a source of learning trap:

It's more like, the way I see it. The majority of people that get employed in schools and staff like teaching is not because they love teaching, they like the idea of being a teacher and when they get given the teacher role, they're just in it to just work enough... but they weren't really looking at oh, this kid has struggles, visual learning, media, listen's more or different programme they can put them, if you're not good maybe try a set below. Whereas back home (Zimbabwe), it was like mate you got to do this, do your homework, you're just thinking you don't want that, you got put in front of the whole class and you have to explain like one of the things you were set to do at home as homework. You see that kind of push you want to do more and stuff and obviously you didn't want to be the one that didn't do

their homework and stuff like that. Whereas here it's more like, you've not done it, I'm gonna call your parents. you've not done it you're staying behind and when you stay behind, you're not actually doing your homework, you're writing I will do my homework next time I get that. You write 50 lines of that and that was it (p.13).

Tanatswa highlighted that the sanctions he was given in England to do his work were ineffective.

Teachers' expectations in England

In Zimbabwe most participants were predominantly taught by African Zimbabwean teachers, except Anotipa who had a multi-ethnic teacher in independent schools he attended. Teacher expectations uncover the differences in expectations between same race teachers and different race teachers. Teachers' expectations were measured against previous experience in Zimbabwe, their perceptions of the English education and focused on a diverse range of learning issues. Ngoni's comments are not included in this section because he did not mention teacher's expectation.

Simba commented on his teachers' expectations, and said:

I had a parent evening once when she came to my school, she talked to my Maths teacher. And my Maths teacher said, that during Christmas he should rest, he shouldn't touch any books, until after Christmas and coming back from holidays, he would be nice and fresh. And that to my mum was shocking! That my teacher would be telling me not to read. And to me at the time, I didn't see anything weird with that because I was invested in the culture. I was raised in the culture. But like I said, now I have a different perspective, I have experienced something else I can see the differences (p. 4).

Tatenda's account of teachers' expectation did not come from the class teacher, but from the classroom assistant teacher. Tatenda remarked that:

I think in primary school they gave me like a leaving assembly I think it was like er like a recommendation like well-behaved or it sounds like achieving like an achiever. And then like after I left primary school, like when I started high school. I saw an older Classroom Assistant, I bumped into her, she was working at the

leisure centre attached to the high school, and she was saying, I remember you from primary school we always knew you'd go on to do greater things or expect you to do great things (p. 8).

This shows that teachers' expectation can be distributed, delayed, or at most not verbalised to learners as in this case.

As for Tinotenda, teachers' expectation, was mainly carrying out teachers' orders without questioning it. He was critical of the teacher's attitude and said:

One of my friends he is Black. He didn't do anything apart from sit down, and the teacher told him to move but he hadn't done anything, and then he said no, I'm not going to move. I have just come here and you're telling me to move for no reason. So, he said you have to listen to me whatever... Coz, the way he had said it is you can't sit next to your friends next to week, and he didn't sit next to us so, when he started moving him, that's why he asked for an explanation he wasn't telling, he was just telling him move, move, move (pp.13-14).

The teacher's behaviour expressed here is manifesting an intolerable attitude towards Black boys by not allowing them to sit near each other or together in class.

Tafara was also critical about teacher's lack of knowledge about Zimbabwe education, he remarked that:

Here the teachers are oblivious especially about Zimbabwean education. They are oblivious or they just choose to, maybe they're just pompous of their own system. I would like to use the word pompous. They think their system is the best. Did they know that I had so much competition where I was coming from? No, they didn't have a clue. To them I was another brilliant child or brilliant student, but they look down upon Zimbabwean education. You had pockets of teachers here and there, you're from Zimbabwe ah, yea they know Zimbabwe they have very good education. But mostly and generally, they look down upon our African education so to speak, they think their own is the best... Personally, this is watered down this. This is way watered down, from everything your life as a student, and your life as a student in Zimbabwe. Life is watered down as a student here (p.13).

Tafara's comments emphasised that his teachers (in England) knew nothing about his educational background. It may suggest that Tafara was subjected to the Black boys stereotyping that exists in England regarding their education. By referring to: *Did they know that I had so much competition where I was coming from?* Tafara doubted, which created a barrier to learning, making it difficult to support his learning. His comments also raised questions about the effectiveness of 'new arrivals' assessments. In addition, Tafara argued that this might have resulted in him not being pushed to do any better, as expressed in his comment:

No, no, it was actually for me I look at it that was the downside. I wasn't pushed to do any better whatsoever. Whatever I was doing even I knew that was mediocre, I'm being told this is the best. This is really good. Even I'm thinking this is mediocre, I remember thinking of particular, my fellow classmates back home Christopher Kutswa, and I remember thinking one time we did Accounts mock exam, so I remember thinking like if these guys think this is the best, they need to see Christopher they were the best you know, they were the best of the best. Even if I don't make an effort. So, for me that actually showed me their education was actually lower (p. 13).

This view was also echoed by Anotipa, who was critical of the changing role of teachers by making a comparison between Zimbabwe and England contexts. Anotipa expressed his perception of teachers in England as that of instructors and said:

But my thing about education especially in the UK, in the primary and secondary schools, I don't think teachers exist anymore. They are instructors more than anything (p. 22). From my teaching experience background, you were actually taught whereby you are handed out a brief to do but before you even explore the brief, you have thoroughly taught and even if it is two, three or four lessons before your actual assignment. You are immersed into the understanding of what the subject is and if it's a practical subject, where you have to do things, you have shown you know examples to get to travel to trips to get to shown to directly to shown thing. That was proper education (p. 23).

Tanatswa completed his primary school in England, then proceeded at the local to secondary school. In terms of teachers pushing him to do better, he commented:

I was in the A2-3, I would say I had a lot of potential, but because I wasn't really pushed that much, I was more like, I just do it whenever I was like them kids. Do you know like when you know you can do something but, and you feel like you didn't need to try to do it, it was more like that. There was no push, the only push I got was from my parents and stuff init. It's programmed from young like especially... and your parents and stuff like that through things it's done in a way that you know about it, its done in many ways through TV, like general soaps, media of music anything like everywhere around you are advertising. It's certain things you visually see, and your brain picks up but when you're watching you're not conscious about it (pp.8-9).

Participants' experiences in this study, suggest the many ways the dominant society racialises different ethnic minority groups (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). The next section moves on to discuss racism.

Racism

For African Zimbabwean males, raised in an African-majority country and educated in Zimbabwe, transitioning to the English system brought their first direct experience of racism. Lacking racial literacy, they struggled to describe it, yet encountered subtle racism, including microaggressions, making them feel both hypervisible and like outsiders. Most participants shared their experiences, except Ngoni, who did not mention it. Simba and Tinotenda had unique transitions, with Simba starting nursery in England and completing his education there. The second cycle began when he returned to Zimbabwe to re-sit his 'O' and 'A' Levels. Simba described his experiences in England, and said:

I remember, it's such a silly thing, I know it as a silly thing, but I remember from when I was 4 till now, I remember that I went to school one day, and kids were allowed to bring in toys. So, I used to have loads of toys, but I left my toys behind. So, everyone on my table brings his toy, and then there was this kid. He had this perfect little white tiger toy. It was playing about, he looked you know when you're a kid, just you see someone playing with something and you want it. So, he's playing with that, there were six people on the table, 5 people got to play with that toy at that table, and when it came to me, I wasn't included.

I'm not saying it because of this but I was also the only Black person on the table (p.10).

In recounting that 'when it came to me, I wasn't included'... but I was also the only Black person on the table,' Simba is trying to express the racial discrimination he experienced. For the teacher not to intervene, it may be seen as normalising racism. Simba also expressed how he was racially excluded and isolated in school. He remarked:

I was very isolated, I felt, yes, I felt very segregated during my first school experience in England. I remember I used to eat lunches by myself, breakfast by myself. I won't talk to anyone on my table, I only had one single friend at that time. That's what I remember (p.10).

In referring to his experiences of racism, Tatenda expressed them lightly, classifying them as just two. He said:

The only racism I have experienced is just two: err, in the first one was yes, monkey noises, err just nearby this is when I was younger. And the second time I was in Bournemouth, err like monkey noises. Unfortunately, I know some people who have had a lot worse. Yea, I have never had you know like go back to your country, I've never been attacked, so I mean so, compared to what I have heard it's weak. But obviously there are other people who've had a lot worse than I, that's what I call strong racism. Mine isn't by comparison (p.10).

Tatenda recounted his experiences with racism and microaggressions at school and university. By referring to himself as "the only" and saying, "compared to what I've heard, it's weak," he downplayed the impact, possibly as a coping strategy to navigate being a minority and avoid confronting perpetrators.

Tanatswa reflected on the racism he experienced during a History lesson in secondary school, and said:

You're in one room and you're watching a History session where you're only told England did this, England did that and we took slaves and the only thing you're seeing is that blacks are the only people that are being treated like---and you're the only black in class and they're saying things like they go to Africa and they found this and these guys were eating this!.... Also like because you're mixed with the majority of the people are British and they

didn't understand, we're coming from a post-racist era in it, so you're in a group like you're the only Black kid in an area where it is full of White kids and Black kids are like spaced like that in different classes, you don't really see each other. You're in class, you hear something or you're watching a film you hear something like sibhunini nca, nca, (imitating the sounds and actions) they are taking a mic at you like where are you from and stuff. Majority of like Africans and other people were forced like to deny where they came from. Yea, and that causes a lot of problems and a lot of things because you're trying to fight to fit in a society that doesn't really accept you. You know what I mean? (p.7).

Tinotenda narrated his experiences indicating what Youdell (2003), described as the mundane bodily practice of seating in a room contributes to the constitution of Black students intrinsically at odds with, and a challenge to, school authority. He remarked:

Yea, there was one that was swearing at the teacher and then he just walked out of the class. They didn't kick him out of the lesson or anything. Next week he was back, and nothing happened. That same teacher where that kid said that to him, one of my friends he is Black, didn't do anything apart from sit down, and the teacher told him to move but he hadn't done anything, and then he said no, I'm not going to move. I have just come here and you're telling me to move for no reason (p.13).

Tafara explained and gave examples he found the education system racist:

So, the system itself is very racist. Like I will give you an example: If you are Black, you do something at college, let's say you get involved in an altercation with another student. The punishment that you will receive is totally different to the punishment if two White kids get in an altercation. You will just be seen as 'clash of characters' two White kids getting into an altercation. But two Black kids got into an altercation, they say it was 'gang related'. I remember thinking, that is pure racism, why would you think this is gang this is drugs involved, when these two students just had an altercation. Is this not just another clash of character of kids? But the moment they brand 'gang' on you, that's it. Nobody wants to know, nobody wants to touch, no lecturer cares whether you turn-up in college or not. So, the lecturers actually become scared. So, they do stigmatise ethnic minorities with certain phrases like 'gangs, aggressive' all this kind of talk so, the system itself is very racist (p.18).

Anotipa described the racist microaggressions he experienced and the coping strategies that he used to mitigate. He explained:

It doesn't dishearten me, it's a like a needle, a bit of stress that I don't need. Even though I have learnt to master the strength to block out racism...it's everywhere. You know racism isn't just in the words I say, you can look at a person in a particular way look at them like a dog. It's because of, remember I told you that I learnt how to observe people's body language and like tonal voice, you know. Facial expressions, it's very important to me because I'm able to understand what this individual is up to, what this individual is up to (p. 29).

There were some negative comments about participants experiences with racism in English schools, indicating how endemic it is society. Ngoni was colour-blind (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017) to issues about racism.

Examinations

In England, GCSE results mark the end of secondary education, with success measured by grades A*-C. Although a 'C' is a pass, results day emphasises A*-A grades, often overshadowing a 'C' pass. Five out of seven participants took GCSE exams in England, while one had already completed 'O' Levels in Zimbabwe, and another returned to Zimbabwe to re-sit. Participants interpreted their results based on GCSE attainment analysis, focusing on ethnicity and passing five or more subjects with grades A*-C. The grading system has since shifted from letters to numbers (9-5), including for Maths and English. Tinotenda's results had a combination of grades in both letters and numerals. He commented:

I got 5 in language then 4 in literature and then in Maths, I got 5 as well. The rest of them were A, B, C., coz it was the first year to do it. So, they said just English and Maths and the year that was after we did four of them (p.12).

Simba commented on his GCSE results and said:

I passed my GCSEs, all Cs with the exception of 1B and 1D. B in English, D in History. I got myself into this thought process of I will just do it for the sake of doing it. I will just be in high school because that's what everyone does. I didn't see any real push or drive for myself. So, when my results came out, the only thing I

was thinking I hope that they are not too- low, otherwise my mum will moan at me. My only concern when the grades came out, I was quite happy with the Cs, because it wasn't a failure technically (p. 5).

Simba's explanation resonates with Gillborn et al., (2012) study, 'You got a 'C', what more do you want? and how he was contended with the grades. His experience indicates on one hand, the low expectation white teachers have for Black students, and on the other, the high expectations and aspirations parents have for their children.

Ngoni was reluctant to share his subjects' grades, explaining that he felt the results could have been better, as expressed in his comment:

I think I achieved some of them, some of them definitely could have been better. Overall, I think they could have been better some of them (p.13).

Similarly, Tatenda only focused on the number of subjects and commented:

I think it was maybe eleven subjects (p.7) ...I went to Brickhead university (p.1).

It is not clear why Tatenda chose not to disclose his subject grade passes, even though he went on to study at university. He may have felt they were below expected grades. From their examination results accounts, all participants felt that they could have been better either way (pushed or not pushed). These results suggest that, for the participants, obtaining a 'C' grade was considered sufficient, echoing the sentiment in Gillborn et al.'s (2008) article: "They had a pass—what more did they want?" The next section moves on to discuss reverse of educational transition experiences, the transition into Zimbabwe education system.

Transition into Zimbabwe Education System

A unique finding was the reverse transition from England to Zimbabwe. Simba and Tinotenda were sent back to Zimbabwe after starting school in England. Simba re-sat his 'O' Levels and completed 'A' Levels, while Tinotenda began primary school up to Grade Four before returning to England. Both shared their experiences of

adapting to Zimbabwe's education system, the culture shock, differences in attitudes, and embracing their Zimbabwean identity and culture. The next section considers culture shock.

Culture Shock: Zimbabwe Education System

Simba described his experiences of culture shock, comparing his education experiences in England with that of Zimbabwe. He commented:

Before my 17th birthday when I was 16, I think, I went to re-write my 'O' Levels and to finish my 'A' Levels. Wow, eer, to be fair I wasn't very positive about going, because it was not my decision, but err, biggest immediate change I mean was the time, because I was used to, I go to school at 8, I finish at 3. But my school in Zim, was 8 am till 8pm (p.13).

Simba expressed his shock at the lengthy school days and extended hours of learning at the private boarding school, which were a far cry from his previous experiences in day school in England. He also explained the differences across the two education systems:

Well, the most important point to me was the things that they're taught in Zimbabwe had difference than the things that's taught in England. For example, my English language and my English literature: in Zimbabwe, they were very, very simple, very easy. 'O' Level English was very easy in Zimbabwe for me, but the Maths, the Science, Combined Science at my school they had Combined Science, we didn't do like separate: Bio and Chemistry as separate subjects, it was all under one, so in Zim, they did Physics by itself, Chemistry by itself. At Community Academy, they only offered Combined Science. But at Hill Crest, there was Combined Science as well as offering Chemistry, Biology, Physics all of that. So, I think the only thing I found easier in Zim, was the English because the Maths, wow, wow, I had, had, I can't even describe the Maths, it was something else. The Maths, the Science, they were very difficult. Yaa, it was a very different curriculum, but coming from someone that never used to revise never used to read and I managed to pass to someone that couldn't even understand what was on the paper without looking into myself it was a BIG [emphasis] jump. It was a different curriculum.... much more difficult (p.13).

Simba expressed shock at the contrast between Zimbabwean private schools and English government schools. He admitted having low expectations of Zimbabwe's education system, saying he went from "*never revising and passing*" to struggling with material. He highlighted how highly education is valued in Zimbabwe and the aspirations of its students.

Education has very BIG value in Zimbabwe. From everyone just valued education, way more and I think it's due to like I said a lot of my White friends they knew that no matter what happens they will be fine. Like if they fail, they can always go depend on or get minimum wage job or get on the dole or something like that. But, in Zimbabwe that's not an option. So, I think the harshness of the reality of life in Zimbabwe, pushes like people know that this is my way to improve my life. Whereas there is no reason for you to try and improve your life because you grow up comfortable. You will be comfortable with everything. So, people in Zimbabwe pushed a lot more just because they had goals, they have something they want to work for. Whereas in England that's not something that's offered because everything is taken care of for you (p.14).

Tinotenda began his early education in England (Reception class) before returning to Zimbabwe to complete up to Grade Four. He shared his experiences, particularly highlighting the warm welcome he received in Zimbabwe. He commented:

It was good, I got welcomed very well and they showed me around the school, and they treated me like every other child. so, I was quite pleased with that. I feel like they didn't treat me differently when they welcomed me as if I'm something special because sometimes.... other schools in Zim where they will tend if you're British if you're coming from Britain, they will tend to treat you as if you're best one of all the students. So, they treated me like as equal to everyone else. Majority were Black and then there were a couple of mixed-race, and one or two white people (p. 2).

Tinotenda recounted his learning experiences, particularly his performance during his time. He spoke approvingly of his relationship with his teacher, the mutual understanding, and the kind of love the teacher had for him, which was always good, and he said that:

I remember in class there was me and this girl we were always good when it came to education. Or if we got something wrong, she (teacher) wouldn't want to do anything to us because there were other students who would mess around, but she knew if we made a mistake, we've actually tried. So, it's like she kind of had kind of love for me in a way that made me feel happy that I am doing well in education. As in getting high grades because I was always getting in the higher ninety's or what they would set as a pass mark. We just did kind of tests, and we also did verbal tests as well. So, it's just about, coz they would say you can't move on if you don't pass. So, you would've to get beyond their pass mark. That would be for us it was breaking over not just one test at the end of the year. It was breaking it into three tests around the terms (p.2).

By expressing satisfaction with his teacher's attitude and understanding, Tinotenda provides insight into teachers' perceptions of high expectations from their students. This good relationship may suggest that it pushed Tinotenda to want to do better in tests.

Chapter Summary

The findings in this chapter show that the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who began schooling in Zimbabwe and later moved to England for their GCSEs were complex. Most participants viewed Zimbabwe's education system as superior, though some questioned the discipline and punishment practices. They benefited from having same-race teachers and being part of the majority, which created a supportive environment with high expectations. The transition began before moving to England, as many participants stayed behind with relatives while their parents left. In England, they lost the advantage of same-race teachers and encountered educators unfamiliar with their academic potential. While they passed their GCSEs, many felt they could have performed better with more support. The next chapter discusses these findings and outlines limitations.

Chapter 8: Discussion and limitations

Introduction

This chapter explores how Critical Race Theory (CRT) counter-storytelling enhances our understanding of the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males in this study. Counter-storytelling brings a crucial focus on how their narratives challenge dominant majoritarian views, particularly the discourse surrounding Black children's intellectual deficits (Wright et al., 2020). These counter-stories of lived educational experiences call on majoritarian Whites to recognize and acknowledge the enduring influence of the colonial British grammar school system, even in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

The chapter is divided into four broad themes. The first theme covers educational experiences in Zimbabwe, including sub-themes such as types of schools attended, learning experiences, ability grouping, teachers' expectations, and examinations. The second theme addresses their experiences as left-behind children. The third theme discusses the transition into the English education system, with sub-themes such as family reunification, types of schools attended in England, school admissions, English language assessments, culture shock, teachers' expectations, academic disengagement, learning barriers, racism, and examinations. The final theme reflects on the study's limitations and how they were mitigated, concluding with a chapter summary.

Summary of the main findings

The lived experiences of Black African students in the English education system have been researched in various ways. However, few studies (Dronkers et al., 2011) have investigated the lived educational transition experiences of students who started their education outside the UK, drawing from their learning stories across the two education systems.

The interview data from this study particularly the educational experience in Zimbabwe, exposes notable social, cultural, racial, gender, class, and academic disparities between the Zimbabwean and English education systems despite their shared roots in the British education system established during the colonial era. In

Zimbabwe, progression to the next year group is based on successful academic achievement, whereas in England, it is automatic and determined by age. The interview data findings suggest that most participants (Anotipa, Ngoni, Simba, Tafara) had relatively better educational experiences and outcomes in Zimbabwe due to their male privilege, the open and highly competitive selective system, the reinforcement of ability grouping and social class than in England. These findings are based on participants' educational experiences drawing from CRT's counter-storytelling, which centres on the voices of the people of colour. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) contend that:

the voice-of-color thesis holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, American Indian, Asian and Latino writers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters the whites are unlikely to know. (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017, p.11)

Likewise, because of African Zimbabwean males' different educational histories formulated during the colonial period and inherited at independence in 1980 as discussed in chapter three, the use of counter-stories in this study offers valuable perspectives to counter dominant narratives. Drawing from Delgado and Stefancic, (2017) concept of renaming one's reality it is essential to acknowledge and accept that no one has lived the participants' lives, knows how it is to have started education in Zimbabwe, and the multiple transitions they experienced (learning as a left-behind child and as an only African Zimbabwean male in English schools). These stories are most likely to counter and challenge the majoritarian narratives of Black children's educational experiences (Demie, 2002; Strand, 2012; DfE, 2018; Byrne et al., 2020) in England because African Zimbabweans were born and started their education outside the UK. Participants lived educational experiences (see Chapter 7) were starkly in contrast to that of other ethnic minorities in the English schools they attended.

The findings of this study illustrate the salience of racism, an enduring remnant of colonisation which is also a significant characteristic of CRT as that suggests that 'racist hierarchical structures govern all political, economic, and social domains' (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004, p.27). This is reflected in the inherited British colonial education system, that mainly privileged Whites and the subsequent Othering of

Africans (DeCuir and Dixon, 2004; Kanyongo, 2005). Although at Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 racism was overshadowed by the educational reform hype 'Education for All' (Kanyongo, 2005), it was still very active as reflected in the educational structures and processes that remained the same. Racism became a reality when participants transitioned into English schools. Additionally, in England, racism was differently textured if one is African refugee or British African diasporic migrant background rather than British Black diasporic from Caribbean descent. The study also exposed similar ignorance experienced by Ladson-Billings (2021) on the lack of race-literacy proficiency among participants and researcher that resulted in their inability to fully articulate their experiences of racism and racialisation (see Chapter 7, Transition into English education system) when referring to their educational experiences in England. The outcome of this study has provided insights into the lived educational experiences of transitions across the two education systems. However, the results should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations of the current research. This chapter presents the study findings from a CRT- counter-storytelling perspective. The use of counter-stories is to respect the views and to bring the voices of marginalised participants' educational experiences to the fore, and how they interpreted the meaning of these experiences. As mentioned earlier on data interpretation, the interpretation of these findings also embeds the literature, researcher's experiences, perceptions, personal beliefs, and reflexivity. In the above respects, then, the findings exhibit some of the key tenets or themes of CRT that have already been identified, namely the salience of racism, intersectionality, counter-stories, and giving value to lived experiences.

It was noted in this study that participants attended diverse schools (former Group A and B) in Zimbabwe and England. They were at different educational stages (nursery-secondary education), different ages (3-17 years) and had never met each other, their experiences consist of individual variations. The three common themes and sub-themes were prominent factors that constituted their educational experiences across the two education systems. The interpretation of findings in this chapter is divided into three main sections, followed by sub-sections, that discuss the educational trajectories from Zimbabwe to England. The first section discusses the findings relating to educational experiences in Zimbabwe, illustrating

the social, cultural, and academic differences rooted in their colonial history and post-colonial present from a post-colonial theory perspective. The second section focuses on findings from educational experiences as Left-behind children in Zimbabwe when their parents migrated to England in the late 1990s. The third and final section discusses the educational experiences of transitioning into English schools between 2000-2020 from a CRT's counter-story perspective (Solarzano and Yosso, 2004) challenging the majoritarian views about Black children's education.

Educational Experiences in Zimbabwe

This section discusses the findings relating to educational experiences in Zimbabwe, illustrating the social, cultural, gender, class, and academic differences rooted in their colonial history and post-colonial present from a post-colonial theory perspective that was predominantly shaped by race and racism. In discussing and analysing these experiences, counter-story or voice a significant tenet of CRT runs throughout this chapter. It is the 'recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color' (Matsuda et al., 1993, p.6). In addition, these experiences echo Calmore's (1995) description of the voice as:

a personal expression that allows our experiences and lessons, learned as people of color, to convey the knowledge we possess in a way that is empowering to us, and it is hoped, ultimately empowering to those whose behalf we act. (Calmore, 1995, p.321)

The educational experiences illustrate simultaneous underlying social, cultural, gender, and academic processes and practices that inform education in post-colonial Zimbabwe that was rooted in the functions of whiteness as property (Harris, 1993) and human rights (Ladson-Billings, 2021). In addition, it also illustrates the lingering remnant of colonisation (Elam, 2019) experienced through the inherited British colonial education system. Education in Zimbabwe is overtly governed by two conflicting dynamics, the human rights aspect adopted since becoming a member of the United Nations and UNICEF in 1980, and covertly by institutional and structural racism embedded in the inherited colonial British education system. Thus, African Zimbabwean males' experiences in the Zimbabwe education system are multi-dimensional and consist of five sub-themes:

types of schools, learning experiences, ability grouping system, teachers' expectations, and examinations. Some experiences relate to the individual, some to the school, and some are a combination of the successful relationship of both. These factors help gain insight into how children from the Zimbabwe education system are challenged and can continuously achieve as they progress in their learning trajectory. The outcomes of this finding provided insight into lived educational experiences and the type of education they received before transitioning to England.

Types of Schools Attended in Zimbabwe

The types of schools attended in Zimbabwe underpins a complex combination of CRT's tenets: 'permanence of racism' (Bell, 1980; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995), the functions of whiteness as property (Harris, 1995) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) that have endured in Zimbabwe's post-colonial education system as revealed in the experiences, and how race, gender, and class played out in these school settings. Zimbabwean males attended who attended former different types of schools (government, former Group 'A', Group 'B', private, independent, church boarding schools) reveal how these schools influenced their educational experiences.

The legacy of the racially segregated British education system inherited at independence in 1980 continues to be reflected in the types of schools identified by racial hierarchies Group A (Whites) and Group B (Africans) available for different students. From a counter-story narrative, African Zimbabwean males. Unsurprisingly, participants who attended former Group 'A' schools had different experiences regarding the quality of education they received. In comparison, participants who attended former Group 'B' schools had to contend with a mixture of trained and untrained teachers and inadequately resourced schools, an enduring experience of African education provision that continues to reflect colonial times. Although the new ZANU-PF government tried to rectify this quality imbalance at independence (Kanyongo, 2005) the rhetoric differed from the reality in schools.

It is also crucial to consider that African Zimbabwean participants are not a homogeneous group in terms of social, class and gender socio-economic status

backgrounds. For some participants who attended boarding schools, former Group 'A', private schools, it must be remembered that at independence in 1980, new social mobility, most middle-class African Zimbabweans moved to live in former White-only affluent suburbs (Southall, 2020). This enabled their children access to former White-only schools. Many aspects of education in Zimbabwe have changed due to influences such as the UK (some in colonial times and some after) and the 'Western' view of education and upholding CRT's Whiteness as property the functions and White supremacy. Some parents enrolled their children and had to transport them to these former White-only schools because they met the eligibility criteria. This finding confirms Dorsey's (1989) findings that the Zimbabwe education system retained its elitist outlook despite policy shifts. These differences from 1980 onwards reflect African parents' choices regarding where to educate their children based on their values and beliefs about which schools would offer better educational outcomes. In Zimbabwe, the type of school a child attends matters because different schools offer different educational experiences, and *reputation* as echoed by one participant (Ngoni, p.14) regarding academic performance is also critical. Schools have different reputations. For example, Ngoni wanted to go to a boarding school because of the reputation (quality of teachers and knowledge and skills he would gain).

This finding reflects similarities to those of Kanyongo (2005), Hungwe (1994), and Shizha and Kariwo (2011), who found the school types and access consistent with the educational reforms implemented at independence in 1980. This finding on types of schools is also consistent with that of DeCuir and Dixson (2004), in the area where African American middle-class parents bus their children in predominantly White-only neighbourhoods. Thus, interpreting this finding requires balancing a counter-story regarding education in newly independent former British colonies inherited the British education system and the different learning experiences among participants who attended former Group 'A', former Group 'B', and private schools. It is consistent with the school structures implemented at the introduction of formal education in 1890; the continued use of these school identifications is a reminder of White supremacy and mimicry (Bhabha, 1994). Often, the type of school is not considered a contributing factor when discussing educational experiences.

Learning Experiences in Zimbabwe

This finding relates to participants' diverse learning experiences in Zimbabwe schools embedded in the social, cultural and academic hierarchies and the Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy of humanness (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza, 2014). The learning experiences highlight the more pronounced social and cultural hierarchies based on age, gender, and authority within Zimbabwe education. All the participants attended different schools, had different teachers and were at different educational stages (primary or secondary). It was expected that they had same-race teachers; it is also clear that participants had diverse learning experiences in their respective schools relating to teaching practices and methods, curriculum, and other educational resources. An interesting, related factor associated with this finding is the contribution and benefits of having same race teachers. This finding broadly supports the work of Gershenson et al. (2022) on the long-term impact of same race teachers.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) referred to the diverse learning experiences that are underpinned by disparities in inequity of educational resources. There are resemblances reflected in participants' experiences in former Group 'A' and former Group 'B' schools. Participants who attended private school and former Group 'A' had better access to sporting facilities, such as golf, than those in former Group B schools, who improvised by practising cricket in the streets and playing with a homemade football '*chikweshe*'. It also suggests that the school systems that emerged from the educational reforms at independence in 1980 did not go far in implementing total educational reforms; instead, essential areas of resources remained unchanged. In former Group 'B' schools, a hot seating system was introduced, which resulted in these schools, running morning and afternoon sessions. Participants who attended former Group 'B' schools experienced attending school in alternating hot-seating sessions. This finding is similar to the findings of Kanyongo (2005) on disparities in resource allocation. Yet, regardless of the school attended, most participants were in higher academic ability groups.

Careful interpretation is needed here since participants attended different stages and types of schools, and it is unclear whether they were conscious of the colonial racial hierarchical structures or were part of normalising racial structures. Despite

the differences, participants shared similar learning experiences irrespective of the school type. A plausible explanation for this learning experience is related to the teaching methods, having teachers who looked like participants who spoke the same first language and held similar educational beliefs and values enshrined in *'education is the way out of poverty'*.

Ability Grouping

One of the tenets of CRT is Whiteness as property (Harris, 1993) and its four 'rights' functions. The right to exclude is reflected in the selective structure of the Zimbabwe education system. One way of excluding is the use of academic ability grouping, a system that selects and groups learners based on their academic performance. The legacy of colonial education is selective education, which relies heavily on grouping learners according to their academic ability. This system feeds into contemporary educational competition and the hierarchical racial, as reflected in national and international assessments such as PISA, TIMMS, and PIRLS, thus creating hierarchies of learners' inequalities.

This significant finding showed the popularity of ability grouping in Zimbabwe's education system. The academic ability grouping system is prevalent across the education sector. The finding suggests strong support for ability grouping among participants. All participants' comments about ability groups may indicate that belonging to high academic ability groups raised their learner identity status and academic prowess. This finding confirms the reason why ability grouping has been introduced and retained in schools (Barrance, 2020) and education more broadly. One explanation for belonging to ability groups 1 or 2 (A or B) is the effect of a badge of academic honour on students. For participants in academic ability groups 1 or 2, this badge of honour gave them a sense of academic prowess, self-worth, and increased self-confidence. This was reflected in some participants' descriptions of belonging to high-ability groups 1-2, describing themselves as *'being a permanent resident'*. This finding is similar to perceptions on ability grouping study (Chisaka, 2002) and tiering (Barrance, 2020; Ireson and Hallam, 2009). Two additional factors peculiar to this study may help explain this finding. First, it is evident that the overt competitive nature of the Zimbabwe education system influences perceptions about higher academic ability groups. Using a CRT,

and considering participants' race, their experiences this finding challenges the majoritarian perspective of an intellectual deficit among Black children.

Another finding within the ability grouping experiences, is that it exposes class, gender abilities and masculinities issues in Zimbabwean society. A significant attribute of African Zimbabwean males' masculinity is that they should possess specific knowledge (measured in terms of educational qualifications) and skills in addition to attributes of Unhu/Ubuntu (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza, 2014), as they take future family and broader leadership roles in society. This is critical as it may undermine the males' leadership role in the wider family, as reflected in some participants' fear of being outperformed by girls. Support for ability grouping was reduced when participants decreased their performance, indicating the negative impact on their self-perception and prospects. This finding mirrors the similarities between Blackness and male masculinity in Zimbabwe and the functions of Whiteness in CRT regarding the right to possess knowledge (Harris, 1995). Here an important and interesting point to note is that the colonial knowledge relations and other forms of white cultural capital being seen as important continue even after independence (Kelley, 2000).

It also suggests the stigma associated with being demoted to a lower ability group, hence participants working hard to go back and retain their badge of honour status as they conform to inherent African cultural beliefs that privilege the male child. Zimbabwean males conformed to societal expectations, although some discovered that some girls always came to the top of the class academically. This finding is consistent with the study by Nhundu (1992), educated unemployed graduates in Zimbabwe. Second, this finding also reflects that of Dorsey (1989), who showed that cultural values and beliefs about gender in African Zimbabwean society privilege boys over girls in accessing education. One possible way of maintaining that Zimbabwean male privilege is belonging to academic ability groups 1 and 2.

Teachers' Expectations in Zimbabwe

Teachers' expectations greatly influence students' academic performance and self-perception of learning experiences and outcomes for students (Johnston et al., 2021). A fundamental teacher standard is to expect all children to achieve and succeed in their learning. From participants' counter-narratives, teachers in

Zimbabwe are most likely to expect their students to do well regardless of their academic ability status, as this also boosts their professional status and how they are regarded by students, parents, and the wider community. Although participants did not mention this directly, several factors contributed to teachers' expectations because this is an African-majority country. One explanation is that in Zimbabwe, teachers and students share the same colonial history of education and social and cultural African Shona or Ndebele ethnic background. It is also common in Zimbabwe that teachers live in the same neighbourhoods as their students and know the participants' parents from various connections, including tribal kinship, the totem system, religious affiliations, and other social affiliations. This web of societal interconnectedness might have increased the reciprocal mutual understanding between teachers' educational expectations of their students.

Unsurprisingly, some participants experienced what Chang (2011) termed the Pygmalion effect (see how Tafara's teacher's attitude and expectations on his learning). This finding indicates teachers' positive attitudes towards high-performing students. Participants also responded positively to the teacher's expectations, reflecting the shared mutual understanding that exists between teachers and participants. As expected from a cultural perspective, teachers' expectations were not confined to the classroom only but also included future careers and behaviour outside school. Another possible explanation that might have contributed to teacher expectations is the issue of school fee payment in Zimbabwe schools and parents' expectation of value for their money. This finding supports a body of literature on differentiated teacher expectations based on academic ability. A study by Chisaka (2002) found that teachers rarely missed lessons for high-ability classes and had positive teaching high ability compared to lower ability.

African Zimbabwean males' education was negatively impacted by the effects of ESAP on educational provision, the rise of educated unemployment, the reintroduction of school fees, and overall education in Zimbabwe (Nhundu, 1992). This finding suggests disguised combination of CRT's convergence of interest (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017) and White Supremacy as seen when international economic organisations such IMF offered rescue financial bailout packages to the

Zimbabwe government. This finding further demonstrates the usefulness of counter-stories and the need to support the views of the participants' learning conditions during a declining economy, political unrest, shrinking job market, and the prevalence of the educated unemployed, as well as the learning becoming highly competitive and selective.

Examinations in Zimbabwe schools

Another significant finding that emerged from the data analysis was the examinations. This finding confirms how examination results have always been essential to the educational experience and dominate students' educational outcomes from national to international perspectives. From a CRT perspective, White Supremacy and the functions of Whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), examinations are one of the enduring characteristics of colonial education since its establishment 125 years ago in Zimbabwe's education system. While other traditional aspects, such as good behaviour and practical skills have been retained, they are not considered qualifications. This suggests how much the 'Western' view of education' (which is predominantly structured from a White Supremacy background), has dominated the Zimbabwe government's educational attainment perspective.

In preparation for the national examinations, two prominent national examinations are taken at two exit points; the first is the Grade 7 examinations at the end of primary schooling and 'O' Levels at the end of four-year secondary education (Nhundu, 1992; Kanyongo, 2005). Some participants' expectations were consistent with their academic ability grouping. Considering the competitive and highly selective culture that dominates the Zimbabwe education system, subject passes have tended to resist the government rhetoric of threshold minimum 'C' grades subject pass. The reason for this is that subject grade passes do not always guarantee school of choice because they are dependent on the yearly pass rate. As illustrated in Ngoni's Grade 7 results, while he got six (6) units out of four (4) subject areas, and the result was considered outstanding, it affected his progression to his first choice boarding secondary school. Also, Tafara progressed to a day urban secondary school, with eleven (11) units in four (4) subjects. However, this did not always guarantee the highest grades (straight 'A's or 'B's).

Participants were conscious of the consequences of passing with low grades. This finding explains the intense competition within Zimbabwe's education system and the diverse interpretations of what constitutes a passing grade. It also challenges the government's definition of a 'C' grade as the minimum subject pass.

Left-Behind Children

Left-behind children is a term used to describe children who are left behind as parents travel for more extended periods or after the death of parents (UNICEF, n.d.). Clearly, all participants in this study were left-behind children due to parental migration to the UK (McGregor, 2006). Participants' stories of their educational experiences as African Zimbabwean males aged between three and seventeen years who transitioned to England on family re-union between 2000-2020 can thus be seen as counter-stories to dominant narratives. It is important to acknowledge that the voices of ethnic minority such as African Zimbabweans have not been heard before the English education system. Their period of separation ranged between two to eight years before they were re-united with their families. During this period, participants, as children under 18, were left in various (family and extended family) care arrangements that had the capacity for the child's welfare. The most common caring arrangement was leaving the child with another stay-behind parent or maternal grandparents and extended maternal family members.

There are several explanations for these arrangements. The structures of the caring arrangements reflect the existing cultural protocols within the traditional African Zimbabwean society. In common with these caring protocols, leaving children with one parent or family member reflects the African cultural tribal and kinship structures and fundamental African adage that '*it takes a village to raise a child*' philosophy. In this setup, children will most likely experience minimal disruptions and discontinuities (Kufakurinani et al, 2014). As expected, participants were left-behind in two settings, one with their stay-behind parents (Ngoni, Simba, Tanatswa). While some participants were left in the care of their maternal grandparents (Tatenda, Tinotenda, Tafara) and maternal aunties (Anotipa, Tafara) with whom they already had a relationship. Most African Zimbabwean families are expected to not travel as a group. Participants' experiences align with the documented policies of exclusion that affect immigrants and their dependent

children, as reflected in the literature on UK's hostile environment policy (Immigration Acts, 2014 and 2016; Madziva and Thondhlana 2017) and the uncertainty of adapting to new environments.

This finding has resemblances to those obtained by Pasura (2011); by Kufakurinani et al. (2014) on diaspora orphans, and by UNICEF's (n.d.) study on Chinese parents or caregivers in rural-urban migration (Fan et al., 2009). The only difference with these studies is that in England, the re-union largely depended on meeting the UK Home Office eligibility criteria on immigration rules relating to bringing over dependents on a family re-union visa. Participants were dependents whose parents were either highly skilled migrants or refugees at the time and had no control over family re-union decisions made for them. At the time of writing, the UK government proposed stricter regulations (changes to legal migration rules for family and work visas) for foreigners bringing in spouses or dependents, including raising the income requirement for family and work visas to £38,700 per year (Home Office, 2023; McKinney and Gower, 2024). These findings are consistent with the functions of Whiteness as property, the right to exclude by setting the rules that are racially exclusionary.

It has been suggested (see Rutter, 2012, for example) that separation from parents is likely to impact emotionally and psychologically the well-being of participants coming to terms with the absence of their parents and the emotional trauma and resilience strategies they employed to manage it. Some participants shared their experiences of episodes of emotional deprivation, describing the periods of *loneliness* and *feeling upset* after their parents' short visits. Rutter (1989) referred to separation's emotional and psychological impact and how critical underlying continuities derive from the effect of early relationships. Separation from parents involves:

- multiple stressful elements (moving houses or locations),
- leaving the familiar to the unfamiliar and the emotional and psychological on participants,
- coming to terms with the absence of their parents and the emotional trauma and resilience strategies they employed to manage it.

It is inevitable that during their separation, participants would have developed resilience in dealing with the separation positively, developing superior problem-solving skills while coming to terms with grief. A possible explanation for the successful separation handling is due to previous separations and the reassurance that parents used to return for short periods. The way participants handled their separation confirms Rutter's (2012) finding that successful, happy separations foster resilience in dealing with unhappy separations. Anotipa's separation case is unique because he experienced a series of difficult separations after the death of his parents and aunt and the eight-year wait for re-union; the resilience may turn into normality. The psychological and emotional trauma suggests the limitations of the cultural capacity in offering practical support systems.

Transition into the English Education System

The third and final section discusses the educational experiences of transitioning into English schools between 2000-2020 from a Critical Race Theory's counter-storytelling framework. Educational transitions are part of everyday school life. However, transitioning from one education system to another is most likely to be fraught with a network of complex cultural, social, and academic differences and similarities.

It has been argued (see, for example, Stewart-Hall et al. (2022) that "Knowledge gaps and avoidance of racism" (p.3) in the English education system have had a "traumatic and lasting impact on children, staff and families" (p.3). It is therefore not surprising that participants' educational experiences of transitioning into the English education system brought to the fore the salience of race and racism in the English education system and British society. These counter-stories explain how African Zimbabwean males coming from an African majority background were unconscious of racism until they arrived in England. To repeat the point made previously, Zimbabwe is an African-majority country; therefore, people do not live their daily lives using racial identifiers. Instead, they use other identifiers such as family name, tribe, totems, or dialects. However, it can be argued that as the participants moved into an education system which involves "underpinning White supremacy through curriculum, staffing and colonial bodies of knowledge"

(Stewart-Hall et al., 2022, p.4), their perceptions changed. The findings revealed the lack of preparedness about the hostile environment and attitudes towards immigrants experienced by African Zimbabwean males and their parents as they transitioned into England to continue their education. Six overlapping sub-themes emerged from the data: family re-union in England, types of schools, admission and English language assessments, culture shock, teacher expectations, not being pushed and learning traps, racism, and examinations. The complex interactions between these different factors supports the notion that has already been explored, namely that CRT is an opportunity to explore intersections in historical, social and cultural influences, and “contextualises student-of-colour experiences in the past, present, and future” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.37). The strengths of counter-storytelling for Solórzano and Yosso (2002, p.36) are that counter-storytelling puts human faces and experiences to the fore in discussion of the issues, and challenges the dominant narrative or what might be termed “majoritarian stories” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.37) by opening “new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.36). Importantly, therefore, participants’ counter-stories can highlight the central and important ideas in understanding and addressing the issues (Ledesma and Calderón, 2015).

Family Re-union in England

This theme emerged from left-behind children. Re-uniting with family members and building a new life in a new country have challenges for participants navigating the complexities of educational transition. One feasible explanation relates to responding to their housing needs. Participants whose parents had refugee status went through a series of adjustments. The first one relates to living back together as a family unit in a new environment, new system, and new culture. It involved letting go of their Zimbabwe experiences and embracing new, unfamiliar neighbourhoods where they could hardly find other Zimbabwean families. In addition, meeting diverse ethnic populations, moving schools as accommodations (Tanatswa, Anotipa), and other circumstances changed. Some participants experienced periods of instability by moving schools because of changing family circumstances, such as accommodation needs and moving to live

with a family relative after the death of a parent (Ngoni). This confirms earlier findings on family separation among refugees (Refugee Council, 2018).

Types of Schools Attended in England

African Zimbabwean males were still in compulsory education when they transitioned to England between 2000-2020. All participants arrived at different times of the academic year in England, and they recounted their experiences of frustration with the English education system; the youngest had just started nursery, and the oldest had completed his four-year secondary education in Zimbabwe. School types in England resembled those in Zimbabwe because of the colonial history. However, a surprising finding was that when transitioning into English schools, participants could not continue attending the same types of schools (private, independent, and boarding) that reflected the ones they had attended in Zimbabwe, except the local day comprehensive schools. The participants' experiences are an illustration of the whiteness as property function to use and enjoy. While in Zimbabwe participants enjoyed, however in England they were excluded from this enjoyment by rules that govern 'choice' private and independent schools. This finding illustrates how contexts are crucial to the learning experiences of participants.

This finding has several explanations. One plausible explanation is that private grammar schools and independent schools are highly selective and highly fee-paying. For example, on their online page, Manchester Grammar school fees for 2023/2024 were £15,180.00 per year or £5,060.00 per term. Also, Watershed's (a private college in Zimbabwe) 2024 fee structure for boarding was US\$ 3,220.00, for a day scholar US\$ 2,060.00, and foreign students are charged US\$ 3520.00 (Watershed. Online). Obviously, the fee structure is not a like-for-like comparison but for illustration purposes. What it clearly shows is that, in Zimbabwe, parents could and still can afford to send their children to schools of their choice because their professional status and salaries were sufficient whereas in England, most Zimbabwean parents had low-paid jobs that did not match their qualifications (McGregor, 2006) making it extremely difficult to afford school fees and in most cases schools of their choice are not available in their neighbourhoods. It is evident that information about scholarships for fee-paying schools was unlikely to

be made public in schools located in deprived areas, where most African Zimbabweans lived under the asylum dispersal policy in England (Humphris, 2010). Despite widening participation initiatives, such schools are rarely located in disadvantaged or deprived areas. These two explanations have resemblances to the education of Africans in colonial Zimbabwe. Third, African Zimbabwean parents lack awareness of school choices available that match the academic level of their children. Fourth, this may also suggest the privilege of racial hierarchies on based on race and immigration/ citizenship status.

This finding supports existing literature on the permanence of racism, as shown in a study on ethnic inequalities in state education in English schools (Alexander and Shankley, 2020). Despite policies legislated in the past, such as The Children's Act (2004) and the Equality and Diversity Act (2010), nothing seems to change for many students. This is in keeping with the point made by Stewart-Hall et al. (2022) who suggest that:

Equal opportunity measures in laws only tackle extreme forms of racism, whereas CRT identifies a socially constructed, business-as-usual racism ..., visible and distressing to PoC [People of Colour] daily yet seemingly invisible to those racialised as white. (Stewart-Hall et al., 2022, p.4)

Another difficulty for participants is that they could not access a similar education provision for continuity and progression at the same level of performance as they had in Zimbabwe. This change might have contributed to the downgrading and discontinuity of equivalent educational experiences and overall attainment. Continuity is an essential element in a successful transition, so a question that needs further investigation is whether school type matters in transitions.

School admission and English language assessments

Through telling their stories, in their words, allowed participants to counter the Othering process, thus challenging the privileged discourses (DeCuir and Dixon, 2004) that are often prevalent in English schools. School admission marks the transition process of new arrivals joining after the academic year starts in their new school. This finding showed another structural and procedural difference in admission across the two education systems. School admissions in State schools

in England, regardless of educational stage, fall under the responsibility of Local Authorities, (DfE, 2021) and follow an admissions protocol, whereas, in Zimbabwe, it is the direct responsibility of the School Head and the staff. It appears the difficulty with this arrangement is that parents had limited choices or say in the type of school they wanted to enrol their child(ren). All participants were admitted to local schools within their neighbourhoods. Participants who arrived at the primary school stage attended a mixture of faith and community primary schools and progressed to comprehensive secondary schools or academies. Evidently, schools attended by most participants revealed they were all located in disadvantaged areas, and some schools ranked average in Ofsted ratings or were performing below the national average at GCSEs. This finding further confirms the ethnic inequalities (Alexander and Shankley, 2020) that continue to exist despite policies to reverse them (Stewart-Hall et al., 2022, p.4) and where the educational needs of Black African middle-class children are not fully recognised.

The admission also exposed a lack of knowledge of the English education system and a lack of effective pre-transition preparations by both participants and their parents. The differences in school academic year calendars led to a four-month waiting period for admission to school, which was surprisingly a very long time for one participant. Prolonged admissions are likely to cause uncertainty and low morale for participants who have only returned from years of waiting for family re-union. It exposes the difficulties with in-year school admissions protocols, as they are not uniformly applied across LAs.

This finding on delays in school admissions may have contributed to participants experiencing a mismatch in school and class allocation. For example, Anotipa had attended private-only education in Zimbabwe, an equivalent of a fee-paying grammar school in England, only to be enrolled in an academy in a disadvantaged area. This was a massive climb-down for Anotipa, who had long assimilated into British culture through the curriculum and school ethos in terms of educational standards and expectations. It is also unsurprising that this shift may have led most participants to conclude that English education was backwards, and to quote Tafara's (p.13) words, '*watered down education, and backwards and all competition is gone,*'

English language assessments measure English proficiency levels in speaking and reading and are taken by all school children whose first language is not English or who are joining the English education system. This finding indicated that all participants met the requirements of English assessments and were placed in a higher year group than their Zimbabwean equivalent. There are, however, possible explanations for this finding. English is the official language and medium of instruction in schools in Zimbabwe; therefore, participants were not new to the English language because of the colonial British education system that has remained in use in Zimbabwe (Kanyongo, 2005). It also helps to remember that the English language was one of the conditions to be met to get permission to establish African schools in colonial Zimbabwe. English language policy makes it one of the compulsory curriculum subjects to be taught in Zimbabwe schools (see Chapter 2). Although this finding has not previously been described, it confirms race as a social construction (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017, p.125) that has prescribed the image of Blacks as indolent, immoral, and intellectually deficient.

Another finding from this compulsory English language requirement is in keeping with CRT's critique hate speech, language rights and curricula. The English language rights are not extended to Shona language rights. This finding aligns with Delgado and Stefancic (2017, p.129) regarding the constitutional status of language rights and the authority to restrict them. For Zimbabweans and participants alike, proficiency in the English language is a symbol of both power and high social status. This is consistent with the literature on English language policy 1899 and 1903 Education Ordinances in colonial Zimbabwe (Richards and Govere, 2003). According to Hungwe (2007, p. 136) Zimbabwe's colonial heritage is British, with English as the official language of education, business and government. There are two major indigenous languages, Shona and Ndebele. Shona is the language of about 75% of the population. Ndebele is spoken by about 16% of the population. It is unsurprising that English has retained its role as the dominant language (Hungwe, 2007) among Zimbabwean languages (Shona and Ndebele) in the Zimbabwe education system. Therefore, participants in this study were not expected to have special language needs except for fluency as this is consistent for first-language speakers. This finding also challenges Ryan et al.'s

(2010) that new arrivals face language barriers, as African Zimbabwean males in this study did not need interpreters.

In terms of being placed in a higher year group, it is possible that this indicated to participants that their English proficiency was at the same level as that of their peers and was not a cause of concern. It is difficult to confirm, as participants did not explicitly mention reading assessments. Participants might have interpreted this move as a demonstration that Zimbabwe's education system was advanced compared to English education. It is also essential to consider that Zimbabwe is a former British colony whose education system was formulated by a British grammar school-type education system. This finding supports the World Bank's (2018) report that Zimbabwe had the highest literacy rate (89%) in Africa, while globally, in 2016, it stood at 86% and 64% in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, it seems this information is not readily available in English literature, or it may confirm the existing racial ideas about Black children and the low expectations in English schools.

A significant principle for supporting new arrivals in schools is a meaningful assessment of their prior knowledge and experience as well as their language proficiency. Another principal concern is supporting the educational attainment of newly arrived EAL learners. Despite these guidelines on supporting new arrivals and refugees in English schools, participants' assessment experiences suggest the assessments were tokenism, a brief chat with the Headteacher, which fell short of the proper procedures, particularly in English. It is also unsurprising, considering the inherent low expectations towards Black children, especially boys in English schools. For example, Tatenda recounted being shown photo cards and asked to name what they saw. This experience confirms the social construction of perceptions of Africans as intellectually inferior (Delagado and Stefancic, 2017); therefore, it may be argued that assessments were not taken seriously to reflect the proficiency levels of participants.

Although most participants confirmed that they had learned English as a subject in school in Zimbabwe, it may be argued that this was not adequately acknowledged by receiving schools. Some participants experienced difficulty with fluency in spoken language. It is unsurprising considering that in most cases, they were the

only Zimbabwean in the whole class and year group; being a minority is likely to trigger confidence issues. Participants were not offered English language support. Since Zimbabwean males were children of immigrants and refugees, a possible explanation for this may be attributed to the hostile environment towards immigrants and refugees. This supports Madziva and Thondhlana's (2017) notion of an attitude of hostility to, for example, Syrian refugees instead of hospitality and refugee preference for Ukrainian refugees with the UK government offering a scheme 'homes for Ukrainians' (Home Office, 2024a). At the same time, it contradicts DfE's mission:

that we work to provide children's services, education, and skills that ensure opportunity is equal for all, no matter background, family circumstances or need. At our heart, we are a department that realises potential. (DfE, n.d.)

Culture Shock in English schools

This finding emerged mainly from the social and cultural differences across the education system. The English education system promotes a more egalitarian social environment, where students are encouraged to interact with teachers and peers on a more equal footing. Informality in student-teacher interactions may be more common, with students addressing teachers by their first names and engaging in open dialogue. It was unsurprising that participants experienced culture shock because they were in an unfamiliar environment and culture (Risquez et al., 2008). The shift from being majority into a minority (captured in Tatenda's comments) was most likely going to cause a degree of disorientation if little or no meaningful support was given. All participants experienced culture shock witnessing White children talking back to teachers and calling teachers by their first names without what they perceived as ineffective consequences for their disrespectful behaviour.

Managing culture shock was difficult, considering the participants' age and adjusting to this imbalance. There are possible explanations for this culture shock. Participants came from Zimbabwean backgrounds, and a fundamental value is that young do not talk back to adults without permission. Participants' African cultural background is governed by the principles of *Unhu/Ubuntu*, whose fundamental values of humanness are based on two essential elements

(behaviour and respect) of good character (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza, 2014). The culture shock may have been influenced by their pre-conceived ideas that Britain was a first-world country and former colonial master and its claim to provide world-class education. There was an absence of a clear explanation of the racial dynamics of learning while Black, for example, some participants (Tafara, Tanatswa, Tinotenda) were critical about the privileging of White children regarding consequences that were not extended to Black children who would have had the same behaviour. Black boys were generally likely to be excluded or expelled for bad behaviour.

Regarding discipline, all participants described their experiences in Zimbabwe as strict' hit but not hard, and smacking. However, this is unlawful in England and Zimbabwe; corporal punishment has since been banned as well. In addition, participants found that. This finding is consistent with disparities in behaviour consequences applied differently between Black and White children. Culture shock is consistent with other literature on transitions. Bridges (2011) states that the culture shock experiences revealed a mixture of the cycles of feelings and how they managed to end, losing and letting go and making healthy adjustments. It is difficult to explicitly confirm that African Zimbabwean males made healthy adjustments.

Teachers' expectations in English schools

It was surprising for African Zimbabwean males to find that English teachers in England held low expectations of them. This might be explained by the fact that, since participants had started their education in Zimbabwe, were in high academic ability groups, and their teachers had very high expectations, they expected a reciprocal attitude from their teachers in England. It is also possible that teachers in England lacked prior knowledge of the education system, types of schools, and the type of students they were receiving, as expressed in Tafara's comment:

Did they know that I had so much competition where I was coming from? No, they didn't have a clue. To them I was another brilliant child or brilliant student, but they look down upon Zimbabwean education (Tafara, p.12).

This may have resulted from these schools not following the guidance on admitting and welcoming new arrivals in schools. It is essential to be cautious here because these are participants experiences, which may not a representative reflection of all schools in England. As mentioned earlier, participants were admitted into higher year groups, but there is no evidence of ongoing support or tracking of the attainment to ensure continuity. This finding is consistent with historical (Coard, 1971) and existing studies on White teachers' low expectations of Black children, especially boys. White teachers have long been accused of lacking the knowledge to teach Black children. This also challenges the social construction of Blacks as inherently possessing low intellectual capabilities. The use of counter-story in narrating their experiences, allowed participants to challenge what DeCuir and Dixson (2004) described as privileged discourses of the majority. This also serves as a way of giving voice to the marginalised minorities.

Not pushed

Not pushed was measured by participants' learning experience stories of teacher feedback and perceived unwillingness to set effective rules governing homework submission. The interview data revealed that all participants were admitted in a higher year group than in Zimbabwe. Some participants commented that teachers' feedback encouraged mediocre standards of work, and to use Tafara's words, *'they say good, even myself, I know this is not good'*. It is evident that feedback like this does not help the student; instead, it only encourages lower standards and is a classic example of a learning trap. There is no evidence to suggest that the same level of performance was sustained through pushing or supporting. According to the study findings, teachers had negative perceptions of African Zimbabweans and were reluctant to push African males to improve. This finding corroborates the ideas of Youdell (2003), which shows how learners are understood within racialised discourse in English classrooms. This understanding is constructed based on pupils' race, class, gender identities. This finding is consistent with Gillborn et al. (2012) which shows that teachers tend to have systematically lower academic expectations for Black children (alongside a regime of heightened disciplinary scrutiny and criticism) regardless of the students' social class background.

Most striking finding was disappointment experienced by participants who were unfamiliar with the perception of Black boys' educational attainment within the English education system. This was also unexpected, considering that England has a reputation for providing a world-class education. Secondly, considering the historical educational experiences of African Caribbean children in the English education system, this finding was not surprising. This finding supports the idea of the intersection of race, gender and class in schools and society that continue to blight the educational experiences of Black children in the UK. Although, the legislations such as Race Relations Acts 1976, 2000, and Equality Act, 2010, not much change has been realised. This suggests that White teachers' ideas about the Black race may have a bearing on their lack of commitment to pushing not only African Zimbabwean males but Black children more broadly. This finding is consistent with existing literature (Demie and McLean, 2017), showing the several ways teachers have low expectations of Black children. For example, teachers not following up on homework or detention where one participant, commented on the compelling experience of not pushed that when you *stay behind, you're not actually doing your homework, you're writing I will do my homework next time I get that. You write 50 lines of that and that was it* (Tanatswa, p.9). While previous studies have focused on African-Caribbean students, it has been observed that African Zimbabwean males also experienced this due to their Black race.

Learning and discipline in English schools

This finding emerged from participants' counter-stories about academic differences in learning environments across the two education systems. Participants contrasted their experiences of learning in Zimbabwe, which they generally believed was well structured (Tanatswa), and teachers had better classroom management, which enabled them to be taught with minimum disruption. In England, however, participants' learning was too relaxed and permissive, and some participants thought their teachers were instructors because they did not teach them (Anotipa, p.24). A possible explanation for this is that participants were used to what they termed a disciplined learning culture, where teachers and parents had the power to discipline, while in England, that power was skewed towards school children (Tanatswa, p.12). This finding is consistent with Youdell, (2004), who found that the Black learner identity is framed as persistently low

attainers at the age of sixteen than their white and other ethnic minority counterparts.

The absence of discipline and an orderly learning environment created a learning and achievement trap for participants. This supports the idea that the Whiteness of teachers grants them hegemonic power coming from their Whiteness and their positions as teachers while non-Whiteness is subordinated (Youdell, 2004). Participants reflected on their Zimbabwe experience, where not only did teachers use corporal punishment as a disciplining method but as a deterrent for disruptive behaviour, although it has since been banned in 2017. This does not mean there are no behavioural challenges in Zimbabwe schools; however, for this kind of students, by virtue of being in higher academic ability groups, they did not display behavioural issues.

There was a split on the bad behaviour they observed based on their age and maturity. It seems that some participants who were still in primary school welcomed the relaxed learning but soon found they were playing with the naughty children, picking up bad habits, and getting into trouble (Tinotenda, p.15). Other participants who were in secondary school felt it was their education and, therefore, ignored the bad behaviour (Ngoni) and focused on their learning. Participants' counter-stories challenged the dominant perception of Black British boys' education and helped to dispel myths about the educational attainment of Black British boys' education about the intellectual deficit discourse (Wright et al., 2020) surrounding and the inadequacy of the 'Black African' categorisation.

Students benefit from teaching and learning when certain conditions, such as class management, discipline, and readiness, are met. Therefore, the lack of discipline and a familiar learning culture in Zimbabwe led to demotivation, waning competitiveness, and a shift toward passivity among African Zimbabwean male learners. This shows how participants may have struggled to progress in the English education system, trying to fit into a system that was not providing for their learning needs. This finding is similar to Youdell's (2004) study on identity traps. Evidently, African Zimbabwean males transitioning into the English education system were admitted to schools that did not match their academic ability. For example, in England, Ngoni could not proceed to boarding school, Anotipa to a

private school. This resulted in a learning and achievement trap. African Zimbabwean males experienced a lack of continuity due to their academic progress not being tracked to make necessary interventions and signposting for extra support or sports available. To fill in this vacuum, it is not unexpected that participants try to fit in by copying the bad behaviour. The implication of this learning trap was low pass examination results at the end of GCSEs.

Racism, learning and attainment

This finding aligns with observations from earlier studies on the education of Africans and African Americans during slavery and the enduring legacy of racism in the USA, as well as the effects of British colonization in Zimbabwe. The participants were part of a racialised group, dating back to Britain's colonisation of Zimbabwe in 1890, which imposed a racial hierarchy on Africans. This was evident in the segregation of schools into 'Group A' for White students only and 'Group B' for African students. As mentioned previously, Zimbabwe as an African-majority country, does not use racial identifications in everyday life. Instead, there is a focus on shadeism or colourism within the African community (Adichie, 2009; Campbell, 2020). Therefore, it is unsurprising that participants lacked proficiency in articulating race, racialisation, and racism, although these factors were fundamental parts of the experiences of African Zimbabwean males in schools in England. It is evident from participants' counter-stories that while they experienced racism in schools, however their inability to recognise it might have influenced them to normalise or downplay it. Some participants (Tatenda, p.11) referred to the racism he experienced as '*just two*' and compared it with what others had been subjected to. However, participants became conscious in England because of their hypervisibility and invisibility. One participant (Simba, p.10) recounted that he was excluded from the group because he was Black. Another participant (Tafara, p.10) was subjected to macroaggression when his teacher asked him, '*Where did you learn how to do this?*' Afterwards, the teacher did not ask him again, and he was utterly ignored in subsequent lessons. This finding further supports Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) suggestion of the permanence of racism and how it is normalised not only in American society but in societies and in former colonised societies too.

This finding on race and racism also confirms Du Bois' (1903) problem of the colour line, which is still prevalent in society. A body of literature on the permanence of racism, the institutional racism in schools in England (McPherson Report, 1999; Mirzah, 1999), despite the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 legislation. It is deeply concerning that race, racialisation, and racism still dominate the educational experiences of Black children in the 21st century and remain unabated.

Education tends to become very narrowly conceptualised and often comes down to only looking at examination results. Yet, there may be a plethora of reasons for some students not achieving as expected. This finding was related to the GCSE examination results at the end of secondary school in England. In their recent research article, (York, online) found that GCSE results are a significant qualification as they impact participants on many decisions after leaving school, including the 6th form or college they will attend, subjects or courses to study at university and career they could go on. Students in higher tier sets are expected to pass with A*-A (Barrance, 2020). In England and Zimbabwe, students are considered to have passed when they obtain five GCSE subject pass grades of A-C. Although 'C' is considered a pass, the government concentrates on the first two (A*-A/ 9-8) subject grade passes. On results day, the media parades those students who would have obtained the highest grades (9-7) only, straight 9s (Sky News, 2023). While there is a deafening silence on students who scored grade 'C' subject pass is less likely to be considered when progressing to particular courses such as medicine and law, and universities only take students with 'A's or Bs at the GCSE level.

Although there are mixed views about examinations and subject grade passes, the reality is that high-grade passes seem to be a permanent aspect of education more broadly. This shows how not only the 'Western' view of 'education as attainment' has come to dominate but to raise standards to current recognised levels as revealed in Cambridge's International General Certificate of Education (IGCE) results in 2023, where Zimbabweans were among the top achieving students (Cambridge International, 2023). This does not disregard all the other essential aspects of education, but at least examinations can measure knowledge

that is needed for innovation and the development of the economy. In England, GCSE results are further analysed based on ethnic classifications, and African Zimbabwean males are classed under Black African, yet they do not use Black African identifiers that are used their daily lives.

A compelling finding is that all participants in this study believed they could have achieved better results in their exams. They justified this based on their academic ability grouping in Zimbabwe, assessments, and their enrolment in a higher year group than they arrived at, which they interpreted as evidence of their higher academic ability. The study's findings may confirm the participants' claims that they were not pushed to achieve their full potential. There is evidence of the intersectionality as suggested by Crenshaw, (2011) of race, gender, class, immigration status, ethnic categorisation, that militated against their academic success. It is also possible that due to most participants being placed in a combination of higher and foundation tiers, their ability to score higher marks may have been limited.

The foundation tiering is capped at a 'C' grade, meaning that scoring higher marks, which would have earned them an 'A' or 'B' grade, did not make a difference. Two participants, Simba and Tinotenda, had achieved one 'A' and two 'B'. One participant (Tafara, p.3) was disappointed with his 'C' grade in English; he understood the different weightings ascribed to this grade, and it became a hindrance when progressing to specific courses. The government's concentration on five strong passes is also intended to improve their ranking on international assessments (PISA and TIMSS). This finding is relatively unsurprising, given that majority of Black males are not expected to achieve beyond a 'C' subject grade pass. In their study, Gillborn et al. (2012), found the continued significance of intersection between racialised and gendered inequalities that runs through the examination grading system.

The criterion of judging academic success through examinations is not limited to GCSEs only but transcends through further and higher education sectors. In secondary schools, the school league tables use subject grades [A*-A/ 9-8] passes (Ofqual, 2022). It is also difficult to explain how a child who arrived with high academic ability and was admitted to a higher year group does not achieve

an 'A' grade at the end of their exams. African Zimbabwean males' counter-stories revealed that they were academically successful in Zimbabwe due to their teachers' high expectations of them, which contrasted with White teachers' low expectations. A plausible explanation supports the notion of differences in expectations that lie between same-race teachers (Gershenson et al., 2022) and different-race teachers. African Zimbabwean males were not adequately supported to achieve their full potential in England, as reflected in the low number of 'A' and 'B' grades achieved by the participants. Another possible explanation for the examination results is that all participants had some traumatic experiences, and indeed, there is at least a possibility that some of them were suffering from undiagnosed trauma. Even if they were not, some of their experiences would take a lot to deal with.

This finding on lower subject pass 'C' is consistent with Gillborn et al (2012) study that Black children's subject passes are pegged at a 'C'. You have got a 'C', what more do you want? Although the grading has since changed, it was used during the period 2000-2020 of this study. If looking at pass A-C, then participants' results were consistent with the DfE (2022) finding that out of the three Black ethnic groups, Black African students were likely to get a grade 5 or above. If considering the diverse composition of the Black African group, this finding is also consistent with a study by Demie (2018). Black African pupils in the national school census are a very varied group made up of pupils from many different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, who are likely to show a wide variation in achievement. Therefore, it is difficult, as mentioned earlier, to explicitly identify which African group within the Black African category is achieving. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995, p.58) argued that the intersection of race and property is a central construct in understanding a critical race theoretical approach to education. The participants' experiences of being placed in foundation tier subjects supports previous study into this area which according to Dixson and Rousseau (2005, p.24) is a manifestation of the absolute right to exclude.

The next section considers the methodological limitations of the study.

Research Limitations

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions and strategies employed by African Zimbabwean males in navigating the cultural, social, racial, gender and academic disparities encountered during their transition between the Zimbabwean and British education systems. By exploring their lived experiences and perspectives, this research sought to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by this demographic group and to identify potential factors that influence their adaptation and integration within the British educational context. The findings of this study aim to contribute to existing knowledge on cross-cultural educational transitions and may inform educational policies and support initiatives aimed at facilitating the successful integration of African Zimbabwean males into the British education system.

It is indisputable that several theses could have been written about each of the insights found, and different directions could have been taken in the data. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge that all research has limitations because the very act of investigating a subject will unavoidably uncover new areas of research. In this section, several limitations need to be noted regarding the present study. This is the first study that has investigated the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who started their education outside in Zimbabwe, then transitioned into English schools to continue and complete their GCSEs. The limitations concern methodological, lack of reliable data, data collection measures, and data analysis. The next section considers methodological limitations.

Methodological Limitations

This section presents methodological issues, including sample size, lack of reliable data, measures used to collect data and data analysis.

Sample size

One notable limitation of this study was its restricted ability to apply findings to broader contexts, primarily due to limitations in sample size and the specific location of the study. It is important to note that the primary aim was not to achieve generalisability; instead, participants were chosen to reflect or represent the topic

under investigation. The emphasis on grouping students with high academic abilities was significant, as existing literature often overlooks the entry-level academic abilities of new arrivals and the types of schools they attend. As a result, the sample was intentionally selected based on Zimbabwe's education system, which employs an ability grouping system (commonly known as the setting system in England). Therefore, because of the smaller sample size, the extent to which these findings can be generalised remains uncertain. The research could have recruited included girls who started their education in Zimbabwe, irrespective of their ability grouping, to replicate the findings to the wider African student population who transition into schools in England to continue their education. Although the representativeness of the study findings may have been limited, these insights provide a foundation for broader replication among African students in the UK.

Lack of Reliable Data

Another limitation was a lack of available data due to a lack of prior research studies on the topic or student population. Currently, there is no known data that focuses explicitly on the educational experiences of children from any sub-Saharan African ethnic background who started their education outside the UK and were in academic ability one and two before transitioning into England to continue their education. Neither is there any data available that focuses explicitly on academic achievement at arrival and how it has been tracked in schools in England or elsewhere. The only data available is on Black African students; this categorisation combines all Africans from sub-Saharan Africa as one and fails to recognise the diversities of each country. Until recently, Demie's (2017) study recognised that Black African is made up of varied students from many different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. It is in this same study that Demie (2017) remotely mentioned Zimbabwean students as having Zimbabwe heritage in his composition of participants.

Data Collection Measures

The research method chapter describes the methods used and the rationale for the choices and decisions made for each method. Critical race theory's counter-storytelling method was used to tell untold lived experience stories of people on the margins in education. Storytelling responds more closely to how the human mind makes sense of the experience. It encourages people who experience oppression to share their stories. Interviews were used to collect data from participants' untold stories of their educational trajectories from Zimbabwe to England. Expressing their subjective meaning-making in the process.

When people tell their stories, they select details of their experiences from their stream of consciousness (Seidman, 2006). In justifying the rationale for choosing interviews as a collection method, Seidman (2006) argued that 'interviews provide a way of knowing and the act of telling their stories and a meaning-making process. It is difficult to access experiences any other way, but it could have been expanded to include mixed data collection methods such as focus groups to have a balanced view. However, this balance was inherently achieved as each participant attended different schools in Zimbabwe and England, were each at different education stages, left Zimbabwe, arrived in England at different periods, and had never met.

Qualitative interviews capture deep and rich data, and it can depend on the individual's availability and time. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants using semi-structured, open-ended questions that were few and used to guide the interview in eliciting participants' views and opinions and were to last up to ninety (90) minutes. The researcher recognised their power in this research, and this power was distributed by allowing participants to choose their preferred interview setting day and time. The benefit of participants choosing their setting homes as an interview setting provided them with safety and privacy. A significant interview limitation depends on how much the individual is prepared to share and how much time it will take. Anotipa's interview stretched beyond the ninety (90) minutes limit; he disclosed that he had always wanted to share his experiences and did not know how or whom to share with to pass the information to education authorities.

Data analysis

A fundamental principle of counter-storytelling is the aspect of the 'untold' counter-story of people on the margins. It is premised on the idea that it is the story of their lived experience, and no lived experience is the same. Self-reported data, whether pre-existing data or in qualitative research, where the researcher has the sole responsibility of collecting and reporting on the data, is limited by the fact that it can be independently verified (Price and Murnan, 2004). However, this study is about an untold story of African Zimbabwean males lived educational experiences as they transitioned into English schools to continue and finish their education.

The researcher accepted the accuracy of participants' stories due to their privileged insider researcher positioning that these were their stories, and no one had lived their educational experiences. Self-reported data may contain some latent sources of bias, such as remembering past experiences several years after the experience about which the participants were reporting. The benefit of this is that the length of time from the experience may also have enabled the participant to better articulate the experience, having had the time to make sense of it. A general observation of people reporting experiences several years later has demonstrated that they have been able to externalise their experience into post-experience than they would have done while still internalising it (Masamha, 2020). Similarly, the lingering memories (feelings and thoughts) remembered after a long period further demonstrate the impact of the enduring effect of the experience. Overall, the experiences that had a simultaneous significant effect may have lost their impact, and by not sharing, there was the likelihood of losing this vital data.

Biases and subjectivity play a role in any research. As an insider researcher, the subjective contexts of research and the interpersonal relationships that develop in data collection may unduly influence the way participants respond to questions. Also, the researcher's limited experience and inherent bias may contribute to making mistakes. People have biases, and researchers are not exempted from holding certain biases, consciously or unconsciously. As with any other researcher, certain biases were brought into the study, such as personal culture, personal history of educational experiences as a student and as a teacher in Zimbabwe and as a parent of children who attended both education systems

(Zimbabwe and England) discussed in this study. These were positive biases that are reflected and relied on in research. Some of the interpretations are likely to be misinterpreted as biased, depending on how familiar the reader is with the topic and the population researched.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has discussed and provided plausible explanations of the main findings of the study. African Zimbabwean males' counter-stories of their experiences of learning, as well as their highly selective and competitive nature, were not fostered in England. The chapter highlighted different operations of the CRT across the education systems. In the Zimbabwean education context, the permanence of racism, Whiteness and interest convergence were experienced indirectly through the colonial British education system inherited at independence in 1980. As participants transitioned into the English education system, they experienced racism directly through the racialised institutional structures of the schooling system. As expected, the participant African Zimbabwean males had more positive educational experiences in Zimbabwe than in England because of the cultural, social, and academic differences that exist between the two education systems. Although participants attended diverse school types in Zimbabwe, they experienced quality education, suggesting that having same-race teachers who had knowledge and a mutual understanding of their students was a strong contributing factor. In England, African Zimbabwean males were the minority within the Black African classification. African Zimbabwean males lacked proficiency in dealing with race, racialisation, and racism they experienced. The next chapter discusses conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 9: Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

This research set out to explore the lived educational experiences by African Zimbabwean males transitioning into English schools in the UK. Through interviews, data analysis, and the application of CRT theoretical framework on migration, race, ethnicity and education, the study uncovered a range of academic, social, racism, and cultural challenges faced by African Zimbabwean males. This concluding chapter aims to reflect on these findings, highlighting their significance for both educational practice and future research. By reviewing the key themes discussed, the chapter will consider the broader implications of these transition experiences and the opportunities for more inclusive educational systems moving forward.

Research aims and key findings

This study explored the complex educational transition experiences of African Zimbabwean males from Zimbabwean schools to English schools in the UK. The research revealed challenges such as switching from one education system to another. For African Zimbabwean males it was the complex dynamics of switching from African Shona speaking majority to becoming minority at the bottom face of Black African ethnic minority group in England. The findings uncovered a constellation of transition dynamics that kept dropping and appearing such as learning and curriculum differences, impact of same race teachers vs different race teachers, highly competitive and selective, and social integration, alongside their resilience and adaptability. The findings have challenged the majoritarian Black African intellectual deficit perspective.

Implications of the findings

The study has shown the inflow of ever-changing Black African student population born outside and started their education outside the UK, from former British colonised countries who have transitioned in English schools from the 2000s. The

findings suggest that educational transition is not just an academic shift but a profound global immigration, cultural and emotional journey. Understanding these experiences could help educators develop better support systems for students in similar circumstances this study has shown that while formal education was established from the same British education system, there are significant differences resulting from divergent educational reforms across over the years, still the dominance and influence of the British education system in former colonial nations is still strong. It is hoped that the reflections within this research have brought to prominence the educational experiences resulting from the inextricable enduring remnants of colonial education in Zimbabwe and how race, racialisation and racism continue to blight the education of African Zimbabwean males in England. This research also invites critique on traditional and established practices that fail to account for the changing landscape of the student population born and started their education outside the UK and the reliance on a Black African ethnic classification that does mask the diversity within this group.

This study has enabled the participants' experiences and voices to be heard through the application of counter-storytelling. It presents how African Zimbabwean males navigated the social differences between the Zimbabwean and British education systems during their transition to achieve academic success and their everyday experiences in British society. Critical Race Theory's counter-storytelling offered a research method capable of empowering the participants and allowing their stories to be articulated from an African Zimbabwean perspective. The qualitative methodology was also of critical in allowing the researcher to demonstrate how it is unthinkable to investigate African Zimbabwean lives without examining the intersectionality of colonisation, race, gender, class, migration and other socially constructed notions and their impact on the lives of African Zimbabwean born outside the UK people who settled in England from 2000. Counter-storytelling empowered the participants to recall and narrate their stories freely. Using counter-storytelling as a method for narrating and analysing stories provides a reflective perspective and enables the examination of resistance against the dominant discourse on the education of Black children in England. This approach has also facilitated a resistance to the prevailing categorisation of Black Africans, which often overlooks not only the vital aspects of African Zimbabweans'

experiences and lives, but ethnic minorities born and started their education outside England.

The findings clearly indicate that African Zimbabwean males had differentiated educational experiences across the two education systems. While participants lived educational experiences highlight the British colonial education system that has continued post-colonial Zimbabwe, it has also put the two education systems under subtle scrutiny revealing the Zimbabwe's education system was established comparable to grammar schools in England in 1890 and has continued from independence in 1980 to date. The inherited British colonial education system had the same curriculum, structure, procedures, and processes despite the educational reforms that unified and replaced the once racially segregated education system (Chapter 3). The Zimbabwe education system has retained an open highly competitive and selective approach thus reinforcing the colonial grouping by ability (Chapter 6, learning experiences in Zimbabwe).

Being in the top two academic ability groups is highly valued and reified as a badge of academic honour, indicating that African Zimbabwean males have academic aspirations and high self-esteem contrary to dominant perspectives in the USA and the UK that present Black males as underachievers and lacking aspirations (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Demie and McLean, 2017). Regardless of the diverse types of schools (government, boarding, private and independent) everyone attended, their teachers had very high expectations of them, allowing them to have high-quality educational experiences.

The study has also uncovered that although educational reforms in Zimbabwe have lagged those in England, still the Zimbabwe education system reflects the English education system, particularly the continued use of examinations and examining award boards such (as UCLES) and recently, since 2009, there has been a gradual return to offering Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education now IGCSE. In line with educational standards, Zimbabwe has participated in international regional and international assessment standards and has consistently performed well in literacy, which is a challenge to the argument on the English language as an additional language.

The study has revealed the influence of lingering forms of colonisation and confirmed that the end of colonial rule did not signal the end of colonisation (Elam, 2019). In Zimbabwe, the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males in this study were measured against belonging to the top two academic ability groups or top attainment academic positions and examination results.

This study also showed that all participants were classed as left-behind children who had left Zimbabwe between one and eight years due to parental or family members' migration. Their left-behind status exposed the harsh reality of the UK immigration rules and hostile environment attitude (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017) towards immigrants. Despite experiencing relatively minimum disruptions, it revealed, on the one hand, the profound emotional and psychological impact of undiagnosed trauma resulting from separation and eventual reunion issues. On the other hand, participants have demonstrated resilience, and their academic performance seems to have not only been massively impacted by trauma but the trauma of experiencing racism and inability to continue in same schools as before. Being left in the care of family and extended family members showed the strength of cultural and social capital within African Zimbabwean families.

The most prominent finding to emerge from this study is that the complex thread running through their lived educational transition experiences in England is the permanence of race and racism and the subtle ways it has manifested. Closely linked is how schools are very different from the rhetoric espoused in government documents of the time in 2000 and in the current Equality Act 2010. This study has also identified highly complex issues with many intersecting factors, including social, cultural racial and academic differences between the Zimbabwe system and the underlying institutional racism in the English system that went unrecognised. The differences in social and racial hierarchies were determined by their immigration status, suggesting underlying influences in admissions into schools that did not match the schools they were transitioning from. The existing bias reflected in the lack of recognition of participants' prior academic ability level exposed the inherent ideas schools hold about Black children, irrespective of the diversities within the Black classification. While African Zimbabwean males were

individually assessed and placed in the year group above, this did not address the transition support from their familiar cultural, social and academic routines.

Teachers are responsible for clearly articulating to newly arrived students what is expected of them and finding out about their prior academic background.

Participants in this study have been neglected because teachers lacked prior social, cultural and academic knowledge of these participants. For example, Ngoni and Simba expressed that their first year was tough, yet surprisingly, they were hyper-invisible. Differences in content and topics across the education systems revealed that one participant had learnt the topic earlier; however, after challenging the teacher, he (Tafara) had done the topic two years back in Zimbabwe. The teacher from that day the teacher did not pick him to answer any questions. The study showed no evidence that teachers tracked progress and offered intervention support, which is crucial for continuity and progression for this group of newly arrived students.

The research has also shown that smooth and successful transitions into the English education system might have been difficult to achieve because schools did not offer the type of transition participants hoped for, particularly for some African Zimbabwean males who had attended boarding and private schools in Zimbabwe, as they could not continue in the same types of school in English education system.

The study identified the divergent cultural and social practices notably in gaps in education, allocation to groups, lack of respect as some of the issues that contributed to the culture shock experienced by participants. The study also considered that all African Zimbabwean male participants in this study were born in African-majority Zimbabwe after independence in 1980 and obviously had minimal racial literacy proficiency levels; they lacked the racial vocabulary to articulate the racism they experienced, resulting in a few participants downplaying it. It also affected how they responded to these racial slurs or abuses.

Overall, the lived transitional educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males were complex, they manifested resilience and self-determination to succeed against all odds. The participants' experiences supported Rutter's (2012), theory of

resilience which suggests that exposure to stress can sometimes increase resistance to future stress (a "steeling effect"), rather than making individuals more vulnerable.

Contribution to New Knowledge

The study is offering an insight of the experiences of particular participants in 2000-2020 as they reflected on them approximately a decade later. This study is offering an insight into the educational transition experiences of African Zimbabwean males, who upon arrival in England between 2000-2020, were classified under the Black African ethnic group. This categorisation is necessarily limited, and the context is always moving. In some ways the inherited British education system in post- colonial Zimbabwe is still having an influence on the education system, and people's everyday lives are shaped by globalisation, immigration and race and racism. The dominant stories told in this study, show lack of an understanding of African Zimbabwean males' educational background, therefore, CRT counter-storytelling has offered a window to change perceptions.

The first notable contribution of this study is filling a gap in the existing literature regarding the educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males transitioning from the Zimbabwe education system to the English education system from 2000 to 2020. The study highlighted the complexity and challenges associated with transitioning across two education systems. African Zimbabwean males described their educational journey in England as a rollercoaster, marked by discontinuities, lack of recognition for their prior academic achievements, misallocation to different types of schools, and experiences of race, racialisation, and racism. Additionally, the narratives revealed instances when they were overlooked and not placed in ability groups and the resilience demonstrated by these individuals, particularly considering they were often the only Zimbabwean students in their entire school.

The second contribution points to the ways in which ethnic classification in England treats everyone from sub-Saharan Africa as a homogeneous Black African group. For example, grouping them together discounts the fact that there are diverse ethnic and linguistic diversities and differences in ethnic educational attainment. This study, like Demie and McLean (2007), found that the term Black African refers to pupils of African heritage, and as indicated, Demie's (2021) study

shows that the great majority of these pupils in the LA schools have Nigerian or Ghanaian family backgrounds also suggested that government classification might prevent African Zimbabweans knowing their academic achievement as they are subsumed within the Black African category. This group also comprises a smaller number of pupils whose families hail from Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, and other African nations. Therefore, using the term 'Black African' in discussions when analysing attainment by ethnicity might be too broad, making it challenging to specifically address African Zimbabwean nationality.

The third contribution is the use of CRT's counter-storytelling as a research design, confirming the appropriateness of this theory in bringing into prominence the voices and experiences of marginalised ethnic minority student populations. For example, allowing African Zimbabwean males to recount their lived experiences and stories of education in Zimbabwe helped them gain insight into the Zimbabwe education system and its structures and processes. The narratives of African Zimbabwean males provide insight into their academic participation and achievements within the Zimbabwe education system. This system inherited a British colonial education system at independence.

The fourth contribution is to fill a gap in the literature concerning English as an Additional Language (EAL). The participants' stories, gathered through admission interviews, challenged the assumption that children transitioning into English schools are new to the English language. Instead, the study highlights that due to Zimbabwe's colonial history, English has been a language policy since 1903 (as discussed in Chapter 2). Consequently, African Zimbabwean males have learned English as both a subject and a medium of instruction in Zimbabwean schools. Furthermore, the study revealed that Zimbabwe ranks among the highest in literacy, particularly in English, at the continental level (Chapter 3). This demonstrates participants' English language proficiency, which is rarely mentioned when discussing English as an Additional Language. This finding also challenges the prevailing perspective Demie (2012) put forth, which suggests that it typically takes 5-7 years for students to attain English language academic proficiency levels. This challenge arises from the observation that students who study English

as a subject outside the UK and achieve high grades may achieve proficiency more quickly than previously thought.

The fifth contribution was to address the gap, and to add new knowledge in the literature regarding the different kinds of Black African student populations in England. Building on Demie's (2017) study, the term 'Black African' is no longer a suitable ethnic classification because it constitutes a diverse ethnic and linguistic background with varying levels of attainment. Expanding on Demie's (2017) research, the term "Black African" is deemed inadequate as an ethnic classification due to the diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds it encompasses, resulting in varying levels of achievement. This study on African Zimbabwean males presents a distinct subgroup within the category of 'Black Africans' that is often overlooked, as they are few and have undergone a unique educational journey compared to the majority of Black Africans in England.

The sixth notable contribution to the literature is the academic ability status of African Zimbabwean males upon their arrival in English schools, evidenced by their placement in higher year groups than their initial enrolment. Receiving schools must assess the academic abilities of new arrival students, as this allows for appropriate class allocation and support. Lastly, by investigating the experiences of African Zimbabwean males who start their education outside of England and later transition into English schools, this study brings a unique perspective to the literature. This has contributed to new knowledge about the significance of the prior academic ability of children who start their education outside the UK.

Recommendations and future research

The findings of this study offer valuable insights that can guide the development of targeted interventions to improve the transition process for students who begin their education outside the UK. It is essential to continuously work towards enhancing these students' transition experiences to support their learning and success. Key recommendations include further research, policy reforms, and practical strategies. Students' education should not be compromised simply because they are the only Zimbabwean in the school; instead, their humanity should be prioritised over ethnic classification. If these issues are left

unaddressed, many students risk falling through the cracks of the education system unnecessarily.

To better understand the implications of this study, future studies could address the following issues. Integrating and evaluating the structural aspects of educational transitions, such as admissions, assessments, and school allocations, is essential. This is crucial to ensure alignment with national and international children's rights standards, which governments legally must fulfil. Schools, educational institutions, and the entire education sector cannot afford to be complacent about accurately matching the academic abilities of African Zimbabwean and wider school children transitioning to England. This matching process significantly affects their continuation in education, overall outcomes at the end of GCSEs, progression, career opportunities, and ultimately, their socio-economic status.

Sample Population and Sample Size

This study focused on the lived educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males who were born and started their education in Zimbabwe and then transitioned to England to continue and finish their education. Given that the Zimbabwean population is thinly spaced in England, the study might have expanded to include all Zimbabweans who started their education in Zimbabwe to determine similarities and differences in experiences. Equally, future studies could benefit from including teacher participants from both contexts (Zimbabwe and England) to strengthen the data collected. While qualitative research was the most appropriate approach for this study, the sampling size in qualitative research is governed by data saturation principle (Guest et al., 2020) of up to fifteen when no new data is expected to be uncovered. The sampling size impacted the generalisability of the study; therefore, future research could benefit from increasing the sample size by incorporating quantitative methods that allow for a bigger sample size for generalisability.

Data Collection

Qualitative data collection tools such as interviews are widely used in qualitative research because they provide rich and deep raw data. However, future research

could benefit from using multiple data collection methods. For example, a focus group could have been used to compare experiences and strengthen evidence.

Policy and Practice

While this study recognises that immigration is a contentious political issue, it does not absolve the government of its responsibility to educate all children, as outlined in its vision (DfE, 2021) and mandated by the Equality Act 2010. To move beyond rhetoric, the government must implement systems that value and support all children without exception. Education providers, practitioners, and anyone working with children from Zimbabwe and other formerly colonised countries should be made aware of the historical and lingering influence of the British colonial education systems that were exported and continue to be used in these nations. At the school level, there is a need to involve and include all new arrivals sharing their diverse backgrounds through many channels, including refugee week celebrations and Black History Month events, to hear and listen to the first-hand experiences of this student population.

Prior Educational Background

Based on this study's findings, understanding Black Africans' wide-ranging prior educational background is critical for continuity and maintaining school improvement for students who transition into the English education system. Three critical issues were identified: matching schools' academic ability with appropriate school type and English language assessment. As part of their preparation, schools can also read and learn literature about a child's country to get a general view of the education system the child is coming from. For example, most White teachers may not be aware that the English language is taught both as a subject and medium of instruction in schools in the Zimbabwe education system. This knowledge could benefit teachers and other practitioners by allowing them to focus on confidence building in spoken language and differences in spelling (American and British). Reading literature also helps teachers to have a general picture of Zimbabwe's international literacy ranking levels so that they can provide appropriate learning tasks that align with the child's level of proficiency.

The Role of EMTAS in School Transitions

Constantly examining and evaluating educational transitions from education systems outside England is crucial. These evaluations have a significant impact on individual student outcomes and overall school standards. Continuously scrutinising these transitions can ensure optimal student support and maintain high educational standards across schools. Knowledge and global economies tend to be unforgiving to students who do not achieve expected subject grades (Gao, 2023), as reflected in the English education system where underperforming ethnic groups have consistently come under negative scrutiny of GCSEs results.

The support provided to new arrival students in England through the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) is critical for achieving smooth educational transition in identified areas. Currently, the allocation of this support service varies across different local authorities, however, a universal approach would benefit all new arrivals. EMTAS faces challenges due to insufficient funding, which impacts its ability to fully support new arrivals based on their academic abilities and needs and ensure continuity in their education. To tackle these challenges, schools can adopt practices like those implemented by Hampshire County, such as providing background information on Shona-speaking children through EMTAS. This type of information not only aids in understanding cultural and educational differences but also facilitates smoother transitions for students. Drawing from research by Dronkers et al. (2011), which identified the educational tracking system as a contributing factor to the educational outcomes of migrant students, schools in England could benefit from implementing similar practices. For example, collecting and utilizing academic achievement information upon arrival to monitor children's progression could significantly enhance their educational experiences and outcomes.

Black African Classification

Ethnic classification does not reflect the way people live their lives. For example, Zimbabweans do not use racial identity markers such as Black Africans. For example, participants struggled with identifying themselves as Black African, preferring Black Zimbabwean, African Zimbabwean. Acknowledging the diversity of linguistics and attainment within the Black African category is also important. Yes,

Black Africans are achieving ethnic groups, but two questions remain unanswered about the lack of Black African ethnic background clarity. Is it Angola, Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, Zambia, or Zimbabwe? This is an area where categorisation becomes problematic when trying to align the achievement with the correct ethnic Black African. The transition from attending schools where African Zimbabweans are the majority to being the only one in English schools can be daunting. Schools are responsible for identifying and offering additional support to students facing this situation, ensuring they do not feel isolated or excluded from the learning process. Maintaining consistency in the educational experiences of individuals is crucial. For example, it would prove beneficial to offer African Zimbabwean males who have received education from private or boarding schools in Zimbabwe comparable educational opportunities in England by enrolling them in equivalent private schools or educational institutions.

Teachers' expectations

It is important for White teachers to continue to reflect on their practice and to know their students as one participant queried '*did they know I was a brilliant child?*' Knowing their students would minimise criticism about perceived unconscious low expectations towards Black children, including African Zimbabwean males and others who started their education outside England. This will improve teacher-student relationships and bridge the cultural differences across the education systems.

School governance policies and practices should be reviewed to ensure they do not perpetuate the Black child stereotype and disproportionate discrimination against the new arrival discourse that can be a barrier to the educational attainment of African Zimbabwean males, as revealed in this study.

Race, Racialisation, and Racism

Although discriminatory education delivery practices based on race is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010, this did not prevent African Zimbabweans from experiencing racism as they transitioned into English schools. As part of the transition process, for African Zimbabweans coming from an African majority country, it is important for schools and EMTAS to raise awareness of race,

racialisation, and racism they may likely encounter in English schools. African Zimbabweans and new arrivals could be encouraged to attend racial literacy proficiency sessions to help them identify and report racism, as this may be intimidating for a child who is the only African Zimbabwean in the class or year group.

Examinations

Transitioning into the English education, involves students making decisions about choosing GCSE subjects including tiering (foundation and higher). Teachers should engage African Zimbabweans and others, so they understand the implications of each tiering on the subject grades and future progression before accepting foundation tiered subject choices at GCSE level.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study not only provides insights into the complex educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males but also highlights their remarkable resilience as they navigate the differences between the Zimbabwean and English education systems. Embedded within these differences are the legacy of the colonial British education system inherited by Zimbabwe at independence and the shared educational system emerging from the colonial period. The study reveals how the academic, cultural, and social disparities between the two systems can serve as sources of new knowledge and bridge existing gaps by drawing from each other to improve learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the study underscores the urgent need for open dialogue and understanding, particularly in the face of the increasing trend of educational transitions, particularly from former colonized nations. This calls for reconsidering the ethnic classification of 'Black African,' as it fails to represent the diverse nationalities within this group accurately. Engaging in honest discussions on issues such as admission processes, school types, culture shock, racism, teacher expectations, and examinations can better prepare both new arrivals and receiving schools.

Understanding the far-reaching impacts of family reunion rules in England (Home Office, 2023b; 2024b) which allow for the reunification of families separated by

migration, can foster a desire for change across the education system. This study sheds light on the historical and contemporary facets of enduring racial discriminatory practices against African Zimbabwean males and wider Black Africans transitioning into the English education system. Contrary to the prevailing belief that Black children lower school standards upon transitioning into the English education system, this study reveals the opposite, as African Zimbabwean males who arrived in English schools revealed dissatisfaction with their academic performance standards as they felt they could have done better if they were pushed. Finally, this study lays a foundation for future research on the educational experiences of students born and starting their education outside the UK and later transitioning to continue and finish their schooling.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information sheet for informed consent

Background Information:

I am undertaking some research as part of my PhD studies, investigating the lived experiences and achievements of Zimbabwe males in British schools.

To achieve this, I hope to hold interviews with 7 males who started their education in Zimbabwe and came to continue in the UK, to understand their learning journey experiences from Zimbabwe education system to British education system.

I want to find out what went well, what were the challenges and how they coped.

The information collected from the research will be used to draw conclusions on the perceived causes of underachievement and how this knowledge can be used to inform policy in offering appropriate and effective support.

The goal of this research is to find out where Zimbabwean males rank in the black male achievement discourse in the British education system.

It is envisaged that research results will be written up by ***Tendayi Madzunu***

The following sections provide participation information on how the research will be conducted. I would ask you to read the following page, before considering if you would like to participate.

Procedures:

During the period **14th October 2019 to 28th February 2020**, if you agree to participate in this study, you may be invited to participate in the following ways:

Participate in a semi structured interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes to discuss learning journey experiences from Zimbabwe education system to British education system

Notes will be taken by me during the interview. Interviews will be recorded if you agree to this request.

This will occur at a time convenient to you during the period of **14th October 2019 to 28th February 2020**.

Risks:

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

Names of individuals will remain confidential and anonymised throughout the research. Regarding any interview recordings, all tapes etc will be stored securely and used only for the purposes of research. Following the completion of the research, all recordings will be destroyed.

Freedom to withdraw:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time, should you decide to do so. All related information relating to you will be removed from the study.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact me or an independent Staff Member (Faculty Research Committee) using the details below.

Name	Designation	<u>Email</u>	Contact No
<i>Tendayi Madzunzu</i>	PhD Researcher	██████████	██████████
Dr Stephen Newman	Director of Studies:	██████████	██████████
Dr Shona Hunter	<i>Ethics Committee Contact</i>	██████████	██████████

Thank you for considering participation in the study.

Do not return this information sheet.

Please retain for your records.

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Working Title of Study: *The lived experiences of African Zimbabwean males who transition into English schools.*

Your name:

*Please indicate your agreement with each of the statements below.

1. I have read the Research Information Sheet written by *Tendayi Madzunzu* and have been provided with a copy to keep. **Yes/No***
2. I have had the opportunity to ask questions. **Yes/No***
3. I consent to participating in this research according to the information and principles described in the Research Information Sheet. **Yes/No***
4. I understand I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason, and that all information I have given will be destroyed. **Yes/No***
5. I understand my identity will be protected by treating the information I provide anonymously, and it will be used only by *Tendayi Madzunzu* for the purposes of writing a thesis. **Yes/No***
6. I understand the information I provide will be kept securely, will not be revealed to any other person, and will be destroyed at the end of the project. **Yes/No***
7. I understand if I have any questions or concerns about how this research is being conducted, I can contact the independent person named in the Research Information Sheet. **Yes/No***

Name

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Gatekeeper Information Sheet

The Pastor/ Reverend

Working Title of study: *The lived educational experiences of African Zimbabwean males transitioning into British schools*

Name: Tendayi Madzunzu

Leeds Beckett University

Email address: [REDACTED]

I am seeking permission to undertake a study to approach members of your church to gain their participation.

Background information

I am a student at Leeds Beckett University studying for a PhD degree. As part of my course, I am undertaking a small-scale independent study. My aim is to gain an understanding of Zimbabwean males' lived experiences of transitioning into British schools.

The project will involve 2 participants from your church – 1 parent and 1 male youth who started their education in Zimbabwe and came to continue in British schools and will take place between 1 October 2019 and 29 February 2020. This information sheet explains participants' rights, and how I will ensure these are observed. It has been devised to enable participants to make an informed decision whether to participate.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the research is to gain important information which will be used to inform practice and policy and help future school improvement for black boys' achievement. The benefits are to improve practitioner knowledge, and maintain performance levels of black children, so that those who join the education system from outside the UK are not left behind.

How will the church members be involved?

I would like to come and explain the study to your congregants for about 20mins, I am hoping that some of your church members will be interested in taking part. I will stay after the service to give more information to interested members.

Participation will be voluntary, and the principles set out in this information sheet will be followed.

What happens if the church wants to withdraw from the enquiry?

The church will facilitate access to church members only and it is the members who signed up to be participants in the study, who may withdraw at any time up to three

months after the data collection has been completed and without giving any reason. All information the participants have provided up to that time will be deleted.

How will the information be used?

The information I collect from church members will be used only in my study. At the close of my project the data will be destroyed. No other person will have access to the data, other than through my study.

All personal details and information will be removed from the data or made anonymous before use. No personal details or information will be kept on computer or in paper records.

The identity of the church and all participants will be protected by using pseudonyms and by removing any information which could identify people or places.

Further information

If you would like any other information about this enquiry, or if you have any questions about the information I have given, please contact me.

If you would like to speak to my Director of Studies, please contact

Dr S. Newman
Leeds Beckett University
Carnegie School of Education
Carnegie Hall 124
Tel. [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

If you would like to speak to an independent person about my project, please contact:

Dr Shona Hunter
Programme Director, Research Degrees
Carnegie School of Education
Leeds Beckett University,
Carnegie Hall, 202
Leeds LS6 3QS, United Kingdom
Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Appendix D: Interview schedule

Family background

1. Tell me about yourself
 - a. Place of birth
 - b. Where did you live in Zimbabwe?
 - c. When did you come to the UK?
2. Tell me about yourself:
 - a. How old were you when your parent(s) left you in Zimbabwe?
 - b. Tell me what life was like living without your parent(s)
 - c. How many siblings do you have?
 - d. Position in family
 - e. Health
 - f. Did you have any Carers or house-maid?

Education in Zimbabwe

1. Tell me about your education in Zimbabwe?
2. At what age did you start school?
3. Which schools did you go to?
4. How many classes in your year group/ how were they streamed?
5. How many pupils were in your class?
6. How were you grouped and which group were you in?
7. Can you describe a typical school day for me?
8. Class enrolled (stream) Was it a hot seating system or not?
9. Tell me about school tests and examinations, results and progression.
10. What is your experience of Parents' Day and Prize Giving days?
11. How often did your parent(s) used to contact you to discuss your education?

Migration to the UK

1. When did you come to England and who did you live with?
2. How long were you separated from your parent(s) and what did you feel about this?
3. Who cared for you when your parents were at work?

In the UK

1. When you came to the UK?
 - a. How old were you?
 - b. Which school year and term were you in when you arrived?
2. Tell me about your experience in enrolling into a British school.

- a. Did you have any prior knowledge of the British education system?
- b. How did you get admission into the school and how long did it take you?
- c. Did your teachers asked you to bring any school documentation: transfer letters, school reports?
- 3. Can you describe your learning experience in the UK?
 - a. What was your last class position before you started learning in the UK?
 - b. Can you tell me about your first day in a British school?
 - c. How did you manage the transition into the British education?
 - d. What was different or the same?

Secondary education:

- 4. Which secondary school did you go to and how did you get admission there?
 - a. What was the pass rate of the school?
 - b. Which GCSE subjects were your enrolled in?
- 5. Can you comment on your GCSE results?

Do you have anything else to say?

Thank you for your time.

End

Appendix E: Primary Listening proficiency levels

PRIMARY LISTENING					
	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E
CODE	Engaging in highly-scaffolded listening activities, learning basic classroom language and linking sounds to actions and meanings	Demonstrating an emerging ability to understand and respond verbally in interactions with others based on their understanding of the context	Developing more independence in the use of the basic listening skills needed to engage with learning	Applying listening skills over an increasing range of contexts and functions	Showing an ability to understand and respond to spoken communication in classroom and school contexts with little or no hindrance
EARLY DEVELOPMENT	1 Can understand single words or short phrases in familiar contexts (e.g. classroom, playground)	Can understand everyday expressions aimed at meeting simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them in clear and deliberate speech by a sympathetic speaker	Can follow oral instructions (e.g. 'throw a circle under the line')	Can understand an unfamiliar speaker on a familiar topic	Can meet the language demands of group activities and class discussions without additional EAL support
	2 Can follow simple instructions and identify objects, images, figures and people from oral statements or understand simple questions with contextual support (e.g. 'Which one is a rock?')	Can respond to simply phrased factual questions (e.g. 'Which things use water?')	Is beginning to understand and acquire topic/subject-specific vocabulary	Can understand most spoken and audio-visual texts, and can identify specific information if questions are given beforehand	Can select key information for a purpose, rejecting irrelevant and unimportant information
	3 Can copy/repeat some words and/or phrases with teacher/peer modelling in curriculum activities	Can attend for short periods to simple stories and songs with visual scaffolds	Can get the gist of unfamiliar and (more) complex English expressions in routine social and learning situations (e.g. language of playground games, common phrases used by the teacher (e.g. 'Do your best', 'Check your work'))	Can participate confidently in shared texts, such as songs and poetry	Can draw on a range of discourse markers (e.g. expressions like 'right', 'okay', 'anyway', 'as I said') to help make meaning
	4 Can follow and join in routine classroom activities willingly (e.g. 'pay attention', 'form a circle')	Can follow day-to-day social communication in English	Can understand common, everyday vocabulary, knowing that some words can have more than one meaning, and demonstrates a tentative understanding of vocabulary beyond immediate personal and school experiences	Can interpret meaning and feelings from intonation, volume, stress, repetition and pacing	Can understand humorous references if not culturally laden
MID-LEVEL DEVELOPMENT	5 Can show comprehension through action and gesture rather than words	Can follow narrative accounts with visual support	Can understand intonation to gain meaning from spoken English (e.g. hear approval or disapproval, or distinguish between a question and a command)	Has access to a wide vocabulary including abstract nouns (e.g. hunger, happiness) and a growing bank of subject-specific words related to curriculum tasks	Can understand most of the content when teachers speak clearly at a normal pace
	6 Can understand a basic, limited range of vocabulary in everyday talk in the classroom (e.g. 'listen', 'put up your hand')	Can follow instructions where the context is obvious and recognise familiar words in spoken texts	Can respond appropriately in most unplanned exchanges	Can distinguish between and follow different types of spoken language (e.g. teacher-fronted context talk, plays, poems, stories)	Can follow most audio and video materials
	7 Can understand simple instructions and curriculum content-related expressions if delivered in clear, slow and repeated speech by a sympathetic speaker	Can respond to simply phrased factual questions about lesson content (e.g. 'Is the teacher about animals or objects?')	Is developing understanding of sentence types (e.g. questions, statements) through word order rather than intonation alone (e.g. 'Who wants to know how we are going to make this story better?')	Can follow spoken language used in school events and activities (e.g. assemblies) confidently but some vocabulary and grammatical forms may be challenging (e.g. 'Some aspects of our curriculum will be challenging')	Has a range of vocabulary, including subject-specific vocabulary, colloquialisms and idioms
	8 Can begin to use limited awareness of grammar to make sense of talk by teachers and peers (e.g. 'went for just time')	Can attend actively to the conversations of other English speakers on familiar classroom topics (e.g. preference of colours, shapes of objects)	May use first language knowledge of the world to interpret spoken texts and may use other first language speakers effectively to confirm understanding	May ask for clarification and need extra time when participating in complex interactive listening activities (e.g. group performances or class discussions)	Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating shifts in style and register (e.g. formal and informal)
ADVANCED CAPABLE OF THE NEXT BAND	9 Can sort pictures or objects according to oral instructions	Can use contextual clues to gain meaning from curriculum-related spoken language (e.g. make use of a water cycle diagram/visual to help make sense of topic-related talk)	Is beginning to pay attention to and respond to different registers in formal and informal settings (e.g. 'Sit down', 'Please take a seat')	Can try to follow a talk on unfamiliar topics and give appropriate responses in a classroom and school context	Can deal with the language demands of all routines and common situations in school
	10 Can engage in face-to-face interactions, responding to key words and phrases (e.g. responds to everyday greetings such as 'How are you today?')	Can understand familiar, simple and repetitive spoken English supported by the immediate context, including simple instructions relying on key words and context (e.g. 'Come to the mat')	Can attend actively to the conversations of other English speakers in familiar topics when the speech is clear and is at familiar pace	Is beginning to correctly interpret intonation, stress and other culturally-specific non-verbal communication (e.g. frowning)	Can understand different registers and varieties of spoken English, and respond appropriately (e.g. match a formal response to a formal request)

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Appendix F: Secondary Listening proficiency levels

SECONDARY LISTENING					
	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E
CODE	Engaging in highly-scaffolded listening activities, learning basic classroom language and linking sounds to actions and meanings	Developing greater autonomy in processing speech	Developing more independence in the use of basic listening skills needed to engage with learning	Applying listening skills over an increasing range of contexts and functions	Showing an ability to understand and respond to spoken communication in classroom and school contexts with little or no hindrance
1	Can understand everyday expressions aimed at meeting simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them in clear, slow and repeated speech by a sympathetic speaker	Can understand and respond to longer questions and instructions (e.g. 'Tell me why you chose this answer, and not any of the others')	Can understand the main points of video and other social media material about familiar subjects delivered clearly	Can begin to follow some culturally-specific practices when listening to English (e.g. eye contact, distance, gesture)	Can define the nature and purpose of information being sought before listening or viewing
1+	Can follow classroom instructions when the context and actions of teachers and peers are supportive	Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives and stories	Can follow and negotiate with other pupils during group work	Can comprehend the different meanings of a range of vocabulary across different curriculum areas (e.g. 'table' in science and 'table' in a description of a room)	Can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly
2	Can understand a small range of words, and, with help, everyday vocabulary (e.g. colours, shapes, preferences)	Is becoming aware of levels of difficulty of the content in the lesson beyond the most concrete or simple topics	Can understand some idiomatic or figurative expressions, but may require explanation (e.g. 'Zookeeper can run like the wind')	Is beginning to correctly interpret intonation, stress and other culturally-specific non-verbal communication	Can demonstrate understanding of well-known idioms in context (e.g. 'to sit two birds with one stone', 'to cut corners')
3	Can understand what people say about everyday things if they speak slowly and clearly with a supportive manner	Is beginning to engage with abstract or complex content, including concepts that cannot be explained and illustrated easily (e.g. pressure, pollution)	Can generally follow group discussion and ask for help and repetition where necessary	Can follow and participate in group conversations, especially on familiar topics in informal English	Can select key information for a purpose, rejecting irrelevant and unimportant information
3+	Can understand and follow directions (e.g. how to get somewhere)	May ask for clarification and extra time when participating in complex listening tasks, group performances or class discussions	Can follow directions in classroom tasks, paying attention to details	Can follow reasoning and argument in the same way as most peers	Can follow the gist and some detail of a spoken text on a new topic at normal speed (e.g. in the media, visiting speakers)
4	Can understand a limited amount of frequently used vocabulary and language expressions across different subject areas (particularly the academic register, e.g. 'concept', 'topic')	Is beginning to comprehend a range of topic-related vocabulary across different subjects	Can follow and understand specialised or subject-specific terminology if it has previously been introduced	Can understand audio-visual recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in social and learning contexts and can identify the content of information, speaker viewpoints and attitudes	Can order information gained from spoken language, choosing a suitable organising format
5	Can ask a speaker to repeat or explain words in order to understand more of the message (particularly when in supportive situations)	Is beginning to correctly interpret intonation, stress and other culturally-specific non-verbal communication	Can respond appropriately in most unplanned classroom exchanges	Can communicate in familiar formal and informal registers, interpreting spoken English mainly at a literal level and organising language and ideas drawn from different sources	Can evaluate the quality and validity of information gained from spoken communication
6	Can listen for longer, and understand new words and phrases when content is delivered with enough contextual support (e.g. visual/video images)	Can follow reasoning, discussion or argument in English, providing speakers are clear and unambiguous	Can understand the gist of most spoken and audio-visual texts, and can identify specific information if questions are given beforehand	Can understand an unfamiliar speaker on a familiar topic	Can follow a complex argument on familiar topics or themes and ask appropriate and relevant questions
7	Can understand questions about topics learned in class	Can understand and use, independently, many of the support systems and scaffolds that operate within lessons (e.g. a note-taking framework to jot down facts or ideas while listening)	Can engage in sustained listening to a level approaching that of most peers	Can record and organise spoken information to set guidelines (e.g. use diagrams, graphs, tables)	Can identify the effects of devices such as rhythm, metaphor and repetition
8	Appears to be increasingly confident, engaged and independent in tasks requiring listening and speaking	Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast audio material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech	Can begin to interpret meaning and feelings from intonation, volume, stress, repetition and pacing, particularly when working with familiar topics	Can follow and communicate in a variety of social and learning contexts, understanding ideas and information on a range of familiar topics and issues	Can identify implied meanings from spoken language (e.g. racist attitudes)
9					
10					

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