

Parental engagement, new technologies and education: between two cultures

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Professional Doctorate

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of London Metropolitan University**

November 2017

Abstract

Parental involvement has underpinned various educational policies and practices in many countries, particularly in ‘Western’ ‘developed’ countries. Much research suggests parental engagement links positively to children’s achievement. Within this discourse, the possibilities for new technologies to enhance parents’ engagement with their children’s education are widely hailed, yet scantily studied. Scholars have highlighted that the premise of this mediation depends on parents’ technological competence, socioeconomic and cultural identities and positions. Minority classed and ethnic parents are often positioned in policy as ‘hard to reach’ or less engaged. However, new technologies are rarely studied in relation to the impact of complex *intersecting* classed, racial, and migratory identities and the colonial legacy on minority group’s ability to participate in education. This study focuses on the impact of subjectification, intersecting identities and post-colonial theory on minority group parents’ abilities to engage with schools in their children’s education.

This study adopts an in-depth qualitative methodology, consisting of 10 months of interviews, observations and recordings (2013-2015) to collect data from 13 parents recently migrated to London from West Africa. Theoretically, the thesis draws broadly from a Bourdieuan theoretical framework of capitals, habitus, and field, from post-colonial theory, and from intersectional theorising to examine how migrant parents in England, who have also experienced schooling in Nigeria or Ghana, engage in their children’s home learning and communicate with their schools using technology.

Using both class and racial lens, this thesis highlights how a racialised group negotiate complex experiences of subjectification and oppression. It shows the complexity of black ethnicity and the relationships to education through its focus on West African migrants (as distinct from assumptions on aggregating African and Caribbean groups), and advances Erel’s (2010) concept of migrating cultural capital to illuminate how a minority racial group’s migration and shifting class positions affects their ability to engage in home learning. Migrant parents’ accounts show how postcolonial theory can also be used in technology studies to illuminate how seemingly liberating forces such as new technology can inadvertently contribute to oppression rather than alleviate it. This study also demonstrates that informants who belong to multiple subordinate identity groups experience greater discrimination and subjection: intersectionality theory helps explicate their everyday experiences.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Alistair Ross and Dr Sumi Hollingworth, for their critical insights and support of the research over the years and, at various moments, inspiration when my spirit flagged. Thanks also to the many individuals who have commented, debated, discussed and provided feedback on various aspects of the thesis, in particular, James Turner, Aaron Nwabude, and Kamara Shanka, and Professor Meryyn Hutchings.

I am forever grateful to the West African migrant parents who took part in this research, for allowing an inexperienced doctoral student in their midst and into their home for 10 months. I greatly appreciate their patience and readiness to share their personal lives with me; I hope I have portrayed them in their complexity.

I would like finally, to thank my family and friends for their support throughout the arduous journey towards completion. My wife, Peace Okpalanwankwo for all the sacrifices she has made and her unyielding support in all my endeavours; and my daughters: Beyoncé, Bianca and Brooklynn (3Bs) for practical and support throughout the whole process. This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late parents, Chief Godwin Uzoezie Okpalanwankwo and Mrs Victoria Amaechi Okpalanwankwo.

Impossible, I realize, to enter another's solitude. If it is true that we can ever come to know another human being, even to a small degree, it is only to the extent that he is willing to make himself known. A man will say: I am cold. Or else he will say nothing, and we will see him shivering. Either way, we will know that he is cold. But what of the man who says nothing and does not shiver? Where all is intractable, here all is hermetic and evasive, one can do no more than observe. But whether one can make sense of what he observes is another matter entirely.

(Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude*, pp. 19-20)

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis will examine how migrant West African parents use new technologies to participate in their children's home learning in England. These parents have had experiences of supporting their children's learning both in West Africa and in the UK contexts. Technology in education began as the primary focus of the research; however, the importance of migratory experiences and social class came to the fore, while technology became the backdrop. This shift means that in addition to the main focus on new technologies and parental engagement, the study will also critically examine the West African migrant parents' identities and experiences, and their effects on these parents' capability to participate actively in the education of their children within secondary schools in England. The study will investigate how new educational technologies support or hinder minority parents to engage in their children's education in English schools. I will carry out the research in relation to complex contextualised aspects of using technology to enhance parental involvement and the impact of social class and habitus. The experiences of migration for many people involve significant changes in their habitus, lifestyle and expectations. Recent West African migrants' experiences in England are particularly interesting, because firstly, often this category is subsumed into the general category of 'Black African' and secondly, relatively new migrancy can mean adults experience sharp contrasts in lifestyle and habitus. This dissertation will focus on a particular aspect of this potential dislocation - the way in which schools in the England, unlike schools in Nigeria and Ghana, are now using electronic technology (for example, computers, the Internet, Virtual Learning Environments) both as a way of supporting children's learning and as a way of communicating with parents. This study is important because West African migrants who have experience of schooling in Nigeria and/or Ghana (both their own educational experience and the experience of being responsible for children in Nigerian and Ghanaian schools) are faced with the dislocation of habitus as a result of their migrancy. Additionally, this minority parents have to deal with their children schools using unfamiliar technology and the expectation for the parents to use these technologies to help their children learn and communicate with the schools. However, this research is not about exploring home-school communications but these parents' *perceptions* of this.

This dissertation began from a lack of satisfaction with current scholarly and policy representations of minority parents' participation in educating their children. Parental involvement studies have developed in relative isolation from the wider social class and

habitus implications, the theories and arguments. Parental involvement using technology had previously focused on providing families access to digital technology, parents' ability to use technology to support learning at home, a well-conducted investigation centred on parents as partners in learning process, and education pedagogy that guides parental involvement using technology initiative in schools. In 2008, the UK government provided low income families with access to the internet and computer through an educational agenda set by *Internet for All* and *Harnessing Technology 2008-14* (Becta, 2008). Much research on parental involvement using technology is mainly focused on governmental and schools' policies (DfES, 2007b; Becta, 2008) and centred on the premises of 'raising the academic achievement of the pupils', parents as partners in education, and parents as a new tool to raise students' achievement (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011). Notwithstanding the emergent literature, Hollingworth et al (2009) argued that barriers to parental involvement for minority groups should be explored. Hollingworth and her colleagues suggested the need for further exploration of the social class influence and habitus on parents' behaviours around the use technology to support their children's learning. They suggested a need for further qualitative research on different minority parents who belong to multiple subordinate identity groups such as working-class, EAL, immigrants (non-residents and undocumented) using more in-depth individual interviews.

Further, academic and sociological investigation on West African migrant parents' involvement practice in schools both in West Africa and in England was either insufficient or non-existent. A few studies evaluated the implications of parents' socio-economic status, low literacy and cultural barriers to involvement (Selwyn, 2002; Valentine *et al*, 2002; Warschauer *et al*, 2004) but the research on the impact of migration on education, and the need for migrants or minority parents to develop new ways of being or doing things (Erel, 2010) in order to be accepted in the new field is limited. The use of postcolonial and intersectionality frameworks in parental involvement research is non-existing. This study marks a starting point for parental involvement using technology as it extends the existing literature, methodology and its centre of interests. It is an attempt to understand West African migrant parents' perspectives on the expectation that English schools have for parents to engage in the education of their children using technology. It also explores how these parents' identities and experiences, including migration, social class and habitus affect their willingness to participate in their children's education.

The thesis will empirically focus on those West African migrant parents who migrated to England between 1990 and 2003 and who have had experiences of supporting children's education or learning in both Africa and England, and were living in London at the time of the interview. This empirical investigation will be conceptualised and examined through a number of themes, such as barriers to involvement (Öztürk, 2013), habitus transformation, and social class transformation, postcolonial and intersectional dimensions to parental involvement. It is important to relate this to current academic discussions on these themes. The discourse on parents' engagement with technology, social class and habitus are of particular relevance because they offer accounts of how social structure, parents' socio-economic status and cultural capital influence their decisions, self-efficacy and ability to support their children's education (Hollingworth et al, 2009; Hollingworth et al, 2011; Jones, 2010). Research has centred on parents as important partners or stakeholders in raising achievement in schools. Hollingworth suggested that parents' social class, technology habitus positions influence their ability, behaviour, and attitudes around the use of technology to support children's home learning (2009). That is to say, socio-economic and cultural capital positioning of families enable or limit parental involvement through technology and unequal access to and use of technology can exacerbate the existing inequalities (Selwyn, 2002; Warschauer et al, 2004). However, Valentine *et al* (2002) argue that focusing on access alone is technologically deterministic because access to ICT does not necessary result in effective and efficient usage and consequential ICT skills development. One of the implications is that parents and children who rejected or fail to use and develop ICT skills will not participate in normal activities, such as socialising, online learning and becoming media literate even though they had access. In order words, technology can further create social inequality instead of ameliorating it as hoped by the UK government.

These authors have developed 'funds of knowledge' (Moll and Gonzalez, 2004) as a research tool, which become an important element needed to conduct empirical studies on parents' involvement using technology, home-school and school-home communication and the effects of identities and experiences to active participation. They argued that active parental engagement raises academic achievement and that effective communication from home to school and school to home enhances children's chances to succeed in education. Epstein et al (2009:9) indicate, "When the school and home communicate effectively teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work." Equally, Emeagwali (2009) and Magouirk (2015) asserted that

parents' involvement and home-school communication is crucial to academic achievement of their children and associates to students' success.

The current published work exposes some vital questions that are significant for the aims of this research. It is evident there is no consensus regarding the concept of parental involvement and technology (both theoretically and practically). Therefore, there is a need to mediate these divisions in social, cultural and symbolic worlds. The literature review on parental involvement using technology (see chapter 2) suggests that the way minority parents experience the different and probably new method of engagement (using technology) in their children's learning process, their social status, cultural position in conjunction with the habitus they occupy and the implications of migration requires further examination. In consequence, a clearer exploration of how migrant parents social class and cultural background, level of education, ethnicity, immigration status, self-efficacy, habitus (including technology habitus¹) shape their experiences and identities, and how these realisations might impact the different provisions (e.g. home learning, home-school communication, helping in school) parents offer to their children and the schools is needed. At the same time, this study needs to examine the power relations between parents and the schools (state institution) and the opportunities for, and limitations of parents' involvement. Additionally, I will explore parents' perception of teachers' actions and practices, and school policies. Middle-class and to some extent working-class parents born in England might have relevant capitals such as socio-economic status, prior knowledge, skills, language, dominant involvement culture and self-efficacy to help their children learn both at home and school. However, the social class and cultural changes, linguistic challenge and issue of immigration documentation presented by migration and exacerbated by the expectation for parents to support children's learning using technology pose further complications to any research on parental involvement using technology. As a result, the analysis of migrant parents' positioning after migrating to England will highlight the tensions, opportunities and constraints under which parental involvement using technology agenda can be achieved.

The asymmetric power relationship and the processes of reproducing social reality is the key concern suffusing the above problem. That is to say, social reality is unchanging because it is historically produced (Bourdieu, 1986) because when inhabitants in a social setting improvise

¹ Technology habitus is a language used in this thesis to explain the embodiment of technology as a way of modern of life.

their actions, they respond both to the social and cultural structures in which they find themselves and to their previous experiences. There is also the issue of the lasting legacy of colonisation on these minority parents, not in terms of socio-economic status and technology literacy (e-maturity²) but the perceived subjectification, stigmatisation, discrimination and racism. This creates a type of relationship, which promotes the identity and values of the colonists (dominant culture) and at the same time devaluing the minority groups' habitual ways of life by imposing discriminatory measures (De Beauvoir, 1989, c1952; Fanon, 1963). Additionally, these West African parents face the challenges of living between two cultures and as a result will experience both bicultural and acculturation stresses (Van Campen and Romero, 2009; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016). First, they will face the pressure to adapt to the dominant culture of active involvement (including using technology) in their children's education and to preserve their West African involvement practices. In the second model, they will also experience acculturation because of the necessity to adapt to the dominant involvement culture in a one directional movement in order to be accepted, discrimination, belonging to multiple subordinate group identities and pressure to speak in British accent. The methodological approach used in this study will provide the necessary link between the practical observations (including interviews and field notes) and theoretical focal points. It facilitates the emphasis on structure and its influence on human actions through the lens of power, and the consequences for those oppressed and marginalised by it (Carspecken, 1996 cited in Mansaray, 2012). The theoretical framework (see chapter 3) for this study draws broadly from Bourdieu's theories of capitals, field and habitus (1986); postcolonial theorists such as Said (1989) and intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989) which can be used to challenge or unsettle issues on oppression and complex issues of inequities and social justice respectively. Whilst these sociologists have different conceptual ideas, their concepts arguably centred on social power relationships and their structural influence on human freedom and choice because complex factors and processes shaped human lives (especially the oppressed). I used these theoretical tools in my semi-structured interview approach because the technique offered the participants the freedom to tell their stories without the need to rigidly follow any predefined question order. Semi-structured interviews also include observations and recordings (Golafshani, 2003; Fylan, 2005) and these techniques are essential for the representation of complex lived experiences, practices and diverse construction of realities, specifically for marginalised and oppressed groups. This is a qualitative study aimed to provide an in-depth, pragmatic explanation of substantive parents'

² E-maturity can be described as an effective and skilful use of technology.

views together with critical review on how the structures or dominant culture affect the West African migrant parents' identities and experiences. A few examples of semi-structured interview oriented research are Hollingworth et al's (2009) work, *parents' perspectives on technology and children's learning in the home*; Crozier and Davies' (2007) research, *'Hard to reach parents or hard to reach schools?'* and Selwyn's (2002) study, *"E-establishing" an Inclusive Society* in the UK. The objective is to put forward new theoretical and practical ways of conducting a multifaceted analysis of the study in context. As a result, this thesis will use sociological explanation; postcolonial and intersectional theorisations which have been lacking in the studies of parental involvement using technology.

As I have introduced the main subjects in this dissertation and the proposed practical methods used in exploring them, a brief socio-political account of factors that help produce earlier parental involvement policy and later parental involvement using technology in England will follow. This explains the discovery of parents as an important partner in education, draws attention to the marginalised and unequal position parents occupied within the education institution. The concluding section of the chapter will include a summary of the study and a plan of the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Parental involvement: From Plowden (1967) to online reporting (2012).

The need for parents to engage in their children's education is not a new concept in English education and around the world. However, the Plowden report (DES, 1967, Para. 322) marks the official use of the term 'Parental Involvement' to mean the need for parents to be interested in the work of schools and talking to teachers. More recently, 1997 White Paper - *Excellence in Schools* described policy for implementing parental involvement. The policy stated three main features:

- schools should provide families with accurate and timely information via technology,
- schools should endeavour to seek parents' opinion on issues concerning their children's education (democratisation of the school), and
- encouraging parental partnerships with schools

(DCSF, 2008)

There is also the need for education reform: more inclusive schools for example cultural and social inclusion; and accountability, making schools more accountable to the parents or parents' empowerment and question about who is responsible for the child's education (Davies and Johnson, 1996). The use of technology to enhance parental involvement in education has been echoed by governments and educators both in the US and Europe, especially the UK (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). One of the prominent champions of this initiative, the European Commission, indicates that the level of parental involvement is an important benchmark when evaluating the quality of education (OECD, 2010; Hansson and Charbonnier, 2010). There is concrete evidence that suggests that parental involvement has helped raise pupils' attainment (Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Becta, 2007; Peters et al, 2007).

Parents have varied roles, which comprise different responsibilities and duties, and some of which are legal obligations. For example, parents/carers have the duty of care to provide housing, health, safety, support with home learning and information about their children to school (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011). Similarly, schools are also responsible to provide good education, health and safety for all children under their care. This is often referred to as *loco parentis* (in place of parent), the legal responsibility of English schools to take on some of the responsibilities of a parent but schools have concerns that parents might not have the academic qualifications, subject and teaching pedagogy required to help with their children's learning (DfE, 2010). Working-class parents, who may be afraid of teaching the wrong skills to their children (Reay, 2005) share this concern, and Jones (2010) assertion that parents from low socio-economic families are ill equipped to support their children's learning supports this view. As I show later, this has led to a tense relationship between the parents and the schools as certain parents are regarded as 'hard to reach' by the schools (Crozier and Davies, 2007).

The advent of educational technology in the mid-1990s resulted in the development of several policy documents: *Children's Plan* (DfES, 2007a); *Every Parent Matters* (DfES, 2007b); and *Harnessing Technology 2008-14* (Becta, 2008). These policies stressed the importance of using technology to enhance parents' engagement in children's education further. For example, parents' access to up-to-date information regarding their children's education and the expectation for them to play more active role in home learning (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011). The authors argued that resistance or low uptake to the use of technology to participate in education meant that the initiative was not very effective. In 2008, Gordon Brown, the British Prime Minister, introduced the '*Internet Access for All*' initiative to provide internet

access to all school children in England (Porter, 2008). This was welcomed at the time by both technology experts (e.g. Neil Selwyn) and Teacher Union leaders (e.g. Christine Blower). Selwyn applauded the initiative and said it is 'a great step forward', but warned that a number of social and technical issues must be tackled to realise the full educational values. Parental involvement using technology is arguably middle-class focused and potentially unjust. It is also problematic because research evidence (Selwyn, 2002; Warschauer *et al*, 2004) has shown that people's access to and use of technology is dependent on the social context. Equally, Valentine *et al* (2002) posit that the government policy on universal access to ICT is not the remedy to digital inequality because varied level of ICT provision in English schools reinforces digital inequality. They argued that both inequalities in access and use of technology create other inequalities in schools and that if the government is serious in addressing technology and inequalities, they have to understand and deal with other factors, such as social class and culture that create the existing exclusion in information society instead of focusing on access alone. North et al (2008) who also argued that other factors, such as people's identity and cultural capital could create technology inequality also echoed this view.

In spite of this innovative way of involving parents in the education of their children and the provision of internet for all, parents from ethnic minority groups rarely use technology to assist in home learning (Russell and Granville, 2005). This shows that it is not a binary issue of access and use, rather complex socio-economic and socio-political factors. The work of Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) on parental involvement suggests that schools or educators should do more to achieve an active parental involvement using technology instead of glossing over or ignoring the issue. Similarly, Warschauer (2003) argued that rebuilding cultural and social capitals of the community (of which the school is a subset) is necessary to tackle the issue of unequal access and use of technology to improve parental involvement respectively.

Whilst several researchers (Epstein, 1995; Ramirez, 2001; Fan and Chen, 2001; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Becta, 2007; Peters et al, 2007) argued that parental involvement through technology raises students' achievement, Fan and Chen (2001) suggested that among differing types of involvement, academic socialisation (e.g. parental aspirations) shows the strongest relationship with children's attainment. NCSL argued that 'schools [should] use technology to update parents about grades, homework, absences or alerts' (2004:4). Moreover, Ofsted (2009) set a target for online reporting to parents by 2012 in secondary schools as part of schools' accountability to parents and as a model of good practice.

The role of technology in parental involvement for migrant West African parents, who are facing complex socio-political realities, needs further exploration. To complicate issues, there is still a variety of views about what actions constitute parental involvement and parental engagement and the difference between the two. At the time of the fieldwork, what follows is a summary of the general features of parental involvement.

1.2 Parental involvement or engagement

A key issue in the parental involvement discourse is the difference between parental involvement and parental engagement. For example, Goodall and Vorhaus (2011:14) asserted that “parenting” includes:

- housing,
 - health,
 - nutrition and safety,
 - home conditions to support learning and development, and
 - information to help schools know about the child and the family”
- [and] “engagement” [involves:]
- learning at home: help with homework, subject skills, other skills and talents, attitudes, values, aspirations and behaviour,
 - communication: school-home; home-school,
 - in-school activities: volunteering; helping in classrooms, parents’ evenings, field trips; participating as a member of an audience,
 - decision making: undertaking role as school governor or other committees and advisory groups, and
 - collaborating with the community: community contributions to schools and families; family and school contributions to the community.’

However, Olmstead (2013) addressed this issue by stating that parental engagement (proactive) is when parents engaged in their children’s learning (e.g. helping with homework) while parental involvement (reactive) is when parents get involved in the life of the school such as attending parents’ evening. These aspects of parental involvement were first theorised by Joyce Epstein, who has carried out extensive work in this area, and therefore widely cited

in parental involvement literature. This study will use both the department of education and Epstein's parental involvement framework to explore migrant West African parents' (informants) perceptions of the expectation to assist in their children's learning and relevant literature.

Epstein et al. (2009) outlined six major types (type 1 to type 6) of parental involvement:

1. Type 1 involves parenting and impacting basic parenting skills to create a home condition that is conducive for learning. In addition, type 1 requires families to collaborate with the schools in order to support children's education. This means that families should understand the schools and vice versa.
2. Type 2 is about home-school and school-home communication in relation to school activities and children's academic progress.
3. Type 3 includes volunteering to help the school, students and community during education related events.
4. Type 4 is about the involvement of families in home learning such as homework.
5. Type 5 refers to the need for parents or families to participate actively in schools' decision-making.
6. Type 6 refers to the organisation of community resources and services for families, schools and children in order to support learning.

Much research, leaders in education, teachers and parents believe that parental involvement is necessary to raise students' academic attainment. However, there is still unanswered questions regarding to how to measure effective parental involvement; how do teachers and parents agree on effective parental involvement practices; and the factors that might affect the minority (ethnic) parents' decision and ability to actively participate in home learning of their child. This study aims to address some of these questions whilst others will require further research in the future.

1.3 The Study

This study involved semi-structured interviews (one to one interview, note-taking and audio recordings) with 13 West African migrant parents regarding parental involvement using technology. At the request of the participants, I gave them pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity, in keeping with the IPSE³ and London Metropolitan University ethical code of conduct. The participants were born outside England; have past experiences of supporting at least a child's education in West Africa before migrating to London; and at the time of the fieldwork, all participants had parental responsibility for at least one child in English education. These characteristics made this group unique, as there has been no previous research on parental involvement targeting such a group. These migrant parents live in nine different London Boroughs – Enfield, Haringey, Newham, Barnet, Croydon, Barking and Dagenham, Southwark, Redbridge and Greenwich. I gathered the research data through 10 months of participant interview at neutral locations – church hall or mosque, and a few interviews conducted at the informants' home at their request. Recruiting participants for this study was challenging, so initially I conducted only 10 interviews from October 2013 to August 2014, then later (through snowball sampling) three more interviews were conducted from September 2014 to December 2014. Moreover, I had conducted a small scale pilot study (in 2012) as part of the Doctor of Education (EdD) module 6, and the two participants were West African migrant parents (London residents) with experiences of supporting a child's learning both in West Africa and in England. This pilot study provided some of the initial motivation and focal point for this thesis. The decision to interview participants with experience in supporting a child's education in both educational systems was an attempt to explore the contrast between West African and English parental involvement practices.

This study focused on West African migrant parents who are resident in the capital (see Appendix G), because London schools had higher than average numbers of West African migrant students when compared with other schools in England. For example, 88,105 Nigerian born people were living in England at the time of 2001 Census – three quarters (68,910) of them live in London and at the same time 46,513 Ghanaians are living in London (Mackintosh, 2005). These figures have increased in recent years- 174,000 Nigerians and 86,000 Ghanaians are living in England between July 2010 and June 2011 (ONS, 2017).

³ Institute for Policy Studies in Education

Next, I will describe research aims; outline the organisation of the thesis and empirical research questions. This section ends with an overview of the thesis chapters.

1.3.1. Research aims and empirical research questions

The thesis aims to explore, through semi-structured interview method, how West African migrant parents participate in their children's learning at secondary school level and the role of technology as a mediating factor in this process. New technologies in education began as the main focus of this research, however as the analysis progressed it became apparent that technology was merely a lens through which to explore wider socio-political issues that affected these parents' ability to engage in English education system. Migration and the shifting of social class positioning became clearly essential foci. This entailed the examination of how migrant West African parents' lived experiences, perspectives, cultural identities, social class and habitus transformations influenced their decisions about how they might engage in their children's learning, given the way this is expected by English schools.

The study explores whether migrant West African parents see the expectation to use technology to support home learning as a liberating force or an oppressive tool. It also aims to examine the complex and interlinked factors, which empower and/or prevent effective use of technology by these migrant parents to support their children's education. This study aims to explore theoretically whether social class and habitus are static or transformative as migration means developing new ways of being in the new field.

What follows are the empirical research questions of this dissertation, aimed to direct readers to the central themes of the research. The questions, individually will address different themes of the research: technology at home, migration history, barriers to parental involvement using technology, home-school communication and the role of social class and habitus.

1. How do West African migrant parents' identities and experiences affect their ability to engage with their children's learning?
2. What are the challenges to West African migrant parents' involvement in the English educational system?

3. How can sociological and educational theories advance our knowledge about African parents' identities and experiences?
4. How does the use of new educational technologies support minority parents in their engagement with their children's education in English schools?

1.3.2. Thesis organisation, reflexivity and subjectivity

The deconstruction of mentally constructed experiences through an interaction between the researcher and participants underpins this study. Golafshani suggested that 'engaging multiple methods, such as, observations, interviews and recordings will lead to more valid, reliable and diverse [de]construction of realities.' (2003:604), and this research and its developing process supports this view. I will present the findings and analysis in order of importance rather than the order of occurrence and production; thus bringing clarity and focus of the thesis' arguments and the comprehensive explanation of its theoretical underpinnings, and the same time preserving the quality of the fieldwork and subsequent analysis. The presentation of the research outcomes will use narrative logic to explain details not necessarily included in the initial focus of the study. For example, the issue of the perceived discrimination and oppression were not the main initial research focus or aim, but participants' narratives during the interviews and the subsequent analysis gave prominence to these issues. This means, the presentation does not follow a thematic approach rather it is reflexive. This is common in qualitative studies involving the use of semi-structured interview, which entails asking the question and then handing the power to the interviewees to respond in any sequence they prefer, and the researcher just listens and interjects occasionally to redirect and/or nods to concur. One of the advantages of this method is that it empowers marginalised group by giving them voice. Although the interview begins with some predefined questions, but the unpredictability of the outcomes, which come in many forms and shapes, such as 'silences' and giving out vital information at the end of the interview process (Hollingworth, 2011) makes such interviews, observations and recordings attractive to social science researchers. As participants' responses yield new but relevant data, the focal points change, and as a result, the research questions are, revised and further reading of literature becomes best practice. I discussed an example of this process in chapter 3, the method and underpinning philosophical framework of study. This type of research demands non-linear approach as it involves the

integration of emergent data, field notes, observations, recordings, published works and relevant theoretical ideas that results in the establishment of statements that are not just sensible but also well connected. One of the implications is that my understanding of the migrant parents' identities, experiences and how shifting social class positions they occupied after migrating to England influence their capability to assist their children with learning at home was firmed up during the interviews, and not before. Equally, the emerging themes guided the theoretical framework in order to ground the themes in sociology, analytical process and debate, instead of applying the interview outcomes as theory.

As qualitative researchers usually interact for the most part very closely with their research participants in the field, there is a risk that their personal and professional principles or dogmas will influence and structure the research processes. The dilemma is between the expectation of arriving at useful and explanatory accounts that help understand how the participants made decisions, and help progress our understanding of a topic, rather than unintentionally producing simply autobiographic accounts.

In this study, the concept of subjectivity and reflexivity played an integral role in examining the research process, because my subcultural, socio-cultural, professional, biographical, and lived life experiences influence what is observed, construed and reported. I highlight my subjectivity in the research process in order to achieve new levels of understanding through reflexivity. It is crucial for researchers to aim to account for their impact on the research process.

Reflexivity should be the “*de rigueur*” for all research (Ball, 1990 cited in Troyna 1998:107) because researchers continuously interact with those being researched, and unavoidably influence and subjectively structure the research processes and outcomes, through their world views, by leaning on theories and methods available in their subcultures, professional characteristics and experiences. Ethical considerations (considered further in section 3.3.2) were only a starting point in addressing ethical issues arising during the process of conducting this study. Being reflexive about different aspects of research process is of paramount important to positioning and analysing the status of the knowledge produced in this study. Mason (2002) posits that reflexivity is about ‘thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognising the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research what you see’ (p.5).

As a West African migrant, a parent and a computer science teacher in an English school, I have experienced the expectation for parents to support their children's learning at home using technology, from both a parent and school-perspective. This policy initiative has been widely implemented in most of the Western world, and many researchers, educators and central governments consider that it will increase parental participation and raises children's attainment. Initially, as a teacher, 'with my teacher hat on' I welcomed the initiative because I believed it would help parents who find it difficult to get involved in their children's learning because of work commitment and other barriers. However, as I witnessed the socio-political implications of expecting parents to use technology to engage in their children's home learning, I found myself questioning this expectation. Parental engagement using technology did not seem to be the panacea to underachievement I had been led to believe it was. I still had unanswered questions regarding issues of migration status, social class and multiple subordinate identities. I noted my experiences in a reflective journal kept over the course of my EdD modules and pilot study. Analysing my reflective journal, I found myself wanting to carry out an in-depth exploration of parental involvement using new technologies.

Also, initially, I wanted to explore how new technologies were used to enhance parental engagement in the English education system. However, participants' focus on migration status, racism and discrimination, coupled with my interest in Bourdieu's framework of capitals, fields and habitus, led me early in the study to reframe my approach to this study. Through reflexive practice, I began to explore other sociological frameworks such as postcolonial and intersectional theories, in order to pay more attention on how my participants' experiences of racism, discrimination, 'classlessness', marginalisation, questionable immigration status, technology otherness and deskilling impacted their ability to engage in their children's home learning using technology. I wanted to know how the expectation for these parents (indeed all parents) to engage in education using new technologies had been seen as an appropriate and desirable means of engaging all parents, especially those seen as 'hard to reach', in education. Therefore, I have used theoretical frameworks that are centred on the impact of social structure on participants' lived experiences and identities to guide data analysis. Moreover, the main data collection method for this study was through in-depth interviews and thus I was the main 'tool' of data collection. Some of the literature I read positioned researchers as interviewers and the research process as linear and unproblematic, insofar as established research protocols were followed (Glensne and Peshkin, 1992). However, I questioned this approach and noted it in my reflective journal. There are also issues of 'interpretive crisis' (Denzin, 1994) and

researcher's 'baggage' Scheurich (1997) in qualitative research which will be discussed in detail in section 3.2.4 and 3.2.5.

1.3.3. Limitations and delimitations

This study is limited to one very specific minority group and therefore it raises the question of direct transferability to other minority groups. However, there are still learning here, particularly in relation to how such groups can be theorised using habitus and intersecting frameworks. Second, this study is also limited to migrant parents who accepted and indicated their willingness to participate by completing a questionnaire (see appendix A) and participant consent form (see appendix B). Thus, the inability to verify the trustworthiness of the information provided by these informants when completing the survey may also be a limitation.

The study was delimited to parents who migrated to the England between 1989 and 2003 and currently catering for at least a child in the English schools. I carried out the fieldwork during the 2013/ 2014 academic year and sampled 13 parents before reaching saturation point (Adler and Alder, 2012; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). The consideration of only the informants' perceptions is also delimitation.

1.3.4. Overview of the chapters

This dissertation adopts a seven-chapter format, and I describe these briefly below. Chapters one to three frame the research within vital social practices and policy discussions. They establish structures that can support the theory of this study (theoretical framework), and provide a justification for the methodology adopted. The second chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the parental involvement literature and the relevant theoretical framework of this study, notably Bourdieu's concepts of capitals, habitus and field and those of postcolonial and intersectionality. This chapter also provides the framework and the support structure connecting the thesis. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approach adopted. This explains the semi-structured interview method used in the study, as well as its philosophical and phenomenological foundations. It gives detail explanation of the interviewing process, sampling procedures, instruments used, and the information collection and analysis procedures. There is a discussion on sample size and method justifications, and the research ethics, social class classification and issues of confidentiality and anonymity and

vignettes of the participants. In sum, these chapters establish the complete structure in the dissertation, in connection with this observable investigation and its documentation.

Chapters 4 to 6 describe the evidence, theorise and analyse the data gathered in the thesis. In chapter 4, the focus is to compare parents' experiences in West Africa with their experiences in England because the literature on living between two cultures showed important hypotheses, and to explore the impact of different identities and experiences on active participation in English schools. This chapter contains analysis of the participants' migrancy experiences and challenges to parental involvement. Chapter 5 theorises the impact of West African migrant parents' identities and experiences using a combination of Bourdieuan, postcolonial and intersectional theories. Whilst chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the data that was collected in the processes described in chapter 3, chapter 6 begins the analysis and theorisation of parental involvement and technology, particularly with reference to the research question "How does the use of new educational technology support minority parents in their engagement with their children's education in English schools?" These Chapters (chapters 4, 5 and 6), also deal with the West African migrant parents' informal and formal mediation based on the social, cultural and representative procedures and formations in relation to the interaction with the state institutions such as schools and the society at large after migrating to England. The thesis concludes with chapter 7, which evaluates the findings in relation to the aims that have been set out. It discusses the significance and potential impacts of the study's findings, offering suggestions for the development of future studies. The next chapter discusses theoretical and conceptual framework that guides this study, and reviews relevant parental involvement literature.

Chapter 2 – The Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews parental involvement literature and develops a framework for empirical explanation of the themes in this thesis, especially its focus on issues of structuration; otherness and complex social reality by drawing specifically from the work of Bourdieu, Bhabha (and other postcolonial theorists) and Crenshaw's theorising to generate a critical theory. This will enable an exploration of the West African migrant parents' social class positions, cultural and symbolic violence, and the interaction of informants' social locations, in addition to laying the groundwork for broader qualitative comparative analysis (macro-analysis) around migration and otherness for framing parental involvement using technology.

The first section of this chapter critically reviews parental involvement, its educational benefits, and parental involvement using technology. This is important because the literature in this area is wide reaching and sometimes contradictory, particularly the different perspectives regarding parental involvement and parental engagement (see chapter 1). The second part of the chapter elaborates on Bourdieu's ideas of capitals, habitus and fields, and the importance of his theory to understand West African migrant parents' social class formations and the relationship to power. Bourdieu's framework arguably under explored the impact of colonialism on those colonised (Said, 1989) by focusing mainly on how socio-cultural structures influence human behaviours. That is to say, Bourdieu's concepts are theories of choice within scholarly work on social class and education but I am applying his work in this different context. For example, his work can be improved by drawing from postcolonial theory, which explains and responds to cultural legacy of colonialism on colonised group. Crenshaw's work on intersecting identities discussed later in this chapter will elucidate the interconnected nature of social categorisations as they apply to the West Africa migrant parents. This chapter ends by highlighting the impacts of the theoretical underpinning of this thesis.

As indicated in chapter 1, in research literature parental involvement is an area of importance to raise children's achievement in education. To answer the research questions (outlined in chapter 1), there is the need to examine the various aspects of this literature. As explained above, the literature on parental involvement is vast and wide reaching, and therefore the review presented will focus on the following relevant areas: parental Involvement, parental

involvement using Technology, home-school communication. Furthermore, literature on post-colonial theory, social class, cultural capital, habitus, habitus transformation and intersectionality will be reviewed.

The use of a post-colonial lens explains colonial influence in culture formation for colonised people. This starts when the colonial power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its 'others.' Therefore, it is crucial to explore the effects of a colonial legacy on the colonised and to understand the formulation of West African migrant parents' (informants) involvement or non-involvement practices. It is also important to investigate how English schools legitimise or de-legitimise these practices. This can illuminate how these migrant parents negotiated complex experiences in the British education and thus, help to understand their embodied practices (Phoenix, 2009). Second, the use of Bourdieu's concept of capitals, habitus and field in this study will help to better explore how particular socio-economic and cultural capitals position of migrant parents enable or limit parental involvement through technology. His theory on capitals, habitus and field also helps to understand how social reality is reproduced because it is rooted on the concept that structures influence/shape human behaviour. Bourdieu argued that unequal power distribution creates a 'signposted universe', full of impossibility and unequal access to jobs, courses and in this instance technology as technology is now the modern way of life. Consequently, the 'impassable' barriers imposed by the structure (Bourdieu, 2000) prohibit or exclude certain group actors from active participation. And where the systems of class domination, migration, race and discrimination converge, as evident in the experiences of migrant West Africa parents, any intervention strategies based solely on the experiences of parents or 'black African' parents will be of limited help because this minority group face different barriers (Öztürk, 2013). As a result, Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality is the most appropriate framework to explore the interactions of class, socio-economic status, habitus and migration.

2.1.1. Parental involvement (or engagement)

Parental involvement is important and relevant because efforts to support and enhance parental involvement in education are top agenda not only in England but also for educators, most European countries and United States (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). Further, the European Commission is of the view that the level of parental involvement is an important determinant factor of the standard of schooling (Ibid). Successive governments in England had slightly different approaches to parental involvement, for instance, New Labour

government policies such as *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (DfES, 2004) which followed the Children Act 2004 (Jenkins and Polat, 2006). Equally, the No Child Left Behind Act 2001 in the US and Banister (2015) has stressed the importance of involving parents in the education of their children. The coalition government reiterated this view, ‘parental engagement includes learning at home, school-home and home-school communication, in-school activities, decision-making (e.g. being a parent governor) ...’ (DfE, 2010:6).

In the past, the schools’ and families’ roles in education were perceived as separate but recently many researchers such as Bojuwoye (2009), Addi-Racah and Ainhoren (2009), Snell et al (2009) and Hujala et al. (2009) have suggested that schools and families are equally responsible for the children’s education and, this view represents a significant paradigm shift. In England, the white paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010) and the *SEN and disability* green paper (DfE, 2011) both assert that schools should be accountable to parents. They argued that in order for parents to play active role in their children’s education, the schools should make relevant information available and in a format easily accessible to parents. Bojuwoye indicates, “When parents and schools interact closely together they share information among themselves and this information-sharing helps family to better understand the schools and the schools to understand the families.” (2009:463). Similarly, DfE (2010) posits that the transfer of knowledge and understanding should be two directional:

- from school to home, and
- from home to school.

The importance of school-home-outside agency collaboration cannot be overemphasised because even teaching and learning pedagogy stressed the importance of the needs for “parents/carers to know about school learning, and schools need to know about and value home learning” (DfES, 2007b:2).

2.1.2. Educational benefits of parental involvement

Sharp et al (2001) suggest that for secondary school pupils, there is a positive relationship between time spent on homework and achievement. Desforges and Abouchar (2003) also argued that parental involvement, which includes helping with home learning, is vital in order for schoolchildren to achieve their full potential. This means that when teachers and parents

work together, students are more likely to excel in learning and teaching. There is also consistent evidence of the educational benefits of involving parents in their child's learning at home (Gutman and Akerman, 2008; Eereka et al 2015). Harris and Goodall assert that parental involvement helps improve students' behaviour (2007). It also improves pupil's attendance (Sheldon and Epstein, 2004) and, as a result, student attainment improves (Hill and Tyson, 2009). These assertions arguably are problematic because regardless of whether parental involvement is good for results, there are wider implications as whether families feel like they are part of a community (or instead, subjugated) and the link between their perceived subjugation to Black African children's achievement in English schools, especially in London boroughs.

Over the last 30 years, research evidence (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Blair, 2001; Demie, 2001; Ofsted, 2002) has shown that Black African pupils are underachieving in British schools. Other research in the 1980s (Rampton, 1981; Swann, 1985) and 1990s (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Demie, 2005; Rollock, 2007) also reflected the same trend, with Black African and Caribbean pupils achieving less GCSE A* - C grades on average than pupils from other ethnic groups such as Chinese, Indian, White and Pakistani (DfE, 2012). However, recent research on West African pupils in London borough of Lambeth showed that pupils of African heritage such as Nigeria and Ghana, achieve more GCSE grades (13% gap) than any other ethnic groups nationally (Demie et al, 2012). This study has shown that Yoruba, Igbo, and Twi-Fante are languages spoken in the migrant parents' home, therefore supporting Demie et al (2012) assertion that Yoruba, Igbo and Twi-Fante are the main languages spoken in Nigeria and Ghana respectively.

There is an interesting correlation between the language spoken at home and pupils' achievement, with Igbo speakers achieving the best grades at 76% (5+A*-C including English and Maths), followed by Yoruba speakers at 75% and Twi-Fante at 66% in 2011. In the same year, national attainment is at 59%, which is significantly lower than the results of these minority pupils. It is of paramount importance to stress however, that these students also are very fluent in English (89% of the Black African students in the case study schools are fully fluent in English) (Demie, 2012).

In schools where Black African pupils are meeting their aspirational academic targets, the headteachers had established a culture of trust between parents and staff. It is suggested that

strong partnership between the schools and the home is necessary to improve the attainment of all pupils (Demie, 2012).

2.1.3. Parental involvement using technology

The 'Every Parent Matters' initiative identified the use of technology (e.g. web based updates and texting) as one of the innovative ways public services, including schools can work with parents, especially 'hard-to-reach' parents (Peters et al, 2007). Similarly, Becta (2008 cited in Hollingworth et al 2009) argued that technology plays an important role in home-school communication, and according to DfES (2003:7) 'Information and communication technology (ICT) [has become] a vital tool for parents' involvement in children's education.'

In contrast to the British government assumption that access to technology ameliorates inequality, Jones argued that even when access is given, there is no guarantee it will produce the positive outcomes or that the individuals in question have the knowledge and skills to use it effectively (2010). Van Dijk and Hacker also suggested, "[t]he causes of inequalities in [technology] access and use is often traced back to usage factors (cost of technology, lack of knowledge, skills or operational abilities) and psychological factors" (2003 cited in Jones, 2010:6). Additionally, Selwyn (2002) stated that access to computers and the internet does not ensure equality of use because the impact of technology and associated inequalities are the products of what people do with technologies. Research evidence (Angus et al, 2004; Lee, 2008; Grant, 2007) has also shown that people's socio-economic status affects how they use modern technology at home, and therefore unequal access and use produces social inequalities. North et al. (2008) argue that people's social background affects their digital tastes. For this group of individuals, social and cultural factors significantly affect the quality of their technology use. Angus et al. (2004) and Grant (2007) both use Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic capitals, particularly cultural and social capital to elaborate on how these inequalities play out. Simply having the financial means, the economic capital, to purchase technological resources only reveals half of the story. In cultural capital discourse, knowledge is usually referred to as a resource and includes knowledge of English education systems and structures, and parents who are aware of the system tend to have an advantage in the system, as they know the rules of the 'game.' Similarly, Grant asserts that social capital refers to the "resources that people are able to draw upon as a result of their social connections" (2007:3). It is suggested that middle-class families tend to have access to more

cultural and social capital (as well as economic), and therefore the ways in which they put technology to use only builds on these capitals and resources, creating further advantage.

Grant's use of the term 'media literacy' seems to encompass the concepts of cultural and social capital; knowing how to 'meaningfully and effectively' engage with ICTs, indicates that it is a form of literacy, a form of social practice which afford benefits to those who can 'read' and use them. Castells' thesis on the 'networked society' argues that it is more valuable to produce knowledge and process information than to produce goods, which places even more importance on media literacy in a rising economy which divides 'people who are valuable to the network and people who are not' (Castells, 1998 cited in Grant, 2007:4). We could see this falling along class lines. Castells sees education as the key factor in access to and participation in the networked society. Though we might positively argue that education has the potential to access a networked society, current research suggests formal education is making little impact in this area. These studies have a similar conclusion that it does not see that access to ICT, without attention to other socio-political aspects of advantage and disadvantage, will do much to close the digital divide (Angus et al, 2004).

Angus et al (2004) pays attention to the role of the teacher in holding preconceived or prejudiced notions of the 'good learner', which often inaccurately informs their views on how technologically literate they perceive children to be based on their ideas about their home background. They found a 'systematic discounting' (p13) of working-class cultural experiences among teachers, which led to them to see working-class pupils as not possessing the right kind of knowledge and experiences, and this extended to ICT, despite schools' emphasis on technology precisely to engage working-class students (and families) and better equip them for the future.

The literature discussed so far seems to suggest a deficit of home use of and access to educational technology by lower socio-economic or working-class groups. However, Sefton-Green's (2004) literature review on informal learning positively confirms that pupils from lower 'social grades' do have less access and use of PCs and internet in the home (p20) but the use of computer games consoles, television, smart phones and music media in working-class households is as high as in middle-class households, if not higher. His review takes great care not to rule out the potentials and possibilities for these technologies, particularly their capacity for informal learning among children and families, though they admit there is not enough research on how this plays out yet. Olmstead (2013) also argued that as schools

invest in websites, parent portals and host curriculum (including setting homework) online, parental involvement using technology has the potential to raise children's attainment.

2.2. Between Two Cultures

Watson (1977) and Menski (2002) accounts on 'living between two cultures' offer useful academic literature on migrants and minorities in Britain. They argued that migrating to a new country comes with different ways of doing things and migrants with similar cultural capitals are more likely to adapt quickly to the culture of the host country, which in this context is England. However, those with dissimilar values and cultures will experience more discrimination, prejudice, racism and cultural differences. Minorities and migrants in England experienced different kinds of stresses as they try to adapt to either the new culture and/or in some cases to preserve their original culture of parental involvement. That is to say, they may experience bicultural stress or acculturation stress (Van Campen and Romero, 2009; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016). Migrant parents' perceived discrimination, prejudice, racism and cultural differences, which they must cope with in order to play in the new field of education, exacerbate the pressure to acclimatise to the dominant parental involvement practices and to maintain their West African engagement methods. Additionally, the English schools' expectation for all parents to use technology to engage in their children's learning at home added another layer of challenge to already stressed migrants. Valentine et al. (2002) and others (see section 2.1.3) have noted that lack of access and inadequate use of technology create social inequality in societies. Therefore, the possession of technological skills pre migration may have reduced the effect of stress on computer literate migrant parents as they may find it easier to participate in the children's education using technology than migrants with little or no skills.

Further, West African migrant parents may experience acculturation stress because of migrating to new parental involvement culture. In this model, migrants adapt to the majority culture, which is from original culture (dominated) to new culture (dominant) in a linear movement. The concepts of bicultural and acculturation, in my view can be related to Bourdieu's theory of 'cleft habitus'⁴ and 'habitus transformation'⁵ respectively. Similarly,

⁴ For Bourdieu a person experiences 'cleft habitus', when they experience a sense of self-torn by dislocation and internal division leading to double perception of self and creating multiple identities.

these concepts can also equate to postcolonial theory of ‘hybridity’ and ‘mimicry’. The literature on ‘*Between two cultures*’ is of paramount importance to this study because these migrant West African parents brought with them their own involvement practices, traditions and education beliefs but found themselves challenged with the requirement to adapt and modify their original involvement culture. They have to learn a new accent and how to use technology to support their children’s education. Thus, migrants face the challenges of living between two cultures and as a result, they are most likely to experience identity crises in the host country (Sonyel, 2000). This study will use Bourdieu’s tools, which are very useful and widely applicable in sociology research, to explore social inequality in education.

2.3. Bourdieu’s Concepts

Bourdieu’s trademark ideas are capitals, field and habitus. He uses “game” comparison to explain the idea that societal existence is like involvement in sports activities where actors battle by competing for a place and relevance. This game (which is taken to be real), involves rewards because of being competitive. As a result, the competitors (players) may put into practice different plans to gain a favourable opportunity to success. To some extent, the players’ previous experiences of the game and their state of readiness for the game (habitus) determine this vantage position (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu’s relational sociology has some key aspects, which are the three main concepts of capitals, habitus and fields. One interpretation is that his concepts should be defined together - (interconnected or connect with each other) and theorised at the same time rather than separate. The concepts have to be explained in connection with their effective use in empirical study; they must be first defined (set in motion) and then used to support the empirical data analysis (Ibid, 1992). These concepts are “open concepts designed to guide empirical work” (Bourdieu, 1990a:107) and in the same way these concepts are applied or used within this study. Bourdieu gives prominence to the connections and procedures rather than science of phenomenon with regard to the theme subject - the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:97).

⁵ Lee and Kramer, (2013) stated that habitus transformation means modifying original habitus in order to adapt with the change of social environment.

For Bourdieu, three major types of capitals are social, cultural and economic (Bourdieu, 1986). He describes these capitals as resources of power. Capitals are forms of power in social life. He argues that culture adds to the wealth of a particular class.

Economic capital is considered equal to:

- personal wealth,
- income, and
- the ability to generate income.

Cultural capital may include three dimensions:

- personal educational credentials and experiences (educational capital) that facilitate the accumulation of cultural tastes,
- social backgrounds, whereby cultural tastes are passed down through socialisation from parents own educational experiences, and
- the cultural tastes and dispositions themselves.

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is demonstrated in different ways, largely the things people 'have' (including both objectified/material cultural capital, i.e., books etc., and embodied cultural capital, i.e. knowledge). It is an embodied state of mind, body and our thought process (for a group of persons occupying a neighbouring position in social space) such as their 'style' practical unity (ways of speaking, saving, eating, loving, music, food, art, cinema, dress), knowledge, and the way we behave or carry ourselves (Shilling, 1993).

Additionally, cultural capital includes educational qualifications (an example of valuable commodity) certified or awarded by institutionalised state (e.g. dominant institutions such as schools); and objectified state manifested in our possession of material products. As the use of technology and access become our modern way of life, for instance home-school communication, online shopping, online homework and online banking, it is reasonable to suggest that access and effective use of technology is a form of cultural capital. Also, the possession of accepted (dominant) accents, and ability to use and understand complex linguistic codes is a subset of embodied cultural capital, which is known as linguistic capital.

Cultural capital theory makes distinction between material wealth and cultural assets of a particular class. For example, assets can be described as any possession that has value in an exchange whilst wealth is what you own (e.g. iPods, TV, the part of the mortgage and car that

are paid off, savings like stocks and bonds), that is total assets minus total liabilities. In summary, economic capital can also be described as command over economic resources (cash, assets).

Further, social capital can be explained as resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support. It therefore enhances an individual's aptitude to act within the field. The sum of social capital accessible to a person is a combination of the network systems accessible to them and their significance and the emblematic or symbolic (socially recognised legitimisation such as prestige or honour) and cultural capital of other members within the same network, social class as a lived condition, a set of practices and values, distributions of and the enactment and deployment of differently valued capitals, in different social fields. This means that social class is invested in who we are, what we do, how we perceive ourselves and others, and how we relate to and deal with those 'others'. Similarly, social capital has the ability to help an individual's acquisition of economic and cultural capitals (Bankston and Zhou, 2002; Schuller et al, 2000). However, possessing capitals is not only very different to actuating them because individuals that possess social and cultural capital may decide to utilise the capital or not, but also they will activate it with different skills (Lareau and Horvat, 1999).

Parents provide children with cultural capital, the attitudes and knowledge that make the educational system a comfortable familiar place in which they can succeed easily (Devine- Eller, 2005). Bourdieu's concept of capitals is used in this thesis because one of the main strengths of this theory is that it does to some extent focus on how structures and institutions play a part in producing inequality. This is vital for this study, as the central government in England arguably believes that minority parents do not participate actively in their children's home and school learning. That is to say, with so much focus now on the individual, it seems that so often 'non-involvement' and being 'hard to reach' (inequality and disadvantage) are seen as the result of parents' actions (reactive and proactive) or lack of it (DfES, 2005). Therefore, by using Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the study exposes the reproductive role that the English schools have and provides a way of examining other institutions in society to uncover any roles they may have in reproducing inequality.

Drawing on the Bourdieuan conceptual tools of capitals, habitus and field, certain social groups maintain and advance their position in a structured social context through the accumulation of assets or resources known as capitals - economic (financial resources), social (networks and relationships) and cultural (knowledge and forms of representation,

tastes and dispositions). These are all forms of capital located within a system of competition and exchange whereby different capitals have different 'values' (Bourdieu 1986 cited in Hollingworth *et al*, 2011:348).). The competitive nature of these capitals mean that those (individuals) with dominant capitals occupy advantage positions while those with 'dominated' capitals, such as the participants occupy disadvantaged positions and these differentiated positions are passed down to generations, and as a consequence social reality is unchanging because of the existing structural barriers (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu regards the places (e.g. family, community and school/education) where this competition occurs as '*fields*'. Social class theory is of paramount importance to this study because it will help evaluate the impact of the participants' new social class after migrating to England as social class is one of the most consistent and persistent indicators of educational attainment. Migrant parents' social class and cultural class positions, for example, income, occupation, level of education and networks etc are inextricably linked to their children's educational pathways and achievement (Lehmann, 2013). Having appropriate network is a determinant factor for migrant group to produce or re-produce new cultural capital that builds on power relations of the country of migration (Erel, 2010). Erel had argued that 'migration results in new ways of producing and re-producing (mobilising, enacting, validating) cultural capital that builds on, rather than simply mirrors, power relations of either the country of origin or the country of migration' (2010:642). And as a result migrant parents' level of involvement is dependent on how soon they can exercise agency by creating new forms of 'migration-specific' cultural capital (embodied, institutionalised and objectified) which are recognised in England such as using technology to participate in their children's learning.

2.3.1. Habitus and habitus transformation

Habitus can be described as the things people 'do', that is, their regular (habitual), and embodied forms of behaviour. It can also be articulated as experience or way of life (Bourdieu, 1977). The concept of habitus is important as it serves as the interplay between the individual realisation and character and the structure context of society, that is, fields (Hollingworth *et al*, 2011). In other words, habitus is the groundwork that guides agency and practices in a particular field. The inhabitants within a field will occupy a particular position (e.g. dominant or dominated) which in turn provides them with the capitals, interests and opportunities to play a part in the life of that field. One interpretation is that over a period, their levels of participation will shape and structure the existing dispositions of the

inhabitants' habitus, and therefore new practices are generated. These new formed practices will in due course further strengthen the individual's position in the field. This means that, 'the habitus both produces and is produced by the individual's practice' (Hollingworth *et al*, 2011:349). The habitus is the cognitive structures (e.g. mental tools, patterns of thought) people use to make sense of the social world. It refers to a set of dispositions and embodied behaviours, which are formed from unconscious internalisation of the social structure (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1990b, 1991, 1992; King, 2000; Lamont and Lareau, 1998); therefore, this study will try to explain the West African migrant parents' history (habitus) regarding parental involvement.

However, habitus is arguably an overly deterministic concept as its unconscious nature rules out the possibility of social change as individuals whose habitual ways of playing in an old-field cannot consciously transform their habitus in order to play in the new field (King, 2000; Reay, 2004). In contrast, Horvat and Davis (2011) and Lee and Kramer (2013) argue that even Bourdieu himself accepts the possibility of habitus transformation as research (Jo, 2013) has shown that habitus can be transformed in accordance with the social and cultural changes individuals find themselves in. This is an important contribution to this study because parents who have acquired the technological competence are able to play an active role in their children's learning through technology, and as a result their involvement is recognised or legitimised by schools as participating in the 'field' of English education. In contrast, those who do have access to technology or knowledge to use these tools are constrained in using other forms of engagement strategies and their forms of capital are not recognised as they are not seen as important and effective by the school ('the powerful') Crozier and Davies (2007).

Habitus is the site where the systems of durable and transposable dispositions, which are both the product, and the producers of subsequent objective structures are located (Lizardo, 2009). In this way, structure is 'embodied', working 'in' and 'through' people's dispositions and activities, rather than 'on' them (see Reay 1998). This is a world of common sense and self-evidence, that is 'intelligible, foreseeable and hence taken for granted', 'what is and is not "for us"' (Bourdieu 1990b:64). This 'does not even require active consent merely the non-occurrence of a refusal' (Ryan and Connell 1989:297). It is at this point that the 'practical principles of division' (Bourdieu 1986:471) and in particular 'the distances that need to be kept' (p472) begin to come into play. This is what Bourdieu calls 'the objectivity of "second order" - symbolic templates for practical activities' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:7). People (social agents) are supplied with habitus which is shaped by their past experiences. Equally, people's ability to act in a certain way is shaped by their identity and recognition or

misrecognition of their capital. However, the ability to generate new strategies to perform acts of practical knowledge in a particular field is dependent on the structure.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus will be used to explain West African migrant parents' habitus in relation to the new field (English education) as actions stem from the confrontations between dispositions and position (match, mismatch, tension and contradictions - comfort/discomfort). That is to say, habitus is a practical rather than a rational or reflexive logic - *modus operandi*. Although these West African migrant parents make choices e.g. participating in their children's education with or without technology in English schools, they do not choose the principle of these choices as they were dictated by either the school or central government. To explicate the influence of colonial legacy on how West African migrant parents engage in their children's education and the intersections of different statuses, postcolonial perspective and intersectional theory will be reviewed respectively.

2.4. The implications of colonial legacy - post-colonial perspective

I began with the premise that, the post-colonial theory can be used in research involving migration of the colonized, in this instance West Africans. It is against this background of annexation that Nair (2003) theorises the use of the post-colonial perspective to study these dislocations, for example issues of class, race, and identity and to try to answer questions of national identity and social contamination.

Migration is triggered by push and pull factors – those factors that either forcefully push people to migrate; such as war, famine and persecution, or attraction such as the chance to practice or learn skilled work abroad (economic migrants). And therefore a postcolonial perspective together with other theoretical frameworks, such as Bourdieuan framework and intersectional theory have been used in this study to elucidate the migration experiences and other socio-political issues facing the subjugated or oppressed in the host country. This is important because many skilled and economically secure migrants are welcomed in the West and this type of migrant does not embody the struggles - that is feelings of discrimination and dislocations plus issues of class change, repression and exploitation experienced by their migrant counterparts. For such groups, the use of multiple theories (Bourdieu, post-colonial and intersectional frameworks) for data analysis could prove to be an effective and efficient means to fully understand and explains their socio-economic, ambivalence in identifying their cultural roots and aspirations.

At the heart of this ongoing process are migrants with contradictory ideas as they seek to establish their cultural identity or practices. This view of the problem is of paramount importance because according to Ahluwalia (2001), it is concerned with the imbalance in power relations between the colonising nations and their previous colonies, in this instance the European nations and her conquered and controlled "Third World" nation-states' (e.g. Africa and India) cultures, and how these marginalised groups responded to and resisted the intrusions during and after colonial rules. Seemingly, the role of postcolonial theory in this thesis is to help analyse, explain and evaluate the cultural legacy of colonisation and the effects of imperialism. Incorporating post-colonial theory was appropriate because the participants in the case studies are descendants of colonies (Africa – Nigeria and Ghana) which were colonised by the British Empire, and since post-colonial theory is about the exposition of human consequences, of cultural and economic exploitation of the colonised - a native people and their lands, its use will help elucidate the complexities in identity formations and experiences of the informants.

Edward Said's work - '*Orientalism*' in 1978 is regarded as the groundwork for post-colonial theory. Said's post-colonial thinking is important to this study because he was particularly interested in the explaining and questioning of the 'artificial boundaries', created between the Middle-East and West by the colonizers. Whilst his work centres specifically on the stereotypes of Middle-Easterners; however, Said's ideas can be applied to the experiences of all 'others.' These stereotypical boundaries precipitate unequal power relationship between the colonised and the colonizers, which creates the widely used 'us-others', 'me-them' mentality. This mentality is problematic because the imposition of Western cultures and systems on the natives, is not only unjust, but leads to misconceptions, misrepresentations and miscommunications. Thus, post-colonial analysis tends to explain the experiences and complexities of those who are colonised and marginalised.

Further, Homi Bhabha's work - '*The Location of Culture*' (1994), centres on the politics, emotions, and values differences between the colonizer and the colonised, uses concepts such as 'mimicry' to explain the desire for a reformed, recognisable 'others' - a subject of difference that is almost the same; and 'hybrid' to portray the idea of colonised people full of ambivalence as they try to identify their cultures and identities as a consequence of colonisation. Bhabha (1994) argues that hybridity manifests when 'mimicry' fails. This means if the natives failed to be completely reformed and become recognisable 'others', then they live with cultural overlap and/or hybrid of cultures, identities and values. Bhabha

particularly argues that categorising colonised people as ‘other’ is problematic because their cultures are the sum total of who they are – their histories. Thus, his focus is on the collective influences of colonisation on people and cultures. Colonialism brings about complexities in the lives of those colonised, and so post-colonial theory, at its core, helps to explicate the quandaries of modernisation and the mediation on the identities and experiences of nation-states of Africa and their citizens.

The problem with postcolonial theory, others have argued, is the use of a specific lens to tell the story about colonialism. This critical lens, postcolonial theory, invites the audience to the explanation of the experiences and complex identities of those who suffered from colonial subjugation. Whilst it is undeniable that colonisation results in different ways of being and doing things for the marginalised groups, it is important to note that colonisation also gave birth to economic and cultural emancipation for some colonies (Dirlik, 1994). That is to say, colonisation also brought freedom and development to the colonised, however the conditions of this emancipation or development were not decided by the oppressed – ‘others’ rather the colonizers – ‘us’. Taking into account that colonialism was carried out differentially, post-colonialism should explore the impacts of colonialism on the colonized in any given colony or locality based on specific historical context; that is, irrespective of geographical locations, colonised people now include, ‘women, subjugated and oppressed classes, national minorities, and even marginalised or incorporated academic subspecialties’ (Said, 1989:207). Equally, Prakash posits that post-colonialism recognises the complexities of globalisation, and that this complex process helps create new types of global inequality, marginalisation and discrimination (1996:199). Therefore, it provides strategic ways of exploring and dealing with these social injustices.

Post-colonial theory provides another good framework to evaluate how the socio-economic, cultural and habitus positions of West African migrant parents may or may not have been transformed in order to play in the new educational field they found themselves. Bourdieu’s conceptual ideas of habitus, field and capitals were arguably informed by his early thinking on colonialism which later prefigures post-colonial theory (Go, 2013). One interpretation is that Bourdieuan sociology is a critique of colonialism (e.g. colonial transformations, the dynamics of colonial exploitation, racial hierarchies under colonial rule) and the impact colonial rule had on native citizens (or the colonised) and this gave birth to post-colonial sociology as means of theorising the impact of colonial legacy.

Moreover, postcolonial theory also helps us to understand how these migrants have to negotiate complex everyday practices, which may have been exacerbated by the English schools' requirement to play an active role in their children's education through technology, and, as a result, the colonial relations are reproduced and disrupted. It can also be argued that the English education policy on parental involvement, though not specifically targeted for migrants, seems to suggest being regulated by the requirements of the structures (Butler 1990). Otherness can be described as a discursive process by which a dominant group ('us') constructs many dominated groups as 'other' or 'them' by stigmatising a difference. This stigmatisation is presented as a negation of identity and as a consequence a motive for potential discrimination. The asymmetrical nature of power relationships is a key factor to the construction of otherness as only the dominant group is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devalue the particularity of others through the imposition of discriminatory measures. Thus, dominated groups are others because they are subject to the categories and practices of the dominant groups and their inability to prescribe their own norms (De Beauvoir, 1952 and Fanon, 1963). So, parents and (even more so) migrant parents can be conceived as 'others' to the school as an institution.

2.5. The intersections of different social statuses - intersectionality perspective.

Kimberlé Crenshaw's account of "*intersecting*" social statuses is a useful tool for thinking of parental involvement using technology. In her view, people experience life, discriminations, and even benefits based on a number of different identities or social statuses that they have or occupy (Crenshaw, 1993). For example, some of the informants who have been discriminated against not just as Black African people, not just as EAL but also as Black African EAL. One interpretation is that this group of parents are facing multiple discriminations (at the same time); racial discrimination that they are facing coming from one direction and they have got language discrimination coming from another direction, and both are colliding in their lives in ways we don't really anticipate and understand (Settles, 2006).

Here, Black African interacts with language status (EAL) to create different, intersectional experiences. So, intersection 'alleys'⁶ help us to think about the fact that discrimination that happened on the basis of several different factors at the same time need to have the language

⁶ Crenshaw (1989) used the phrase, intersection 'alleys', as common everyday language to explain the complex effects of possessing multiple subordinate groups identity.

ability to see it in order to address it (Crenshaw, 1989). Hankivsky posits, 'Inequities are never the result of single, distinct factors. Rather, they are the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations and experiences' (2014:2). He also argues that intersectionality framework can be used to challenge complex issues of inequities and social justice (Ibid). Intersectional approach supports post-colonial theory in that feminist, queer, as well as post-colonial researchers have all argued that complex factors and processes (Bunjun, 2010; Collins, 1990; Valdes, 1997; Van Herk, Smith, and Andrew, 2011 cited in Hankivsky, 2014) shape human lives. Additionally, intersectional perspective can also fit within a Bourdieuan framework because it theorises that people are shaped by the interaction of their social locations, such as 'race' or ethnicity, class, and social status. That is to say, people experience these interactions differently within the systems and power structures. Different forms of privilege and oppression, which are shaped by colonialism, racism, imperialism, are produced and people can experience privilege and oppression at the same time. As multi-directional events influence people's lives, it will be inadequate for researchers or policy makers to adopt one social category as the most important parameter for understanding people's needs and experiences. The concept of intersectionality is thus necessary in this study, as it will help to analyse the interactions between participants' immigration status, class, race or ethnicity and socio-economic status after migrating to England; and how these interactions affect their decision to participate in the children's education using technology.

My objective here is to use intersectional approach to explore the migration, class, cultural, race and language dimensions of West African migrant parents and their effects on the involvement or non-involvement using technology in English education system. Although contemporary studies might have used intersectional approach to consider how the cumulative different statuses (e.g. social class, race, level of education, EAL) may shape the experiences of minority groups – additive, but they have failed to consider the intersections of these different statuses in the lives of this marginalised group. Having an intersectional identity as both migrant and EAL for example within the discourses tailored to address one or the other will mean that the interests and experiences of this minority group are frequently marginalised within both statuses (Jones et al., 2013). At the basic level, migration and language are implicated together because being a West African migrant is associated with EAL. There is also an element of imposition too as English might be their first language but it is assumed that because they are migrants it is not their first language and consequently migrant identity comes with added layer – EAL. In this instance, parental involvement using

technology, the arena of discrimination, is reproduced through their immigration and language identity.

Intersectional analysis is important for this study because the identified social factors affecting parental involvement are interacting with one another to produce distinctive social positions or experiences that are dependent on time and place for the participants. Using intersectionality was found to be the most suitable tool for exploring the lived experiences of dominated or marginalised groups (Crenshaw, 1991), and ‘the intersecting processes by which power and inequity are produced, reproduced and actively resisted’ (Dhamoon, 2011 cited in Hankivsky, 2014:9).

Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) indicated that the hypothesis that certain groups of people are worse off or are more likely to experience more prejudice and discrimination as a result of possessing multiple subordinate group identities (e.g. ethnic minority women, black gay men, West African computer illiterate migrants) rather than a single subordinate group identity (e.g. white gay men, ethnic minority heterosexual men) is problematic. It is like keeping a scorecard of who has suffered more than the other (Pastrana, 2010; Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003).

There is another alternative perspective, ‘intersectional invisibility’, developed by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008). They argued that people with multiple subordinate intersecting group identities experience less prejudice and discrimination because their intersecting identities result in experience of social invisibility compared to the more prototypical members of their group. This view is supported by Best et al’s (2011) research on anti-employment discrimination lawsuits in the US which concludes that plaintiffs who make intersectional claims of being discriminated upon because of their multiple group identities have less chance of winning their cases when compared to those with a single subordinate identity. This assertion is problematic because people with multiple group identities, such as race, sexual orientation, gender suffer multiple, or intersecting’ discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989), and these identities intersect with each other to create greater discrimination, and by ignoring the intersecting effects of multiple group identities, intersectional disadvantages are being created.

The debate about whether an individual or groups with multiple subordinate group identities will experience greater or less oppressions and discriminations than those with a single subordinate group identity has raised important questions and inspired interesting perspectives and research on intersections of race, class, sexuality, gender and other identities.

Scholars on both sides of the argument have used empirical evidence to support or back up their claims; however, the question of who suffers more oppression and discrimination may never be answered.

2.6. Implications of the theoretical framework for the study

One of the study's objectives is to use a number of theoretical frameworks to analyse parental involvement using technology, in the context of social class, habitus and habitus transformation. This approach creates an emphasis on how class power or dominance influences our access to capitals, habitus and symbolic relations, which are constituted through struggle within the social structure – interrelationships between groups and institutions.

The development and explanation of theoretical frameworks and the use of Bourdieu's concepts, postcolonial and intersectionality theories, are instrumental in striving to achieve this goal. Bourdieu's concepts of capitals (including symbolic capital), habitus field, and symbolic violence, which are central to his analysis, were introduced because they relate clearly in his study of class development and power relationships. The central theme in Bourdieu's concepts is the view that, at various levels of society, struggles and pressures within a social system determine the social positions of its members, and these are perpetuated through the processes of domination and power. His concepts demonstrate that positions and dispositions that individuals possess are due to their life experiences, which are epitomised in cultural and symbolic capitals, and then exhibited through habitus. These concepts were used in this study to explain attitudes of parents to the use of technology and the expectation of helping their children to complete homework. The concept of habitus, which Bourdieu himself refers to as *the* physical embodiment of cultural capital (deeply ingrained habits and/or skills) is instrumental to this study because it expounds clearly how social relations are embodied and reproduced through the nexus between individual's formative life experiences and social conditions, such as level of education, migration experiences, identities, practices and perceptions.

The West African migrant parents bring with them a variety of experiences, such as different levels of education and work histories; and habitus assists in examining how their social class differentiated experiences and cultural backgrounds may be manifested and shaped not only their habitual (habitus) ways of engaging in home learning and with the schools but also their perspectives of parental involvement. Additionally, the concept of habitus offers a lens to

elucidate whether the informants transformed their habitus ‘consciously’ when facing a different field such as English education system.

The concept of field, in conjunction with capitals, was helpful in exploring participants’ perceptions about West African and English educational settings and their social positions within these domains. This is important because the interaction between the West African migrant parents’ habitus, capitals and rules of the fields determine each parent’s position and self-perceived position in society. It is also important to note that fields interact with each other, and some fields are subordinate (dominated) to other dominant fields. This framework helps us to understand how groups make sense of their struggles over the allocation of capitals, and how these experiences influence their social perspective.

Turning to postcolonial theory, the notion of ‘otherness’ explains how the colonised groups are ‘othered’ by the colonizer society. That is to say, postcolonial perspective offers us the lens to examine groups who are marginalised or discriminated against, and the impact of unequal power relation between the dominated and the dominant. Most notably is Homi Bhabha’s concept of ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybrid’, which he used to explain the symbolic violence, perpetuated on the dominated as they try to mimic the dominant culture and new ways of being; and hybrid to portray mix elements - pre-colonial and postcolonial cultural identities and values. This approach theorises that those who are marginalised are exploited or oppressed by the colonizers, and as a result, they assimilate new ideas, values, culture, identities and habitus imposed on them through symbolic violence. Therefore, complete assimilation of new values, culture and identities may lead to habitus transformation (or ‘mimicry’) and ‘cleft habitus’ (or ‘hybrid’). Arguably, Bourdieu was not concerned about the impact of migration on a dominated social group’s capitals and habitus. Therefore, a postcolonial framework will help to explain informants’ migration experiences; and how these presented opportunities or obstacles in playing active roles in their children’s education in England.

2.7. Concluding comments

This chapter has situated the study of parental involvement using technology within various debates and themes in the sociology of education, socioeconomic implications and cultural mediation. A number of key ideas and different bodies of literature emerge.

Firstly, I examined the importance of parental involvement in their children’s learning provided by scholars in this field. The wider implications of parental involvement in relation to how policies make these parents feel for example included or not included, welcome or

unwelcomed, part of the community or not are a key problematic and focus of the thesis. Parental involvement using technology is about the use educational technology to engage in children's learning especially 'hard to reach' parents. However, much research evidence (North, et al 2008; Angus et al, 2004 and Grant, 2007) have asserted that there is a direct correlation between parents use of technology and social class. That is to say, socioeconomic and cultural factors influence parents' use of technology to participate in their children's home learning. Most importantly, the review draws attention to successive policies in England which institutionalised parental engagement using technology in schools without attention to parents' (minority parents in particular) socioeconomic and cultural experiences.

I argue that parental involvement requires a more nuanced understanding of how parents' socioeconomic and cultural experiences and identity affect their ability to actively use technology to participate in their children's learning at home and to communicate with schools. Furthermore, the impact of living in two different parental involvement cultures is a vital focus point for this study. Therefore, I reviewed scholarly work of Watson (1977) and Menski (2002) to help explicate the implications of involvement practice between two divergent cultures. This study showed that when migrants faced with the need to learn new cultures after migration – acculturation, occasionally some of them adopted some new cultures while retaining some of their original cultures – bicultural. Both acculturation and bicultural are stressful for these migrants as they are expected to learn new ways of doing things in the host country which in Bourdieuan sociology amounts to symbolic violence.

Secondly, the discussion moved onto the theoretical framework of Bourdieu, postcolonial theorists and Crenshaw's intersectional perspective. These conceptual frameworks have the ability to help in the exploration of West African migrant parents' perspective of using technology to engage in their children's education. They offer a heuristic method to illuminate the impact of factors such as social class, habitus, migration, level of education on the informants' ability to participate in English education. These accounts drew attention to West African migrant parents' capitals and habitus before and after migrating to England, the impact of colonial legacy and the implications of belonging to multiple subordinate groups to their ability to use modern technology to support their children's home learning. Power relation is an important concept for both the Bourdieu approach and postcolonial theory but it is expressed in different ways. In Bourdieuan terms, an individual's social location and entitlement (as a result of their positions) in a field determines how dominant they are in that particular social field. The postcolonial approach, however, addresses how unequal power

relation between the subordinate social groups and the colonizers give rise to cultural, social, and identities exploitation or oppression. Arguably, what is lacking in both Bourdieu and postcolonial concepts is the exposition of the impact of multiple subordinate ‘intersecting’ identities or discriminations (Crenshaw, 1989). Equally, intersectionality framework has a particular relevancy to this research. It posits that minority groups with multiple subordinate ‘intersecting’ identities experience more discrimination than those who possess a single identity. Whilst there is no agreement among sociologists on whether minority groups with single group identity suffer more or less than those with two or more intersecting identities, this study uses intersectional perspective as a critical tool to explain the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related social systems of oppression and domination perceived by the informants. In the next chapter, the methods and methodology underpinning the above framework will be discussed in more detail.

Chapter 3 – Methodological Approach

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain the research methodology (qualitative approaches) adopted and the semi-structured interview and their epistemological assumptions. Here also, the inspirations and reasons for using this method and its link with the theories discussed in chapter 2 will be examined. Subsequently, short accounts of the research design and sites; decisions and introductions to samples; instrumentation, the forms of data generation; methods of data collection and approach to data analysis will be provided. The biographical

and other factors that defined the investigation will also be explained. This chapter concludes with a discussion of informants' social class classifications, categories of parental involvement and informants' pen portraits. This chapter will be divided into three sections:

1. Exploring research epistemologies and methodology,
2. Biographical influences and positionality, and
3. Outlining the research design and methods.

3.2. Exploring research epistemologies and methodologies

This section discusses research methodology and their epistemological underpinnings, which, I suggest, are vital to answer the proposed research questions (see section 1.3.2). This methodological review is important and relevant and provides a framing for the empirical aspects of this study on parental engagement through technology, which is at the centre of national and global aspirations to raise children's attainment.

3.2.1. Constructivist Methodology

The study uses constructivism to explore the informants' lived experiences in using technology to support home learning. According to Young and Collin (2004:375), constructivism 'proposes that each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes.' This means that people create their own subjective interpretations of objective reality. Semi-structured interview, which is the best data collection tool to explore these experiences, was the key research instrument to gather data, and the transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis methods and discourse analysis. Many investigators believe that a particular lens of seeing the world informs every research model, and the chosen research methods are based on this assumption. However, it must be kept in mind that Guba and Lincoln argue that features of different research models frequently intersect (1994, 1998).

Constructivist theory underpins interview method because its ontology supports the view that reality is relative. Therefore, what is "real" is informed by our social and lived experiences (Guba and Lincoln 1994). In other words, these intangible and mentally constructed experiences (subjective reality) can be best explored through an interaction between the

researcher and the participants (interviewees). This is important because reality is created by the mind, and the participants who experienced different cultures and experiences created multiple social realities. The concept that an objective group reality does not exist because reality is subjectively constructed should be kept in mind. Although for the purposes of this research, reality is subjective, pluralistic and experienced differently by individuals. Whilst similarities exist between the informants, there were no predefined variables (dependent and independent) which underpin quantitative, positivist research. Furthermore, constructivism focuses on exploring, as well as giving account of how people make meaning in relation to the interaction between their ideas and their experiences in a particular situation (Blaxter et al., 2006). In addition, the epistemology of constructivism acknowledged that all research has bias because both the researcher and those being researched have a set of presuppositions that shaped their worldview. This means that the researcher and the researched are both likely to make value judgements. The subjectivity of social realities means that the informants' knowledge and view of the world is shaped by time, social space, their location, socio-economic and cultural positions (that is, they are relativistic). I have used research models, which are naturalistic and interpretive because it was perceived as a better framework to explore the participants' realities.

An interactive linkage exists between the researcher and the informants and as a result, research 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds' (Guba and Lincoln 1998:207). This relationship means that the methodology is hermeneutical and dialectical. Denzin and Lincoln asserted that hermeneutics 'is an approach to the analysis of text that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process' (2005:27). In contrast, within a constructivist approach, the dialectics encompasses the art of investigating the truths of opinions or narratives by comparing and contrasting participants' various reality constructions through 'iterations, examination, critique, reiterations and re-examination. This interactive process therefore will lead to a co-construction (researcher and participants) of knowledge in the form of research outcomes (Schwandt, 1998).

Hines (1988:251) suggests, 'in communicating reality, we construct reality'. The analysis of informants' histories and narratives, which include textual and verbal accounts gathered via interviews, is the primary focus of constructivist studies. This is interpretive process because understanding the informants' lived experiences through hermeneutics is the fundamental characteristic of constructivism. Additionally, this process generates 'rich and compelling interpretations [which] are a key to producing more rigorous forms of knowledge'

(Kincheloe, 2008:21). Unlike scientific research, the use of constructivist approach was instrumental to explain informants' current socio-economic and cultural positions and to discern other social barriers or influences, which could have been difficult to identify in a scientific model. Furthermore, research is not limited to an existing theoretical framework, but attempts to construct theory through the analysis of data (Richards, 2007; Glaser, 2012) that highlights the subjects surrounding parents' use of technology to engage in home learning. In this way, clear and useful understanding of socio-economic stratification and human behaviour has been provided using an adaptable and neutral perspective to record accurately the social concepts predominant in parental involvement, as understood by informants. Equally, since knowledge and understanding is restricted and compatible with a specific background, the concepts of correct and incorrect understanding are thus dependent on the context.

In designing the research, I considered it important to enable participants to express their realities, activate their voice, and realise that their voice is being heard (Hammond and Sikka 1996; Napier 2006; Manwaring 2010). The issue of voice is crucial when dealing with social inequalities because those who possess marginalised group identities often felt excluded and without a voice. As this was qualitative research underpinned by a constructivist approach, predetermining the interview's sample size would have been unsuitable. Consequently, in line with Adler and Alder (2012) concept of saturation, the appropriate number of participants for this study emerged during the research. That is to say, data gathering via interviews continued until data analysis (carried out concurrently) failed to establish new themes and social experiences (Lincoln and Guba 1985 cited in Bisman and Highfield, 2012).

3.2.2. The Semi-Structured Interview

This study used semi-structured interview to collect data from the research respondents. This type of interview provides informants with the freedom to tell their stories (with no interruption from the interviewer) in a non-linear sequence, and offers the interviewer an opportunity to probe for more information and ask other questions to seek for clarification. Additionally, the use of structured or standardised schedule is inappropriate because of the varied identities and experiences including educational and personal histories of the migrant West African parents (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Participants were given voice and power to explain their perceptions and the interviewer listens, gestures and sympathises with them where appropriate. Specifically, semi-structured interviews were used to explore

informants' perceptions and feelings regarding complex issues such as the use of technology to support home learning (Louise and While, 1994). This was found to be an effective method because it has the capability to investigate several leads, enquiry for additional information or seek for explanation and, thus semi-structured interviews are underpinned by the constructivist approach. One of the main advantages of loosely semi-structured interview over other methods, such as surveys, is flexibility. Semi-structured interview enables the interviewer to ask more questions (not in the schedule) in order to clarify any issues raised by the interviewees. Equally, sensitive questions such as immigration status and migration history were asked during the interview (i.e. in real-time) to check the validity of data being collected, and at the same time making sure that all participants were asked comparable questions. In contrast to questionnaires, semi-structured interviews enable the social scientist to become one of the research tools, which is a fundamental aspect of interpretivist paradigm. It facilitates the ability to follow any leads from the participants, and react to their requests and evolving situation, and this information was incorporated instantly into the body of the conversation. The distinctive link between the participants and researcher in the constructivist framework enabled the interviewer to obtain and comprehend implied information disclosed through informants' body language, tone of voice, repetition of points and silences. Additionally, the interview also empowered the researcher to ask for immediate clarification of any equivocal or ambiguous account narrated by the informant.

The literature on interviews clearly suggested that it is up to researchers to determine their own interview saturation points (Bisman and Highfield, 2012). For the purposes of this study, the saturation point was reached by the 13th interview. The interviews then became a repetition of issues and experiences identified in the previous interviews with no new perceptions or information being gathered.

The interview themes were based on:

1. Migrancy experiences,
2. Experiences of supporting a child in West African education,
3. Home – school communication experiences in English education system,
4. Experiences of supporting a child in English schools, and
5. Migrant parents' use of technology for both home entertainment and home learning.

These themes were designed to address the main research questions (see chapter 1). The first interview question was a focus on gathering demographic data; exploring what the participant

perceived were the difference between their social class status before and after migrating to England and their general views of any perceived challenges and way forward. Questions two and four were included in the interview schedule to ascertain participants' perceptions on supporting at least one child in both West African and the English education systems. Whilst question three centred on home-school communication in England in comparison to home-school communication in Africa before migration, it was kept in mind that educational technology in use in Africa between 1980 and 2000 was either non-existence or limited and must have improved as the economies of West African countries developed and the population became more technologically sophisticated. Finally, question five, was designed to gather data on participants' perceptions on the expectation to use technology to support their children's home learning. It will also explore how migrant West African parents' social status, culture and habitus affect their willingness to participate in English education and their perceptions on barriers to active involvement.

In interpretivist research, unusual responses are as important as conventional narratives, and therefore worthy of incorporation into the research outcomes and further examination. Interviews offer researchers an opportunity to explore these types of responses and help the informants convey their thoughts in a relaxed and friendly setting. However, the standard of interview is dependent on the interviewer's experience and techniques, for example listening skills and the ability to engage informants (Bisman and Highfield, 2012). Adams and Cox (2008) also highlighted the difficulty in establishing the most favourable environment for interview, for example the need for awareness of unequal power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees. In terms of credibility, a substantial difference in age between the participant and the researcher, as well as interviewer's experience may affect the interview quality (Odendahl and Shaw, 2002). All of the above factors were taken into account when conducting the interviews for this research.

3.2.3. Biographical influences and positionality.

It is important to note that contemporary theorists acknowledge the need to recognise the researcher's privilege position - a position of power in knowledge construction, the effects of researcher self are always present (Coffey, 2003). Thus, researchers construct knowledge from a particular worldview shaped by their past experiences and identities, however it is not reducible to their worldview. Nagel in '*The View from Nowhere*' (1989) argues that insofar

as our divided social universe is rooted in a range of philosophical problems, our view of the world is informed from our previous life experiences. Influences, such as the connection between the researcher and the questions, methods and conclusions cannot be eliminated; and the researcher's personal biases, over-familiarity, relationships formed during the interview or fieldwork and social position should be explicitly acknowledged (Cabral and Baldino, 2004; Coffey, 2003).

The rationale for choice of research topic and methodology was based on my personal encounter through active participation in the education of children in both in Nigeria and England, and working as a Computer Science teacher (Head of Department) in an inner London secondary school. My familiarities with English education and social pathways, and my varying affiliation to the informants' communities also influenced the research topic. A critical recollection or re-examination of the aforementioned factors arguably suggests these influences may have shaped a few of the research decisions and orientations and therefore, when critically reviewed, the conclusions arrived at might be seen as having been affected by this.

I was born in urban postcolonial Lagos, Nigeria, and was educated at primary, secondary and university education levels in West Africa. While in third year at the university, I became actively involved in my cousin's education and my family occupied middle-class status in Nigeria – we live in our own house, everyone in the family was educated to at least secondary school level and our parents had limited financial assets. I migrated to London, England in 1999, and as a 'Black African' immigrant living in the London Borough of Haringey, I occupied a marginal working-class position, similar to many West Africans residing in the borough. Having already achieved my first degree in Nsukka, Nigeria I went to study for a master degree in computer science and trained as a teacher in the same field, in early 2000s. Although I experienced discrimination and was treated as 'other' because of my accent and immigration status, I have been teaching in an inner London secondary school since 2005 and I am now actively involved in my children's learning at secondary school. Therefore, my own habitus has been shaped by my Lagos and London experiences, and as a result, I share some of these experiences with the informants encountered in this study.

In response to the devaluation of my degree, a BSc (Hons) in Geology, by UK agency (Naric) after I had migrated to England, I undertook a PGCE in ICT – a teaching qualification course at one of the London post 1992 universities in order to 'escape' from the new marginalised

social position I occupied. The feeling of lack of fulfilment and disappointment I experienced during these initial stages of my migration was one shared by the study informants, particularly those I have broadly grouped as working-class depending on their occupations (initially within five years of their arrival in England) (Reynolds, 1996). In my role as a secondary school teacher, I became aware of the implications of expecting parents to help their children with home learning and communicating with schools using technology, and the informants' differing understandings of teachers and parents' role in the education of their children.

I carried out a pilot study (expounded in section 1.3) as part of a module in the taught element during my EdD course, which comprised of two interviews with participants who have played active role in at least one child's education in both in Nigeria and England. Whilst the national data suggests that children from Black African families are outperforming other black categories due to parents' aspiration and involvement, I was increasing aware from my own schools' data that children whose parents were born outside England are not doing as well as their counterparts and these parents are less likely to be involved in their children's education. As result of this perception, I wanted to explore the root of the differences in West African migrant parent' involvement strategies and self-efficacy. Additionally, I wanted to explore the impact of cultural legacy of colonialism in the lives of the informants and whether it empowers or limits their ability to engage and communicate with the schools; what are the West African migrant parents' perceived barriers to active involvement and the implications of their perceptions in terms of involvement using technology. Although the scope of the pilot research was limited, it shows how parents' interaction with experiences and multiple identities, for example, different class backgrounds, level of education and 'field' after migration affect how they see different possibilities and values in using technology to engage in their children's education. This research was inspired by the need to explore the lived experiences and identities of this unique minority group – West African migrant parents born outside England and with experience of supporting at least one child's learning in both fields of education, the technology they use both for entertainment and supporting home learning plus the implications of unequal power relation between teachers and parents in relation to children's educational achievement.

Just like the participants, I have had experience of living and supporting a child's learning in two different educational cultures and when people migrate from one country or culture to another they carry their identity and experiences with them (Watson, 1977). During the period

of settling down in the new culture, their cultural identity is likely to change and that encourages a degree of belonging; they also attempt to settle down by either assimilation or biculturalism. However, the decision to either assimilate fully into the English educational culture (described as ‘mimicry’ in post-colonial term) and/or adopt some aspects of English parental involvement practices while retaining some elements of West African engagement practices (also described as ‘hybridity’ by post-colonial theorists) is complex. Therefore, the integration of multiple frameworks is required to understand and explicate their complex lived experiences and multiple identities (see chapter 2).

3.2.4. The Interpretive Crisis

I had some trepidations related to Denzin’s (1994) concept of interpretive crisis in qualitative research as shown in this excerpt from my reflective journal.

I am a West African migrant parent researching other migrant West African parents. I migrated to England in late 1990s and the almost all participants migrated between 1990 and 2003. I am a Nigerian, and at the beginning almost all my participants were Nigerians. I am a teacher in an inner London school, and all participants’ children attend London schools. I speak Igbo and most of the participants speak Igbo. I live in London and 10 participants live in London. I am not an impartial participant in this study from the beginning. I have issues, perceptions, dogmas, opinions, and values about parental engagement using new technologies. So I have requirements for this study and what I wanted to achieve or establish that are bound up with my presumptions and feelings on parental engagement using technology and what it should be, what is acceptable and unacceptable. It is obvious that I am not an objective data collection tool as my decisions and actions during this study were influenced by my view of the world (Research journal, October 2014).

In qualitative research the issue of bias remains unresolved, as there are different views on how best to conduct interviews and the role of researcher as an interviewer. In addressing the issue of bias in qualitative research, Scheurich (1997) suggests the need to reconceptualised interviews by making the ‘baggage’ we bring visible to the reader. Similarly, I drew on my reflective journal/log in order to make my experiences, presumptions, values, and opinions

visible to the reader. Here, my intention is to open my world views to scrutiny, rather than an effort to control bias. For example, in section 3.2.3 I give insight into my biographical influences and positionality in relation to the topic of this study.

3.2.5. The Researcher's "Baggage"

The main issue for me is the disagreement on what constitute active parental engagement between West African and England. Is it parents' ability to help their children with homework using technology? Is it to create conducive home environment that fosters home learning? What about the morality of helping children with homework? How can we assess these contradictions? As a West African, my idea about parental engagement may differ from another researcher or person. The UK government set the expectations of how technology should be used to engage parents in the education of their children especially dysfunctional and hard to reach families, but schools' implement these expectations subjectively and as a result open to different interpretations. If migrant West African parents engage in their children's learning by making sure they have all the equipment for learning at school and take care of their well-being at home and believe they are actively engaged in their children's learning, and the schools/staff say they are not actively engaged in the education of their children, who do I believe? Is it just an issue of differing ideas of what constitute active parental engagement (Reflective journal, October 2014).

These concerns, questions, life experiences, previous knowledge on parental engagement and feelings had influenced my choice of research topic and continued to influence what I focused on during the research process. For example, in selecting my samples, conducting the interviews, data analysis and interpretation. An in-depth reflective account of these trepidations and 'baggage' is discussed in section 3.3.3.8.

3.3. Outlining the research design and methods

In this section, I will explicate the research design and site, and sampling procedures. Additionally, the most suitable research method to gather data about the experiences and perceptions of the participants will be discussed in relevant subsections. Other research issues concerning validity and reliability, assurance of confidentiality, questionnaires, policy analysis, terminology and transcription conventions, approach to data analysis and “evolution” of the research will be explicated.

3.3.1. Research Design and Site

As outlined in the section above, West African parents who were born outside England were the focus of this research, and thus this study was conducted in London because the majority of these migrants settled in the Boroughs of North East London, such as Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Newham. Since the researches aim is to explore the informants’ perceptions on the use of technology with which to participate in the education of their children (in secondary school) and how the possession of multiple identities such as social class and habitus affects their decisions or choices, the qualitative research is inherently descriptive and will provide data in the form of informants’ narratives through semi-structured interviews.

3.3.2. Sampling Procedures

The selection process for participants was flexible and open, and the overriding aim was to recruit parents from minority group with sufficient variation to produce a list of contrast ways of parental involvement. The recruitment of minority parents (e.g. West African migrant parents) with different experiences of supporting a child’s education is more demanding of time and resources, however, the involvement of different group of minority parents, as Hollingworth et al. (2011) indicated, is necessary to identify more barriers to parental involvement using technology, and explains the nature of these barriers. For the purposes of the research it was necessary to recruit West African migrant parents that were born outside England, who migrated to England mid to late 1900s and early 2000s, with varied levels of education, a diverse social class; ideally, parents with experiences of supporting (at least) a child’s education in both West African and English educational fields. Overall, selective or subjective (non-probability) sampling technique and criteria were used in the recruitment of informants.

The participants were a diverse mixture of parents from different SES⁷ or social class (income, educational levels, housing tenure) and marital status (i.e. heterogeneous group, single parents), but they also have one thing in common, at least one child in one of the two secondary school key stages. These parents were accessed and recruited through local churches and mosques, by distributing poster campaigns (see appendix C) (Holbrook and Jackson 1996), questionnaires and information leaflets (see appendix D) by word of mouth through the vicars/priests (for churches) and Imam (for mosques) explaining the research project and asking parents to volunteer to participate. Parents were compensated for travel and childcare costs where necessary and in addition, one participant was given Tesco retail vouchers in appreciation for her participation. Only participants who met the criteria of being West African migrant parents, whose children were attending secondary school education in England at the time of the data collection and who have had an experience in supporting at least one child in West Africa before migrating to England were selected for the research.

It was originally considered that the initial survey would consist of 24 participants and also six focus group discussions. However, it was thought to be more ethical to change this because of the issue of ethnic tension between different religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria, therefore I decided that semi-structured interviews would be adequate to collect substantial evidence for this study. It was also thought that since informants' perspectives were subjectively constructed through interviews the research would be able to gain an insight on the informants' perceptions. Although some of interviewees were recruited through religious groups, others were recruited by standing at Wood Green and Edmonton Green shopping malls (both in North London) on four Saturday mornings in 2013, displaying posters and giving out a research recruitment questionnaire containing a description and purpose of the study. In total, 100 questionnaires were given out and 34 candidates recruited, unfortunately, as is the nature of life and research, some of the selected candidates were not available for interview due to work commitments, personal reasons and 'no longer interested', a telephone questionnaire (see appendix E) was set up and conducted on three

⁷ SES stands for socio-economic status. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. It is commonly conceptualised as the social standing or class of an individual or group. When viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power, and control are emphasised.

occasions to help ameliorate this problem. Additionally, snowballing sampling was used in to recruit three more informants whose perceptions brought different perspectives to the research outcomes. This different perception was due to the three informants residing in boroughs south of the River Thames unlike the other participants who were residing north of the River Thames; one participant was also recruited from Croydon (South East London) and the others from Greenwich and Southwark.

3.3.3. Data Collection

Thirteen West African migrant parents were interviewed between October 2013 and August 2014. Although, the interviews were presented in a sequential fashion, data analysis (see section 3.7) was, in most cases, carried out in tandem, therefore shaping or structuring the focus and significance of data gathered.

3.3.3.1. Interviewing

Interviews are interaction rituals, through which views are co-constructed between the interviewer and interviewee (Cassell, 2005). During interviews, power relations are negotiated, and identities are confirmed or rejected. Therefore, interviews vary in ambiance from formal to informal, the tone of voice and the construction of interpersonal reality. At the beginning of each interview, participants were reminded about the purpose of the research and their right to pull out at that point. Most importantly, I reminded the participants that the interview outcomes are strictly confidential as nothing they said is available to a third party (without their consent) and finally, I asked them if they were happy to continue and if they have any questions. During the interview, participants were reminded their right again to discontinue if they are feeling uncomfortable or that they are not under any obligation to disclose information that are personal to them or family. They were also informed that the interview would be recorded unless they objected to the idea and even when they agreed at the beginning, the tape will be paused on their request to guarantee their confidentiality. On average, each interview was scheduled to last for at least 45 minutes and it was decided that the transcripts should be transcribed manually in order to immerse with the data. The interviews ended with the interviewer thanking the interviewees for their time in participating and offering them the opportunity to discuss anything further. It has been noted by Hollingworth et al that valuable information is always gathered at this last stage (2011).

Each prospective informant was contacted through email and/or telephone to arrange for face-to-face interview. In the pilot investigation, it was assumed that the use of neutral venues, but those in which the interviewee feels comfortable produces better interview outcomes; therefore, church halls and mosques were chosen for the interviews. Most of the interviews with migrant parents were strongly framed - conducted inside a church hall or mosque, which was relatively a controlled environment as there were no disruptions either visual or aural. However, it has to be noted that a few interviews were not rigorously conducted as others; this was because they were carried out in participants' living place with whole family members (children and partners) present. For example, in one instance, two of the interviewee's children came back from school and her partner was cooking. Although, this type of interview bore similarity to informal rituals (informal interactions between interviewer and interviewee or researcher bonding with interviewee and family members) in data collection, it was formal interviewing that was the main set of questioning activities used for data generation in this study (Walford, 2007; King, 2006). The informant's socio-demographic data (see Appendix G) was also gathered through the questionnaire (section Appendix A and section 3.3.3.4).

The interview schedules were implemented in a non-linear fashion, that is to say, they were used in a flexible manner to reflect the informants' on-going or new concerns. The interview was recorded using password protected Samsung S3 phone and all observations noted or scribed in the field note, which was always locked away in a filing cabinet in order to maintain their confidentiality. The recorded interviews were later transcribed; and the informants' narratives and information gathered from socio-demographic questions, such as year of migration, gender, previous and current jobs, marital status, income, number of children being responsibly for and level of education were anonymised. Each interview lasted for an average of 60 minutes, it took on average 130 minutes to produce one good quality transcript, and a further 20 minutes were used to clean each transcript. At the point of saturation, a point where nothing new was disclosed (Bisman and Highfield, 2012), 13 of the 24 interviews have been conducted (using the interview schedule – see appendix F) and transcribed (see appendix H). Whilst 12 interviews are adequate to generate sufficient data to reach theoretical saturation (Guest et al, 2006), such quantitative method should not be applicable to all types of interviews. Yet, it was applied in this study because the sample size includes a relatively homogeneous population and the interviews was partly structured; that is, all participants were asked a similar set of questions. Therefore, the point of saturation for the research was based on the interview data.

3.3.3.2. Validity and Reliability

The use of triangulation for testing the validity and reliability are uncommon in qualitative research that uses naturalistic approach. Since the concepts of validity and reliability are pertinent in all research, discussing these concepts of the data collection method also is equally relevant for this thesis. It has to be noted that the concepts are used in rather different contexts, for example, reliability in qualitative research is simply about the quality of data in terms of generating understanding while quality is used in quantitative research for explanation. In support of discussing validity and reliability in qualitative research, Patton (2002) suggests that validity and reliability concepts should be addressed at all stages of qualitative research. Testing for validity is simply testing for trustworthiness and in consequence a valid research method will generate a reliable data or outcome, and a dependable outcome can lead to generalizability. According to (Stenbacka, 2001 cited in Golafshani, 2003) generalizability is important in doing and reporting qualitative research.

Since the participants have constructed multiple realities in their minds, it is important to use multiple techniques of gathering data to gain valid and reliable diverse realities (Golafshani, 2003). This study thus uses multiple techniques such as questionnaire, interview, observations and recordings to collect data. In Golafshani's view, the use of these multiple techniques will produce more valid, dependable and diverse construction of realities. However, it is thought, the quality of the research could have been further improved if participants were allowed to help with the research questions and in gathering the data as their participation at this level will blend more with constructivist perspective. Enabling the participants to inform the interview questions would have, in part, ameliorated the potential for my personal experience and biases to shape the direction of the interviews and therefore the outcomes. However, enabling a loose and open questioning method did go some way to ensuring that new perspectives could, and did, emerge.

3.3.3.3. Assurance of Confidentiality

To guarantee the confidentiality of all informants, the interview and the subsequent transcripts were carried out in accordance with FSSH⁸ and IPSE research guidelines. At the start of the interview, informants were assured that the data they provided could not be traced back to them in the study reports, subsequent journal articles and other forms of dissemination. Informants were assured that their confidentiality will be ensured. In addition, each participant was allocated pseudonyms and this is necessary to maintain their confidentiality. The transcripts were stored digitally on such devices as the researcher's hard drives, which are password protected. The confidentiality of the transcripts and NVivo⁹ nodes, themes, memos and codes will be maintained even after the study's defense in compliance with research etiquettes in relation to confidentiality.

3.3.3.4. Questionnaires

Structured and closed-ended questionnaires were designed (see appendix A) to gather socio-economic data from informants. This information was used to correlate qualitative data such as informants' social location with demographic data and the information gathered through questionnaires (including telephone questionnaire (see Appendix E)) was used for selection process, initially this was to facilitate the selection of all potential informants before formal contacts was made to arrange for subsequent interviews. Overall, it was used as an entry point to this new social world or to put simply the field.

3.3.3.5. Terminology and transcription conventions

For this study, different types of empirical data, which were generated in differing contexts through the use of variety of techniques, are presented. Therefore, enclosed brackets indicate unique references, which were given to all data extracted in this research. Also, information such as pseudonym, type of data – interviews (ITV), interview notes (ITVN), and the year in which the data was gathered for example can be represented as: (Awka, middle- class, Nigerian-Parent: ITV2014). This reference means Awka is a Nigerian parent, he is

⁸ FSSH stands for Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

⁹ NVivo is a computer software package produced by QSR International, which is used for qualitative data analysis.

categorised as a middle class parent and the direct quotes and/or interview extracts were generated during the interview held in 2014. However, a reduced reference is used for in-text extract citation (Awka, middle-class, ITV2014) instead.

The table below summarises all transcription conventions used in this study.

Table 1: Transcription and Citation Conventions

<i>Convention</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Italicised text	= Represents emphasis comments either in data extracts or original quotes
...	= Omitted material
[] – square brackets	= Inserted materials both in quoted interviews and journal/articles
ITV	= Interview transcript
ITVN	= Interview notes

3.3.3.6. Approach to Data Analysis

Whilst a framework of themes to be explored was included in the semi-structured interview schedule, other themes such as marginalisation and the effect of intersecting multiple identities (Crenshaw, 1989) were also explored as they emerged during the interview process, literature reviews and subsequent data analysis; thus the interviews were not conducted *tabula rasa* (an absence of predetermined objectives). An inductive approach was used to analyse the data gathered through the interviews. This approach is appropriate because it enables the researcher to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. An inductive approach helps condense extensive raw data into a more manageable (summary) format. It also “establish[es] clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data” (Thomas, 2003:1). Another important reason of using this approach is that it helps to develop theory about the underlying structure of informants’ experiences, which are evident in the text gathered from the interviews. Furthermore, the main method of data analysis is to develop categories and subcategories from the interview text (raw data) into a model that encapsulates key themes deemed to be important in this study. Categorising the raw data will be achieved using

emergent categories. This is of importance because instead of using preconceived themes, it allows the researcher to read through the text and identify the themes or issues that recur in the data and these, in turn, become the categories explained in this thesis. This approach is felt to be more suitable because it allows the categories to emerge from the data. After the identification of core categories and main concerns, the next step was to conduct selective coding and theoretical sampling. This requires the coding of only the core category and related categories and further sampling is directed by the developing theory and used to saturate the core category and related categories. In addition, searching for missing information (scrutiny-based approach) could be used to search for themes that are missing in the text (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). This is necessary as silences can indicate areas that people are unwilling or afraid to discuss but hold important information about the research interest.

The interview transcripts were analysed using thematic coding approach. This involves identifying sections of text that are relevant to a common theme and thus allowing the coding of the texts into categories, which then created a ‘framework of thematic ideas about it’ (Gibbs, 2007). Initially 23 categories and 57 sub-categories were identified, but in the end, however 24 categories were identified and relevant texts from the interview transcripts were coded accordingly into these categories (see table 2). NVivo 10 for Windows was the qualitative analytical software used in this study to explore informants’ perceptions. Working with in-depth interview transcripts and observation notes, data analysis followed five stages:

1. Import transcripts,
2. Set up case nodes,
3. Code themes,
4. Query and visualize and
5. Summarize in a framework matrix.

The first step was to create a research project in NVivo 10, followed by importing 13 transcripts and the observation notes and setting up case nodes. Then case node was created for each participant and attributes such as profession and year of migration respectively and then assigned these to respective nodes. Next step was to explore the materials and code all identified themes. At Query and Visualise stage, text search and word frequency queries were used to explore the way migrant parents talk about their experiences or perspectives and a model was made in order to visualise and ‘tell the story’ for each participant. To facilitate comparison of what participants said about an issue, I summarised material at each

intersection of case and theme then record this in memo, which was then used as research evidence to substantiate any claims in this study.

Table 2: Nodes/Themes for Transcripts Analysis

<i>Nodes/Themes</i>		
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Auto-Code</i>
Nodes\\Themes\\BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT	Nodes\\Participants\\ADA	Nodes\\Prompted Responses\\Questions in Auto-Code\\Q1.
Nodes\\Themes\\COLONIALISM	Nodes\\Participants\\ADERO	Nodes\\Prompted Responses\\Questions in Auto-Code\\Q2.

Nodes\\Themes\\DIFFERENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS	Nodes\\Participants\\AWKA	Nodes\\Prompted Responses\\Questions in Auto-Code\\Q3.
Nodes\\Themes\\GHANA-NIGERIA INVOLVEMENT POLICY	Nodes\\Participants\\BIAFRA	Nodes\\Prompted Responses\\Questions in Auto-Code\\Q4.
Nodes\\Themes\\HABITUS TRANSFORMATION	Nodes\\Participants\\COLLINS	Nodes\\Prompted Responses\\Questions in Auto-Code\\Q5.
Nodes\\Themes\\HOME_SCHOOL COMMUNICATION	Nodes\\Participants\\DAYO	
Nodes\\Themes\\IMMIGRATION STATUS - POST MIGRATION	Nodes\\Participants\\FUMI	
Nodes\\Themes\\IMMIGRATION STATUS - POST MIGRATION\\Otherness	Nodes\\Participants\\KWAME	
Nodes\\Themes\\INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE IN THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY	Nodes\\Participants\\MARTIN	
Nodes\\Themes\\MIGRATION EXPERIENCE	Nodes\\Participants\\MUSA	
Nodes\\Themes\\MIGRATION PERSPECTIVE	Nodes\\Participants\\NNAEMEKA	
Nodes\\Themes\\PARENTAL ASPIRATION	Nodes\\Participants\\NNEKA	
Nodes\\Themes\\PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	Nodes\\Participants\\OYIRIDIYA	
Nodes\\Themes\\PARENTS and TECHNOLOGY		
Nodes\\Themes\\PARENTS' EXPECTATION		
Nodes\\Themes\\PARENTS' VOICE - BEFORE MIGRATION		
Nodes\\Themes\\PARENTS' VOICE - POST MIGRATION		
Nodes\\Themes\\PARENTS-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP		
Nodes\\Themes\\SOCIAL CLASS SHIFT		
Nodes\\Themes\\SOCIAL MOBILITY		
Nodes\\Themes\\SOCIAL NETWORK - BEFORE MIGRATION		
Nodes\\Themes\\SOCIAL NETWORK - POST MIGRATION		
Nodes\\Themes\\STRUCTURAL BARRIERS		
Nodes\\Themes\\THE UK SCHOOLS' INVOLVEMENT POLICY		

As indicated in table 2, three different coding based on Themes (column 1); Participants (column 2) and Questions in Auto-code (column 3) were carried out. Whilst repeating the analytical process was onerous, it was instrumental in conducting thorough analysis because I was unfamiliar with Nvivo software, and time was needed for at least a few practice runs to effectively use Nvivo analytical tool. Using Nvivo facilitated the integrated analysis of all the textual data gathered, and as a result, it was less complex to cipher common themes, compose memos, explore and extract data. It enabled data links to be maintained between respective

nodes/themes as the coding is re-analysed or polished in order to generate minimised, useful and actionable information (Coffey et al, 1996). Other statistical data was individually analysed using the Microsoft Office package ‘Excel Spreadsheet’, which is also an analytical application. The data generated through this method was also incorporated in the overall evaluative comments. Using Endnote, a bibliography and citation software helped to manage and catalogue the literature read for this study.

The process of analysing the interview transcripts and observation involved numerous amounts of reading, re-reading, coding, re-coding, and drafting. It was an iterative process, which developed with reference to the relevant literature. I carried out continuous correlation between participants’ narratives simultaneously (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These analytical and interactive processes, in the end, produced an outcome articulated through a theoretical language, which is grounded on Bourdieu, postcolonial and intersectional theories. Thus this framework was pivotal in re-analysis of the research data, amplification and producing the final draft of the arguments in connection with the academic literature and the significant themes identified.

3.3.3.7. “Evolution” of the Research.

My initial belief was that adequate access and use of technology could enhance participants’ ability to communicate with their children’s schools and support active home learning. However, as the research progress it became evident that the issue of technology in parental involvement is not just a duality (dichotomy) of access and use; rather complex issues affect participants’ ability or inability to play active role in their children’s learning using technology, and as a result, the research process was modified. Constructivism supports the view that research can be modified during its development (Bisman and Highfield, 2012). Modifications to the research were based on the changes that ensue because of the interactions between the researcher and the researched, and re-evaluations or reflections on the effectiveness of the initial research design and progress.

3.3.3.8. The Impact of Critical Self-Reflection on the Research process

My reflective journal was instrumental in addressing the issue of subjectivity and reflexivity in this study. As discussed in section 1.3.2, initially I wanted to primarily work with Bourdieu’s concepts of capitals, fields and habitus (theory of choice for parental involvement)

but as I critically reflect, I changed this approach and also used other theoretical frameworks, not planned at the onset. Research questions were modified in three occasions to include those issues of subordinate identities and experiences which were more important to the participants. Due to the complex nature of Oyiridiya's narratives, especially issues regarding undocumented residential status, I emailed her copies of the interview transcripts and asked for her comments to ensure I had accurately represented her stories because her story was particularly sensitive in relation to her legal status, so I felt a specific duty of care to her. She replied with minor corrections regarding date of arrival, issues of deskilling, language and access to state benefits. My main aim was to create space for the participants to play an important role in the reconstruction of data analysis. I had not considered this at the beginning of this study, but it became salient as the research progressed and I documented this new development in my reflective journal. Recording my reflection allowed me to critically evaluate the ethics and power/knowledge relationship with informants. My research reflective journals made my experiences, opinions, presumptions and feelings visible and an acknowledged part of the research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Writing about ourselves and our choices, lived experiences and actions during research process is important, because it enables others to understand the constructed nature of the outcomes and conclusions we arrive at. These outcomes are the result of diverse choices and decisions made during the process of this study. In posing my research questions, I was influenced by my sociological context and how I saw this as meaningful and appropriate. I, thus chose research samples based on what I considered acceptable both to myself and sociological underpinning of the research topic. This choice of appropriate samples was an active (and thus constructive) process, because the choice was made on personal and disciplinary grounds through the process. As explained in sampling procedures section (see section 3.3.2) I selected my sample through religious groups and by standing at Wood Green and Edmonton shopping malls located in North London. However, upon reflection I realised that if I had not been West African myself I would have been unlikely to know that it was important to sample people from different ethnic groups (e.g. Igbo, Ewe, Hausa, and Yoruba). My 'insider' status might have helped in knowing how to access my sample and the best place to find suitable participants for the research. One of the implications is that my personality, discipline, and position have an effect on what is, or should be considered as valuable answers in the research process. An implication of choosing this method of data collection was that it enhances possible interactions with some research participants, but on

one hand might hinder interaction with others, because I (a subject) entered into a relationship with the research objects (other subjects). Moreover, the researcher has the power to make the decision on what kind of data – transcribed audio recording of the interviews will be included in data analysis. Because of my subjectivity, I decide to transcribe all interviews, so I could reflect on the whole process and concerns in analysis.

As a researcher who was asking personal questions about participants' migration history, parental involvement using technology, parents' attitudes, schools' attitude and home-school communication, and having the status and power of a doctoral research student at a university, I was in a position of discovering personal and sensitive information while working with my participants. Therefore, it was important that these parents trusted me and viewed me as neutral, and a researcher solely interested in their subjective experiences. Whilst my possession of similar experiences and identities to participants meant that they had a more relaxed and welcoming attitudes towards me, the inherent power dynamic in our relationship was still present. A few of the participants mentioned my residential status (British) and profession (teacher), and said they hoped to naturalise as British citizen someday and others talked about their hope to become teachers in the near future. This means that participants who were not British nor had a professional job found me a bit threatening. These views ought to be recognised (used as data itself as it shows how important status is to these migrants) rather than avoided because they highlight significant aspects of migrant West African parents' lives.

Despite ethics committee approval of my research proposal, I faced many ethical tensions during and after the research process. For example, most Nigerian (Igbo speaking) participants (e.g. Awka, Oyiridiya) were more respectful and friendly during the interview than other ethnic groups such as Yoruba (e.g. Dayo, Fumi). Oyiridiya opened up about her undocumented status, not only because I was a Nigerian but I was also an Igbo man, she saw me as being 'one of her own'. My relationships with Igbo participants were the most cordial, followed by other Nigerian ethnic groups, but a little bit strained with Ghanaians, both during sample selection and interviewing. There seemed to be possible degree of a lack of trust between the Ghanaian parents and myself, perhaps in a way that would not have existed if I had been a White British man - completely detached from their lives. They seemed to view me as an 'outsider', despite my being a West African migrant myself, I was a kind of 'insider-outsider' to the Ghanaian participants. When I first looked at my interviews with Collins,

Martin and Kwame, and I considered the quality of conversation, I considered discarding them and only use the ‘friendlier,’ lengthier, seemingly more substantial interviews. But rather than using personal relationships and comfortability as the basis of deciding whether or not to use the data generated in these interviews, I included them, as equally valuable data. I also felt that no West African migrant parents should be subjected to an arbitrary decision about being included, based on whether I had a cordial rapport or not. I felt it was unethical to ignore the narratives of the Ghanaian migrant parents, and I asked what I could learn from my responses to these informants. I learned that it is important to reflect on my own subjectivity and how it shapes and is shaped by each aspect of the research process. My reflective experience in this study therefore, supports Rossman and Rallis (2003) assertion that qualitative research is a messy process and that researchers learn during this process.

While Collins, Martin and Kwame and I had less relaxed relationship during the interviews, I had a warm and positive response with other interviewees, but I continue to reflect about the degree to which I may have influenced my participants’ reactions.

I remembered my telephone interview with one of the study participants, Kwame. My practice was to first explain the aim of my research – I was a doctoral student who was investigating how migrant West African parents use new technologies to engage in English education. Kwame, like many other West African parents, listened to my accented explanation and responded with bewilderment to my request for an interview. Kwame, and others, wondered how their experiences could be useful for research, and why I was interested in them since ‘nobody cares about us...’ (Oyiridiya, working class, 2014). Their questioning of my motives paralleled my own questioning of my motives. How did I, during my master degree in education in 2010 develop an interest in researching West African migrant parents’ engagement in English education? I answered these questions through self-disclosure (Harrison, MacGibbon, and Morton, 2001) because I wanted to value the participants and focus directly on their stories. I told them of my experience in Nigeria, how as an undergraduate, I was actively involved in my uncle children’s education, and now as a parent myself, I played active role in my children’s home learning. Also, as a teacher, I came to understand the issues within parental involvement using technology discourse from the parents and schools’ perspectives.

My migration to England had met similar dislocations some of these migrant parents had experienced – deskilling, residential status issues, accented English, marginalisation and

social falling (see section 3.2.3). The informants' stories were quickly at risk of turning into my own story as I went through the emotions of working closely with them. I realised that the lives of these participants were being seen through my lens and my decisions as to who to interview, whose voice to represent, and how to analyse and represent these voices. I had set out to tell their stories, and in doing so, I had naively positioned these participants as 'others'. I determined the research questions, the theoretical frameworks and who the participants were, and therefore I am not neutral. Although I was focusing on the participants, I must recognise that I was the one with power to decide what to disclose and when. I hope that my status as a 'insider-outsider' to this migrant 'community' allowed me to sample appropriately, to access the useful range of ethnic groups I accessed, which perhaps allowed the social diversity of experiences which make my data interesting. Moreover, my insider status, as West African migrant parent gave me common shared experience and insights into what might be the key issues for these parents. However, what it is key to accentuate here is that while my own personal experience of deskilling, residential status issues, accented English, marginalisation and social falling was played out through the data, this was not at all something I expected to find nor to focus on when I began the research, as a keen pioneer for technology in education. My own story was 'brought home' through the analytical process – as these migratory issues 'spoke louder' in the data and resonated with personal experience. As they told their stories I was there with them in the data, but I was also listening to the discordant experiences - those that differed from my story, and this process is what enabled me to make the theoretical insights I have made about who is able to engage with education (like I was) and who is not.

3.4. Describing the sample: biographies and classifications

This section gives brief but informative biographical accounts of the research participants in order to introduce the research sample. Additionally, I grouped the participants into different categories based on social criteria, which then became useful to make analytical comparisons. This included nationality, ethnic background or tribe, social class. Moreover, for purposes of analysis I also categorised parents in terms of levels of parental engagement, which also then became a useful tool for comparison.

3.4.1. Study Informants Pen Portraits

The informants' pen portraits have been published so that they might be helpful in giving some background of each of the participants of this study, also, that can help readers identify with individuals. Appendix G provides demographic data for all 13 migrant West African parents.

- Ada was born in Nigeria and although she comes from south-eastern Nigeria (a member of the Igbo people); she speaks both Yoruba and Igbo fluently. While in Nigeria, she studied Secretarial Diploma, was working as PA in a private company, and initially worked as an Agency employee after migrating to England. Ada migrated to England in 1996, and she does not actively engage in her children's learning. They speak three languages: Yoruba, Igbo and English at home. At the time of the interview, Ada is a qualified Nurse (BSc) working with the NHS and has been categorised as middle-class. Ada came from an educated family and she aspires for her children to do well in school. At the time of the interview, she is married with two secondary school and one college children.
- Adero was born in Nigeria and she comes from the Yoruba ethnic group in south-western Nigeria. Adero studied Physiotherapy at BSc level but was unemployed pre migration and became a Physiotherapist with the NHS. Adero migrated in 1995 and plays active role in her children learning and English is first language. Adero came from well-educated background and she has very high aspiration for her children to do well in school. At the time of the interview, she is married with two secondary school children. She has been categorised as middle class.
- Awka is a Nigerian migrant from south-eastern Nigeria (the Igbo ethnic group). While in Nigeria, he studied Agriculture Economics at BSc level, graduated shortly before migrating to England in 1994, and plays active role in her children learning and English is first language. He later gained MSc and now works as a college lecturer. Awka came from well-educated background and he aspires for his children to do well in school. At the time of the interview, he is married with two secondary school and college age children. Awka has been categorised as middle class.

- Biafra is a Nigerian parent who migrated to England in 1989 as an international student. He was born to Igbo parents in the south-eastern part of Nigeria and was actively involved in his cousins and nephews' learning at home pre migration. Biafra gained a Bachelor degree in Wales, United Kingdom. He is currently teaching RE and Ethics at an Academy in London. He is married with three children: one in primary, another in secondary and the other at university. They speak two languages: Igbo and English at home. Biafra came from well-educated background and he aspires for his children to do well in school. Biafra has been categorised as middle class.
- Collins is a Ghanaian migrant from the Ewe ethnic group in Volta region, Ghana. Collins was an insurance accountant prior to migrating to the UK and became a shop owner in London, England. He migrated in 1996 with his wife. English is his second language. Collins' highest qualification is OND (Ordinary National Diploma). They speak three languages, Akan, Twi and Fante and English at home. Collins is from less educated family background but he has strong aspiration for his children to succeed in their education. Collins has been categorised as working class.
- Dayo is a Nigerian Yoruba (south-western Nigeria) man who migrated to the UK in 1995 to join his British born wife. Prior to his migration Dayo was the Head of Maths in a Nigerian secondary school. Dayo has three children, two in secondary school and one at the university. He retrained as a teacher (PGCE Maths) after 5 years of arriving in London and currently teaching Maths at inner London school. They speak two languages, Yoruba and English at home. Dayo is from an educated family background has shown strong aspiration for his children to succeed in their education. Dayo has been categorised as working class.
- Fumi is now working in London as a pharmacist, having migrated to England as an A level student in 1994. Fumi was born in Nigeria and from the Yoruba ethnic group (south-western Nigeria). Prior to her migration, she was working as a cashier in her father's business in Lagos. She is married and has two children of secondary age. Fumi was born in an educated background with great emphasis on education and as

result; she has high aspiration for her children. They speak two languages, Yoruba and English at home. Fumi has been categorised as working class.

- Kwame was employed as a government minister in Ghana. He is from Guan in Brong Ahafo region, Ghana. This is one of the most influential regions in Ghana, but Kwame became a Royal mail postmaster after migrating to England with his wife in 1998. They have two teenage children who are both in secondary education. English is his second language. Kwame's highest qualification is BA (with honours). They speak two languages, Akan and English at home. Kwame is from an educated family background and he has demonstrated strong aspiration for his children to succeed in their education. Collins has been categorised as working class.
- Martin was born in Ghana, Akan ethnic group in Ashanti region. He was a Banker in Ghana and became a Hair Dresser after migrating to England. Martin migrated in 1997 with his wife. They have three teenage children who are in secondary education. Martin's speaks English as second language and holds BA and MA in Business and Marketing. They speak one other language, Akan at home. Martin's family is well educated and in his family education is highly valued. Martin has been categorised as working class.
- Musa was born in northern Nigeria, Hausa ethnic group. Musa migrated to England in 1995 with his wife and at the time of interview they have seven children but only three (secondary school age) live with them in London. Musa was a well-respected farmer in Gombe, Nigeria. GCSE is Musa's highest level of education with very poor grades accepts in Hausa (B grade). Musa is from less educated family background but aspires for his children to do very well in school. They speak two languages, Hausa and English at home but English is their second language. Musa has been categorised as working class. Musa is currently working as a cab driver.
- Nnaemeka's country of origin is Nigeria and he is from the south-eastern region, the Igbo ethnic group. He was unwilling to disclose his occupation pre-migration but

became a businessman post migration. Nnaemeka is married with three children age and all three are in secondary education. He migrated with his family in 2003 from South Africa where he lived for five years. Nnaemeka speaks English as second language and his family speaks Igbo mainly at home. He has achieved first degree (BA) and second (MA) degree. Nnaemeka came from an educated family background and he demonstrated a strong aspiration for his children to do very well in school. He has been categorised as working class.

- Nneka is from the Igbo ethnic group, south-eastern Nigeria. Although she was born in London, Nneka went back to Nigeria at the age of six. She was unemployed in Nigeria and currently works as a medical administrator after returning to England. She lives with her son in a council flat in a run-down neighbourhood. Nneka migrated (returned) to England in 1996 and she is a single mother with a 16 years old son, who is in secondary education. Nneka and her son speak fluent English and her highest level of qualification is HND (Higher National Diploma). Nneka has been categorised as working class.
- Oyiridiya is an Igbo woman born in south-eastern Nigeria and attended her primary, secondary and university education in Nigeria. She gained BSc and MA in business management. She migrated to England in 2003 with her husband and three daughters, but now a single mother as her husband went back to Nigeria and remarried. Oyiridiya's daughters are in primary and secondary education. They speak two languages, Igbo and English at home but English is their second language. Oyiridiya has been categorised as working class. She is currently working as an office administrator for a charity organisation in London.

3.4.2. Social class categorisations

Social class categorisation has been a difficult task since 19th century and more difficult in 21st century with cultural shifts and shifting labour markets. Social class is intrinsically difficult to measure because of cultural, societal and political changes in the UK in the last decades. For example, in Britain, riding a bicycle both for leisure and to work may be an indicator of lower SES but most recently, we have seen Boris Johnson (UK Foreign Secretary) riding bicycle to work in City of London. This constant shift in cultural and social

values makes social class categorisation very difficult. Similarly, once upon a time (in 19th century) upper class citizens were those who never worked rather people work for them. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) will categorise such individuals (those who never worked or long term unemployed) as belonging to the lower end of socio-economic status spectrum. Secondly, the Great British Class Survey in 2015 did not include question about respondents' level of education, may be in recognition of the affluent uneducated citizens. However, in Britain (indeed European countries), people's level of education is arguably one of the key factors in determining social mobility (OECD, 2010).

Thirdly, defining social class is problematic because it is not universally applicable. For example, living in council/state accommodation (flats and houses) is seen in the UK as belonging to lower class but in developing countries such of Nigeria and Ghana, such housing scheme does not exist and as a result cannot be used in defining social class in West Africa. This is applicable to the participants in this study because upon migration, their immigration status, level of education, housing and professional status changed which contributed to their deskilling in the UK. And as a consequence, many of them were now reclassified as working class. This raises the question as to whether social class categorisation is really important. Is it more about how we perceived people's socio-economic status difference and similarity?

These debates aside, I found clear patterns in my data that fell along socio-economic lines and I thus chose to explore social class theory to help to understand this. This involved categorising my participants by broad social class status, which, as the thesis unfolds, the reader will see, was merely a starting point for a more nuanced account of the fluidity of social class as it is experienced in the timelines of those that experience global migration/s.

The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) was used as a starting point and loose guide to categorise my participants. This classification model was adapted from the Nuffield Class Schema advanced in the 1970s. A new level of NS-SEC was rebased on the Standard Occupational Classification 2010 and will be further rebased for 2020 Classification which will be used on the 2021 UK census (Rose et al, 2003; Erikson et al, 1992).

Using the three-class of NS-SEC classification - higher occupations, intermediate occupations and lower occupations, the table below presented the picture that six participants are in professional occupations, and the remaining seven are in intermediate or lower occupations. Similarly, participants' housing status and income levels were factored in when categorising

them (see table 3) in different social class with those in professional occupations owing their houses and enjoying annual salary of between £36,000 to £45,000, whilst seven participants are paying rent (some living in high rising buildings) and being paid minimum wages.

In table 3, I categorised participants as middle class and working class based on their level of occupations, housing tenure and income levels after migrating to the UK.

Table 3: Social class categories

<i>Informant</i>	<i>Class categorisation in West Africa</i>	<i>Class categorisation in the UK</i>	<i>Occupation in West Africa</i>	<i>Current occupation in the UK</i>	<i>Housing status in UK</i>	<i>Income level</i>
Adero	Middle class	Middle class	Graduate	Physiotherapist	Owner	Band 6 - £40,000
Awka	Middle class	Middle class	Graduate	Lecturer	Owner	£38,500

Biafra	Middle class	Middle class	Student	Teacher	Owner	£47,000
Dayo	Middle class	Middle class	Head of Maths	Teacher	Owner	£45,000
Fumi	Middle class	Middle class	Student	Pharmacist	Owner	£36,000
Ada	Middle class	Middle class	Senator's PA	Adult Nurse	Owner	Band 6 - £36,000
Nneka	Middle class	Working class	Unknown	Medical Assistant	Council flat – rent	£8.05 per hour
Nnaemeka	Middle class	Working class	Unknown	Petty Business Man	Council flat – rent	Estimate - £19,000
Oyiridiya	Middle class	Working class	Bank Consultant	NGO Office Admin	Rent	£7.50 per hour
Collins	Middle class	Working class	Insurance Accountant	Shop operator	Council flat - rent	£7.50 per hour
Kwame	Middle class	Working class	Government Minister	Royal Mail postal worker	Council flat - rent	£9.00 per hour
Martin	Middle class	Working class	Banker	Hair Dresser	Council flat - rent	£7.50 per hour
Musa	Middle class	Working class	Farmer	Cab Driver	Council flat - rent	£17,000

So we can see from the table that all participants were ostensibly middle class prior to their migration, and then the following informants were categorised as newly belonging to the working class category in the UK, at the point in time that I met them and conducted my research:

- Oyiridiya,
- Kwame,
- Musa,
- Collins,
- Martin,
- Nneka, and
- Nnaemeka.

Equally, the following participants were categorised as belonging to the middle-class in the UK:

- Ada,
- Adero,
- Awka,
- Biafra,
- Dayo, and
- Fumi.

All the participants said that they owned their houses or their family owned the houses they lived in before migrating to England. They also enjoyed financial security which is one of the attributes of middle class status (Savage et al., 2013). Also, as members of the dominant culture such as Igbo, Yoruba, Ewe and Akan, the informants experienced variety of cultural activities. That is to say, the informants can be categorised as broadly belonging to the middle class category in West Africa.

Whilst almost all of the interview participants went through deskilling upon migration (except Adero who moved straight into a professional occupation as a Physiotherapist), some had managed to climb to a middle class status by the time I met them and conducted my research. My analysis has shown that participants categorised as working class experienced more dislocations such as racism, prejudice (when looking for work), discriminations and limited or questionable immigration status. Other participants were able to reskill within three to five years of arriving in England, and as a result gained higher/professional occupations with secure employment, own their houses and reach a higher income level, thus were categorised as middle class. This group of participants were socially mobile after they had reskilled in England. Those categorised as working class participants were in low level of occupations, they live in rented flats (private and council) and their average hourly wage rate was £8.00.

3.4.3. Categories of Parental Involvement

The informants' narratives show different techniques in which they use to participate in their children's education. The variety of ways includes:

- attending parents' evenings,
- communicating with the schools,

- providing conducive and safe environment for home learning,
- discussing the importance of education with their children, and
- Academic socialisation and helping with homework and school projects.

For analytical purposes, the respondents' types of parental involvement were categorised into 'active', 'less-active and non-active.

Table 4: Categories of parental involvement

<i>Types of Involvement</i>	<i>West African Involvement</i>	<i>Informants</i>	<i>English Involvement</i>	<i>Informants</i>
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Active	Paying tuition and all other fees Attending PTA Paying for extra lessons Paying for boarding schooling Buying text and exercise books Buying school uniforms Conducive and safe environment for learning Academic socialisation Assisting with homework (voluntary)	Ada Adero Awka Biafra Collins Dayo Fumi Kwame Martin Musa Nnaemeka Nneka Oyiridiya	Attending Parents Evenings/PTA Helping with homework and school projects including online Encouraging children to learn (academic socialisation) Encouraging children to talk about their day Providing additional learning resources and encourage children to use them Conducive and safe environment for learning Educational games Discussing the importance of education with their children	Adero Awka Biafra Dayo Fumi
Less-active	Conducive and safe environment for learning Infrequent academic socialisation	N/A	Listening to children talk about their day Conducive and safe environment for learning and all non-active involvement below	Nnaemeka Nneka Oyiridiya
Non-active	Unable to pay tuition fees Non-attendance to PTA meetings Limited or no academic socialisation	N/A	Providing computer equipment Limited or no home-school communication Not helping children with homework or school project Inadequate response to schools' queries Limited or no academic socialisation Unable to use ParentPay ¹⁰ to pay for children's dinner money	Ada Collins Kwame Martin Musa

3.5. Concluding comments

This chapter explained the general research methods used in this study; the epistemology or methodology underpinning interview; the biographical information and other effects on the study objectives and techniques; the process of conducting sampling procedures, data collection; and the approaches used in data analysis. Moreover, vignettes (pen portraits) were used to provide an insight into the informants' lived experiences (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999; Goodson and Sikes, 2001). The logic of how to do research as illustrated (reconstructed logic) which is highly organised and restated in an idealised, formal, and systematic form and the logic in practice (logic of how research was actually carried out) are 'messy' but true by virtue of the way things in fact are and not by logical necessity. I argued that interviewing the

¹⁰ ParentPay is an online payment system for schools. It is the recommended payment platform for school meals, trips and other fees.

informants was the most appropriate method to generate a realistic data for this study because it gives them the voice and power to deconstruct their multiple lived realities or experiences. Equally, the methodological approach elucidated in this chapter is in agreement with the theories applied in this study and verifiable facts being explored. That is to say, the comprehensive evaluation of people's actions, comments, and thinking in the real flow of temporary encounter (Collins, 1981) is linked to large-scale social power relationships, with the aim of expounding the impact of multiple realities on West African migrant parents' ability to participate in their children's education. The views expressed in this study are not an 'objective' knowledge. It must also be acknowledged that constructivist methodology in general and the research design used in this thesis have limitations. Whilst the construction of knowledge may be imperfect and incomplete, and social enquiry is conceptually conducted through the mediation of language and social practices, good knowledge and understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and methodological approach to this study has been demonstrated.

Sayer (1993) asserts that our theories are more than the quality of representations and textual deconstruction in which we indulge. Moreover, although acknowledgement of the fact that the analyses and narratives presented from the interviews could have possibly been interpreted and written in other equally valid ways, the narratives offered here echo and overlap with my trepidations, lived experiences, and theoretical dispositions. The analysis of data gathered through the research method discussed in this chapter and theoretical underpinnings will be explained in chapter 4, 5 and 6. Chapter 4 explains West African migrant parents' identities and experiences of engaging in two educational systems; chapter 5 theorises the impact of these identities and experiences on their ability to support home learning, and chapter 6 discusses whether new educational technologies support minority parents in their engagement with their children's education in English schools. These three chapters addressed all four broad research questions in this study.

Chapter 4 – West African migrant parental involvement: identities, experiences and challenges.

4.1. Introduction

How do West African migrant parents' identities and experiences affect their ability to engage with their children's learning? I compared parents experiences in West Africa with their experiences in England. Pre and post migration analysis was carried out because the data and literature on 'between two cultures' seemed to show that these are important constructs. In this chapter, I begin by describing and discussing the participants' experiences of migration. I do this because the migration experience for these migrants was not seamless and was fraught with difficulties and jarring experiences, which evidently informed the possibilities for actively engaging with their children's education in the UK. Perceived (and completely unexpected) experiences of discrimination coloured their overall migration experience, and they also experienced a culture shock in terms of *how* they were expected to engage with the education system for their children. These largely discordant experiences understandably impacted on their interaction with their children's schools, and their engagement with the education system. Furthermore, what I found was very different social patterns of parental engagement in the two contexts. Most parents in the sample were involved in the West African system, regardless of social differences, but in England this changed. In England I found that identity and previous experiences mattered: there was a relationship between parents' social class, ethnicity, language, educational level, (as well as their previous experiences), and their ability to engage with the education system in England. So not only were their experiences of migration fraught with difficulties, my analysis reveals that this impacted them at a structural level, and had very tangible effects, namely, on their ability to engage with institutions such as their children's schools. Of course there were exceptions to this in the data -there usually are- but these exceptions only served to highlight and compound the difficulties for the other majority of less fortunate parents. In this chapter I explore both these experiences and social patterns across the data and I then attempt to interpret and to theorise the effects of these multiple intersecting identities and experiences, in the following chapter.

4.2. Experiences of migration

This section illustrates some contrasts that emerged in relation to migrant parents' experiences. That is to say that a lot changed for parents upon migration, in that their pre-migration experience jarred or contrasted significantly with their new experience in the UK. I want to argue that these experiences pre and post migration – and the fit, or dislocation informed their ability to play an active role in their children's education.

West African migrant parents in this study all migrated to the UK between 1990 and 2003 and settled in London. Most of them wanted a better life and future and migrated to England with their family. However, a few of the migrant parents such as Biafra and Fumi migrated to England to study in English schools and universities because English schools and universities were rated as the best in the world at the time. Whilst the respondents' narratives show that they had naïve expectations that they would assimilate easily into the English society and culture because West African countries were colonised by the British Empire, some of the respondents reported that they were disappointed because everything they thought about England was almost the opposite. Their disappointment can be categorised in two themes: discrimination and prejudice upon migration and cultural differences in parental involvement practice. These two broad themes highlight the context in which these parents were attempting to engage with the English education system.

4.2.1. Discrimination and prejudice upon migration.

Upon migration to the UK, the parents' experiences were overwhelmingly experiences of prejudice and discrimination, before they even encountered the education system. Almost all participants recounted a story of discrimination of some kind, and for some, this tainted their whole migratory experience as they were not expecting this. These experiences of prejudice came in various aspects of their engagement in the new culture, beginning with experiences of immigration control, attempts to find work, and filtering down into everyday engagements at their children's school. That is to say that discrimination coloured their experiences of migration, and that took various forms, and I discuss each of these in turn:

- Immigration control
- Racism in attempts to find work
- Experiencing 'social falling'

4.2.1.1. Immigration control

Respondents' accounts show that they experienced immigration control after migrating to England (12/13 respondents). This involved: who has the right to social benefits including council housing and free school meals for their children, who has the right to work (for how many hours) and the right/conditions to further their education. Although these restrictions do not specifically target West African migrant parents but migrants in general, their individual accounts show that immigration control is increasingly punitive for these parents, and as members of Commonwealth countries they did not expect this treatment. Martin, who migrated from Ghana at the age of 36 (in 1997), reported that he was working as an accountant in Ghana but upon migrating to England became a hair dresser working with his wife because they did not have the right immigration documentation. In Martin's view, the over-reliance on immigration status amounts to discrimination.

I experienced discrimination, [an] unfair system where everything is dependent on your immigration status and once people notice that you do not have the right residential document then they abuse you knowing that you cannot complain to the authority. The irony of the whole situation is that white people working in Ghana are treated with unquestionable kindness and respect and to be treated unkindly in the UK is heart breaking.

(Martin, working class, INTV2014)

Similarly, Oyiridiya reported that her daughter passed the entry exam and scholarship interview for one of the best secondary schools in London but was refused an offer.

She doesn't have status [resident visa], so the school denied her of that opportunity I followed it up I fought it out, I went to a solicitor and he wrote to the school asking why should they deny the child education and that no child should be denied education. They school called and said because they are going to spend £100k + for scholarship and bursary and that was why... So ever since I have not applied for any scholarship...

(Oyiridiya, working class, INTV2014)

Further, other respondents like Awka, Collins, Musa, Nnaemeka, Dayo and Kwame reported that they had negative migration experience in terms of not being able to find the same/comparable jobs or employment they were doing in West Africa after migrating to

England. Dayo for example reported being refused acceptance to a PGCE course in order to gain QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) in England because of his immigration status and as a consequence he resorted to cleaning job to feed his family. Akwa, who just graduated from the University of Nigeria Nsukka (one of the best universities in Nigeria), reported that he worked as a security guard (I presumed illegally) for the first five years after migrating to England because he do not have the required documentation to look for a job (as a Nutritionist) appropriate for his qualification.

In Oyiridiya's view, immigration policy has prevented her daughter from getting a quality education which was upsetting for her as she concluded by saying "[my children] can't get scholarship, they can't get bursary because we don't have paper..." After this negative experience Oyiridiya almost gave up, while she still had aspirations for her children, she took more of a backseat in their education, occasionally assisting with home learning but retracting from engagement with schools. Similarly, Dayo, Akwa and Martin's experience of discrimination led them to disengage entirely from the education system. The respondents' narratives show that they experienced a different world after migrating to England, a world almost opposite to that of West Africa.

The respondents felt that immigration control is subtle way to discriminate against people of colour. For example, Nnaemeka said that the issue of racism and discrimination does not only apply to migrant parents but also very much applicable to 'our children because they also black children going to school in a foreign land' (Nnaemeka, working class, INTV 2014). A view shared with Biafra, who said that a racist person does not 'differentiate between West African parents or children and other black parents or children. What they see is one colour and that colour as far as they are concern is black and that is it...' In his view, irrespective of your successes – financially, educationally, once you are a black migrant 'your colour still puts you different/under.'

In contrast, Adero, who migrated from Nigeria at the age of 28 (in 1995), reported that she was able to secure working permit/visa upon arriving in England, and a result found a job (Physiotherapy) which is the exact profession she would have had if she was resident in Nigeria. For Adero, emigrating to England was a success story as she was able to assimilate into English culture, and most importantly their school system, better than the rest of the study sample who struggled for many years because of their immigration status. Similarly, Fumi's elder brothers and father were resident in England when she emigrated and although

she does not have an automatic right to a resident permit, she was well advised on the best route to citizenship or permanent residential status. First, her student visa enabled her to work for 20 hours and she later got married and became a citizen after three years of residing in England as a student. Nneka was born in England and went back to Nigeria at the age of six with her father then came back with her son in 1996.

4.2.1.2. Racism/discrimination in attempts to find work

This section is directly linked to immigration control discussed above. Upon migration, participants (12/13) found it much harder to get work than they expected. A major issue was that despite many being professionally qualified to tertiary level, many found their qualifications were not recognised and therefore they were unable to find work in their profession. Many found themselves doing manual work for minimum or below minimum wage, and being badly treated in those jobs. Others had to face the prospect of completely retraining, and all the costs involved. Others found they were even expected to re-study for English qualifications, even though their main language was English. They found these restrictions to be discriminatory. Oyiridiya, a 47 year old mother of three emigrating from Nigeria for example reported being required to re-study for English qualifications before she can 'even' start looking for jobs:

I did my education back home up to Master degree level but I came here my degrees were not recognised ... I was looking for a job and is like nobody care about what you have, they are not interested in the degree you have and they expected me to do another English qualifications...

(Oyiridiya, working class, INTV2014)

Similarly, Fumi said:

I did A levels in Nigeria and was working at my father's company as an office assistant, but after migrating to England the only job I was able to find is to clean toilets while studying for Pharmacy.

(Fumi, middle class, INTV2014)

In the same vein, Collins said that he had a racist experience while looking for job after migrating to England:

The agency I was working for was giving white skin colour agency workers more jobs than us black Africans. One day I confronted the manager and he said the client requested white workers – are you white?

(Collins, working class, ITVN2014)

It was evident from respondents' accounts that most of the West African migrant parents in this study were unable to find the comparable or better jobs that they hoped for before migrating to England. For example, a bank consultant became an office administrator; head of Maths became a park attendant/cleaner; a government minister became a mail sorter for Royal Mail; A level graduate and office clerk became a toilet cleaner; Nutritionist became a security guard and a CEO PA became an agency worker. These 'new' jobs in England have no job security that other workers are entitled to because of their immigration status.

Dayo reported that when he went for the interview for his PGCE at Oxford University, the receptionist ignored him for almost an hour and arranged interviews for other white candidates who arrived late. In his view, the receptionist did not only show racist behaviour towards him but also was discriminatory because of his accent. In Dayo's view, the lecturers who later interviewed him were discriminatory because instead of assessing whether or not he has secure Maths knowledge, they were more interested on his accent and doubted his ability to communicate with the students in the classroom despite achieving C4 in GCSE English; gaining first degree in English and teaching Maths in English language for over fifteen years.

The respondents' narratives have shown that racism and discrimination experience while looking for 'better' jobs in England had a negative impact on their sense of self/ belonging. The overriding perception was that this was demeaning, reminiscent of colonial era treatment, and as a consequence they are more concerned about the structural barriers than the expectation to help their children with home learning. However, Adero who just graduated as a Physiotherapist in Nigeria before migrating to England was able to find a job in her field and did not have any issue regarding racism and/or discrimination. In her view, her 'dream came true after migrating to England' and she is happier and has fully assimilated into English culture and had a secure job from day one with all entitlements (e.g. pensions, paid leave, paid maternity leave) that come with it.

Whilst it is a long standing policy for foreigners (including those from European member states) emigrating to the UK to meet certain resident requirements and also adopt to the English educational system, this study has shown that these minority parents experienced more discriminations and prejudice (Wrench, 2004) which impacted their self-esteem and made them feel like ‘others’ with undesirable qualities. According to Biafra ‘it was a total shock’ in terms of accent, involvement practice, racism, employment, social network and happiness. Therefore, this study supports Ward et al. (2005) assertion intersection of cultures can be a stimulating and rewarding but it can also be a stressful and bewildering experience. Awka reported that he has never heard about the word ‘racism’ until he migrated to England.

I was frustrated that people’s colour, accent and social status can determine their future in a “civilised” country like England. This is not right! This kind of treatment is uncommon in Africa...I couldn’t find a decent job instead I worked as a security guard for many years...

(Awka, middle classINTV2014)

In the same vein, Nnaemeka said:

Foreigners [Europeans and American] in Africa are allowed to work without any preconditions. In fact, they are given the best jobs and their children go to the best schools but for Africans in Europe it is the opposite...but for African migrant like me I could not find good jobs because of my immigration status back then...

(Nnaemeka, working class, INTV2014)

Further, it is evident from the data analysis that West African migrant parents experienced multiple discriminations such as immigration status and race or being part of a dominated ethnic group (Crenshaw, 1989). Therefore, later I discuss the concept of ‘othering’ to theorise respondents’ narratives outlined above.

4.2.1.3. Experiences of social falling

As well as applying a racial lens, it is of paramount importance to evaluate the impact of West African migrant parents new social class position, post-migration, as social class is one of the most consistent and persistent indicators of educational attainment or involvement. This means that migrant parents’ social class and cultural class positions, for example income, occupation, level of education and networks are inextricably linked to their

children's educational pathways and achievement (Lehmann, 2013). What I found was that, as well as experiencing racial discrimination, this was compounded by the experience of 'social falling' upon migration, which most parents in the sample underwent.

In response to an interview question, whether the respondents experienced any changes in their social circumstances, Collins reported being in contact with Ghanaian elite social class (e.g. millionaires, government contractors and agencies). In his view, these contacts in Africa are real gold mine because they provided opportunities for his family to send their children to the best schools and even getting a good job for the members of his family was one of the benefits of having high-class contacts. However, after migration he said:

We became nobody even up until now our social class dipped so low and there is no contact/influence to rely upon instead you are being prejudiced upon. We have no social life; all we do is work and pay bill.

(Collins, working class, ITVN2014)

Similarly, Kwame reported that he has a well-paid job with the ministry of internal affairs in Ghana and uses a government car and "lives in government apartment with his family" and as a result of his social network his brother's children (for whom he was responsible for in Ghana), attended one of best government schools back home due to his employment status.

I socialise with the country's top politicians, men with power men that rule our country and dine with heads of state especially Africa heads of state. At one point I was appointed commissioner of internal affairs. However, in the UK we have no class as nobody noticed us as we live in a dilapidated council flat in North London...

(Kwame, working class, ITNV2014)

In West Africa all the thirteen participants could be classified as middle class and most of these parents reported playing an active role in their children's education (8/13 active and 5/13 less active). However their migrancy comes with serious dislocation of social status, for example only *one* migrant parent was categorised as middle class upon migration. Adero was able to get a mortgage to buy her own home and got a professional job as a Physiotherapist with NHS, five parents I reclassified as working class and later worked their way back to middle class status through either re-studying English qualifications or re-training in England. For

example, Fumi and Dayo were initially reclassified as working class in the first 3 years of emigrating to England as they were working as a cleaner and a park attendant respectively but after re-studying (Fumi) and re-training (Dayo), Fumi is now a Pharmacist (middle class) and mother of two children whilst Dayo is now a teacher (with QTS) and father of three children (now considered middle class). However, nearly half of the respondents (7/13) were unable to assimilate into middle class networks and as a consequence were still reclassified as working class and found themselves socially falling and locked into working class lifestyles.

Furthermore, in response to an interview question regarding participants' social class positions, post migration, Biafra reported that in England a black person has no social class as he/she is just regarded as another ordinary black person with no class. I agree with Biafra's view that race supersedes class differentiation because in the UK context ethnicity/race is seen as pertaining to people's cultural identities, and as a result not part of social categorisation, rather adorned on us from our parents or origins. This means that ethnicity/race has natural attributes to who we are, while class is associated with material inequality (Anthias, 2001). Similarly, Hall et al (1978) state that 'race is the modality in which class is lived. It is also the medium in which class relations are experienced' (p. 394). This means that parents who were ostensibly 'middle-class' with access to dominant networks in their home country became 'classless' and as a consequence lack the social capital needed to support their children's learning in the new field of education – a practice that is uncommon in their home countries.

4.2.2. Cultural differences in parental involvement practice

One of the main barriers to migrants' involvement in their children's learning was a cultural disjuncture between West African and English educational systems. That is, what parental involvement 'looked like' in West Africa was very different to expectations in England. The respondents reported that in West Africa, active parental involvement involves:

- paying tuition and all other fees,
- attending pta (parent teacher association) meetings,
- paying for extra lessons,
- paying for boarding schooling,
- moral and emotional support,

- empowering children to be more independent,
- buying text and exercise books, and
- provision of conducive and safe environment for learning.

However, in England active engagement includes:

- attending parents' evenings (once a year),
- helping school children with homework and school projects including online learning at home,
- school-home and home-school communication,
- in-school activities
- provision of conducive and safe environment for learning, and
- decision-making (e.g. being a parent governor)

Fumi, for example said that schoolchildren should complete their homework independently, and if they need help it is the responsibility of their teachers to help and not parents. Almost all the study participants echoed this view as they reported that whilst parents were not expected to help their children with homework and other day to day school work requirements in West African schools (Russell and Granville, 2005), they were surprised by the English schools' expectation to help their children with home learning. Kwame, for example said that he received a note/letter from his son's Maths teacher, demanding to assist him with homework.

My son's Maths teacher wrote on his diary that we [his parents] should assisting him with Maths homework...we were unaware that it is also our duty to help with homework... this is different ... despite the fact we have provided our son with all learning equipment, provide him with supportive home environment.

(Kwame, working class, INTV2014)

Adero, said '...in secondary I just don't want to be actively involved because I am always around to provide the right environment and making sure they are actually working.' This view was supported by another participant, Awka who said '...for me it is just a choice of not wanting to be involved in terms of helping with homework but rather providing the right atmosphere...'

Further, another obvious difference in cultural ways of engagement between the two fields is home-school and school-home communication requirement by English schools. In West Africa, parents are not expected to inform schools about home situations or issues including issues of ‘child abuse’ as they are believed to be family affairs, best addressed by family members but schools are required to communicate with home regarding their children’s attainment. However, in England the government expects parents to inform schools any issues at home, which will affect the welfare and academic progress of their children (DfE, 2011). See section 3.10 for full list of cultural differences in relation to parental involvement between West Africa and England.

West African migrant parents’ contrasted expectations discussed above in turn created differentiated barriers or challenges to their ability to actively participate in English education, and it is to this that I now turn.

4.3. Challenges to parental involvement

Coleman’s (1987) article titled ‘*Families and Schools*’ argued that all categories of family are increasingly ill-equipped to provide the learning environment that will support schools for the education of the next generation. Some of these barriers are well documented in previous research (Hollingworth et al, 2009; Selwyn, 2002; Warschauer et al, 2004) and professional journals, and it is also reasonably well documented how these barriers are more acute for parents experiencing a range of other socio-economic difficulties (North et al, 2008; Livingstone et al, 2005). What is less documented is exactly how minority ethnic, and specifically migrant parents experience (and struggle with) educational engagement, upon migration. In this section then, I discuss the identified barriers or factors that hinder these specific West African migrant parents’ efforts to actively participate in their children’s education. Some of these factors can be attributed to structural barriers or ‘external barriers’ which are out of the parent’s control while other barriers can be linked to parents’ specific situations or ‘internal barriers’ Coleman (1987), but these categories are mutually reinforcing and difficult to entangle. What I want to do is paint a picture of the importance of the complex contextual experience, how migration brings shifting social positionings, differing cultural expectations and assumptions, as well as very practical challenges such as time

pressure, relationship building, and holes in subject knowledge, which all come together to enable parents to be more or less effective in their involvement with their children's education.

The perceived barriers to engagement are listed in table 4 and these barriers are further discussed in this section.

Table 5: Identified barriers to parental involvement

<i>Barriers</i>	<i>Explanations</i>
Cultural difference in parent-school roles (4.2.1)	Parents' came from West Africa with different expectations of what parents' roles are.
Lack of knowledge or schools' lack of training (4.2.2)	Parents lack of subject curriculum knowledge or of technology skills. Lack of effective communication between parents and the school.
Ways of involvement not acknowledged (4.2.3)	In terms of communication, teachers perceived different cultural experiences between migrants and teachers as a fundamental barrier to active parental involvement.
Disagreements about discipline (4.2.4)	Welfare officers in England disapprove migrant West African parents' ways (smacking) of disciplining their children and this disagreement creates tension between school and home.
Marginalisation in decision making (4.2.5)	Parents who struggle to socially integrate and/or assimilate because of their perceived prejudicial treatment and stigmatisation feel like 'others'. However, a few migrants were able to utilise their social capitals and assimilated British involvement culture. Parents have no voice, as they perceived schools as oppressed or aggressive institutions.
Time crunch (4.2.6)	This affects mostly working-class and/or single parent households.
Parents' social identities (4.2.7)	Parents' social identities in terms of language, ethnicity and social class acted as structural barriers to engagement.

4.3.1. Cultural difference in parent-school roles

As I mentioned in section 4.2.2, it is clear from the respondents' narratives that parents are not expected to participate in education in West African education system, therefore in England most of them (11/13) resisted to actively engage in their children's home learning. This shows that the perceived non - involvement is because of cultural difference in terms of

involvement practice. For some of these respondents, it is difficult to change this deep-rooted assumption and therefore they rejected the need for complete assimilation of the British education expectation for parents' home learning (Menski, 2002). However, a few respondents reported they have started assisting their children's with home learning after being asked by the teachers. Shartrand et al. (1997) suggest that the perceived non-involvement by minority groups can be attributed to their lack of the 'cultural capital' needed to play active role in their children's education. This means that lack of acceptable cultural capital for active participation creates cultural barriers and according to Morris and Taylor (1998), these cultural barriers for example could include diverse values, culture, and experiences between parents and teachers. Denessen et al. (2007), who asserted that cultural difference between schools and minority families is another reason for non-involvement, supported this view.

4.3.2. Lack of knowledge or schools' lack of training

While migrant parents often lacked the knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy, one way of perceiving this is that it is schools' responsibility to communicate this. This study has revealed that many respondents were unaware of how to assist their children's learning at home because the schools have not clearly communicated the teaching methodology needed to enhance home learning. Similarly, they received no training (both subject curriculum and technology) on how to help their children with homework, and thus this perceived lack of training amounts to a structural barrier to involvement. Adero reported that her children's schools send out curriculum information to parents at the start of the year explaining what their children will learn but this does not explain the types of activity that parents can be involved in or how they should help their children.

Participants were of the view that parental involvement strategies in their children's schools lacked clarity and were inconsistent with regard to how to raise children's attainment. A few participants said that they have bad experiences with schools in England and they felt unsupported and therefore they are reluctant to actively participate because of their perceived mixed-messages from the school. For example, Awka recalled an incident when he helped his daughter with Maths homework and she got low marks. One interpretation is that this minority group of parents were reluctant to participate in the education of their children especially supporting them with homework because of the fear of teaching things differently from the school's standard.

Some interviewees said they had received curriculum information but others had not. Migrant parents also reported that they would benefit from better-organised teacher-led communication actions.

Wouldn't it be nice if our children's teachers will give us all their subject contents at the beginning of the term, so that we know upfront what they should be learning...might help if we can... instead the schools communicate more when there is a behaviour issues to address...

(Awka, middle class, INTV2014)

Moreover, the schools did not provide the respondents with any training and guidance on how best to help their children with home learning.

Our children's schools did not provide any technology training and subject guidelines to help our children. But they set online homework for our children and expected parents to help them. Sometimes they show me the homework once they have completed the homework but I'm unable to assist them, as I'm not technology literate.

(Kwame, working class, INTV2014)

The schools do not even provide any form of training and obviously assisting parents to buy the required technology is not possible but still they expect parents/carers to play active role using technology.

(Collins, working-class, INTV2014)

4.3.3. Ways of involvement not acknowledged

Sometimes lack of knowledge is interpreted as lack of interest. White-Clark and Decker (1996) argue that although parents and family members are interested in the education of their children, many parents struggle to translate their aspiration into active involvement. Indeed, this study suggests that respondents (13/13) are interested in their children's learning and want to help them to succeed.

Further, most (9/13) of the participants said that education policy in England is 'anti-migrants' as all the migrants' habitual ways of involvement are not recognised by their

children's schools. All participants said that English schools did not acknowledge their cultural ways of involvement as valuable or valid by the schools.

My son's Maths teacher wrote on his diary that we [his parents] should be assisting him with Maths homework... despite the fact we have provided our son with all learning equipment e.g. mathematical set, computer and internet at home and trained him on how to respect teachers ...provide him with supportive home environment...

(Kwame, working class, INTV2014)

DfES (2007b) assertion that some parents are 'hard to reach', from dysfunctional homes, disengaged and do not care for their children's education is problematic as the schools can also be regarded as 'hard to reach' as they keep 'parents activists' out of their schools (Coleman, 1991). Crozier and Davies (2007), who argued, 'schools themselves ... inhibit accessibility for certain parents (p296), shared this view. For example, despite the provision of supportive home and academic socialisation, parents from Pakistan and Bangladeshi were seen as not participating in their children's education (Ibid, 2007).

These cultural differences became apparent when it came to attempts to engage with teachers. Teachers' attitude towards parents as valuable stakeholders in the education of their children poses another noticeable barrier. Teachers who have prejudiced views that low income parents do not care about their children's education and do not want to be involved in their education, may knowingly or unknowingly convey the attitude to parents that their participation will have little or no impact (Liontos, 1991; Maylor et al, 2009). This position is problematic because low income is then interpreted as not interested in children's education.

The respondents reported that teachers' lack of knowledge about migrant parents' cultures, lifestyles, and values inhibit their relationships with parents who come from different cultures. For example, Awka reported that he received a phone call from his daughter's school complaining about her 'unacceptable' behaviour and when he challenged the teacher arguing that his daughter is a well behaved girl, she ended the telephone conversation abruptly and later made a complaint to the headteacher alleging that Awka was aggressive and abusive. This is reminiscent of my experience as a secondary teacher: African born parents speak fast and loud which is misrepresented in English culture as shouting and therefore condescending and abusive but it is simply a cultural insignia (Joshi et al.2005). Moreover, teachers might lack the confidence to work with parents from different cultural and

socio-economic backgrounds. One of the implications of the above barriers is that active parental involvement is negatively affected, and consequently, migrants' children are unlikely to achieve their full potential in education. Flynn and Nolan (2008) state that teachers, in some instances, hinder school-home communications because they lack the required skills and need more training in this area.

Further, teachers lack the knowledge about cultural differences in non-verbal communications, such as looking each other in the eyes while having a conversation could be considered disrespectful for other cultures, and as a result, they tend to avoid communication with ethnic minority parents (Denessen et al., 2007). Some respondents reported that teachers treat them as 'inferior' in terms of academic knowledge, English proficiency and experience.

I attended my son's parents evening and I was waiting and his Maths teacher, whom my wife has spoken to before on the phone about his homework. He saw that we were waiting and made no effort to come and speak to us ... so we made formal complaint to my son's form tutor ...

(Martin, working class, INTV2014)

As a result, Martin and others feel intimidated or embarrassed to communicate with or visit teachers to discuss their children's education and ascertain how best they can assist them at home. This study supports Leitch and Tangri (1988) assertion that teachers' perceptions of parents, such as, having unrealistic expectations of the role of school, inability to help with the school work, teachers' unresponsiveness to parents, and teachers' distrust of parents who are involved (and schools' unwillingness to involve 'parent activists' Coleman (1991)) amount to barriers to active parental involvement.

4.3.4. Disagreements about Discipline

Discipline was a further area in which cultural differences were laid bare. Any attempt to discipline their children at home was often met with threats of prosecution from welfare officers in schools. Fumi talked about her infamous encounter with her son's welfare officer regarding his rudeness at home and school, which obviously has started to have negative impact on his education. According to her, the school's inaction is part of a wider plan to stop minority children from achieving their full potential as education is the only measurable route for social mobility and consequently failing to achieve good secondary education will

invariably lead to an unfulfilled adult life. A nuanced analysis of Fumi's encounter with her son's welfare officer suggests there are issues about children's human rights and cultural practices, which often come in conflict, especially within families from ethnic minority backgrounds. First, article 5 of the Rights of the Child states that the governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly (UNCRC, 2010; UNICEF, 2008). However, the same convention also states in article 19 that the governments have the obligation to protect children from all forms of abuse. Social programmes and support services shall be made available. This shows that both Fumi and the welfare officer are both fulfilling their obligations.

The underlying cause of the confrontation was the issue around what constitute an 'abuse.' The welfare officer, who is white and working in a predominantly white school, considers 'smacking' an abuse. Her standpoint is bolstered by her cultural practices and English schools' interpretation of what constitute an abuse. In contrast, Fumi who migrated from Nigeria has a different perspective on what constitute an abuse, and reported that smacking her 15 years old son, who has been rude both at home and in school, is not an abuse because she was trying to teach him an important lesson: the right to express his views also comes with the responsibility to respect other people's rights, and as a mother or parent she has the right for her son to respect her. In Fumi's experience, smacking children is a caring means of bringing them up in the right way, it is the cultural practice in West Africa which helps to re-direct children to make the right choices as they grow up. It is not a deliberate, reckless or a systematic act to cause injury to a child; rather, in a culture that is more physically tactile, it is regarded as transient and trifling. Interestingly, a review of Section 58 of the Children Act 2004 indicates that whilst the government does not condone smacking as there are other effective methods of managing children's behaviour, the State and her institutions should not intervene in family life unnecessarily, and stressed the need to allow parents to bring up their children as they see fit (DCSF, 2007).

Parents' past 'undesirable' experiences with their own education can also hinder their involvement in their children's education, as they perceive themselves as the "others" (DCSF 2009; Williams et al 2002; DfES, 2007b). Unlike the West African experience of 'equitable dialogue', the dialogue between parents and teachers in English education is inequitable with teachers assuming the position of authority – the knowledgeable. This is contrary to Crozier and Reay (2005) assertion that the dialogue between schools and parents should be equitable

in order to establish good home-school communication (Schussler, 2003). Moreover, Epstein (1985) posits that creating genuine partnership between the family and the school will result in maximum interaction between the two spheres, and as a result increase the standard of parental involvement. Equally, some (4/13) respondents questioned the impact of technology in their children's education. In their view, technology provide their children access to learning materials but it does not really explain how to critically analyse, evaluate or synthesise the information (OECD, 2015). In the same vein, NCREL (2003) suggests that factors, such as parents' efficacy and home-school communication influence students' achievement positively. Thus, parents with positive attitudes are likely to communicate with the school and teachers in order to support their children's education.

4.3.5. Marginalisation in decision-making

There is an issue of marginalisation (which will be considered in more detail in chapter 5) as respondents' accounts demonstrated they have been marginalised by the schools, and thus felt they have no voice, particularly in decision-making. Some of the respondents reported that their children's schools rarely consult them before making any decisions that will affect their children. Biafra, Awka and Fumi reported that the schools are more likely to contact them (through text messages) when their children have failed to comply with their rules or ethos. This practice is contrary to Shaw's (2011) view that schools should do more to illustrate to parents how their jobs and daily life skills can be transferred and used in supporting their children learning at home. Parental involvement experts indicated that schools should solicit for parents' views; understand their needs; contact them with more good news than bad news regarding their children (DfE, 2010). These attributes are important because one of the parameters to measure or judge the quality of children's education is the degree of parental involvement (OECD, 2010; Hansson and Charbonnier, 2010). When parents do not see schools as honest institutions, established for the interest of all citizens irrespective of race, immigration status, language then they will not trust the schools and lack of trust, in my view, could lead to scepticism. If there is no relationship, then parental involvement initiative cannot survive as parents will always feel voiceless and marginalised. Hollingworth et al (2009) indicated that parents who perceived the schools to be discriminatory and felt being marginalised because of their socio-economic status, are unlikely to actively engage with their children's schools. Biafra said:

Our relationship with my children's schools is like master - servant relationship, the master tells the servant what to do and the servant does it and no question asked...

(Biafra, middle class, INTV2014)

Equally, Collins, working class migrant parents quipped 'is this kind of master – servant relationship what will transform British education to make it world class - I believe no.'

In Biafra and Collins' view, true relationship is one found on equality and respect with no strings attached. One of the implications of unequal relationship is marginalisation as this study has demonstrated that informants felt being marginalised and as a consequence has no voice especially in decision making. In the extract below, Adero narrated how her experience of 'voiceless' in the English education system (new field) affected her level of involvement.

Charles Okpalanwankwo (CO): How does your children's school empower you as a parent to help your children?

Adero: 'We normally have a meeting at the beginning of the year briefly about the curriculum, briefly about types of the exams so they give us some information there in the school. But the schools do not solicit our feedback or views on what the children are learning apart from Ofsted comments before any inspections. The only thing is when they want to make changes they do consultation. In my opinion parents' views have never be taken on board after the consultation ...it is just formality ... tick box exercise. You understand?'

Charles Okpalanwankwo (CO): Not really!

Charles Okpalanwankwo (CO): Are you saying that your children's school consultation is a 'tick box' exercise?

Adero: Yes

Charles Okpalanwankwo (CO): What do you mean by 'tick box' exercise?

Adero: May be to prove to inspectors or governors that parents were consulted but actual parents have no voice. It is a bad practice because as parent I have the right for my voice to be heard and contribute my views towards the education of my children. In Africa, parents have real voice and they can influence school policy and get things done but in the UK parents are treated like outsiders.

Adero and other informants' narratives constitute an example of how dominant discourses create 'truths' about parents as equal partners in English education system that impact on how they see and experience themselves.

As discussed in chapter 2, much research on parental involvement (especially in secondary school) suggest it raises students' achievement (Ramirez, 2001; Fan and Chen, 2001; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Becta, 2007). However, they overlooked the possibility that some of these children may not want their parents to get involved in their education. Thus, creating a another type of marginalisation, the expectation for parents to engage in home learning without the children's consent. Children's desire for independence creates another barrier to involvement (Okpalanwankwo, 2010). At secondary schools, some migrant parents recalled that their children do not want them to get involved. Their priorities centred on creating a home environment conducive for learning, discussion of general school progress, support when in trouble and provision of materials (including technology) to succeed in schools. Additionally, the respondents' accounts suggest that the West African education system encourages children to be independent and does not expect parents to assist them with home learning.

My son is really difficult because it is like he is warding me off ... is ok mummy I'm ok ... really doesn't want me to be interfering. He wants to take that control which is good to an extent but again if I am able to see what he is doing I can add to it.

(Fumi, working-class, INTV2014)

My children are capable of doing what they are doing, their schoolwork and homework ... sometimes they don't want my help. And also my children don't actually want to be spoon fed. They just want you to probably just advise them and then let them carry on.

(Awka, working-class, INTV2014)

Fumi and Awka's views above support Okpalanwankwo (2010) finding that some young people do not want parents' involvement when it comes to school work as it is their space and they do not want parents to interfere but rather provide an environment that is conducive to succeed in school. Byron's research (2009) on the views and attitudes of parents, children and teachers, reveals that some children rarely speak to their parents about their education. In

addition, parents find it extremely difficult to extract information about school from their children. Equally, lack of educational experience and personal interests may be other underlying reasons why West African parents would prefer their children to be independent. As Reay et al (2005) asserted parents might not really want to participate in their children's education because of different goals and lack of active parental involvement skills. That is to say, parents were unable to support their children's learning because of their involvement in work and lack of previous experiences to draw upon. This study reinforces Reay et al's observation that less educated parents are the groups who are most unlikely to participate in their children's learning. Becta (2010) research titled "*I'm stuck – can you help?*" indicates that one of the reasons why children hesitate to ask their parents to help with schoolwork is because they are usually confused with their teaching methods. This raises questions regarding the role of teachers and parents. Who has the professional duty to educate learners and provide education? According to Russell and Granville (2005), teachers have the professional responsibility to provide education in a safe and structured setting. They are also responsible to make sure that every child meets the expected target, so the use of uninformed parental support for home learning can produce undesirable outcomes.

4.3.6. Time crunch

On a very practical level insufficient time led to parents being quite 'time poor' as work and earning enough money became a priority, in a way that it was not in West Africa. Most respondents (11/13) said that they do not have enough time to play an active role in their children's education especially assisting them with homework because of work commitment. In most cases, both parents are shift -working which makes it almost impossible for them to be around and actively participate in their children's education.

Both of us are working, so we find it really difficult to devote quality time for our children because we come back from work we are tired and we will not have enough time for our kids. So, time is the problem – not having enough time to participate in our children's home learning is the main problem facing us.

(Awka, middle class, INTV2014)

Similarly, Biafra said, 'my wife and I do not give enough time for our children's education because of work pressure. There are lots of bill to pay and we are both in full time

employments...’ (INTV2014). Furthermore, single-parent respondents with more than one child have limited time to devote to every child.

I’m a single mother with three daughters and it is really challenging to give quality time to all of them in order to help with their learning at home...

(Oyiridiya, working class, INTV2014)

Liontos indicated that as the number of single-parent families, families in which both parents work and families experiencing financial hardship increases, all children are likely to be at risk at some point in their childhood (1991). Children from these families are prone to receive little or no help from their parents, and consequently be at risk of likely underachieving. Equally, parental involvement is a marker of assessing good quality education for children (OECD, 2010; Hansson and Charbonnier, 2010). Therefore, to engage these families in English education, different approaches are needed because some of the cultural or dominant methods of parental involvement may not work for them.

The FPI (Family Parenting Institute) claims that lack of time hinders the ability of certain groups of parents, for example families where parents work, fathers, and single parent’s household to participate in their children’s education (FPI, 2005). It was evident from transcripts analysis that in households where both parents work, it is difficult to help with their children’s home learning and this affects both working-class and middle-class families. Also, this study shows that low income and/or less educated respondents (e.g. Martin, Musa, Kwame and Nnaemeka), who migrated to England for economic purposes or in pursuit of better life, are more likely to have insufficient free time due to work patterns. However, there is also another type of disadvantaged group of schoolchildren (often ignored), those from well-educated family whose parents (e.g. Awka, Ada) are busy working and have no time to participate in their education (Coleman, 1991).

The respondents’ narratives have shown that insufficient time is one of the main reasons they were not participating actively in their children’s home learning. The perceived non-involvement is exacerbated by the migrant parents living in a nuclear household without extended family members to assist in the raising of their children. That is to say, many respondents (12/13) are experiencing what I refer to as ‘time crunch’ or not having enough time to engage in home learning. For example, although a few respondents are of the view that it is crucial to spend quality time at home helping their children with homework, they are

frustrated there often is not enough time to assist children. Moreover, this study showed that working-class respondents are more affected when compared with middle-class respondents as they work long shifts. Martin, for example worked for a standard 12 hours shift as a security guard, while Fumi (middle class) started work at 8.45 and finished at 4.00. This reinforces Russell and Granville's assertion that lack of time because of family and work obligations is one of the significant barriers to active involvement (2005).

4.3.7. Parents' social identities

In table 3 (section 3.4.3), I categorised the respondents as having 'active', 'less active' and 'non-active' involvement in education. I found there were patterns in terms of who was able to be 'active' and 'non-active' upon migration. It is evident that parents' West African ethnic background, language spoken, educational levels and class position had impacted their ability to be involved in their children's education in England. In contrast, migrant West African parent's ethnicity had no bearing on educational involvement however, upon migration to England, those from Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups were able to take a more active involvement. In terms of educational levels, in West Africa, no significant pattern was observed as parents are not expected to support their children's learning but in the English education system, migrant parents' educational level affects their ability to support their children's learning. Whilst in West Africa there was no impact of language or dialect on engagement, as parents have the option to communicate in their local dialect, in England home-school communication and learning instructions were usually in English. Migrant parents who are now categorised as EAL after migrating to England were less likely to effectively support the children's home learning.

Further, there is a pattern to suggest that West African migrant parents' social class position affects their ability to participate in their children's education in both contexts, albeit different class classification systems. I go on to elaborate on these differences below.

4.3.7.1. Impact of social falling on educational engagement

As I outlined in section 4.2.1.3, the majority of respondents (12/13) experienced social falling after migrating to England and their narratives showed a relationship/pattern between parental involvement and parents' socioeconomic status *after* migrating to England. This study

therefore explores those patterns in three main themes: being reclassified as ‘EAL’; having their qualifications downgraded; and experiencing a social class downgrade.

4.3.7.1.1 Being reclassified as EAL

Respondents’ narrative accounts showed that in West Africa the main language of communication between parents and schools is English (including pigeon English). Almost all (11/13), however, reported that English became positioned in England as ‘foreign language speaking’, regardless of what they actually spoke at home, post migration. This created an ‘EAL divide’: where those who spoke ‘good enough’/‘acceptable’ English were afforded better involvement in the school, while those with less accepted English language command tended to be less active, despite having no problems communicating in English in the African school context. Parents found in England they were expected to communicate in English unlike in the Nigerian system for example, where parents have a choice to communicate in English, local dialects, pigeon English or a combination of these languages. Despite London schools being promoted as multicultural and multilingual, the reality of this appeared to be tokenistic as day to day communication in English was just assumed, and any other language was ‘extra’ and ‘other’. A few respondents such as Musa felt the expectation that parents must communicate in English was biased and reminiscent of colonial era prejudice against ‘natives’, something I go on to theorise in the next chapter.

It was apparent in the transcripts that this categorisation of migrant parents as ‘EAL’ led to a feeling of alienation. Kwame, for example, said:

My wife [a qualified nurse with years of experience] was required by the NHS to take speaking, reading and writing tests and six month induction [almost equivalent to retraining] before she could work as a nurse in England. So if she has to relearn English, how can she then support our children attending English school...?

(Kwame, working class, INTV2014)

Similarly, Oyiridiya said that:

Two UK universities requested I undertook refresher courses ... I have to do even test in English – ESOL you know...before I could be considered for a course

(Oyiridiya, working class, INTV2014)

This treatment, Kwame reported, made his wife feeling depressed, worthless and sometimes suicidal for many years. Whilst the NHS requirement for medical professionals is universal and ‘fairly’ applicable to all migrants, West African migrants arguably are the ones mostly affected as there are large numbers of this group in the NHS.

This issue of language had a particular ethnic dimension also. In West Africa ethnic background bore no significance to whether parents were involved in education or not. However, upon migrating to England, those from the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups were able to take a more active participation, regardless of their participation in Africa, and those from ‘less educated’ ethnic groups (Onwuameze, 2013), tended to be less involved (e.g. Hausa from northern Nigeria, Ewe, Guan, Akan). This was clearly not because they were less interested (as they had been in Africa) but, largely, appeared to be because they had a stronger accent, ‘dialect’, or less clear English language fluency, which was interpreted by teachers/schools as less competent.

It is difficult for me to communicate in English because the teachers find it hard to understand what I’m saying, they keep on saying pardon, pardon ... may be my Hausa accent is the problem I don’t really know and I don’t want to humiliate my children so it is better to avoid contacting the school...

(Musa, working class, INTV2014)

So as we can see in the case of Musa, he decided to stay away in case his competence (or perceived lack of) affected how they perceived his children. Equally, Collins said that:

Teachers are more willing to spend more time with parents who have better [accepted] accent but reluctant to engage parents with accent or English as second language.

(Collins, working class, INTV2014)

In the same vein, Kwame said that:

In my normal day to day interaction in London, people find it difficult to understand what I am saying and it is insulting because I went to English school in Ghana I know I speak good English but even my children’s school always want them explain what I’m saying during parents evenings...

(Kwame, Guan, INTV2014)

Collin and Kwame's accounts outlined above shows that, due to their accent and English language use, and the schools' reaction to this, they became 'hard to reach' (Crozier and Davies, 2007).

4.3.7.1.2. Having their qualifications downgraded

Data analysis has shown that migrant West African parents who had their qualifications downgraded after migrating to England had more difficulty engaging with their children's education upon migration. For example, it was evident that the qualifications of five 'non-active' parents were downgraded post migration. Moreover, educational level affected their ability to support their children's learning in the English education system, whereas in West Africa, this had little or no effect. Interestingly it was not just their education level upon migration that mattered, but the extent to which their educational qualifications were able to 'travel' with them into the new context. For example, five parents categorised as being 'active' in England all had secondary or tertiary level qualifications that they had received in Africa. In addition, this group of parents had been able to either have their West African qualifications validated in the UK and/or had progressed to further tertiary level in England. In contrast, of the five parents who do not actively participate in their children's learning, despite some having tertiary level qualification, most found that their qualifications were either not recognised or 'downgraded' in England. So their 'true' educational level is being misrecognised, in a sense.

I think it is insulting to disregard my Maths and teaching degrees, 15 years experience of teaching Maths and running a department and demand that I should do PGCE in England before I could teach Maths

(Dayo, middle class, INTV2014)

Whilst Dayo had achieved a degree in Mathematics and teaching qualification in Nigeria, he believes it was enough to teach Maths at secondary school level in any country. However, upon migration his qualification was downgraded which affected his confidence and as a consequence he became 'non-active' and disengage in English education system at least for the first three-five years of emigrating to the UK.

Ada said that she was actively involved in her cousin's learning in Nigeria, despite only achieving GCSE/A level, but became non-active after migrating to England even though she has subsequently achieved a BSc in Nursing. Similarly, Martin (gained BA and MA in Ghana) was actively engaged in Ghanaian education system but his narratives show that he became non-active participant post migration. Ada and Martin's qualifications were downgraded after migrating to England and they also said other experiences such racism, EAL, discrimination, prejudice and being jobless were painful. Therefore, respondents' non-involvement could be as a result of the intersecting multiple identities which hindered their ability to engage in their children's education in England. Similarly, Collins and Kwame had OND (Ordinary National Diploma) and bachelors' degree respectively and were actively involved in West African school education system, but they became non-active after migrating to England. One interpretation is that the experiences of misrecognition of their qualifications and parental involvement practices in England was so painful and discriminatory that they became disenchanted, and as a consequence withdraw from active participation. Kwame said:

We are disappointed with the UK system, I gained bachelor degree in Ghana [studied in English] and it is not recognised in the UK... and now they expect[ed] me to assist my children with homework which unthinkable in Africa. Anyway, sorting out our papers[immigration document] is our main goal...

(Kwame, working class, INTV2014)

Similarly, Collins said:

It is really unfair to disregard my diploma and previous experiences and expect us to start learning English again... I think the system is biased against Africans

(Collins, working class, INTV2014)

Kwame and Collins narratives above have shown that they felt being treated unfairly in England because of their 'alien' identities and past experiences and arguably their perceived non-involvement can be attributed to possessing multiple subordinate group identities such as race, EAL and educational level which exacerbated an already difficult migration experience.

4.3.7.1.3. Experiencing social class downgrade

What I found was that the 'social class theme' was the most significant and dominant in this study. All participants reported that their social class positioning after migrating to the

England informed their ability to play an active role in their children's learning. For example, all participants (13/13) were categorised as middle-class in West Africa and most of these parents reported playing some kind of role in their children's education. In contrast, many recalled that migrancy came with serious dislocation of practices and social status. In the new context, based on their occupation, housing status, and income levels and other socio-cultural factors I have categorised seven as working-class in the UK context (see section 3.9). This represents a 'down-grade' or shift down in their social class status. Interestingly, these 'working-class' parents, some of whom were active in the African context, told me that they do not play an active role in their children's education. This was due to complex factors such as work pressure, low SES, computer illiteracy and culture (Selwyn, 2002; Warschauer et al, 2004).

In response to an interview question whether the respondents experienced any changes in their social circumstances, Biafra asserted that in England a black person has no social class as he or she is just regarded as another ordinary black person with no class. This means that parents who were classified as 'middle-class' with access to dominant networks in their home country became "classless" and as a consequence lack the social capital needed to support their children's learning in the new field of education, a practice that is uncommon in their home countries.

Dayo, Fumi (both categorised as middle class) and Musa (categorised as working class), for example experienced 'social class shift' for at least the first three years in England. They reported a downward movement from being surrounded and socialising with the powerful in their home country to being lonely in a foreign country. In response to one of the research questions (participants' views on their social class and status both pre and post migration), Musa said:

I owned many farm lands which was deemed upper class in our city [Gombe]. I have high level contacts [social network which they can draw upon]. My children go to one of the best schools and are treated in the best hospital but, when we migrated to England we had no class and no one cares about us. It seems like we do not exist because everybody goes about their business. In fact I will say we had no social class apart from socialising with our Muslim brothers and sisters through the mosque

(Musa, working-class, INTV2014)

Further, participants' narrative accounts demonstrated their belonging to multiple subordinate identity groups (Crenshaw, 1989). Their social class positions in England intersected with race and language/EAL, to create more discrimination and prejudice. The SES divide and the impact on respondents' participation in their children's education is typified by Adero:

I get involved by creating conducive environment when my children come back from school ... I can tell from their book what is expected of them to complete for the next day. We pay for tuitions in English, Maths and Science and my son has personal music teacher and football coach. Even sometimes, I will forego my gym classes just to make sure homework and other school works are completed to the highest standard...

(Adero, middle-class, INTV2014)

In contrast, Collins – a working-class migrant parent, recalled:

As a shop keeper in London, it is impossible to help our children with their homework or school work because when I come back I'm already tired so I just eat and go to bed. Occasionally they ask for our help like on Sundays but I still can't help because I don't understand the questions. I don't engage much with my children's learning because of work and lack of subject knowledge.

(Collins, working-class, INTV2014)

Data analysis also shows that all the less-active and non-active parents (in England) were categorised as 'lower' class because their West African qualifications were downgraded and SES status. This study supports Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) and Eereka et al. (2015) observations that high SES and well educated families are more likely to participate in their children's education. It is important to observe that Adero is classified in this study as middle-class and well educated while Collins is from lower class family, and thus the study finding supports North et al. (2008) and Livingstone et al.'s (2005) assertions that other factors, such as SES, parents' educational background and social class issues are responsible for creating the 'ideal' environment needed to foster children's well-being and achievement.

I have shown so far how a range of identity and experience factors appeared to play a role in parents' ability to engage in their children's education, and more importantly that migration created a new context in which these factors worked differently: it was a new ball game.

4.4. Concluding comments

This chapter has discussed in detail West African migrant parents' identities and experiences, pre and post migration, and has illuminated how these have complexly and differentially affected their ability to participate actively in the English education system. To summarise, these migrants experienced different forms of prejudice and discrimination. For example, they were subjected to strict immigration control, and as a consequence they often could not find work, further their education, send their children to the schools of their choice and receive free school meal entitlement even though they are from working class and low income families. Upon migration, these West African migrant parents experienced dislocation in their day to day activity in England. In addition, to immigration control and racist/discriminatory remarks made against them while looking for work they experienced 'social falling' as most parents were now categorised as EAL, their qualifications downgraded and social class shifted from middle class to working class. They found these experiences very painful for at least the first five years of their migration to England. What was also evident was that discrimination and prejudice upon migration affected their sense of belonging which also played a key role in whether and how they engaged with key institutions including schools.

These experiences in turn shape their ability to either play an 'active'/'less-active' or 'non-active' involvement role in their children's education. This means that their experiences and new identities after migrating to England created challenges to their ability to participate in English education. First, the expectation to only communicate in English language added another layer to the parents' predicament as those with accent and poor literacy find it difficult to engage with their children's schools. Second, it was evident that parental involvement practice in England is culturally different from that of West African school system. In West Africa for example parents are not expected to participate in their children's learning as this would amount to 'interfering' in schools' business. To them, creating a home environment, which is conducive for learning; paying tuition and all necessary fees and general well-being of their children, are important aspects of active parental involvement.

In summary, this chapter has shown that respondents' social treatment upon migration (rather than their 'pre-migration social status') affected their ability to engage in their children's

education. That is, alienation and isolation has a knock on effect on other aspects of their lives which exacerbated the situation.

The next chapter explicates how sociological and educational theories can advance our knowledge about African parents' identities and experiences and the implications of these new identities and experiences on their ability to support their children's home learning. Chapter 5 will also explore and interpret these experiences/ factors and theorise these using a mixture of Bourdieuan, postcolonial and intersectional frameworks.

Chapter 5: Theorising the Impact of migrant parents identities and experiences.

5.1. Introduction

We have seen how parents' identities and experiences affected their ability to participate in their children's education. Before I explore the role of technology in parents' engagement with their children's education, I want to first discuss these parents' experiences and identities theoretically. In this chapter, I want to further explore and interpret these experiential factors and to theorise these using a combination of Bourdieuan, postcolonial and intersectional frameworks. I draw on Bourdieu's theories of habitus, cultural capital and habitus (1986) because asymmetric power relationships and the processes of reproducing social reality are the key concerns suffusing the opportunities and constraints under which the parental involvement using a technology agenda can be theorised. In Bourdieu's view, social reality is unchanging because it is historically produced. I draw on Fanon's (1963) because his argument that representations are central to the colonisation processes is important to theorise migrant parents' migration experiences. In addition, Phoenix's (2009) notion of 'epistemic violence' – an injury to their ways of knowing will also be used to substantiate the respondents view and Fanon's assertion. Examples have been integrated from the interview data that provide further insights about migrant parents' migration experiences which can be interpreted as epistemic violence and the identified themes were informed by this perceived violence. In this chapter, first I discuss habitus and the idea of 'migrating cultural capital' for these migrants. Second, there will be a discussion on habitus shift or stick. This section discusses whether the respondents' habitual involvement practice changed as a result of encountering a different field or did they 'stick' with their 'old' habitus. Thirdly, I discuss marginalisation and epistemic violence and finally, I discuss involvement practice difference in the two cultures. What I found was that a few respondents were able to activate their habitus whilst the majority of parents experienced dislocation, discrimination, and racism after migrating to England.

5.2. Migrants' habitus

Habitus is Bourdieu's language to explicate people's regular (habitual) and embodied forms of behaviour. It can also be "expressed as 'taste' or 'lifestyle' (Jenkins, 1992:76). The respondents said that in West Africa their habitual methods of participating in their children's educations are mainly by paying their school fees, attending PTA (parent teacher association)

meeting and providing conducive environment that fosters learning at home (see section 3.10). Almost all participants reiterated the importance of separation of duties in relation to their children's education. They see this relationship as one in which teachers were solely responsible for the academic achievement of their schools and if students' need assistance then teachers are obliged to help them whilst parents are responsible for paying all required fees, and take sole responsibility of their children's emotional and physical well-being. However, upon migrating to England this habitual way of involvement changed as parents were expected to help their children with homework, attend yearly parents' evening and communicate the home situations to schools if need be. These expected methods of involvement are arguably middle class focus and problematic in that they favour middle class parents who have the flexibility in terms of time off work; closing work at 4.30 to attend parents' evening; access to technology and skills to effectively use it to communicate with their children's schools and most importantly the self-efficacy to play active role in the education of their children.

The concept of habitus is important in this study because it guides migrant parents and their practices in the English education field (a 'strange' or new field). Therefore, these West African migrant parents will occupy a particular position, as dominant or dominated; which in turn provides them with the capitals, interests and opportunities to play a part in the life of this new field. There is a detailed discussion on habitus in section 2.3.1.

Hollingworth et al (2011) have asserted that different habitus represent different experiences, identities and world views and this does not mean that parents from the same social class background will act in the same way. Bourdieu, uses the simile that the art works of the same painter will have some similarities but are entirely different outcomes in the work produced (2005). Additionally, the ability to participate in English education is determined not only by migrant parents' agency, access to resources and self-efficacy, but the structural opportunity existing in schools. This section has therefore explicated clearly that the informants' deep-seated practices, styles, and dispositions were shaped by their identities and life experiences within the contexts of engaging in two educational fields.

5.2.1. Migrating cultural capital?

Migrants usually bring a set of cultural resources from the country of origin to the country of migration that either fit or do not fit, and the respondents' narratives show a significant relationship between their social class and orientation to and capacity for engaging with their children's learning. Despite attempts to play an active role in their children's education, these migrants were bound by the significance of class through both cultural process and the reproduction of (economic) position. This was exacerbated by misrecognition of their involvement style and qualifications in England; inability to access available social networks (social capital) which helps to raise children's attainment (Coleman, 1988), and among other challenges, failure to develop mechanisms to activate their cultural capital after migration. Erel (2010:642) argues that 'migration results in new ways of producing and re-producing (mobilizing, enacting, validating) cultural capital that builds on, rather than simply mirrors, power relations of either the country of origin or the country of migration.' This study has shown that in England, the dominant cultural capitals are speaking non-accented English and ability and resources to help children with homework. Interestingly, all respondents who developed these capitals post migration were deemed active participants in their children's education. This means that migrant parents' level of involvement is dependent on how soon they can exercise agency by creating new forms of 'migration-specific' cultural capital (Erel, 2010) which is recognised in England. In these arenas of competition (education *fields*), middle-class families' cultural capital (engaging in children's learning, helping with homework, involvement in the school decision making) is the dominant and desirable method of operation and it seems to be more valuable and as a result enables them to secure advantages for their children over others (e.g. migrant parents) in the English education system (Reay 1998; DiMaggio and Hargittai, 2001; Archer, 2003). In other words, 'possessing valued cultural capital means being able to operate within and decode dominant cultural forms in society' (Hollingworth et al, 2011:348).

There was a need for these migrant parents to convert their language (in many cases accents and dialects) into that of the ethnic majority after migration in order to legitimise belonging (Erel, 2010). This amounts to discrimination and prejudice because failure to learn new ways of speaking (accent/language) and engaging in children's education in England, as I go on to explore, can lead to isolation, subjugation and de-legitimisation of the respondents' West African way of life, an experience they found painful (Oyiridiya, working class, 2014).

Musa, for example who communicates with his children's school in local dialect and pigeon English (pre migration) was forced to speak English after migrating to England. This amounts to structural violence and discrimination as the dominant groups and those in power decide what accent and language is to be legitimised or accepted. This finding therefore supports Bourdieu's notion that the cultural capital of families enable or limit parental involvement (2002). Whilst there is also issue of practicality because teachers cannot be expected to speak the first language of all the pupils in their schools, teachers should embrace multiculturalism to enhance parental engagement (Varela, 2008) . On the contrary, Dayo and Oyiridiya reported that they occasionally assisted their nephew and niece respectively in Nigeria with homework and communicate with their class teachers even though parents are not expected to participate in school education. This practice, helping children with homework, in my experience is recognised in England as the most effective method of parental involvement. Therefore, Dayo and Oyiridiya were able build on this practice after migrating to England and as a result they were able to assist their children with home learning despite belonging to multiple subordinate minority groups (Crenshaw, 1989). Dayo and Oyiridiya's ability to migrate to England with their involvement practice is known as 'migrating capital' (Erel, 2010) or 'migrating habitus' (Thatcher and Halvorsrud, 2016).

5.3. Habitus shift or stick?

The complexity of the participants' experiences can also be explained using Ingram's concept of 'habitus tug'. That is to say, habitus can be divided against itself and consequently doomed to consecutive loyalty and multiple identities (Bourdieu 1999: 511). Ingram used the concept of 'habitus tug' to explain how the habitus of successful school boys was conflicted by two rival fields – their local community and the school (Ingram, 2011) and as a result these boys were being pulled in multiple directions as their tastes, practices and dispositions are contending for supremacy. Therefore, we can see that through the encountering of a new field, West African migrant parents (specifically the working-class ones) may experience a cleft habitus as their involvement practices and dispositions were competing for supremacy and consequently they were being pulled in multiple directions by different fields.

This study has revealed that habitus can shift/transform, or stick to varying degrees, following migration, and this is then experienced individually and/or collectively. Further, these West

African migrant parents have diverse social classes, which complicates straight forward class categorisations (see section 3.9).

I don't know biology, chemistry and physics back in Africa but now I have to pay for tuition to learn them in England so that I can support my children with homework

(Nnaemeka, middle-class, INTV2014)

Migrancy is fraught with social and life changes for many migrants but these West African migrant parents experienced a sharp social class shift. As discussed in section 4.2.7.1.3, many of the respondents experienced a social class downgrade and one participant described his experience as belonging to no class (Biafra, INTV2014). Biafra's view thus supports Crenshaw (1989) assertion that possession of multiple disadvantaged identities creates more discrimination, prejudice and marginalisation. Adero, Fumi (both categorised as middle-class, see section 3.9) and Musa (categorised as working-class, see 3.9) for example experienced social class shift for at least the first three years in England. They reflected on this downward movement: moving from mingling with the powerful in their home country to being lonely in a foreign country. In response to one of the research questions (participants' views on their social class both pre and post migration), respondents recalled that:

In Ghana I used to attend annual Accountant end of year party with my wife and son and I was given a company's car at some point in my career. But in the UK ways of doing things are different, so we have to start learning many things anew.

(Martin, working class, INTV2014)

My wife with 15 years of nursing experience in Ghana is now working 12-hour shift at a nursing home because the NHS insisted that she must pass IELTS exam before working with them... this is just discrimination... no one cares about us and we are nobodies but she has to learn new of speaking and writing if it is what it takes to settle and work here...

(Kwame, working class, INTV2014)

Martin and Kwame's narratives above reinforced the view that habitus is not fixed or permanent, and when people face unexpected situations or new fields, they experience either habitus tug (pulled in different fields instantaneously) or habitus shift (the desire to learn new

ways of doing things). For Kwame's wife, she has to learn new ways of speaking and writing in England (new field) in order to 'fit' in.

Further, whilst parents are not expected to assist their children with homework Kwame and a few other migrant parents started helping their children with home learning but rather reluctantly after being asked by their children's teachers.

The downgrade or dip in migrant parents' social class post migration may have contributed to their perceived non-active involvement because on a structural level, the stratification of society into economic classes leads to a separate compartmentalised experience with differing interests, and when people's interests clash, classes may come into conflict. However, on an individual level, the experience of a particular position in the class structure leads the individual to understand themselves as, in part, defined by that position and to collaborate with those who share their position and have similar interests (Furlong and Cartmel, 2006). That is to say, the downward shift in their social class position was clearly experienced as a painful one where they felt marginalised, experiencing this new context as the 'dominated' 'out group': where 'no one cares about us' and we are 'nobodies' (Kwame, working class, INTV2014).

The downgrade or down shift (e.g. middle-class to working-class) in respondents' social class arguably contributed to their de-investment in their children's education because the stratification of the social world into different economic class groups by the state creates different grouped socio-economic experiences, and as a result interests are bound to clash when different classes interact with each other. However, on an individual level, membership to a class group produces a particular experience and position, and therefore shapes how the individual understands themselves and who to collaborate or interact with. This means that members of the same class will share the same interest, have the same experience and 'ally' with people who belong to their category (Tatum, 2000). Thus, migrating to England brought with it dislocations which had negative impact on the respondents' ability to play an active role in their children's learning at home. Consequently, these habitus shifts (which can be seen as akin to 'mimicry' in postcolonial theory) can be seen as being in contradictory positions. This arguably exerted an emotionally distressing dilemma on migrant parents as their habitual involvement practice is destabilised and subsequently leads to emotional and financial (e.g. paying to learn basic subject knowledge and how to use computers) sufferings.

Adero, a 51 years mother of two and Physiotherapist working for NHS and Fumi, a 49 years mother of two and Pharmacist are classified as newly middle-class and both utilised their social network effectively immediately after migrating to England which helped them to assimilate into English system with minimal or no dislocation. Adero, reported that although she had the time and knowledge to help her children with their school work and homework, she refused to do so because she regarded as the sole duty of teachers and schools to make sure that all students are making 'sustained' and 'substantial' progress. Despite some of her cultural capital migrating, in the form of qualifications and social networks, Adero's habitus remained partially 'stuck' in her old ways of being. In contrast, Fumi believed that relearning how to speak and write at A level was instrumental to gaining a masters degree in pharmacy. In her view, it was necessary to learn new ways of 'being' in England in order to fit in the country. Therefore, despite Fumi's negative experience with her son's welfare officer (see section 4.2.4) and her view that assisting children with homework is wrong, she engaged with the new system in terms of actively helping her children with homework. Fumi worked hard to have her cultural capital validated in the new field, and her habitus begun to show signs of transformation.

Other respondents' accounts above have shown how their attempts to maintain their position (habitual way of life) and identity in the new field resulted in frustration and unhappiness. For some, they resorted in developing new ways of being in order to play in the new field. Whilst Dayo and a few other respondents assist their children with home learning which is required in the new 'field' of English education, they still believe it is unethical to do so. This is one example of how this minority group of parents have developed divided habitus in supporting their children's learning post migration. For Adero, she 'just sit' stay and encourage her children to complete their homework on time. That is, these West African migrant parents constantly struggle with their habitus which is now divided against itself: but still wants to maintain West-African parental involvement practice despite now being in England.

5.4. Marginalisation and epistemic violence

This section theorises the implications of marginalisation and the resulting epistemic violence using Bourdieu, postcolonial and intersectionality framework.

Chapter 4 showed that all participants were the product of both different social classes and ‘ethnicities’ and subsequent experiences, which were instrumental in creating and shaping their on-going identity formation in England. West African migrants’ social identities, like any other defined social group, are their sense of who they are based on their group memberships. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant, habitus guides people’s practices, and therefore dispositions are shaped by past experiences and structures (1992). Moreover, Fanon asserts that the interaction between past actions and structures can result in subjectification, subjugation, marginalisation, social categorisation and prejudicial attitudes (i.e. ‘them’ and ‘us’ mentality) (1992). Furthermore, social psychologists argue that social categorisation can lead to ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’ forming. In this study it was evident that previous social status and ethnic affiliation in West Africa shaped parents’ experiences in the UK. The extent to which parents felt included or marginalised; dominant or subjugated; ‘of the crowd’ or ‘othered’; ‘in’ or ‘out,’ was dependent on a number of factors connected with their social position:

- ethnicity: (classified here as ‘dominant’ and ‘dominated’ following post-colonial theory, often termed majority and minority),
- education level: (classified here as formally educated and less- educated),
- gender: (classified here as women and men),
- language: (classified here as fluent and eal/accented), and
- social class: (classified here as middle-class and working-class).

Post-colonial theorists such as Edward Said, Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha have theorised that group members of the dominant (‘in group’) will seek to find negative aspects of the dominated (‘outgroup’) thus enhancing their own self-image and opportunities. Prejudiced views between cultures may result in discriminations based on accent, race, gender, family background, educational levels, and financial background (Fanon, 1992; Bourdieu, 1987; Crenshaw, 1991; Erel, 2010; Watson, 1977; Menski, 2002). Here, the in-out groups categorisations of ethnicity, language, social class, and education level emerged from the data as key factors affecting the respondents’ feelings of inclusion and thus, in turn, ability to participate in the English education system.

The state itself stands at the apex of the parental engagement practice we have been discussing. Bourdieu defines the state in terms of “the monopoly of the legitimate use of

physical and symbolic violence over a definite territory” (Bourdieu 1998:40). One of the implications is that the state and it alone, preserves the ultimate power to legislate how the subjects are classified and there state-level classification becomes obligatory (Nguyen, 2013). The “state also retains the legitimate right to judge the validity of all such principles” (Bourdieu 1990b, pp136-7). Additionally, the state’s inscription of ‘a set’ of categorisations into the social order which enjoys obligatory characteristics limits the opportunity to choose between different ways of doing something available to social actors (Nguyen, 2013). Recognition by the state provides ‘an official definition of one’s social identity, and thus, saves its bearers from the symbolic struggle of all against all’ (Bourdieu 1991:240).

As I outlined in section 4.2.7.1.1, many of the participants reported that upon moving to London it was assumed that their English language was poor and they were routinely required to take English lessons, despite having been schooled in English, and having obtained Higher Education qualifications in English in West Africa.

It was not easy trying to cope, yea... I mean... I mean it’s not our country; we are dealing with foreign nationals. So in terms of language, we have to overcome the language barriers. We have to overcome... overcome... ok I know how to speak English in Nigeria ... but in the UK, my accent was an issue. And then registering the kids in schools was also a challenge because most of the schools were full and because we have issues with our immigration.

(Oyiridiya, working class, INTV2014)

The respondents reported that parents are treated as equal partners in West African schools, but in England teachers and the school institution have more power as they assume the duty of ‘gate keeper’ with absolute power to decide what parental involvement to recognise or misrecognise.

My son’s school sent a letter requesting that I should help him with homework. Then about two weeks later we received another voice mail from his geography teacher complaining that our son is struggling, that we are supposed to help him...after buying text book, computer, laptop and internet why should we assist him to complete the work...what are schools for? What are teachers paid for?

The respondents' accounts demonstrated that the perceived inability to assist their children with homework has created a significant psychological and emotional impact on them. Chapter 4 highlighted that unequal power relations are at play, with the schools assuming the position of the powerful with the right to dictate what to recognise and the migrant parents on the other hand occupying the dominated status expected to abide by the dominant discourses (Fanon, 1963). Biafra asserted that misrepresentation brings back colonial memories. In his view, since West African countries were colonised by the British 'we are bound to be inferior to them both in ideas and practices as they did during colonial rule when they abolished all long standing traditional laws and ways of life...' that have been in existence for many decades and served the native well. According to Fanon, colonised identity or image is regarded as inferior and only through the acceptance of the colonisers' imposed image can the subjugated be recognised (1963). This means the colonised subjects become trapped into performing an identity of themselves that is not 'real' or 'true', but is imposed. Phoenix (2009) describes this process as 'epistemic violence' – an injury to their ways of knowing. In the case of my research, it involves migrants learning that they are constructed as incapable, despite knowing deep down that they are capable. Many respondents reported feeling outraged that their English language proficiency was in question. Oyiridiya for example reported feeling degraded and suppressed which damaged her confidence, but nevertheless, she found herself having to 'comply' with representation of herself as incapable, in order to 'get on' in this new context. All participants reported that the differences in their pre and post migration experiences in relation to racism, subjugation, discriminatory treatment and immigration control made them feel like 'others' which affected their ability to actively participate in their children's learning at home.

In addition to habitus transformation, and the issues associated with experiencing a divided habitus, located between two worlds, these migrant parents also reported feeling 'othered' in this new environment. Here, I theorise a correlation between postcolonial 'otherness' and a Bourdieuan structural violence. Zygmunt Bauman's work on otherness summarises the concept:

Woman is the other of man, animal is the other of human, stranger is the other of native, abnormality the other of norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the

other of health, insanity the other of reason, ... foreigner the other of state subject,
enemy the other of friend...

(Bauman, 1991: 8).

The respondents' accounts show that their perceived 'otherness' were largely perpetuated by the state and its institutions and arguably amounts to structural violence. According to Galtung (1969), structural violence can be described as social structures (e.g. economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural) that stop individuals, groups, and societies from reaching their full potential. That is to say, that human needs are rarely met as a consequence of exploitation and abuse built into political, economic, and social structures and institutions (Farmer, 2003). Similarly, Gilligan (1997) argued that structural violence is often embedded in longstanding universal social structures, regularised by stable institutions like schools and regular individual experience. I would argue that the perceived symbolic violence (a form of non-physical violence and that this can be structural i.e. caused by the structures of the state and state control) experienced by the participants in the English education system can be based on "structural violence" derived from the fear of their children underachieving in schools. The symbolic violence experienced by many of the low class respondents (7/13), then, is bound up with the structural violence of their location in society, unlike the symbolic violence experienced by middle-class parents (6/13).

The domination experienced by Adero and Fumi, both categorised in this study as well-educated and middle-class migrant parents, for example in the scholarly field is very different from the domination experienced by Musa and Kwame who are both low income and working-class parents. For example, Adero was a qualified Physiotherapist before migrating to England and has a good network which enabled her to 'fit in' in terms of employment and engagement in her children's education. In the same way, Fumi, who migrated with GCSE /A levels, asserted that undertaking a one year English course in England helped her to study for a Master degree in Pharmacy and as a result secured a well paying job and now actively assists her children with homework, and has largely assimilated in to a middle class way of being. On the contrary, Musa and Kwame were not able to build on or transfer their capitals post migration. Musa can only speak Hausa and pigeon English and was classified as EAL in England. Equally, Kwame was unable to retrain because his qualifications were downgraded in England and as a consequence he must enrol on ESOL course in order to further his education. Furthermore, Collins, Nnaemeka and Martin reported being discriminated against when looking for employment. Dayo for example reported being

refused to undertake a PGCE course in order to gain QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) in England because of his residential status (visitor's visa) and as a consequence he resorted to a cleaning job to feed his family. Structural violence can have adverse outcomes, such as subjugation, subjectification and stigmatisation (Fanon, 1992; Farmer, 2004). Collins' also reported his experience of subjugation and marginalisation, when working for an agency he questioned their rationale of giving more jobs to white skin workers and the manager replied: 'that is the client's request....'

Collins' account therefore supports Farmer's (2003) view that people from different ethnic groups are discriminated upon when looking for employment and according to him it is an example of structural violence. In Martin's view getting a job in order to support (financially) his family both in England and Ghana was a higher priority than engaging in his children's learning. This shows that migrant parents with intersecting multiple identities such as low-income, EAL and working-class experienced more discrimination and prejudices.

Many participants (see table 5 below) reported that they experienced some form of immigration control when the first arrived in England which amounts to symbolic violence, but in different ways, and their accounts demonstrate diverse outcomes that come from varied social class; social network and educational backgrounds, and some respondents' accounts amount to 'symbolic violence' as the state exerted its power and domination over them. Depending on how much cultural capital they had, this made them less or more able to deal with this violence. Whilst immigration control is also applicable to all non-British nationals including some Eastern European citizens visiting and/or migrating to England, the respondents' race and colonial history, intersects with immigration status to produce a different experience than White European experience. Moreover, the respondents' inability to access social networks and/or activate their capital (Erel, 2010) exacerbated the situation.

The table below presented the picture that most (11/13) participants were subjected to immigration control upon arriving to England, a treatment they never expected.

Table 6: Immigration ‘Otherness’ data analysis

<i>Types of Involvement (England)</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Dominated residential status upon arrival in England(UK)</i>
Active	Adero	No
	Awka	Yes
	Biafra	Yes
	Dayo	Yes
	Fumi	Yes
	Nnaemeka	Yes
Less-active	Nneka	No
	Oyiridiya	Yes
	Ada	Yes
Non-active	Collins	Yes
	Kwame	Yes
	Martin	Yes
	Musa	Yes

Nevertheless, it is important to note that immigration control is not specifically targeting West African migrants, but rather all migrants including refugees and asylum seekers. Immigration control for example was one of the main issues campaigned and contested for during Brexit (referendum for the UK to leave European Union). For these migrant parents, it was reminiscent of colonisation, where the colonizer ‘us’ had the ultimate power to decide what identities or attributes and experience of the colonised ‘them’ to recognise or misrecognise.

In chapter 4, I discussed how Adero got a job with the NHS upon arriving in England because of her profession which was in high demand at the time. Whilst Fumi was subjected to restricted residential status (as a foreign student), she had a good network in England as her brothers and father were living in London. Equally, Nneka was born in England before going back to Nigeria, so for her assimilating into English education and system was a smooth process and most importantly she was not subjected to immigration control. However, others like Collins, Dayo, Nnaemeka, Ada, Martin, Musa reported more difficult immigration pathways to permanent residency.

Immigration status was a key marker of inclusion and exclusion which had repercussions on West African migrant parents’ identity and confidence. Being a legitimate resident in the eyes of the state meant they could then focus on their children’s education, while those with illegitimate immigration status were consumed with worry which detracted from their ability

(emotionally and practically) to participate in their children's education amongst other things. The ability of the state to define who is and who is not a 'legitimate' citizen, or to define people as without status is a form of structural violence.

In Oyiridiya's case, for example, her children were subjected to "immigration othering" because they did not have legal residential status and as a consequence their access to free school meals were denied despite coming from low or no income household. Dayo reported that he could not teach in England despite being married to a British National; Kwame's wife could not register with a GP, even seven months pregnant; Oyiridiya is still doing a menial job until today, despite achieving BA and MA in Nigeria and others did menial jobs (e.g. cleaning toilets) for a significant number of years just because they were seen as 'others' (subalterns) with undesirable resident status and as a consequence relegated to jobs 'us' (with same qualification and experience) do not want to do.

5.5. Involvement practice difference in the two cultures: migrating habitus?

The move to England is represented through both the informal and formal routines of a very different culture to these migrant parents' previous experience. Martin found himself unable to use digital technology which made him uncomfortable and unable to engage in his children's learning. Whilst Fumi felt quite strongly against the expectations that parents should assist their children with homework, this does not stop her desire to comply with them. Some of the respondents reported a mixture of shock and excitement bounded up in their first three to five years residence in England. For these respondents, such an occasion was an opportunity which made clear the differences in their own prior experience, and the focus of their early concerns was not on the demands of playing an active role using technology, but instead the expectation to help their children with homework, and for Oyiridiya it was changing her family immigration status (from illegal to legal migrants). Nonetheless, the West African migrants' perceptions of new experiences in English education were mediated by their past experiences in the local (original) field (Abrahams and Ingram, 2013). This means that the embodied habitus includes among other things their ways 'of standing, speaking, walking and thereby feeling and thinking' (Bourdieu, 1990b).

Table 6 below shows that the respondents experienced differentiated positions and dispositions as habitus development are dependent on the ‘field of origin and its position in social space’ (Abrahams and Ingram 2013:4), and migrants who occupied similar positions in relation to the English education methods of parental involvement prior to migration were able to develop similar habitus post migration. Dayo for example, was assisting his nephew with homework in Nigeria and as result he was able to assist his children with homework in England, where as Fumi did shift and did so willingly. In Bourdieu’s view one is attuned to fields of which she is the product and un-attuned to others (Bourdieu, 2002). In other words, parents who had by chance developed similar ways of involvement (in the local field) which are compatible with that of England (in the new field) were able to adapt and as a result they had more positive experiences than migrants with dissimilar habitus.

The table below presented the picture that habitus of some (5/13) participants shifted after migrating to England.

Table 7: Habitus transformations data analysis

<i>Types of Involvement (England)</i>	<i>Categorised social class background</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Habitus shift</i>
Active	Middle class	Adero	No
	Working-class	Awka	No
	Working-class	Biafra	Habitus shift
	Middle class → Working class	Dayo	No
	Middle class	Fumi	Habitus shift
Less-active	Working class	Nnaemeka	Habitus shift
	Working class	Nneka	Habitus shift
	Working class	Oyiridiya	No
Non-active	Middle class	Ada	No
	Working class	Collins	No
	Working class	Kwame	No
	Working class	Martin	No
	Working class	Musa	Habitus shift

Moreover, Musa, a farmer from northern Nigeria reported that he is currently receiving computer training in order to help his children with online homework (see section 6.3.2). This is one example of migrant West African parents deliberately changing their habitual practice in the new field in order to ‘fit’ in.

Bourdieu’s theory of habitus allows us to see the participants’ attachment to their country of origin’s ways of parental engagement as learned and habituated; some of them being open to modification and reconstruction through reflexive agency and interactions with the English educational practices (Pollmann, 2009). There is a clear relationship between cultural capital and habitus within education. The theory of habitus is premised on the theory of a cultural capital. The cultural capital that is being passed down by the dominant cultural group perpetuates the English schools’ parental involvement policy by permeating it with a sense of legitimacy through participation. The respondents move to England can be seen as disrupting their ordinary and taken-for-granted behaviours and dispositions. The respondents reported their attempts or desire to become a part of their new environment in order to better their lives and provide a better education for their children. However, their immersion in the field addresses questions as to the nature of habitus as, on the one hand, durable and resistant to transformation, or, on the other hand, as a concept that encompasses the potential for change and adaptation. The alignment between the migrant parents’ habitus and their new educational field in England might be described in relation to their ability to develop a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 2002) and the extent to which the transition represents continuity or disruption of the practices and routines of everyday life. This is not necessarily about stark binaries of working-class and middle-class differences, but more about the migrant parents’ perceptions of themselves in relation to the English schools’ representation of class-coded culture.

In addition, these migrants arguably may have experienced ‘cleft habitus’(see section 2.2) or ‘hybridity’ (see section 2.4) which was caused by the two competing fields of West African education system and that of the English education.

It is just ‘immoral’ to expect me to help my children with their homework; this is not the African way of educating children. Children should be empowered to be responsible for their education and if they need help then the teachers are paid to teach... The good thing with schools here [England] is that they use technology

effective to reach parents [communication] and set extended work for students ...and parents can help their children...

(Fumi, middle-class, INTV2014)

Fumi's view above is just one example of how the West African migrant parents were conflicted by two competing fields – their local West African engagement practice versus the English schools' involvement practice (Ingram, 2011), and as a result these parents were being faced with an emotional dilemma as their practice and dispositions are contending for supremacy between two rival fields.

5.6. Concluding comments

This chapter has demonstrated that the effects of the interaction between migrant West African parents' identities and experiences in relation to the construction of habitus and cultural capital to engage in home learning amount to symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977). These migrants have to unlearn and relearn how to speak and write English, despite speaking English as their first language in their mother countries (most of them); and unlearn and relearn how to engage actively in their children's education at home, despite having supported their children effectively in West African schools. These varieties of experiences have diverse and different effects on migrant parents both in West Africa and in England. Representations – recognitions and misrecognitions (Fanon, 1963) had affected the ability of this marginalised group to engage in English education. For this group of minority parents, involvement in England is like participating in a field or site of colonisation as they have assimilated into the dominant ways of engaging with children's education. This positioned some of the migrant parents as desirable by virtue of exhibiting acceptable cultural capital. Bhabha theorised this as 'mimicry', the desire for reform and recognition by others (1994). However, marginalisation is not only applicable to working-class migrant parents as a few middle-class participants were also marginalised because they possess other intersecting multiple identities such as race, accent, ethnicity and immigrant status. It was also evident that migrant parents experienced 'cleft habitus' as they adopt different ways of participating in education in England while still maintaining some of the West African ways of involvement. This therefore can also be explained in terms of 'hybridity', the practice of living with cultural overlap or simply put, hybrid of cultures, identities and values.

This chapter also introduced the concept of ‘immigration otherness’, to explain the view that these migrant parents were considered as foreigners, who are, according to Bauman ‘the other of state subject’ (1991:3). When the respondents first arrived in England, they had experienced being ‘othered’, however in different ways because of their resident status. Thus, groups with multiple subordinate intersecting identities experience more discriminations or prejudices (Crenshaw, 1989). Equally, the participants’ immigration experiences can be explained in terms of ‘structural violence’ as the state exerted its power and domination over them. In consequence, new and undocumented migrant parents were less likely to participate in their children’s learning because ‘sorting out their papers’ was the main priority and not participation. Overall, I showed how respondents experienced life, discrimination, prejudice, racism, social exclusion, and even benefits because of possessing multiple social statuses (Crenshaw, 1989).

West African parents’ experiences of the English education system therefore show ways in which relations and power are negotiated and resisted in interactions between colonizers and colonised. According to scholars (Pratt, 1992; Clemente and Higgins, 2008), these demonstrate both unequal relations of power and epistemic violence. This study has shown that these migrant parents came to the UK with high hopes and positive, not even thinking about colonial struggles or colonialism when they were in Africa, but it is as if being confronted with this new subjugated position (being black and African in a white world) heightens or reawakens colonial histories. Colonialism is not ‘back there’ in Africa, in the past, as we usually think, but it is here and now of British contemporary society.

In the following chapter, I explore how West African migrant parents use educational technologies to support their children’s learning at home and communicating with English schools. Again, I intend to theorise this experience using Bourdieuan, post-colonial and intersectional theories.

Chapter 6 – Parental involvement and technology

6.1. Introduction

This chapter hones in on the crux of this thesis - the use of technology in the realm of parental involvement, exploring the research question: How does the use of new educational technologies support minority parents in their engagement with their children's education in English schools? In this chapter, I describe and discuss West African parents' experiences of using technology in relation to both learning at home with their children, and communicating with the school. I then theorise this using Bourdieuan and postcolonial theory. What the data suggests is that, despite praise for the benefits of modern technologies, the expectation to use technology to support home learning often exacerbated already existing inequalities. I begin by discussing technology for home learning, followed by home school communication, and their levels of computer literacy. I then move on to theorise these experiences, in three further sections on technology inequalities, gender and technology and exploring 'technology otherness.'¹¹

6.2. Expectation to use educational technologies

Whilst there is evidence to suggest that schools have expectations that parents will use technology to support young people's learning and felt that this is necessary to raise children's attainment, on a practical level such policies exacerbate existing inequalities because many of the participants reported that they did not have the technical skills to actively use technology to assist their children's learning at home. Bauman (1991) identified a form of dichotomy in the creation of a type of otherness, the lay public the 'other' of the expert (1991: 8). It is argued that the expectations for these migrant parents (interpreted by them as requirements) to assist their children with online homework and/or school work posed a similar type of otherness – 'technology otherness.'

From the informants' accounts, there appear to be seven main themes around engagement in education using technologies. These categories are outlined in Table 7; the patterns of other qualitative data for the themes are shown in tables 8 to 15.

¹¹ 'Technology otherness' is a language I used to explain migrant West African parents who have limited or insecure skills to use technology.

Table 8: Identified themes

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Source of data</i>	<i>Effect on involvement – in West Africa</i>	<i>Effect on involvement – in England</i>
Technology for home learning (6.2.1)	Interview and questionnaire	No patterns with parents' ability to participate in their children's learning	Recent and undocumented migrants were less likely to participate in their children's learning using technology.
Home-school communication (using technology) (6.2.2)	Interview	Not in use and as a result has no effect on parental engagement.	Working-class and low income families are less likely to use technology to communicate with the schools.
Computer literacy (6.2.3)	Interview	Technology was not in use and as a result has no effect on parental engagement.	Working-class and low income families are less likely to be computer literate.
Technology inequality (6.3.1)	Literature review	No pattern identified as technology was not in use in West Africa	Theorising the effect technology inequality as working-class and low income families are less likely to use technology to support their children's learning at home.
Computer literacy and inequality (6.3.2)	Interview and literature review	No pattern identified as technology was not in use in West Africa	Theorising the effect of computer literacy as a marker of active parental involvement in the England. For example, emature parents use technology for home learning more than their counterparts.
Gender and Technology (6.3.3)	Interview and literature review	No pattern identified as technology was not in use in West Africa	Theorising the view that women are more are likely to use technology to support their children's learning at home. This is contrary to gender-technology discourse which positions women as incompetent.
Technology others (6.3.4)	Interview and literature review	No pattern of techology otherness.	Theorising the effect of technology 'otherness' on migrant West African parents ability to support their children's home learning.

6.2.1. Technology for home learning

This section outlines and discusses the technologies used in the homes of these West African migrant parents. The table below presented the picture that technology use was high as all the respondents use modern technologies in the home after migrating to England.

Table 9: Technology at home – leisure data analysis

<i>Types of Involvement (England)</i>	<i>Informants</i>	<i>Technology at Home</i>	
		<i>West Africa</i>	<i>England</i>
Active	Adero	Laptop	X-BOX, Desktop, Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet, WII FIT
	Awka	None	Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Biafra	None	X-BOX, Desktop, Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet, WII FIT
	Dayo	Landline telephone	X-BOX, Desktop, Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Fumi	Desktop	X-BOX, Desktop, Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet, WII FIT
Less-active	Nnaemeka	Laptop and Internet	Desktop, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Nneka	None	Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Oyiridiya	Desktop and Internet	Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet
Non-active	Ada	Desktop	Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Collins	Desktop	Desktop, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Kwame	Desktop	Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Martin	Desktop	Desktop, Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet
	Musa	None	Laptops, Smart Phones, the Internet

All the participants (educated and less educated; working-class and middle-class; low income and high income) believe that technology is good not only for home entertainment but also

for their children's learning/education at home and communicate with their schools. It appears, therefore that this evidence supports the assertion that technology among other things helps to reach 'hard to reach' and disadvantaged parents (DfES, 2005; Becta, 2008; Rogers and Wright, 2008) and as a result, equal access is needed to ameliorate technology inequalities. However, McElroy (2008) argued that equal access does not always guarantee the same outcomes.

Typical technologies in homes are listed in table 8 and all the participants reported using some of these technologies for home entertainment:

We watch YouTube videos on the computer/laptop with the Internet/Wi-Fi connection; watching movies on TV; using the Internet connection on their smart phones to search for driving directions and sending email to friends and employers.

(Ada, middle class, INTV2013)

My son and I play online games on his laptops; exercising using the Wii Fit; and sometimes he asked me to help him with his online Mymaths homework which I enjoy doing as a Maths teacher...I also personally read Nigerian news online

(Dayo, middle class, INTV2014)

However, having access to these modern technologies does not translate to effective use of technology (Selwyn, 2002; Warschauer *et al*, 2004; Livingstone and Helsper 2008). The question remains: were these families using technology for *learning*?

The table below has shown that whilst technology use at home after migrating to England was high, technology use for home learning was very low.

Table 10: Technology for home learning data analysis

<i>Types of involvement</i>	<i>Informant</i>	<i>Social Class</i>	<i>Access to Laptop</i>	<i>Access to Desktop</i>	<i>Access to Internet</i>	<i>Access to Smart Phones</i>	<i>Level of usage</i>
Active	Adero	M	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
	Awka	M	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
	Biafra	M	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
	Dayo	M	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
	Fumi	M	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Less-active	Nnaemeka	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
	Nneka	W	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Low
	Oyiridiya	W	Yes	No	Yes	No	Middle
Non - active	Ada	M	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Low
	Collins	W	No	Yes	Yes	No	Low
	Kwame	W	No	Yes	Yes	No	Low
	Martin	W	Yes	No	Yes	No	Low
	Musa	W	No	Yes	Yes	No	Low

M – middle-class and **W** – working-class

Table 9 above has shown that although all participants acquired these modern technologies, the levels of their usage in terms of engagement with their children’s learning varies, with middle-class and e-mature informants more likely to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to use them. Equally, Jones’ (2010) argument that people’s (including young people) access and use of internet are patterned along their individual identity or life experiences in relation to SES, gender also plays an important contribution. However, his findings could have been further developed by exploring the effects of these social factors on people’s level of access to and use of technology. For example, women are still perceived as technically ‘incompetent’ even though research evidence (Henwood et al, 2000; Montagnier, 2008; Wajcman, 2010) suggests otherwise. DfES (2010) and Banswal (2014) indicated that technology could enhance parental involvement because it provides an appropriate medium for parents to access up-to-date information with regard to their children’s education, and that this would have the result of supporting their learning at home.

With regard to modern technology, informants' reflective accounts revealed that they use different technologies after migrating to England. Typical technologies in homes are listed in table 8, and, as discussed, all the participants reported using some of these technologies for home entertainment such as watching YouTube videos on the desktop computer/laptop with the Internet/Wi-Fi connection; exercising using Wii Fit, watching movies on TV; using the Internet connection on their smart phones to search for driving directions and sending email to friends and employers. Computers, the Internet, smart phones were the main technologies identified by participants as valuable *learning tools* provided in the home to foster home learning. Internet access, they said, is of paramount importance as it enables their children to access online resources used to carry out school projects and to complete homework including online assignments. This view thus supports Becta (2006) and Peters et al (2007) assertion that the use of technology enhances parental involvement in home learning.

Whilst some informants acquired the required technologies to support home learning, there appears to be variations in their levels of usage with middle-class and e-mature parents, e.g. Dayo and Fumi (both categorised as middle class), more likely to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to use them. Additionally, some of the working-class respondents reported having one desktop computer and Internet connection for the whole family (e.g. family of 3 school children and 2 adults) and it is felt that this is not really an adequate access as it will take longer time for all inhabitants to access this technology when compare to a middle-class family with Desktop computer, laptop, Wi-Fi, XBOX which allows multiple access to the Internet (Jones, 2010).

As discussed in section 6.2.1, migrant parents reported actively using technology for home entertainment and socialising rather than helping their children with homework. Dayo, a 55 years old father of three emigrating from Nigeria said that he actively use technology for both leisure and to assist his children with their homework. A practice echoed by Fumi, who narrated how she assists her two secondary school age children with their homework and/or school project at home using technology. In contrast, Adero and Akwa who are categorised in this study as middle class reported that they watch programmes with their children but still they do not get involved with their homework. All the others reported procuring all necessary technology equipment such as computer, the Internet, printers, software but do not help their children with home learning because of different reasons ranging from lack of secure technology skills to morality of helping children with homework as doing so would be considered 'interference' (Russell and Granville, 2005:13). These parents were categorised as

coming from working-class backgrounds in England and this supports Warschauer *et al* (2004) view that middle-class and well-educated parents are more favoured, because they have the socio-economic and social capital to use these technologies to participate actively in their children's learning. Biafra also indicated that the lack of technology skills and knowledge made supporting his children's learning more difficult.

6.2.2. Home – school communication

While technology is expected to be used by children at home for their learning, another key way in which technology enters these parents' worlds is through home school communication. DfES (2007b) and Ofsted (2009) assert that parents can receive the latest achievement reports about their children's attainment, and learning progress including attendance online. Additionally, Rogers and Wright (2008: 36) argue that 'home-school communication is important in building trusting relationships that foster parental involvement' and that home-school communication can be enhanced through the use of technology. Equally, Ramirez (2001) asserts that technology can be used to improve school-home communication, thus supporting and enhancing parental involvement. Whilst this is a good innovation and a quicker means of disseminating information to parents, various sources have argued that it does not constitute active parental engagement as it is often one-directional i.e. school/teacher to parents, and according to Singh *et al* parental involvement is (should be) multi-dimensional (1995).

The table below presented the picture that technology use for home-school communication before migration was either non-existence or rarely while in England it ranges from frequent to rarely depending on informants' social class.

Table 11: Home-school communication using technology data analysis

<i>Types of involvement</i>	<i>Informants</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Home-school communication (post migration)</i>
Active	Adero	Female	Frequent
	Awka	Male	Infrequent
	Biafra	Male	Infrequent
	Dayo	Male	Frequent
	Fumi	Female	Frequent
Less-active	Nnaemeka	Male	Rarely
	Nneka	Female	Frequent
	Oyiridiya	Female	Frequent
Non-active	Ada	Female	Rarely
	Collins	Male	Rarely
	Kwame	Male	Rarely
	Martin	Male	Rarely
	Musa	Male	Rarely

Table 12: Home-school communication using technology (with social class)

<i>Types of involvement</i>	<i>Frequent</i>	<i>Infrequent</i>	<i>Rarely</i>
Active	M M M	M M	
Less-active	W W		W
Non-active			W W W W M

M = middle-class; W = working-class

Table 10 has shown that most English schools infrequently and/or rarely communicate curriculum contents to parents using technology. It also revealed that middle class migrant West African parents received home-school communication more than working class migrant parents. Although data analysis demonstrated that schools rarely provide parents help on how to establish home environments to support children's learning (Epstein's type 1), most parents said that schools have an effective communication system (Epstein's type 2). All, however, recalled that parents are more likely to be contacted when their children have done something wrong (negative communication). Awka, a 59 year-old father of two emigrating from Nigeria reported how his daughter's school only communicates with him whenever she is in trouble

or has detention, and he questions the school's true motive in terms of whether it is an institution with the education of all children as her priority and core purpose or prejudice institution where children of colour can never do right.

However, there is also evidence that the schools provide parents information about their children's curriculum. Adero, for example asserted that:

My children's school always email their termly curriculum materials and during parents evening there is opportunity for us to discuss the contents with teachers in charge of the subjects.

(Adero, middle-class, INTV2014)

In Adero's view, this information is useful in monitoring and supporting her children's academic progress or attainment as she has prior knowledge of topics to be taught and homework/coursework submission/due dates, and as a result can check if her children have completed all set work.

Further, migrant parents felt face to face communication was the most effective than the use of technology but complained that it did not happen enough in England. Ada, for example reported:

Face to face communication is the most effective means parents use in Africa [Ghana and Nigeria] to communicate with teachers but in England it is all about phone calls and emails...

(Ada, middle-class, INTV2013).

Ada's view thus supports research evidence (Decker and Decker, 2003 cited in Rogers and Wright, 2008) that the creation of home-school communication through technology may not after all be the most effective form of communication because oral, face-to-face is the most effective means of communication. All, however, were of the perception that the English schools' methods of home - school communication is far better than that of West African before migration.

There was hardly any technology for communication in Nigeria before I migrated to the UK. I used to visit schools to speak to the teachers but in the UK, the schools communicate with emails, websites, texts and phone calls which are very effective and efficient.

(Fumi, middle-class, INTV2014)

Similarly, Nneka asserted that:

The new means of communication with my children schools in the UK like email, text and phone calls - smart phones are more effective as we get instant responses.

(Nneka, working-class, INTV2014)

In contrast to Fumi and Nneka's views outlined above, Biafra argued that 'home - school communication in West Africa may also have improved with the advent of technology in Africa within the last 10 - 15 years' (Biafra, middle-class, INTV2013). This view is worth exploring further, as 'home' becomes a fantastic place, with the assumption that cultural practices and the use of educational technology in schools must have improved since they migrated to England.

Notwithstanding these perceptions about effective use of technologies to support children's education, all informants agreed that using these technologies could facilitate home-school and school-home communication and home learning.

I must admit that technology has improved the frequency of communication between my children's school and us. They sent text to tell us if our children are staying behind...or ask us to help our children with homework...

(Kwame, working-class, INTV2014)

Further, in West Africa, these migrant parents had no access to technology, but a significant number of parents were *frequently* communicating with the schools. In contrast, despite having adequate access to communication technology and possessing the skills to use it, most of these parents were *rarely* and *infrequently* communicating with their children's schools in England. This contributed to a situation in which schools failed to symbolically recognise migrant parents' involvement. Even when communication is established, it is one-directional – school to home and for the purposes of, in most cases, mass disseminating of information such as extreme weather conditions, closing the school, emergency information to parents or negative news, particularly when their children failed to comply with the schools' ethos and rules. This type of communication is one-directional communication mode, it creates unequal power relation where teachers are powerful (dominant), and parents treated as the powerless

(dominated). It was evident that informants who possess multiple disadvantaged identities experienced more discrimination or prejudices, and that technology and social realms are intertwined.

Another example of communication through ‘prescribed’ or ‘strange’ technology (Musa, working class, INTV2014) is found in recent requirements for parents to use the online payment system, *Parentpay*. Whilst this system is used for monetary transactions between English schools and parents, it is regarded as a form of home-school communication in this study and Nneka complained that she was unable to effectively use this platform. This view was echoed by other participants, who found it problematic because they felt that they lacked the technological expertise to use this system, and were uncertain of the security requirements of internet payments. The argument is made that this initiative is another middle-class focused policy, which is problematic because not all parents have the skills to use online payment system. Whilst these requirements are universally applicable to all parents, and not targeted at migrant-origin parents, I argue that it is migrant and/or working class parents who are most affected by these practices. Therefore, the interaction of the experiences and multiple subordinate groups identities of these migrant parents are inextricably linked to their ability or inability to use Parentpay platform.

6.2.3. Computer Literacy

Computer literacy is an important theme because informants’ ability to use technology to help with homework and/or communicate with their children’s schools is dependent on their computer skills. The table below has shown that those who are actively engaged have secure computer skills/ technological literacy, and of those, most are middle class.

Table 13: Computer literacy data analysis

<i>Types of involvement</i>	<i>Informants</i>	<i>Secure computer skills</i>	<i>Insecure computer skills</i>
Active	Adero	Yes	
	Awka	Yes	
	Biafra		Yes
	Dayo	Yes	
	Fumi	Yes	
Less-active	Nnaemeka		Yes
	Nneka		Yes
	Oyiridiya	Yes	
Non-active	Ada		Yes
	Collins		Yes
	Kwame		Yes
	Martin		Yes
	Musa		Yes

Table 14: Computer literacy (with social class)

<i>Types of involvement</i>	<i>Secure computer skills</i>	<i>Insecure computer skills</i>
Active	M M M M	M
Less-active	W	W W
Non-active		M W W W W

Kvasny and Keil (2002) asserted that even though more people have access to computers and the internet in the last decade, little is known about the impacts of increased accessibility and usability for marginalised groups. This study has demonstrated that while marginalised informants have adequate access to modern technologies (see table 8) for home learning, however only five (5/13) respondents have secure knowledge and skills to effectively use these technologies (see table 12). That is to say, the technology skills and the ability to use them are not equitably distributed even when access is arguably similar. The analysis consistently shows that computer literacy had a significant impact on all informants' ability to participate actively in their children's education. The ability to use educational technology effectively was a challenge that confronted these informants. The dominant view (see table

12) is that most of the informants have insecure or no technology skills to actively use technology to support home learning. For example, Musa and Kwame, who had decided not to engage in their children's learning using technology reported:

What is VLE [online platform] and parentpay? These technologies are prescribed and strange... We don't know how to use the computers and my children's schools didn't even contact us to find out if we know how to use the technologies... instead they set online homework and expect us to help. What are we supposed to do? Since we came into the country, it is one struggle after the other ...

(Musa, working-class, INTV2014)

Computer technology is great. Our children use the internet to do their homework and for me and my wife yes we can use online technology but we don't have the skills to help our children with homework...

(Kwame, working-class, INTV2014)

Similarly, Nneka reported that:

I am not technology literate but my son is required to complete his online homework using the internet, of which I don't think I can help.

(Nneka, working-class, INTV2014)

Traditionally, the digital divide discourse centres mainly on access to digital technologies, with dichotomy between 'haves' (people with adequate access) and 'have-nots' (people with no or inadequate access). However a new type of divide – a 'computer literacy divide' emerges from this study. Just as Hargittai (2002) used the concept of 'second level divides' to illustrate the difference in people's ability to search the internet and the time it takes them, parents reported that they are either 'computer literate' or 'computer illiterate'. Dayo's involvement in the home learning of his children using technology improved his son's learning outcome.

My son's Maths teacher rang me and was grateful that I helped my son with his Mymaths.com homework throughout the term and his end of term report also shows good improvement.

(Dayo, working-class, INTV2014)

In contrast to Dayo's view above, it is evident that a few e-mature parents were unable to effectively support their children's learning using technology at home. Fumi, for example reported that she assists her son with home learning using technology but the home support has yet "...to yield good or acceptable result as other behavioural issues are hindering his progress ..." (middle-class, INTVN2014). We can see from Fumi's experience that technology is not a 'magic wand' that improves all children's learning and school experiences.

6.3. Theorising parental involvement and technology

So far, I have discussed parents' access and use of technology both for leisure and for some to support their children's home learning, and home-school communication using technology . However, I have also shown, that for these West African migrant parents, the effectiveness of using technology is determined by how computer literate they are. Therefore, in this section, I attempt to explore and interpret these themes in relation to technology inequality, gender and technology and 'technology otherness' and to theorise these using a mixture of Bourdieuan, postcolonial and intersectional frameworks.

First I theorise technology inequality, as was evident in this study. Second, I theorise computer literacy or lack of it, which creates inequality. Thirdly, I discuss gender and technology because the data suggests that women were more likely than men to use technology to help home learning, which is contradicts the dominant cultural discourses in which men are constructed as 'good' with technology and women as technically 'inept.' Fourthly, I theorise 'technology otherness' as a language to explicate migrant parents' experience of alienation as a consequence of their inability to use technology to participate in their children's learning.

6.3.1. Technology inequality

Although they may not have thought about inequality in terms of technology use at home to support their children's learning, it was evident from the informants' narratives that most of them were making ineffective use of technology.

Parents' inability to make online payments for their children's dinner money is an indication of technology inequality. Valentine *et al* (2002) argue that functional citizenship can be regarded as being able to carry out 'normal' activities like having a job, a roof over someone's head, access to ICT and effective use of it (e.g. online shopping or transaction) are also regarded as 'normal' activity in 21st century. This means that these parents and possibly their children who are making ineffective use of ICT are at risk of social, economic, educational and digital exclusion (Helsper, 2008). Kvasny (2006) argued that life experiences shape parents and young people's ability and confidence to use technology and these experiences are strongly connected, in a Bourdieuan sense, to forms of capital. Capital is distributed unequally among social groups, and consequentially this unequal distribution creates differential experiences which eventually widen technology inequalities (Bennett *et al.*, 1999). This was evident in this study as most of the 'non-active' parents are categorised as working class and they reported that one of the reasons of their perceived non-involvement is lack of technological skills. Further, Valentine *et al* (2002) and INSINC (1997) asserted that the right socio-economic and educational policies should be put in place in order to increase participation. For example, Onyiridiya said:

My children cannot receive free school meal because we don't have the correct residential status. I cannot pay for their meal because I need to open a bank account in order to do online payment...so there is nothing we can do until our immigration status is rectified...

(Oyiridiya, working class, INTV2014)

Whilst table 8 shows that all parents irrespective of social class have reasonably equal access to the required technologies to support home learning, as discussed, equal access does not always guarantee equal outcomes (McElroy, 2008). There is also recognition in the US that equal access and competence should be the basic concern for all educators (Kenway, 1996), but in England equal *competence* is rarely mentioned and focusing on access alone is technologically deterministic because having access to technology does not necessary result in effective or efficient use. Valentine *et al* argued that if the government is really serious in addressing technology and inequalities, they have to understand and deal with other factors,

such as social class and culture that create the existing exclusion in information society instead of focusing on access alone (2002). This view was also echoed by North *et al* (2008), arguing that other factors, such as people's identity, experience and cultural capital can create technology inequality. Warschauer *et al* (2004) also asserted that technology exists within a system of social stratification. Therefore, the quality and nature of access to and use of technology is inextricably linked to the social contexts of the society and as a consequence socio-economic status is one of the main determinant factors in technology access and use (Warschauer *et al*, 2004). Gordon Brown, as Prime Minister in 2008, said that access to technology for low income families is the main focus in England (Porter, 2008; Gould, 2008). However, Warschauer *et al* argued that effective use of technology is as important as having access (2004).

Further, some informants were concerned about the cost of internet broadband and computer repairs. Martin, for example bought educational technology for his children and had hoped this will enable them to complete homework and other school work. However, the cost of repairing a desktop computer and the increase in the tariff for internet connection left him dispirited and perplexed:

I'm really unhappy with cost of these technology [sic] and the cost of repairing them. I think the government or school [s] should pay for them if they want children and parents to use technology at home for learning.

(Martin, working class, INTV2014)

Martin's account highlights how the use of technology to support home learning can also exacerbate an existing inequality as some families may struggle to repair or replace their existing computer technologies.

North *et al* (2008) have drawn on the work of Bourdieu (1996) and Williams (1990) in their analysis of the relationship between people's use of technology and social class and argued that other social factors, such as identity and culture create technological inequality, and as a result the provision of equal access on its own cannot ameliorate the existing technology and/or education inequalities in our societies. They also argued that people's habitus - social, cultural and political structure they grew up in shape the quality of their technology access and use. Those that grew up with dominant habitus seem to have good access and made effective use of technology than their counter parts with undesirable habitus. This can be also

explained in the context of post-colonial theory of ‘us’ (dominant habitus) and ‘others’ (undesirable habitus). The informants’ narratives and research evidence (Russell and Granville, 2005) have consistently shown that West African parents are not expected to help their children with home-learning. However, in England parents/carers are regarded as ‘partners’, and are expected to participate in educating their children. Therefore, different parental involvement methods between two different cultures affected informants’ ability to actively engage in English schools and their narrative accounts show that some of these marginalised parents were treated as ‘others’ with undesirable involvement habitus by their children’s schools.

6.3.2. Computer literacy and inequality

We can use the concept of habitus to further understand dispositions and parents’ attitudes towards technology. Informants were motivated to purchase these technologies by a desire for their children to do well in school. Awka for example stated that:

Internet enables my children to carry out history research in the comfort of our home. This is a great opportunity for them as they are more likely to gain good marks
(Awka, middle-class, INTV2014)

In Awka’s view, access and use of technology to support home learning is a step towards higher attainment for his children. Dayo provides a narrative in which his son is now seen in school as putting excellent effort because he completes all online homework on time and achieve good marks. Access and secure skills to use home learning technologies provided a noticeable means for these parents to actively participate in their children’s learning in an era where schools are increasingly using technologies to set homework and communicate with parents. Many participants reported that using technology in education was new and strange to them after migrating to England. Equally, informants with insecure computer skills (see table 12) told me that gaining these skills is necessary to help their children with homework/school project which in turn will earn them more respect. Additionally, the desire to acquire computer skills can be analysed using the idea of ‘habitus transformation’ and the post-colonial concept of ‘mimicry’. In both instances, the experiences and identities of the marginalised groups are not recognised/valued by the dominant groups, and as result they transform their habitual ways of doing things in order to play in the new field, or attempt to mimic the dominant ways of being and doing.

I feel I'm letting my children down as I do not have the computer skills necessary to assist them with homework and school project... and now I am receiving private computer training from our neighbour who runs an internet café...I want to be comfortable with technology so that I can also use it to do other personal things in the future...

(Musa, working-class, INTV2014)

Musa's view supports Kvasny and Keil (2002) observation that computer skills are cultural capital which is developed overtime. Kvasny and Keil suggested that schools should provide technology training for all parents in order to maximum the impact of technology in education, and without basic computer training it will be virtually impossible to gain secure skills needed to assist their children with home (2002). As Campbell had observed that meaningful parental involvement can be achieved by providing necessary training for parents (2011). Furthermore, effective parental involvement needs strategies that are well planned and robust to increase children's achievement (Epstein, 2005; Furger, 2006; Henderson and Mapp, 2002). However, these authors focus mainly on helping children with home learning and home-school and school-home communication with little or no emphasis on the use of technology. Therefore this study strengthens parental involvement discourse as it explores to a great extent the impact of belonging to multiple identity groups on parental involvement through technology.

The disparities in the level of computer skills between the participants are mediated by orientations or habitus in relation to their social contexts. Tables 12 and 13 show that six (of seven) working-class participants reported having insecure technology skills to support their children home learning. Whilst the policy discourse (DfES, 2007a) suggests that the acquisition of the necessary computer skills will produce e-mature citizens, Galbraith argued that these newly empowered e-mature parents will not suddenly become middle-class because computer skills acquisition will not create more spaces at the top (1998). Additionally, Matthews says 'ICT skills are not intrinsically liberating ... neither are they automatically valuable'" (2001:28). The underlying notion is that 'mimicry' doesn't always pay off.

This study has also shown that migrants' gender, technology skills and social class position affect their level of involvement. For example, a comparative analysis between home-school

communication (see table 10) and computer literacy (see table 12) shows that one of the two active/infrequent participants categorised as being middle-class possessed secure computer skills while the other possessed insecure computer skills. One interpretation is that although men arguably possess more computer skills, women are more likely to use their skills to play active role in their children's learning or education (Rose and Atkin, 2010). Also, there is a link between secure technology skills and active involvement through the use of educational technology (Ramirez, 2001). This was evident in the comparative analysis between two less active/frequent working-class informants who have both been categorised as having insecure computer skills. Whilst these participants have insecure skills to actively participate in their children's home-learning, they possessed adequate enough skills to engage in a meaningful home-school communication which required minimal technology competence.

6.3.3. Gender and Technology

Jones' assertion that people's access and use of technology is linked to their individual identity or life experiences in terms of SES and gender is an important contribution (2010).

Using women as informants in a critical examination of the relationship between technology and inequality, Henwood et al (2000) indicated that seeing technology as simply a set of skills to be acquired by those who do not have them in order to level the playing fields or to catch up is a liberal discourse which will not solve the existing digital inequality. In this liberal discourse, women are thought to be under represented in the computing field, and as a result giving them more access to computing course will create equality instead of looking into other socially constructed factors that led to technology inequalities. However, they warned that tackling the root cause of gender-technology relations will not be easy as it is constructed in dominant discourses, which have an impact on individuals' gender identities' construction. According to Valentine et al (2001), recent technology and education researchers such as North *et al* (2008) shows that 'technology use is closely tied with social identity' (p903) and 'technology is embedded in relations of power, serving the interest of individuals or institutions, whether for economic or cultural means' (Schirato and Webb 2003 cited in North *et al* 2008:907). That is to say, even when universal access is achieved, there are always going to be tensions in power relations either in schools or families and these tensions, unless resolved will continue to exacerbate the existing inequalities in relation to technology.

The table below presented the picture that more women in this study use technology to support their children with home learning.

Table 15: Gender and Technology data analysis

<i>Types of involvement (in England)</i>	<i>Informants</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Assist children with homework using technology</i>
Active	Adero	Female	No
	Awka	Male	No
	Biafra	Male	No
	Dayo	Male	Yes
	Fumi	Female	Yes
Less-active	Nnaemeka	Male	No
	Nneka	Female	Yes
	Oyiridiya	Female	Yes
Non-active	Ada	Female	No
	Collins	Male	No
	Kwame	Male	No
	Martin	Male	No
	Musa	Male	No

Table 14 shows that more female participants (3/5) use technology to help their children with home learning when compared with their male counterparts (1/8). One possible explanation for this might be linked with another significant theme –e-maturity (or computer literacy). It can also be linked to general West African mentality where men are culturally treated as the bread winner and the women charged with running the house hold including engaging with children’s education (Biafra, middle-class, INTV 2014). In England, for many migrant families, this traditional pattern was disrupted. Ada, a female participant narrated that she failed to participant in her children’s learning in England because she always worked to pay the bills and her husband stays at home to look after their children.

I work five days a week and twelve hours shift. My husband has no job so I don’t really engage in our children’s education because of work commitment. My husband communicates with their schools and he is responsible for all their school stuff ...

(Ada, working-class, INTV 2014)

In the past, non-participation has been linked to gender-technology inequalities and in the dominant cultural discourses, in relation to technology, gender is constructed with men as ‘good’ with technology and women as technically ‘incompetent’ (Henwood et al., 2000).

This study has shown that there is a gender difference in who can translate their capitals, with more women than men being able engage in their children learning using technology in England because they were able to transfer/activate their capitals quickly post migration and as a result they see the benefits of using modern technology to assist their children with homework (see table 14 above). However the view that women are technically incompetent is still generally accepted as the ‘truth’ even when research evidence suggests otherwise (Montagnier, 2008).

6.3.4. Technology ‘Otherness’

In this study I argue that most working class participants can be identified as technology ‘others’ as they were unable to assist their children with online homework and school project. The pattern is also consistent with the literature and research evidence discussed above regarding the interconnectivity between technology and social class. In addition, it was evident that migration processes came with many lifestyle changes and cultural implications. One of the implications identified is the West African migrant parents’ refusal to assimilate into English education culture on one hand, and the misrecognition of their involvement techniques by the schools on the other. The latter, as explained in section 5.2.1 above amounts to structural violence and the refusal to completely assimilate in English culture resulted in *habitus clivé* in Bourdieuan concept and ‘hybridity’ in the word of Bhabha as a consequence of the contradictions they experienced in coming from West African school system to English system which is totally new field of education.

As I outlined in section 6.2, Bauman identified the lay person as the other of the expert, and with reference to the computer literacy section (6.2.3) above, several informants reported insecure technical skills to actively use technology to assist their children’s learning at home and whilst they created a conducive home learning environment for their children, this study has revealed that these migrant parents were regarded as ‘others’ in relation to

technology because they lack required skills to assist with home learning using technology. Thus, they confided that being constructed as incapable to use these technologies is ‘hurtful’ and discriminatory.

The table below presented the picture that working class migrant parents were less likely to use technology to help their children with homework or home learning.

Table 16: Technology ‘otherness’ data analysis

<i>Types of involvement (in England)</i>	<i>Informants</i>	<i>Technology ‘others’</i>
Active	Adero	No
	Awka	No
	Biafra	Yes
	Dayo	No
	Fumi	No
Less-active	Nnaemeka	Yes
	Nneka	Yes
	Oyiridiya	Yes
Non-active	Ada	Yes
	Collins	Yes
	Kwame	Yes
	Martin	Yes
	Musa	Yes

This study demonstrated that the requirements or expectations for these migrants to assist their children with online homework and/or school work posed a second type of otherness – “technology otherness.” For example, Kwame said that:

Our younger son’s ITC [sic] teacher asked us to assist him with his homework on the school’s website [VLE]... this teacher has never spoken to us and does not even know if we have the technology at home... my wife and I can do online shopping but that is it...we don’t have expert computer and subject knowledge to help our children with

homework

(Kwame, working-class, INTV2014)

Kwame's narrative above shows that he was unable to engage actively in his children's home-learning through technology, but moreover, that this only compounded existing feelings of alienation: as their relationship with their children's teacher/ school was non-existent. Technology created another layer of otherness- where it could have aided communication, their inability to use it further alienated them.

Equally, Biafra asserted that:

Parents do not have the required technological knowledge to assist their children with home learning technology and for me and my wife; our main challenge is how to use the technology since we are not very good in using technology.

(Biafra, middle-class, INTV2014)

The informants' narratives have shown that they feel like technology 'others' in their relationship with their children's school. This is problematic because the data shows that some of these parents are working-class, and Warschauer *et al* (2004) argued that middle class and well-educated parents are mostly favoured as they are the ones who have the socio-economic and social capital wherewithal to participate actively in their children learning via technology.

I want to revisit the example of '*Parentpay*', as an heuristic device to theorise migrant parent's alienation. Recent requirement for parents to communicate with schools through the online payment system (*Parentpay*) was problematic for three reasons. One, some of the participants do not have the technological expertise to use this online payment system; two, their accounts demonstrated inadequate internet access to make this type of payment and three, I want to argue it has a dominant (White middle class) bias. This story from Ada is revealing:

My children came back from school ... with a letter from school showing arrears of £50.00 [i.e for two children] ... the letter also said several reminders have been sent to our parentpay email which my husband signed into ... and schools won't accept cash anymore and my husband doesn't know how to use parentpay...this is frustrating and now our children have to go to school with pack lunch until the arrears are paid...it is humiliating for them ...

Ada's story shows how as parents, their lack of technological literacy (despite class background) led to humiliation and alienation for their children in school, who were perceived as poor (or worse, criminal!) because their parents had not paid for their dinners. This is a clear example of what Fanon discusses: the dominant must play to the tune of the dominated, despite not being provided with the necessary skills to do so. The 'game' is rigged from the start.

However, Nigeria is Africa's top internet nation with 48.4 million internet users (Agbaje and Ayanbadejo (2013). Ayo et al (2010) also asserted that estimated online shopping may rise to N150 billion (that is £360,947,867.00) in 2014 and internet banking users are also growing in Nigeria. Additionally, Nigeria is ranked 7th on 2016 world internet users whereas the United Kingdom occupied 9th position (Internet Live Stats, 2016). This is interesting and raises the question of whether migrant's inability to use technology in England was perhaps due to wilful resistance to assimilate new ways of involvement. This view again support the points made by Menski (2002) and Watson (1977) that ethnic minorities in Britain may be resisting the need to reconstruct their cultures and traditions in order to assimilate into the British norms. Migrant parents who also belong to other subordinate categories such as technology others, working-class, EAL, less educated are the ones who most experienced technology inequality.

There was 'active' and 'non-active' divide in relation to the use of technology, with migrant parents identified as active embracing new educational technology, and on the hand non-active parents described it as 'prescribed' and 'strange'. Consequently, they accused the schools of coercing them to use this technology to support home learning. These migrant parents felt the requirement to use this technology is one way the schools – the dominant ('us') is marginalising and discriminating against them (the 'others').

6.4. Concluding comments

This chapter has advanced a key theme, the role of technology in parental involvement specifically in relation to West African migrant parents' experiences. The expectations to use technology to support home learning in England exacerbate already existing inequalities because at practical level some of the informants do not possess the required technical skills

to effectively use these educational technologies. Moreover, these migrant parents lack the cultural capital needed to participate in their children's learning because in Nigeria for example parents are not expected to get involved (Russell and Granville, 2005) and doing so is considered interference. Thus, these parents were 'othered' as 'technology others'. However, when faced with the challenge in the new field of education, a few of these migrant parents were able to transform their habitus and started to use technology to help their children with homework. Whilst habitus is socially constructed rather than individual process, this research has shown it can also be transformed when a player faced with different field or unexpected situations for example helping children with homework and/or involvement using technology.

It demonstrated that migration processes bring cultural implications, for example at one hand the informants seem to resist complete assimilation and on the other hand they are denied the right to practise their cultures, and as a consequence they now live in between two cultures (Watson, 1977) and Menski (2002). There was a clear evidence of computer literacy divide with computer literate informants more likely to participate in their children's education while migrants who possess little or no technology skills are less likely to engage in learning at home. The difference in West African migrant parents' level of computer skills is interrelated with their habitus and according to Bourdieu, and others like Reay, 'habitus' is the main channel power (both cultural and symbolic) is created, and re-legitimised through the interaction of agency and structure. Informants' perceived discriminatory treatment in relation to their inability to use technology to support home learning and open a bank account in order to use parentpay system amounts to structural or institutional violence perpetuated on the dominated by the powerful.

The role of gender in the dynamics of parental involvement using technology in England was then investigated. Clearly, West Africa and England presented two distinct depictions of parents' involvement methods. There is also the issue of how social class positioning of these parents affects their ability to use technology to communicate with their children's schools. Whilst some middle-class informants felt that schools in England embrace their linguistic and cultural differences, many (working-class), however, reported that their inability to communicate using technology is a significant barrier to participation.

Chapter 7 - Implications and Discussion

7.1. Introduction

This study has used the theoretical lens of habitus to examine the effects of the expectation that parents use educational technology to support their children at home. For migrant parents of West African origin, the use of technology in education crystallised the impact of their subjectification in a post-colonial context and highlighted that intersecting identities in relation to their ability to engage in their children's schooling.

The dissertation shows how migrant parents' involvement using technology could be explored as the foci of education policy in England, and how schools can be sites for facilitating social inequalities because consciously or unconsciously teachers' pedagogic actions endorse cultural capital of the dominant (White middle-class) group. The motivation for this study was the desire to carry out qualitative research about the impact of using technology to engage in children's education in England for different minority groups and to offer alternative theoretical frameworks which, in addition to Bourdieuan concepts of capitals, field and habitus, locate parental involvement within the wider contexts of the impact of postcolonial legacy and intersecting multiple subordinate identities. The study problematizes the accepted assumptions of the socio-economic and cultural mediation literature regarding parents' ability to use technology to play active role in their children's education, and to communicate with their schools. A substantive empirical analysis was carried out that addressed the research questions and developed methodological interest.

The structure of this concluding chapter is divided into three sections: significant key finding and themes, discussion and implication for practice, and research limitations.

7.2. Significant key findings and themes

This section summarises how this study has addressed the research questions outlined in chapter 1: the impact of experiences and identities to the West African migrant parental involvement; the theoretical exploration of West African migrant parents' experiences and identities and the examination of West African migrant parents' use of the new educational technologies to engage with their children's education in English schools.

7.2.1. The impact of experiences and identities to the West African migrant parental involvement

One of the central themes for this thesis is how West African migrant parents' identities and experiences affect their ability to engage with their children's learning, and the role in this and the impact of *intersecting* multiple identities such as social class, migration, and ethnicity and technology habitus. This integrative theme emerged through the study: during the interviews, analysis and a review of literature.

7.2.1.1. Experiences of migration

Upon migration to England, the participants said that they experienced discrimination and prejudice in various ways. A few of the study participants on student visa such as Biafra and Fumi were permitted to work for only 20 hours during term time. Whilst immigration control is a standard UK national policy to regulate migration, these West African migrant parents felt they were being marginalised because of their multiple identities. The study also showed that one of the implications of immigration control for these migrants is racism and discrimination when looking for work. They were treated as 'others', the undesirables (subalterns). Therefore, they were unable to get the same/comparable jobs or employment after migrating to England. The informants' migration story revealed that they experienced social falling because in West Africa, these migrant parents were categorised as middle class but upon migration almost all of them were recategorised as working class within the first five years of migrating to England. In Biafra's view, these migrants became 'classless' after migrating to England. Migrant parents' experiences before and after migrating to England, created an opportunity or hindrance to actively participate in their children's education. This means that their class position post migration created 'the most' significant effect on migrant parents' ability to participate in their children's education in England, and it is also linked to all the other identities. Some parents who experienced dislocation of social class as they move from middle class to working class became less active and others were classified as non-active in their children's education. This again can be attributed to intersecting complex issues such as culture, low SES, language (Selwyn, 2002). This class position has been contrasted with most migrants pointing to commonality in relation to social class shift, as well as difference in severity. Informants whose qualifications were downgraded post migration became either less active or non-active, thus this study supports Livingstone and Helsper, (2008) assertion that parents' level of education is a factor in their ability to support their

children's education. That is to say, informants' educational level affects their ability and self-efficacy to engage in their children's education and communicate with their schools.

7.2.1.2. Cultural differences in parental involvement practice

The informants recognised their responsibility to help in the education of their children. For example, supporting their children to maintain acceptable attendance, punctuality both to school and to lessons, and respecting others. However, the greatest barrier to engagement was found on cultural difference in relation to the issue of assisting children with home learning. This study showed that many informants held a fixed assumption about the division of labour between school and home. Parents are responsible for providing a conducive home environment, paying all necessary fees while teachers/school are responsible for teaching their children and making sure they succeed academically. This belief is the habitual practice in West Africa. Moreover, providing the right environment and making sure children are completing all set homework independently is a priority for these migrant parents. On the other hand, helping schoolchildren with their homework was seen as 'immoral' (bad practice). Thus, the perception of non-involvement is actually an instance of cultural difference in the understanding of the meaning of involvement, as the parents in this study resist or reject the pressure to assimilate the British education use of technology to support home learning. Therefore, the study supports Waltson's (1977) and Menski's (2002) assertion that migrants to Britain resist complete assimilation into British culture. One of the implications is that migrant parents' ways of involvement will not be acknowledged by English schools and as result they are regarded as 'hard to reach'. Shartrand et al. (1997) suggest that the perceived non-involvement by minority groups can be attributed to their lack of the cultural capital needed to play active role in their children's education.

Other obvious challenges to active parental involvement are teachers' lack of knowledge when dealing with ethnic minority with complex multiple subordinate (intersecting) identities; disagreements about how to discipline children; perceived marginalisation when it comes to decision making as the study showed that the schools rarely consult these minority parents when making decisions that affect them; time crunch and parents' social identities after migrating to England. In relation to time crunch, this thesis has shown how insufficient time is perceived as one of the main reasons that these migrants were not participating actively in their children's home learning. Equally, social falling (for example, being

categorised as EAL, having one's qualifications downgraded and social downgrading) exacerbated the situation because migrants who were middle class in Africa became working class post migration. This fall to a lower socio-economic class means that most informants (who had become working class) are more affected when compared with middle-class informants, as they work long shifts to meet their financial obligations in England which is contrary to their habitual way of life in West Africa. This empirically support the work of Russell and Granville, who argued that lack of time due to work commitments is one of the main barriers to active involvement (2005).

7.2.2. Theorising the Impact of migrant parents' identities and experiences

Chapter 5 centred on the theoretical underpinnings of parents' experiences and identities. In this chapter, Bourdieuan and post colonial and intersectional theory were used to try to further understand West African migrant parents' experiences.

Starting with the Bourdieuan concept of habitus, this study has shown that migrant parents' habitual ways of parental involvement in Africa is different from the English model. However, a minority of parents, who had access to desirable cultural capital in relation to supporting their children with home learning, were able to migrate with their capital. As a result, they experienced less dislocation, as they were able to activate their existing cultural capital in the UK setting. Therefore, this study supports Hollingworth et al (2011) assertion that different habitus represent different experiences, identities and world views.

The interaction between West African migrant parents' identities and experiences in relation to habitus reconstruction and cultural capital rebuilding (Erel, 2010) after migrating to England amounts to symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977) as they have to learn new ways of being, for example speaking and participating in their children's learning despite speaking and communicating with schools and actively engaging in their children in West Africa. The recognitions or misrecognitions (to use Fanon's 1963 terms) of the migrant parents' cultural capitals in England served to either empower or hinder this marginalised group's participation in English education. Equally, this study has shown that non-recognition of their involvement practices and the expectation to help with homework acts as a reminder of treatment in the colonial era. The colonizer expected the colonised to assimilate the culturally dominant ways of doing things. Whilst a few migrant parents accepted the need to totally reform their post

migration engagement practices, in order to conform to English parental involvement policy and to exhibit acceptable cultural capital in this field, others adopted new forms of participation in English education, such as communicating with schools but at the same time maintaining their West African engagement practices and beliefs, such as holding to the view that parents should not help children with homework, in order that they become independent learners. This desire for reform is described by Bhabha (1994) as ‘mimicry’; while in Bourdieuan sociology, living with two competing identities is termed as ‘cleft habitus’ or divided habitus while post-colonial theorists called it ‘hybridity’, living with two competing cultures, identities and values. The study has also demonstrated that the prejudice, discrimination and marginalisation experienced by this minority group of parents were not peculiar to just working class parents, as the few middle class participants with intersecting multiple identities such as race, accent, ethnicity and immigrant status also experienced these treatments. This study therefore supports Crenshaw’s (1989) assertion that groups with multiple subordinate identities experience more discriminations or prejudices. Whilst UK immigration policy is arguably applicable to all migrants, West African migrant parents’ narratives showed that their immigration experiences amount to ‘structural violence’ as the state exerted its power and domination over them.

It is clear from the theoretical perspectives that these migrant West African parents need to activate their cultural capitals (where possible) or create new post migration cultural capital (Erel, 2010) to actively participate in English schools. However, the interaction between their diverse and multiple intersecting identities and experiences pre- and post-migration affected their ability to engage in their children’s home learning. Similarly, the interaction between different identities demonstrated in Chapter 4 shows how relations and power are negotiated and resisted between the dominant and dominated. These demonstrate both unequal relations of power and epistemic violence (Pratt, 1992; Clemente and Higgins 2008).

7.2.3. Parental involvement and technology

Chapter 6 moved to the crux of this study: whether the expectation to use of new educational technologies to engage in children’s home learning empowers or hinders minority parents’ ability to participate in English education. This study has demonstrated that although almost all participants had the belief that educational technologies are of paramount importance in the education of their children, a significant number of these migrant parents were still not helping with home learning. And despite migrant parents’ economic difficulties in their early

years of migration, almost all participants had adequate access to the internet, computers including laptops and smart phones. These technologies were not acquired purely for home entertainment purposes but for their children to do their home learning by themselves. It was evident that some of these parents were using smart phones to communicate with English schools but it is still one directional, school to home, and generally negative, for example, schools contacting home when children have done something wrong rather than positive communication such as praise. The study also showed that these parents reported that they were marginalised, subjugated and discriminated against in England and their ability to participate in their children's education was affected by these experiences. I argue that one of the reasons for this non-involvement lies in their refusal to assimilate into such dominant cultural expectations as helping with homework. For example, some of the participants said they do not have the required computer skills to use the technology but they use the same technology for home entertainment. They believed that technology is a necessity for their children's education, yet they were unwilling to use it to enhance their children's home learning. I also argue that the expectations for parents to use technology to support with home learning acted as a trigger, exposing long-held frustrations. Their refusal to conform with these expectations, thus becomes a means of demanding equality in home-school relationships, and for greater cultural sensitivity when interacting with ethnic minorities, and a recognition that they have cultures and stories that need to be heard. Equally, the expectations to use technology to support home learning in England exacerbate existing inequalities because at practical level some informants do not possess the necessary computer skills to effectively use these educational technologies.

Four themes were identified and theorised in chapter 6: there were technology inequality, computer literacy and inequality, the gender and technology relationship, and technology 'otherness'. This study has demonstrated that migrant parents' identities and experiences created technology inequality. Thus, this thesis supports North et al's (2008) assertion that low SES family and ethnic minority groups are disadvantaged when it comes to the use of technology. Equally, the classification of these migrant parents as computer literate or computer illiterate; technology user or technology other and either having adequate access or inadequate access reinforces Warschauer et al (2004) claim that access technology existed within a system of social stratification. This means that migrant parents' nature of access to and use of technology is linked to the social contexts in England and as a consequence their socio-economic status after migrating to England is one of the main determinant factors in their ability to access technology and use it help with home learning.

This study also showed that more female participants use technology to help their children with home learning when compared with their male counterparts. This might be directly linked to computer literacy and self-efficacy to participate in their children's education. Therefore, the finding that West African migrant parents' identities such as gender and literacy empowers or hinders their ability to help with home learning underpins Jones' (2010) claim that people's identities and experiences such as race, gender and social class influence their access and use of technologies. Habitus was also used to explore dispositions and parents' attitudes towards technology. It was evident that migrant parents with 'technology habitus' (a phrase I adopted to theorise good use of technology) were more willing to use it than those without secure computer skills. However, habitus can change when it meets a new field for example a few informants with insecure computer skills said they acquired computer skills in order to help their children with homework/school project. As noted earlier in this chapter, in Bourdieusian sociology, this is known as habitus transformation and the post-colonialists regard this as 'mimicry'. Both 'mimicry' and habitus transformation are the products of non acceptance of the experiences and identities of the marginalised groups, therefore forcing them to transform their habitual ways of doing things to 'belong.'

In this study, most working class participants were categorised as technology 'others' as they were unable to assist their children with online homework and unable to use *Parentpay*. This pattern is consistent with technology and social class literature (Jones, 2010). Whilst migrant parents' refusal to assimilate into the dominant involvement practice exacerbated the situation, the misrecognition of their involvement techniques by the schools, amounts to structural violence.

7.3. Discussion and implications

Having reviewed the main findings, this section will firstly reflect on the execution of the research: the methods adopted; the theories and empirical significances drawn on in the analysis; and secondly a consideration of the implications for practice.

7.3.1. Theoretical framework and methodological approach

The synthesis of theories, advanced in chapter 2, that might contribute to an investigation and analysis of migrant parents' use of technology to engage in their children's education in England had a heuristic value. The integration of the empirical and theoretical dimensions of this thesis should be understood as a holistic approach. The importance of integrating empirical evidence with theoretical framework was previously observed by Bourdieu, who asserted that it is important to ground empirical studies in theories and the outcomes underpin these research tools (1992). The theoretical framework and conceptual instruments - capitals, fields, habitus, postcolonial legacy and intersecting multiple identities used in this study were interconnected; and they were derived from the sociological works of Bourdieu (1986; 1990a; 1990b; 1991; 1992; 1996; 1997; 1999; 2002 and 2005), postcolonial theorists (e.g. Bhabha (1994), Said (1978), Fanon (1963) and Pheonix (2009) and the identification of intersectionality by Crenshaw (1989). This study demonstrated that deploying these concepts can produce new language or provide a lens with which to explore the social world in a non-reductive manner, bringing together a concern for unequal power relations, unequal distribution of resources, effects of colonial legacy and possession of dominated identities with a semi-structured interview flexibility which empowers the participants to deconstruct the lived experiences and make sense of the social life. Whilst a group habitus may points to the unequal socio-cultural dispositions and orientation, these were flexibly enacted, and reactive to schools' expectations generated within the English education field. In turn, this interaction produced new identities embodied in migrant parents' ability to play active roles in their children's education.

Bourdieu and a micro-level sociological approach thus augment and improve the understandings of each other. This is demonstrated by Fumi's interactions with her son's welfare officer in chapter 4, which show unequal power relationship, regardless of the habitus. The requirement for parents to use technology to engage in their children's learning at home in England, and failure to conform to this method of engagement which often results in discrimination and social exclusion has been highlighted. I suggested that these migrant parents' social class and habitus positions and dispositions post migration; particularly working class families should be explored to understand fully the impact of belonging to multiple group identities. Contrarily, it is shown that some middle class informants were able to transform their socio-economic and cultural capitals and habitus in relation to involvement in education, which empowered them to be actively involved in their children's learning

process in England. This advanced Erel's (2010) concepts of migrating capital through the production or reproduction of cultural capital that builds on power relations of country of migration. In the same vein, it demonstrated how the possession of stigmatised experiences and identities limit the possibility for marginalised group to participate in English education.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework facilitated an emphasis on parents' culture (ideas, customs and social behaviour) and their agency via the prism of supremacy, ensuring that it is a relevant part of this practical investigation. It also helped to explain the dynamics of power relationship between the migrant parents and teachers and/or schools, and the consequences for this minority group who are oppressed and dominated. During the ontological analysis, attention was given to informants' narratives in connection with postcolonial legacy on their class formation because reality is subjective, impalpable and constructed mentally, thus this framework supports constructivism. Although Bisman and Highfield warned that knowledge and realities are relative because they are dependent on time, space and context (2012), it is argued that this study is naturalistic, and therefore interpretivism was seen as the appropriate framework to explore these realities. Further, a concern for validity and reliability in a qualitative study has methodological implications, because it adds weight to the triangulation of the data collected during the interviews. For example, unlike triangulation in quantitative research, using different methods such as interview, recording and observations improve the quality of data in relation to generating reliable understanding, and therefore dependability lead to generalization, which according to (Stenbacka, 2001 in Golafshani, 2003) is crucial in conducting and reporting qualitative research.

The migrant parents' depiction of the English schools' involvement policy is an appropriate example of the inherent practical challenges. As explained in chapters 4 to 6, the perception of England and teachers narrated by the informants was that of oppression, dominance and of being constructed as 'hard to reach', and that they were responsible for the perceived parents' non-involvement in education of their children. These perspectives influenced my early judgements of the schools' behaviour and home-school communication practice because I was immersed into this social world during the fieldwork. However, in re-examining these perceptions, the manner, in which English schools' involvement policy was represented, was through intersubjectively produced expectations. These expectations successively shaped the variety of involvement activities migrant parents recognised as being practicable. This created

one of the barriers to involvement as migrant parents had mentally constructed teaching as being solely for teachers and parents, in their view were not responsible for teaching.

This study advanced postcolonial theory to explore how migrant parents experienced technology in education as an aspect of a postcolonial oppressive legacy, rather than the liberating tool of government policy. Bourdieu is the theory of choice for many research articles on parental involvement. His conceptual ideas of economic, cultural and social were, I argued, informed by his colonial experiences during the Algerian war (1954 - 62). The use of Bourdieu's socio-economic status theory joined with postcolonial theory is 'novel' as this research has successfully demonstrated that the participants' new socio-economic status after migrating to England affected their ability to participate in their children's home learning, and their new SES can be understood using postcolonial theory. Racism, discrimination, and intolerance etc. were hallmarks of colonial legacy, and according to these migrant parents, they are still experiencing the same treatments from their children's schools. The school becomes central: it causes dislocation. Schools are the face of the state and society in the life of the parents and children. As schools are major institutions for interaction, postcolonial theory helps us examine the relationship between class and colonial legacy or experience and parents' ability to participate in education. Although these informants belong to subaltern populations, social actors referred as being politically and socially outsiders to hegemonic power structure of British Empire, this study demonstrated that initially one informant overcame colonial or cultural legacy of subjugation and categorisation and came to 'succeed' in England. Adero, a physiotherapist who migrated to England during NHS staff crisis, was able to be assimilated into English culture despite her class, accent, immigration status, ethnicity and gender. Adero was from a middle class background and importantly held a qualification, which had functional significance in England, and therefore was able to be assimilated into dominant culture. In contrast, many migrant parents, from low income and working class background with qualifications of no or little functional significance experienced more prejudices and discrimination, which negatively affected their confidence to fully assimilate.

Whilst the use of technology for involvement was the arena for discussion, this study has exposed the underlying issues of migration. It has been shown that the expectations for migrant parents to use technology to engage in education meant that they were experiencing two different challenges – migration and technology simultaneously. In this respect, sorting migration issues such as immigration status was their first priority, rather than becoming

actively involved in education. Postcolonial theory thus adds depth and nuance to parental involvement research, predominantly theorised through Bourdieu's concepts of capitals, field and habitus. Additionally, for a few informants some of these technologies such as *VLE* and *ParentPay* were 'prescribed' and 'strange' because the schools did not seek for their opinion before the implementation or offer any training, and these migrant parents lack the required technical skills to use them effectively.

The impact of intersecting multiple identities is another area of concern, both in this research and for analytical studies generally. The overlapping or intersecting interactions of social identities such as class, race, ethnicity and gender create social systems of oppression and domination for this marginalised subordinate group (Crenshaw, 1989). As explained in chapter 2, some of the intersectional literature has argued that different types of subordinate identities or statuses can be examined separately and the effects of such experiences added or multiplied (i.e. additive model). This view is problematic and indicates a narrow and limiting emphasis on intersecting effects of these complex identities on this marginalised group. Researchers have recognised the difficulty for individuals belonging to multiple subordinate social categories to distinguish the particular identity that causes the oppression (Pastrana, 2010; Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003). In contrast to the additive model, this study has demonstrated that the intersection of migrant parents' multiple stigmatised social identities such as accent, West African, class, immigration and technology 'others' created more discrimination and oppression, and therefore making it sometimes impossible to engage in their children's learning at home and communicate with schools in England.

7.3.2 Implications for practice

In addition to the theoretical and methodological contributions explained above, this study leads to a few practical implications. Starting first with barriers to involvement, this research lends weight to the consideration that the *intersecting* multiple subordinate group identities of West African migrant parents complicate their ability to participate in their children's education in England which requires further acknowledgement and development. It is essential for schools in England to identify means to strengthen ethnic minority parents' participation and draw from their experiences in relation to engaging with home learning. Migrant parents (and all parents) must be treated and respected as important and equal partners in the education of their children rather than 'fringe partners' worthy of collaborating

with, in times of troubles. Therefore, it is suggested that training for experienced teachers and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)¹² on cross-cultural competence, particularly West African cultures with regard to involvement policy and practice is necessary. In the same vein, it is also recommended that training should be provided for parents on how to use ‘prescribed’ and ‘strange’ educational technology to help their children’s learning at home. This study showed that technology for the most part is used by teachers and/schools to disseminate information to parents and school – home communication is one directional. This raises serious question with regard to true value of technology to support home learning. A critical review of the academic benefits to use technology to support learning at home is recommended. School leaders and/or teachers should be encouraged to be aware of the socio-political, economic and cultural dynamics of working with parents. It is imperative for teachers to understand that these ethnic minority parents possess diverse experiences and identities which are possibly different from dominant parental engagement practice accepted in England. That is to say, it is important for teachers to understand, recognise and value parents’ diversity in order to manage the involvement of both working class and middle class families to raise achievement of all children. Similarly, this study has shown that parents are rarely consulted in schools’ education policy decision-making, despite having strong knowledge and understanding of their house hold environment and children’s learning behaviour. Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) paper, a review of best practice in parental engagement would be a practical starting point to explore further teaching, education and instructional implications.

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that school leaders and/or teachers failed to to adequately inform and prepare most migrant parents on the curriculum contents and how to use their life experiences to support learning at home. It is of paramount importance for leaders of education and teachers to reflect on how parents’ (e.g. working class families) lack of curriculum knowledge (particularly at key stage 4 – GCSE level) and confidence to assist their children can be instrumental in the production and reproduction of educational inequalities. At least in Africa, the lack of parental involvement with homework has a levelling function, as children’s success is less dependent on their parents’ knowledge, but what they all learn in school. Equally, in England, teachers appear more likely to contact parents with negative comments such as when their children have shown poor attitude

¹² NQT – Newly Qualified teacher is a compulsory twelve months’ programme (also known as induction year) tailored for teachers who have gained their QTS.

towards learning, made racial/homophobic remarks, truant their lessons, defiance and informing them about exclusion meeting/hearing. Whilst it is advisable to inform parents about incidents concerning their children, teachers should also send positive messages home regularly to meet the needs of children they ‘share.’ It is also shown in this study that inadequate or inappropriate communication between teachers and parents has given rise to scepticism and distrust. Thus, effective communication requires the establishment of robust teacher-parent relationship, which is considered an important aspect of schools’ development strategy necessary to create learning communities (Schussler, 2003). Equally, teachers must be explicitly trained in the skills they require to communicate with minority parents (Hradecky, 1994; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004). Indeed, promoting communication skills development for practitioners via Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and other professional programmes is vital and can maximise partnership with parents (Casper, 2003) in educating their children.

This study suggests that it is one-dimensional to regard parents as ‘hard to reach’ in parental involvement discourse without exploring and addressing the effects of intersecting multiple subordinate identities and experiences in their lives. If parents are to be actively involved in their children’s learning and maximise their partnership with teachers to make a difference, their socio-cultural identities must be explored, recognised and legitimised in English schools. Whilst this study demonstrated that achieving this task is complex and partly an on-going struggle in education, particularly the possibility of establishing ‘equal’ power relationships, it is up to individual schools to decide how they want to go about such a task.

7.4. Research limitations

This part examines the shortcomings encountered in the thesis and the ways they would have been ameliorated, in addition to fresh lines of enquiry that, because of my thesis, need to be explored.

In chapter 3, I mentioned that most of the themes of parental involvement using technology and the effects of colonial legacy emerged before the interview and from the data analysis rather than during the interview. Research process is arguably incomplete, and was modified by the researcher’s motives, experiences and influences in the field. It is unavoidable that an individual will go into writing with the mind-set that an-individual was incapable of knowing

all (Rock, 2001). Whilst it is acceptable to stop further interviews once the saturation point is reached (see section 3.6.1), recruitment and interview of more migrant parents, and the views of the children of these informants and their teachers would have been useful rather than relying solely on the perceptions and perspectives of one stakeholder (migrant parents). Pupils are also active agents, and exploring their experiences and perspectives could have been equated, contrasted and differentiated with those of their parents and teachers. In previous chapters, I discussed how the intersecting multiple identities theme emerged inductively, an early emphasis on it would have led to more in-depth questioning to ascertain explicitly whether the informants experienced more or less discrimination as a result of belonging to multiple subordinate identity groups. As social class was one of the contributing factors to migrant parents' ability to engage in their children's education, it could have been interesting if equal numbers of working class and middle class parents were recruited and interviewed because this would have enhanced the comparative analysis. In general, different West African migrant parents, those escaping wars and/or terrorism (e.g. migrant parents from Mali and Niger) should be included in future research of this kind. Additionally, the issue of language in this study could be further developed as migrant lack of confidence to communicate in English may have posed more barriers than this study lets on, and may have impacted class differences more than we are aware of. It would have proved interesting to have been able to investigate *current* parental involvement practice in West Africa (as home becomes a fantastic place) rather than using informants' past experiences (dated at least 13 years ago) as this would have yielded a more equitable and realistic comparison between both fields.

This study demonstrated that cultural capital emerged as either the key enabler or hindrance to active involvement, yet the impact was not extensively explored. It is possible that the gap in categories of involvement (active, less active and non-active) between middle class and working-class migrant parents, clearly explained here might, in time, narrow. Therefore, an ethnographic longitudinal dimension would provide protracted time needed for testing habitus transformation. Additionally, exploring the correlation between length of residence and the acquisition of migrant-specific cultural capital for active engagement would be an interesting endeavour as the level of migrant parents' involvement after migrating to England is dependent on duration of residence and access to social network. It is sincerely hoped that this research will motivate more researchers to pursue this suggestive enquiry.

The investigation of the ‘*real*’ advantages of parents’ use of technology to support home learning in relation to academic achievement at both Key Stage 3 and GCSE levels is an area of important development. The whole of chapter 6 explains migrant parents’ engagement using technologies, revealing mainly factors that affect their ability to engage in learning at home, but did not fully inquire into the academic benefits of using technology to support home learning. For example, the differences in academic achievement of children from working class and middle class families – both those whose parents use technology to support learning at home and those their parents do not participate, would illuminate further the intricacy of educational technology and parental involvement.

In conclusion, I have learnt a great deal from this long research journey, particularly from the interviewed parents and their recorded narratives. The informants gave unfiltered access to their homes and despite their family and work commitment so kindly spent time to participate in this study. One of the working class migrant parents asked at the end of an interview:

What difference would your research on West African immigrants make? No one cares about African people! The schools expect us to support our children but they don’t want to know about our predicaments ...

(Oyiridiya, working class, ITV2014)

They do not want *know* about our predicaments! In this thesis, I have demonstrated that Oyiridiya and other migrant parents’ migrancy experiences and identities provide rich data and valuable perspectives that can help to bring about better understanding of barriers to active parental involvement using technology for different minority group (Hollingworth et al, 2009), and as a result I hope that it may bring about much-needed changes in parental involvement policy in England.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Questionnaire

Are you a migrant from West Africa – Nigeria and Ghana?

Please fill in this short questionnaire to participate in EdD (Doctor of Education) research to explore parents' experiences and perspectives of using technology to participate in their children education.

1) Name:

2) Your country of birth? [Please tick]

Nigeria

Ghana

Other West African Countries

(Please write)

3) Your children: [Please tick & write down age]

	Girl	Boy	Age	Secondary
1 st Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2 nd Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3 rd Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4 th Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

4) Date/Year of migration?

<input type="text"/>							
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5) How would you best describe your ethnicity? [please write in]

6) What is your gender?

Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>

7) Do you speak any languages other than English?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please write in the line below.

8) What is your highest level of education?

Primary

Secondary

Further Education/College [A – levels]

Further Education/College [Vocational]	<input type="checkbox"/>
Higher education: HND	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Masters or doctorate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other [please write below]	<input type="checkbox"/>

9) Which country did you have your secondary school education in?

10) Have you been involved in a child's education either in Nigeria or Ghana?

Yes No

11) Would you be willing to participate in an interview and a group discussion?

Yes No May be

If yes or may be, please write your email address and/or phone number.

12) What is your employment status in England?

Full time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full time carer (children)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other full time carer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other [please write below]	<input type="checkbox"/>

14) What was your employment status in Nigeria/Ghana?

Full time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full time carer (children)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other full time carer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other [please write below]	<input type="checkbox"/>

 If you have further question, please contact me on **07962364251** and/or email me on charloskiuju@gmail.com

Thanks for your time, your participation and any information collected from you will be strictly confidential, and only available to the research team.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH TO EXPLORE WEST AFRICAN MIGRANT PARENTS' NON/INVOLVEMENT WITH THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION USING TECHNOLOGY.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

1. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research at any time, without giving any reason.
2. The research has been explained to me and I am aware of what my participation will involve.

Participant's signature: _____

Participant's name (please print): _____

Tick this box if you would like to receive a summary of the results by e-mail

E-mail: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: CHARLES OKPALANWANKWO
E-mail – charloskiuju@gmail.com

Supervisor: Professor ALISTAIR ROSS
Email – a.ross@londonmet.ac.uk

Are you from Nigeria or Ghana?

I am a student at London Metropolitan University undertaking a study and need to talk to migrant parents about their perspectives and experiences of using technology to participate in their children's education.

I really want to speak to parents or carers from Nigeria and Ghana who migrated to the UK and currently have at least one child in secondary school.

If you decide to participate, please could you collect an information sheet (research details) and questionnaire from your Father/Priest/Imam/Pastor. The questionnaire should be completed and returned to them or me.

Alternatively, take my number and call/text/email me

To thank you for your time I will compensate parents for travel and childcare costs where necessary.

Please contact CHARLES OKPALANWANKWO to find out more information and/or to arrange a time to speak to me over the phone.

Charles 07962364251 charloskiuju@gmail.com

Charles: 07962364251

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANT

Dear Participant

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

1 This is an EdD (Doctor of Education) study to explore migrant (West African) parents' perspectives and experiences of using technology to participate in their children's learning and communicate with their schools. The outcomes of this study will contribute to the debate around parental involvement in migrant families and your participation is important as it will provide useful data about the West African parents as a migrant community in London (which is often subsumed into the general category of 'black African') for whom which little is known about empirically, and who are very diverse in terms of social class, which complicates straight forward race/ethnic categorisations.

As a participant, you will be involved in the research for an hour and thirty mins and during this time you are expected to participate in a one-to-one interview [which may last between 45 - 60 mins] and subsequently in a focus group discussion (about 6 parents in a group) and in turn I will endeavour to address any concerns that you may have regarding your involvement in this study. The interview and/or focus group discussion are scheduled to be held in the Church hall, All Saints Church Edmonton, N9 9AT on 9th March 2013 at 10AM [first interview] and every Saturday thereafter. However, if these dates and/or time are not convenient, please let me know so that the interview and/or focus group discussions can be rescheduled [where possible]. In addition, it is within your right to withdraw at any time without prejudice and without providing a reason. In the unlikely event that you withdraw from the research, then you also have the right to decide whether the existing data provided prior to your withdrawal can be used or not. The focus group discussion and/or interview will be recorded and the data gathered will be analysed and the findings used for EdD research and may also be used for further educational research and publication in the future.

If you decide to participate in this study, your participation and any information collected from you will be strictly confidential, and only available to the research team. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained by using respondent pseudonyms. In fact, I can assure you that your personal details will not be revealed either verbally or in data analysis. Moreover, if you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

We would like to thank you, in advance, for your participation.

Researcher: CHARLES OKPALANWANKWO
E-mail – charloskiuju@gmail.com

Supervisor: Professor ALISTAIR ROSS
Email – a.ross@londonmet.ac.uk

Appendix E: Telephone Questionnaire

Hello, I'm Charles – Doctor of Education student at London Metropolitan University. Thank you for accepting to complete this short research questionnaire over the phone and I can assure you that any information provided will be strictly confidential, and only available to the research team.

Just a quick reminder – the research is set to explore parents' experiences and perspectives of using technology to participate in their children education. For this research, later on I am carrying out group discussions and someone to one interview. But first I just want to ask you quick questions.

Is there any other thing you would want to know before we start?

1. What is your name? [may ask the caller to spell]

2. What is your country of birth?

	Girl	Boy	Age
1 st Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2 nd Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 rd Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 th Child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3. What is your date/year of migration?

4. Do you have any child/ren in secondary school? [please circle]

Yes No

5. What are their sex and age? [assuming 'yes']

6. How would you describe your 'ethnicity'? [may ask the caller to spell]

7. The next question may be obvious but it's vital to be asked for clarity: what is your gender? [please circle]

Female Male

8. What is your mother tongue? [i.e. which language/s do you speak at home?]

9. What is your highest level of education?

10. In which country did you have your secondary school education?

 11. Before migrating to the UK, have you ever been involved in any child's education back in Nigeria or Ghana?

 12. Would you be willing to participate in a 1-2-1 interview and a group discussion? [please circle]

Yes No

If yes, the interview is likely to be held in February (half term) at All Saints Church hall N9 entrance via All Saints Close. The interview will last about 40 minutes. Please remember that even if you say yes, you can still change your mind at any time.

13. Can I have your phone number and/or email in order to contact you in the future [assuming yes in q. 11]

15. How would you describe your employment status back in Nigeria/Ghana?

 14. How would you describe your employment status in the UK?

[Prompt may be given i.e. see below]

Full time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full time carer (children)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other full time carer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other [please name it]	<input type="checkbox"/>

Full time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part time employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full time carer (children)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other full time carer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other [please name it]	<input type="checkbox"/>

The End!!!

Thanks for your time and if you have further question, please contact me on **07962364251** and/or email me on **charloskiuju@gmail.com**



Appendix F: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule: Migrant parents (Nigeria & Ghana) with secondary school children who live in Enfield [south east wards e.g. Edmonton Green; Upper Edmonton; Ponders End; Lower Edmonton and Haselbury and Haringey [east wards e.g. Tottenham Green, West Green, Northumberland Park and Tottenham Hale] and other London boroughs

Introduction

- Reminder of purpose – to get West African migrant parents’ experiences and perspectives of the UK schools expectation of using technology to assist their children’s learning and to communicate with the schools
 - Issues of confidentiality and anonymity
 - Any questions before we start?
- 1. Can you tell me the story about your migration to the UK?**
 - How long have you been living in the UK now?
 - Did you come alone or with family/ did family join you later?
 - What were your motivations for migration?
 - Tell me about when you first arrived.
 - How did you feel at this time? Did things meet your expectations? If so, in what ways? If not, in what ways?
 - What were the difficulties and challenges? [*prompt when necessary e.g. different way of writing English and speaking [accent]; issues of racism; educational qualification downgraded or not even recognised*]
 - Tell me about work - Is paid work a priority for you, personally? Were you working in Nigeria/Ghana before migration? If so, what did you do? Are you currently working in the UK? If so, is it in similar work? How do you feel about that?
 - Were there any difficulties or challenges with finding the kind of work you wanted when you came to the UK? [*Prompt: How was the move to the UK for you, financially? Did you experience any changes in your social circumstances? Did you find any differences in how you were perceived by others when you came here, and worked here, in terms of social status? Was social class ever visible to you when you moved here?*]
 - 2. Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of being responsible for a child in Nigerian or Ghanaian educational system?**
 - Was there an expectation to participate? How did you participate in a child’s education back in Nigeria/Ghana?
 - Was there an expectation to help your child with their learning? What ways did you assist the children’s learning?
 - What were the different ways available to you to communicate with schools?
 - What were the most common ways? Why is this method popular? What did you find most effective? [Convenient, no appointment required, allowed to speak in your local dialect...]
 - In your perspective, were there any draw backs or problems? Either in terms of communication or in terms of supporting your child’ learning? Can you tell me about them?
 - 3. Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of communicating with your child’s school in the UK?**
 - How does it compare with Nigeria/Ghana experience?

- How do you get involved in your child/ren education in the UK?
- Talk me through a typical week of your engagement with the school?
- What were the different ways available to you to communicate with schools?
- What were the most common ways? Why is this method popular? What did you find most effective? [Convenient, no appointment required, allowed to speak in your local dialect...]
- In your perspective, were there any draw backs or problems? Either in terms of communication or in terms of supporting your child' learning? Can you tell me about them? [Quicker, schools preferred choice...]

4. Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of helping your child's learning in the UK?

- In terms of assisting your children with school work; homework; coursework etc., what do you do to assist their learning
- Do you have a partner? [if yes, what does your partner do?]
- Is there anyone else significant who helps?
- What are the difficulties/challenges with getting involved for both parents/carers?
- What are the factors that influence your decision to get involved? [Aspiration, expectation, personal failure, community/family expectation/culture...]
- Can you tell me about the support you get from the school?
- What do school staff do to help parents to play active role in their children education?
(Issues related to teaching and learning materials/technology, parent support, parent voice/involvement/feedback, etc.)
- Do you feel the school understands of the needs of migrant parents in particular?
- Is there anything the school or the government is doing that you feel can hinder/enhance parents' involvement [Support/parents development or training? PTA meetings; the use of strange technology to set homework/coursework?]
- How would you describe your relationship with the school? What would you change?

5. Tell me about the technology you are currently using in the home?

- Talk me through a typical day or typical week after school- what do you do? What do the children do? Does this involve technology- Computers, games consoles, The Internet, ipad, mobile phones etc
- Do you use any of the identified technology to assist your children's learning? If yes, can you tell me a bit about how you use technology to assist their learning?
- And what would you say are the challenges in using the technology?
- Are the chosen technologies your own choice or school's preferred choice of involvement and communication?
- Did the staff offer any training on how to use the technology?
- What are the benefits/advantages in using these technologies in engaging in your children's learning?
- How do you feel about the things you are talking about?

Thanks for your time and this is the end of the interview, however, you can tell me any other thing you wish to discuss.

Appendix G: Participant Demographic Data

Participants' Demographics											
Name	Nationality	Gender	Tribe/Ethnic	Area	County	Profession (before migration)	Profession (post migration)	Number of Children	Age of Children	Primary/Secondary	Date of Arrival to UK
Ada	Nigeria	Female	Igbo	Barnet	London	CEO PA	Agency work	3	12, 16, 17	Two in secondary and one in College	1996
Adero	Nigeria	Female	Yoruba	Croydon	Croydon	Graduate	Physiotherapist	2	14, 16	Both in secondary	1995
Awka	Nigeria	Male	Igbo	Ilford	Redbridge	Graduate	Lecturer	3	12, 16 and 18	2 secondary and 1 college	1994
Biafra	Nigeria	Male	Igbo	Eltham	Greenwich	Student	Teacher	3	8, 15, 21	1 primary, 1 secondary and 1 university	1989
Collins	Ghana	Male	Ewe	Tottenham	Haringay	Insurance Accountant	Shop operator	2	13 and 15	2 secondary	1996
Dayo	Nigeria	Male	Yoruba	East London	Newham	Head of Maths	Teacher	3	12, 15, 19	2 secondary and 1 university	1995
Fumi	Nigeria	Female	Yoruba	Edmonton	Enfield	Student	Pharmacist	2	15 and 16	2 secondary	1994
Kwame	Ghana	Male	Gurma	Tottenham	Haringay	Government Minister	Royal Mail postal	2	14, 16	2 secondary	1998
Martin	Ghana	Male	Akan	Tottenham	Haringey	Banker	Hair Dresser	3	12, 14 and 16	All 3 in secondary	1997
Musa	Nigeria	Male	Hausa	Edmonton	Enfield	Farmer	CAB driver	3	11, 14, 15	All three in secondary	1995
Nnaemeka	Nigeria	Male	Igbo	Peckham	Southwark		Petty Business Man	3	11, 14, 16	All three in secondary	2003
Nneka	Nigeria	Female	Igbo	Barking	Barking & Deganham		Medical Assistant	1	16	Secondary	1996
Oyiridiya	Nigeria	Female	Igbo	Edmonton	Enfield	Bank consultant	NGO Office Admin	3	10, 14, 16	1 primary & 2 secondary	2003

Main research questions:

1. How do West African migrant parents' identities and experiences affect their ability to engage with their children's learning?
2. What are the challenges to West African migrant parents' involvement in the English educational system?
3. How does the use of new educational technologies support minority parents in their engagement with their children's education in English schools?

CO: Thank you **Oyiridiya** for accepting to participate in this interview, I want to remind you that the purpose of this interview is to get your experience about using technology to assist your children with their learning and how you communicate with their schools. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity – I want to assure you that anything you say here will not be exposed, or made available to a third party apart from the members of the research and further educational purposes.

CO: Do you have any further questions before we start?

Oyiridiya: No, it's fine sir.

CO: OK. Thank you again for giving up your time to participate in this interview – I appreciate that.

CO: The interview will be recorded and transcribed later, do you have any objection for me to record the interview?

Oyiridiya: No, that is fine.

CO: I will be taking notes while you answer the questions, so please excuse me if I am maintaining eye contact as I have to write down important points raised. I will be listening to you attentively.

Oyiridiya: I understand and that should not be a problem.

CO: Thanks

Question 1: Can you tell me the story about your migration to the UK?

CO: Can you tell me the story about your migration to the UK?

Oyiridiya: Migration to...?

CO: To the UK

Oyiridiya: In what aspect? Do you mean how I came or what...?

CO: Yea yeah, you were born in Nigeria according your questionnaire, I supposed

Oyiridiya: That's right

CO: So tell me anything about your migration to the UK, it's up to you how you want start...

Oyiridiya: Yea, well I got married in Nigeria and had two of my kids in Nigeria as well and after sometime my husband said it is for us to take a holiday more or less and we came and eventually we decided to leave here.

CO: OK, so like how long ago?

Oyiridiya: It should be over 10 years ago.

CO: OK, so you came with your family?

Oyiridiya: With my kids first of all.

CO: What was your motivation for migration?

Oyiridiya: In what area?

CO: Like you left Nigeria – your country and came to the UK what motivated you, that's what inform that decision? Why do you want to live here? Why did you come?

Oyiridiya: There is more, more, how do I put it now! I'm looking for the right words!

CO: Yea take your time

Oyiridiya: Should I say there are more opportunities?

CO: Yes, you can say whatever you want

Oyiridiya: There are more opportunities for the children, it's calmer, and it's quite. It's more secured.

CO: These were your aspiration; you want your children to live where there is rule, discipline and calm.

Oyiridiya: Yes

CO: Before you came you had these aspirations – i.e. views of what England should be like, right?

Oyiridiya: Yes

CO: When you arrived, did what you saw or experienced met your expectations?

Oyiridiya: No it didn't as it was struggle initially, of course when you migrate from a country to another. It was painful, frustrating and disappointing sometimes.

CO: Really!

Oyiridiya: Yes, of course. You are going to have challenges. Even up till now we are still having challenges.

CO: Yes, I understand.

Oyiridiya: But once it is a decision you've already taken, you just have to go ahead and continue ignoring the challenges knowing that you have a better goal to achieve.

CO: Just to be clear, when you arrived did what you see meet you expectations/aspiration

Oyiridiya: For the kids yes, because they were happy and playing and lot happier and doing well in school

CO: What about you?

Oyiridiya: It doesn't really matter for me because I have a family and that is more important and my life depends on so many other things as well.

CO: So what is the one that didn't meet your expectation?

Oyiridiya: As an individual? Or as a family?

CO: As a family as individual? Name one thing that didn't meet your expectation in the first week, month, year.

Oyiridiya: It was not easy trying to cope, yea... I mean... I mean it's not your country; you are dealing with foreign nationals. So in terms of language, you have to overcome the language barriers. You have to overcome... overcome... ok I know how to speak English in Nigeria but still you need to speak it in a proper way that they can understand. And then registering the kids in schools was also a challenge because most of the schools were full and because we have issues with our immigration. It wasn't easy because we are visiting so we have to fit in so many things and that's why I said I can't discuss some of these issues. My children cannot receive free school meal because we don't have the correct residential status. I cannot pay for their meal because I need to open a bank account in order to do online payment, so there is nothing we can do until our immigration status is rectified.

CO: That's OK. That's absolutely fine. You've actually said so much.

Oyiridiya: OK

CO: Lets talk more about those difficulties and challenges. You mentioned the way they speak English, you change country and the way they speak English is different even though you are well read but still. Did you have issues with accent?

Oyiridiya: It was not easy trying to cope, yea... I mean... I mean it's not our country; we are dealing with foreign nationals. So in terms of language, we have to overcome the language barriers. We have to overcome... overcome... ok I know how to speak English in Nigeria ... but in the UK, my accent was an issue. And then registering the kids in schools was also a challenge because most of the schools were full and because we have issues with our immigration. Like I already know how to speak English back home and the kids we brought them in English too but when we came we have to learn the way to pronounce certain words of course it's not your mother tongue. There were also issues of discrimination against my daughter by a local school in Edmonton. Two UK universities requested I undertook refresher courses. I have to do even test in English – ESOL you know before I could be considered for a course.

CO: Tell me more about your family struggles when arrived in England!

Oyiridiya: My daughter passed entry exam and scholarship interview for one of the best secondary schools in London but was refused an offer.

CO: Really, why?

Oyiridiya: She doesn't have status [resident visa], so the school denied her of that opportunity I followed it up I fought it out, I went to a solicitor and he wrote to the school asking why should they deny the child education and that no child should be denied education. They school called and said because they are going to spend £100k + for scholarship and bursary and that was why. So ever since I have not applied for any scholarship. My children can't get scholarship, they can't get bursary because we don't have paper. It is unfair.

CO: That is really upsetting.

Oyiridiya: Upsetting? Upsetting is an understatement. I was so disappointed that my daughter was treated without dignity in a country we came to settle. I really couldn't help her and it hurts so badly because she is a child. It is not her fault and I started blaming myself for putting my children through this shame.

CO: It is really painful. But how did you cope with this frustration?

Oyiridiya: We managed to find her another local Church of England school, which a satisfactory alternative.

CO: I'm speechless to your ordeal. I don't even know how to cope if I were in your position.

Oyiridiya: I will sum up my daughter's experience as discriminatory, racist and prejudice.

CO: How do you mean?

Oyiridiya: Racism, discrimination was not openly carried out but implied but not openly.

CO: OK. Tell me about work?

Oyiridiya: Laughter...my work now?

CO: Yes, also when you first arrived 10 years ago

Oyiridiya: We were doing fine in Nigeria before we came so work was not the main reason for coming to the UK

CO: OK but did you look for work when you first arrived in the UK.

Oyiridiya: Yes, I did look for work because it will be boring and you have to pay a lot bills and its different from where I came from so yes I looked for work.

CO: So was it easy to find?

Oyiridiya: No!!!! nothing is ever easy like I said there is a lot of challenges when I look back the whole ten years I just give God the glory because it is what you have determine to do. Looking for job wasn't easy, I have to look for voluntary jobs here and there. I did my education back home up to Master degree level but I came here my degree was not recognised.

CO: So you did a master degree in Nigeria?

Oyiridiya: Yes definitely

CO: And you come here, did they devalue that degree?

Oyiridiya: Yes, a whole lot of course. I did my education back home back in Nigeria up to Master in Business Administration but I came here and I was looking for a job is like nobody care about what you have, they are not interested in the degree you have it does not have any impact. I was looking for a job and is like nobody care about what you have, they are not interested in the degree you have and they expected me to do another English qualifications.

CO: How did that made you feel? Did you ask why your certificate was not recognised?

Oyiridiya: Of course I did... of course I did!

CO: What did the university say?

Oyiridiya: They told me to enrol for ESOL course

CO: Where you bother by this advice.

Oyiridiya: Of course yes... I have to do a lot of refresher courses that I have done ages ago like I have to do even test in English – ESOL you know... laughter...

CO: Really...How did that made you feel?

Oyiridiya: I'm this kind of positive human being, nothing puts me down. [She signs ...]

CO: So you find looking for work difficult...

Oyiridiya: Very difficult... [She signs]. Sometimes I felt degraded and suppressed and start to start myself why I couldn't find job. I said may be it is my fault.

CO: What about your social status? I presumed when you are working in the bank with your Master's degree back home you belong to a particular social class, so when you came to the UK did you maintain the same social class?

Oyiridiya: You know you can't maintain the same social class because you took off from somewhere with different geographical location, different language, different race, and you come a different place it won't be easy. Like when I was back home I never did any paid work, I was more or less on contracts, supplies yeah. I chose to work like this because I have started having children and I wanted to have time for them. But when I came here I found out that these kinds of jobs are not easy to find. And in as much as I want to have time for my children but with immigration thing and so many issues I just have look for jobs, look for a way to progress myself and move on.

CO: OK, thank you.

Question 2: Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of being responsible for a child in Nigerian or Ghanaian educational system?

CO: Can you Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of being responsible for a child in Nigerian educational system?

Oyiridiya: How? Responsible as in paying their fees or what?

CO: Tell me about any kind of involvement?

Oyiridiya: From the family I come from I am second to the last and both my parents made sure they train each one of us. I thank God for that they trained each and every one of us. But I occasionally assist my niece in year SS 2 [year 10 in the UK] with homework and communicate with her class teachers even though we [parents] are not expected to participate in children's education.

CO: What kind of role did you play?

Oyiridiya: try to channel them towards the right part by encouraging them as they weren't interested in education. The right attitude towards education. During holidays I discuss his education/learning with him.

CO: Do you about Nigeria educational system based on secondary school level?

Oyiridiya: Well I went to school there.

CO: Are parents expected to get involved in the education of their children?

Oyiridiya: Yes, if I remember when I was growing I remember my mum was playing a big part because I still remember her teaching at home you know helping me with my maths you know I still remember some of the questions she helped me with.

CO: So was that because she wanted you to do well or because the school expected her to help you?

Oyiridiya: No the school does not expect her to help me at all, she is an enlightened woman

CO: She was doing it from her own volition.

Oyiridiya: she wanted us to do well in school.

CO: Do you have different ways to communicate with schools in Nigeria?

Oyiridiya: Technology isn't what it is today and telephone is not easily available then. Basically, you have to give there physically to see the head master, or the teacher or whoever you want to see.

CO: Do you have to make an appointment or do you just walk in and see them?

Oyiridiya: Yes

CO: And they will see

Oyiridiya: Yes if there is an opportunity to see you they will see you

CO: what if there is none?

Oyiridiya: let me use my children's school for example because they a little bit of kindergarten in Nigeria in a private school, yeah you go there and you can see the class teacher

CO: Straight away

Oyiridiya: It could when you are picking them up or drop them or something

CO: is this the only way to communicate with the schools?

Oyiridiya: No, you can also communicate with school by attending PTA meeting. But it is so important because it is not widely known then.

CO: So which of them is the most commonly used method of communication?

Oyiridiya: Walking in to see the Head Master or teachers

CO: What are the good things about walking in to see the HM or teachers?

Oyiridiya: it is not easy to see HMs they are always busy...

CO: so walking in to see them may not actually work.

Oyiridiya: But it is easier to walk in and see the teachers.

CO: And there was appointment needed?

Oyiridiya: No...you just go and they will see you

CO: was that convenient?

Oyiridiya: Yea I think it was fine

CO: can you speak in your local direct if you want? Assume a parent does not speak English, are they allowed to speak in their local dialect?

Oyiridiya: yes

CO: OK; in your view what will the draw backs with that type of communication.

Oyiridiya: The person you want to see may not be available when you walk in to see them and ehm.....you might be busy and I can't remember what I want to say...
A lot of things may prevent you from going to see the teachers.

CO: Don't worry; we can always comeback if you remember any more facts

CO: if you are in charge what could you do differently i.e. what would change in terms of the way the school communicates even without technology to improve the communication between parents/carers and the school.

Question 3: Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of communicating with your child's school in England?

CO: Tell me a bit about your experiences of communicating with your children's school in the UK?

Oyiridiya: There are so many ways ...

CO: Like?

Oyiridiya: Like you can do write an email to the head teacher which is the fastest means.

CO: OK

Oyiridiya: You can also make a request if you want to see the head teacher

CO: So how do communicate with the class teacher?

Oyiridiya: It has always being the same as back home – when go to drop your child or pick up your child you can discuss whatever you want to discuss with class teachers. Mostly it is

always after school that is when they have the time because in the morning everybody is busy they are busy as well.

CO: Do you need to book an appointment if you want to do that?

Oyiridiya: No, you can always when you go pick your child in the afternoon you can always indicate you want to speak to them and they will wait, they have the patience.

CO: OK thanks you for that and how do you get involved in your children's education in the UK?

Oyiridiya: you know they have what is called 'the planner' ...

CO: Yes

Oyiridiya: That is the most important option I use to communicate with their schools. That's no 1 then no. 2- they always send letters home and what they do now is that they don't give them hard copy any more they do it through the internet. If you want an appointment with the head teacher or any teacher, you can call the school.

CO: so you call with your landline or smart phones?

Oyiridiya: Any how you want to call – Land line phone or smart phones

CO: which one do you use?

Oyiridiya: I always use my mobile and then you call them, they speak to them they might not speak to you immediately but eventually they will get back to you that day or any available date or if you want an appointment they will an appointment for you.

CO: so which one would you is the most common?

Oyiridiya: I normally call. It also depends. One of my children is at St Annes and the other one in Latymer School. For St Annes I have not really developed much communication with them it is always through her planner and study what she is doing. Then if I have any issue any problem at all then I give them a call. I have not email them or anything but with Latymer I have gotten this relationship that I know how to email them and call them depending on the issue.

CO: How do you get involve in your children education?

Oyiridiya: with the ones in secondary school I am not so involved as I was when they were in Primary school because I gave them a lot of help. But once they are in secondary school I expect them to be independent. So you need to give them that gap for them to be independent. So I don't go into like teaching them, helping them with their subject. I thank Good they know how to deal with it but if they have any problem may be they are not doing well if I see their result, I will come in and advise them – what is the problem...I have a chat with them is there any problem. Why are you not doing well? Commend them where they are doing well. I encourage them and if I feel is not yielding any result then I try to encourage and get more involved like assisting them at that point and I will make out time.

CO: Have you ever helped her or seen her homework in math as she is struggle with the subject.

Oyiridiya: Yea, that's what I am trying get at. Eventually, I said let me help and she says mum don't worry I can do on my own. So I found out that the school has to find mentors for them but she didn't want to have a mentor because I have encouraged her so much and she really wants to do on her own. And she now realises that it is not as difficult as it seems. Do you know surprisingly in her last mock maths, she got an 'A' and I said to her you see you can do. So it's a matter of the parents being for these kids because if you leave them they will leave it. That is why is good to have working parents because it is not easy but it is good to also look into your family.

Oyiridiya: Most of the times they are the ones who calls my attention to look at things – like mummy look my book and see the comments my teachers wrote in it. And most times I would be tired may be from work. And I will say to them later you remember when I'm less busy always in the night after dinner but I still make out time for it because they are proud and they want me to be proud.

CO: So take me through a typical day or week of your involvement with your children's learning?

Oyiridiya: every day is not the same.

CO: Yes, just tell me about a particular day, what you did with your children towards their education?

Oyiridiya: like I said earlier sometimes I look at their work after making dinner but is not easy ... it's not easy at all. So there are so many challenges. But I come from this background that I have already decided I'm going to make it no matter the challenge and because my children are also brought up with the same mind set. Mind set as in the sense that they go to church, they know that the world is full of challenges and full of obstacles but they have decided that those obstacles are things that are going to move them forward. So any challenges and obstacles they see they decide we are going to overcome them. OK like when I coached them for their selective exams that is a challenge. Is not like we don't have other negative situations all around us you know financially, whatever, but the thing is where are going, where do you want to be, where are you now? Is that thing gonna stop you? If you like it to stop you it will stop you. But if don't let it stop you it wouldn't.

CO: OK

Oyiridiya: So a typical day ehm... I might come home, I have done it in a way that I got a part time job where in as much as it is lowly [poorly] paid but I gives me more peaceful time for my family. Where I start at 9.00, I have to take my little daughter I have to drop her at school, go to work finish around three and come home because I want to be home before they come home and give them time. Tell me if it is easy, it is not easy.

CO: Yea

Oyiridiya: Tell me you don't have pressure of work and there, is there. They come home, you come home around the one in Latymer come around 4 o'clock, the one comes home to 5 and sometimes it's the bus delaying them here and there. So when they come I make sure their food is there. They eat their food, they watch their TV, they relax, and then they

individual go to do their homework which I don't help them with but if there is anything they always bring it to me or mummy look at what I did, look at this DT look at drawing and everything. So I still look into it because I have to for them to be the best. So there are many challenges/barriers as with immigration, trying to cope with so many things but that is not the issue for now.

CO: I think what I can gather from what you have just said is that you actually play active role in their education because for them to show you and want you to look at their homework is the check if was correct and good enough.

Oyiridiya: Yea, I agree.

CO: you agree on what?

Oyiridiya: They are showing me to see if the homework is correct and done properly.

CO: Would agree that the fact they have the opportunity to go to their mother to show her their homework is on its own an involvement?

Oyiridiya: Yes and sometimes they just want to get my opinion because they want me to be happy. So most times is not really about correcting them.

CO: You just made a very good point, why would they want you to be happy?

Oyiridiya: Because they love me... laughter... laughter... laughter...they know I'm going through a lot of challenges and I'm doing a lot for them.

CO: I know you are doing a lot for them...

Oyiridiya: Yes, I'm doing a lot for them, they love me, they want me to be happy. Yea

CO: That's interesting! So the success that they are achieving in school, they are happy for themselves, they also want their mum to be happy.

Oyiridiya: Definitely

CO: Why?

Oyiridiya: Because they know that is what makes me happy.

CO: That's interesting!

Oyiridiya: They know I want them to stand out in their academic, they know that I love education ... laughter... laughter...

CO: Is correct to ascertain from your response that parental aspiration has an impact on children's achievement?

Oyiridiya: Yes, my aspiration is robbing off on them

CO: That's wonderful

CO: What do you think that could make other kids not think about the happiness of their parents? That is not bothered about their parents' happiness when it comes to school attainment?

Oyiridiya: First of all like I always say it depends on the upbringing. Erm... if they feel the parents don't care or not there for them. They are not bothered, they don't even ask question like how was school today, because once my children come through the door the 1st question is oh 'nne' [girl] welcome, 'kedu kemere' [how are you?], how was school today and they will answer is fine. For example I had a little problem with my first daughter when she was still primary school and she said to mummy it is my life... and I said to her you know what sit down and let us talk. I said to her you know what it is your life because your life is connected to my life, to your children further lives. It is connected to a whole lot of people so don't just tell is your life you can do whatever you want with it because if you end up wasting your life you have wasted my life I will know I didn't achieve anything. Ever since I said this to her I think it sank into her head and she has never made that kind of statement to me again and they know how much effort I put into them when they were in primary school coaching them, they come home no matter how tired I'm, I will still sit down and look into their work coach them which is also the same with what I had with my parents ... my mum. We come home we seven but she sits each one of us down teach us little whatever she can understand even if it is not much, laughter... so they [her children] know what my desire is for them and what their father's desire is for them as well. So is the relationship with your children and you need to build that relationship with them. Personally, no matter tired you are just build that relationship, they know you, you know them, they know what you will do for them and they will be happy and proud. They know that your lives are connected.

CO: Are there any drawbacks with the way you communicate with your children's school in the UK?

Oyiridiya: I think they are doing well as it is and they keep improving by the day. Like before I never knew I could email, I thought it was just the phone. Sometimes when you call you don't always get the appointment you wanted but they always try to meet up to your time but sometimes it might not suit your time.

CO: Thanks again, let's now move on to question 4

Question 4: Tell me about the technology you are currently using in the home?

CO: Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of helping your child's learning in the UK?

Oyiridiya: No, I don't help them with homework. They show me whatever they have done and when I have time then I will go over it. It's more of being proud of the quality of work done rather than seeking for help.

CO: We have discussed this before

CO: You partner, your husband ... does play any part? Does he get involved too?

Oyiridiya: Then good a thing you said this will not go to a third party....

CO: No no.... its part of the ethical consideration and my university takes ethical violation very serious...

Oyiridiya: Because this interview involve so many personal information that I won't want to hear outside this room

CO: No no and if you don't want to say anything and/or withdraw whatever you have said you have the right to do now and in the future. My university has very high ethical regulations...

Oyiridiya: Yes they know, he is very much interested in their education

CO: OK. Not just being interested, does he participate?

Oyiridiya: She giggles [strangely] he talks to them ...

CO: If you don't want to say anything about his involvement, just tell me pass – so we can move on.

Oyiridiya: He participates as in that he talks to them about it. He is not here anyway.

CO: So it is just like a kind of moral and psychological support, ask them questions and try to ascertain how well they are doing.

Oyiridiya: Yeah yeah and if they are doing well they will say dad you know at this subject I got this and that and he will say well done that's my girl.

CO: OK

Oyiridiya: It might little but is fine

CO: OK. Please let me reiterate any questions you are comfortable with you are not any obligation to answer them.

Oyiridiya: Yes, you have told you and I know

CO: OK, Does anyone else support your children's learning?

Oyiridiya: No not at the moment, even though for my little daughter for her secondary school I needed help you know I don't if I am getting tired or what ... laughter....

CO: OK

CO: so we have talked about challenges of getting involved, and partner involvement – what he does with them. and also we have covered aspiration because I want to ask what makes you want to be involved and you've talked about your mum being the role model – you guys were seven but was always there to support all of you with your education making sure every single one of you was doing well and it suffices to say that what you got from your mum that family background where you came from is what put you into this motherly situation where you think you owe it to your kids to get involve because your mum was involve...

Oyiridiya: Yeah... Yeah

CO: Yeah what?

Oyiridiya: Yes, your summary was correct

CO: OK

CO: Can you tell me about the support you get from the school?

Oyiridiya: How the school help the parents to support their children...

CO: Yes

Oyiridiya: I don't think I remember but I think my first daughter's school has given us a letter communicating how and where we can help our children prepare for GCSE exam. Telling us how to let the children go to bed early. They have given us some hint on how to help them, you...

CO: apart from the hints, do they give you any intermittent training?

Oyiridiya: No there is no training

CO: OK no training

Oyiridiya: Yes...

CO: Do you feel the school understands the needs of migrant parents in particular?

Oyiridiya: I don't really think so...what did they know!

CO: What made you think so?

Oyiridiya: Laughter... Laughter because they are not bothered about you [with loud tone] they are bothered about the child education, isn't it?

CO: If they know that it is a partnership – would they not care about what the other partner is doing with the children as both parents and school are parents – school is 'loco parentis.' Would it appropriate to have continuous dialog with parents/carers?

Oyiridiya: I don't the school may see it as coming into your personal issue, what they do is if the child doesn't come to school they want to know why the child didn't come to school.

CO: So they are only interested when the problems comes [negative charter] that is if the child is not in school they want to know why?

Oyiridiya: Yes

CO: That is negative charter, what about when that child is in school what effort have you made as a school you have all the money all the health care visitors and the budget – is not a good practice to actual understand the need of migrant family because if you understand their needs you know how to deal with them equitably.

Oyiridiya: I think they are not interested in Migrant family and issues they are going through. I think they are more interested in the citizens and ways of helping them because they will say if you can meet your financial needs and if you are claiming tax credits and you children need has a school trip and you cannot pay it they can subsidise for you. But for migrant parents whether you can pay it or you cannot pay it is not their problem. All they know is that you have to pay for it and that could be the reason your child did attend school.

CO: Thank you for that view with me. Is there anything you think the school or the government is doing that you feel that can hinder or help to improve parental involvement?

Oyiridiya: OK there is an issue I want to bring up. I think when I was looking for secondary school admission for my first daughter, she took series of exams and there was this school called Christ hospital ok...

CO: yeah

Oyiridiya: It is a boarding school, she passed the school, she passed the scholarship but she couldn't go because she doesn't have status, you know what I mean

CO: Yeah

Oyiridiya: OK, so they denied her of that opportunity I followed I fought it out, I went to a solicitor and he wrote to the school why should they deny the child education and that no child should be denied education. They school called and said because they are going to spend £100k + for scholarship and bursary and was why... anyway that is the past. I told my daughter good a thing you got Latymer.

CO: So what you are saying is that the government policy has prevented your children from getting quality education that they could have?

Oyiridiya: Yes.... They can't get scholarship, they can't get bursary because you don't paper....

CO: Is that the policy?

Oyiridiya: Yes of course!!

CO: So the policy they made, has made impossible for migrant families to achieve their full potential and live a normal live.

Oyiridiya: Like I said earlier there are many challenges living a foreign land but the thing is you determination.

CO: That's a problem because they are implicitly putting a cap on how far migrant children can go and I have issues with that as you cannot open your border and then limit the opportunities available to them migrants

Oyiridiya: Yes, it has happen to me as a person because I know I have done so many applications to just to do PGCE to retrain in order to better my family's well-being. They rejected my application and directed me to do entry/found language course first

CO: Yes, you have alluded to this before.

Oyiridiya: It is like you can do this, you cannot do that, and you can't do the other one... so many things...

CO: Thank you very much for that insight. I think we are doing very with time. Lastly,

Question 5: Tell me about the technology you are currently using in the home?

CO: Tell me about the technology you are currently using in your home? Technology - not specific for learning or education?

Oyiridiya: Any kind of technology....

CO: Yes...

Oyiridiya: TV, Laptop, Computer, Wii [game console], Mobile phone... definitely mobile phone because I need to get in touch with them. They know once they are going into secondary they are independent but I need to know wherever they are and I know to hear from them. They also use [the] Internet.

CO: OK, from these technologies you have mentioned which one do you use to assist your children learning?

Oyiridiya: It's mostly the computer not their computer but their laptops because each one of them has a laptop because they will fight over the computer. They also use the Internet because the house generally has a wee far... what you call it?

CO: Wi-Fi – wireless fidelity?

Oyiridiya: Yes ... Yes, I'm not technical.

CO: That's fine.

Oyiridiya: So that they can all get internet in the laptops

CO: OK, so basically laptops and the Internet?

Oyiridiya: Yeah... Yeah...

CO: What are the challenges in using these technologies you will say?

Oyiridiya: Laughter ... challenges are that most times they don't use it for the right purposes and I think I don't really have the right skills to use the technology and my children seem to know more than me which I found a little bit disappointing. Most times they watching programmes, playing games you know which I know also helps their brain develop but then if they don't get a balance in these things ok then you have a problem ok...

CO: OK, in terms of you assisting them using these technologies, what would be the challenge/s?

Oyiridiya: Laughter.... Well I thank God in so many arrears because they are also educating me laughter ... laughter ... the whole lot OK in as much as I did computer I have computer knowledge back home but is not as standardised as theirs. They are well far ... I learn so many things from them is like in the world of learning you never stop learning you learn from them they learn from you. So they teach me a lot about the laptop and the computer...

CO: So how does the school use technology to set them work?

Oyiridiya: Yeah, they give them a little of work on the computer?

CO: Do you have access to those works?

Oyiridiya: Not that if I want to look at it, like I told you I gave them the independent

CO: Do you have the password to check their work on the computer?

Oyiridiya: Yes I have the password to check their results and I think may be their progress in school as well but I don't really have the time to do it.

CO: Have you ever done it - used it at all?

Oyiridiya: I have checked their results online but most times my daughter will just open it and we look at it I don't really have time on my hand.

CO: So are technologies they are using the school choice or your choice?

Oyiridiya: Is the school!

CO: So the school wanted it and it's the school choice?

Oyiridiya: Yes... Yes...

CO: OK, have you received any kind of training from the school on how to use it better?

Oyiridiya: Laughter ... No there was no training provided, they just send a letter with the password and username and an explaining on how to access the children's results online.

CO: So what are the benefits/advantages in using these technologies in engaging in your children's learning?

Oyiridiya: Hmm!!! It makes easier though because I mean when they really.... laughter ... laughter – who do I say about this now please can come again with the question?

CO: Of course, so your children use technologies like the computer, laptop and Internet to do their work has it brought about any advantages?

Oyiridiya: Yes it has as in they do a lot of research in the laptop let's say they give them a lot of homework they do a lot of research to help them support the homework they are doing. It has done a lot of improvement.

CO: Improvement in what aspects?

Oyiridiya: Improvement in the quality of research finding and output and presentation of their work

CO: Can imagine them no having technology?

Oyiridiya: At least they are not carrying books anymore unlike during our days you have carry all the books you needed but with technology now the internet you can get any information you need you can access any information you want from anywhere and its faster.

CO: Is there any problem with it?

Oyiridiya: I think a whole lot of communication is going on about the security of the internet even on the TV, in the news you hear a lot about how to keep your children safe online I think what I have done I don't protect them like by monitoring what they are doing on the Internet but I have developed this relationship with my children that they know what is right and what is wrong and once anything they are not supposed to access comes up on the screen they get of it immediately.

CO: So you think that is better than putting security in place to filter these inappropriate sites or images or monitoring them?

Oyiridiya: Yes

CO: Thanks you, all these things you talked about for the last 60 minutes or so, how does it make you feel?

Oyiridiya: Laughter ... laughter ... laughter ... hmmm! Well I feel a little bit relieved for at least talking to somebody...

CO: Why?

Oyiridiya: Because I have discussed so many things I should not... I don't normally discuss with anybody and ... I feel a little bit lighter. I would be happy if as a result of your research the government can pay more attention to migrant families and the challenges they go through which affects their children in turn. I mean the difficulties they go through affect their children's performance. Because once you arrived is not if you want the government to do this and that for me, we just need an encouragement to live a better life and the freedom to dream and pursue that dream. Denying my daughter to go to Christ Hospital School because of our status I think is against UN charter on the rights of the children which includes rights to be educated and it hurts me more when it is on my child than when it is on me ... I can bear it but not on the child.

CO: Thank you very much, in a different note, does your decision to come to and live in the UK has anything to do with British colonialism?

Oyiridiya: I don't think so because we always want to bring up our children abroad and we first went to South Africa and why we didn't settle I don't really know. Although there is elements of being treated like a second class citizen or not being useful for the country. In hindsight may be our decision to settle in the UK was influenced by their colonialism as I always wanted to live in the UK since I was a child.

CO: Thanks for your time and this is the end of the interview, however, you can tell me any other thing you wish to discuss.

Oyiridiya: What difference would your research on West African immigrants make? No one cares about African people! The schools expect us to support our children but they don't want to know about our predicaments, it is really a sad situation everything is based on immigration status, erh well I believe things will definitely be better one day.. Thanks for listening and I feel better at least someone listened to my stories for an hour, laughter!!!

CO: All I can do is to tell your story as accurate as possible and I hope the UK government and English schools will improve some of their policy regarding working in partnership with parents to further raise the achievement of black children.

Oyiridiya: That will be really good. Thanks. I have to go to pick up my children from their schools.

CO: Thanks again for your time; I really appreciate your contribution to this study.

Oyiridiya: My pleasure, bye now.

END