Reading the African School Curriculum as an Historical Text: Educational Contexts, Policies and Practices in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The current research is a critical rendition of the history of the African school curriculum in Zimbabwe. The paper explores how this curriculum manifested itself from colonial times to the present post-colonial dispensation. Methodologically, we adopt a Kliebardian historical approach to an understanding of the purpose and changing nature of education through a study of the history of education. The study posits that a curriculum may be read through a vertical analysis of changes over time as shaped by varying contexts, policies and practices associated with its development. Thus, the curriculum under review is an historical text. The main conclusions drawn from the study are that in Rhodesia, curriculum goals, content, methods and assessment strategies were crafted to serve the needs of the dominant European group, while African education was perennially under-funded. The post-colonial curriculum was, and is still expected to exorcise the erstwhile colonial elitist educational jinx to serve the needs of the African majority. Regrettably, however, it has been saddled with challenges such as policy and ideological inconsistencies, as well as inadequate financial resources to support change and innovation. We (the authors), therefore, see the study as providing a basis for a critical scrutiny and understanding of the history and purpose of education in Zimbabwe and ipso facto, its possible improvement.

Keywords: African school curriculum; educational policy making; history of education; Kliebardian historical approach; post-colonial; vertical analysis of changes.

Introduction

The history of the African school curriculum in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, is best understood within the economic, social, political and cultural contexts created, and perspectives held by successive British minority settler governments on Africans in general.[1] The same contextualisation is true for the post-colonial era, albeit there was now majority rule. Therefore, our discussion covers the period of missionary education before 1890 to the present. To that end, we make a retrospective analysis of the history of African education in Zimbabwe.

[1] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe: A social, political and economic analysis,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

The authors' critique of how the African school curriculum has been positioned within the various contexts is informed by Freire's[2] view that all education is always-already political. Hamilton and Weiner[3] further explicates that a curriculum that gestures particular forms of social order may equally work to change social order that may be actual, imagined or anticipated. This way of looking at how the Zimbabwean African school curriculum was framed is not intended to raise a nostalgic argument through mere reference to past trends and practices, but to give it a historicity,[4] which Jansen[5] claims was non-existent. We dispense with the idea of a curriculum as a mere learning package handed down to schools for implementation. Instead, we adopt the concept of curriculum as a historical, social intervention programme that is more than what schools teach.[6] This enables us to view the subject of our investigation within the broader intellectual and ideological climate of the periods under review.

Literature review

Educational systems are beholden to history for many aspects of their curricular aims, content, teaching methods, forms of assessment and other areas of educational endeavour. This article traces the main signposts in the provision of African education in Zimbabwe from colonial to post-colonial times. To a certain extent, this article is essentially an analysis of extant literature on the history of that education and its potential impact on contemporary educational provisions. The importance of history of education to curriculum practice is well documented.[7] Most of this literature is a narrative of what transpired. This study finds a lacuna among writings on Zimbabwean education by seeking focus on forces at play at any moment in history.

[2] P Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed,* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

[3] D Hamilton, D. and Weiner, G. 2003. Subject not Subjects: Curriculum Pathways, Pedagogies and Practices in the United Kingdom in W. F. Pinar. International Handbook of Curriculum Research p. 632-636. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

[4] ZA Casey and MJ McCanless, "Looking backward to go forward: Toward a Kliebardian approach to curriculum theory", Berkeley Review of Education, 8(1), 2018, pp. 23-38; KK Kumashiro, Against common sense: Teaching and learning toward social justice, (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[5] JD Jansen, "What education scholars write about curriculum in Namibia and Zimbabwe", WF Pinar, *International handbook of curriculum research,* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003), pp. 78-84.

[6] S Triche, "Reconceiving curriculum: An historical approach", PhD, Louisiana State University, 2002).

[7] N Atkinson, "Racial integration in Zimbabwean schools, 1979-1980", *Comparative Education,* 18(1), 1982, pp. 77-89; W Jonga, *An Assessment of Teachers and Parents' Views on Part-Time Continuing Educational Classes (PTEC'S) in Mashonaland Central Region,* (Ethiopian Civil Service University, 2012); HM Kliebard, Why history of education? (The Journal of Educational Research, 1995). 88, 194–199.

It has Kliebard's[8] observation as its point of departure: "Ideas and practices that seem so normal and natural in a contemporary setting often take a certain strangeness when viewed in historical setting, and that strangeness often permits us to see those ideas and practices in a different light."

Informed by views gleaned from the related literature, we, the authors in this study of the history of Zimbabwean African education, contend that research is a chance for deliberative inquiry in, and critical scrutiny of, contemporary curricular practices.

Research questions

The British settlers grappled continuously with the issue of education that they deemed suitable for Africans. In their broad scheme of things, such an educational offering had to shape a specific subordinate role and create a segregated society.[9] Thus, to engage critically with the history of African education in Zimbabwe, the following guiding research questions are posed:

1. What socio-political context framed the school curriculum at any given historical moment?
2. What curricular critiques can be extracted from this curriculum history?

An interrogation of questions such as these will aid in scrutinising what seems automatic or common sense[10] and to contextualise and understand the present moment better.

[8] HM Kliebard, "Why history of education?" The Journal of Educational Research, 1995). 88, 194–199.

[9] C Summers, "Educational controversies: African activism and educational strategies in Southern Rhodesia", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 20(1), 1994, pp. 3-25.

[10] ZA Casey and MJ McCanless, "Looking backward to go forward: Toward a Kliebardian approach to curriculum theory", *Berkeley Review of Education,* 8(1), 2018, pp. 23-38; KK Kumashiro, *Against common sense: Teaching and learning toward social justice,* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

Research methodology

The Kliebardian historical approach to studying education that was adopted in this study is illustrated below in Figure 1.

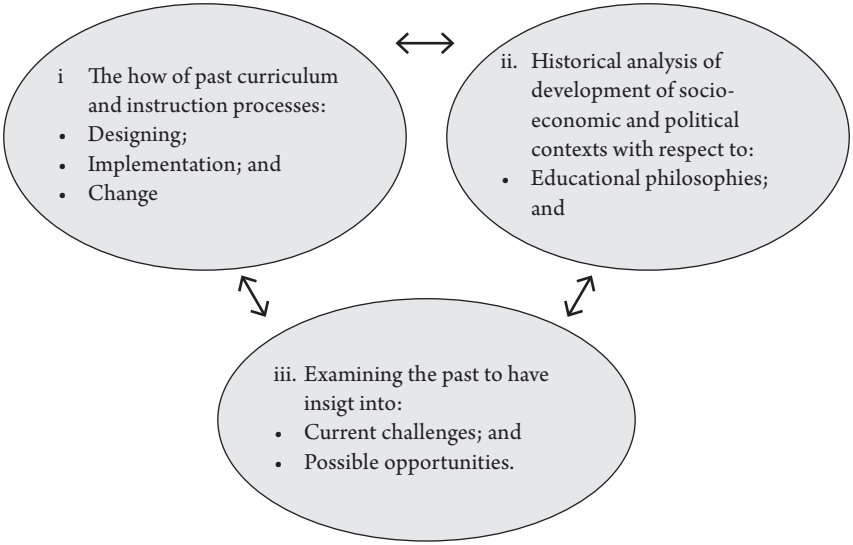

Figure1: The Kliebardian approach to understanding education

The Kliebardian approach involves three interlinked processes as depicted in Fig 1. In general, each phase necessitates a critical study of past curricular initiatives to proffer possible solutions to contemporary societal challenges. Documents that were subjected to close examination in this study included journal articles, books, government documents, official reports and policy-related publications.

Education in colonial Zimbabwe

The leading providers of formal education in pre-independent Zimbabwe were the various missionary groups that operated in the country and the central colonial government. While the former initially advocated for basic literacy, the latter insisted on basic manual skills training to provide the public service with low-level functionaries. Nevertheless, these two leading education providers generally agreed that Africans had to access only inferior education. An inferior education would not undermine European dominance in whichever sector of the Rhodesian economy. On their part, Africans consistently preferred

an academic education to basic literacy and quasi-vocational education, as holders of academic qualifications were thought to stand a better chance of securing high-earning 'white-collar' jobs.[11] Further, academic education would enable them to "...escape from the rural treadmill of communal agricultural life".[12]

Missionary education

Before the advent of colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia in 1890, missionaries had already started providing formal education to Africans. The first school was established by the London Missionary Society at Inyathi, Hwange district in 1859. The form of education that the missionary society promoted was guided by the philosophy of spreading 'civilisation'. Even though Africans had their own established religion and non-formal educational systems, Christian missionaries believed that the spread of Christianity and the development of legitimate commerce would expose Africans to 'civilisation'. The latter was a substitute for the infamous, illegitimate trans-Atlantic Slave Trade that had ravaged the African continent for many centuries.[13] The missionaries perceived indigenous peoples as inherently inferior beings; wild, barbaric and uncivilised.[14] Hence, schooling was intended to make Africans adopt 'civilised' Christian practices. To that end, the core curriculum for Africans focused on elementary literacy skills and religious instruction.

Cecil John Rhodes, the architect of British Imperialism in Southern Africa encouraged missionary activities in the country. In his thinking, "...the transition of Africans from barbarism to civilisation must be gradual".[15] For Rhodes, Christianity would pacify Africans in that "...missionaries are better than policemen and cheaper".[16]

[11] NJ Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians: History of education policy in Rhodesia,* (London: Longman, 1972); DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power: Commissions of inquiry into education and government control in Colonial Zimbabwe", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 22(2), 1989, pp. 267-285.

[12] SJ Berridge (Father), ESAP & *education for the poor,* (Harare: Mambo Press in association with Silveira House, 1993).

[13] GY Abraham, "A post-colonial perspective on African education systems", *African Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(5), 2020, pp. 40-54; JR Chepyator-Thomson, "Public policy, physical education and sport in English-speaking Africa", *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy,* 19(5), 2014, pp. 512-521.

[14] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe…,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

[15] RJ Challis, "The foundation of the racially segregated education system in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1923, with specific reference to the education of Africans", (PhD, Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1982).

[16] RJ Challis, "The foundation of the racially segregated education…", (PhD, Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1982).

Christian missionary values tended to teach docility and submissiveness, which blended well with the idea of getting cheap labour with minimal or no resistance. In such a way, there would be no need for policemen to maintain law and order as chances of a rebellion would be minimal. Thus, the early mission stations, including Inyathi, Hope Fountain and Empandeni, were centres of such education. Shizha and Kariwo,[17] concur with these views. Mission stations were established primarily as centres of evangelism, hence, more mission boarding schools were built by different missionaries after 1890. The idea was allegedly to wean Africans from the corrupt influences of the villages and homes and to free them from the evils within their communities. Consequently, missionary education foregrounded imperialism and colonialism and the school curriculum was attendant to the imposition of colonial rule.[18] However, it is noteworthy that the nationalists, who spearheaded the call for self-rule, were products of mission schools.

The missionary provision of education to Africans was also driven by the need to enable Africans to read the Bible on their own, especially in areas which were not easily accessible to missionaries. Through schooling, it was hoped that those converted to Christianity would translate the Bible and preach the Word to others. Such missionary views on education provided the context within which the curriculum that the Africans experienced in the mission-run schools developed. The curriculum fostered literacy, numeracy and basic economic skills.

Secular education

Consecutive European minority governments of Southern Rhodesia had a clear position on African education. It was to be parochial and for the consumption of a few learners, for which, it would be problematical to deal with a burgeoning class of Africans with a high-level of consciousness. Hence, the political establishment kept missionaries in check so that they would not 'over educate' Africans.[19] For the British settlers, the indigenous people were not to be educated in a way that would make them compete with the Europeans. The form of education that Africans received was designed to serve the interests of the settler colonial regime. To maintain this resolve, successive colonial governments used various strategies to control and limit the education of Africans, whom they derogatively referred

[17] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe…,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

[18] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe…,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

[19] C Nherera, "The role of emerging universities in Zimbabwe". *The Zimbabwe Educational Research* 12(3), 2000, pp. 38-61.

to as 'natives'. Commissions of inquiry into education and the promulgation of ordinances were the major instruments for achieving the Rhodesian government's intentions.[20] These formal strategies reflected the ideological and attitudinal orientations of the Europeans based on their self-proclaimed superiority over the Africans.

Both missionary and colonial government school curricula for Africans were explicitly and overtly designed to marginalise Africans as expressed by their discriminatory policies.[21] By adopting a supremacist attitude towards the Africans, the missionaries and the colonial governments truncated erstwhile forms of African education, some of whose tenets contemporary educationists argue should be restored as part of making post-colonial education viable.[22]

Competing views on African education

Throughout the colonial era, Africans were generally viewed as inferior people. It was against this background that colonial governments in the then Rhodesia devised strategies that saw Africans play the role of servants and providing mainly a plentiful supply of cheap manual labour. Resultantly, there was very little finance for African education, which was not meant to be academic, but quasi-vocational in nature. For example, in June 1899, the administrator of Southern Rhodesia, Earl Grey, in introducing the Education Ordinance Bill, argued that it was cheap labour that they wanted, and it was yet to be proved that Africans, who could read or write were good labourers.[23] Subsequent amendments of the Ordinance in 1903 and 1907 required that practical training and manual labour be the core of the African curriculum.

[20] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.

[21] RJ Zvobgo, *Transforming education: The Zimbabwean experience,* (Harare: College Press, 1986).

[22] GY Abraham, "A post-colonial perspective…", *AJEP,* 6, 2020; N Makuvaza, "Celebrating the ministry of primary and secondary education curriculum framework for Zimbabwe (2015- 2022)", *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research,* 30(1), 2018; N Makuvaza and O Hapanyengwi, "Towards a *Huhuist/ Ubuntuist* philosophy of education in post-colonial Zimbabwe." In MM Madondo, G Museka and M Phiri (eds.). *The presidential commission of inquiry into education and training (Nziramansanga Commission): Implementation successes, challenges and opportunities*, (Human Resources Research Centre, University of Zimbabwe, 2014), Volume 1, pp. 43-52; G Museka and MM Madondo, "The quest for a relevant environmental pedagogy in the African context: Insights from unhu/ubuntu philosophy", *Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment,* 4(10), 2012, pp. 258-265.

[23] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.

These ordinances were further buttressed by the 1919 Graham Commission, which favoured an African education that did not go higher than manual training, as was earlier recommended by Earl Grey. Parker[24] cites one colonial official, who wrote to the editor of the Rhodesian Herald newspaper in 1912 expressing similar sentiments in support of the government: "I do not think it is right that we should educate the native in any way that will unfit him for service… The native is and should always be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for his white master." Thus, practical training and manual labour constituted the core of African education, thereby ensuring that Africans would be kept out of economic competition with Europeans.

Educational policies soon sparked controversies between missionaries and the colonial government. The main bone of contention between them was on the purpose of African education.[25] Missionaries were against the government's idea that if Africans learnt to read and write, they would no longer be useful as servants. To them, education was critical in getting Christian converts.[26] Other government officials began to support missionary views, however, for different reasons. For example, Duthie, then Inspector of Schools in the early 1900s, argued that continued provision of education to Africans that translated to underdevelopment was increasing tension between races and discouraging better understanding between them. For expressing such sentiments, Duthie was forced to leave office.[27] The idea of educating Africans to function as a pool of cheap labour was taken enthusiastically by Keigwin, who in 1920, was appointed director of Native Development. Keigwin's views further entrenched the government's position by advocating for a vocational type of curriculum for Africans. His focus was on industrial schools, which treated "...learners as workers, who had to be trained for disciplined subordination".[28]

Keigwin's view of education for Africans was one of agricultural and industrial instruction. This would enable them to develop a more satisfying and productive way of life in the tribal reserves in which they lived. For Keigwin, as cited in Zvobgo,[29] "... what was wanted among the backward natives [was] something of his old-fashioned craftsmanship of 50 or 100 years ago". From one perspective this point of view promoted indigenous technology, however, it smacked of retrogressive conservatism.

[24] F Parker, *African development and education in Southern Rhodesia,* (Westport: Greenwood, 1960).

[25] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.
[26] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.
[27] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.
[28] C Summers, "Educational controversies…", *JSAS,* 20, 1994.
[29] RJ Zvobgo, *Transforming education…,* (Harare: College Press, 1986).

For, it was part of the Europeans exclusionary approach to African education. It seemed that the colonial government did not want Africans to get educated and thereby, join the world of machine-based technologies. Even where Africans could fill white-collar job posts, they were often denied the opportunity if they competed with Europeans. The colonialists hoped to retain African 'primitive ways' of producing goods manually for their mine and factory masters.[30]

Following recommendations of the Keigwin report of 1919, two industrial schools were established for Africans, namely Domboshawa in 1920 and Tsholotsho in 1921.[31] The two industrial schools were founded as part of the 'Keigwin Scheme'. This was an early native development initiative, which sought to teach young African males how to get the most out of their land, revive old crafts, and extract a living from their increasingly overpopulated and overused lands, termed reserves. Missionaries found the industrial subjects, namely carpentry, building and agriculture difficult to teach and sometimes neglected them.[32] Challiss,[33] however, comments that Africans were more interested in technical skills of western industrialism, than the traditional craftsmanship that they were expected to focus on.

By the 1920s, however, Africans had developed their own specific educational expectations. They would evaluate mission and government schools according to the curriculum offered and conditions in each school type. When the conditions and the curriculum were considered inadequate, they would either complain, leave the schools, or even go on school strikes.[34] By 1925, the two government schools of Domboshawa and Tsholotsho were all that remained of Keigwin's original outreach programme, and both had experienced clashes over African conception of what constituted a good education.

In the period between 1920 and the mid-1930s, the government recognised five types of schools for Africans, which were to be funded under three main categories.[35] These were *kraal* (traditional African village) schools, central mission boarding schools, central mission day schools, government schools and special schools for the blind, deaf or lepers.

[30] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe…,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

[31] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe…,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

[32] C Summers, "Educational controversies…", *JSAS,* 20, 1994.

[33] RJ Challiss, "Education planning for Zimbabwe: The problem of unreliable historical perspectives", *Zambezia,* 7(2), 1979.

[34] C Summers, "Educational controversies…", *JSAS,* 20, 1994.

[35] C Summers, "Educational controversies…", *JSAS,* 20, 1994.

Missionaries did not have enough personnel or resources; hence, they utilised class three schools (kraal schools, which were also known as Out-Schools or third-class schools). Enrolments in these schools ranged in size from 10 to 12 pupils, with some up to 200 pupils. Summers[36] describes teaching staff qualifications in these schools to have been as low as a pass in Standard 1. Missionaries were not willing to engage trained teachers, with higher qualifications on the grounds that they were scarce, expensive and not always as evangelical as the lowly qualified older ones. These schools were not subjected to government inspection. The curriculum consisted of a modicum of literacy in the vernacular and pupils were rarely taught beyond Sub A, Sub B and Standard 1.

Grants for kraal schools depended upon the requirement for teaching classes for at least two hours per school day during the school year. Post 1931 it was further required that these schools teach classes for three hours, including at least an hour of industrial or manual work. The government further made half of a school's grant contingent upon success in teaching aspects of the hidden curriculum intended for moulding character; probably punctuality, cleanliness, orderliness, self-control, respect for authority and service to the community.[37] Schools were not officially subjected to any academic standards of achievement during the 1920s or early 1930s.

Central mission schools were categorised as first class (boarding) schools or second class (day schools). In some instances, a central mission school would have both boarding and day pupils, thus, falling into both grant categories. They had a resident European head or principal and preferably or partly European teaching staff. To qualify for full grants-in-aid, the curriculum had to include English, habits of discipline and cleanliness, with at least four hours of instruction a day during the school year. The curriculum for class 2 schools included two hours of instruction, but no requirement for industrial training. Religious education was taught in all the school categories. As Africans pressed for more education, missionaries became reluctant to accept government stipulations and/ or conditions attached to these grants.

To minimise the friction between the two entities, the Hadfield Commission of 1927 recommended that future native education was to be based on Christianity. The socio-political context of the time was charged with fear of the church and Africans uniting to exert pressure on the political order should there be any relaxation of control. Thus, the 1929 Tate and 1936 Fox Commission reports were preoccupied with maintaining 'white'

[36] C Summers, "Educational controversies…", *JSAS,* 20, 1994.
[37] C Summers, "Educational controversies…", *JSAS,* 20, 1994.

supremacy in the Colony. The former reported: Southern Rhodesia [is] ...[a] small but growing community of Good European stock … and [has] a native population … composed of a people who are for the most part, docile enough and intelligent enough to afford a large supply of labour… It is [, therefore,] essential to maintain … the way of life of the civilized man of Western Europe.[38]

The latter read: "If government relaxes its control of education, Western civilisation will sink into barbarism".[39] In this context, a dual education system, thus, prevailed during the colonial times; one for European children, which was fully funded and one for African children that was inadequately funded and inferior. For African education, the school curriculum had to be strategically designed to provide a pool of cheap labour.[40]

The socio-political order that prevailed after World War 2 changed British attitudes towards African education in the British colonies. With the British and French attaining world supremacy in the aftermath of World War 2 and the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) the status of superpowers, former European colonisers' stance against their subjects was challenged.[41] The USA and USSR at least had an overtly anti-colonial stance and used their dominant positions in the United Nations (UN) to exert pressure on colonial powers to prepare Africans for self-government.[42] According to, the UN forced Britain and France to: "...promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstance of each people."[43]

[38] F Tate, *The report on the commission of inquiry into White Education*, (Southern Rhodesia, 1929), p. 120.

[39] F Tate, *The report on the commission of inquiry into White Education*, (Southern Rhodesia, 1929), p. 12.

[40] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, Education and development in Zimbabwe…, (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

[41] CA Babou, "Decolonization or national liberation: Debating the end of British colonial rule in Africa", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 632, 2010, pp. 41-54; J Flint, "Planned decolonization and its failure in British Africa", *African Affairs,* 82(328), 1983, pp. 389-411; AO Nwauwa, "The British establishment of universities in tropical Africa 1920-1948: A reaction against the spread of American 'radical' influence", *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines (The African Studies Companions),* 33(130), 1993, pp. 247-274.

[42] CA Babou, "Decolonization or national liberation…", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 632, 2010; J Flint, "Planned decolonization…", *African Affairs,* 82, 1983.

[43] CA Babou, "Decolonization or national liberation…", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 632, 2010, p. 43.

Given the external pressure, which was necessitated by a shortage of labour during World War 2, the government of Rhodesia focused on advancing Africans for political and economic reasons. The education and training that Africans were to receive was meant to benefit the Europeans in the development of the economy that protected their investment.[44] Zvobgo[45] further argues that the school curriculum in Rhodesia after World War 2 was, therefore, framed to match these political and economic views that the British settler government held about the country and its inhabitants at that historical time.

Government involvement in African secondary education

Government expression of interest in African secondary education was shown by the construction of its first school, Goromonzi, in 1946 and the second school, Fletcher, in Gwelo, which at that time, was a name for Gweru, in 1957. Yet, the first European government school had been established as early as 1902 at Plumtree. In the 1940s African education and curriculum were structured as follows: Fifty per cent of the secondary school pupils entered academic schools; 10 per cent specialised in technical courses, while others followed the general course. By 1952, 100 per cent of European pupils, who entered academic secondary schools enrolled for Cambridge School Certificate.[46]

When Godfrey Huggins assumed premiership of Southern Rhodesia during the period 1933 to 1953, the Tate and Fox commissions became the basis of his educational policy. Huggins claimed: "Our children must keep the positions of power in society and prevent the emergence of poor whites".[47] Sir Godfrey Huggins, in a Parliamentary speech delivered in 1937, went on to underscore the purpose colonial education was to serve for Europeans: "...it is only by allowing our race the very best education and bringing out the latent talents there may be that will enable our race to survive in Africa. [Our youth] ... will not be able to preserve their white brain and if they are to survive, it will be nothing but superior education."[48] Consequently, the Europeans accessed academic education and advanced vocational (polytechnical) training to suit them for leadership positions in the country's economy.

[44] E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe…,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011); RJ Zvobgo, *Transforming education…,* (Harare: College Press, 1986).

[45] RJ Zvobgo, *The post-colonial state and educational reform-Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana,* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1999).

[46] RJ Zvobgo, *Transforming education…,* (Harare: College Press, 1986).

[47] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989; E Shizha and MT Kariwo, *Education and development in Zimbabwe…,* (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011).

[48] As cited by RJ Zvobgo, *Transforming education…,* (Harare: College Press, 1986).

With such an ideological view point, Huggins, therefore, advocated for the infamous 'horse and rider relationship' between Africans and Europeans; which received criticism from the likes of Garfield Todd. Todd argued that whilst educated Africans can be governed, they could not be enslaved forever.[49] In response to Todd's concern, Huggins appointed the 1951 Kerr Commission to inquire into African education. The Kerr Commission recommended the elimination of class 2 and 3 schools, the expansion of teacher education and a broad-based primary education system, with five years of education. In Mungazi's[50] view, the curriculum for Africans, up to the time of the Kerr Commission, was a mere exercise in manual labour.

In 1953, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) amalgamated into a political union that became known as the Central African Federation (1953-1963). The federal socio-political context entrenched unequal relations between Africans and the British settler government. Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland resented this union, fearing the spread of harsh racial laws from Southern Rhodesia.[51] Godfrey Huggins wanted the Federation to promote a 'horse and a rider' multi-racial partnership whereby the African was the horse and the European the rider.[52] Eventually, economic and cultural subjugation of Africans foregrounded the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.[53] For African nationalists, the Federation was created to strengthen settler dominance by giving Europeans even greater power in administrative and economic spheres of the three countries. Furthermore, it was meant to exploit the entrepreneurial skills of the white settlers in Southern Rhodesia, the rich mineral wealth of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the labour reserve of Nyasaland.[54] For Kliebard[55] the Federation was also meant to stem the tide of self-governance, which was gaining momentum in West Africa from spreading to Southern Africa.

[49] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.

[50] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.

[51] RJ Zvobgo, *Transforming education…,* (Harare: College Press, 1986).

[52] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989; RJ Zvobgo, *Transforming education…,* (Harare: College Press, 1986); RJ Zvobgo, *Colonialism and education in Zimbabwe,* (Harare: Sapes books, 1994).

[53] R Austin, *Racism and apartheid in Southern Africa: Rhodesia; A book of data,* (Paris: The UNESCO Press, 1975).

[54] CA Babou, "Decolonization or national liberation …", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 632, 2010; J Flint, "Planned decolonization …", *African Affairs,* 82, 1983.

[55] JD Hargreaves, "The idea of a colonial university", *African Affairs,* 72(286), 1973, pp. 26-36.

During the federal decade, non-African education was placed under the federal government, which had more financial benefits. That of African children remained under territorial governments, which had scarce resources. For example, between 1954 and 1956, there were 50 000 European and 6 000 Asian and Coloured children in the federal states. In such schools, children were educated at a cost of £126 per pupil. In contrast, 800 000 African pupils were being educated at £6 per head. European education was also declared free and compulsory for persons between the ages of 6 and 16.[56] However, African nationalists advocated for better education and greater participation of Africans in their country's political, administrative and economic lives.[57] In Rhodesia, the first nationalist movement was the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC), which was formed in 1957. From then on, pressure was exerted on the colonial government as direct racial confrontation was looming with African nationalists and trade unionists agitating for political rights, better education and employment opportunities.

In 1965, the Rhodesian Front (RF) government of Ian Douglas Smith declared independence from the British government through an act commonly referred to as the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The political atmosphere around the UDI engendered fear in the country. In 1966, a liberation war movement was formed to wage an armed struggle against the settler government of Ian Smith. This armed struggle for independence came to be known as the *Second Chimurenga/Umvukela*, meaning an uprising.[58]

Arguably, the commission that brought about radical changes in the education system during the colonial era was the 1962 Judges Commission. Following its recommendations, an Education Plan, drawn-up in 1966, made an impactful decision regarding the school curriculum that Africans were to receive. The new Education Plan recommended that 12.5 per cent of all African children completing primary education each year were to proceed to academic secondary schools which were known as F1 schools, to pursue an academic curriculum. In F1 schools, learners would complete a four-year educational programme (Form 1 to Form 4) culminating in the writing of ordinary level (O-Level) examinations. A further 37.5 per cent were to be admitted into vocational secondary schools (F2 schools) from Grade 8 up to Grade 11. The curriculum in these F2 schools comprised vocational

[56] RJ Zvobgo, *Colonialism and education in Zimbabwe,* (1994).

[57] KO Morgan, "Imperialists at bay: British labour and decolonisation", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 27(2), 2008, pp. 233-254, (available at https://doi.org/10.1080/03086539908583066, as accessed on 20 January 2023).

[58] RJ Zvobgo, *Colonialism and education in Zimbabwe,* (1994).

subjects. Consistent with the colonial government aim of creating a pool of cheap labour, the remaining 50 per cent were left with no provision in the formal education system. These students had to find their way into either correspondence colleges or had to join the pool of unskilled labour in the market. It was evident that the RF government wanted to discourage an academic curriculum for Africans. The RF government further changed its financial policy by reducing expenditure on African education from 8.6 per cent to 2 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1967. On the other hand, as argued by Mungazi,[59] the education for white learners was structured in a way that strengthened their political position to curb the rise of African consciousness.

The 1966 Education Plan faced criticism from African nationalists and missionaries. Students who took the F2 curriculum were stigmatised. Most products of junior schools were destined for menial jobs in the home where they would "...repair domestic appliances such as door handles, locks, mending clothes and bicycles and similar small domestic chores".[60] Few of these learners would look for employment opportunities in their immediate cultural environment. According to Atkinson, in Challiss,[61] the F2 schools had a "pre-vocational flavour, strongly linked to the agricultural or industrial needs of particular communities". This was an 'anglicised form of Apartheid' implemented under the guise of 'community development'.[62] Hence, the curriculum of these schools was described as ecological.

The government forbade missionaries to establish more secondary schools for Africans, thereby, limiting education access for Africans. Smith in Zvobgo[63] defended the dual form of education introduced by the colonial government:

"[W]hen the white man came into this country; African people could not read or write even in their own language. They had never been literate so we had no basis for common ground, and there was no basis for racial integration. We had to provide for whites the kind of education available at home in Britain, in Europe, and in South Africa. Our standards had to be the same as in those countries."

[59] DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.

[60] Chitate, H. Innovation in the high-school academic subject of history. The ordinary level history curriculum of Zimbabwe from 1990 to 2015: A critical analysis. Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis. Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 2021.

[61] RJ Challiss, "Education planning for Zimbabwe…", *Zambezia,* 7, 1979, p. 228.

[62] G Cunningham, *Rhodesia: The last chance: Fabian tract 368,* (London: Fabian Society, 1966).

[63] RJ Zvobgo, *Colonialism and education in Zimbabwe,* (1994), p. 66.

Smith's view showed that African education was not a major priority for the colonial government. The 1979 Education Act, however, saw the abolition of racial discrimination in education and the introduction of the zoning system of schools. Schools were categorised into A, B and C schools. The category A schools were for Europeans, though in theory Africans could access these schools. Ironically, the zoning system, which required learners to attend schools within the proximity of their homes became the basis for discriminating against potential learners.

Post-colonial Zimbabwe school curricula

The development of the African school curriculum in the post-colonial Zimbabwe entered upon five distinct phases, namely the Socialist era (1980-1990), the neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) period (1991-1995), the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) era (1996-2000), the reforms stemming from the 1998 to 1999 Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET)- the Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework (ZCF) (2015-2022) and its successor, the current Heritage-based Curriculum (HBC) (2024-2030).

The socialist era 1980-1990

Zimbabwe's attainment of political Independence on 18 April 1980, ushered in a period of radical changes. These changes were guided largely by socialism and a nationalist trajectory designed to address most, if not all, of the nation's ills that the new African-majority government had inherited from the previous colonial regime. For instance, there was an overhaul of the educational structure, which made academic education accessible to all races.

However, this pro-socialist stance weighed heavily on education and in the first five years of political independence, instructional resources became fewer because of the great number of school enrolments. Teaching and learning standards fell as classes became over-crowded with teacher-to-pupil ratios of over 1:45 being common. Classroom furniture was poor and inadequate. The situation was exacerbated by an acute shortage of library and reading materials for effective curriculum implementation.[64]

[64] RJ Zvobgo, "The impact of the economic structural adjustment programme on education in Zimbabwe", *The Zimbabwe Bulletin of Teacher Education,* 12(2), 2003, pp. 65-101.

Table 1 gives a synopsis of some of the educational changes and processes in the first decade of political independence (1980-1990). The table juxtaposes the educational changes and processes *vis-à-vis* fate and their possible enduring impact on contemporary educational practices.

Table 1: School curricular changes in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 1990

Educational Phase/ Issue and its Characteristics	Relative Merits and Demerits	Possible Impact on Educational Practice
1. Education for All (EFA) drive and the introduction of 'mass education', including 'increased access to and participation' in science educational programmes such as the Zimbabwe Science (ZIMSCI) project.	• 'Massification' of education seemed to have been a correct political response to addressing educational inequities inherited from the previous colonial regime.[65] • The mass education policy increased phenomenally enrolments in both primary and secondary schools. [66] • The ZIMSCI project was a "...dynamic methodology of teaching science [, which] utilis[ed]...low-cost and high-local content science kits suited for the impoverished rural secondary schools".	• Colonial-like inequalities have persisted and at times intensified, following the establishment of new private, elite, high fee-paying schools. • Established mission schools have enjoyed a head-start over day schools in the rural areas. • Emphasis was placed on western science as a channel through which education would contribute to industrial development and modernisation. • However, community-biased ZIMSCI was viewed as 'second-rate science'. • Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) were despised and were under threat of 'withering away' eventually.

[65] Chitate, H. Innovation in the high-school academic subject of history. The ordinary level history curriculum of Zimbabwe from 1990 to 2015: A critical analysis. Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis. Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 2021.

[66] H Chitate, "Change and innovation in curriculum enterprise: An analysis of the ordinary level history syllabus 2166, with reference to the problems of its implementation in the Mashonaland East province of Zimbabwe", (M.Ed., Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1988), p. 27.

Educational Phase/ Issue and its Characteristics	Relative Merits and Demerits	Possible Impact on Educational Practice
2. Demise of the F2 (technical-vocational) pathway.	F2 schools required pupils to: • Do two practical subjects from the following list: (for boys) woodwork, metalwork, building and agriculture and (for girls) agriculture, needlework and housecraft; the latter included laundry, hygiene, vegetable gardening and the raising of small stock.[67] • Have minimal competency of the English language, mathematics, science, environmental studies, Ndebele or Shona language and religion.[68]	• The independent state found the F2 system objectionable, owing to its colonial origins, it was thought to be inferior to the F1 academic pathway. • This epistemological bias and paralysis need to be resolved in the Zimbabwean context. It is not enough to clamour for 'a hands-on' practice form of education.

[67] SM Hadebe, The Approach of the F (2) Secondary School, (Ref. 0.4., no date), p. 1.

[68] RJ Zvobgo, Transforming education …, (Harare: College Press, 1986).

Educational Phase/ Issue and its Characteristics	Relative Merits and Demerits	Possible Impact on Educational Practice
3. Socialist ideology, polytechnical education and Education with Production (EWP).	• Socialism provided the theoretical basis for EWP. • Attempts were made to 'vocationalise' the school curriculum and promote hands-on learning, with a view to encouraging school leavers to produce goods and services. • By the mid-1980s, EWP-related changes had failed to place education in a position to spearhead socialist transformation.	• EWP met with little success, owing mainly to incongruence with dominant social values and expectations of parents. Many scholars concur that parents favoured the traditional academic education offered under colonialism than EWP, which they perceived to have been aligned to the despised colonial F2 system.[69] • The preference for, and domination of, academic knowledge in the Zimbabwean school curriculum illustrates the pervasive influence of Western academism on the curriculum, which must be addressed.

[69] J Jansen, "The state and the curriculum in the transition to socialism: The Zimbabwean experience", Comparative Education Review, 35(1), 1991; E Shizha and MT Kariwo, Education and development in Zimbabwe…, (Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, 2011.

Educational Phase/ Issue and its Characteristics	Relative Merits and Demerits	Possible Impact on Educational Practice
4. Political of Economy Zimbabwe (PEZ) 1988-1990.	• PEZ was a politically inspired subject meant to reconstruct the colonial base of the curriculum on the belief that successful curriculum reconstruction is contingent on broad societal transformation.[70] • PEZ provided an epistemic and intellectual basis for socialism and EWP as guiding philosophies for society and education. • More specifically, the PEZ syllabus had been crafted, with a view to "...study[ing] and analys[ing]... (among other issues), the socio-economic relations that emerge between people in the process of production". • PEZ collapsed in a space of two years, mainly due to opposition from churches and established capitalist interests.	• The failure of PEZ underscores the primacy of interest groups, in this case, the church, in leveraging their influence on determining the fate of a placed innovation. • Curriculum development and implementation, among other processes, must be guided by genuine inputs from stakeholders. The socio-economic and political milieu must be congruent to envisaged curriculum change.

[70] J Jansen, "The state and the curriculum in the transition to socialism …", Comparative Education Review, 35, 1991.

Educational Phase/ Issue and its Characteristics	Relative Merits and Demerits	Possible Impact on Educational Practice
	• The men of God, most particularly the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) "...bitterly resented (PEZ) ...because of its anti-God and anti-religion stance". [71] • "...Leading publishers of the accompanying textbooks stalled on the...development and production of materials, creating a major obstacle to the implementation [...of PEZ]".[72]	
5. Two compulsory technical-vocational (Tec-Voc) subjects at Form 2 from 1988 onwards.	• This was introduced to increase the uptake of technical vocational subjects.	• The initiative faced problems of funding the establishment of a diversified technical-vocational curriculum due to high costs. Hence, cheaper options like agriculture tended to dominate.

The foregoing comparative tabular display is a basis for analysing past curriculum to gain valuable insights into the fundamental purposes and values of education. This may highlight historical practices, changes and issues that may be replicated or avoided in contemporary times. The above table is, therefore, an analytical framework for enhanced understanding of the Zimbabwean school curricula that were implemented in the first decade of the country's political independence.

[71] H Chitate, "Change and innovation in curriculum enterprise …", (M.Ed., Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1988), p. 25.

[72] J Jansen, "The state and the curriculum in the transition to socialism...", *Comparative Education Review*, 35, 1991, p.88

In the second decade of Zimbabwe's political independence, 1990-2000, government focus shifted from enhancing quantitative access to education to improving the quality of education.[73] As the economic situation continued to deteriorate, the government gradually and quietly conceded to the non-viability of the socialist ideological stance and opted to pursue a free market route.[74] Resultantly, an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (better known as ESAP) was implemented in October 1990 and lasted until 1995.

ESAP was a liberal capitalist prescription for the country's economic recovery.[75] This 'World Bank-style' economic 'stabilisation' programme had been:

"...officially cast as a 'home grown' reform. ESAP had initially been more about expansion than contraction. However, the devastating drought in 1991-92 seriously affected Zimbabwe's ability to fulfil its goals, leading to greater control of the reform process by the International Monetary Fund and hence the introduction of more orthodox stabilisation measures after 1993, including a stronger focus on public sector reforms. (It also constrained official promotion of a one-party state.)."[76]

Neoliberal policies and the school curriculum

Under ESAP, the government allowed schools to supplement resources from treasury by levying parents. Non-core business at educational institutions such as catering, landscaping and security became privatised. Education during ESAP became unaffordable for many. Parents found it difficult to raise tuition fees for their children. The net effect was a high school drop-out rate targeting mainly disadvantaged groups like girls and learners from poor households.

The neoliberal interlude served to strengthen colonial vestiges in curricular provision, which the first decade of political independence had begun to dismantle successfully. The increasing costs of supplying materials for technical-vocational subjects hindered the provision of these subjects. This reinforced the curriculum, a reversion to pre-independence preference for an academic curriculum.

[73] Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, *The curriculum framework for primary and secondary education 2015-2022: Enhancing Quality Education through the Curriculum*. The Zimbabwean Government, 2015

[74] RJ Zvobgo, "The impact of the economic structural…", *The Zimbabwe Bulletin of Teacher Education,* 12, 2003.

[75] P Balleis, *The social implications of ESAP in the light of the Bible and the social teaching of the Catholic Church; final statement,* (Harare: Silveira House, 1992);

[76] Hammar, A., Raftopoulos, B. and Jensen, *JD. Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2003.

Nevertheless, this was not without its problems. The shortcomings of the country's academic educational system in the post-ESAP period were revealing. Statistics of pupils' performances in O-level examinations before this period were hard to find. For, the sizeable ESAP-induced retrenchment of staff in parastatal organisations such as the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), now Curriculum Development and Technical Services (CDTS) and the Examinations Branch, now Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC), resulted in loss of written institutional memory.[77] Available data show that pupils' terminal performances in the 1998-2013 O-level examinations were poor. The pass-rates were nowhere near the traditional 25 per cent limit that had been set by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) in 1946.[78] Table 2 below testifies to this perennial gap in desired pass rates.

Table 2: O-Level National Performance Statistics (1998-2013)[79]

Year	O-level Candidates	5Cs or better	Pass Rates
1998	244 083	35 593	14.58%
1999	242 329	38 036	15.69%
2000	264 056	36 659	13.88%
2001	272 125	38 077	13.99%
2002	274 772	37 804	13.8%
2003	275 576	35 606	12.8%
2004	Figures missing		10.2%
2005	Figures missing		12.0%
2006	154229	31 247	14.2%
2007	179 274	25 673	9.85%
2008	142 840	20 632	14.44%
2009	87 201	16 853	19.00%
2010	229 522	37 871	16.5%
2011	241 512	45 887	19.5%
2012	268 854	31 767	18.4%
2013	285 260	36 031	20.0%

[77] Chitate, H. Innovation in the high-school academic subject of history. The ordinary level history curriculum of Zimbabwe from 1990 to 2015: A critical analysis. Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis. Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 2021.

[78] Chitate, H. Innovation in the high-school academic subject of history. The ordinary level history curriculum of Zimbabwe from 1990 to 2015: A critical analysis. Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis. Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 2021.

[79] AS Chigwedere, *Part 1: Reform of the Zimbabwe education system, very overdue.* A paper written for the attention of the Minister and Permanent Secretary for Education: May, 2018.

The above statistics are a telling indictment of the way Zimbabwe's educational system has been run. In the period from 1998-2013, the country's average pass-rate at O-level was 14.93 per cent. Thus, 85.07 per cent of candidates, who took those examinations failed. This seemed to have been a scandalous waste of human resources. According to Chigwedere,[80] "...any system of education that dumps on the streets 50% of its products is a failure. [One]... that throws away 75% of its products is a DISASTER".

The Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) 1996-2000

ZIMPREST was introduced in 1996 to alleviate the devastating effects of ESAP. This signalled the government's admission of the failure of ESAP. Regarding education, ZIMPREST aimed at improving the relevance of education curricula to the economy, increase access to information technology at school level and improve employability of school leavers. It was introduced against the backdrop of a severe shortage of instructional resources. As inflation was rising, commodity prices also increased. Hence, the assessment of O and A-level examinations, which was done by Cambridge University faced problems. Owing to a shortage of foreign currency, payment of fees to Cambridge University became untenable.

In early 1998, a Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) was set up under the chairmanship of a leading educationist, Dr Caiphas Nziramasanga. This became the first post-colonial Commission of Inquiry into Education. Its major findings highlighted the academic nature of the school curriculum, which did not respond to the needs of the learners and society in general. To that effect, the National Advisory Board (NEAB) of the then Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, compiled the curriculum needs of the country in 2010. It recommended a comprehensive review of the school curriculum to address the needs of learners and the nation.[81] The review was needful given that a decade had passed without much being done to implement CIET findings.

[80] AS Chigwedere, *Part 1: Reform of the Zimbabwe education system…*, Minister and Permanent Secretary for Education: May, 2018, p. 6.

[81] Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. *The curriculum framework…*, The Zimbabwean Government, 2015.

Among the objectives of the new curriculum was its alignment to the needs of the country as highlighted in the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIM-ASSET) document (2013-2018). It was also expected to reflect the Zimbabwean context, while remaining consistent with international trends and standards).[82] The curriculum document that was crafted was a result of consultations with local stakeholders.

The Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework (ZCF) for primary and secondary education 2015-2022

A new curriculum was introduced in the school system in 2017 after a curriculum review exercise had been done during the period 2014-2015. The reviewed curriculum considered local socio-economic imperatives and global changes. Continuing trends that had taken place in the country, especially after the publication of the 1998-1999 CIET report were most important. The ZCF 2015-2022 proposed several changes to the education system. Some of these proposals included the introduction of continuous assessment, which was implemented in 2022 at the tail end of the 2015-2022 curriculum cycle. This was called Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALA). A critical view of the ZCF (2015-2022) curriculum reform brought about an orientation towards a heritage-based curriculum (HBC).

The Zimbabwean Curriculum 2015-2022 and its successor, the HBC 2024-2030, were implemented within the purview of an economic blueprint entitled *Vision 2030,* whose aim is for the country to attain an upper-middle-class society by the year 2030. In this vision, the curriculum is expected to speak to the demands of industry and general socio-economic development. What is clear though is that the requirement for education to contribute to socio-economic development has been an omnipresent aspect of educational provision since time immemorial.

[82] Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. *The curriculum framework…,* The Zimbabwean Government, 2015.

Conclusion

In this paper, critical spaces that have been carved from which the Zimbabwean curriculum history may be read are mainly; the colonial period, post-colonial socialist era, the ESAP period, the historical moment of the ZCF (2015-2022) curriculum and the present HBC (2024-2030) epoch. Critiques that can be raised are that during the colonial era, the ideology of racial superiority was the dominant influence at work in the formulation of educational policies. Curriculum policies were, in their scope, content, pedagogy and general implementation, conceptualised and structured to guarantee 'white' privilege and promote limited and segregated development for Africans.[83] Education in Rhodesia was, therefore, designed to support a dual society philosophy based on one's race, which in turn, determined one's economic position.[84] To that end, Africans' access to an academic curriculum was limited, because keeping them under European domination and providing cheap labour as second-class citizens in their own country, was the settlers' top priority.

Upon the attainment of political independence in 1980, policies that defined the school curriculum were not only sustained by changed or desired economic, social and political changes and factors, but were also in response to, and a function of, historical antecedents.[85] The educational policies that the Zimbabwean government embarked on were meant to redress the imbalances that colonial educational policies had spawned.

Therefore, the history of African school curriculum in Zimbabwe during the post-1980 period may be read explicitly through the socio-economic and political lens as *mutatis mutandis*. This also applies to the preceding curriculum of the colonial era.[86] Thus, for example, the post-1980 policy of mass education was meant to enhance equal access to the curriculum. Also, neo-liberal influences of external interventions such as ESAP entrenched curriculum continuity in education through dominance of academic knowledge forms and buttressed colonial-like differential access that reduced educational participation by girls and children from poor households.[87] Currently, the school curriculum is ostensibly guided by the country's socio-economic needs and international trends.

[83] K Hungwe, "Educational policy in African colonial contexts: The case of instructional media in Southern Rhodesia 1930-1980", *African Study Monographs,* 15(1), 1994, pp. 1-36; DA Mungazi, "A strategy for Power…", *IJAHS,* 22, 1989.

[84] C Colclough, J-I Lŏfstedt, J Manduvi-Moyo, OE Maravanyika and W Ngwata, *Education in Zimbabwe. Issues of quality and quantity,* (Education Division Documents, 50, 1990).

[85] C Colclough et al., *Education in Zimbabwe…,* (Education Division Documents, 50, 1990).

[86] P Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed,* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

[87] P Balleis, *A critical guide to ESAP: Seven questions about the economic structural adjustment programme in Zimbabwe,* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1993).

The current study underscores the importance of historical trends, discontinuities and continuities as contexts of understanding present day practices. For this reason, in the post-colonial times the expectation that education is exorcised of its erstwhile colonial elitist function has been vitiated by interrelated variables, least of which is the socio-economic, political and ideological stasis from the late 1990s. The challenge of availing needed financial resources for curriculum provision persists, common in the pre-1980 colonial period, *albeit* for different reasons. This continues to be an albatross to the realisation of intended curricular goals.

In highlighting the stakeholder desired curriculum, policy-makers' intended curriculum and the actual performance of transacted curriculum in colonial and post-colonial times, this study may be a springboard for deliberative enquiry and critical scrutiny in contemporary curricular practices, with the potential for improving such curricular practices. Current educational policies need to address challenges of relevant policy-making and implementation, ideological inconsistencies and inadequate financial resources head on, to ensure successful curriculum