TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION CHANGE WITHIN TRANS NZOIA EAST DISTRICT, KENYA

E. N. KIMALIRO

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Dedicated to the memory of

Ruth Nasambu Makali and Peter Wafula Musolio

for their love of knowledge and to those, like me,

who were schooled by them.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEO	Area Education Officer
CAT	Continuous Assessment Test
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CREST	Consortium for Research Excellence, support and Training
DC	District Commissioner
DEO	District Education Officer
DFID	Department for International Development

ECD	Early Childhood Education
EEA	Evaluation of Educational Achievement
EERA	European Educational Research Association
EFA	Education for All
FPE	Free Primary Education
FSE	Free Secondary Education
GKRTS	Graduate Key Resource Teachers
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
KCB	Kenya Commercial Bank
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KESSP	Kenya Education Sector Support Programme
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
KNUT	Kenya National Union of Teachers
KUPPET	Kenya Union of Post Primary Teachers
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OPEC	Organization OF Petroleum Exporting Countries
PI	Primary I (Primary Teachers grade 1)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SMC	School Management Committee
SMASSE	Strengthening Mathematics and Science Education
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UK	United Kingdom
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

Despite the growing literature on teachers' professional identity (Beijaard et al. 2004, Day et el 2006, Hextall et al.2007,Sutherland et al. 2010, Canrinus et al.2011), there is little concurrence on what it should mean and few examples of studies from schools in sub Saharan Africa (Smit and Fritz 2008, Barrett 2006). This sociological study contributes to the knowledge of teachers' professionalism by presenting subjectivities and socio-institutional discourses said to shape teachers' post training identity and role in education change as experienced within a given Kenyan primary school.

The literature indicates that whilst identity is perceived to be core to motivation, the different expressions of self, subject and identity placed alongside competing discourses of professionalism widen the scope for diverse discourses of teachers' professional identity (Sachs 2005) to emerge. Since professional identity is socially derived (Cohen 2008) and discourse mediated this study contributes to knowledge by illustrating how contextually held interpretations of teacher professionalism influence their role in reform contexts. Teachers' role expectations are examined alongside the social suggestions of significant others. Ethnographic data collection methods and thematic analysis are intended to highlight the emerging discourses and their impact on the given population.

The findings suggest teachers are caught between expectations influenced by organisational and occupational professionalism which put reform processes outside their immediate jurisdiction but appeal to their altruistic occupational orientation in fulfilling managerially determined objectives. Teachers post training identity is said to be influenced by pre-service training, the interface between curriculum and examination requirements, pedagogical practices framed by professional and community norms and by their individual sense of discipline, dedication, self-sacrifice and moral purpose. Pupil and parental expectations seen against contextual realities challenge various forms of teacher professionalism and education reforms.

1.0 THE JOURNEY

1. 0 Overview

Research is a journey. Using established conceptual tools, the research journey takes one away from pre-conceptions through vistas of other people's' thought worlds' (Uretta 2007)to different associations in knowledge and to new questions. The concepts used to present research queries, the epistemological and ontological positions of the parties involved, the frameworks and methods used, each have a history that shape what is presented as findings. This chapter outlines some of the key observations along this research journey, particularly in the motivation and build up to the project, issues in the literature leading to the research question, and choice of design. It summaries the main arguments in the findings and indicates how a researcher's personal experience as a research instrument facilitates understanding of the tensions in research on teachers' identity construction.

1.1   Introduction

The 2012 Olympics brought the world's best athletes in a variety of disciplines to London. I watched with awe and fascination as each stepped up to the *mark* in their chosen field, eyes firmly fixed on a medal and the honour of raising their national flag. Each exuded a confidence in their respective ability and was in London to showcase his or her prowess. I began my research journey in a different frame of mind. Instead of approaching the starting blocks with an established confidence, I was challenged in my adequacy to articulate the issues that had dogged my career in school improvement. I was in the race because of a need to reflect on and find an explanation to a proposition I could only, at that juncture, vaguely articulate (Mason 2002). Although I knew that my enquiry would be within the broad field of education, unlike the Olympic athletes, I was not entirely certain of the specific discipline from which to approach my question since education borrows from such diverse disciplines as sociology, philosophy and psychology, each with its attendant boundaries and debates (Hodgson and Standish2007).

My research quest initially arose from observations and experience as an Education Coordinator in a large refugee camp in Kenya. My chief role there was to facilitate education to refugees displaced by conflicts in Central, Eastern and the Horn of Africa. My responsibility then was to offer a programme that would equip refugee teachers with the appropriate pedagogy to meet Kenya's curriculum and examination expectations whilst at the same time offering the psycho-social support that refugee students require. Following experience in refugee education, I worked with Kenyan teachers on school improvement projects in two educationally marginalised provinces. Here the main focus was again to achieve higher educational outcomes by supporting teacher education programmes intended to influence their pedagogical practices in favour of those deemed desirable in other contexts. I come to recognise teachers as individuals were at different levels of development. There were many whose work I considered admirable, despite numerous constraints, and others who struggled to fulfil their role. From this position, I began to reflect on the modalities of change in education practices particularly the link between being professional and contributing to a particular sphere of knowledge, as shall be discussed in chapter 2. Whilst not averse to shared learning and exchange of knowledge the lopsided learning and the seeming persistence of the challenges listed in chapter 2 invite reflection on the platforms for ensuring sustainable education development. I thought research would afford me an insider understanding to education change and contribute in some way to sustainable development within my context.

1.2   The Journey: Becoming a Researcher

During the orientation week, I attended a *Learning Together Lunch* within the Institute of Education which gave me a glimpse of the differences in 'thought worlds' (Schopflin 2009) between where I was as an educational practitioner and where I needed to be as a researcher. The meeting, a regular platform through which departmental staff supported each other through ongoing research projects was my initiation into a research community. It was here that I first floated my enquiry before a critical audience and began to consider my options. When invited to talk

about my proposed project I stated that I was broadly interested in the teachers' role within education change. In the ensuing lively discussion, opinions were offered regarding issues and angles from which the study might be approached as summarised in table 1.1

Table 1.1   Suggestions

- Professionalism as locus of power – loss of teacher autonomy, increasing perfomativity, destabilising the establishment
- Protectionism of professional identity
- Sustaining internal commitment
- Examination of professional confidence
- A discussion of types of change - small/large, generation rebellion, status influence on change, cultural/social trends, economic/funding driven change/example of Finnish teachers' management of change

The interest generated amongst experienced researchers, and the different perspectives from which it was viewed helped me to realise the difficult involved in narrowing an interest to a specific choice of research question, particular approach and justification. I also recognised the necessity of grasping the concepts, approaches, and debates that frame the issues deliberated within research circles and the search for knowledge for knowledge's sake. I found myself amongst a community willing to listen and appreciate, but whose continued interest was contingent upon the resonance of my contribution to ongoing forms of discourses within their familiar pathways of enquiry (Hodgson and Standish2007).   In choosing a research question and related approaches, I would align or alienate myself further from a particular segment of this research community.   In similar vein, I realised research reports are as much about the language in which they are crafted as they are about field findings. I became acutely

self critical of my thought processes and began to question what might be gained or lost in framing my inquiry in a language that would accommodate a particular community of researchers and how that in turn would accommodate the language of my research context. This research journey has been as much about understanding and making sense as it has been about being understood.

Frequent association with other early career researchers through the *Work in Progress* sessions, research conferences, the European Education Research Summer School and the CREST Summer School afforded me unique learning opportunities to revisit the research purposes and processes. These forums offered me the privilege of sharing different researchers' excitement and anxiety at uncrossed bridges which also reassured me in my own struggle with unformed or evolving thoughts and the unanswered questions that ignited more questions in the quest for knowledge. Secondly, the forums created an environment in which to hone instincts for researcher identity and membership into the diverse community of researchers. There were moments when I got lost in the labyrinth of other researchers' choice of approaches and theoretical frameworks, but it was only by doing so that I gained their better acquaintance and greater appreciation of my own choices.

1.3 Whose Epistemology?

The justification for the research design and methods used in this thesis are presented in chapter 4. Whilst the necessity of stating a researchers' epistemological and ontological position (Mason 2002)is not disputed it could be argued that participants' ontological positions are equally important especially considering that the questions posed and the responses generated are shaped and produced through these lens and that in the end the validity of research reports rests upon participants' recognition of themselves and their contributions as portrayed. Coming from a context whose epistemological foundations have been shaken by waves of religious conversions and forces of globalization I am aware of how individual's conversations are predisposed by barely interrogated ontological positions that are in turn shaped by the discourses in their

particular cosmos and affiliations. Equally important is the diversity of ontological vantage points amongst research consumers interested in the issues investigated through social science such as identity. Hammersley and Atkinson (1994:p.12) argue that 'the validity of a scientific claim is always relative to the paradigms within which they are judged.' Individuals confront questions of identity periodically for different reasons and to different depths as each context provides ways of being and expressing one's identity. I recognised that research on identity is imbued with debates of positionality and intent which carry ethical responsibility and which raise questions regarding the researchers ability to, if need be, suspend their own ontological perceptions to engage with different paradigms of thought. Who has the right to investigate or say what one's identity is or implies and how the said identity can be delineated from other possible overtures? The choice of a qualitative approach was partly in recognition of the complexity of identity research but also the need to make visible participants' voices and to locate my influence as a research instrument. Wilson (1997:p.261)argues that the success of qualitative research depends on the ability of the researcher to become 'a sensitive research instrument by transcending his own perspective and becoming thoroughly acquainted with the perspective of those he is studying.' This is the real challenge in qualitative research.

A vast amount of research has already been undertaken on different aspects of teachers' professional identity, particularly within the European (Day et al. 2006, Flores and Day 2006, Osborne et al. 2000), American (Goodson and Hargreaves 1996), Australian (Sachs, 2001, 2005, O'Connor 2008) and Asian contexts (Tsui 2007). However, despite this wealth of research I was intrigued by the seeming lack of consensus regarding its meaning and the negligible number of similar studies from my context. Researchers conceptualise teachers' professional identity differently (Beijaard et al.2004) treating it as though it is a latent variable with a uniform structure (Canrinus, et al.2011) but investigate diverse topics under its broad framework, each in accordance with their own specific goals. Is a definition of teachers' professional identity likely?

Though some studies have been conducted in Kenya on teachers' classroom practices in relation to pupils' learning outcomes (Ngware et al.2010, Pontefract, 2002 Ackers and Hardman 2001) hardly any have deliberated the meaning of being a professional teacher in this context.

The literature review in chapter 3 separately discuss the constructs *professional* and *identity* to highlight the debates and aspects that fuel continued research on teachers' professional identity, its formation, application and weakness. The necessity to investigate identity lies largely in the knowledge that it is key to motivation and human interaction. The difficulty in defining identity stems in part from its Latin origins *Idem*, which paradoxically imply both 'similarities and differences' (Buckingham 2008:p.1), something unique to an individual, though at the same time implying a social relationship with a broader collective. Discussion of the *self* and *subject* in relation to identity and the different interpretive frameworks bring different aspects into focus. The possible tensions in the multifaceted nature of identity, the relationship between the uniquely personal and the social being and the link between personal agency and the structure are the key debates around the construct of identity (Olsen 2008). Ybema et al. (2009:p.301) aptly summarise the main contentions in identity construction as deriving from:

> ...internal strivings and external prescriptions, between self-presentation and labelling by others, between achievement and ascription and between regulation and resistance.

Particularly within the African context, in which my study is situated, these self and other tensions in identity construction bring a variety of discourses into focus. Does a teacher experience their self from an individual or collective sense, what other identities exert pressure to bear on teachers' role expectations and why is there a conservative approach to classroom practices? Also in the light of postmodern interpretations of identity as constantly evolving is it logical to hold expectations anchored in the certainty that those who occupy given positions will discharge their duties in a specific, measurable, efficient way? Significant in the identity

research is the relationship between the enquirer and those whose identity they seek to define.

Although teacher's identity is often accessorised as 'professional', there are contentions as to whether teaching, particularly at primary level, actually qualifies as a profession (Etzioni 1969) which raises thequestion: what or who defines a profession and what should be expected of a professional? Whilst debate continue regarding what rightly falls within the parameters of professional duties and privileges, the discourse of professionalism is creeping into increasingly more usage not least as a force for quality of service, ethical practice, knowledge and change (Evett 2009). There is a general consensus that the construct of professionalism has evolved and been shaped by both historical and institutional factors (Young 2007). The level of authority, trust and confidence exclusive to professionals remains contested by organisational structures that seek similar acclaim. As will be discussed in the literature review (Sachs2001, 2005, Whitty 2006)the likelihood of competing discourses of professionalism and the growing discourse of performativity have influences on teacher identities. My task therefore was to establish whether teaching was conceptualised as a profession, the form of professionalism embraced and how that positions teachers in the context of education change.

1. 4 Fieldwork

Gaining entry to my research context was through a negotiated process regulated by ethical issues that bring into focus the context, the content and the social conventions through which the data is generated and discussed. Chapter 5 presents the school context in which the research is conducted to provide a background against which the emerging themes are illustrated. Though multiple interactions with my participants afforded me firsthand experience of teacher/pupil, teacher/ teacher and teacher/ parent interactions it does not diminish the enormous challenge of defining so vibrant a social phenomena as identity. Questions of identity are linked to participants' lives, knowledge forms, aspirations, fears and the dynamics

of power which place them in their relative positions and must therefore by approached with appropriate sensitivity.

My fieldwork was purposely scheduled to coincide with the beginning of the school year, the release of the national examination results and the subsequent ranking of schools. At the same time, discussions concerning the alignment of the education sector to Kenya's new Constitution and Development Plan were ongoing. This climate of change made the subject of my enquiry particularly pertinent, raising my participants' awareness of the salient issues relating to education and their voice in decision making.

The fieldwork helped me to appreciate identity as co-constructed and to question my suitability as an ethnographic research instrument (Murchison 2010) in this case. Researchers in identity are aware of how identity is entangled in issues of positionality that can impact on participant disclosure and right to know. My presence as a researcher in their school raised questions of intentions - who need to know the identity of teachers in this school and why do they need to know? To eliminate any possible misconceptions regarding my intentions, my research methods and objectives were disclosed from the onset and the participants' individual consent sought and obtained. I purposely moderated my speech, dress and mannerisms to project a particular image of myself as a researcher that would blend into context, though at times I did wonder whether I presented a version of myself that was not entirely representative. Yet, even if the image I projected could be proved inaccurate, that image, I believe, represented my understanding of myself as a researcher in that particular context. By extension, I wondered if my key participants also consciously altered the projection of their identities to accommodate my researcher identity. Should that have been the case, the individuals I observed were not necessarily projecting a false picture, but rather a dramaturgical representation (Goffman 1969) of what they believed a professional teacher ought to be. Then again, I reasoned, was it entirely feasible for seven individual teachers to independently maintain a facade for a whole term in the presence of pupils and colleagues who had prior

knowledge of them? If they did manage to do so, then I could interpret that projected identity as one they valued and wished to project.

I was concerned about the influence of my presence on the research process. However, since questions of identity are usually raised in the event of new encounters or circumstances, my presence in this school community possibly acted as a catalyst and created a platform for the teachers to review their role expectations in the light of ongoing education change. Hammersley and Atkinson (1994) urge researchers to understand and acknowledge rather than resist the likely impact of their presence on the research process. In time, I came to understand how this preliminary step helped to forge mutual respect and confidence. I realised that those who investigate identity should themselves be prepared to be investigated. Though the participants were conversant with my methods, they were under no obligation to disclose how they would investigate my identity and their reasons for doing so. The questions they subsequently asked or inferred led me to reflect on my own identity, my values, my faith, my aspirations and inevitably my suitability for conducting this research.

Besides scheduled interviews, classroom observations, staff and parent meetings, the routine school activities strengthened my appreciation of teachers' internalised role expectations and the social suggestions of significant others. In their faces I saw reflected not only teachers' confidence attendant to pupils' achievements, but also the doubts, uncertainties, struggles and self-sacrifice that accompanied their efforts to meet their own and the community's expectations of teachers. The challenges against which they contented to maintain a school rhythm within inadequate infrastructure to fulfil the aspirations of pupils and parents alike helped me to understand identity as a negotiated experience. My experience as a participant observer increased my appreciation of face to face contact as a participant might glibly speak of the difficulties entailed in working with a large class, or a class with irregular attendance, but it is in their face that one sees mirrored their resolve or resignation. I wondered whether these constant challenges could possibly lead to a form of disillusionment and disengagement. Though other forms of inquiry

might also have been fruitful, I believe *in situ* contact afforded by ethnographic methods privileged me to experience the ecological impact on identity construction and to triangulate data from a variety of sources.

During the months of my fieldwork I inevitably became well acquainted with my chosen participants both professionally and personally. Having made every effort to gain entry into a relationship where a certain level of disclosure was possible, it became equally difficult to disconnect myself from the context at the end. I felt that a significant part of me had been invested in the inquiry, in the community and that somehow in my departure I was leaving behind an ongoing discussion, a search for answers that may be found in other forums.

Bearing in mind Ybema et al. (2009:p.302) advice that, 'identity studies should pay attention simultaneously to self-definitions and the definitions of others', my discussion on teachers' professional identity has separately explored teachers' own internalised role expectations in chapter 6 and the social suggestions of parents and pupils in the same context in chapter 7. Whilst the generalisability of these findings are limited by design and interpretative frameworks, understanding professional identity as learned through training brings into discussion the intent, length, content and impact of teacher education and support programmes as will be discussed in Chapter 6. Assessment of professional identity on the basis of curriculum coverage and pupil achievement brings into discussion the relationship between prescriptive managerial practices in education in relation to perceptions of a profession as a self-governing sphere of knowledge and skills. The preferred platforms for deliberating education reforms, the limited opportunity for joint reflexivity and self-development on a professional platform, in addition to the emphasis on discipline, dedication and self-sacrifice seen as essential to their role generates debate on the capacity and processes needed for leadership of education change. Parental and pupil expectations, their relative sense of entitlement (or lack of), their desperation for change and the illusion education will occasion this change in their lives positions their social suggestion to teachers' professional identity.

Though my destination is now in sight, this research journey has been a unique experience affording me opportunity to be in a familiar place but with an ethnographic strangeness, to observe teachers' inner striving and the community's social suggestion against which their identity is constructed. Though the dissemination phase is still evolving, to, the teachers, pupils, parents of Trans Nzoia East who participated in this research the fieldwork presented an extended platform from which to revisit the adequacy of our self-definitions.

1. 5 Summary

This section mapped my research journey, highlighting some of the key milestones along the way including the factors that influenced the research agenda, design, methodological choices and findings which will be expounded on in greater detail in subsequent chapters. Whilst, it was a researcher's journey, the chapter also invites reflection not only on participants' contributions but also on the importance of their ontological dispositions and ownership of the research process. The following section reviews the general debate on teacher identity and the context of education change in Kenya.

2.0   BACKGROUND AND GENERAL CONTEXT

Overview

This research takes place against a national and global context of rapid educational changes in which assumptions regarding leadership and the adequacy of policy instruments favour certain models and platforms for deliberating and effecting change in education policy. This chapter gives a national context in which such change takes place and invites the reader to reflect on the impact these assumptions may have on the policy processes and change momentum. Changes deliberated through specialist led education committees and presidential decrees in Kenya are reflected upon, raising the question: if teachers are professionals where are they when change is deliberated to their practice? What does being a professional teacher mean?

2.1 Introduction

Through education, governments generally seek to equip their youth with the knowledge, skills and values that are deemed to be advantageous in a globally competitive world. The publication of surveys such as the *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* (IEA) and the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) adds to this pressure by providing a basis for comparison (Smithers 2004, Sahlberg 2007). Countries reflected as attaining high achievements strive to better their performance whilst others seek to emulate elements of their educational systems in the hope of replicating their success. This often results in prescriptive curricula, a multiplicity of accountability mechanisms and large scale reforms (Webb 2009). The 1988 *Education Reform Act* in Britain and the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act* in the USA (Cumming 2012), are examples of educational reforms that had 'changing classroom focus and improving pupil achievement' (Earl et al. 2003:p.6) as their purpose. At the time of this research, Kenya was contemplating changes to its educational system to fulfil the objectives of its new constitution and Development Plan otherwise known as *Vision 2030*.

Education research has been fuelled by concerns about the suitability of education objectives, curriculum structure, syllabus content, instructional quality, costs, and debate over the roles and responsibilities of the various actors in ensuring quality and sustainability. In western societies, research shows that education change has gone through several stages, from the unsystematic erratic formats in the early 1980s through to the school improvement/school effectiveness programmes of the 1990s (Wolfe and Vassan 2008). The limited success of large scale education reform has been attributed, in some measure, to the reformers' failure to fully comprehend 'the depth, range and complexity of what teachers do' (Bascia and Hargreaves 2000:p.4, Earl et al.2003, Muijs and Chapman2009, House 2000). This in turn, has fuelled the current thinking that appears to regard change as a constant, necessitating greater involvement of the classroom teacher. Fullan (2001:p.79) posits that education change depends on 'what teachers do and think.' Hargreaves (1998:p.109,b) argues that governments can help teachers adapt to change by 'reconceptualising the role and professional identity of teachers.' This is borne out by examples from Finland and Japan. In Finland, the incorporation of trust in teachers and recognition of their professionalism is said to have contributed to the success of their education reform (Sahlberg 2007). The progressive contributions Japanese teachers make, particularly in Science and Mathematics, is visible due to the manner in which their professional identity has been conceptualised (Lewis 2002). Without being simplistic and naïve about the real challenges teachers in these contexts face and the socio-economic support that makes possible the enactment of their particular professional identity, it is worth noting how the construction of their professional identity has made visible their contributions to education improvements. Beijaard et al. (2004:p. 750) link professional identity to teachers' 'ability and willingness to cope with change and implement innovations in their own practice'. Though a contested concept, this study views *professional* identity as 'a critical analytical lens' and as 'powerful organizing structures' (Cohen 2008:p.5) through which to explore education change. Education is relational. Individuals act towards one another on the basis of the meanings they have for each other's identity,

hence the need to understand the meanings and expectations that teachers and significant others bring to the construction their professional identity and how that influences education change. Sachs (2001) presents teachers' professional identity as being either enterprenual, resulting from managerial professionalism, or activist arising from a democratic professionalism. Since teachers' professional identity is understood to be contextually derived (Cohen 2008), this study sought to establish the form of professional identity evident amongst my participants and show how that identity either facilitates or inhibits their opportunity for contributing to education change.

Understanding the national context of my participants may both help situate their particular circumstances and facilitate comparisons with teachers in similar or other circumstances.

2.2 National Context

The establishment of the first Christian missionary school in 1846 at Rabai near Mombasa marked the beginning of classroom based formal education in Kenya. From there Christianity and education spread hand in hand further inland, introducing a new episteme and equipping Kenyans with the literacy skills necessary for further religious and social transformation (Eshwani 1993). From 1911 onwards the colonial administration assumed responsibility for education management and used it to further their agenda. Due to this manner of inception, studies have illustrated how formal education in Kenya was viewed both as a source of power and *otherness* among African communities (Mazrui 1978). The differentiated curriculum favoured Europeans and Asians and estranged the native and non-Christian communities thus limiting their sense of control over the content learnt in formal institutions. These are the attitudes subsequent education reforms have sought to overcome. The search for the authentic Kenyan education that also complements global expectations is a continual deliberation.

Since independence Kenya has enjoyed relative political stability which has allowed for the development of educational programmes that have

been beneficial to both its citizens and the refugees within its borders. Formal education has always been esteemed in Kenya and viewed as a vehicle for socio-economic and political development (UNESCO 2000). Over the years, the government has enacted a number of successive reforms to revise education objectives, improve access, equity, structure, content and financing (Ojiambo 2009) in order to provide a globally competitive education (MOE 2004). This drive for change is frequently premised on the perceived inadequacies of an existing education system, often judged on the school level performance and employment rate of graduates. Proposed changes are usually embraced on the basis of their presumed advantages and success in contexts of origin. The socio-economic and historical backgrounds against which the borrowed systems are developed are frequently understated as is the process and level of support through which they were developed.

Education is of such importance in shaping national consciousness and development that it frequently forms the centre piece of political manifestos, causing detractors to regard any education change as political manoeuvring. It therefore comes as no surprise most of the key education changes in Kenya have been associated and used as political milestones. The 2002 National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) manifesto for example, pledged the following:

- To provide free and compulsory primary education to all children.
- To undertake a comprehensive review of the current system of education.
- To design a new system that guarantees all children the right to education and a competitive edge in a global job market. (The World Bank /UNICEF 2009:p.129)

Events following the NARC victories in both the 2002 and 2007 elections could be construed as a testimony of the party's efforts to fulfil these electoral promises. Free primary education (FPE) was enacted in 2003, free secondary education (FSE) in 2008 and an entirely new education system is now being contemplated. These changes were implemented with the support of development partners to enable Kenya fulfil its commitment to such international conventions as the attainment of Universal Primary

Education (UPE). Table 1.2 illustrates the expansion in enrolment by provinces following the enactment of the 2003 Free Primary Education policy.

Table 2.1   Increased enrolments following the FPE Policy

Province	2002		2003		2004	
	Boys	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**
Central	398,683	33,773	429,366	420,106	430,670	420,677
Coast	199,414	165,344	251,194	208,091	285,455	241,183
Eastern	572,082	574,537	652. 555	636,123	685,811	663,127
Nairobi	72,611	72,668	93,366	96,466	101,044	102,017
North Eastern	33,200	15,034	43,244	21,194	46,188	21,249
Nyanza	514,524	499,554	654575	626,789	651,151	607,739
Rift Valley	756,571	720,321	889,003	834,884	920,177	853,704
Western	430,433	450,127	527,501	518,898	554,690	537,525
Sub totals	2,977,517	2,897,259	3,543,804	3,362,551	3,675,186	3,447,221
Totals	**5,874,776**		**6,906,355**		**7,122,407**	

Source: The World Bank/UNICEF(2009)

Besides increased enrolment, the completion rates at primary level went from 62.8 in 2002 to 76.2 in 2004 (The World Bank/UNICEF 2009). UNICEF estimated that the net enrolment ratio between 2007-2010 reached 83% with an adult literacy rate of 87% (UNICEF 2012). It has to be acknowledged that the optimism accompanying the policy enactment raised the hope of many families as attested in the increased enrolment. The provision of textbooks and stationery under the government's 2008 FPE policy also impacted the quality of classroom processes. Secondary enrolment is said to have risen from 42% in 2002 to 72% in 2011 (Njoroge and Ole Kerei 2012).

As Kenya stands on the cusp of yet another monumental education change, there is a lot of soul searching and blame allocation over the previous system's perceived failures. This discussion will be confined to primary

education reviews. Ntwarangi (2003:p.213) assertion that many Kenyans receive, 'an education that is devoid of the central ingredients that are crucial in making them active participants in their socio-cultural existence' is shared by a section of Kenyan society. Given the government's commitment to education and proof of rising enrolment rates following the FPE initiatives one is perplexed over the unsatisfactory achievements (Wasanga and Kyalo 2007). It is alleged teachers lack creativity and are generally 'docile and dependent minded graduates' (Ojiambo 2009:p.135). Whether of their own volition or through limited choice, they are said to embrace, 'antiquated teaching and learning techniques', which dampen 'initiative and curiosity,' (Ojiambo 2009:p.135) amongst their learners resulting in underachievement. Teachers have been criticised for encouraging their pupils to memorise and regurgitate information without promoting critical thinking and whole person development. The structural conditioning for such methodology or how curriculum programming and evaluation fails to promote the development of critical thinking is barely interrogated. The perception that some teaching is antiquated presumes a continuum of teaching approaches from primordial to progressive along which teachers can be graded according to preference and ability. The poor performance of pupils in public primary schools is attributed to teachers' chronic absenteeism, to weak client voices and to an unhealthy relationship between teachers' unions and politicians which weakens the sense of accountability (Kimenyi 2013). There are those who would like to see Kenya's education go beyond the attainment of high grades to 'a processing of knowledge, using inspiration, visionary ambitions, creativity, risk, and 'ability to bounce back from failure' (Mwaka et al. 2011:p.2). These descriptions of teachers' work raise questions about how their identity is conceptualised and how they view their role and justify their choices. However, would teachers collectively and deliberately abandon their learners or choose approaches that were counterproductive even damaging to pupil achievements?

Determining quality teaching is premised on a given yardstick and is a subject of continued debate. Whether the yardstick should include pupil

achievement, adherence to specified curriculum dictum or quality of pupil experience is a matter of separate enquiry. Assessing quality is also a matter of considering who the customer is; be they pupils and their parents, the occupational group or the organisation that codifies curriculum frameworks and finances its implementation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the eyes of the general public, pupil achievement is quantifiable and therefore an accessible yardstick by which to measure education quality. The 2004 review of the national curriculum implementation established the process to be heavily biased towards the cognitive skills at the expense of the practical skills necessary for economic development (KIE 2010). It is important to establish whether and to what extend the deficiency in practical skills was a result of attributed value or to a lack of skill and appropriate infrastructure to support implementation. Similarly, it is important to establish what teachers deem to be their role and to compares their expectations with those of significant others in their immediate community.

Concerns about classroom practices raise questions about teacher training / management programmes and teachers' perception of their role and identity. Studies of Kenyan classrooms have often focused on the assessment of educational effectiveness within which the teachers' voice is often unheard. Ojiambo (2009:p.2) argues that, 'Today's educational struggle in Kenya is for pedagogy, more specifically, for an African pedagogy that is responsive to the African condition'. Any African pedagogy to be regarded as such needs to be contextually derived, have its own shape and character and be of relevance to its recipients in today's society. Tharp and Dalton (2007:p.65) compound this argument in the statement: 'the best education is culturally realised and thus to a degree localised.' Examples are given of Chinese policy makers who 'utilise the international language of progressive pedagogy in ways that fit their particular localised, culturally grounded circumstances' (Carney 2008:p.41). On what platform can local needs and progressive pedagogy be discussed to find contextual equivalence and relevance so that a country moves from a history of replicating practices borrowed from elsewhere to

utilising existing structures to cultivate practices effective in context and possibly useful elsewhere?

Concerns are often raised regarding the education system's adequacy to inculcate moral and social values (Mwaka et al. 2011); to reduce wastage and to address the difference in achievement between private schools and public schools which consequently sustains poverty amongst the already marginalised; and to successfully address the apparent regional disparities in enrolment and achievement since equity is enshrined in the constitution and the overall objectives of primary education (Alwy and Schech 2004, Glennester et al.2011). Singling out the case of nomadic pastoral communities, Ngasike (2011:p.57) argues that the current education system taught their children to 'perceive their culture as barbaric, archaic, primitive and the cause of cognitive deficiency'. Clearly these strongly held views invite reflection. It would be erroneous to view the entire education system as a failure and to give blanket condemnation to all protagonists. A centrally planned education system in a country as culturally diverse as Kenya is challenged in meeting and protecting the integrity and aspirations of all its ethnic groups, yet protecting this diversity is important to nationhood. The need for wider stakeholder involvement at different levels of intervention is self-evident and the role teachers' play in addressing these challenges will largely depend on how their identity is conceptualised and the forms of education change preferred. Whatever is valued in education will influence what is encouraged and supported. If a premium value is attached to critical thinking, then educational programming and assessment will prioritise its expression and appreciation. How current curriculum structure and multiple choice formats favoured by the National Examination Council promote the attainment of the desired learning outcomes merits a separate enquiry. Perhaps with the decentralization of governance and the devolution of power to county level management structures opportunity will be grasped for grassroots consultation on appropriate means of safeguarding unity in diversity, for enhancing assessment formats and for the means to reduce regional and education disparities. Making evident

these disparities and galvanising appropriate action requires different platforms of consultation and action. In terms of social cohesion and desired social values, Jansen (2007:p. 39), writing in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, observed that 'students learn much more about values from what they observe than from what we could possibly teach in a dedicated curriculum slot...only extra ordinary and exemplary teacher leadership could affirm the possibilities of a different world'. From his observation, it can be understood a centrally prescribed national curriculum may contribute to national unity, but it is the identity of the teachers and the values they cultivate and inculcate within specific school contexts that have the greatest influence on the values learners embrace and their sense of nationhood. It is thus reasonable to ask how teachers understand their role in relation to promoting desired national values.

Kenya's Ministry of Education is structured in a way that facilitates continuous monitoring and evaluation of its programmes. The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) ensures quality of education by overseeing the development of curricula and the vetting of instructional materials for use in public schools. The Directorate of Standards and Quality Assurance monitor the curriculum implementation process, whilst the Kenya National Council of Examination (KNEC) administers summative examinations at primary and secondary levels and evaluates overall performance. Periodically, it also conducts monitoring assessments to determine levels of pupil achievement. For example, a recent KNEC (2010) assessment indicates that pupils in Class 3 achieved a possible mean score of 297. 29 in reading and 292.29 in mathematics which is below the desirable 300 points. In addition, the 2005-2010 Kenya Education Sector Support Programme - KESSP (MOE 2005) provided a sector wide planning instrument to focus government investment on 23 specific education priorities in order to achieve equitable and quality education.

Despite these robust inbuilt monitoring structures and the frequent education reforms a number of education challenges persist which invites reflection on institutional capacity and the manner key education changes

have been deliberated upon. The next section will discuss the two key platforms from which educational changes in Kenya have been deliberated.

2.3 Change Through Working Committees and Commissions

Soon after independence in 1963, the 1964 Kenya Education Commission, also known as the Ominde Commission, provided the blueprint for Kenya's post-independence education policy (Ojiambo 2009). Its recommendations were strategically timed to inform Session Paper No.1 of 1965 and the subsequent 1965/1970 National Development Plan (Eshwani1993). The nation's thirst for a new philosophical outlook, increased access to academic education, desegregation in learning institutions and a desire for nationhood were self-evident. The Ominde Commission's recommendations paved the way for the adoption of the 7 years primary, 4 years secondary, 2 years high school and 3 years university (7.4.2.3) system of education and appropriate adjustments were made to the existing curriculum. The content of subjects such as History and Geography was revised and technical and vocational education was abolished at primary level (Makori 2005). This was an attempt to build a new self-image and confidence to divorce Kenya from its colonial policies which had previously limited the indigenous population to vocational and technical education as an act of subjugation. One of the Commission's 160 recommendations states:

> An excessive competitive spirit in our schools is incompatible with our traditional beliefs and must be restrained. Every young person coming from school must be made to realise that he has a valuable part to play in the national life. (Eshwani 1993:p.26)

It is not clear at what point the idealism in the Ominde Commission recommendations gave way to the competitive examination bias present today. Understanding the circumstances that fuel the persistence of a competitive examination spirit against the recommendations of the Ominde Commission would help to develop change in a sustainable manner.

By 1976, despite the initial exuberance attached to the Ominde Commission's recommendations and the government's efforts, it was clear that an increasing number of school leavers were not being gainfully employed. This was once again attributed to a deficiency in the education system and a review of the national educational objectives and quality was directed. With the benefit of hindsight the 1976 Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies, the Gachathi Commission, recognised the need for technical and vocational education. Consequently, education objectives were re-defined; proposals were made to re-integrate technical and vocational education at both primary and secondary levels. The Gachathi Commission further proposed the extension of primary education to nine years and government support to be extended to the Harambee (community self-help) secondary schools. Recognising the value of early childhood education, the Commission further recommended the establishment of the National Centre for Early Childhood subsequently housed within the Kenya Institute of Education (Mbengei and Galloway 2009). The Gachathi Commission actually echoes the recommendation of the Ominde Commission in stating that education should:

> foster national unity; remove social and regional inequalities, create national consciousness; be adaptable, be relevant to the real life situation of the Kenyan environment. (Eshwani 1993:p. 28)

Enhancing national unity whilst acknowledging *real life situations* across the regional, economic and socio-cultural diversities would seem to require a dexterity in approach, curriculum flexibility and teacher competence. To address the causes of social inequalities and bring curriculum relevance to diverse geo-social groups would call for a different way of working with existing structures. Had this recommendation been realised earlier, regional and ethnic disparities would not feature in current education debate.

The 1978 Presidential Working Party on Education and Training for the Next Decade - the Kamunge Commission-revisited the issues of education quality and relevance with particular emphasis on finance. The commission's cost sharing strategy placed the responsibility for school

infrastructure, pupils' uniforms and support staff salaries upon local communities, whilst the government remained responsible for teacher training, recruitment and remuneration. School management committees, usually drawn from the local communities, were entrusted with the responsibility of mobilising local resources. The unintended result of this policy was that pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds remained with correspondingly poor infrastructure which impacted on their learning experiences. The school management committee's role has increased proportionately with Free Primary Education and the devolution of administrative structures as envisaged by the new constitution.

The next major transformation in Kenya's system of education followed the recommendations of the 1981 Presidential Working Party on the Second University-the Mackay Commission. This resulted in the establishment of Moi University and the supplanting of the previous 7.4.2.3 education structure, modelled on the British education system, with the new 8.4.4 (8 years primary, 4 years secondary and 4 years university) structure imported and modelled along the Canadian system being introduced in 1985. Many argue changing the education system was not in the Mackay Commission's terms of reference (Makori 2005) though it was anticipated the extended primary and restructured secondary curriculum would equip school leavers to function productively in agriculture, commerce, and industry in addition to the option of transition to tertiary level (Ojiambo 2009). The timing and rapidity, with which the 8.4.4 system was implemented, with little prior consultation, caused many to impute a political motive to its introduction. Its subsequent shortcomings have been well documented (Sifuna 2005, Makori 2005, Amutabi 2003). Even as technical education is deemed imperative to achieving Vision 2030, future reforms should be cognisant of the structural, social and attitudinal elements that contributed to the disenchantment with the 8.4.4 system, as failure to do so could risk the successful implementation of future education proposals.

The 2000 Koech Commission attempted to redress the shortcomings of the 8. 4. 4 system and to make recommendations to bring it in line with global technological advancements. Their proposals for the acceleration of industrial and technological development, lifelong learning and adaptation were later rejected on grounds of cost (Nyaberi 2009). Similarly, the recommendations of the Mungai, and Sagini Commissions were never implemented.

Task forces and working committees have had a strong influence on the structural development of Kenya's education (Makori 2005). As specialist led consultation forums, they have provided leadership, expertise and engagement with a variety of key stakeholders. However, key challenges often deliberated by successive commissions still remain. Possibly because of their mandate each commission is task specific and limited in scope and timeframe affecting the continuity of their support beyond the recommendation phase. Some subjects, as in the case of technical and vocational education, have been repeatedly deliberated upon by a succession of task forces resulting in conflicting recommendations, some of which have even remained unpublished. Those that do get implemented are often moderated by budgetary and extraneous circumstances. Because of their theoretical nature, history has shown that whilst they are a vital consultative tool, there is a real danger of accumulating a library of costly recommendations that raise expectations and remain as reference points with partial or limited implementation.

In the wake of the promulgation of the 2010 constitution and the launching of Kenya's long term planning and development strategy, popularly known as Vision 2030, a task force, led by Prof. Douglas Ojiambo, was set up to advise the government on how best to align the education sector to the new legal and planning frameworks. Of particular concern was how the Ministry would provide free basic education as envisaged in the new constitution, whilst taking into consideration the devolved government structures and the country's ambition to develop into a medium sized economy by the year 2030 (MOE 2012). Again, consultations have been

held at district, provincial and national levels with the different stakeholders including representatives of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET). Lessons from countries whose education systems are thought to be effective, particularly Singapore, have also been reviewed. Recommendations have again been proposed including the necessity of changing the current education structure from 8.4.4 to 2.6.6.3 (2 years early childhood education, 6 years primary, 3 years lower and 3 years upper secondary and 3 years university). Under these recommendations, yet to be acted upon, primary schools are expected to expand and house lower secondary classes for a further three years the pupils would then transit either to talent schools, specific technical institutions or high schools.   It is envisaged the new system will allow for the early identification of pupils' aptitudes and provide pathways for specialisation after junior secondary school. This proposed system will hopefully reduce the stress and pressure associated with summative national examinations at primary level as these would be replaced by county administered cumulative competence assessment tests (MOE 2012). The consultative process has generated a great deal of debate with the media presenting the majority of teachers and university lecturers in opposition to the projected structure on grounds of viability. As with previous commissions, working committees and task forces, the Ojiambo commission has made its recommendations. Their mandate is now fulfilled. It remains to be seen how far their recommendations will be implemented and whether they will achieve their desired goals or remain hostage to the same vulnerabilities that limited the effectiveness of the 8.4.4 system they seek to replace.

Ojiambo (2009:p.147) in a review of Kenyan education reforms observed a 'chasm between theory and practice'. Could such a chasm be occasioned by inadequate dialogue and engagement between those who formulate and those who implement change, and is this inadequacy attributable to how professional identity has been conceptualised? If this is so, then any proposed change is possibly compromised from the onset?

2.4 Change through Presidential Decrees

Not all education changes resulted from the deliberations of specialist led working committees and task forces: a number of reforms have been precipitated by presidential decrees. Recognising the voters' desire to acquire the transformative power of education, every head of state since independence, except Uhuru Kenyatta, has decreed free primary education in some form. President Jomo Kenyatta did so progressively beginning in 1971 with free primary education in the more economically marginalised districts of Garissa, Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Tana River, Turkana, Wajir and West Pokot (Sifuna2008). During the Independence Day celebrations of 1973, he extended free primary education to Lower Primary classes in all districts; this was implemented in 1974 (Makori 2005). Soon after he came to power in 1979, President Moi abolished parents' contribution to primary school building funds and later offered free milk to all pupils in public primary schools. He is also credited with the 8.4.4 education legacy and the expansion of university education (Sifuna 2005). Amutabi (2003:p.129) asserts that during Jomo Kenyatta and Moi's presidencies, 'the policy environment was characterised by a lack of popular consultation, with decrees, circulars and political rhetoric replacing policy making instruments. ' In the light of this trend, it could be argued all early initiatives, though commendable were basically unsustainable hence the developments in President Kibaki's presidency which once again offered both free primary education in 2003 and free secondary in 2008 in all public schools.

Changes introduced through presidential decrees have the distinct advantage of receiving immediate support from the government and its development partners. For example, when President Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government legislated for free primary education, an emergency grant of US$6.8 million was immediately disbursed by the Ministry of Education to public primary schools to ease the transition with a further US$ 31.6 million allocated within the same financial year to offer basic support for the increased enrolment. The government received additional support from many of its development

partners. Among others these included the World Bank - US$50 million, the UK Department for International Development (DfID) - US$ 21.1 million,UNICEF-US$2.5million,DfID/Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) - US$10.6 million, World Food Programme - US$10.6million and OPEC - US$ 9.9million (The World Bank/UNICEF 2009).

The unprecedented support Kenya received for its 2003 FPE policy may be seen in the light of two possible developments. First, with the change of government, the Kibaki administration was seen as a window of opportunity for Kenya to demonstrate its commitment to democracy and transparency. Secondly, development partners seized the government's FPE declaration to robustly push forward global targets set by international conventions to which Kenya was a signatory (Colclough and Webb 2010) such as the Dakar Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, partners' support to presidential decrees is also thought to perpetuate dependency (Langinger 2011) and to divert the government's focus from other educational and development priorities (Amutabi 2003). Examples have been cited of how attention to free primary and secondary education have minimised support to tertiary and mid-level colleges that are now seen as a vital link to employment (Kaga 2006). The rapid expansion in primary school enrolment led to overstretched, under-resourced facilities that had an inevitable effect on the quality of education. In some respects the term *free education* is a misnomer, since parents are still expected to meet undetermined auxiliary costs and contribute to the provision of facilities. This resulted in some parents, even from the lower income bracket to resort to private education providerswhose terms of service are known in advance (Oketch and Somerset 2010).

Though much thought and planning may precede each presidential decree the timing and difficulties entailed in sustaining some of the initiatives often brings this supposition into question. Commenting on the haste with which the 8.4. 4 system was introduced Amutabi (2003:p.136) states:

> It is doubtful if the views of the experts were ever genuinely sought by the politicians with regard to the timing of the new system and infrastructural preparedness.

Education initiatives associated with presidential legacies are vulnerable to the temperament of the subjectivities which ushered them into existence and consequentially remain a valued but temperamental route to change. The successive offers of free primary education declarations and the dissatisfaction with the 8.4.4 system can be partly attributed to reactive planning and a lack of tenacity in the implementation attendant on the changing tides of political good will.

2. 5   Summary of Background and Context

This chapter has outlined the general background and national context in which education change is pursued and how such pursuit is legitimised by the need to remain competitive in a globally linked world. In western society, research shows that education change evolved from the unsystematic formats evident in the early 1980s through to the school improvement/school effectiveness programmes of the 1990s (Wolfe and Vassan 2008). Some of the countries that have enjoyed a significant measure of success in their educational reforms are also said to have incorporated a measure of re-conceptualising teachers' role and identity (Sahlberg 2007).

In post independent Kenya, major changes in education have been deliberated primarily through the platforms of successive specialist-led commissions, working committees and presidential decrees. It is argued that though the route through education committees and commissions afford both leadership and expertise to a consultative process leading to appropriate recommendations, as a platform for education change, it is limited by the mandate which determines the scope and time frame of each committee. They cease to function as an entity beyond their recommendations and have limited influence over what is adopted, moderated or implemented. Successful implementation of their recommendations depends on how well they are articulated, understood, accepted and supported within existing administrative mechanisms. As a

result, some of their recommendations have been repeatedly made, revised or discontinued by subsequent committees. Presidential Committees on the other hand have immediacy, reducing the consultation process and setting the policy machinery rolling in the chosen direction. They are capable of galvanising resources and public support but as a platform for change they lack continuity and remain vulnerable to the forces that legitimise their power. Despite the institutional support of the Kenya Institute of Education, the Quality Assurance and Standards Department within the Ministry of Education and the Kenya National Examination Council, debates on the quality of education, regional disparity and the comparative advantage of private schools over public schools continue.

As Ojiambo (2009:p.147) commented, Kenya is not lacking in theoretical recommendations, but in the means to bridge the 'chasm between theory and practice'. Could the chasm be a result of the relationship Kenyans historically have had with formal education or the manner in which education policy and practice are deliberated? Teachers, at the forefront of educational delivery, are often depicted as choosing inappropriate teaching approaches or generally failing to meet expectations. Does this arise out of alienation from the education they are contracted to provide, from lack of choice in pedagogical practice or from utter negligence? With the decentralisation of power, as proposed by the 2010 Constitution (Nyanjom 2011), understanding what teachers see to lie within their role boundaries and the factors influencing their pedagogical choices is important to establish the teachers' capacity to utilise this new found opportunity to engender the sense of ownership necessary to deliver Vision 2030. This study aims to examine teachers' professional identity and practice in a manner that allows for their voices and their choices to be self-evident.

A detailed context of the primary school in Trans Nzoia East District where this study is conducted will be provided in chapter 5.

3.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

Whilst acknowledging the limited literature on teachers' professional identity from my research context, this chapter draws upon a wide range of studies related to identity, professionalism, and education change to highlight their relationship and the debates, ambivalence and the mysticism around the key constructs showing how the emerging understanding affects what is researched or embraced. Notably, it points to the link between professional identity, teacher motivation and education reforms, showing how conflicting discourses of professionalism locate teachers differently within processes of education policy frameworks and reform.

3. 1 Introduction

Research on education change and teachers' professional identity has burgeoned over the last three decades (Beijaard et al.2004, Day et al 2006, Hextall et al. 2007, Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, Sutherland et al. 2010, Canrinus et al. 2011) possibly because of the intensity of education reforms. Though the majority of studies have been conducted outside the African context, their findings highlight the conceptual debates and concerns around the construct of professional identity that challenge its universally application. Apart from studies from South Africa, the limited research on teachers' professional identity within Sub Sahara Africa, (Jansen 2001, Smit and Fritz 2008), could be interpreted as indicative of assumptions regarding the relative value of such knowledge. However, Jansen (2001:p.242) notably argues that "unless we understand the identity dilemma teachers face, we cannot begin 'to disrupt the grammar of schooling" (Tyack and Robin 1994).

In their general review of research conducted on teachers' professional identity between 1998 and 2000, Beijaard et al. (2004) observed that a third of the studies analysed offer no definition of teachers' professional identity, possibly because the idea of 'professional identity is rarely taken as problematic' (Sachs 2001:p. 153).   The remaining two thirds explored

the integration of the personal and the professional in initial identity formation and the tension between person and context. Beijaard et al. (2004) concluded that researchers variously conceptualised professional identity and consequently investigated different aspects of teachers' lives under its broad banner.

This diversity of conception could affirm the resilience and versatility of the constructs *professional* and *identity,* making them useful to work with in a variety of investigations and contexts, or contrarily, highlight their threat of 'operating under erasure' (Hall 2000:p.16) without definite analytical purchase. If these constructs are overused, it is because, however archaic, they still resonate with a broad audience. Their over application could also be attributed to the sustained discourses around work related identities (Adam et al. 2006) and the evolving meanings of being professional. Like Beijaard et al. (2004), I believe dialogue in a given professional landscape can bring one to a deeper contextual understanding of the definition and function of professional identity.

Canrinus et al. (2011:p.593) challenge the concept of professional identity as 'a latent variable with a uniform structure'. Using data collected in the Netherlands from 5,575 teachers under the indicators of teachers' job satisfaction, occupational commitment, self efficacy and levels of motivation, they differentiate between motivated, de-motivated, and self doubting teacher identity profiles and conclude that teachers' professional identity is actively shaped by person and context. Whilst a teacher's profile may fall predominantly within any of these three categories, their transitory nature suggests many dimensions to teachers' identity, some stable, others unstable (Caretello and Borrelli 2006). These dimensions have been investigated from personal, professional, policy and situated dimensions (Mockler 2011) illustrating how teachers' professional identity is a site of competing discourses with each purporting to act in teachers' best interest Sachs (2001). Lack of conceptual clarity inhibits the potential synergy in teachers' professional identity and becomes the reason for stagnation or exploitation. Without definitive analytical purchase professional identity becomes a dormant or ineffectual policy tool.

One needs to understand the constructs of *identity* and *professional* in order to fully comprehend the issues forming the basis of debates entailed in education reform processes. This chapter is thus primarily devoted to this exploration giving examples of research on teachers' professional identity in other contexts of change.

3. 2   Education Change

To understand the mounting interest in research on teacher identity and education change, one has to look at the large family of constructs including reform, revolution, improvement, development and innovation used to explain and justify adjustments (Altrichter 2000) in education practice and policy. Organizational change is not unprecedented, however, because of the likely impact on a wide range of individuals and institutions, educational reforms ranging in depth and pace from overarching aims and administration costs to learning approaches and assessment, make the suitability and sustainability of its forms a subject of intense debate(Fullan 2001, Sachs and Groundwater-Smith 2006, Hargreaves and Goodson 2006, Chapman and Gunter 2009). A distinction can be made between institutional level adjustments and large scale educational reforms that promise to revolutionalise learning experiences and enhance national economies. Further distinctions can also be made between education change as a process, and therefore a context for identity construction or change as an envisaged state. In this thesis, reference will be made primarily to national educational reforms as a context in which the activities and salience of certain identities are debated and reconfigured.

Research into educational change attempts to document and theorise the nature and process of change as it is manifested at institutional and national contexts (Fullan 2006, Hargreaves and Goodson 2006). In the last twenty years investigations have been conducted into the manner of reforms, lived experiences in reform contexts, the changing goals, priorities management and ,'the locus of control' in reform processes (Alteritcher and Elliot 2000:p.20). As a context, education change provides a forum where the identity conflicts of individual agency versus

maintenance of existing social structures resurface and are played at the levels at which such changes are seen to be introduced or contested; whether progressively through institutional evolution or through rationally planned organisational change issued from national platforms where agents administer and enforce central surveillance to assure desired transformations. The history of education has, as Altrichter (2000: p.3) explains, been:

> … dominated for a long time by concepts of rationally planned organizational development, these have been called into question by observations that real changes very often do not conform to the neat designs of organizational planners, but are contested and resemble political struggles.

In view of the centrality of education to national consciousness, governance and human development justification for such planning is admissible. However, as Altrichter (2000) indicates above such changes, may also be vigorously contested where they are perceived to be at variance with existing contextual frameworks. Some of the reasons for the contest lie in the different expectations of education in general and the processes through which educational goals are determined. Goodson (2003:p.102) identifies recurrent pendulum swings in public knowledge and education between 'the emanicipatory enlightenment vision and the darker forces of subordination and social control'. The extent to which education is perceived to serve either purpose may influence how changes are instituted or contested and by whom.

Though each reform is set against a given socio- economic climate in specific contexts, global evidence illustrate the disproportionate comparisons between education and economics said to play a part in national contexts (Lang et al 1999, House 2000, Sachs 2001). Based on the assumptions that education leads to employment and competition to greater innovation, economic metaphors are increasingly applied to education thinking, so much so that the imagery of corporate management, markets and productivity are frequently applied to schools with the expectation of innovation and competition being the key drivers. Examples of rational, centrally planned reforms, which frequently

stigmatize or ignore the past (Hargreaves and Goodson 2003), whether framed from an 'equilibrium paradigm' seeking to improve effectiveness and relevance of education systems or from a 'conflict paradigm' (Ginsburg 1991:8) seeking to address identified forms of inequality can be found globally. The Kenyan journey towards equitable and effective education changes was discussed in Chapter 2.

In examining the factors limiting the success of large scale reforms, Fullan (2006:p.4) argued that they are often premised on the erroneous assumption that by aligning 'key components and driving them forward with lots of pressure and support good things will happen on a large scale'. Though logical, the unstated assumptions behind the identities of those involved in identifying key components and how they might be configured in existing infrastructure brings into debate accountability and relevance of professionalism. What is it that qualifies an individual or set of individuals to determine what and how desirable changes in education practice and policy should be achieved? How are these individuals held accountable for the decisions and expenses entailed in the choices they make? Whilst a certain level of knowledge and leadership may be considered essential to change processes, what form and level of knowledge is sufficient for this level of decision making? The answers to these questions influence the positions and processes through which reform choices are made.

Commenting on why rationally planned national education policies might fail, House (2000: p. 14) posits that:

> National leaders formulate educational policies primarily in response to national economic concerns - without sufficient understanding or appreciation of educational institutions. This overdrawn focus causes educational policies to be mismatched to practices.

A possible chasm is suggested between how educational needs are determined and how they are addressed. Driven by economic imperatives, the changes are modeled on intended outcomes but premised on inaccurate or understated representations of teachers and their contexts or what Bascia and Hargreaves (2000:p.4) see as the reformers' failure to fully

comprehend 'the depth, range and complexity of what teachers do'.This inevitably results in proposals for education reforms that are mismatched to intended contexts. Policy planners do not deliberately misunderstand those who implement their recommendations, but rather as House (2000:p.14) suggests, they may be:

> … mistaken in their initiatives because they are too far removed from educational work, too wedded to powerful interests, too imbued with misleading ideologies and simply misinformed.

Ideological and physical distance, rightly or wrongly, impact the thought worlds through which reforms are formulated because they influence what is recognised as a problem and the options proposed for addressing it in relation to existing policy frameworks. Changes driven from rational organizational platforms may be thought to be an ideological response to either a previous or competing administration or a need to appear proactive in responding to social equity needs of a given population, positions which can then be reversed by subsequent administrations with consequence to budgets and sustainability. Significantly, Fullan (2006) posits that standard based reforms in themselves do not address the settings in which people work, which in turn diminishes the relevance of their identities, possibly creating tensions and affecting the achievement levels initially envisaged in reform proposals. The question then is whether the seeming gap between policy formulation and school contexts can be mediated in ways that moderates ideological inclinations and pay attention to the contexts in which education takes place. Hargreaves (2000: p.166) shows how:

> Many teachers caught up in educational reforms and change are experiencing increasing role expansion and role diffusion with no real sense of where their commitments and responsibilities should end.

Ball (2005) acknowledges that policy reforms not only change what teachers do but also who they are and what is possible for them to become. If there is a relationship between what teachers are and what they do it would logically follow that their identity is an important consideration in the reforms process. Unfortunately, it has been suggested that policy images of teachers may differ substantially from their self images (Jansen

2007) which affects perceptions of capabilities and positionality in the reform process.

Perception of leadership influence the levels of decision making leading to the formulation of goals, processes, content and costs of education which in some cases leaves the majority of actors within the sector in the role of followers. Enhancing distributed leadership (Frost and Harris 2003), where leadership is more a function than a role is thought to increase levels of involvement and accountability.   Where teaching is perceived as a profession, such leadership is expected to facilitate their reflection and occupational accountability towards the evolution of changes to their practice and quality of work. According to Harris and Spillane(2008:p.32) distributive leadership is:

> … where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals where the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders.

Whereas distributed leadership is often encouraged at institutional level, the possibility of such professional platforms creating linkages for reflexivity and experience sharing over a wider reach of issues remains to be investigated in diverse contexts.   Could regard for teaching as a profession enlarge the platform on which the leadership function is stretched over a number of accountable individuals to facilitate forums for contemplating education change within institutions, regions and countries? Perhaps such a transformation may broaden the opportunity to consult, pilot, build consensus and refine proposals that are finally deliberated at conclusive policy stages. Sachs (1997) demonstrates how the Australian government re-visioned teacher's professional identity by valuing their school work and giving them greater responsibility and flexibility in the implementation of goal governed approaches aimed at increased efficiency.Fullan (2011:p.2) concludes that:

> … cultures in which teachers focus on improving their teaching practice, learn from each other, and are well led and supported by school principals result in better learning for students.

In the face of powerful, conflicting influences, could strong teachers' professional bodies, guided by sound theoretical principles and devoted to the elevation of education standards provide the momentum needed to sustain appropriate education reforms? That would depend on how professional identity is understood and facilitated.

It would be inaccurate to judge all education reforms as unsuccessful. The changes within the Finnish education system, for example, where a gradual revolution placed the locus of reform at school level is often cited as a possible successful ongoing reform. Its success is attributed to the trust and shared responsibility placed upon their teachers' professionalism. Whilst their system can be said to be comparatively small and supported by a variety of socio- economic factors, they have nonetheless become a reference point in education change. Since it is increasingly evident that planned reforms are mediated by human circumstances and do not always go according to intention, Fullan (2007:p.29) advises, '...we find some ways of developing infrastructure and processes that engage teachers in developing new knowledge, skills and understanding.' To engage teachers in a search for additional knowledge and skills requires an understanding of the role that they play or should play in nurturing reform processes.Could adopting reform strategies that locate local actors differently in engaging with the changing local and national aspirations help to ensure a different trajectory in the quest for quality education? Considering the role that teacher identity plays in education (Fullan1993:p.13) further advises that:

> We need a new conception of teacher professionalism one that integrates moral purpose and change agentry, one that works simultaneously on individual and personal development.

Whilst acknowledging education reform is conceptualised at policy level, usually in response to global league tables and in pursuit of economic ambitions, the actual change occurs at institutional level where teachers' professional identity is enacted. Failure to fully understand change as a context for identity construction is likely to result in mismatched recommendations. Elmore (2004:p.73) recognised the need for a reform

movement that is closer to the classroom stating, 'improvement is more a function of learning to do the right thing in the setting in which you work'. Reforms that encourage teachers to take responsibility for doing the right thing in the setting in which they work requires a different conception of educational leadership and what Lang et al. (1999:p.10) see as a:

> Radically different idea about teachers' role in change and ultimately radically different ideas of teachers as professionals.

This study examines how teachers in a specific Kenyan location relate to the wider context of education change, and whether the boundaries of their professional identity allow for active engagement in the formulation of such changes

3.3   Why investigate teachers' professional identity?

Changes to education programmes frequently focus on objectives, structure, costs and content. However, Watson (2006:p.510) succinctly draws attention to an equally important dimension:

> The importance of the concept of professional identity lies in the assumption that who we think we are influences what we do, i.e. there is a link between professional identity and professional action (in a sense, professional action is doing professional identity).

A relationship is suggested between who teachers see themselves to be and what they do which essentially links their perceived identity to education at a practical level.   Teachers' professional identity also merits particular attention as their work at the chalk face of education is said to be an interpersonal and relational endeavour, involving 'human interaction and emotional understanding' (O'Connor 2008:p.119), aspects closely linked to perceptions of identity. Sometimes this emotional understanding is called for in highly variable contexts that require further interpretive lens and regulatory frameworks. Justifying their research within South Africa on teachers' professional identity in the context of change, Smit and Fritz (2008: p.100) posit that

> Exploring and explaining how teachers make meaning of their professional lives and how they forge identity in their educational

landscape adds epistemological value to understanding how education change manifests in South African schools.

Given the history of race relations within South Africa, the use of professional identity as an interpretive lens provides a window through which to examine the extent to which reform objectives relate to their target audience and adds a certain piquancy to the debate in this context. Like South Africa, Kenya's society has a rich diversity that could perhaps be better understood through similar lens. Smit and Fritz (2008:p.100) examine the issues that shape teachers' professional identity against the pressures of change policies by using ethnographic narratives of two teachers from different racial backgrounds working in separate locations and conclude that:

> Education will not improve with financial efforts or the provision of workshops addressing policies, teaching practice, and management unless teachers' identity receives prominence.

Those identities capture the essence of the variance between the aspired for outcomes of education reform and the live worlds of the teachers and the communities in which they work that may be understated or generalised in reform packages.

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009:p.175) acknowledge the importance of professional identity as '.a frame or analytical lens through which to examine aspects of teaching.' A growing body of literature illustrate how teachers from different contexts adapt to new work environments (Deters 2008, Moloney and Xu 2012); how newly qualified teachers adjust to post training work environments (Boreham and Gray 2005);how second language teachers experience distinct challenges (Farell 2011); and, how teachers themselves engage in a politically charged social transformation (Smit and Fritz 2008). These studies serve to demonstrate the variety of tensions and contradictions that confront teachers and possibly challenge the internalised role expectations initially engendered during pre-qualification training. It can be argued that for teachers in these circumstances professional identity acts as an analytical and organising

structure (Cohen 2008), assisting each to fulfil their role expectations and find a place in society.

Teachers' professional identity is an equally important analytical lens through which to assess the evolution of education change at policy levels. The success of the Finnish education reforms since the 1970s for example, is largely attributed to trust and teachers' professionalism (Schleicher 2012). Whether other contexts can place sufficient trust in their teachers for a strong professional identity to be developed and form the bedrock of subsequent educational reforms remains to be seen. Although Jansen (2001:p.244) argues that teachers' identity alone cannot drive policy, he nevertheless, like Avalos (2010) recognises and points to the dislocation between teachers' personal identities and their policy images. He is of the opinion, 'transforming education in developing countries requires dialogue between policy, politics and practice' (Jansen 2001: p.244). However, the nature of that dialogue in itself is dependent upon a recognition of what is at risk, the identities of the parties involved and maybe even a necessity to 'reconceptualise teachers' role and professional identity' (Hargreaves (1998: p.10, a). This is especially important as dialogue is influenced by assumptions of the identities of the parties entailed and can be foreclosed by perceptions of teachers' identities that place leadership functions beyond their role boundaries. As noted by Avalos (2010), teachers often get blamed and bear the brunt for failing education systems. Dialogue based on teachers' failure to fulfil their role will take an entirely different course from one in which they are seen as partners in formulating changes to evolving education systems.

Through the example of the Innovative Links and the National Schools Network projects, Sachs (1997) shows how in the 1990s teachers in Australia were facilitated through a favourable policy environment to reclaim their professional identity and recast themselves as learners and researchers in the context of rapid education changes. Embracing the principles of participation, learning, collaboration and activism, the two projects helped teachers to forge links across institutions and collaborate

with universities to improve their practice and re-assert their professional identity. Recognising the necessity for re-conceptualising teachers' professional identity as a necessary part of effective education change, Sachs (2001:p.15) posits:

> '… teachers' identity stands at the core of teaching. It provides [teachers] with a framework to construct their own ideas of how to be, how to act and how to understand their work and their place in society'.

Three points arise from this argument. The first is that an identity is necessarily an action system guiding teachers' self-expectations and interactions. Individuals are thus said to be guided in how to act and how to be by their identities, in this case, their professional identity. The second point is that identity, though drawn from a public social structure, is an individual personal experience, processed through subjective lens providing opportunity for the interpretation of further action and interaction. An individual draws their own compass or ideas of how to act and how to be from the framework provided by their social structure in the form of their identity. Thirdly, the relationship between individual teachers and their social structure is reciprocal as individuals strive to fulfil assigned roles and gain recognition or 'place' from their social structure. Mockler (2011:p.2) further argues that:

> Teachers' work encompassing the decisions they make on both short term and long term basis about approaches to such things as curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment … is framed by, and constituted through, their understanding and positioning of themselves as a product of their professional identity.

Mockler's (2011) argument is premised on the recognition that teaching is a profession and consequently it falls upon teachers as professionals to make such curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment decisions. If these decisions do not rest upon teachers, can teaching be considered a profession and if not what ramifications would this have on their identity and work?

In the light of Sachs' (2005) and Mockler's (2011) depiction of teacher identity, one can appreciate why alterations to education practice requires

contextual sensitivity as such changes are likely to ignites changes in role and self concepts, exposing the actors to possible vulnerabilities (Trowler et al. 2003). This is not to suggest that teachers are unsympathetic to or unlikely to understand the need for change to their practice but that there is a need to understand how such changes might be situated. Change articulated in reform agendas may represent 'a substantial departure from teachers' prior experience, established beliefs and present practice' (Little 1993: p.3) requiring them to visualise and facilitate learning experiences to which they themselves have not been previously exposed. Crucially, frequent education changes result in a 'constant construction, destruction and repair of boundaries' (Margolis 1998:p.133) along teachers' professional identities and can be fraught with emotion. If a teacher's work and identity are so closely linked a:

> . . . sense of professional, personal identity is a key variable in their motivation, job fulfilment, commitment and self-efficacy and is itself affected by the extent to which teachers' own need for autonomy, competence and relatedness are met. (Day 2007:p. 603)

Unlocking teachers' motivation appears to be an important part of ascertaining successful reforms. Even though teacher motivation is often conceptualised in relation to terms of service and remuneration, it is here linked to their job fulfilment, sense of commitment and self-efficacy which in themselves are often challenged by reform proposals that are de-contextualised. Teachers' motivation is also affected by the way in which their needs for relatedness, autonomy and competence are acknowledged and met. With this understanding, the successful incorporation of any change would first require sufficient opportunity for teachers to not only identify with the proposal for change but also to internalise their new roles and be trusted to execute their new tasks effectively. If teachers feel inconsequential in regard to the direction of their work, they are said to 'surrender a core part of their identity, a form of 'bereavement' that has emotional consequences for them'. (Osborn et al. 2000:p. 58). This may manifest in a detached fulfilment of contractual agreements (Jessop and Penny 1998) and is supported by Avalos' (2010) study on teachers'

professional identity in Chile, which also links self-efficacy and agency to teachers' response to education change.

Vahasantanen et al. (2008) show how the need for autonomy can be afforded or restricted by organisational environments which they describe as either loosely or tightly coupled depending on how each facilitates the exercise of teachers' orientation to their professional identity. Tightly coupled organisations expect continuous improvement and change, but place 'more restrictions on [teachers'] opportunities to practice agency and to act on the orientation towards the profession' (Vahasantanen et al.2008:p.24). Loosely coupled organisations on the other hand, afford individuals more opportunity for agency and professional orientation. Whether the relationship between loosely coupled organisational environments and improving education system is causal or coincidental is a matter for further investigation, but Fullan (2011:p.1) argues that there is over 30 years' evidence that 'collaborative cultures in which teachers focus on improving their practice, learn from each other and are well led and supported by school principals result in better leaning for students', because 'the best motivation comes from within'. The level to which such collaborative cultures contribute to education change beyond institutional practice merits further enquiry. It is, however, significant to note the relationship between successful educational systems and the organizational environments that provide for the exercise of teachers' professional identity (Lewis 2002, Wolfe and Vassan 2008, Schleicher 2012,).

Mockler (2011) envisages professional identity as a tool. Like other tools its effectiveness depends on how and by whom it is used. It could be a tool to 'engender managerial discourse of accountability within a target/audit culture' (Wilkins 2011:p. 392) whilst at the same time undermining professional judgment by a culture of 'coercive compliance' or in the hands of professional bodies as a tool to engender status and better remuneration. However as shall be discussed further in chapter 6, teachers' professional identity is also underpinned by a moral purpose. Many researchers acknowledge this moral purpose. Fullan (1993) for instance, associates teachers' moral purpose with a desire to improve their pupils'

lives, which essentially means their engaging constructively with the change process. However, even he (Fullan1993:p.12) realises this moral purpose is challenged by 'the way teachers are trained, the way schools are organised, the way educational hierarchy operates and the way political decision makers treat educators'. Basically, it would seem the exercise of teachers' professional identity, essential to the advancement of moral purpose and their motivation, is dependent on teacher preparation, organisational environment and teachers' own awareness of their identity.

Beijaard et al. (2004) recognise the need for clarity of meaning on teachers' professional identity and an exploration of contextual influences on its construction. They perceive teachers as components of a wider landscape in which professional identity is formed. Consequently, they advocate for an investigation into the involvement of 'relevant others' who represent different aspects of this landscape in the hope that 'a permanent dialogue between these actors may lead to a deeper understanding of the concept of teachers' professional identity (Beijaard et al. 2004:p.126).

The remaining sections of this chapter will explore the constructs of *identity* and *professional* to highlight the current debates with a view of contributing to a greater understanding of the issues entailed in researching professional identity and education change.

3. 4   What Does Identity Mean?

Part of the difficulties in defining teachers' professional identity has to do with how the construct *identity* is understood and used. Teachers' professional identity is essentially one among other possible identities an individual may have. This section examines *identity* and related concepts to show how the varying interpretations and attendant debates influence research on teachers' professional identity. Various discourses arise from different perceptions of *self, subject* and *identity*; where identity's reciprocal relationship and influence over social structures, motivation and sense of agency attracts interest from various disciplines. Key debates, specifically those centring on the relationship between the personal and the

social, plus the link between the structure and agency in relation to teachers' professional identity will also be discussed (Buckingham 2008).

The word identity derives from the Latin root *idem,* meaning 'the same' paradoxically implies similarity and difference (Buckingham 2008). The paradox lies in the fact whilst the construct *identit*y is thought to link an individual to others through a set of values and expectations it does, in so doing, also separate and differentiate them from others not similarly categorised. One finds that they are linked and separated from others by the various identities they hold drawn from the various social structures of which they are a part. To each of these categories one brings an element of the other group identities and personal traits which may or may not be shared. The extent to which one identifies with one more than the other identities, the factors that guide the demarcation between the different identities, the analytical purchase, power allocation, category membership, maintenance of each identity and its influence on one's actions form the subject of much research (Clarke 2008, Reicher et al. 2010).

Identity is thus commonly understood to answer the question, 'Who am I?' (Prytula and Hellsten 2011), and alludes to the uniqueness and differences between individuals or groups of individuals premised on their ethical codes, goals, guiding frameworks, knowledge, affiliations and aspirations (Sutherland et al. 2010). When identity is said to be 'anchored around a set of moral prepositions that regulate values and behaviour, so that identity construction necessarily involves ideas of 'right' and 'wrong' desirable/undesirable unpolluted/polluted'(Schopflin 2001:p.1) then education processes become entangled in identity constructions. A learning environment is a site of competing values, where some are given greater significance than others, where learners are encouraged to question certain values while they are actively encouraged to uphold and therefore identify with others. This necessarily makes enquiry into teachers' values a necessary part of their role identity which in turn blurs the boundary between personal and professional identities. Since identity is also a

relational concept, it necessarily sets boundaries of duties and responsibilities and therefore Andreouli (2010:p. 6) suggests:

> Assessing the quality of self- other relations is crucial in understanding identity processes. Using the idea of rights and duties as associated with identity positions we can stress the impact of power in our conceptualisation of identity.

It is from this understanding that this study looks not only at how teachers define their identity but also how others in their immediate context define them. Individuals are said to act and interact on the basis of their understanding of their self-expectations and the expectations of those with whom they interact. Since individuals are distinguished through their activities in relation to the social types that populate their figured world (Urietta 2007) one can comprehend why' research on identity is preoccupied with finding how identities are formulated, reformulated, embraced or resisted, inscribed or prescribed' (Ybema 2009:p.303). A number of sociological, anthropological (Holland et al.1998), psychological (Erickson 1959) and philosophical (Taylor 1989) studies on the meaning and influences of identity have been conducted. Aspects of teachers' identity have already been investigated through their narratives (Smit and Fritz 2008) and through their role identity and motivation (Beijaard et al.2004). This research will approach teachers' identity from a sociological, symbolic interactionist understanding, but in addition, will utilise eclectic frameworks to explore the key issues surrounding the construct of identity.

A body of research distinguishes between personal and social identities (Schoflin 2001:p.1) where the emphasis in personal identity is on 'personality characteristics and behaviour' while social identity is said to be derived 'from group membership' forming the basis for common identification (Ried and Deaux 1996: p.1084). Whether distinction can be made between what is personal and what is a social identity is debatable considering the reciprocal relationship between individuals and social structures. Where such a distinction is made professional identity is said

to fall in the social categorization as distinguishing persons belonging to a distinct occupation. Social or collective identities are also said to provide a sense of meaning, security and recognition for its members whilst at the same time promoting agency and monopoly (Schopflin 2001, Uretta 2007). They are said to create thought worlds, which influence not only the way problems are conceptualised, but also the way they are articulated and addressed.

Gee (2001) identifies four categories, not mutually exclusive, from which identity is often discussed. The first category is the natural endowment identity such as being a twin child or a person of a particular colour over which one has no choice. The second category depends on institutional authority as a holder of a given position which is often the position from which teachers' identity is discussed. The third position is discourse mediated which is reflected in how individuals talk of themselves or are represented in speech by others. This is the category postmodernists such as Foucault (1978) prefer. The fourth and last category is affinity based, such as learning groups or fan clubs, distinguished by their voluntary membership and common practice. Though teacher identity could be discussed as institutional based this thesis examines the discourses evident in the self perceptions and expectations of significant others. Reference to other identity categories will periodically be made.

Discourse on identity therefore depends on the category from which the discussion derives and the interpretive frame used. Postmodernists for example, articulate identity as more than a label, rather a fluid, evolving phenomenon '... constantly marshalled, consolidated, retrenched contested and on occasion compelled to give way' (Butler 1993:p.105). Postmodern thinkers such as Foucault (1978) see identity as unfixed and discourse-mediated. Identity is also conceptualised as being complex and multifaceted (Beauchamp, and Thomas 2009) with an individual possibly having more than one identity, each potentially consisting of multiple named facets, each separately negotiated and changing at a different pace in accordance to how it is constructed. This constant evolution and

fluidity challenges the validity of expectations based on presumed social identities attributed to teachers or other professionals. At the same time, however, individuals still act towards one another and towards these professionals in the recognised context of particular identities. Whilst it is accepted individuals may have multiple identities, Adam et al. (2006: p.55) argue that '...it is often the professional identity that is the most significant in an individual's life'. This assertion possibly explains why any imposed change that threatens or undermines a professional identity may be fiercely resisted and may impede the implementation of change within a professional sphere.

Conceptual confusion over teachers' identity arises in part from a failure to distinguish between the key components: 'self', 'subject' and 'identity' (Boreham and Gray 2005, Beijaard et al. 2004). Significantly, Beijaard et al. (2004:p. 124) argue that 'it is important to make explicit from what point of view we see a teacher's *self,* because this determines how we see his or her professional identity.' Mead (1913), credited as being the father of symbolic interactionism, saw the 'self' as being dual in nature and arising out of social interactions and reflection. He distinguished between *self* as a subject (me) taking on the learnt expectations, behaviour and attitudes of others and the s*elf* as an object (I) creatively responding to the present and the future. This distinction is important in understanding how an investigated identity is unlikely to be fixed and how it is influenced by its social context. Boreham and Gray (2005: p. 11) show the link between self-subject and identity by presenting *self* as 'those aspects of being a person which persists through time and is inextricably linked to the body'; *subject* as 'where and how that self is positioned, whether discursively or otherwise, at a given point in time'; and *identity* as a transient 'self - subject distinction in a given situation'. The self in this case is seen to be a represented from the *me* position which affects how the individual positions himself or herself as a subject at a given time. The emphasis on the aspects that persists over time show that in as much as identity is negotiated events in our past are likely to influence how we perceive ourselves in the present.

Beijaard et al. (2004:p.108) also capture this continuity of *self* by describing it as, 'an organized representation of our theories, attitudes and beliefs about ourselves'. Although they do not specifically offer a definition of *identity*, they list features intrinsic to the definition of professional identity based on their review of relevant research between 1988 and 2000. These features include the understanding of identity as an ongoing process of interpretation of experience with sub categories that involve aspects of person and context and which entail an element of agency. Stets and Burke (2003) regard *self* as an ongoing evaluative product of the mind, shaped through social interactions and forming the basis of social structure. Crucially, they argue that 'the hallmark of this process-selfhood - is reflexivity' (Stets and Burke 2003:p.4). Furthermore, they show the link between identity and the social structure by arguing that self is 'organised into multiple parts (identities) each of which is tied to aspects of social structure' (Stets and Burke 2003:p. 8). Although Foucault was not interested in defining identity *per se*, in his discussion on power, he saw *subjec*t as having two possibilities: 'Subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge' (Foucault 1982: p.781).

Discourses of identity within the African context ignore the complexity of its geo-political and historical reality often projecting its residents as subjects tainted in victimhood and/or struggling for self-validation. Mama (2001) argues African languages do not have a translation for the word *identity* and that it is simply a political and historical construction, whilst Wright (2002:p.10) observes:

> African identity is a category that is over determined, spectacularly over generalised and homogenised.

Not surprisingly then, teachers' work and practices in Sub-Saharan Africa are similarly generalised. It would therefore be inappropriate to discuss teachers' professional identity in the Kenyan context without some reflection on the general discourse of identity in Africa. The concept of identity within the African context is both naive and contentious, but a substantial number of traditional oral narratives provide an image of

selfhood that is subjugated to a communal consciousness. An example of such narratives is the story told among the Luhya community of Western Kenya of the self-sacrifice of Sella and Mwambu (see Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1 Sella and Mwambu

When Sella the chief's daughter comes of age, her father chooses Mwambu, one of his warriors, as a bridegroom. Unfortunately, before they are married, disaster strikes her community in the form of a prolonged famine. Through divination, it is revealed that an envious lake monster is withholding rain because he wants Sella, a beautiful human being for himself. In order to save her people Sella, with her father's consent, agrees to sacrifice herself and her future happiness. A feast is organised for her farewell during which she meets with Mwambu and wishes him every happiness in the future. She asks nothing of him except that he continues to serve her father and his people faithfully.   Later that evening, accompanied by song and dance, Sella is escorted towards the lake. After her people have withdrawn, she puts aside her own fears and sorrows; breaks into a song that invites the monster to eat her and thus release the rains that will save her community from further devastation.

>   Mbilimbili Nyanja incha undie x 2 (Lake monster come and eat me)

>   Mukhana wo mwami fla ekwe   (Daughter of the chief, that it may rain)

>   Mbilimbili Nyanja(Lake monster)

On approaching the water, the lake monster rises up to meet Sella, clouds gather and rain is released onto the parched earth. Unbeknown to her, Mwambu has been hiding behind some rocks at the water's edge. At the very moment the lake monster leaps towards Sella, Mwambu springs from the darkness of the evening and thrusts his spear through the monster's heart saving both his bride and his people.

Source: Oral narrative of the Luhya people of Western Kenya

understanding of their identity was anchored to a sense of belonging to a

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family, clan, tribe or community as aptly summarised in the words of Mbiti (1970: p.141):

> I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.

The individual saw their membership to a particular group as a significant part of their identity. The need for this sense of belonging is often underestimated or overexploited by different actors in programming Anecdotal evidence shows this idyllic sense of selfhood, once a source of much pride and security to have over time, been disabused and become the excuse for dependency, nepotism and abuse of office in a contorted landscape of diminished traditional norms and nationhood. Its residue is sometimes portrayed as a barrier to the process and responsibility of subjective being (Kochalumachavavattil 2010: p.108) which others see as the basis of development but which certain ones still esteem as the only hope for the future.How individuals locate their sense of self influences their source of motivation and what they see as possible within their individual agency.

Destructive forces of 19th century slavery, colonialism, apartheid and derailed nationalism are said to have eroded the prior concepts of African selfhood leaving diverse races of Africans at a junction with the choice of either forging new identities or attempting to salvage what had been battered. The diversity and intensity of external influences upon African selfhood may have damaged its essential fibres, but in time, became the catalyst by which resilience and new gateways for negotiating identity are established. It is said that:

> Discourse on African identity has been caught up in a dilemma from which it is struggling to free itself. Does the African identity partake in a generic human identity or should one insist in the name of difference and uniqueness on the possibility of diverse cultural forms whose single ultimate significance is universal?(Mbembe 2002:p.253)

In the 20th and 21st centuries, individuals such as Nelson Mandela, Wangare Maathai, Koffi Annan, Ruth First and Boutrus Boutrus Ghali, and others like them, have forged a trajectory towards identities that

recognised their communal heritage but surpassed pre-conceptions; defied odds and proved that no condition is totally determining. There are others, who finding an identity through religious or other convictions, denounce any association with their collective past and attempt to recreate a more generic human identity in keeping with their newfound beliefs. A third group attempts to salvage what they can of their cultural past and cling to it despite the encroaching forces of globalisation. The concept of *Ubuntu*, (humanness) (Lutz 2009: p.2), is rooted in this camp, where recapturing the essence of communal selfhood is seen as a necessary condition to sustainable development and a safety-net against greed and corruption. Whilst the encouragement of collective selfhood is the ideal and would enhance a sense of communal responsibility, as yet, it remains an ideal. In the 21st century, the identity struggle is not with ghosts of the past, but with the present, with self-misrepresentations, with other people's perceptions and identity constructions so locked into certain historical epochs, they fail to recognise and take advantage of opportunities in the present. The fundamental acknowledgement of a uniquely, diverse African context accepting of its past struggles and new opportunities proffered by a global world, of which it is a partner, would make different identity negotiations possible. A constructive interpretation of educational thought, goals, procedures and perceptions of teachers' identity in the African context rests upon this acknowledgment.

The discussion above illustrates how perceptions of *self, subject* and *identity* might influence how professional identity is experienced and discussed differently. As previously discussed, individuals may understand and discuss their selves from a communal sense, where the notion of individual selfhood, operating along its own evaluations and beliefs, is difficult to conceptualise. In Western society, selfhood as an individual experience is usually the norm and is taken as the standard in most discussions of professional identity. By use of a symbolic interactionist framework for identity this study shows the relationship between self and subject in the emerging teacher identity. As already discussed self is presented as the ongoing interpretive process while

identity is seen to be, 'the meanings one has as a group member, as a role holder or as a person' (Stets and Burke 2003:p.8). The symbolic interactionists theory of identity is guided by the following principles:

1. Behaviour is dependent upon a named or classified world and these names carry meanings in the form of shared responses and behavioural expectations that grow out of a socialisation process. Thus the social suggestion of being a teacher or pupil depends on this classification in a given context.

2. Among the named classes are symbols used to designate positions in the social structure: teacher, pupils or parent.

3. Persons, who act within the context of the social structure, recognise occupants of positions within that structure and have certain expectations of them. This recognition entails a patterned behaviour associated with the role and perceived to be within its boundaries.

4. Persons acting in the context of the social structure also name themselves and create internalised meanings and expectations in regards to their own behaviour.

5. These expectations and meanings, together with probing interchanges amongst the actors, form the guiding basis for social behaviour. They shape and reshape the content of interaction as well as the categories, names and meanings used.

Adapted from (Stets and Burke 2003: p. 10)

It is significant to note that in interactions individuals are said to be guided by their internalised role expectations and the expectations of others which, though recognisable, are not static but can change through further discussion. Identity is a dialogical process where those who are *named* are also involved in *naming*. It is a meaning making process that involves the

reciprocal relationships of persons interacting through language and thought within a specific social structure. Individuals come to an appreciation of their identities through the meanings they draw from the role(s) they occupy, regardless of whether these are informal, formal or professsional (Cohen 2008). Viewed from this perspective, it can be understood why teachers from different social structures can possibly draw different meanings from their identity as professional teachers. A full understanding of an identity is facilitated by an overview of the social structure from which the individual draws their meanings since it shapes their 'beliefs, roles, role expectations and attitudes' within that context (Misheng 2002: p. 10). Akyeampong (2002) illustrates how the role of a teacher in the African context is influenced by traditional social values in relation to knowledge, teaching, learning and selfhood. These are factors likely to be overlooked in generalised proposals for education change.

Individuals invariably have more than one role and therefore corresponding multiple identities maintained either in a hierarchy of prominence or in a hierarchy of salience. Theorists of the former (Mc Call and Simmons 1978), argue that an individual's hierarchy is maintained in accordance to their values, commitment and the support they receive in relation to that identity. Theorists of the latter (Stryker 1980), the hierarchy of salience, emphasise the behavioural aspects of the identity most likely to be evoked across a range of interactions. The complexity of a teacher's identity is that it draws upon a number of peripheral identities including those of facilitator, mentor, counsellor, arbitrator and parent, which are separately claimed by others within a similar social structure. A teacher's identity then is not only multifaceted, but also multidimensional. Day et al. (2007) see an individual's multiple identities as a potential source of conflict. Stets and Burke (2003) suggest that during interactions, individuals do not interact with their comprehensive selves, but rather with the specific identity having most salience at that particular moment. Thus the interaction of teacher/ parent with their offspring who is a pupil in the same class will be influenced by one or the other of the roles depending on the purpose of their communication. How an individual partitions their

separate identities and enacts each in its relevant circumstances invites further investigation.

Today's global society and the intruding pervasiveness of cyberspace fuels further complexities on the nature and expression of different identities (Beauchamp and Thomas 2009). The multiplicity of interactions and interpretations now made possible promises a kaleidoscope of possibilities in one's identity, but can also impede communication, as different meanings can be attached to identical identities. Whilst not opposed to the idea of multiple identities *per se*, a body of researchers also entertain the notion of a 'core' identity (Beijaard 2004:p.16, Gee 2001), which facilitates recognition and influences what is lost or gained during negotiations. Individuals may thus use identity to 'justify, explain and make sense of themselves in relation to other people in context' (Maclure 1993: p.312) on the basis of this recognition.

Since'identities are constrained by social structure, but they also maintain and facilitate further development of social structure' (Stets and Burke 2003:p.23) one may question the extent to which identity is the product of a social structure or an individual's agency and meaning making process. Distinct approaches position the relationship between social structure and individual agency differently. Structuralists see identity as wholly dependent upon social structure; humanists allow for individual agency; the late modernists allow for an even greater influence of agency; whilst the poststructuralists see identity as being negotiable (Vahasantanen et al. 2008). The contentions between identity and structure are aptly summarised by Ybema et al. (2009:p. 301) as a constant interplay between:

> ... internal strivings and external prescriptions, between self-presentation and labelling by others.

Though dissimilar contexts may permit diverse levels of social suggestion and different individuals have varying capacities for self-presentation, each context has a level of social suggestion where individuals with

different capacities confront these contentions.   Individual teachers bring their internalised role prescriptions and strivings to the labelling, regulation and ascriptions of the communities in which they work.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural and social capital (Goldthrope 2007) attempts to link identity and power to position within the wider social structure and is itself a source of much debate. Unlike Foucault, he saw power as controlled within certain classes, who limit access and transmission of cultural and social capital through family lines. This necessarily raises the question of whether teachers' cultural and social capital can influence their identity construction in accordance to their relative position within the context in which they work. Within a school, a teacher's comparative social and cultural capital may affect their self-presentation and interaction with others who are either perceived to have more or less of the desired social capital with consequence on how they perceive their professional identity.   Whether this accounts for the difference in educational achievements along regional and social strata is a matter of separate enquiry.   Smit and Fritz (2008) argue that the construction of teachers' identity is shaped by daily challenges within their work place.   Teachers of disadvantaged pupils, or those in contexts affected by poverty related deprivations such as ill health or social marginality, are confronted with unique challenges, which may affect how they view their professional role. Whatever the context, teachers' work is said to be 'framed and constituted through *their understanding* (italics ours) and positioning of themselves as a product of their professional identity' (Mockler 2011:p.517).

Since identity is perceived as an evolving, negotiated process (Vahasantanen et al.2008), it can either be a powerful motivator helping individuals to fit within desired frames or conversely, a 'coercive and constraining,' force (Fearon 1999:p.24).   Whether identity serves as a powerful motivator or constraining force, depends on the social structure from which it is drawn, the capacity of the individual to fulfil role expectations, the salience of the emerging identity and how the identity itself enforces a sense of belonging, achievement and self-fulfilment

amongst group members. There is always the possibility, however, of multiple social structures interacting within the same space with the accompanying assumption they will impact on selfhood and role expectations differently. If the fundamental social structure strongly influences selfhood, as in the case of family or location, an individual is more likely to accept rather than question the collective interpretation of their ascribed identity and its practices, even when these are challenged. The earlier discussion on communal selfhood corroborates this view and indicates how individuals may shy away from taking responsibility for a course of action that deviates from the accepted group norm.

If identity is to serve as an instrument through which education change is cultivated, attention has to be given to ways that promote the positive elements of both self and group identity. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009:p.183) see teachers' agency arising from a full realisation of their identity in context. They argue that, 'a heightened awareness of one's identity may lead to a strong sense of agency'. Agency here is interpreted as:

> . . . intentional acting aiming at self-protection, self-expansion and mastery of social reality. (Pulkkinen and Aaltonen 2003:p.146)

This section has shown that though identity matters in guiding individual actions and interactions, its form, content and influence are variously conceptualised and contested which accounts for the diversity of identity investigations. Categories of identity, different conceptions of self, subject and identity have been discussed. In this thesis, identity is presented as 'the meanings one has as a group member, as a role holder or as a person' (Stets and Burke 2003: p.8) and is thought to be constructed in the meeting of internal strivings and external prescriptions within a given social structure. Discussions of identity necessarily entail an examination of the moral prepositions that influence its salience, values, behaviour and boundaries. The context and nature of immediate and interacting social structures expand or limit individual's space for identity construction although the extent of such limit is equally contested. Identity is presented as arising out of and influencing social structure, being multifaceted in

nature with possible role conflicts and having direct influence on one's motivation, identity salience and the expression of professional identity. It is argued that discussions of teachers' professional identity should take into account the social challenges against which such identities are constructed. Identity in the African context is discussed as often over generalised through discourses of victimhood and self-validation and that assumptions regarding teachers' professional identity in this context may account for the limited research from this context.

3.5   Is a Teacher a Professional?

Difficulties in defining teachers' professional identity arise partly from lack of consensus regarding the intrinsic meaning of professionalism, and in some locations, ambivalence regarding teachers' right to such a status (Etzioni 1969). Differences in interpretations and the right to accord professional status results in what has rightly been regarded as competing discourses (Sachs 2001) of teachers' professional identity. In this section, a review of the history , definitions and currrent debates surrounding the application of the construct *professional* to teacher identity and the potential diversity this contributes to related research work will be discussed.   The difference between profession, professionalism and professionality will be made in so far as such difference helps to make evident the issues entailed in researching teachers' professional identity.

3.5.1   Some Definitions

From its sociological origins, the term 'professional' was loaded with expectations of altruism, intellectual commitment, quality, efficiency, expertise, self regulation, privilege, status, pay and monopoly (Hargreaves 2000 , Boyt, et al. 2001, Wilkins 2011).   Though accord regarding the actual meaning is obstructed by various interpretations of professionalism, professions were initially regarded as 'a generic group of occupations based on knowledge both technical and tacit'(Evett 2003:p.4). Whilst every occupation requires a certain type of knowledge, professionals are traditionally thought to require a higher degree of specialised knowledge in conformity with a certain epistemological orientation to their work (Day

et al. 2007, Young 2007). Evans (2008) presents professionality as having a powerful influence on an individual's sense of self and their understanding of their role by claiming that it is:

> … an ideologically-, attitudinally-, interlectually-, and epistemoligically-based stance of an individual in relation to the practices of the profession to which s/he belongs and which influences her/his professional practice. (Evans 2008:p. 8)

Seen as an epistemological stance, professionality has a strong hold on the way an individual approaches tasks that define their identity. One can therefore understand how challenging a claim to professionality from an occupation that regards itself as a profession can affect members motivation. The attitudinal and behavioural aspects of the professional worker, particularly in the adherence to a code of ethics and standards of performance are frequently highlighted in discussions of professionality (Helsby 1995, Boyt, et al. 2001) making the distinction between personal and social identities almost insignificant. Like identity, professionality is drawn from a shared outlook but operates at the individual level, influencing decisions and practices of the professionals. Hence, Hargreaves and Goodson (1996:p.22) argue that teachers professionalism is about 'how teachers and others experience it as being, not what policy makers and others assert it should become'.

Professionalism is understood to be a :

> Professionality-influenced practice that is consistent with commonly held consensual delineations of a specific profession and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by and expertise prevelant within the profession as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice. (Evans 2008:p. 13)

Professionalism has to do with practices based on an individual's understanding of what membership to their occupational group entails. Though professionality is influenced by consensual group definitions of what lies within their role boundaries it is observable at the individaul level and therefore their individual narratives enrich the understanding of the groups' professionality. As a consquence a number of studies have

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utilised narrative approaches to understanding teachers' professional identity(Kelchetermans 1994,Goodson 2003,Watson 2006, Tsui 2007).

Professional groups strive to present themselves as meeting certain basic standards that assure the commonality of values and outlook. In a conference paper, Whitty (2006) quoted the following elements of a creteira compiled earlier by Millersons (1964) :

- skills based on theroretical knowledge.

- education and training in those skills certified by examination.

- code of conduct orientated towards the *public good*.

- a powerful professional organisation.

To this list, Baxter (2011:p.24) adds the codicil:

- sense of professional identity that differentiates the professional from others.

Though the degree to which occupations fulfil these professional requirements may vary arguments against teaching falling within the professional category (Newkirk 2009, Ozga 1995, Runte 1995, Etzioni 1969) are often premised on the naïve assumption of the simplicity of its occupational tasks and the claim that 'teachers' language [is] quite indistinguishable from ordinary language' (Goodson and Hargeaves 1996: p. 9). Perceptions and values attached to the complexity of the knowledge necessary for excution of teaching tasks and how such knowledge might be gained or safeguarded lie behind the right to determine the course of education reforms. Whilst acknowledging that teachers' knowledge is not fixed or final, Shulman (1987) identified the following categories at the core of teachers' work:

- Content
- General pedagogical
- Curriculum knowledge

- Pedagogical content knowledge

- Knowledge of learners

- Knowledge of educational contexts

- Knowledge of educational ends

Young (2007) further distinguishes between every day and special pedagogised knowledge that affects teacher/pupil relations. The complexitity of teachers' occupational tasks requires extensive knowledge acquired through diverse sources including their training, scholarly sources, research on schooling, institutional practices and the wisdom of their own practice. The post modern thinking of knowledge as being in a constant state of flux (Bartlett et al.200l) makes signficant the question of teachers' professionalism and their role in the formulation of curriculum and general pedagogical knowledge. How should teachers be placed in shaping the processes through which knowledge is gained and how it changes in order to meet the needs of a new world while preserving what is valued in a fast changing society?

The requirement for a code of conduct as a distinguishing characteristic in the recognition of professionals has also been questioned (Baxter 2011). Critics contend that the universal langaguage of principle-based ethics is unresponsive to diverse contexts, yet it is the expectation that professionals are governed by these ethics that assures the general public of their safety and care in professionals hands. It is this same expectation of ethics that forms the basis for interrogating the practice or standards of inviduals associated with occupational groups. In Kenya, for example, one of the key functions of the Teachers' Service Commission is to develop and regulate the teachers' code of ethics (TSC 2003).

Though a number of countries have teachers' professional bodies, their role in upholding professional standards is overshadowed by their struggles for better remuneration or what Hargeaves (2000:p.152) calls 'professionalization',where professional identity is seen to operate as an occupational strategy negotiating power and rewards (Clerk and Newman 1997). It is argued that there is little or no professional gate keeping in

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teaching as persons with little or no requiste training have been known to teach, sometimes with seeming success. Teachers' professional bodies are rarely associated with such gate keeping functions as barring untrained personel from practising as teachers or deregistering members for breech of professional ethics and standards. In some countries, for instance, the use of former armed forces personnel as classroom teachers has been mooted (Burkard 2008). It would be interesting to see what aspects of the armed forces training remains especially compatible with educational objectives and to assess the identity that remains salient in their new role. Though their work to promote effective practice or protect professional teaching standards requires further exploration, Avalos (2004) shows how the Chilean professional bodies engage with pedagogical and policy reforms in an effort to protect their professional identity. The necessity for professional bodies to fight for appropriate renumeration is in itself indicative of possible shifts in the reletionship between teachers and society.

3.5.2 Historical Overview

The meaning and expression of the term 'professional' is generally portrayed as having evolved over time (Young 2007) with implications on teachers' sense of self and role boundaries. The cacaphony of voices around professionalism in recent years can be associatiated with the plurality and mysticism that has been allowed to shroud its form and purposes. Historically, only medicine, law and the church in the Anglophone world were considered the domain of professionals, regulating entry through high levels of training and apprenticeship. They were seen to be:

> … interpreting scholarly knowledge to their fellow citizens and by applying it, to holding society together and helping it to function (Hudson 1978: p. 22).

From the onset, professional status was tied to access and interpretation of knowledge within a given sphere of human enterprise and was considerd useful for 'the stability and civility of social systems' (Evett 2010:p.4). Over time, however, professionalism has been variously used as a

discourse to promote products, services and careers; to influence management practices and also in 'the development and maintainance of work identities, career decisions and sense of self (Evett 2010:p.12). It could be that more occupational groups seek professional status as a recogntion of their knowledge and expertise in a a given domain. When judged a profession, an occupation is perceived as:

> … an exclusive area of expertise and knowledge and the power to define the nature of the problems in the area as well as the control of access to potential solutions.

(Evett 2003:p. 407)

In section 3.4, identity was shown to create 'thought worlds' (Schopflin 2001:1). In the light of the above argument, professional identity not only affords access to information in specific areas, but becomes a repository of common experiences and expertise, providing ways of thinking about problems in respective social spheres. The manner in which a problem is articulated, analysed and deliberated upon determines what is made visible, what is promoted as an action point and the array of possible solutions. Professions were thus selective platforms upon which human needs could be deliberated upon with coherence and continuity.   Over time, however, other competing platforms for such deliberation including the media, managerial and political avenues have emerged challenging the exclusivity of knowledge professionals.

Professionalism is said to have evolved differently in the European and Anglo-American contexts where the state is said to have had a major stake as an employer in the former but where professionals were said to have had greater freedom to control work conditions as self employed practitioners in the latter (Evett 2010). Elements of this development have merged to influence expectations of professionals in both contexts who now work in new organzational settings. Hargreaves (2000) and Whitty(2006) chart the evolution of teachers' professionalism from the pre-professional, the autonomous, the collegial to the post professional phases within the Anglophone world. Hargreaves (2000) shows the pre-professional phase as a time when teaching was more a matter of common

sense, primarily concerned with maintaining law and order in public institutions and where teachers were influenced by and followed the example of those to whom they were previously apprenticed. During this phase, the most common methods of teaching were in the form of lecturing, recitation, question and answer which were transmission biased. This was followed by the autonomous phase largely promoted between the 1950s and 70s, a period when teachers were unquestionably regarded as self regulating professionals (Wilkins 2011). This golden period of teacher professionalism within the UK was marked by a measure of trust, material rewards, occupational security, professional dignity and discretion. Teachers had 'the freedom to decide not only how to teach, but what to teach' (Whitty 2006:p.3). However, due to this freedom, teachers were also said to be both polarised and isolated with little opportunity to share classroom experiences. It was then that teacher preparation moved to institutions of higher education. In the early 1980s there was a move towards collegial professionalism where teachers learnt to lean less on external expertise and more on each other in order to cope with the many successive education reforms. With voluntary collegial support, they learnt to work through the increasing number of options and innovations which had opened up ideological battles between traditional teacher-centred and progressive learner-centred and subject-centred pedagogies, and also between open/closed classroom approaches. The drive towards accountability in public service has led to the establishment of a national curriculum monitored through educational management structures, such as OfSTED (Evans 2008). Changes in working environments also included:

> …elements of hierarchy, bureaucracy, output and performance measures and even the standardization of work practices, all of which are more characteristic of organizational rather than occupational control. (Evett 2009: p.14)

Hargreaves and Lo (2000:p.8) also list 'declining support, limited pay, restricted opportunities to learn from colleagues, work overload and standardisation' among deprofessionalising conditions. The changing work environment not only means that teachers learn to work effectively with diverse partners but they also understand their professionalism differently

(Ball 2005, Clarke and Newman1997). However, Hagreaves and Lo(2000) indicate that the development of teacher professionalism has not been linear and that residues of past historical phases linger in the present influencing current expectations and debates.

Emerging discourses of teachers' professionalism are judged to be either *occupational* or *organizational* (Evett 2005:p.9) *managerial* or *democratic* in form (Sachs 2001) depending on the locus of control and are said to limit what can be said or done with regards to teachers' professionalism. Evett (2009) distinguishes the competing notions of occupational or ideological and organizational or normative professionalism depending on whether it is driven from 'above' or 'within' occupations. Organizational professionalism driven through external forms of regulation and accountability, is seen to promote increased standardized work procedures and practices along hierarchial structures of responsibility and decision making. In some cases, a distinction is made between the control and delivery of programmes, where administrative structures determine goals and control patterns while professinal elements are seen as a tool for ascertaining standards. Teachers are seen as delivers of guidelines and schemes devised and standardised elsewhere (Goodson and Hargreaves 2003). The extent to which formulation of education objectives can be seperated from the administrative control and delivery of programmes structures is contentious.

Advocates for managerial and organizational professionalism see it as a force for efficient school management assuring accountability and improved achievement, but this contention is not universally acknowledged (Wilkins 2011). They also argue against teacher autonomy as promoted during the golden period stating that the time when 'isolated, unaccountable professionals [making] curriculum and pedagogical decisions alone without reference to the outside world' has long gone (Department for Education and Employment 1998:p.14). Many will agree witht his view. However, if education decisions are so important they cannot be made by unaccountable individual teachers or their occupation, what qualifies anyone at all to make them on behalf of a nation? Where

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curriculum and pedagogical directions are independently determined through organizational structures away from occupational control, would it be logical to credit members of an occupation for the success or failure of such strategies? As Vahasantanen et al. (2008) illustrate, organizational environments impact teachers' opportunity to exercise their agency and to act on the orientation towards their profession, which in effect impacts their input to education policy directions.

Protagonists of managerial professionalims further asserted, 'efficient management can solve any problems and that practices which are appropriate for the conduct of business in the private sector can also be applied to the public sector' (Sachs 2001:p.151). Managerial professionalism encourages conformity to state regulated standards and requirements (Mahony and Hextall 2000) as it is believed to be in the public's interest and in most cases is the predominant employer (Whitty 2006). If teachers' professionalism is reduced to 'a service level agreement' (Evans 2008:p.3), with an 'intensification of their working lives, extended bureaucratic and contractual accountability, decreasing resources (including time and energy the most precious resources of all) and increased managerialism' (Day 1999:p.6), what are the likely implications for teachers' practice and identity? The emerging entrepreneurial identity arising out of a managerial professionalism is said to be:

- individualistic
- competitive
- controlling and regulative
- externally defined   (Sachs 2001:p.157)

It would appear that these qualitites fly in the face of occupational professionalism(Evett 2003) which espouses being collegial and cooperative. Where teachers' professional identites are surplanted by identies imposed by administrative structures, it is likely that their relationships with peers is affected by how they are seen to drive organisational targets especially where the head teacher and selected

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teachers are identified by their administrative roles (Whitty 2006). Teachers who are thus defined, may successfully function in conditions where all other variables are constant, and where they are not held responsible for variations based on socio- institutional conditions not specifed in contractual agreements. However, reality functions differently and an over determinined contractual agreement may lead to misleading models of education and learning situations. Secondly, as Wilkins (2011) argues, managerial professionalism with its target/audit culture is susceptible to market and consumer forces that narrow educational objectives through the limited pipelines of economic imperatives.

Whether similarities can be drawn between the management of personnel in schools and other businesses is a matter of separate enquiry but a key concern is how, in the light of teachers diverse knowledge needs, the knowledge that matters to educational processes is generated, shared and safeguarded through the instruments of organizational or manegerial professionalism. Does it matter whether that knowledge is developed with or without teachers' participation or who becomes the custodian of its forms? Does it matter that different managerial systems may institute changes that suport of contradict prior established systems to gain political mileage? The main argument against organisational or managerial professionalism, as presented here, is that it diminishes teachers'autonomy and creativity (Hall and Schultz 2003) while requiring them to support learner creativitiy within variable organizationally determined guidelines.

On the other hand, occupational professionalism is thought to be driven from within its membership based on ideological consensus, trust, colleagial authorithy, autonomy and discretional judgement guided by a code of eithics. Goodson and Hargreaves (2003:p.129) see 'reflection at the heart of what it means to be a professional' and that such reflection would help teachers to articulate and share their situated and craft knowledge in what they call a practial and reflective professionalism.They also a dvance principled professionalism which puts caring concerns at the heart of professionalism (Goodson and Hargreaves 2003:p.132).The

reflection and caring requirements call for administrative structures that recognise occupations as a valuable forum for managing knowledge and practices in specific spheres and and utilise professionals' contextual and self knowledge in reforms. The question is whether professionals have a choice to be directed purely by the edicts of occupational professionalism when in an environment dorminated by prescriptive organisational structures, that may, from time to time over rule occupational choices and directions

A democratic professionalism, as promoted by Sachs (2001) , is said to lead to an activist professional identity and is deeply rooted in justice and social equity. It shuns exclusivity and encourages collaboration and co-operation between teachers and other stakeholders in order to overcome the illegitimate domination of certain individuals or groups (Sachs 2005, Furlong 2005). Through communities of practice that revolve around issues and draw upon strategic networks, Sachs (2003) sees teachers, who embrace an activist professional identity, as reclaiming moral and intellectual leadership over education debates. The activist professional is thought to be politically astute, recognising the need for strategies within extensive social networks to address the issues that impinge on the wellbeing of their immediate community. However, in the light of changing organisational environments and work structures can such an identity be meaningfully asserted in ways that balance occupational self preservation and changing public needs? Can teachers be trusted to step away from their comfort zones to push boundaries for changes that might require more from them without being compelled to do so? Where managerial structures are deeply entrenched or even overpowering, democratic professionalism can be misrepresented as unprofessional conduct or radicalism.

Teachers' professional identity needs to be examined in the light of changing organisational environments where:

> … the use of new language to describe roles and relationships , the reformed educational organizations are now 'peopled' by human resources which need to be managed; learning is re-rendered as a

'cost- efffective policy outcome'; achievement is a set of productivity targets (Ball 2005: p.7).

Organisational structures beccome the focus of monitoring and re-organisation towards the efficient delivery of pre-determined outcomes. Whilst professionalism continues to be used as an epitome of standards and manner of service in public and life demanding specialised roles, the trust, discreation and competence which were the hallmarks of professionals in a bygone era (Evett 2009:p.2), are the very qualities professionals wrestle to claim. Paradoxically, professionals are expected to be trustworthy and competent in discharging assigned roles whilst the level of prescription and monitoring in certain working environments brings into question the applicability of these very qualities.

3. 5. 3 Looking Ahead

The growing performative culture where various interpretations of professionalism operate within the same space and the ambivalence in some locations regarding teachers' right to professional status present significant challenges to the teaching occupation (Ball 2005). However, since professionalism has survived the tides of time other see the possibility of utilising it as a force for change. Rather than limiting its use to traditionally designated select occupations Evett (2009) argues for the expanded usage of professionalism which could be:

> … analysed as a powerful instrument of occupational change and social control at macro, meso and micro levels in a wide range of occupations in very different work organizational and employment relations contexts and conditions.(Evett 2009:p.3)

Within the teaching profession, it can possibly be a platform and a force for influencing individuals at different levels to work towards a desired quality of education. To do so however, both teachers and those who manage them have to be clear on the form of professionalism embraced and how that form advances the form of education essential to the desired citizenship.

Though the interpretation of professionalism has been affected by historical events, organisational developments and different political and

institutional voices (Day 2007), knowledge has remained at the heart of its definition. In enviroments where'organisational principles, strategies and methods are deeply affecting most professional occupations and expert groups transforming their identities, structures and practices'(Evett 2009:p.13) Sachs (2000:p.79) singles out knowledge as the hallmark of teachers' professional identity. She advocates for:

> … continue[d] learning throughout a career, deepening knowledge and skill judgement, staying abreast of important developments in the field and experimenting with innovations that promise improvements in practice.

By continually reviewing their pedagogical, subject and contextual knowledge, teachers position themselves strategically to engage with the policy instruments in the interest of their communities and their occupation. Goodson and Hargreaves (2003:p.4) argues that 'the forms of knowledge which teachers have are substantially implicated in the kind of people teachers are and believe themselves to be'. To this end the following seven principles are suggested as essential to teacher professionalism:

- Increased opportunity and responsibility to exercise discretional judgment
- Opportunities and expectations to engage with the moral and social purposes of what they teach
- A commitment to work with colleagues in a collaborative culture
- Occupational heteronomy- working with other stakeholders
- Commitment to active care of learners
- Self directed and continuous learning
- Recognition of the high task complexity of their occupation.

(Adapted from Hargreaves and Goodson 1996:20-21)

But it is not enough to expect teachers to continue learning if their knowledge and experience is insufficiently processed to inform future policy and practice. As has already been discussed professionalism is an intrisic source of motivation, driving teachers to want better for the

learners. Fullan (1993) argues that many teachers at the onset of their careers entertain alturistic expectations of being socially meaningful and likely to change the lives of their learners. However, they soon become demoralised possibly because the knowledge they generate in their workplace is not successfully channelled or utilised beyond their classroom doors. Instead they are made consumers of knowledge and practices generated through managerial and performative technologies which place responsibility for perfomance in their care whilst taking judgement and goal setting in other hands (Ball 2005). This reduced motivation and sense of agency can also affect how they approach or implement changes that originate from other sources.

Teachers' professional identity as evidenced in specific locations rests upon role boundaries negotiated within their immediate community. However as indicated below it has consequence on the achievement of set educational aims.

> Weak professional identities lead to less personal salience, lower levels of motivation, less passion, lowered levels of commitment and lowered levels of confidence. (Baxter 2011: p. 16)

Weak professional identities have consequence not just for the individuals concerned but for the systems in which they work. Fullan (1993) urges teachers to negotiate for a professional identity that embraces both their moral purpose of improving the learners' lives and a change agentry that will mitigate feelings of dissatisfaction or inconsequentiality. Failure to recognise and protect this professional quality opens institutional doors to a wide range of influences that are not equally accountable for the wellbeing of the students. If professional identity is a 'socially constructed, contextual variable', (Troman 1996:p.476) then teachers must acknowledge their role in the social construction of their identity as Helsby (1995: p.320) argues:

> If the notion of "professionalism" is socially constructed, then teachers are potentially key players in that construction, accepting or resisting external control and asserting or denying their autonomy.

Even where managerial definitions of professionalism persist to limit teacher flexibility and freedom to make professional judgments (Goodson and Hargreaves 1996), an expanded content, pedagogical, subject and context knowledge advanced on a vibrant professional platform is expected to make a difference in the way teachers experience professionalism. If professionalism influences epistemological orientation towards work, it would appear that maintaining a strong occupational professional identity is a key part to improving work related performance and learning outcomes. Considering teachers as professionals invites reflection on the scope of their decision making and the opportunity they have to meet their knowledge needs.

This section has shown how professionalism and its application are affected both by history and location and how from its very beginning professional identity has been associated with the use of scholarly knowledge for the general good of society. Professional status is bestowed and valued by occupational groups who use it to gain approbation from society. An overriding expectation of quality, a given body of knowledge, ethical regulation and constant self-improvement are intrinsic to the ethos of professionalism. These are qualities the public espouses in those having responsibility over the learners. Ambivalence regarding teachers' professional status and the conflicting discourses of occupational versus organizational (Evett 2005:p.10), managerial versus democratic discourses of professionalism (Sachs 2001:p. 159) challenge expectations of teachers' role in education change. However it is important to note, the re-conceptualisation of teachers' professional identity has been associated with successful and improving school systems. For example, in their study of 20 progressively improving school systems worldwide, Mourshed et al. (2010: p.20) recognised those that moved from:

> Good to great: the interventions at this stage focus on ensuring teaching and school leadership is regarded as a full-fledged profession; this requires putting in place the necessary practices and career paths to ensure the profession is as clearly defined as those in medicine and law.

Changes in expression of professionalism have also affected changes in the research in this area, from concern with the traits of professionals, to occupations that qualify as professionals and to how professionalism can be used as a force for occupational change. In researching professional identity Evett (2009:p.14) proposes that:

> It is important also to examine whether or not in what ways and for which practioners relationships of trust, discretion and competence are being challenged and if so by whom.

Based on the above discussion, this research sought to examine whether key participants in this research considered themselves professionals, and if so, the form of professionalism they embraced and whether the boundary of their emerging identity shows evidence of trust and competence allowing for significant contribution to the ongoing education change?

3.6 Summary of Issues in the Literature

Since a link is suggested between education practices and teachers' professional identity, the observation that reforms which aim to alter those practices are 'not based on the insights teachers have achieved from practice over time' (Lang et al 2002:p.10) brings into focus teacher' professionality in the context of education change. Whilst a number of studies have dwelt on teachers' response to change, the suggested relationship and the attendant tensions invites reflection on how that identity is conceptualised in various contexts (Beijaard et al 2004). It is argued that though identity guides individual motivation and actions, its form, content and influence are variously conceptualised and contested which possibly accounts for the diversity in research on teachers' professional identity. Identity is presented as both an analytical lens and an interpretive framework for gaining an epistemological understanding of education practice and the way education change manifests itself in a given context (Smit and Fritz 2008). Varying categorization and interpretations of self, subject and identity open discussion on different aspects of teachers' work and lives.

Discussions of identity often encompass an examination of the moral prepositions and values that influence behaviour, perceived boundaries and

identity salience which are also at the heart of educational programmes. The context and nature of one's immediate and interacting social structures either inhibit or expand an individual's opportunity to exert a given identity, although the extent of any such limitation is equally contested. Whether and how an identity facilitates or inhibits the exercise of agency on a range of subjects continues to be a subject of enquiry. In the African context, in which this thesis is based, identity is often over generalised through discourses of victimhood and self-validation. Identity is also presented as multifaceted in nature arising out of and influencing social structures with resulting implications on possible role conflicts, identity salience and the expression of professional identity. It is suggested discussion on teachers' professional identity should not only pay attention to their self-presentations but also the social suggestion and challenges against which such an identity is constructed.

From its genesis, professionalism was used to confer status upon members of selected occupations said to use scholarly knowledge for the stability and wellbeing of society. In due course the discussion has moved on from concern into personal traits of professions; to occupations that qualify to be regarded as such; and currently to the power of professionalism as a force for change (Evett 2009). However, this power is contingent upon the clarity of the analytical value attached to professionalism and how it connects with individual's motivation. Though not immune to historical and geographical discourses, professionality is associated with the collective expectation for quality, ethical practice, intellectual commitment, self-regulation, trust, competence and constant improvement (Whitty 2006, Wilkins 2011). The wider application of the discourse of professionalism in marketing of services and products, promotion of careers, management practices and identities is evidence of its potential (Evett 2009).

Whilst the professional status of teaching is contested in some areas on the naive assumption of the simplicity of its occupational tasks and knowledge, there is a growing recognition that teaching is a high complex task job that requires a variety and depth of knowledge from diverse

sources (Lang et al. 2002, Kasilka et al. 2002). Contexts where education is said to be improving are also said to recognize this fact (Mourshed et al. 2010). Where used, professionalism is discussed as either organizational/ managerial or occupational with implications on working relationships and the emerging teachers' professional identity experienced as either entrepreneurial or activist(Sachs 2001, Evett 2005,). The possibility of different kinds of professionalism inevitably invites reflection on how these affect teachers' practice and the learning environments. Organizational professionalism is said to be hierarchical in form with controls driven from outside the occupation whilst occupational professionalism is said to be driven from within and provides access to specific scholarly knowledge, practices and 'thought worlds' or what Hargreaves and Shirley (2009:P3) call 'the fourth dimension' from which education practices can be interrogated and improved in a collegial supportive environment. Organizational professionalism is promoted on the understanding that it assures accountability and efficiency of service. Whether accountability and efficiency in public service can be achieved more effectively through managerial structures away from or through occupational accountability is a matter of separate enquiry. However conceptualised, the pursuit of knowledge, whether pedagogical, subject specific, contextual or policy related is considered an important avenue by which teachers are seen to reclaim professional authority over their work as exemplified in the cases of Singapore, Finland and Australia. Whether a teachers' professional identity evolves as entrepreneurial or activist (Sachs 2001) will be evidenced in the individual teachers' internalised role expectations and the level of social suggestion within their work environment.

The discussion on education change highlights the routes to policy deliberations and decisions. Whilst acknowledging reforms are a policy matter conceptualised away from learning contexts, usually in response to national economic goals and global league tables, the actual change occurs at institutional level affecting interactions and identity constructions at that level. Failure to fully understand the institutional context and the structural

realities of learning practices is thought to lead to a mismatch and chasms between policy and practice. Whether professional platforms can make visible the institutional challenges that need to be addressed at policy levels depends on the form of professionalism entailed and how it facilitates the exercise of teacher agency. This study examines the form of professionalism teachers in a specific Kenyan location embrace and how their identity positions them in the context of policy reforms.

4. 0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Over view

This chapter discusses the thinking behind the key choices of research design, methods and analysis. It engages with the complexities of determining what is important in identity research particularly the ethical issues embedded in researcher/ researched relationships and the presumed right and adequacy of the researcher to name and describe the researched. An interpretive/constructivist approach using ethnographic data collection methods and thematic analysis are preferred to make visible the research instrument, the diversity, partiality and yet informative subjectivities that shape discourses on teachers' professional identity which may be camouflaged in essentialist definitions. Ethical issues and the validity of methods used are discussed whilst possible limitations of both the research instrument and the study are acknowledged.

4.1   Introduction

From the beginning, it was my aim to conduct research that would contribute towards improved policy development and practice, especially within my research context, Kenya. However, it became evident that this may not be immediately achievable as policy apparatus are not always guided by research findings and when they are, they frequently favour designs that are backed by numerical strength. What was important therefore was to make available a reference point that would highlight both teachers' internalised role expectations and the social suggestions that lead to the construction of a particular form of teachers' professional identity which could be discussed, accepted or disputed. In doing so, the study facilitates reflection on what is considered valuable, contestable, and omitted in teachers' professional identity and the gaps in education change that might be occasioned or closed by such identity constructions.

The implications of conducting research in a field as expansive and diverse as education were evident, as were the criticisms often levelled against it (Slavin2002). Yates (2004) pointed to the seeming lack of balance between theory and practice within education research, to its being jargon

ridden with a deficit of scientific rigour. Philips (2011:p. 9) further argues that:

> Educational research is of low quality because it is too focused on practice at the expense of theory, educational research is of low quality because it is too "ivory tower" –too theoretical - at the expense of focusing on practice, educational inquiry is of low quality because it lacks scientific rigor, and educational inquiry is irrelevant because it suffers from "physics envy" and mimics the (inappropriate) methods of the natural sciences.

This assessment may at first glance appear severe, but it serves to highlight the contradictions in the expectations of education research and its processes. On the one hand, it is expected to develop theory, the intensive search of which is viewed as an ivory tower engagement; on the other, some approaches used to facilitate the identification of practical solutions to immediate educational problems might be viewed in some quarters as lacking scientific vigour. The search for theory and the search for practical solutions may appear to place emphasis on different angles of enquiry, which are subsequently viewed by others as *physics envy*, *ivory tower* or of *low quality.* From Philips' (2011) argument there was no unproblematic position from which to conduct education research - one is either accused of mimicking approaches deemed more appropriate to other research fields or falling short of measures others consider imperative. As education research borrows from a variety of disciplines, each with its own attendant debates and boundaries, the choice of any design was in itself indicative of a particular ontological view and therefore, potentially a source of contention, even possible prejudice among certain researchers. To those whose preference is for the certainty of objective facts, assured by quantitative approaches (Punch 2009), this interpretive /constructive design (Hammersley and Atkinson 1994) not only trivialises the subject of my enquiry, but shies away from establishing causality. Such detractors would prefer the use of a design in which a representative sample was used to establish or dispute a hypothesis.

Owing to the centrality of education, everybody has been or is affected by issues of education and therefore all have their own hypothesis of what worksor why failure is experienced in some or all sections. This means

everybody is an enquirer in education and those engaged in this area of research have to constantly ask themselves what depth, if any, they add to their line of enquiry. McWilliams (2009) cautions educational researchers to maintain radical doubt about the tools they use and the evidence produced to back their findings. Taking this investigation into teachers' professional identity for instance, it would be naïve to assume a dearth in knowledge regarding the construction of teachers' professional identity, as in deed a number of studies have been conducted in several contexts using these constructs which are already in common sense usage (Beijaard 2004, Hextall et al.2007). Interest in the investigation can be dampened by the sense that the key constructs are already known and possibly 'in danger of erasure' (Hall 2000: p.16,Ball2005). The onus then was to provide the audience with a reason to look again at what may seem familiar constructs, to explore contextually held meanings or interpretations and bring to light opportunities that are expanded or denied in this understanding.

During participation in the Trondheim EERA (European Educational Research Association) Seasonal School held between 17th and 21[st]June2013 for education researchers, the purpose and methods of education research, particularly with reference to pre-constructions and performative tendencies, were discussed. Emphasis was placed on education research being seen to contribute to disciplinary knowledge. This led me to assess my intentions in research and to question the need for disciplinary knowledge *per se* - knowledge provided by whom, for whom and to what purpose?

4. 2   Research Design

In the choice of research design, consideration was paid to the purpose of the research and the nature of identity studies. The frequency with which policy was seen to favour quantitative research findings, which to my understanding, are anchored in the belief of an objective social reality obtained through valid, reliable methods and instruments but which, I have also learnt, to be stated in undeclared, underlying assumptions and values was noted (Russell 2000). Though quantitative approaches have a strong appeal, especially in their use of substantial samples and their claim to

demonstrate correlations by the identification and testing of key variables through appropriate instruments, such correlations do not necessarily confirm causality. They could also be coincidental.

Secondly, though quantitative approaches help to establish correlations between selected variables, there could be difficulties in pre-determining the kind of variables that alone would be considered sufficient in determining teacher identity. While the literature points to the variables that have been the focus of previous research on teacher identity, I felt that as informative as these were they were not entirely prescriptive. Significantly, in researching professional identity different researchers have had different aims and therefore selected their variables accordingly. Canrinus et al. (2011:p. 593) for example, contested the perception of professional identity as a 'latent variable with a uniform structure'. Whilst in agreement with Day et al.'s (2006) conclusion that professional identities are formed in the balance between the personal, professional and policy dimensions, they examined teachers' professional identity through indicators of job satisfaction, occupational commitment, self- efficacy and levels of motivation. Focus on these dimensions is thought to be based on the understanding that professional identity is reflected in those variables which indicate a sense of meaning and commitment to their work. Understanding professional identity as essentially one amongst possible identities steered this research towards a holistic approach that allowed teachers' sense of their role expectations in relation to immediate social suggestions to be made evident. In their research,Vahasantanen et al.(2008) investigate the social suggestions encased in organisational work environments and so investigated variables related to their participants' understanding of the nature of their work, professional development at work, professional community and future expectations. It is precisely because of this multi-faceted nature of identity that I felt the flexibility afforded by a qualitative design would be needed to engage with both the social suggestion in their immediate work environment and also the internal role expectations that teachers bring to the enactment of that identity.

Similarly the possibility of multiple subjective social realities referred to in chapter one inclined me towards approaches that would also allow for such diversity to be investigated spontaneously. Quantitative approaches were deemed inadequate for a study on teachers' professional identity as they are said to treat human subjects as, '…abstract individuals with no histories, unaffected by cultures, values, discourses and social structures' (Scott and Usher 2004:p. 13). The objective social reality they aim for, supported by numerical strength, often forms the basis for generalisations that are context and time free (Johnson and Onwenbuzie 2004), but which overlook human agency and contextual variations. Whilst this approach may be useful at a certain level of abstraction, it was felt that any approach that disregards or underplays the value of human history, interactions or values in an investigation on teacher identity would be prejudicial, even limiting since the literature indicates identity to be contextually derived (Cohen 2008). The assurance of scientific rigour in this case requires an engagement with the research question that exhaustively documents the specific context in which identity is investigated and allows for the different voices within that professional landscape (Beijaard 2004) to be presented and heard, hence the choice of a constructive/interpretive approach.

Whilst not exhaustive, the in-depth descriptive data, generated through ethnographic research methods (Wilson 1997, Hammersley and Atkinson 1994), provide informative insights into a particular case of teachers' practices and their professional identity against a specific context. Ethnography's unique eclectic data collection methods can be useful in illuminating the cultural interpretations of the complex interactions of human relationships (Mariampolski 2006) and have been used to explore market designs (Mariampolski 2006), classroom practices (Watson-Gegeo 1998) and professional identity (Mawhiney and Xu 1997, Triantafyllaki 2010). Since a case study usually employs a small sample (Hammersley and Atkinson 1994), it can facilitate focused observation and detailed documentation, possibly unattainable through other designs. Such a case might show not only the perceptions of teachers' internalised role

expectations, but the various social suggestions of significant others and how these influence their interactions.

Pring (2000) points to the disturbing failure of education research to answer the questions governments and policy makers frequently pose. This is not by any means to suggest only questions asked by governments are important, but to encourage researchers to consider the value of the questions they raise. While it is important to direct research efforts to enquiries that address felt needs, sometimes, the answers to the questions governments ask are inhibited by assumptions and answers to questions not asked. As has been discussed in chapter 2, there are prevailing assumptions regarding the value and relevance of teachers' professional identity which influence policy directions and which have coloured the course of my own career trajectory? Since educational changes are contemplated in Kenya and elsewhere this seemed to be the most important research question to ask at this time.

4. 3   Research Question and Rationale

How does the construction of teachers' professional identity limit or expand their opportunity for contributing to education change?

4.3. 1 Rationale

First, in the light of the common sense usage and conceptual difficulties of providing a universally accepted definition of teachers' professional identity, I sought to respond to Beeijard et. al.'s(2004: p.126) invitation to contribute towards conceptual clarity by providing a post training contextual definition that not only allows for teachers' voices to be heard but also those of 'relevant others' in their 'professional landscape' on 'what counts as professional identity'. While many studies on teachers' professional identity often acknowledge the influence of others including the policy and organisational environment on the construction of teachers' identity (Wilkins et al.2011, Day et al. 2006, Vahasantanenet al. 2011) few studies have documented the social suggestions held by pupils and parents in a given landscape. Similarly most studies that examine the construction of teacher identities often focus on the training processes but

as Avalos (2010:p.3) points out educational reforms may occasion identity conflicts as they seek to 'redefine professional practice'. Thus, this study focuses on teachers post training identity construction within a context of national reform.

Secondly, having experienced a wave of changes driven from diverse platforms in my own career and in view of the certainty that more changes would occur in education it seemed important to understand how the construction of teachers' professional identity in my particular context facilitated or obstructed their contribution to change. Commenting on the role teachers played in educational changes within the Chilean context Avalos (2010:p. 2)observed:

> Teachers have been part of these changes in various ways but mostly as implementers of reforms decided with limited teacher participation.

She goes on to argue that pressure is often applied for teachers to be held accountable for the failures of their education systems. They are the excuse or the object rather than partners in a reform agenda. Many of the studies on teachers' professional identity have sought to illustrate how teachers adjust to educational change, either accommodating or resisting proposals that have been imposed upon their practice(Bascia and Hargreaves2000, Hargreaves and Lo: 2000). Other studies have also looked at how teachers can be supported to adopt changes(Osborne et al. 2000, Elmore 2004,Day et al.2007, Avlos 2010) whilst others have examined organisational environments- either as loosely coupled or tightly coupled limiting or facilitating the exercise of teachers' professional identity (Vahasantanenet al. 2008). This thesis revisits the contextual definition of professional identity in relation to education changes to answer the question: where are teachers when changes are deliberated to their practice? Considering that a professional is thought to be:

> …an exclusive area of expertise and knowledge and the power to define the nature of the problems in the area as well as the control of access to potential solutions.(Evett 2003:p.401)

One is forced to ask, is teaching in this context a profession and if so does it provide access to potential solutions to problems in education? If not, why not? As earlier stated identity, even professional identity is a social construct (Cohen 2008) which in the case of teachers provides a framework from which to, ' construct their own ideas of how to be, how to act and how to understand their work and their place in society' (Sachs 2001:p.15). By making evident the teachers' own internalised role prescription, alongside the social suggestion of pupils and parents in a particular professional landscape, this constructive /interpretive case provides a contextually derived definition of professional identity that invites reflection on teachers' role in education change.

Events following constitutional promulgation in Kenya in 2010, created an environment in which it was appropriate to raise questions regarding the manner in which education change was facilitated. The devolution of power to the newly formed County management structures to widen participation in governance led to the decentralization of certain functions of such centralised institutions as the Teachers Service Commission. But how far would this devolution go and how does the construction of teachers' professional identity facilitate how they utilise the emerging leadership opportunities? Whilst a Ministerial Task Force held consultative forums with diverse stakeholders, presenting their recommendations for a new education system to a general stakeholders' conference, the upheavals following previous systemic education changes prompted a mixed public reception to their recommendations creating a suitable environment in which to interrogate the manner in which sustainable education change should be deliberated and the role teachers should play in its evolution.

Focus on the professional identity of teachers at primary level was prompted by the knowledge this level constitutes the largest sector of the Kenyan education system and comes at an important stage in a child's development. For some pupils, the eight years spend in primary school would be the only formal education they will receive and so it would be important to understand the identity of those who have the greatest chance of influencing their development.

4.3.2 Aim

The aim of this study is to understand how teachers' professional identity was conceptualised and the kind of framework it provides for teachers in the context of changes envisaged within Trans Nzoia East. Choice of specific location was influenced by the diversity in its demographics and therefore it's potential to capture and illuminate some of the issues affecting teachers' lives and perceptions in Kenya. This interpretive/constructivist study (Punch 2009) explores the influences on the construction of teachers' professional identity in this given context, illuminating the social/institutional discourses that shape teachers' identity and their role in education change. Specifically the thesis provides answers to the following questions.

- What are the teachers' own internalised role expectations in Trans Nzoia East?
- What are the social suggestions of parents and pupils within their given context?
- How do the expressed expectations limit or expand teachers' role in education change within the same professional landscape?

Understanding identity to be constructed (Ybema 2009) in the meeting of internalised role expectations and social suggestion, the study investigates how the specific context of Trans Nzioa East influences the construction of teachers' professional identity.In particular, it discusses whether the teachers see themselves as professionals and if so, what that adds to their role expectations and those of others within their professional landscape.

4.3.3 Contributions to knowledge

In their review of research on teachers' professional identity Beijaard et al.(2004) identified a gap in research on professional contexts and 'how the professional side is seen'. They argue that:

> What counts as professional then is related to ways in which teachers relate to other people (students, colleagues, parents…) and the responsibilities, attitude and behaviours they adopt as well as the knowledge they use which are more or less outside of themselves(Beijaard et al. 2004:p. 126)

This study provides a contextual definition of professional identity in a manner that makes evident teachers' own internalised role expectations and the social suggestion of these 'significant others' (parents and pupils) within their professional landscape. In doing so the study demonstrates contextual practices and figured worlds (Uretta 2007) that affect educational quality and achievements.

In the light of the limited achievements of educational reforms driven from other strategic platforms discussed in chapter 2, and in view of the frequency with which reference is made to teachers' capacity for implementing the said reforms, understanding the kind of platform teachers' professional identity is and teachers' own perception of their identity would open discussions that would ultimately contribute to sustainable improvements in education quality.

4.4   Field work

Fieldwork was planned to last a complete school term at the beginning of the year to facilitate observation of a full range of teacher/ pupil, teacher/ teacher and teacher/ parent interactions. In considering the forms of data recording I was guided by Masons (2002: p. 97)advice on the value of field notes as the most significant activity since it ' helps you to observe, record and analyse your own role in the experience of the setting and its interaction.'Data was collected in the form of hand written field notes, summaries of which were prepared on a weekly basis and shared with my research supervisor. Interview transcripts and classroom observation notes were prepared ver bertum and checked with individual teachers during follow-up conversations. The note books have been retained and are kept in safe storage. A more general overview of findings was shared in a whole staff meeting towards the end of the research process.

The decision regarding the length of fieldwork was influenced by Fetterman's (1997: p.20) law of diminishing returns, which proposes that fieldwork may end, 'when the general picture reaffirms itself over and over again'. This view is reinforced by Hammersley (2006:p. 5) who argues that:

> The fieldwork carried out by many ethnographers today is at best likely to last months rather than years.

Owing to the nature of the clearance and the difficulties the school experienced at the beginning of the school year the researcher was present in the school for 12 of the 13 weeks of term.

4.4.1 Negotiating Entry

Entry into the research context was negotiated at national, regional, institutional and personal levels. To obtain permission from the National Research Council of Kenya, affiliation to a Kenyan research institution, local referees and an application fee of £250 was required. A month later, in receipt of the Research Council's clearance certificate, further clearance was sought from the district civil and education authorities before entry into the school was granted.

At the school, clearance was soughtwith the head teacher and her two deputies and then the chairman of the management committee. During these initial meetings the purpose of my research and its possible implications for the school were discussed. To each, an explanation was offered as to how their anonymity and confidentiality would be protected. Issues regarding the nature of data collection and subsequent use were also clarified. Having authorized my presence in the school through a written consent the head teacher further introduced me to her staff and pupils as one 'learning about teachers and teaching'. She also assigned the senior teacher with the responsibility of helping me identify key participants from the different school levels. The chairman of the school management committee at the next parents' meeting took responsibility for explaining my presence within the school and its possible implications for the community.

My fieldwork was further delayed by yet another week owing to the collapse of a boys' latrine block after unprecedented heavy rains. The school was notified by the Public Health Office of imminent closure if a new block was not immediately erected. During this period, members of the school management committee were a constant presence in the school

mobilising parents' response to this emergency. The normal school schedule was disrupted, so the head teacher considered it an inappropriate time for me to begin my fieldwork. Though I could have insisted, since I had the requisite authorisation from the District Education Officer, I considered it expedient to comply with the request. To do otherwise could have misrepresented the purpose of my research and adversely affect my entry into the research context. This unforeseen event worked in my favour, as it afforded me the opportunity to see the Schools' Management Committee in action and to note some of the challenges that affect scheduled school programmes and their impact on teachers' professional identity.

Whereas entry at institutional level was a one off formal event, at teacher level it was a continuous occurrence negotiated over ever changing circumstances. I was introduced to selected key informants by a teacher to avoid any impression they were officially obligated to participate in my research. I met with each individual teacher and then with the group as a whole, to explain the purpose of the research, the nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any point should they wish to do so. I assured them of my commitment to protect their confidentiality and to separate the research process from any institutional or regional administrative processes. In addition to voluntarily signing a formal participation form, each subsequent lesson became a re-negotiated entry. In doing this, I strove to demonstrate my respect for their right to determine admission into their working space and professional privacy.

The concept of key informants was not initially understood by all staff members. Other members of staff theorised their inclusion or exclusion viewing the participating teachers as perhaps somehow privileged. Despite being thoroughly acquainted with the research processes and the confidentiality code binding it, a proportion of the participants initially viewed their selection with trepidation and though given the choice of withdrawal at any time, were not entirely cognizant of what that choice entailed hence the necessity to confirm further agreement at each entry.

4. 4. 2   Role in Situ

Researchers using ethnographic data collection techniques make a choice between visibility and invisibility (Hammersley and Atkinson 1994). I could not successfully claim invisibility for the duration of my investigation so felt it best to acknowledge my visibility and limit the extent of my involvement. I realised the experience of being observed in the work place can be rather unnerving, particularly where previous observations have been in the context of assessment. As schools are formal institutions with clearly defined responsibilities finding a role through which it was safe to both participate and observe without seeming to take over or contaminate the observation was a challenge.

Despite my experience in project management and secondary school teaching, I was under no delusions in regard to my teaching capacity at primary school level. Nevertheless, I was willing to undertake non-classroom tasks that placed me close to teacher/pupil, teacher/teacher and teacher/parent interactions. As an inside/outsider, I had the advantage of proximity without the emotional entanglement of familiarity from which to access and question day-to-day experiences and expressions. From this vantage point, I observed and shared a teacher's day in all its complexity.

Even though I was aware my experience in the classroom could not compare to that of the teachers because of our different trajectories and responsibilities, I became increasingly aware of the pace of their work tempo. The activities I engaged in as a participant observer allowed me the freedom to alter my schedule with minimal disruption to the school timetable. I could for instance, with apologies to the concerned teacher, reschedule a lesson observation or interview in order to attend a staff or parents' meeting. Despite our difference in roles, I do feel I experienced, as far as possible, their daily life with its accompanying successes and trials. The greatest learning curve for me during my fieldwork was simply to keep pace with the long working day of my participants. It was only by acting in tandem with them I gained both a comprehension of the mechanisms driving teachers towards certain inclinations and a realisation

of what it means to be a primary school teacher in that particular rural context.

4.4.3 Ethical Issues

Research into identity presents unique ethical challenges as assumptions regarding the enquirer and their right to investigate the researched, stated or otherwise, underlie the process of enquiry and discussion of the findings. In many senses identity is highly personal. The manner of disclosure can be affected by underlying and evolving assumptions regarding the identity and purpose of the enquirer or research instrument(s) and their capacity to name and describe the researched. Questions of identity are inextricably loaded with declared and undeclared baggage related to positionality and attendant anxiety. Knowledge concerning identity is disclosed on the basis of the adequacy of the instruments and the emotional environment in which the enquiry is made. The challenge for me was to create an environment in which each participant felt assured of their confidentiality, the right to be what they wanted to be and at ease to disclose their thoughts and opinions without accompanying feelings of censure, coercion, disloyalty or inadequacy. As far as possible, consent was sought and obtained from participating individuals in keeping with BERA Guidelines(2011).

 I looked upon the use of participant observation as an opportunity to study social phenomena in its natural state. However, Russell (2000:p.319) contends that:

> Participant observation is the most ethically problematic of social research methods because it is thoroughly manipulative.

It could be argued that in trying to assume a cloak of invisibility during participant observation or in trying to be the kind of research instrument suitable for particular contexts, one is being manipulative. Anticipating and responding to prospective participants' expectations is part of the natural process of identity construction, where persons take on the role of the other in social contexts. It could also be argued that in trying to assume a cloak of invisibility in order to observe familiar events,

participant observers are not just being manipulative but responding to the likely anxiety of those observed. Even when a researcher conducts a study within a familiar locality or work place, inevitably there is a change in their perceived roles and manner of engagement. Whether this is interpreted as a conscious manipulation or not will, to my mind, depend largely on the researcher's attitude to the participants and the extent to which he facilitates participants' ownership of the research purpose.

It was important for me to review my own suitability as a research instrument, knowing that as I engaged in the quest for knowledge regarding my participants' identity, I was also unwittingly inviting inquiry into my own identity and that of institutions or individuals associated with me. Because of the school's proximity to my family home assumptions regarding pre-existing relationships might cloud the actual research process. Secondly, because of the genesis of the research question I was aware of the influence of my own experience and therefore the responsibility to present my research context in a manner that invites reflection on the identity of my participants rather than presumed personal conclusions. Similarly, I was aware of how any linguistic or conceptual tools used might be inadequate in conveying the issues around which my participants' identity was constructed. During our introductions I presented the personal details that were pertinent to and made evident the purpose of my research, the measures taken to ensure their confidentiality and options available to withdraw during the process, should anyone wish to do so. My intention was thus to create an environment in which the participants felt sufficiently at ease to engage with the research process without feeling they were voiceless objects of observation.

Whilst some of participants viewed this enquiry as an opportunity for recognition and visibility, their vulnerability in the face of sustained scrutiny could not be ignored. Direct enquiry has to be sensitively undertaken, as it possibly intrudes into participant's private space, their emotions and dispositions. I was aware that whereas I would depart at the end of my fieldwork, the participants would remain *insitu* and therefore my research should not in any way undermine or damage their confidence

to maintain professional relationships within the school and community. As far as possible, I made every effort to be both empathetic and diplomatic in keeping with BERA Guidelines (2011:p.5), which urge educational researchers to treat participants; 'sensitively, with dignity and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice'.

Whereas it was important for participants to understand the purpose of the research and the nature of their participation prior to their consent, the depths of disclosure was mediated by age and conceptual barriers varying according to audience. The explanations with the teachers were more detailed with greater attention paid to its possible implications on their daily schedules and safeguarding their anonymity. Though a sufficient level of disclosure with pupils and parents was assured, it was mediated by translation, conceptual barriers and age. Each focused group discussion was preceded by an outline of the purpose of the research, the reason for the particular group discussion and an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were also given the option of withdrawal should they wish to do so.

Discussions with pupils had to be carefully choreographed so as not to seem an invitation to fault finding exercise, but rather an open discussion in which their opinions matter. Pupils discussions could only be conducted after a certain level of rapport had been established through my stay and participation in their co-curricular activities. Since parent discussions were held in Kiswahili, the extent to which the concepts under investigation were understood could be contested. However, even though the parents had varying levels of formal education, I felt on the whole, there was general shared understanding concerning the overall nature of my enquiry. Pupils and parents who subsequently participated in the research discussions had also signified their consent in writing. Certain parents queried the necessity of this, whereas others wished to see their names alongside their specific contributions. There were, however, a number of open forums, such as school assemblies, general parents' meetings and lesson observations sessions, where it was infeasible to ask every participant to sign a consent form. The overall permission granted

by the administration for my presence within the school was deemed adequate.

Teachers whose lessons I observed initially introduced me to the pupils as a person there to 'learn about teaching' and asked whether they would welcome 'the visitor'.   Their chorused answer of 'yes', gained me admittance into the lessons I had scheduled for observation.   Upon reflection though, I wondered how a child with a different opinion from the majority, would have voiced their opinion should they have wished to do so. Many pupils even found it strange that their permission was sought in the first place, as culturally they are taught to welcome visitors and rarely do adults seek permission to participate in their activities.

According to Riemer (2008: p.211):

> … unlike other researchers who know their respondents through surveys, telephone conversations or as numbers in statistical runs, ethnographers enter interdependent relationship with their informants.

Such an interdependent relationship a researcher has to be prepared to make a number of on the spot moral and ethical decisions (Mason 2002).As the participants reveal more of themselves to the researcher, so too does the researcher, consciously or unconsciously through the information they divulge or withhold regarding themselves with the result the corresponding quality of the interpersonal relationship can impact upon the research process.   As Wolcott (1998) points out, an ethnographer seeking to gain an inner understanding of a group walks a thin line between being too close - going native - or appearing detached and aloof to go native' (Tedlock 2012:p.168).Both have disadvantages, a closeness can engender a certain blindness, blur attentiveness to observations that portray participants in a negative light, whilst aloofness can result in dispassionate fault finding.   Throughout the duration of my fieldwork, I was aware of these threats.   Even as I immersed myself into the school community and experienced school life in its entirety through my participants, I tried to maintain a reflexive stance through daily note taking and regular contact with my supervisory team.

Throughout my fieldwork every effort was made to protect the identity and confidentiality of my participants. In this report the names of all participants have been substituted to protect their anonymity. Even though it was evident whose lessons were observed, the details of the observation and subsequent analysis were only disclosed to the teacher concerned. A summary of key issues affecting their identity were shared in a general meeting, but were not presented in a manner to single out or undermine specific individuals or to show lack of appreciation for the stakeholder's efforts.

4.4.4 Use of Participant Observation

One of the most frequently favoured methods of data collection in qualitative research is participant observation (Wilson1997, Riemer 2008). Although as Wolcott (1988: p. 193) observes, we are participant observers in virtually everything we do in life, but only become ethnographers when we pay attention to:

> The cultural context of the behavior we are engaging in or observing, and when we are looking for those mutually understood sets of expectations and explanations that enable us to interpret what is occurring and what meanings are probably being attributed by others present.

Use of participant observation in this case was expected to grant access to participants' habitus (Bourdieu 1977) and the sets of explanations and meanings that would be taken to reflect their identity. It was also hoped participant observation would make evident these explanations and suggestions through the enactment of teacher/ pupil and teacher/ parent interactions.

In fulfilling the conditions of participant observer, I had to participate to some extent in the activities of the group under observation. Madden (2010:p. 1) calls this 'walking a mile in the footsteps of the participants'. Though one is afforded a certain level of participation by simply being present in the location, any subsequent involvement in activities is possibly going to increase that level. However, Wolcott (1999) cautions researchers against the possible distraction from the focus of research by

the rhythm of participation. My participation was limited to activities that placed me in the learning environment with the freedom to change the course of my involvement without inconveniencing set school routines.

Though my fieldwork could be generally viewed as participant observation, I wish to discuss lesson observations, semi-structured and ad hoc interviews, teacher and parent meetings and document analysis in greater depth.

4.4.5 Lesson Observations and Post Lesson Discussion

Ethnographic data collection is underpinned by the naturalistic assumption that human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs and that 'settings generate regularities in behaviour that transcend differences among individuals.' (Wilson 1977:p. 247). Though there are few examples of professional identity research employing classroom observation(Rex and Nelson 2004,Cohen 2008) I felt that such an observation would facilitate an understanding of their professional landscape since as Mockler (2011:p.2) explained, teachers' work was framed and constituted through their understanding and positioning of themselves as a product of their professional identity. While individual teachers may have multiple identities it is in the setting of their classrooms they interact with learners and are likely to enact identities reflective of their understanding of their internalised role expectations as teachers. It is also their practice within this space that often constitutes the subject of much reform (Earl et al.2003).   I therefore looked upon classroom observation as a primary source of information regarding teacher/pupil interaction and an important entry into understanding teachers' internalised role expectations. Key participants (Reimer 2008) facilitated such observations.

Lesson observation is frequently employed in the context of pre-service training, staff development or appraisals and as such its use in identity research is likely to evoke feelings attendant to such situations. Since the classroom is a vibrant living organism, the choice of variables considered significant to particular research, assigning meaning to occurrences and

crucially, how to account for or minimise the impact of the observer are key considerations for which there is no uncontested rule. Wragg (2012) acknowledges that there are different methods of classroom observation and therefore advises researchers to consider the purpose of their observation in the selection of method. Creating an atmosphere in which participants were assured that the primary purpose of the data collection was the pursuit of knowledge rather than an administrative tool was as important to my research as capturing what was observed.

While the merits of guided observations including the use of Flanders interactional analysis (Flanders 1970) are well documented, it could also be argued that they 'limit the range of behaviours observed (Anderson et al. 2008:pp.101).Official lesson observations follow the use of an observation protocol that involves the use of a standard observation tool, the presentation of professional documents such as schemes of work, lesson plans, weekly records of work and students' assessment reports. However I chose to use an unstructured observation protocol which affords the researcher many lens through which to follow the complexities and vibrancy of the classroom as a context of identity construction. Since the purpose of my observation was to come to an understanding of the teachers' internalised role expectation I chose to protect the uniqueness of each classroom observation by coming to it with an ethnographic strangeness(Neyland 2008: p.18). Though perhaps the use of observation tools would have streamlined data interpretation; however, I found the open approach to classroom observation more suited to my purpose.

Post lesson discussions were viewed as an opportunity to see the lesson from the teacher's point of view and to link their observations to what it meant to be a professional, their daily challenges and the subject of education change. My previous training and experiences in lesson observations on school improvement projects had taught me the necessity of making a post lesson discussion a forum in which the observed teacher talks about their lessons from their own experience because at the end of the day it is what they see that matters in terms of what they can alter.

Despite the open exploratory nature of the discussion, I sought answers to the following questions:

How do you think the lesson developed?

What do you feel about the lesson?

Whilst the focus was not on the effectiveness of a given methodology over another, the discussions were an opportunity to understand the internalised expectations that teachers brought to what was observed in their classrooms. Inevitably, when the lesson went according to the teacher's expectations, there was a corresponding feeling of professional achievement. Where this was not evident, I sensitively led the discussions along the lines of where the teacher felt the lesson began to unravel and, in hindsight, what alternative approach could have been adopted to ensure a greater level of pupil participation/comprehension. Though every effort was made to hold post lesson discussions directly after each lesson, it was not always feasible to do so. I found that the more relaxed the teachers were with my presence in their classrooms, the more forthcoming they became in post lesson discussions whether voicing successes or frustrations because they felt they had a sense of ownership with the research process. This companionable atmosphere was something I valued and sought to protect. During the final de-briefing at the end of my fieldwork, the participants commented favourably on the value these post lesson discussions had for them and recognised the opportunity they had been afforded to discuss their work with another adult in a non-judgmental way.

The validity of scheduled lesson observations to represent teacher's internalised role expectations could be contested on the basis of the Hawthorne effect(Wragg2000), since the observations occurred at known, scheduled timeslots and each had previously been selected by the respective teacher; they were likely to be improved performance rather than representative of their typical lessons. Considering the measures I took to locate my presence in their lessons, it would be naive to assume the teachers did not make an extra effort to improve their lessons, indeed I

hope that they did. Yet, even if the observation lesson could be considered a performance rather than a reflection of the habitual practice, it would signify a reflection of the teacher's current or aspirational identity as one only enacts what one is able to. What participants presented in those lessons, whether as a dramaturgical performance (Hoffman 1969) or repeated ritual, was a reflection of what they were capable of under the circumstances. Secondly, I would imagine that it would have been difficult to maintain the performance over the span of an entire school term in the presence of pupils with whom they had a prior and continuing professional relationship.

This prolonged period of lesson observation in one school gave me a greater insight into curriculum demands made upon teachers and helped me to distinguish the complexity of activities facing the teachers at each level. I also gained an appreciation of each individual teacher's relationship with their classroom space. The ECD and Lower Primary class teachers, for instance, exhibited a sense of ownership of the classroom space and a deeper relationship with pupils not evident with the middle and upper class primary teachers. This can be accounted for by the fact the former spend the whole year in that space with the same children and every decision taken regarding the use of the space is with their consent, whereas the latter moved from class to class according to subject and class and did not have overall control over wall space and desk layout. The different ways each level of teacher inhabited and used their space and overcame their specific difficulties was a revelation to me. During the observation periods, for instance, I was particularly distracted by the extraneous sounds from the adjoining classrooms as shall be explained in the following chapter. Disruptions to scheduled observations were caused by interschool sports competitions, students being sent home for outstanding school levies or the necessity of attendance at teachers/parents meetings. No scheduled observation was lost due to a teachers' inexplicable absence.

4.4.6   Semi-structured and Opportunistic Interviews

Though interviewing and participant observation can be discussed as separate research methods participant observers use varying types of interviews within the course of their observation. A number of research projects on teachers' professional identity have either employed interviews exclusively or as part of their data collection process (Bartlett 2006, Hextall 2007, Vahasantanen et al. 2008). A distinction is often made between factist approaches which seek to establish a given truth by examining the content of the interview and the interpretive interviews (O'Reilly 2009) which regards the interview as representing a version of reality. Interviews in qualitative research are based on the assumption that knowledge is situated and reconstructed during interviews and not simply excavated or reported. It is therefore the responsibility of the interviewer to ensure that the contexts are brought into focus 'so that situated knowledge can be reproduced'(Mason 2002:p.62). Interviews are also regarded as a direct source of information regarding a participants' meaning or description of experience (King and Horrocks 2010) and so in matters of identity are a valuable source of participants internalised role expectations. Rex and Nelson (2004) for example used interviews to establish how teachers conceptualised their responsibility to their pupils, where that view originated and how it linked to their teaching. Though arguments can be made against the interview as a source of data on participant experience, attitude or perspective since such data is discursively produced (Hammersely 2006) it could also be argued that there is no data collection process that is absolutely impartial and that in the case of the interview the likely source of bias is noted and accounted for. Mason (2002: p.65) urges that instead of pretending that key dimensions can be controlled for bias one tries to understand the complexities of the interaction and more importantly to understand 'how context and situation work in interview interactions'.

Apart from the opportunistic interviews (O'Reilly 2009)that were part of the daily observation 13 separate semi-structured interviews were held with individual participants. In the initial interviews with each of the 7 key

participants, my primary aim was to set the pace for the research process, and to gain understanding of each teacher's individual thoughts and descriptions as to whether teaching was a profession and what that meant to them. A secondary aim was to determine how they envisaged their role in ongoing education changes.

As flexibility is an essential element to qualitative interviews (King and Horrocks 2010) semi-structured interviews were preferred in this research giving allowance for the interview to develop according to participants experience and engagement. Each interview was held at a time suitable to the teacher and lasted for about 45 minutes. The first set of interviews were all marked by a degree of formality and reservation on the part of the teachers, as they had yet to fully ascertain my intentions and the degree of confidentiality they would be assured. As our relationship deepened, so too did their degree of disclosure. By the end of the fieldwork, they had acquired sufficient confidence in the research process to discuss their initial reservations, evaluate their involvement and even make recommendations as to how they thought the process might be improved. The last six interviews lasted for 30 minutes each and were an opportunity to bring the fieldwork to a closure. The validity of self-disclosure anticipated in teacher interviews can be conditioned by participants need to present themselves in the best light. Whilst this partiality is accounted for in the research approach, what is captured, whether factual or a representation of 'the best light' can also be informative in illuminating the ideal held by the participant at that point. I was similarly aware of how the language of the enquiry can shape participants' self-descriptions. For example, asked whether teachers were professionals or not, the participants answer necessarily takes ownership of the word 'professional' to express a position that might otherwise have been framed differently. Perhaps we will not know what the answer might have been had the discourse of professionalism not been introduced in these terms.

The relaxed atmosphere afforded by the timetabled breaks and the material development sessions were appropriate occasions in which to initiate and sustain opportunistic interviews (O'Reilly 2009:p.18) and the concurrent

activities ensured their conversational tone. It was during one such interview early in my fieldwork that I first recognised the collective pride and general feeling of satisfaction that accompanied discussion of pupil achievement. A letter of admission to a national school arrived for a previous year's examination candidate and the spontaneous outbreak of communal celebration, which encompassed both pupils and teachers, was a revelation. I did wonder, however, whether the absence of such letters would plunge them into an equal measure of despair. This admission letter provided an opportunity to initiate a conversation on the role of national examinations in defining teacher's identity and the accompanying pressure they place on each individual, particularly those teaching Upper Primary classes.

It was also within the forum of opportunistic interviews that teachers openly vented their frustrations usually around lessons not progressing as anticipated, pupils' absenteeism or difficulty in completing learning tasks. Solutions to some of the problems were volunteered by their staff mates, but usually, the mere act of vocalising the problem was sufficient to relieve associated tensions. Current affairs, including the much debated proposals for education change, were also a frequent topic of conversation in these forums. As the teachers discussed the proposals amongst themselves, I was able to gain significant insights into aspects that either affirmed or threatened their professional identity. For instance, whilst they welcomed the proposed county level education administration changes and viewed them as an opportunity to be heard, they also felt threatened and pressurised as it would bring them into direct competition with other more established schools in the county. Though I obtained the teachers permission to use their comments, due to the informality of the conversations conducted within the opportunistic interviews, it is evident that they would have to be valued against the context and audience for which they were generated. On occasion, the teachers felt so much at ease, they volunteered details of their personal lives which remain personal.

I seized any opportunity that presented itself to conduct semi-structured interviews with five visiting parents recorded as field notes. These

naturally varied in content and length in accordance with their willingness to engage with the subject of research and the pressures on their time (Mason 2002). Chiefly the interviews elicited their personal opinions regarding their expectations of the school system and how they thought or expected teachers to support these aims. On each occasion, I ensured the parent was aware of the purpose of the ensuing conversation and that they gave their consent for participation. It was especially during these interviews that I came to appreciate the regard and esteem the parents had for the teachers in the school. Data collected from these semi-structured interviews was triangulated with data from parent meetings and focus group discussions to later assess the nature and role of social suggestion on teachers' professional identity.

4.4.7 Focused Group Discussions

During my fieldwork I held two focused group discussions (Klieber 2003) with parents each lasting for about an hour and four group discussions with pupils according to their class levels. In order to facilitate group discussions with parents, the chairperson of the school management committee assisted in the identification of six possible participants from different ethnic backgrounds and constituted a gender balance. Prior to each discussion, the six participants were duly informed of the purpose of the ensuing meeting and their permission sought.

As earlier stated the validity of the discussions was mediated by the accuracy of interpretations. The discussions were held in Kiswahili, a national language, to ensure full participation as the parents spoke various first languages and had different levels of education. Translating the research question and such concepts as professional and professionalism posed a unique challenge. For example, the closest word in Kiswahili to a professional is *mtaalamu,* which is generally understood to refer either to one who is a specialist or one who does their work well. The extent to which the Kiswahili word *taaluma* translates to professionalism or *mtaalamu* to professional can be contested. However, whatever they can

be proved to mean represent contextually held meanings of what is important in the person of a teacher.

The challenge in the parents focused group discussions was to create an environment where participants, with diverse profiles, could relate to the discussion and feel comfortable to make a contribution. Creating the right pace required a period of background setting in which participants were helped not only to understand their rights as participants but also the necessity of their voice to be heard on the expectations of the teachers from the parents' viewpoint. My previous work with school communities in the Coast Province gave me an awareness of the possible difficulties encountered when both male and female participants are invited to share a public platform. Very often, though not always the case, male participants are more forceful and forthright when presenting their comments and are likely to dominate the discussion. Female participants may require some form of scaffolding before they have the confidence to assert a view likely to be contradicted. To ensure an equal playing field where all voices would be heard, it was therefore necessary at times to direct specific questions at female members of the panel.

Before initiating pupil focus group discussions, I felt it was necessary to built a rapport with the pupils and be seen to be accepted within the school structure. This naturally took time, so these discussions were purposely scheduled to take place during the latter half of my fieldwork in the hope the pupils would then feel more at ease in my presence and enter the discussions with more verve. Though teachers were involved in the actual selection of the participants, they were not present during the discussions to afford the pupils' greater freedom to voice their views. Once again the participants were informed of the nature of the research, their consent for participation was sought and their confidentiality was assured. My subsequent discussions with the pupils were conducted in five sessions in accordance with their school level and age. One would argue that focus group discussions create an environment which conditions the answers that pupils give. However, I see the same environment offering support and an enabling environment in which they were facilitated to examine commonly

held assumptions. Though the discussions with the upper school pupils were possibly more detailed than those with the lower, both sets exuded an unconditional pride in their school and a sense of responsibility towards maintaining its reputation. It was so strong; this pervading pride influenced their comments pertaining to the school and their teachers. Having been part of the school for a full term, I felt credit for this should be attributed to the head teacher and the *esprit de corps* she engendered in her staff.

4.4.8 Staff Meetings

Staff meetings were convened at the discretion of the school management to discuss timetabling, review examinations and deal with arising curricula and co-curricula matters. During the course of my fieldwork, I attended three such meetings partly as a member of the school community, but predominantly as a participant observer (Wolcott 1988). As the meetings were a communication forum between the administration and teaching staff, they were a vital source of information regarding the school's ethos, the impact of the different forms of professionalism on inter staff relationships and the challenges the institution faced - some ongoing, some short term. Though the atmosphere in each was cordial, there was a recognised rather formal protocol, governing the proceedings. For instance, as this was a Catholic sponsored school, each meeting opened and closed with a prayer. The head teacher was always the chairperson and it was she who presented the agenda and outlined the key messages before her two deputies and the senior teacher were invited to comment. Only then was the discussion opened to the rest of the staff.

Though the validity of the data generated in this context has to be taken against the background of its intended purpose and audience, these meetings offered profound insights into formal teacher/ teacher interactions and the issues that drew their collective attention. It was in these staff meetings that teachers reviewed their identity and unconsciously displayed their need to project or protect that identity within both the school and the wider community. As an observer, the meetings provided me with the opportunity of witnessing teacher identity norms

being referred to, defined and refined. The meetings brought all the staff together under one roof so it was here one could assess their collective sense of belonging and their propensity for change.

Of the three staff meetings that were conducted during my fieldwork, the first was convened chiefly to take stock of text-book resources, generate a procurement list and discuss ways in which the shelf life of existing materials could be extended. The second one mainly dealt with the logistical use of the limited school facilities. The third and last staff meeting I attended was to arrange the prospective end of term activities and it was here I had the highest profile when I disseminated the preliminary findings of my research. This dissemination before both my participants and the other members of staff was extremely helpful as it provided immediate feedback and clarified any unintentional misrepresentations. It was particularly gratifying to note the positive light in which the initial observations were received, even though some pinpointed obvious areas for improvement.

4.4.9 Parent Meetings

Prior to my fieldwork, I had anticipated at least one general parents' meeting. However, partly due to the unforeseen collapse of the boys latrine block and the nature of the schools programme three general parents' meeting and three class specific meetings were held during my visit. The frequency of the meetings, their agenda, the social norms that governed their deliberations provided a window through which to observe teacher/ parent interactions and gain useful insights into the nature of parental social suggestions to teachers' professional identity. A comparison in the communication formats preferred at this meetings and lesson delivery was equally informative. Contributions to school infrastructure, parental support, pupils' achievement at various regional examinations and pupils' welfare formed the key agenda at most meetings. Each meeting was chaired by the SMC's chairperson except when a guest speaker from the District Education Office presided over the election of a new management committee. The head teacher and her staff took advantage of the forums to apprise parents of their children's progress and to encourage further

parental support to pupils' welfare. The management committee on the other hand, utilised the meetings to account for and elicit further funds for current improvement projects and to celebrate school achievements. Although the meetings were not specifically convened for research purposes and I only attended them by invitation as a temporary member of the school community, they were a valuable source of information in regards to the school's profile, the catchment area, parental aspirations and contentions. They gave me the opportunity to observe first hand teacher/parent interactions which I felt was fundamental to an understanding of the professional landscape in which the participating teachers worked and an opening to note the community's awareness of the proposed education changes and its prospects for their children.

At parents meetings, I also gained an appreciation of the relative financial burden education placed on their shoulders. Though each parent was desperate to be seen to shoulder their share of the responsibility, in many cases the cost seemed to be beyond their means and some could only contribute in kind, usually in the form of farm produce or free labour.

4. 5   Data Analysis

The thematic analysis used in this thesis is thought to be especially compatible with a constructionist research paradigm (Joffe and Yardley 2004) since it helps the researcher to examine' the ways in which events, realities, meaning, experiences… are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society'(Braun and Clark 1996:p.9). Whilst the weight of themes generated in such limited contexts may be debated, it can be argued that individual narratives also provide scope for discussion of the depth and meanings associated with human experience. The identities teachers hold and the associations to that identity are underpinned by a variety of social discourses that thematic analysis makes possible for discussion. Schei (2009:p.227) argues that:

> When an informant expresses something of importance in an
> interview, s/he actually verbalises the discourse by which she is
> ruled, by making use of the vocabulary and the narrative offered in
> the discourse.

Through the strength of networks established during field work and a level of reflexivity the researcher is able not only to map out the key discourses governing teacher identity but also to show how they are arrived at, rejected or advanced. During fieldwork one is facilitated to arrive at codes and catergorise that reflect the processes, activities ,status, power relations, role relationships, warrantability, desirability and normativity of perceived identities. Through further reflexivity and analysis of field data including participants' interviews, classroom observation transcripts one is helped to unveil both the presentational and orientanional meanings associated with the discourses that govern participants' live worlds.

A theme is said to capture 'something important about the data in relation to the research question and presents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun and Clark 1996:p.9). It is not necessarily identifiable by statistical recurrence but may be influenced by the researcher's theoretical orientation to the subject under study. In this case I was also guided by Schei (2009:p.228) advice that:

> When focus is on identity formation, a map of active discourses is needed in order to enable understanding of what it is possible and impossible for the individual to think, value and to do within a certain space.

The analysis sought to present evidence of the active discourses that shaped what was seen as possible or impossible within teachers' professional identity and how the emerging themes position teachers within ongoing reforms. Repeatedly going over the different field notes helped me to identify possible codes in relation to the questions guiding the research as presented in section 4.3.2.I was further guided by Gee's (2011:18)observation that individuals 'use language to get recognised as taking on a certain identity or role'.   Examining field notes from interviews and classroom observation sessions helped to illustrate the language with which teachers sought to position their identity.

Aword, phrase or extract can be used as code. The challenge was in ensuring the translated sections represented the intended meaning. The codes derived from field notes were clustered into the following broad

categories from which latent themes (Joffe and Yardley 2004) were derived:

- Routine activities
  - Authority
- Aspirations
    - Curriculum
- Sense of self
  - Knowledge
    - Perceived roles
- Expectations
  - Feelings
- context
  - Reflections/ shared experiences
- Resources
  - training
- Regulation
  - Responsibility
- Professionalism- Managerial
  - Professionalism- occupational

A constructivist analysis adopts an interpretive approach to developing the themes at a latent level, examining 'underlying ideas, assumptions of conceptualization- and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data(Braun and Clark 1996:p 13). Though a number of likely themes were suggested by initial categorization including the notion of teaching as a talent determined by birth and social standing; or professionalism as a category of salaried staff as opposed to casual labour; or manner of dress as reflecting professionalism they were not independently developed but their content absorbed into related themes.

The discussion on teachers' internalised role expectations was developed in connection with the following themes:

- Training as an initiation into professional identity
- The centrality of the curriculum/the primacy of examinations
- Discipline, dedication and self-sacrifice in teachers' professional identity
- Communication/transference of knowledge
- Teachers' moral purpose and education change

Though a pre-determined classroom observation tool such as Flanders interactional analysis (Flanders 1970) was not used, it was recognised that the wealth of description in the ethnographic data clustered through a latent thematic analysis would enrich the identified themes. To this end, data collected in the classroom was coded and categorized under the following broad categories:

- **Pupil activity**: Evidence of any individual pupil activity during the lesson- such as writing on the board, identifying objects or reciting poems for the benefit of the entire class.

- **Chalk board:** Whether used to signpost the development of the lesson or illustrate a discussion point.

- **Seating arrangements**: Whether pupils sat in rows, or group formation or the lesson was field based as this affected the flow of communication.

- **Group work**: Whether pupils were asked to undertake any task that required pupil to pupil communication at group level during the observed lesson.

- **Question and Answer**: Whether any section of the lesson was developed through teacher- led question and answer discussions.

- **Textbooks:** Whether any part of the lesson involved reference to a section of the prescribed textbook and whether the book was available for such reference.

- **Locally collected/developed learning resources**: Whether as part of the preparation for the lesson the teacher had any additional learning material to make the lesson more accessible to the learners.

- **Assignments**: Whether as part of the communication pupils were tasked with individual post lesson assignments or note taking.

These broad categories helped me to articulate the nature of teacher/ pupil interactions, communications and also the implicated power relations in the emerging teacher identity. It was necessary to triangulate data from a variety of sources in order to illustrate the development of each theme.

Arguments can be made against thematic analysis on the basis that '..it abstracts issues from the way they appear in life, organizing material according to the researchers' sense of how it is connects rather than the inter-relationships of the themes in the participants mind or lifeworlds. (Joffe and Yardley 2004:p.66.) However, it can also be argued that since the themes are developed in relation to the data, they bring something of the participants' lifeworlds into discussion. Secondly, since ethnographic descriptions make visible the context in which the data is generated one could argue that subsequent analysis places participant contributions within the conversational context of their production thereby minimizing the opportunity of misappropriated meaning.

4.5   Limitations of the Study

By virtue of design and sample size the generalizability of the findings of this study may be limited. This study cannot be said to be representative of the diversity of Kenyan teachers' professional identity. Constructivist research is by nature subjectivist, transactional and relativist (Guba and Lincoln 1994).Nevertheless, its findings and the questions this particular case raises releases ideas about professional identity and education change that would otherwise lie sleeping under the rail tracks of progress. Findings based on interpretive/ constructivist frameworks are first thought to be partial and constrained by the positionality of the informants. Where informants are thought to be from lower echelons of a social structure, questions might arise regarding the validity of their observations on an entire education system. However, when implementation is dependent on the identity of a large mass of individuals at this lower echelons who process their course of actions through the personal prisms of their identities, understanding the subjectivities influencing their identity formation and perceptions is as important as those from any other positions.

Given the design and approach to this study which privileges the voices of the teachers, pupils and parents within a particular institution, the extent to which their views are representative of regional or national understanding might be contested. However, as Margaret Mead is reported to have said ,"The question is not, 'Is this case representative' but rather,' What is this case representative of?"(Wolcott 1998: p.166).As narrow and partial as these views may be, they serve to widen the conversation about what is relevant in the discussion of teachers' professional identity and education change. Having presented teachers' professional identity from the teachers' point of view there is also the necessity to understand the policy frameworks that shape their position within the wider national policy framework. This calls for a separate and different study.

The absence of pre-determined lesson observation schedules may have opened opportunities for a wider observation of classroom practices but could invite debate about the rigour of the observation. Though in hind sight, such a schedule could have streamlined the analysis process, it is not without limitations. Pre-determining the observation schedule presupposes a guideline of what is or is not acceptable as an indicator of identity. The challenge of sorting through the large quantity of classroom data opened a door of reflection about what really counts in assessing lesson processes. If a researcher is interested in determining a teachers' internalised role expectation, should they assess a lesson on the basis of their own judgment of what they consider attractive and interesting lesson processes? Should the focus be to determine what is actually observed or what should have happened? Clearly there are stated and unstated expectations that influence such observation or our assessment of them. The challenges of determining the manner of lesson observation helped to highlight the difficulties of attaining objective social realities aimed for in quantitative research.

Lastly, since interpretive /constructivists see social reality to be created and identity to be co-constructed, an investigation of identity that places the researcher amongst the researched naturally raises questions of the suitability and adequacy of the research instrument to make evident the

researched identity. In the light of pre-existing knowledge and relationships with the research context and the implication of my own identity, any deviation from existing discourses on teacher' identity in this context might instigate arguments on my adequacy as a suitable research instrument in this case. The extent to which pre-existing cultural interpretations obstruct or facilitate the emergence of a new discourse on teacher identity might be questioned. Considering that most of the classroom observation reported in my context has been through researchers' who had little previous experience of the context it could be argued that our starting points and therefore our usefulness as research instruments are very distinct. It is precisely because of this privileged position that I believe I bring a contribution to knowledge because my entry into the research context begins at a different level. As a person who has lived in and out of the community I have the privilege of an inside /outsider's vantage point.

Though I made a conscious endeavour to transcribe *verbatim* what was said by both teacher and pupils and describe their respective activities accurately, a classroom is such a vibrant environment, I cannot, regrettably, claim to have fully captured every movement and word spoken. It is quite possible certain aspects, either of the content or pupil/teacher interaction, may have been missed during the process of documentation. Also, my role as a passive observer was difficult to maintain. On occasion, the interest factor and tempo of the lesson became so captivating I had to suppress the overriding urge to contribute. There were other occasions, however, when I fought an equally compelling urge to assume control and develop the lesson along an entirely different path. I found maintaining the necessary passivity of an observer an exercise in personal discipline. Another challenge was capture the freshness of each lesson without the complaisance presumed familiarity that can result from repeat observations. As with passivity, it requires a conscious effort to maintain ethnographic strangeness (Wolcott 1998) over a series of lesson observations. It is also possible my presence in a class may have polluted the learning environment, but I believe after a number of observation visits

I became absorbed into the system, and lessons continued routinely with pupils paying less and less attention to my presence.

4.6   Summary of Research Design and Methods

In this chapter, the research choices that determined and shaped the thesis including particular ontological and epistemological considerations have been discussed. Recognising the difficulties and controversies entailed in seeking an objective social reality, an interpretive/constructivist approach was adopted to provide an account of professional identity in a specific context while making evident participant voices and researcher influences. Understanding identity to be negotiated and enacted in context, ethnographic data collection methods have been used to make evident the contextually influences of identity construction. Through participant observation the enactment of teacher/pupil and teacher/ parent identities were captured in situ, highlighting contextually held perceptions and realities.   Focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and meetings provided further opportunity to explore the meanings and thoughts that could constitute social suggestion to teacher identity. I have also reflected on my own position as a research instrument and shown the challenges attendant to ethnographic enquiry into identity and how such enquiry is interwoven with researcher identity and positionality. From the experiences of this research journey I know that I have improved my skills as a research instrument and will look forward to employing them in new contexts.

Through the choice of discourse analysis I reflected on the content, context and partiality of the emerging discourses. Whilst accepting the limited generalisability of findings made possible through these approaches, I believe the interpretive approach used here will make visible the debates and opinions that construct a specific case of professional identity and the impact of upholding such an interpretation to the population in question. The study further invites further reflection on the possible impact of such contextual discourses on the research on teachers' professional identity in a wider context. A detailed discussion of the findings will follow in the next sections, but first a description of the school context.

5. 0   School Mapping and Key participants

Overview

Further to the general context provided in chapter 2, this chapter details the complexities of the institutional context in which the research was conducted laying grounds for discussions on the meanings of teacher professionalism and the background to educational reform. Whilst the institution is shown to evolve under its own steam according to its capacity it also serves as a context where centrally determined theories of education and their reforms are tried and tested against the aspirations and capacities of teachers, pupils and parents. Though conversations of reform are held at regional and national platforms, in institutions such as this efforts are continuously directed to meeting current curriculum and policy specifications and pupils' welfare. An introduction and justification for key participants is also provided.

5. 1 School Layout

 This study was conducted in a rural public primary school within Trans Nzoai County because it is one of the most heterogeneous counties in Kenya, accommodating families that migrated from diverse regions following the re-distribution of land post independence. The 720 rural agricultural estate on which the school stands was once a colonial farm, now in the hands of a group of families who were either former farm workers or had moved from neighbouring districts and jointly bought the land in 1990. The estate was subdivided into portions between an acre and ten acres in accordance with the original member contributions. Each portion has further been subdivided amongst the original families in line with local inheritance customs and rapid population increase. At the time of my fieldwork, the homeowners were second or third generation settlers still trying to find a confidence in their new identities as land owners. Like other similar settlements at independence, the estate initially had no education or health infrastructure. At the time of this research, two public primary schools and a secondary school were sited on the original settlement.   A baseline survey conducted by the Ministry of Health and

WHO (2005) indicated that 79.8% of the population within Kaplamai Division, where the school is situated, cited farming as their chief occupation. Though Trans Nzoia County is recognised as the granary of Kenya, the majority of families in this particular neighbourhood are subsistence farmers who find it necessary to sell some of their produce to meet other expenses such as healthcare and education. Selling a portion of their harvest at the disadvantageous prices offered during the harvest season in December, results in many of these families experiencing food shortages later in the year, particularly between the months of May and August. In consequence of this, local primary schools are said to experience seasonal absenteeism during this period as children from the affected families supplement their parents' income by working on other people's land. The comparatively low wages of agricultural workers mean that even the collective earnings of both parents are inadequate to meet the living costs of large families and their livelihood is dependent on the vagaries of this fragile agricultural economy. The same Ministry of Health and WHO (2005) survey also established that on average, 59.9 % of the population have primary level education and only 24.4% attained secondary education while 12% had none. This is especially significant when considering levels of income and parents' capacity to support escalating ancillary educational costs.

The school was started during the final term of the 1995 school year to ease the enrolment pressure on the only other public primary school on the estate and also to reduce the distances pupils walked to school. The first three classrooms, still in existence at the time of my research, were built by parents' voluntary labour and consisted of mud floors, lattice wood walls covered with mud and roofed with corrugated iron sheets on a 4.2 acres piece of land. The money for the roofing materials was raised through *Harambees* - community self help initiatives. Despite the lack of furniture, the pupils moved into these classrooms in January 1996 at the start of the new school year and three additional teachers were posted to the school by the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC).Though established for 16 years at the time of my fieldwork, the school's 16

classrooms were in various stages of completion and ware. In 2012, the school's enrolment was 742 (347 boys and 395 girls). These were drawn from a broad catchment area that spread across Yuya, Sibanga, Muhuti,Velows, and Kaplamai villages within Ngonyek Zone, Kaplamai Division. The school was headed by a female teacher with two male deputies and a female senior teacher and these were supported by a teaching staff of 22 (15 female and 7 male). It had recently been connected to the electricity grid making it possible for senior pupils to attend early morning and evening supervised 'prep' on the school premises.

Visiting the school for the first time, my attention was arrested by the distinctive wrought iron gate which serves as the only entrance to the fenced school compound. Pupils, teachers, parents and visitors passing through the gate are reminded of the school's mission statement, vision and motto inscribed on the walls of the gate. The mission statement reads: *To provide the best learning environment for our pupils to be disciplined and self-reliant*; the vision states: *To provide an education that will equip our pupils to play an effective role in society* and the motto reads: *Strive to excel*.The values and philosophy that the school community subscribes to are enshrined in these statements of expectations. The necessity to be disciplined, to excel and be self-reliant indicate what was perceived to lie at the core of their educational pursuit. The necessity for discipline indicates a need for self-control, an inhibition to personal instincts in order to follow without distraction what must be achieved. It also points to a need to distinguish one's self as having excelled following a course of self-discipline. The painting of a schoolgirl and a schoolboy on either side of the gate also serve to illustrate this is a mixed school promoting gender equality. Though the expectation of becoming the best learning environment is relative, it nevertheless creates anticipation of what is expected.

The 12 member School Management Committee (SMC), elected annually, manages the institution on behalf of the community. Each of the eight primary classes has its own parent representative on the committee, though

not the Early Childhood Education classes. The head teacher represents the teaching staff and serves as Secretary, whilst the District Education Office (DEO) is represented by the Area Education Officer (AEO) and the Catholic Church, as the official sponsor of the school, is represented by two of its local church members. The chairperson and treasurer are elected from amongst the 12 members during their inaugural meeting. Whilst individual members may be experienced administrators, prior administrative experience is not a necessity for election to the committee, neither is the SMC as a unit given formal training. The Committee relies on the head teacher and the DEO's representative to interpret and advise on the Education Act and government directives. The key functions of the SMC is to account for the school's allocation of the government's free primary education funds, generate additional resources for the provision and maintenance of the school's general infrastructure and provide salaries and teaching materials for the Early Childhood Education (ECD) section.

As the ultimate responsibility for the school's infrastructure lies with the parents, each contributes a sum, agreed upon at parents' meetings, towards the SMC's infrastructure projects. Periodically, the school gate serves as an *office* for representatives of the SMC who vet pupils' entry into the school compound on the payment of said contributions. Inadequate evidence or explanation for such payment resulted in a child being sent home to return with the fees or accompanied by a parent or guardian. Pupils, whose parents made some contribution or explained their mitigating circumstances, were allowed to continue in class for a specified period. Under the government's policy of Free Primary Education, teachers are not directly involved in the collection of any school levies. As previously stated, at the beginning of my fieldwork the SMC was collecting funds for the construction of a new boys' latrine block following the collapse of the original set due to unprecedented heavy rains in the December holidays. This incident and others where the SMC made financial demands upon the parents caused great disruption of scheduled learning activities at the start of the new school year. The continual need to raise funds for infrastructure and the parents' subsequent difficulties in

raising the required funds, invites reflection to the provision of a suitable learning environment, the nature of teacher/pupil contact time and the capacity of local networks to support any proposed education reforms.

However, they did give me an insight into some of the contextual challenges around which the teachers' professional identity was constructed as despite the situational challenges I witnessed, the teachers were still expected to keep pace with the rest of the country in their syllabus coverage. I understood the necessity for infrastructure and revenue collection, but could not help wondering whether the quest for excellence was being compromised by the necessity and even the modality of such collection. Even the children whose parents who had paid the required contributions in full and on time were caught up in the teachers' efforts to deal with the transitory classroom attendance of the others. Children whose parents paid in sporadic installments were likewise penalised, as they missed lessons each time they were sent home.

Once through the school gates, one faces a well-tended quadrangle of grass and shrubs. Demarcated paths, around and through the quadrangle, serve as networks of access to classrooms and the centrally located head teacher's office and staffroom. The quadrangle is the pulse of the school, as it is here the entire school gathers for school assemblies. On Mondays and Fridays the school sings the national anthem as the Kenyan flag is hoisted. This is an activity replicated in all public schools to foster a sense of belonging and national awareness. On school assemblies both the head teacher and the staff issue reminders of forthcoming events, reports of recent school achievements, the progress of past pupils and expectations concerning pupil behaviour. A section of the quadrangle also functions as an extended staffroom where teacher/pupil and teacher/parent interactions may be observed on a one to one or group level. For instance, Class 7 pupils regularly queue here before their mathematics teacher to have their work individually assessed or to be assisted in their class work, whereas the science teachers used the space for outdoor observation activities. Other teachers variously utilised the quadrangle for lesson preparation, marking of exercise books, repairing textbooks and the development of

learning materials. Although there is no regulation to this effect, male teachers habitually sat on the right hand side of the quadrangle nearer the gate, whilst the female teachers tended to sit on the left hand side beneath a large Nandi Flame tree colloquially known as the 'shrine'. Parents waiting to see the head teacher or specific teachers often gravitated towards the Nandi Flame tree and sat there until they were attended to. Senior pupils placed their textbooks and exercise books at the foot of this tree before entering the classrooms designated for external examinations.

An incomplete brick building with a hard core floor, corrugated iron roof but lacking glass window panes stands to the right of the main gate and houses both Classes 7B and 7Y. These two classes are separated by a wooden panel, which can fold back when a large space is required for external examinations or parents' meetings. Pupils in each class normally sit with their backs to the folding panel facing the blackboard on the opposite wall. Due to the thinness of the dividing panel, one could comfortably follow the lessons conducted in the adjoining class. Pupils at the back of each respective classroom were caught between two different streams of information and needed a strong sense of discipline to give undivided attention to the lesson in their class.

To the left of the school gate stands another incomplete brick building with a hard core floor housing Classes 6B and 6Y. These two classes, however, are fortunate in being separated by a brick wall and though still lacking window panes, have almost total enclosure. However, the classroom windows overlook an adjoining public pathway and pupils in either class can easily be distracted by the extraneous conversations of passersby. The absence of window panes in the classrooms also presents a perpetual challenge to teachers wishing to display visual aids or examples of students' work. Periodic dust storms can either dirty or destroy unprotected displays.

The senior classes, 8B and 8Y, are situated in the best brick building separated by the administration offices. This strategic location may be interpreted as either an indicator of their seniority or the necessity for close

monitoring to ensure strict adherence to punctuality and performance. At the time of my research, these were the only two classrooms connected to electricity, having concrete floors, glass paned windows and secure doors. They were also the only ones to be fully furnished. Two to three pupils shared bench desks lined up in formal rows facing the blackboard or, occasionally re-arranged to facilitate group activities and shared learning resources such as atlases, dictionaries and bibles. The glass windows allowed for a continuous display of interchangeable learning materials on the walls of both classrooms. Pupils in the two classes shared major textbooks to the ratio of 1:2. Periodically, the two streams joined together for either extra tuition or internal examinations. During such occasions, the classroom furniture was again re-arranged according to requirements. Upper Primary Classes 7 and 8 were recognised as senior members of the school community and were expected to earn the respect of other pupils and set an example in regards to leadership, work and conduct. Outside Class 8Y is the school notice board on which, by law, is displayed updated accounts of the expenditure of the school's Free Primary Education capitation grant. Periodically, it also displays individual pupils' results in internal evaluation tests or outstanding essays to encourage greater effort or celebrate achievement.

The administration offices, lying between Classes 8B and 8Y, is the only section of the block with security bars on the windows and the door which opensimmediately into the staff room. This room is furnished with two large tables each seating six teachers. Each of the ten Upper Primary teachers is allocated a specific space on the tables where pupils daily deposit or collect marked exercise books. Additional but limited storage space was available on the shelves extending halfway along one wall. The tables became a social hub during lunch breaks when the Upper Primary teachers were joined by their Lower Primary colleagues for a lunch to which they made contributions. The duty roster for the term, the timetables for the Upper Primary classes, and the progress record for Class 8 pupils were displayed along the staffroom walls. The Class 8 progress chart was

regularly updated and the subject of frequent conversation amongst the staff. The school compound could be represented as follows:

Table 5.1   The School Compound
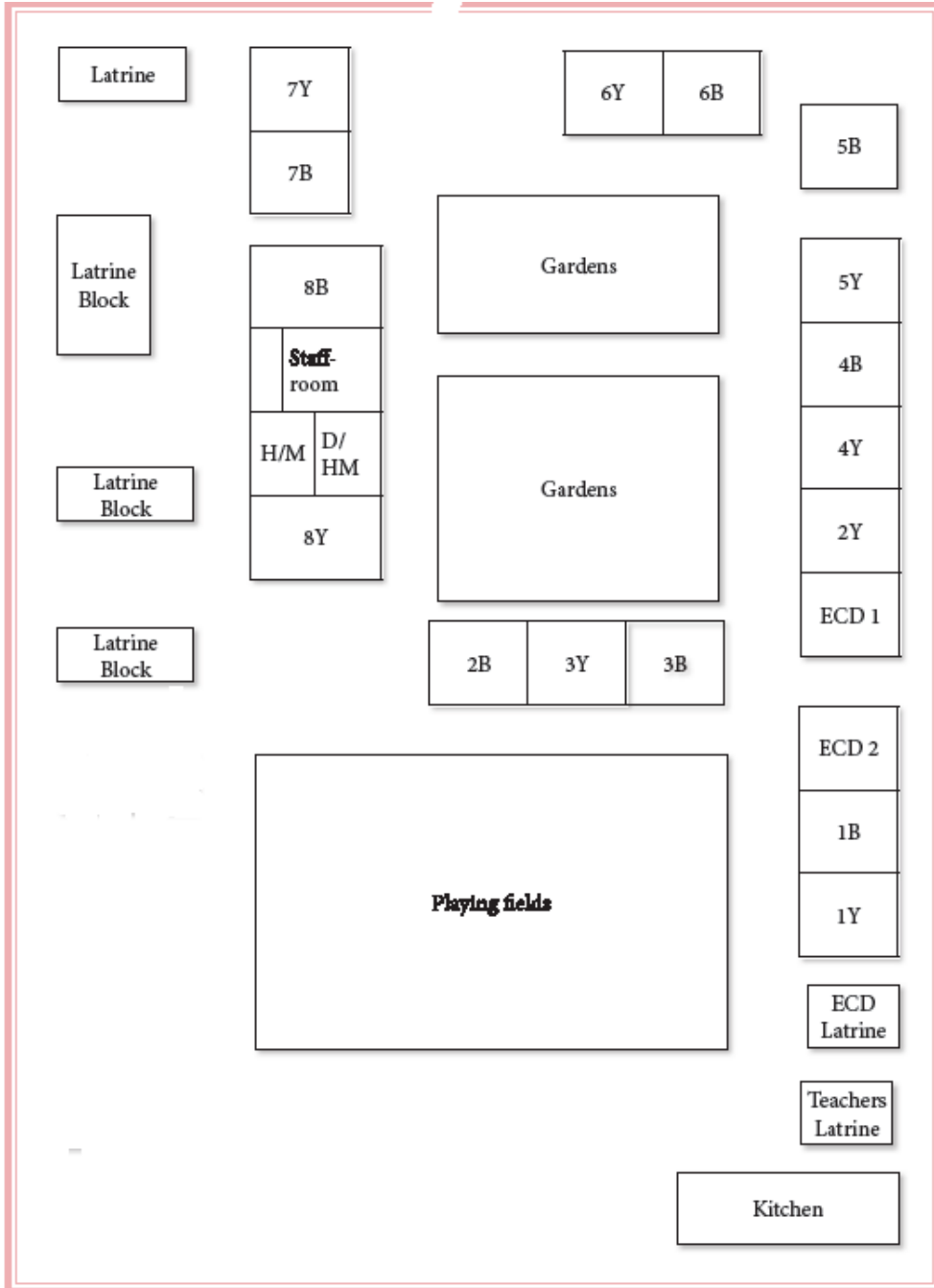
Also displayed on a staffroom wall was a list of school resolutions that had been agreed upon by the teaching staff and parents prior to my arrival.

Figure 5.2 RESOLUTIONS

1. To serve as if serving God.
2. To make sure the syllabus is well covered in all classes.
3. To have a remedial timetable adhered to.
4. To have regular continuous tests.
5. Parents to assist both teachers and pupils.
6. To ensure a high standard of discipline is maintained.
7. Set achievable targets and objectives.
8. Maintain good teacher/pupil relationships.
9. Maintain regular guidance and counselling.
10. Maintain school traditions.
11. Stakeholders to observe time.
12. Learning to enhance the school motto.

These resolutions and the earlier stated inscriptions on the school gate indicate the educational aspirations likely to shape teachers' professional identity. Along with the need for discipline on the part of all parties, is the requirement for remedial lessons and continuous assessment to meet their targets in syllabus coverage, and to support pupils' welfare. It is recognised that achievement will only be attained through a shared responsibility amongst pupils, teachers and parents. The influence of the Catholic Church, the official sponsor of the school, is noted in the first resolution - to serve as if serving God - and might also account for the association of being professional with self-sacrifice, a key theme arising from this research. The resolutions also reflect an understanding of the part relationships play in learning hence mention is made of maintaining good teacher /pupil relationships, guidance and counselling and school traditions.

Since the staffroom is too small to house all 22 members of staff, the Lower Primary teachers mark and prepare their work either at their classroom desks, or weather permitting, outside under the Nandi Flame tree - the Shrine. They meet with the senior teacher informally almost on a daily basis to coordinate lesson planning and discuss needs or challenges

specific to their level. The teachers of the ECD classes spend most of their working hours within their own classrooms as the children cannot be left unsupervised. The only time they meet their colleagues is during the lunch time meal after their pupils have gone home for the day. These different working spaces facilitate different ways of being and allow teachers to identify more with certain spaces than with others. The Upper Primary teachers appeared to rotate between various classrooms, outside spaces and the staffroom, whilst the Lower Primary and ECD teachers seemed to spend the majority of their time in their own classrooms and when not there, they were to be found at the 'Shrine'.

The first door on the left of the staffroom opens into the shared deputy head teachers' office, which also doubles up as the book store and a counselling room. The deputies each have their own tables which face each other across a narrow passage leading to the book shelves that cover an entire wall. One deputy supports the head teacher in overseeing curriculum implementation, whilst the other assists her in general school administration such as new admissions and discipline. Every evening, all the textbooks and teaching materials pertaining to Lower Primary are collected from the classes and packed into their respective tin boxes for overnight storage in this office.

The second door on the left, off the staffroom opens into the head teacher's office which in turn doubles as the visual aid and examination store. A medium sized table, which acts as the head teacher's desk and three wooden chairs occupy the centre of this room and on a smaller table alongside one wall are the trophies celebrating the school's previous achievements in examinations and sports. Behind the head teacher's table is a notice board on which is displayed key information concerning the school. This includes its mission and vision statements, pupil enrolment figures, the last five years' achievement record in national examinations, teachers' responsibilities, present members of the school management committee and the numbers of the school bank accounts. A photograph of the incumbent President hangs above the notice board. The prominent

display of the school's achievement in national examinations could be taken to illustrate the community's interest in external examination results.

Table5. 3 SchoolsK. C. P. E Performance

Year	Entry	Mean score
2000	23	396.35
2001	25	271.68
2002	30	293.78
2003	34	280.67
2004	48	284.42
2005	52	275.36
2006	56	257.7
2007	52	270.5
2008	69	294.06
2009	57	297.56
2010	56	292.18
2011	67	282.90

The positioning of the chart captures the attention of prospective parents visiting the school for the first time and also serves as a reminder to the head teacher and her staff of their collective responsibility to maintain the school's district rating. Though modest by some accounts, the mean score ratings indicate that despite the surge in candidate figures following the 2003 FPE policy the school has maintained an average pass rate which was repeatedly presented at parents meetings. During the period of my research, I witnessed a constant flow of pupils, teachers, parents and leaders of the local community into the head teacher's office. Her door

was usually open unless she was attending to a matter that required discretion. This open door policy, though demanding, engendered a team spirit amongst the teaching staff.

As the school's capitation grant does not cover the provision of school meals in this district, parents of Upper Primary pupils contributed in kind and cash towards the school's lunch programme. At the beginning of the year parents contributed, seven *gorogoros* (measures of approximately 2 kilos) of maize, 3 *gorogoro*s of beans and a hundred Kenyan shillings towards the cost of other ingredients and the cooks salary. Periodically pupils were asked to bring pieces of firewood to support the lunch programme. Teachers saw this programme to be especially useful in ensuring children remained on the compound during the lunch hour and even assuring a meal during the hard periods of general food shortages between May and August. For reasons of security, the school's food store was housed within the administrative block, the only area with barred windows and doors. The school also hires a watchman, who along with the cook, are the only support staff.

Across the quadrangle, directly opposite the administration block, were two blocks of classrooms. The first was a brick building with open window frames, which at the time of my research housed Class 5Y. It was to be extended to accommodate Class 5B once the bricks had been made and baked. The other building was the longest, mud walled, corrugated iron roofed block on the compound that incorporated part of the original classrooms built in 1995. It was home to Class 5B, Classes 4B and 4Y, Class 2B and one ECD class. This building had no shutters and its mud walls and floors required constant maintenance. In Class 4, three pupils shared a bench desk in pre-appointed groups of 9 sharing textbooks to the ratio of one to three. Visual aids were suspended from the roof beams of these classrooms daily, whilst other charts were nailed to the mud walls. Sitting in any of these classrooms at midday was an uncomfortably experience as one was only too aware of the heat emanating from the low corrugated iron roof above. Conversely, on the occasions when it rained it

was impossible to communicate within the classrooms due to the sound of the pounding raindrops on the iron sheets.

Completing the quadrangle on the fourth side and opposite the school gate was another brick building housing Classes 3B, 3Y and 2Y. The construction of this block was funded through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). These classrooms have both wooden shutters for windows and wooden doors but earthen floors. They also had desks to the ratio of one to three. Because of the security of their walls and windows teachers were able to permanently display learning materials on the walls and from the roof beams. The Senior Teacher being in charge of Class 3Y was advantageously placed to monitor activity in the compound.

The classroom block containing Classes 1B and 1Y and the other ECD class sited along the fence, immediately behind the Class 3 block. This too was a mud walled, corrugated roofed building. The ECD class was furnished with two large tables on either side of the room each seating ten pupils. Twelve pupils sat on benches along the back wall of the classroom doing their work on their laps and the remainders were on plastic chairs near the front of the class, again working on their laps. In one corner at the back of the classroom, the teacher had improvised a general 'shop' area using empty grocery cartons and hardware tins. Different coloured pop bottle tops substituted for the various denominations of coins. Only the ECD class had wire meshed windows and wooden doors. This ECD teacher was able to have a permanent display on her classroom walls and to store her teaching aids in cardboard boxes in one corner at the back of the classroom, because of the security afforded by the wire mesh windows and the lockable doors.

Separate blocks of pit latrines were located around the school compound. Primary boys and girls used the two separate blocks each located on the far side of the playing field, whilst the ECD pupils used the block nearest their classrooms. The staff latrines were discreetly located away from the classrooms and close to those used by the ECD pupils. The water for all school needs was drawn from a protected borehole behind the Class 3

block to the side of the second ECD classroom. Near the borehole was a single room which served both as the kitchen and firewood store. The school had no dining room facilities, so pupils queued with their plates to be served at the kitchen door. No staff housing was within the school compound, so teachers either rented rooms in the nearby village or commuted from other locations. The school tried to be pro-active in income generation by growing trees in parts of the school compound and along the fence. It was hoped that once the trees had matured they would be felled and used to make school furniture or sold and the proceeds used to improve facilities.

The bare earth classroom floors in majority of classrooms needed to be smeared with a new coating of cow dung at least once a week in order to keep the dust down. Cow dung smearing was a culturally assigned gender role to female pupils, whilst the boys were tasked with moving the classroom furniture and fetching water for mixing the dung. This was usually programmed for the Thursday afternoon breaks. Due to constant footfall, the mud floors became rutted and uneven, so periodically the boys were tasked to dig and re-level the floors. In addition to these tasks, each Upper Primary pupil was expected to bring a quota of firewood to school each week for the school kitchen.

The playing field was divided up into a football pitch, a volleyball court and a netball court. The football pitch also doubled up as an outdoor learning activity area for ECD pupils. Though there was limited sports equipment, the pupils made up for the shortfall by improvisation. Balls for instance, were made up of layered plastic bags and paper held together by a string until they reached the requisite size, skipping ropes were plaited from dried sisal strands, stones and bottle tops used as counters for board games, sticks became makeshift goal posts and bicycle tubes were utilised as hoops when required.

Aside from the head teacher, the two deputy head teachers, the senior teacher and examination officer, the administration of the school also included a non-denominational chaplain, a sportsmaster a counselling team

and class teachers. Though the school was under Catholic sponsorship, a teacher was assigned to the position of a non-denominational chaplaincy to provide focus for inter-faith spiritual support valued by the parents. A young teacher, with six years classroom experience was put in charge of sports, though he was supported by colleagues in the preparation of teams for zonal or district competitions. Each member of the teaching staff was allocated a rotational duty week each term. During this period, they were responsible for ensuring pupil punctuality, cleanliness and participation in co-curricula activities. The school prefects, representatives of the senior classes and appointed by the staff, helped in the execution of these duties. Individual class teachers were responsible for the maintenance of the attendance registers, pupil progress records and the completion of end of term report cards. They were also involved in the pastoral care of their class.

5.2 Key Participants

While the school provided the context of the case, seven teachers served as key informants. Through them I was able to follow and document key teacher/pupil and teacher/parent interactions. This section profiles each participating teacher, outlining the rationale for their selection and their particular contribution to the research process.

Though I initially intended to use six teachers, seven teachers were chosen as my chief informants - one from early childhood, one from Lower Primary, two from the middle and two from the Upper Primary. To insure against any unforeseen mid-term teacher transfer, an occurrence not unknown in Kenyan schools, the head teacher advised me to select an extra teacher bringing my informants to seven. The selected participants of varying ages, levels of education and experience also reflected the main ethnic groups present in the district. Although my initial aim was to attain a gender balance, due to the high proportion of female teachers within this school, four female and three males were eventually selected.

5. 2. 1 Mrs. Wafula

Mrs. Wafula was one of the teachers representing the ECD section with a teaching experience of nine years. As an ECD teacher she was a valuable participant in highlighting the differences in teachers' terms of service, the multiplicity of teacher identities and the different learning approaches at her level.   Though she holds a certificate in Early Childhood Education, Mrs. Wafula's terms of service differed from the other teachers as she was employed by parents rather than the Teachers Service commission which recruited and managed staff for public primary schools. Her salary and terms of service were different, negotiated at the school level with the School Management Committee and payments were contingent upon parental contributions.

Unless Mrs. Wafula and her class were involved in an outdoor learning activity on the playing field, any school visitor could easily be unaware of their existence due to the location of her class outside the quadrangle. Possibly because of this position and the absence of a teaching assistant herresponsibilities for the young pupils kept her mainly within the bounds of her own classroom. She had limited contact with the rest of the school. She was married and not only lived on a plot of land forming part of the original Estate, but was also a parent in the school. Her own five year old daughter was a pupil in her class, whilst her ten year old son was in Class 4. Her dual role as teacher and parent, plus the fact she lived within the school's catchment area, made her a particularly informative participant. She interacted with parents at many different levels; as teacher, neighbor and member of the same church congregation. In addition, as her salary came directly from parent contributions, she was essentially their employee, a relationship parents did not have with the other teachers. When conversing with parents, she frequently referred to them by the name of their child, thus Amos' mother was simply referred as 'Mama Amos' and Amos' father as 'Baba Amos'. This locally acceptable convention also reflects the roots of communal selfhood discussed in chapter three where a person is seen in the light of a line of others from whom he or she is associated. When the school deemed it necessary to

send any of her ECD pupils home, for their parents' contributions to her salary, she was caught between her feelings as a neighbor and an employee. She had known many of her pupils since birth and their parents, as neighbours expected her to understand their straightened circumstances. When the SMC sent children home to collect unpaid contributions for the various building projects, her son, in Class 4, would report to her classroom door.

When I arrived at the school to start my fieldwork, a teacher from the ECD section had just resigned to set up a private nursery school in a different part of the country and had taken most of her teaching/learning resources with her. There were semi filled jars, gaps in the wall where charts had been scraped off and left over bottle tops. When Mrs.Wafula took over the class, she quickly prepared new materials as well as orientate the new teacher recruited for the second ECD class. During the two weeks of orientation, the two classes were combined and the new teacher observed Mrs.Wafula teaching and helped the pupils with their tasks. Most of these lessons were held outdoors because the classroom was too small to accommodate all the pupils. After a fortnight, the new teacher was allowed to move into her own classroom.

Though all the pupils were expected to be in school by 7am some allowance was made for her ECD pupils still adjusting to school routines to arrive later. Once inside the class, lessons began with an examination of personal cleanliness, followed by language and number activities, and outdoor play. Mrs. Wafula's lessons followed a particular pattern and rhythm which included songs, movement, listening, games and role playing. The transition into different segments of learning was made to appear seamless and opportunity was availed for individual, group and whole class involvement. Most of the materials and examples were drawn from the local environment or prepared by the teacher around the themes of family members, domestic animals and familiar crops. ECD lessons were allocated to the morning hours interspersed with two short breaks. The teacher was constantly interrupted by requests from pupils and visits

from respective parents. The afternoon was spent either cleaning the classroom or preparing or repairing teaching aids

An unfortunate incident in her personal life, afforded me an opportunity of witnessing how the school administration and teaching staff rallied round a colleague in time of need. One evening, when Mrs. Wafula was cooking supper, her ten year old son fell backwards from the fence into the family water borehole. Luckily, his fall was witnessed by his five year old sister who raised the alarm shouting, 'He's gone!'With the neighbours' help, he was hoisted out of the borehole and rushed to hospital, where he remained under observation for a week. Mrs. Wafula stayed by his bedside for the duration while her lessons were taught by the other ECD teacher. Whilst in hospital she was visited every day by a representative of the school and the staff as a whole contributed towards the boy's medical fees. Witnessing the pace and commitment with which the school community rallied to her support challenged my perception of the distinction between teachers' personal and professional identities and helped me to realise how the boundary between the two becomes blurred.

During staff meetings, I noticed that Mrs. Wafula's contribution was limited to confirmation of her class's requirements or in answer to a question the administration directed to her. A reason for her level of participation cannot be offered beyond possible biographical differences, but perhaps the different schemes of service and work routines might have contributed to her sense of personal and professional identity. Within the classroom, however, she assumed a more vibrant persona.

5. 2.2 Mrs.Lunani

Mrs.Lunani was selected on the basis of being a Lower Primary class teacher. Through her participation, I was able to observe teaching/ learning activities at Lower Primary and to see how a teachers' professional identity was shaped by the extensive out of class administrative roles associated with organizational professionalism. Besides being a class teacher, Mrs. Lunani also holds the position of Senior Teacher which in this school entailed supervision and oversight for

curriculum coverage at Lower Primary and ECD classes. In this role she facilitates joint planning for lessons on a daily basis, creating opportunity for colleagues to talk about the highlights of their lessons in a sympathetic and often practical way. Her role was to help teachers taking separate classes at the same level to keep pace with each other and to support each other when for some reason one of them could not attend school. The arrangements for joint planning and the conversations around lesson coverage, though limited, were an opportunity to enhance a shared occupational orientation to their professional task.

Mrs.Lunani also coordinates the school counselling programme, the school feeding programme and pupil/teacher welfare initiatives. She had undergone additional training in counselling skills by the Ministry of Education. She arranged counselling interventions for pupils affected by bereavement, family conflicts, parents' prolonged illness, or separation or , inexplicable pupil absenteeism, truancy, and any disruptive behaviour. In some cases a single conversation with an assigned teacher could remedy the situation. In other cases prolonged follow up, possibly involving a counselling team, respective parents and community elders, would be required before the matter could be satisfactorily resolved. As part of the schools welfare programme she was in charge of the school feeding progamme, ensuring the quality and safety of parental contributions. Mrs. Lunani, like other female teachers of middle age always dressed formally in skirt suits. Unlike other Lower Primary teachers, she both attended and addressed all parent meetings, staff meetings and class specific review meetings. This could be attributed to her role, experience and personal disposition.

She is also credited with being the first TSC appointee to the school and therefore her in-depth knowledge of its history, coupled with over 20 years teaching experience, made her a particularly informative participant. When she was first posted to the school she is reported to have singlehandedly conducted lessons within a church compound for 48 children at three different class levels until they moved to their present site and received more teachers. She was part of the pioneer effort to raise

funds for the new school building before the advent of the Free Primary Education policy. When asked why she was not a head teacher, given her experience, she explained that her husband was a head teacher in another school and with three children of school age to raise she could not sacrifice the time needed to fulfil headship responsibilities. Nevertheless, the fact that she was not a head teacher did not seem to diminish her sense of commitment or the amount of time she spent in school. To me, her reluctance to aspire to the role of head teacher was a matter of perception rather than the time or level of responsibility it entailed.

Mrs. Lunani lives on the edge of the school's catchment area, but retains a strong sense of identity both with the school as an institution in her neighbourhood and as a product of her personal influence as a teacher. Most of the parents are known to her personally either as neighbours, fellow church goers, former pupils or members of the various women's groups to which she is affiliated. She was often at the forefront of the school's response when a pupil or teacher's family was affected by illness or bereavement. Though most of her own children are beyond primary age, she also acts as guardian to two pupils in Class 6 and 7 from her extended family. During the course of my field work she missed school on three different occasions in relation to an existing medical condition and to arrange for her daughter's admission to a new secondary school. In these cases the head teacher was notified in advance and prior arrangements were made for her lessons to be covered by the teacher in the other stream. Once again I witnessed the support teachers received from each other in times of need.

5. 2.3 Mrs. Mutai

Mrs.Mutai was a participant representing the mid primary, teaching classes 4- 6. She was middle aged with twelve years post training teaching experience in three different schools within the county. Through her, I was able to appreciate the challenges teachers in middle level classes experience helping pupils transit from Lower to Upper Primary. In her lessons, I witnessed the transition in persona as she moved from one subject tone to another, from the practical focus of Science lessons, to the

exuberance of CRE and the grammatical focus of English lessons. As an Upper Primary teacher she was allocated a place at the second table in the staff room.

The course of her lessons illustrated the challenges facing middle school teachers in a multilingual, rural context. At the beginning of the school year, as a Class 4 teacher, it was her responsibility and that of other teachers at this level, to ease the transition class into the new routines of Upper Primary. This entailed accustoming them to a full school day, longer lessons and different subject teachers. I observed the difficulties she faced with translation and the effort it took to make the learning material accessible to all. Though she herself hails from the Kalenjin community, she often used words and phrases from other languages spoken by children in her class. The seamless code switching from English to Kiswahili and a pupils mother tongue to ensure class participation was informative. Often she referred to her pupils as 'watoto wangu'[my children] which alludes to a parental relationship with the class. They responded to her approach and enjoyed the passion and action sequences she brought to her lessons.

Mrs.Mutai commutes daily from her farm - a distance of about 4 kilometres. From her experience in three different schools, she helped to highlight the effect of school's culture and ethos on shaping a teacher's identity, though she argues that one must love their work and be driven by self-volition rather than compulsion. She distinguishes between performing and non performing schools on the basis of achievement. Whereas she classified her current school as a performing school with the administration setting the example in taking responsibility, she considered some of the other schools she had worked in as non-performing.

She believed the syllabus in Classes 4-6 forms the foundation for the National Examination and so reflected this in her teaching. Because of the centrality of the Ten Commandments to Christian philosophy, she said they were a frequent examination area so she ensured that her pupils were well acquainted with them before Class 5. This fundamental belief had

been imbibed by her pupils to the extent before each CRE class they were chanting the Ten Commandments before she arrived for the lesson.

There was a clear distinction between her Science and CRE lessons. The latter included a significant amount of time devoted to singing, question and answer sessions based on examples from the pupils' lives and rote learning. The Science lessons on the other hand, were far more practical and rooted in the familiar, thus tooth care lessons included sessions of teeth brushing using both twigs and tooth brushes with toothpaste or salt.

5. 2.4 Mr. Kidaki
Mr. Kidaki was also a participant from the middle level classes. He taught English, Mathematics and Social Studies in Classes 4 - 6 and was the class teacher of Class 5Y. He was a quiet, soft spoken man but his voice always acquired a more assertive tone in class as if to affirm his authority. At 28, Mr. Kidaki, was one of the youngest staff members and lived with his family on the outskirts of Kitale town so had a daily *matatu* (local minibus) commute of about 30 kilometres. Despite this he was in school by 7.30 am and usually left around 5pm. With six years post training experience, this was Mr. Kidaki's first school and his youth and athletic build made him the most suitable candidate to coordinate ball games and outdoor activities, though this was an area that took up very little of his school time. Most of his time was devoted to lessons preparation and teaching and he told me that on average he marked 94 books a day.

Perhaps because of being relatively young he was most vocal about his training experience and the proposed education changes. He earnestly supported the school's effort to teach the full syllabus, but personally felt it was too wide and impossible to cover adequately without extra tuition. During post lesson discussions he was forthright in lessons acknowledging how he might have made the lessons more effective. He was fully aware of the ongoing discussions concerning the proposed new education system, but was more concerned with its subsequent implications in terms of the school's position on published league tables. He understood the recent

constitutional changes as merely widening the competition for his pupils, since districts had been combined to form counties.

When asked to teach at Lower Primary level, he confessed to finding it demanding and though proficient at Lower/Upper Primary level, he stated his preference for teaching at the Upper Primary classes. With Mr. Kidaki, I saw the elation and despair that often goes hand in hand with a teacher's work. In the school, he was foremost amongst the teachers who monitored and celebrated past pupils' placement in the different types of secondary schools. His sense of pride when talking about successful past pupils was almost tangible, but I also witnessed his undisputed frustration when lessons did not go as well as expected or pupils did not achieve as highly as he envisaged in continuous assessment tests.

5.2. 5 Mr. Kadi

Mr. Kadi's age, experience, responsibilities and dual role as teacher and parent made him a resourceful participant. Through him I was able to witness the pressure piled upon Upper Primary teachers and how they appeared driven to prove their worth through pupil achievements. The value attached to his work and the attention he allocated to organizing and supervising the administration of internal and external assessments, the analysis of the results and discussion forums with the relevant parties highlighted a given perception as to the role of schooling. Our scheduled classroom observation sessions frequently had to be rescheduled due to his examination related assignments. At the time of my fieldwork, he taught English, Science and Kiswahili in Upper Primary, but was better known for his role as examination officer, which seemed to regulate his relationship with hiss staffmates and the school community highlighting the impact of the organizational discourse on teacher professionalism. He was among the older members of staff and exuded an air of confidence in his formal attire and measured tone. With over 20 years post training teaching experience, he was looked upon by younger colleagues as an immediate resource in the subjects he taught, especially Kiswahili. As an Upper Primary teacher he was assigned a space at the first table in the staff room and had a space allocation on the wall shelves.

He was married and lived on his farm four kilometres away from the school commuting daily on a *boda boda* (riding pillion on a motor bike). Mr. Kadi said he was influenced in his choice of career by the positive influence his teachers exerted on their pupils and the status they held within the community. He was a Luhya by tribe and a Quaker by religious affiliation, but voiced no objection to working in a catholic sponsored school, as he says - 'God is one'. Perhaps because of his age, identity and post of responsibility within the school, he was often involved in counselling duties and called upon to address parents, some of whom he had previously taught. As a parent of a KCPE candidate in the school he was expected to make whatever financial contributions agreed upon in the SMC meetings.

He executed his teaching tasks with the familiarity of one who knows his material intimately with no need for over-reliance on textbooks. Having benefitted from an in-service training supported by DfID(Department for International Development) for Key resource teachers, his lessons were informative and relatively innovative in presentation, yet outside the classroom he disclosed a distinct unease at the prospect of sweeping changes likely to be effected under the new education system. Teaching gave him a sense of satisfaction and affirmed his identity because for the most part he felt his pupils responded favourably to the challenges he presented and their parents were grateful and had respect for his work.

5.2.6 Mr. Kimutai

Mr. Kimutai, a middle aged, Upper Primary school teacher, was provisionally earmarked, on the advice of the head teacher, as a replacement participant in the event of a transfer or drop out. The necessity for such a replacement did not actually arise and though I had less contact time with him, I feel his contributions to the research process are worthy of reflection. I conducted one semi- structured interview with him and through his comments at various staff, class and parents' meetings I attended, was able to attain a deeper understanding of participants' apprehension in relation to identity research and benefit from specific views concerning teachers' professional identity.

At the time of my field work, he was one of the two deputy head teachers charged with curriculum supervision, timetable management and coverage of the syllabus, particularly at the upper level. He also taught Mathematics in Class 8 and spent a considerable amount of time coaching individual pupils. He was passionate about his subject and utterly disconcerted at the language used to refer to it in social conversations or the manner in which it was taught by less enthusiastic teachers.

.He acknowledged teaching was not his initial choice of career, though admitted it could be very rewarding. He was of the opinion teachers dignified their professional status by their sense of dress, their resourcefulness and by their general conduct. Perhaps because of his role as deputy head in charge of syllabus coverage, he felt the syllabus was achievable with proper management, though he did feel additional resources would make curriculum implementation more effective. He argued that senior teachers at least had an opportunity to contribute to education change through participation in such projects as Strengthening Mathematics and Science Education (SMASSE), though admitted such occasions were infrequent. From his administrative position, his interview responses reflect a desire to be in harmony with the rest of the staff but also to ascertain standards and regulations

Formal observation of his lessons, though scheduled, was not held. I am uncertain as to whether his work schedule was the reason or the excuse for this omission, though he did invite me to other open meetings he organised or individual support to pupils. It is possible, as a senior, male member of staff he was uncomfortable with the prospect of being observed by a woman, and though informed, uncertain as to the ramifications of the process on his personal standing in the school. He helped me to appreciate how research into identity could be unsettling and pose a possible threat to participants regardless of their age, experience or seniority. Towards the latter end of my fieldwork, he did invite me to observe his lessons, perhaps because time was then available or because the other participants had assured him of the confidentiality of the process, but at that time it was no

longer possible to fit him into my programme. In this thesis, reference will be made only to material he has given consent for use.

5. 2. 7 Miss Chebet

Miss Chebet, an Upper Primary participant illustrated a range of issues pertaining to teacher identity in this context. Through her I came to understand the influence age, self-development, personal choices and level of teaching have on a teachers' sense of self. Similarly, she seemed to represent a glimpse of the changes taking place in the teachers' profiles that invites reflection on the structures in place for staff management.

She was young, single, trendy and clearly ambitions. She distinguished herself in her very individual sense of dress. Her choice of dress in formal trousers distinguished her among her staff mates in the rural context of her school and exemplified contemporary influences over individual teachers' sense of self and the attendant influence on being professional. She came across as a driven personality with a zest for life and a willingness to work towards achieving her dreams. Living on the outskirts of the nearest town to afford her the quality of life she desired, she commuted daily to school. Though a trained Certificate holder she was already in her final year of a Bachelor of Education through a part time programme at the university and considering further studies. Through her own struggle to improve her qualification and the confidence this extra step gave her I came to appreciate the value that teachers attach to their own learning journeys. Juggling her study, work and personal life influenced her expectations of the class 8 candidates. Similarly the hopes she held for a transformation in life following successful completion of further study influenced the expectation and model she presented to her pupils. Meeting Miss Chebet challenged some of my initial thoughts of what a primary teacher might be.

Through her experience as an Upper Primary teacher I came to appreciate the pace of work in teaching an examination class. Her concern was not just with what the pupils should learn at her level but what they had learnt

earlier and need to learn or revise. Despite only having six years teaching experience, she had been allocated to teach Social Studies in class 8. This is a very broad subject incorporating Geography, History, Civics and Christian Religious Education. Through her I saw how teachers devise their own ways of dealing with syllabus challenges and how these initiatives eventually become the subject of further legislation.

Despite being amongst the youngest teachers on the compound she did not allow her youthfulness to detract from her role. She set a very high standard of discipline in her lessons and expected it to be maintained - pupils had to be punctual, handed in their assignment at the set time, maintain personal and classroom cleanliness and accept reprimands in the light in which they were given. Her lessons were peppered with reminders of acceptable behaviour both in and out of the classroom and school assemblies were viewed as an opportunity to foster such social values as honesty, integrity, work ethos and community spirit. Despite the fact her pupils came from different ethnic communities, she believed their achievements were not predetermined by origin, but by hard work and opportunity.

5.2 Summary

By introducing key participants against the detailed backdrop of their school backgroundthis chapter sets the contextfor reflection on the meaning of being professional in relation to utilising local, pedagogical and self knowledge during reform processes. The details of school context show a social organism whose self determined change trajectory is likely to be disrupted and redirected by externally determined reforms. The chapterhas highlightedissues that separately influence discourses on education reform and likely interpretations of teachers' professional identity.Key participants were introduced to illustrate the fact that teachers are individuals, each with their particular story but all united in what they aspire to in relation to their work and context. Each individual teacher's sense of identity is related to the meanings they associate to their sense of self, their respective responsibility and level taught. By their practices and

beliefs the participants helped me to develop a comprehensive understanding of the diverse issues that reflect teacher's internalised role expectations. Through the observation of their lessons, attendance at staff and parent meetings and through semi structured and opportunistic interviews, I gained an insight into the subjectivities and discourses that influence their professional identity and education reform as will be illustrated in subsequent chapters.

6.0 TEACHERS' INTERNALISED ROLE EXPECTATIONS

Overview

Since professionalism is discussed as an ideological, attitudinal and epistemological stance (Evans 2008) the distinctive contribution of this chapter is in presenting the nuanced subjectivities that were said to influence how teachers' professional identity is experienced within the research context. Though professional identity is said to be acquired through training, teachers are said to judge themselves and each other's professionality on the basis of pupil achievement and behavioural development which are said to result from the teachers' discipline, dedication and self-sacrifice. This understanding reflects the conflicting discourses of professionalism where teachers are expected to be driven by an altruistic orientation associated with occupational professionalism to meet managerially determined targets associated with organisational professionalism.

Whilst bearing in mind the participants' possible partiality and positionality, this discussion illustrates how teachers' self expectations within current policy frameworks limit or expand their capacity to engage with the reform process. The debate on communication skills often cited in classroom observations in this context challenges identity perceptions and the role teacher professionalism should play in improving pedagogical knowledge and practices. Evidence is triangulated from semi structured interviews, classroom observations and meetings.

6.1 Introduction

As earlier noted in the literature, identity is constructed in the meeting of one's internalised role expectations and the social suggestions of significant others within a particular landscape. The symbolic interactionists view that bevahiour is depended upon a named and classified world in which actors hold role expectations of themselves and of those with whom they interact was explained in chapter 3. Though

meanings are negotiated, action is premised on the knowledge of one's presumed role expectation. In this chapter, the discourses influencing participants' internalised role expectations are discussed in related themes.

6.2   Training as an Initiation into Professional Identity

During my field work I sought to establish whether teachers in this context considered themselves professionals. The extracts below are taken from their responses to the question:

> Question: Is teaching a profession?

> Mr. Kadi: Teachers are professionals. Went to school. Trained to be classroom teachers. Went to college willingly.

> Mr. Kidaki: It is a profession because we went to school, pursued a 2-year training as professionals. We were posted to schools to exercise profession. We have professional ethics. We are paid as professionals. In school there is professional practice and chain of command that we follow. We have professional documents, schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes and teaching aids.

> Mr. Kimutai: Teaching is professional work. We follow ethics. We went through two years course. I take it as a profession.

> Mrs. Lunani: It is not like any other job. I trained for two years and came out a professional teacher.

> Mrs Wafula: It is a profession. As a teacher you look at a child and you understand his problem whether it is from home or their health. I was in Lodwar. I trained for two years.

They all, without hesitation, consider teaching a profession and point to their two year training as an important path to becoming professionals. While reference to training was comparatively less frequent than the other themes discussed here it is significant that all conversations regarding teacher professionalism in the one-to-one interviews with teachers acknowledged its influence on their internalised role expectations. Mr.

Kidaki's response reflects an understanding that training introduces one to the ethics, routines, practices and procedures that a professional teacher is expected to follow. Mrs.Wafula considers teachers' capacity to understand learners as a key part of that training. Though two of my participants had earlier confessed to having joined teaching against their better judgment, they all acknowledged the influence pre-service training had on their internalised role expectations (Coldron and Smith 1999). Their argument reflects the belief the accolade - professional - can only be bestowed by a recognised external authority or gate keeper. It is not something an individual can lay claim to of their own volition. Someone made them believe they were professionals because someone trained them to think so. It was during this time they were introduced to the concept of teacher 'professionalism' through 'professional studies' and socialised into the practices of professional teachers. Even after fourteen years of post-training service, Mr. Kimutai, still acknowledges its influence on his sense of being a professional:

> Before, teaching was not my choice of career. I wanted to be a nurse. The attitude was not ok. I was focusing on outcomes. But the training, it is the training and programmes that made me to accept and enjoy it. I ended up accepting it. You were made a teacher. You were made one.You can make it better. Try to improve it. But you accept it first. Preparedness is making us excel as teachers.

Apparently, something in his training helped him to overcome his initial reluctance, to accept and now even take pride in teaching as a career. His use of the passive pre-training voice '*You were made a teacher. You were made one*' followed by the active post-training voice,' *You can make it better. Try to improve it*.' is informative. It suggests that the trainee teachers' uncertainty, even dependence, during the pre-qualification phase is progressively replaced by a growing confidence which allows for creativity as one advances in their career. Failure to channel and optimise on the use of post training creativity represents a potential threat to teachers' motivation and self-efficacy as earlier discussed(Fullan 2006). Mr Kimutai attributes confidence to the acceptance of one's role and preparation for what one does repeatedly. An element of reflection on

what one does is implied in the preparedness that leads to excelling. Without the acceptance, the motivation to improve what one does would be lacking, and without the preparation one cannot anticipate or contributed to improvements. As a curriculum supervisor Mr. Kimutai attributes the school's relative success to the level of teacher preparation.

Training as entry into being a professional is widely supported and researched (Beauchamps and Thomas 2009, Shepen et al. 2009,Sutherlandet al.2010). Not surprisingly, many of the studies reviewed by Beijaard et al. (2004) focused on teachers' identity formation at this stage as this was thought important to teacher educators and mentors(Kelchetermans1994, Bullough 1995). Carratero and Borrelli (2006:p.4)describe professional identity as an 'open constructed system', which is the product of personal, internalised and socio-institutional representations, where 'the academic institution and the course of studies are given great importance as privileged sources of influence in the construction of professional identity' (Carratero and Borrelli 2006:p.7). When training is viewed as the gateway into being a professional teacher, as is the case with Mr. Kidaki, it fulfills one of the original criteria for professionalism as enumerated by Millerson (1964). However, unlike other professionals whose professional bodies regulate entry into their fold teachers in this context are certified through managerial structures. The Kenya National Examination Council examines and certifies primary school teachers whilst a constitutionally mandated Teachers Service Commission (TSC) registers and regulates teachers in public service on behalf of the government. Professional bodies such as the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) were not seen to have a role in determining teacher qualification and professional status.

Though it is beyond the scope of this research to determine the breadth and depth of the Kenyan primary teacher training programmes or to make comparisons with other contexts, available literature suggests what is entailed. Entry into primary level teaching in Kenya currently depends on attaining a C grade in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) and completing a 2 year certificate course in primary education

training (MOE 2012). There is however, a proposal to have all primary teachers upgrade to degree level. Table 6.1 outlines the present content of the national two year teacher training course for primary school teachers.

Table 6.1   Subjects offered at Primary Teacher Training Colleges

YEAR 1	YEAR2
Subject	**Core Subject**
English	English
Kiswahili	Kiswahili
Mathematics	Education
Religious education	Physical education
Social studies	Information Communication and Technology
Physical Education (PE)	
Professional Studies	**OPTION A** **OPTION B**
Education	Mathematics Arts and craft
Information Communication and Technology	Science Music
	Agriculture Social studies
	Homescience Religious education
Physical Education (PE)	

(Bunyi et. el.2011)

As can be seen from the above table, the training covers subjects expected to be taught at Primary level to give teachers the confidence and authority to guide their pupils. During the second year, trainees have the choice of either taking humanities or the mathematics and science options. The professional studies component in the first year comprises such foundational disciplines as history, philosophy, psychology, sociology of education, comparative education, curriculum studies, education administration, special needs education, guidance and counselling and specific legal issues in relation to education, all of which are designed to enhance a professional framework for teachers' practice. In the light of this research the inclusion of the following two objectives under this heading is worth noting:

- Develop awareness for innovation in the field of education and utilise them appropriately.
- Develop rational approach to problem solving through enquiry and research.

(Bunyi et al. 2011:p.18)

Accordingly, a professional teacher is expected to keep abreast of developments in education, and apply lateral thinking and research to problem solving. Though the policy expectation is clearly stated the challenge is how post training teachers would demonstrate that they were actively involved in problem solving and keeping a breast with innovations in their field. If there was a framework for evaluating and disseminating the progressive innovations teachers individually or collectively made within their school, it was not evident to me, which led me to question how such innovation was expected to be disclosed.

I sought to understand what key participants felt they were trained for. Over the course of my fieldwork, each participant was asked a number of open ended questions pertaining to their perception of the role and responsibilities of a teacher. The key question posed was - What does a professional teacher do? - This generated a lengthy list of roles and responsibilities which they saw to lie within their boundaries. Their specific responses are significant, both for what they consider important to mention and what is excluded from their responses.

Miss Chebet: A teacher has to judge ability of the child – see academic part of the child. Teachers are patient. They are sympathetic to pupils. They pass knowledge to children. They perform their role as teachers including assigned duties. They ensure that the children are given what they deserve. The teacher determines what they deserve guided by the syllabus. The correct interpretation. You don't want to waste children's time. Professional teachers ensure that children are taken at their pace, but that they cover the syllabus. The teachers create time to ensure that they marry the children's needs to the specifications of the syllabus within set timeframes.

Mrs. Wafula: You must prepare teaching aids, teach the children, mark books, make sure the classroom and the children are clean

and the class is orderly. Lazima upende watoto (you must love the children) caring for the children as a teacher. Make arrangements for their porridge.

Mr. Kadi: Love learners, meet the right number of learners ready to learn. Ensure that learners get the right education to help them acquire a satisfying life in the future. Go to class as per timetable.

Ensure the school is running smoothly- collective social responsibility. Here our staff motto is: United we stand. We have departments and every department has a head.

Mrs.Lunani: Finish the syllabus as required.

In a post lesson discussion Miss Chebet added the following specific summary to her answer:

Prepare lesson plans

Keep classroom order

Oversee cleaning of school environment

Mark books

Counsel students

Discipline students

Oversee club activities

Supervise, coach games

Set exams

Counsel parents

Attend meetings.

Their responses reflect a learned structure to their work which involves an intended representation of the curriculum, a particular work schedule guided by the syllabus, periodic assessment of learner competences and the organisational support to pupils' welfare and learning. The language of my participants replicates phrases probably inculcated through training which symbolize what they consider important to their work:

- Love the children
- the correct interpretation of the syllabus
- taken at their pace

- marry the children's needs to the specification of the syllabus within set timeframes
- you must prepare teaching aids
- the class is orderly
- cleanliness

The training they received, or are still receiving as in the case of Miss Chebet, locates them in a given position within the education hierarchy and implants certain patterns of expectations. It prepared them to understand the necessity for pre-planning lessons in accordance with syllabus objectives and their pupils' needs and to work within a school timetable which regulated periodic teacher/pupil interactions in dedicated timeslots. Data collected during lesson observations demonstrate a learned structure to lesson delivery. Their acquiescence of this was demonstrated by the presentation of lesson plans and notes before lesson observations. Each participant acknowledged the influence their respective teacher training institution had had upon the development of their professional outlook and practice. They accepted as necessary the emphasis laid upon planning documents as a vital source of information regarding input, methodology, focus and subsequent outcome of each lesson.

Whilst initial training prepared teachers for their professional role, they do recognise, as Mr. Kimutai did, that the ever changing context in which a teacher's works requires adjustments and adaptation:

> Mr. Kimutai: If you teach the way you were taught in college, you will not help these children.

Mr. Kimutai is aware of the necessity to improve upon their training in keeping with the fluidity of their work. His argument also indicates the probability experienced teachers, have made certain adjustments to their classroom approaches in accordance to how they understood the task at hand. The challenge in understanding these changes requires a baseline at the time of qualification in comparison with teachers' work after a length of service. It is anticipated that repeated routines have the potential of increasing familiarity even perfection. Repeat routines also show the gaps and the challenges entailed in maintaining them.

Despite their training, the teachers in my study acknowledged their limitations in certain areas, specifically in supporting children with special learning needs. An example was quoted of how their combined efforts to support a candidate with special learning needs in the last examinations proved frustrating.

Mr. Kadi: She was a very clean and obedient girl. She had a beautiful handwriting but she only managed to give us a total of 83[out of 500 marks]. We tried our best, but that is as much as we could get her to obtain.

Post training specialisation in special needs education is facilitated through the Kenya Institute of Education to a limited number of teachers who are then deployed selectively(MOE2009). Within Trans Nzoia County, teachers have the support of a Special Needs Education Resource Centre and a trained tutor to help them identify, and where necessary, refer children to more specialized institutions. According to the official policy, however, the majority of children with learning related needs are supposed to be integrated into regular learning institutions (MOE2008). Considering the school's infrastructure and resource limitations, the participants confessed to being ill equipped for such eventualities.

If training inducts one into a profession and shapes one's professional identity, the content and form of that training is paramount in shaping the understanding of their role boundaries. Although there is need for further research in this area, available literature highlights some of the aspects that are a subject of current debate (KIE 2010, Namunga and Otunga 2012, Bunyi et al. 2011). Recent research by Bunyi et al. (2011:p.6) on teaching English and Mathematics in Kenyan primary schools found the teachers' training to be biased towards, 'theoretical knowledge about teaching less on understanding and pedagogical knowledge.' This discrepancy is partly attributed to the diverse paths teacher educators have travelled to arrive at this important post. Some are posted as a promotion from a post primary teaching position into teacher training colleges and as such were said to have theoretical knowledge about teaching but little pedagogical experience at primary level. The appointment and preparation of teacher

educators indicates unstated assumptions regarding the identity and work of primary school teachers and invites reflection on what should qualify anyone as a teacher educator. In a summative evaluation report on the implementation of the national curriculum, the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE 2010) cited the trainers' lack of training in pedagogy specific to primary level as an action point.

Limitations in teacher education are not the reserve of any country or context, as Fullan (1993: p. 5) argues, 'teacher education has the honour of being the worst problem and the best solution in education, since it is not geared for lifelong learning'. It is possible for teachers to leave an institution of training with a sense of accomplishment, feeling they have finally arrived at the destination of professionals. The resulting overconfidence can dampen or inhibit a teacher's engagement with what can be done differently or better, post training. If training does not feed an appetite for further enquiry, if it does not help professionals question their knowledge and to see their role in the creation of new knowledge, then it deserves the honour of being the worst problem. If, on the other hand, teachers are trained to be actively engaged in problem solving then opportunity should be expanded for them to demonstrate their problem solving skills. As knowledge workers, continuous improvement of knowledge gained through training is important. In their classroom observation study Ngware et al. (2010) found a weak but linear relationship between school mean score and teacher mean score. Although the average teacher score for mathematics in their study was 60%, the teachers' score in high performing schools was predictably higher than those in low performing schools which demonstrates the value of teachers' subject knowledge to the quality of pupils learning experience. Although the poor mathematics teachers' performance might be explained by the manner of subject allocation influenced by necessity rather than personal preference and capacity reflected in the achievements attained, Ngware et al.'s (2010) study nevertheless demonstrates the necessity to continuously upgrade teachers' knowledge as the qualification attained from college a

few years earlier might be inadequate for current and future classroom needs. As Beauchamp and Thomas (2009:p.186) argue:

> …a teacher education programme seems to be the ideal starting point for instilling not only an awareness to develop an identity but also a strong sense of the ongoing shifts that will occur in that identity.

From the beginning it seems necessary to prepare teachers for a career in continuous knowledge creation. For the majority of my participants, the opportunity for structured lifelong learning is curtailed by limited post training collective reflexivity and self development which are through to be essential to exerting a professional identity (Sachs 2001, Goodson 2003). The continuation of teacher education seems to have petered out post-graduation. The occasional in-service and subject related meetings provided opportunity for review of teaching theory, but they were few and far between. Of the 22 teachers in the school, only two were pursuing post-qualification training at their own expense. The effect this further training had on Miss Chebet's level of confidence and lesson delivery was evident during lesson observations. Whether this could be attributed to the synergies generated through further training or to other biographical details was beyond the scope of this research to empirically determine. Another two, Mr. Kimutai included, were attending SMASE (Strengthening Mathematics and Science Education) in-service courses sponsored by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). These were held locally three times a year during each of the school holidays. Three other Upper Primary teachers - those for the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science - had some years earlier participated in the Kenya government/DfID funded training for Graduate Key Resource Teachers (GKRTS) to stimulate and continue school based training amongst their colleagues. Continued support for post-qualification professional development forums would both afford teachers the opportunity to gain new theoretical perspectives and share personal field observations.

Except for planning purposes within the school at lower levels, subject-based discussions were timetabled once a term owing to the pressure of

class-based responsibilities. When convened, the discussions are geared towards fulfilling organizational specifications since they focused mainly on the pace of syllabus coverage in relation to set targets. As Mrs. Mutai explains:

> We have subject panels. They check syllabus coverage you have to explain why you have not reached where you should be and also you explain to them how you are going to cover the shortfalls. They are also concerned with scheming and preparation of teaching learning materials.

Thus subject panels which could serve as a forum for collegial support and further synthesis upon specific content that was problematic and the approaches that had been either successfully or unsuccessfully tried within particular classrooms are utilised as a tool for organizational professionalism ascertaining curriculum coverage.

Teacher training programmes pre-condition teachers' internalised role expectations and therefore the frame of mind from which they engage in the negotiation and enactment of their professional identity in school contexts. However, taking into account Bunyi et al.'s (2011: p.63) observation, the primary teachers' training curriculum in Kenya is 'overloaded, 'focusing more on theoretical knowledge about teaching' allowing little room 'for the development of knowledge, understanding and skills that the trainee teachers will need to help primary school pupils to learn. 'perhaps creativity in teacher education and efforts to 're-conceive teachers, not simply as compliant demagogues, but as leaders with a broader understanding of what is worth learning in the first place' (Jansen 2007: p.39) would contribute significantly to improved quality of learning.

It has been argued that professional identity is a lifelong project (Mockler 2011, Zembylass 2003). If training inducts teachers into professional practice, maintaining that professional standing requires continuity in learning and development (Beauchamp and Thomas 2009) not as consumers but active participants in a shared knowledge platform. Bunyi et al. (2011:p. x) Recommend that 'it is critically important that Kenya institutionalises CPD [Continuous Professional Development] as a strategy

for improving the quality of education.' Equally important is the need to recognise what teachers see to be the gap in their own knowledge, and practice and to utilise their experience to address felt needs. Perhaps school-based teacher learning can help to interrogate regional disparities in education achievement and focus upon what is relevant in that context, what needs modification and what could be improved. It would allow for development of theory that reflects a deeper understanding of the multiple realities of Kenyan classrooms. More significantly, supporting such forums and utilising their recommendations would motivate teachers to continue learning.

6.3 The Centrality of the Curriculum: The Primacy of Examinations

The most prominent theme with regards to teachers' internalised role expectations was the centrality of the curriculum which was seen to influence their relationships and control their activities within the school. Four out of the ten school resolutions displayed in the staffroom referred to on page 121relate to measures taken to ensure syllabus coverage. Further reference was made to curriculum coverage and pupil achievement in the teachers' semi structure interviews and in all the meetings attended within the school. This section illustrates how perceptions of curriculum requirements are interwoven into the fabric of teachers' internalised role expectations and the complexities associated with curriculum development, implementation and assessment. Whilst the syllabus derived from the national curriculum determines what is taught, I intend to show how teachers manage its implementation and favour sections that have direct consequence on their pupils' transition and their own professional identity.

Teachers' relationship with the curriculum is historically and politically tied to what is considered knowledge. When the curriculum and pedagogical decisions are centrally determined away from institutions, the powers that establish what is worth learning formally and how it should be learnt, influences the salience of the identity of those entrusted with its evolution and management. Because of the nature of its development and

the responsibility of ensuring effective implementation the syllabus was seen to be both a source and challenge to teachers' authority. Introduced during the early missionary/colonial period (Eshwani 1993) as part of the enlightment package the formal curriculum has been the subject of much review since independence. The changes, however, have not diminished the authority attached to the curriculum or the instruments of its management through the various education system shifts. A particular interpretation of the syllabus was supposed to indicate teachers' professionalism as indicated by Mr. Kidagi's answer to the question how does one demonstrate that they are professional:

> Mr. Kidagi: Manner of duty. How he interprets the syllabus, manage children and the way I interact with other teachers, parents and pupils.

Interpretation of the syllabus is here seen to be part of a package that identified a teachers' professionality. A depth of knowledge was necessary for syllabus coverage, the evaluation of that coverage influences what is considered important. Though the expression 'interpretation' is subject to inference, the observed lessons reflect efforts to remain faithful to scripts recommended by the curriculum development agency (KIE)and the examining counterpart (KNEC), hence the efforts to help pupils retain certain content in the wording with which it is presented. An extract from Miss Chebet's lesson illustrates:

> Miss Chebet: In class 6 you learnt about some of these features. We shall look at the formation of mountains, lakes and valleys. We begin with mountains. How many different mountains in East Africa?
> Pupil: Block mountains and host mountains.
> Miss Chebet: Can you say host mountains?
> Class: Host mountains.
> Miss Chebet : In class 4 and 5, I said rocks in East Africa are very old. If they are disturbed they breakor crack. They are old. When they crack ,the crack is called a fault. – a line of weakness.A again?
> Class A line of weakness
> Miss Chebet: A fault.
> Class: A fault.
> Miss Chebet: Or a line of weakness.
> Class: A line of weakness.

The repeated reference to the fault or line of weakness is expected to help pupils recall and commit to memory something likely to be required in subsequent evaluation.

My participants respected the curriculum because they believed as did Mr. Kidagi that:

> Mr. Kadi: KIE has done sufficient research and come up with the right content, right specifications for the syllabus. You just need to be organised.

The seeming abdication of curriculum development responsibility to a separate body established for the purpose is indicative of the power of organizational or managerial discourses of professionalism over the participant which separate goal setting from implementation and control measures. Subsequent difficulties in implementation are assumed to be occasioned by a teacher's poor organisation which then reflects on their capacity and professional identity. Teachers were keen to be seen to be keeping in line with recommended levels of curriculum coverage even if that comes at some personal cost and inconvenience. Such internalised notions exlude the classroom teacher from responsibility over what is taught engendering an instrumentalist focus to their complex role. The Kenyan primary school syllabus not only specifies curriculum objectives, but also subject specific objectives, topic outlines per class, recommendations of teaching approaches and means of assessment. Further to syllabus specifications, guidance is also given as to teaching/ learning materials approved for use in public schools. Whilst acknowledging possible advantages in such levels of prescription one is led to reflect on its impact on the place of teachers' reflexivity, motivation and self-efficacy.

The National Primary school curriculum in Kenya includes the following eight subjects but only the first six are externally examinable at Class 8:

1. English
2. Mathematics

3. Kiswahili
4. Science
5. Social studies
6. Christian/Islamic religious education
7. Arts and craft
8. Physical education

There was a different timetable for lower primary and upper primary in the school owing to the differences in length of their lessons highlighting the multiplicity of teachers' professional identity (Sachs 2001). A Lower primary lesson lasted 30 minutes whilst an Upper primary lesson lasted 35 minutes. Lower Primary teachers taught all the subjects in their assigned classes. It was significant to note that all teachers at this level were middle aged and female. Whether their age and gender were the deciding factors was contested by the school administration who argued that the allocation was predicated by male/ female staff ratios and the teachers' proven capacity to manage learners at that level. The suitability of female teachers for lower classes raises debate on the nature/nurture determinism in teacher identity bringing into focus what professionalism should mean? If female teachers are naturally endowed for certain levels, then it follows that the boundary between teachers and all other females equally endowed will be permeable and therefore contested. The gender debate is also linked to the wider discourse in society which then implicates teaching roles with gender specific allocations in the wider social milieu. The fact that the school is headed by a female head teacher and that half of teachers at the top of the school are female is either indicative of a changing social order or that fewer men were joining the profession.

Staff allocation at middle and upper levels was subject based in relation to teachers' preference and staffing levels. At the top Upper Primary the allocation was also strongly influenced by proof of previous or likely success in the subject. Where staff failed to show an interest in a particular subject the school administration intervenes by assigning the subject to any member of staff, a fact that Mr.Kimutai saw as detrimental to the teaching of Mathematics. Teachers at Upper Primary eventually

develop identities that are directly related to one of the subjects they taught and became reference points for their colleagues. When asked where she gets help with difficult topics in her subject Mrs. Mutai said:

> I can approach a teacher and get assistance. For example Madam Rita is very good at CRE class 8. She has been helpful.

Many of the activities I observed in my participants' school day revolved around the planning, execution and assessment of pupils' understanding of the syllabus content. Central to the understanding of being a professional was a teacher's ability,' to interpret the syllabus correctly' (Miss Chebet). A teacher's interpretation was thought to involve not only what must be learnt within the specifications of a particular topic, but what aspects deserve emphasis and why. Frequent assessment of pupils through externally procured examinations was seen as a measure of ensuring level of accuracy of curriculum coverage at levels tested. The measure of correctness in interpretation at Lower Primary was located in the pupils' ability to read, write, compute basic mathematical functions and attain a level of fluency in the language of instruction (English) or in the case of Upper Primary the overall mean score achieved in KCPE. Mrs. Lunani in answer to the question:

> Question: How do you demonstrate you are a professional?
>
> Mrs. Lunani: The work you do.
>
> The pupils you teach. It is possible for a teacher not to be a professional. A professional teacher is dedicated, disciplined and you see their outcome. We assess ourselves- CATS, exams and results are released.
>
> You can also see pupils are active
>
> Can read
>
> Participate fully in c lass
>
> Class control
>
> How the teacher conducts himself- friendly, sound.

In her response Mrs. Lunani links a teachers' professional identity to their work, pupils' achievement and behaviour. The self-assessment referred here is in terms of pupils' achievement, rather than teachers' knowledge. Self-assessment in terms of what the teacher actually knows as opposed to what they should know is assumed by virtue of certification. Assessment of Lower Primary pupils' achievement remains an internal affair, but is increasingly becoming a non-certificated monitoring mechanism operating at district and nation level (KNEC 2010, Elimu Yetu Coalition 2004) in keeping with organizational professionalism. If pupils results are thought to indicate teachers' capacity and effectiveness as professionals it is possible that teachers could progressively come to an interpretation of the curriculum in terms of what is strategic.

My participants showed an institutional respect for the role played by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) in developing the curriculum and vetting textbooks and support materials for use in public schools but felt alienated from its processes. The Quality Assurance and Standards Department was said to monitor curriculum implementation through school inspections, whilst the National Examination Council assesses pupil achievement through summative evaluations. During the second week of my fieldwork it was announced that Quality Assurance officers from the head office would be in the district to visit schools, particularly those whose candidates had underachieved in the previous years' evaluations. Unfortunately that visit did not cover my sample school but it helped me to engage with teachers on the subject of inspection. Mr. Kadi observed:

> No officer can trouble you if you are doing the right thing. Most of them are our friends.

Such friendship can only be maintained where teachers were seen to do what is expected of them. The flurry of activity following the announcement of the proposed visit indicated the unspoken anxiety of being found wanting.

The structure of the syllabus shows a linkage from lower to upper levels which indicate a need for certain levels of coverage at each level as Mr. Kimutai explains.

> Since our syllabus is spiral in format, if the syllabus was not sufficiently covered at one level, the understanding of the pupils at the next level will be severely affected. Proper coverage. If a child was not helped in Class 5 or 6 there is little that a Class 8 teacher can do. A big challenge.

The spiral nature of the syllabus creates a chain of responsibility from Lower to Upper Primary, with a lot expected from teachers who induct the new learners, and those who prepare the candidates for the national examination. Often teachers in the top class, whose identity was specifically tied to a subject went beyond the content assigned to their level to revise work done at lower levels. Miss Chebet, for example, had a plan for covering the broad content of Social Studies at class 8 while concurrently reviewing what was taught at lower levels through supplementary lessons. Using the last continuous assessment test paper as an entry point, she devoted extra tuition time for the clarification and consolidation of specific syllabus content in accordance to the pupils' needs. The regular timetabled lessons were allocated to teaching the syllabus specified for that year and this was reflected in her schemes of work. Most of these lessons followed the practice of teacher led question and answer sessions, where she channelled pupils' attention to the specific content she considered important. Because of the broad nature of the Social Studies syllabus, Miss Chebet believed a proficient teacher's task was to devise a means by which the key elements could be covered in the shortest possible time. With this as her primary aim, there was little room in her lessons for discussions or deviations outside the pre-determined content. Each of her lesson plans identified the approved textbook that most comprehensively covered the topic in question and as a further safeguard, she often consulted other teachers who had successfully taught that content. This was seen as a means of ensuring that her candidates were adequately equipped to answer questions from all levels during the final examinations. Each teacher's sense of who they were as professionals

was influenced by how they thought they were seen to be performing at their level. A professional teacher is seen as one who has an overall view of the curriculum and presents it in a manner that ensures pupil achievement as measured by national assessment instruments. This understanding ties in with Wilkins et al.(2011:p.2) observation that.

> Teachers' professional identity has to be understood in the context of schools managerial practices and cultures, with their *own* performance as well as the performance of their students.

Opinion was divided amongst my participants as to whether their current syllabus content was achievable. The majority felt it was ambitious, though Mr. Kimutai, attributed inadequate implementation to poor preparation by teachers and an overload of co-curricula activities.

Question : In your view, is the current syllabus achievable?

Mr. Kimutai: It is achievable. However, there are holidays, outdoor games that interrupt implementation. Also some of us come unprepared.

Perhaps because of his administrative role Mr. Kimutai's observation illustrates how managerially determined positions influence perspectives and teacher to teacher relationships and identity. Though inadequate implementation is an explanation often proffered for pupil under achievement (Musasia et al.2012), it was by no means the only possible contributing factor. Even though holidays and outdoor games are an anticipated part of the school calendar, in the eyes of Mr. Kimutai, a Mathematics teacher, their value is peripheral to the demands of learning mathematics. Teachers' priorities were influenced by their pupils' needs in relation to monitored syllabus requirements.

In the one to one interviews with the key participants I sought to understand the challenges they faced as professionals.

Question :What challenges do you face as a professional teacher?

Mrs. Lunani: Facilities. The environment is not conducive. Second term absenteeism. Children are not regular in school. If a child slept on an empty stomach how do you expect them to learn? Children come from large families with limited land.

Children at lower not taken care of by parents. Basic needs… not provided. Orphaned children …and uniform in this school is a policy.

Mr. Kidaki: The environment. Infrastructure- dusty classrooms. Age of pupils. The seasons- during circumcision seasons the pupils go to *minya(*pre- initiation *dances/*rites*)*. Then comes the pregnancies that accompany the merriment. Pupils sit on the floor. Insufficient latrines. Poverty. Hunger, cold. Shortages of pupil/ teacher resources.

Mr. Kimutai: Daily preparation. The time and space to do it. The level of the pupils, ability of pupils [since they not do not have]the same background. Continuous admission, difficult to maintain uniform level of achievement. Attitude to subject Challenges in learning Maths, negative attitude is the biggest problem. Children learn from home and from their family that Maths is hard. Family perceptions matter. Another challenge is recognizing the mathematical symbols in their various forms either as symbols or when written as words. Background – preparation in mathematical concepts at lower levels not achieved well.

Presentation of a lesson. If a teacher fails to understand, to understand the level of the class, they will hit a snag. You see Madam, being in class 8 does not mean that these learners are at that level, they could be at level 6 or even 5 in their understanding of mathematical concepts. You as a teacher have to find out where the majority of your learners are.

Mrs. Mutai: Class 4 is a transition class. They have difficulties understanding English. In Lower primary a teacher is allowed to explain the examination for them and they answer few … but in Upper they deal with the exam independently. Class 4 is a transitional class. No verbal instructions, are allowed in the exam.

The extracts above illustrate the participants' contextual awareness of the social institutional structures and conditions in which their professionalism was exercised. The description is not proffered as an excuse for underachievement but as a context for reform and identity construction How can these challenges be articulated so that they are visible during policy reform processes? Some of the challenges listed have to do with the

space in which learning takes place, pupils' welfare, the social practices of the communities from which the children are drawn, the language of instruction, the economic capacity of parents, the attitude to specific subjects and the teacher's preparation for learning. Attention is drawn to the need to understand the child who is the learner. If the child's welfare including nutrition, difficulties with the language of instruction, absenteeism due to parental illness or loss, if they are imbued with negative attitudes to certain subjects how can they be supported to engage in learning activities in ways that assure their equal opportunity to success? Clearly, these challenges need multiple approaches and platforms of deliberation and are unlikely to be solved through a single policy directive. Though the frequent teacher/ parent meetings could be interpreted as an attempt to provide one such framework, perhaps a more assertive framework is required to engage policy instruments in ways that make education flexible and responsive to the contexts actual need.

Their desire to complete the syllabus in the pre-determined schedule appeared to be moderated by an equally compelling need to match the curriculum specifications to their pupils' particular circumstances within their context. Teachers were expected, to blend content with the specific needs and pace of their learners as Miss Chebet explains:

> … ensure that children are taken at their pace but that they cover the syllabus. The teachers create time to ensure that they marry the children's needs to the specifications of the syllabus within set timeframes.

However exclusive focus on covering the syllabus invariably leaves some of the pupils' educational needs unfulfilled. As Mr. Kidaki argues in the discussion on curriculum coverage:

> Utaenda kama mwalimu [you will move as a teacher] but the pupils will not be with you.

It would be erroneous to present pupils within this environment as incapable of coping with demanding learning tasks or somehow inhibited in their capacities. However the challenges listed by their teachers above indicate likely impediments to the pupils' access and progress. Finding the

correct balance between curriculum coverage and their pupils' learning needs contributed to the creation of extra learning time, particularly for Classes 7 and 8 pupils. Before they were legislated against, additional lessons were often timetabled before and after the official school day, during the lunch break and even weekends as Miss Chebet explained during a post lesson discussion:

> Yes. I have covered the level of syllabus in most subjects because of the extra tuition hours. I have sacrificed my own time to reach where I am now. If I followed the normal timetable I would not be where I am today…

To meet the needs of the pupils transiting from Lower Primary classes where they could be taught in mother tongue to Upper Primary where instruction was in English Mrs. Mutai, felt:

> Unless you use remedial time you cannot cover the current curriculum. It is not possible to cover the syllabus. I have extra tuition in Class 4 from 4 – 5pm teaching English. We have regular lessons, only we have more time during tuition.

The extra tuition time was also seen as a means of covering up for any period of teachers' unintended absence as Mr. Kadi explains.

> The syllabus cannot be covered without tuition. Also we use this time for any period we may have missed for unforeseen reasons.

If more time was required, then the non-examinable subjects were sacrificed as Mr. Kidaki confirms:

> Creative Arts and PE lessons are non-examinable, so they are given to teachers of English, Kiswahili and Mathematics to continue their lessons.

The important curriculum requirement for developing pupils' creativity was thus sacrificed in the interest of those subjects seen to have direct impact on pupils' assessment and by extension teachers' professional identity. They do not omit teaching non-examinable subjects because they feel they are of less value, but rather because of the need to cover the content of the examinable subjects within the allocated timeframes. This extra tuition at the expense of other aspects of pupil development was what legislation sought to eliminate at the time of my research. A similar

impact of prescriptive curricula expectations on teachers' classroom practices was observed in the PACE project as reported by Osbornet al.(2000:p.49)

> … as they themselves felt more externally controlled they were also compelled to exert more control over pupil experience in the classroom, allowing pupils less choice of activity in the classroom towards measurable achievement.

However, in the light of the above observations, legislation alone would be inadequate to address the conditions that incline teachers and their communities to the necessity of extended timetables. Perhaps research into optimum conditions for the full attainment of the curriculum coverage, including teacher competences would be useful to policy compliancy. Achieving the level of syllabus coverage prescribed, was a source of pride and a moral boost for my participants as Mr. Kadi expressed:

> We have pride because we deliver. We are envied by other teachers from other schools.

Monitoring mechanisms existed in the school to ensure coverage. One of the deputy head teachers was in charge of curriculum implementation at Upper Primary, whilst the Senior Teacher oversaw implementation at Lower Primary. Class teachers periodically reviewed and reported on their class progress. The evidence of such monitoring inclined me to regard the form of teacher professionalism evidenced as managerial (Sachs 2001); however, the necessity to rely on teachers' internal motivation and personal sacrifice underlying the call for additional classes also caused me to reassess this conclusion.

The relationship between teachers' professional identity and the curriculum has been acknowledged (Day 1999, Osborne 2000). The curriculum is here seen as a symbol of authority, giving meaning and purpose to teachers' daily routine. Its knowledge is counted among the distinctions of a professional teacher because persons who had not been exposed to their level of training are thought to be less knowledgeable about curriculum content and delivery methods. It seemed to provide a

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structure within which the teachers worked and found confidence in the value of what was taught. Controversially, Mr. Kidaki observed that:

> We need to be time bound, so that checks and balances - so that you are not relaxed - you are on your toes.

Whilst this is a personal opinion expressed in the context of a post lesson discussion it nevertheless reflects the influence of managerial discourses on his sense of being professional as involving acceptance of monitoring and supervision mechanism.

As a professed Christian, Mrs. Mutai felt the CRE syllabus allowed her to share her beliefs and to mould the pupils in accordance with her own ontological view, though she realised she had to keep within the curriculum outline she said:

> I find the curriculum appropriate for these children. Human experience.CRE deals with life. We are trying to mould these children, to change their lives. In teaching I draw upon experiences from their own lives.

The Kenyan curriculum provides options in religious education which, depending on the demographics of the school's catchment area, would predominantly be Christian or Islamic. Whilst religious affiliation is not a determining factor for the subject's allocation, nor conversion the intent of the lesson, teachers of CRE like other secular subjects are expected to achieve pre stated subject objectives within specified timeframe.

Curriculum determined achievements were reflected in teachers' awareness of parental expectations of their role. Pupil achievement was taken not only as proof of a teacher's subject knowledge, but also as evidence of professional acumen in linking pupils' aspirations to the limited opportunities for advancement:

> Mrs. Mutai: I shouldn't be called a teacher for nothing. When you help a child and he succeeds you feel good and the parents treat you with respect.

> Mr. Kadi: Also the community is very proud of their teachers. Because the community trusts teachers to deliver

good results teachers feel that they should not let them down.

Mrs.Lunani: As a professional teacher you will finish the syllabus as required. You sacrifice. We are happy when we hear our children have gone to good schools.

As teacher's professional identity appears so interlinked with pupil achievement any subsequent failure is often accompanied with feelings of low self-esteem asMiss Chebet explains:

Miss Chebet: You don't want to waste children's time. If my pupils' performance is low, I also feel low.

In contexts such as Kenya, where secondary schools are graded and beliefs sustained regarding schools likely to facilitate pupil transition to tertiary level education, competition is rife for places in the more promising schools. National and provincial schools are thought to be better equipped and supported to facilitate transition to higher education than district schools. The subsequent competition for upper end schools places constant pressure on primary teachers to assure such transition through higher pupil achievements in national examinations. As an examination officer, monitoring pupil achievement is a regular occupation for Mr. Kadi:

We are happy when we hear our children have gone to good schools. One of our pioneer students went to St. Joseph's and he is now studying medicine at Nairobi University. One of our girls is going to Loreto Msongari[a national school]

For Mr. Kadi and his colleagues mention of past pupils who have gained admission to national schools and transited to tertiary level is an indicator of success and therefore professional standing. Admission into any public secondary school is highly competitive and this is further aggravated by the disproportionate number of KCPE candidates to available secondary school places. For example, in 2013 there were 839,759 candidates and only 647,602 places available, so 192,157 primary pupils failed to secure a secondary place (Ndonga 2014). Admission to any category of secondary school depends solely on the mean score attained by the candidate.

Transition to national and provincial schools rests upon a candidate attaining between 350 and 500 marks. Pupils with just over the pass mark of 250 can only hope to join a district school, and only after those with higher marks have been placed. Enabling one's pupils to transit into national or provincial schools was therefore understood as a crucial indicator of a primary school teacher's professional identity. The diagram below illustrates my participants' understanding of the link between curriculum interpretation, pupil achievement and their professional identity.

Figure 6.2   The Teachers' Professional Identity Wheel

```
Teachers'                      Teachers'
professional                   interpretation
Identity enforced /            of the
affirmed                       curriculum

                                  Teachers refine and
Parental                          retain interactions
respect and                       that ensure success.
recognition
earned

Pupil
achievement/                   National
transition to                  assessment of
respective sec.                pupils based on
schools based                  curriculum
on results
```
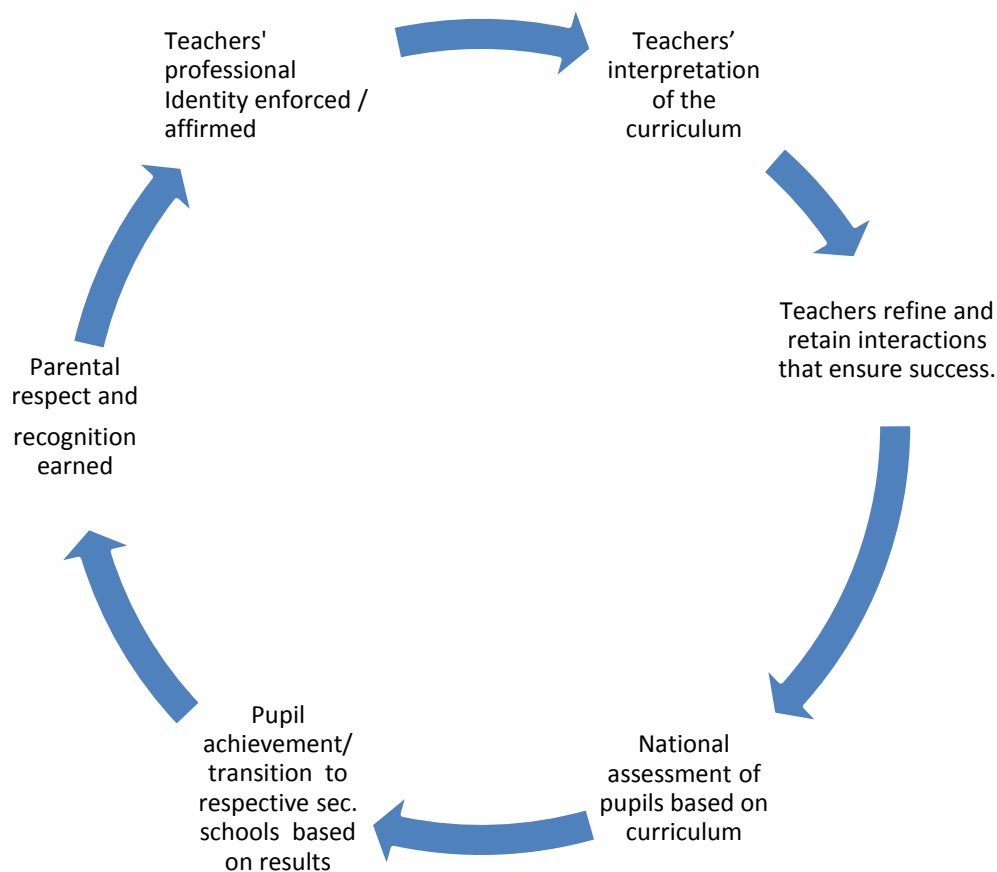
Teachers' correct interpretation of the curriculum was expected to lead to high pupil achievement in national examinations which in turn would open access to premier secondary schools thereby earning parental recognition

and an entrenchment of interactions that have assured such achievement. In schools where comparatively few pupils transit to national or provincial schools, assertions which adversely affect their professional identity are made regarding the teachers' ability to interpret the syllabus and allegations are levelled against the school as being non-performing. In such cases, disappointed parents have at times sought the removal of all or specified teachers (Nzuma2014). Whilst these cases are extreme, they serve to illustrate the high emotions associated with pupil achievement and its influence on teacher identity construction.

Evidence of the primary school's comparative success and advantage was often presented to parents and the general public as this extract taken from a parents' meeting illustrates. The head teacher is addressing parents whose children have just joined the top Class 8 and will be sitting for a national examination at the end of the year. It is instructive that she presents the results of the immediate past class to the parents of the current top class. The subject average is out of a 100 marks, whilst the school's total mean score has been achieved through the total marks scored by all the 67 candidates in the five examinable subjects as a percentage of 500.

Head teacher: Last year we had 67 candidates. We had the following mean score per subject:

English   55.18

Kiswahili   56.

Mathematics 52

Science   58

CRE   59

The total school mean score 282.   90

Last year's D..joined a national school - Loreto Limuru and the parent is here, just like you. Mr.Sifuna from Yuya please stand up.   (He stands up. Parents clap for him).

7   students joined St.Joseph's High school

26   joined other provincial schools

22   others couldn't go to the provincial schools they were invited to join, but are in district schools

All our children except one have joined secondary schools and even this one we know will get somewhere.

Even though only one female pupil qualified for admission to a national school, this was viewed as a significant feat of achievement. St. Joseph's, a provincial school by the time of my field is singled out for mention on account of its record in assuring transition to tertiary education. It is also significant that mention is made of the 22 pupils who received invitations but did not take up their places in provincial schools, not because of failing to meet the admission criteria but because of parents' inability to meet costs. Economic challenges were real. In a research on free secondary education in Kenya, Ohba(2009) found that the auxiliary costs for first year secondary students was 19 to 20 times over the monthly income of families in a category similar to the parents in this context. The failure of the 22 candidates to take up their positions is likely to dampen the ambitions of others preparing for the same examinations. That is why in this meeting and others parents were enlightened to post primary support available through competitive scholarship schemes. At this meeting it was reported that arrangements had been made for the 22 candidates to enroll at the more affordable district schools.

The desire to improve their pupils' achievement provided motivation for teachers to learn from others who achieved better results. Upper Primary teachers especially exhibited an eagerness to learn foolproof strategies from colleagues in other schools preparing candidates for similar examinations. Shortly before my fieldwork a team from a neighbouring school had visited my research school for this purpose. Also during my fieldwork, the Class 8 teacher of English returned from invigilating an examination in a neighbouring private school with a book she had borrowed for the teaching of composition. Although it was not listed on the approved textbook list, she judged it appropriate for providing practical advice in teaching composition writing to her class.

In this section, the teachers' use of the curriculum as a source of structure and authority to teachers' identity has been illustrated as has been the presumed link between teachers' capacity to appropriately interpret the curriculum and pupils achievement. Continuous testing of pupils was used as a measure of determining class level syllabus coverage with pupils achievement used as indicators of adequate coverage and teachers' professional identity. Fear of appearing to misinterpret the curriculum through poor pupils' achievement appears to influence school level priorities in a manner that ensures teachers positive self-identity. However, some of the measures taken to ensure this success appear to limit the attainment of broad educational objectives and the development of the whole child. Where pupils attain the desired examination success and transit to the next level of education the primary teachers' role is thus feted and transformed into one of advocacy, increasing access to national or provincial schools for otherwise marginalised children.

Considering the importance of teachers to curriculum Woolman makes the case for their involvement in education change by arguing that(2001:p.43 :

> Curriculum changes should involve teachers at every state of decision making; improved in service training is essential. Curriculum needs to be diversified to be relevant for the great variety of social contexts found in each country. Village development should be as important as urbanization.

On the basis of this discussion, it would appear that a greater appreciation of teachers' operational curriculum experience and the role they play in its development should be further examined. Similarly, the level of teacher competence necessary to engender a sense of ownership essential to interrogate and build curriculum content should be explored. Lack of ownership over what has to be learnt possibly contributes to what others have observed to be a banking approach to education and learning Freire (1972). The necessity to correctly transmit what has been developed elsewhere, in ways that are handed over to them, possibly alienates teachers from the core element of their work and affects their relationship with the knowledge they work with. The pressure that arises from trying to interpret the curriculum in particular contexts within predetermined time

frames also limits the teachers' opportunity to interrogate its effectiveness. Similarly, the pressure to respond to policy directives with limited dialogue and the knowledge their competence will be determined by pupils' achievement narrows their focus towards producing more of the same, retaining routines that deliver assured success in the shortest possible time.

6.4   Communication/Transference of Knowledge.

Communication skills and the transference of knowledge was a key theme reflected in my participants' understanding of their role expectations and were keen to be seen to do so in the lessons observed.   During the semi structured interviews teachers were asked whether they were professionals and what identifies them as such? As part of the answer to that question, Miss Chebet said:

> The skills I have…Communication skills. How to handle pupils and bring them shape them to be the way society wants them. Understanding the way children are.
> Transferring knowledge. Assessment/evaluation. Marking and observations….

From her response, a number of syllogisms can be derived:-

- Communication skills identify the professional teacher,
- A teacher is expected to understand her audience- the pupils,
- Knowledge will be seen to be transferred
- Observations and assessments of pupils will be made
- The communication will help the pupils to be 'the way society wants them' to be.

This interpretation and necessity for communication skills was further reinforced in Mr.Kimutai's responses to the same question:

> Mr.Kimutai:The way I address to people, how I present myself. The results… a person being associated with bad results as just a teacher. Results and presentation identifies a teacher, as a teacher- a professional

teacher, somebody who moulds society a resourceful person, not just in schools.
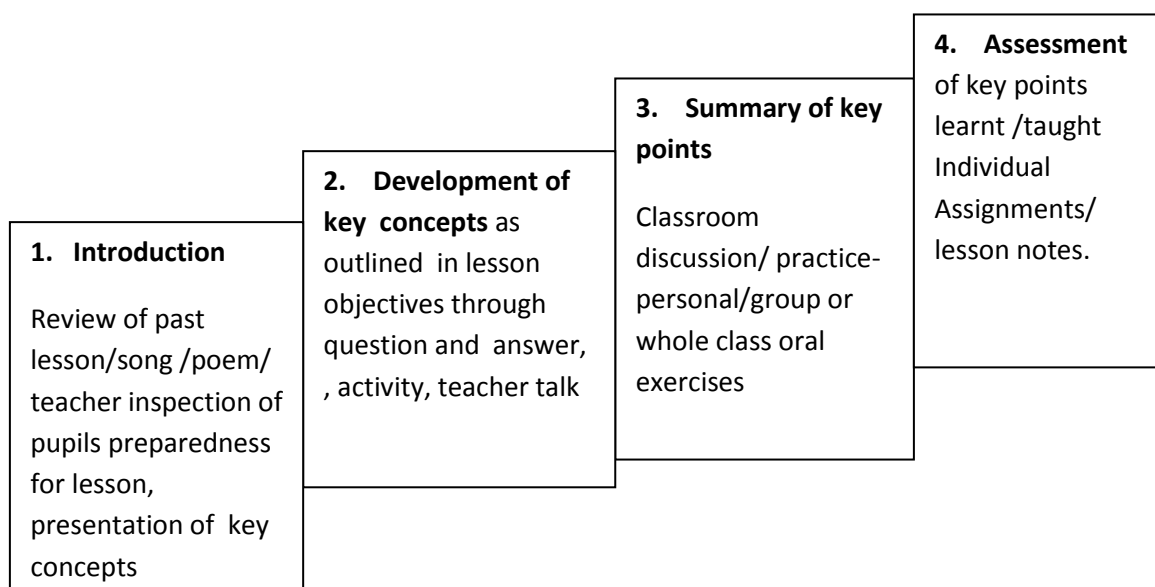
Mrs. Mutai: They expect that a teacher knows a lot. They expect you to help them pass an examination

Communication serves a purpose which besides identification is associated with pupil achievement, the implication being that low achievement is a result of teachers' failure to communicate effectively. It was expected that capacity to communicate would be evidenced in their daily interaction with pupils and parents and also in the results of that interaction. Miss Chebet and her colleagues understood their communication to include transferring certain knowledge, assessing pupils' understanding and helping them pass examinations as part of the wider goal of making them 'what society wants them to be'. Underpinning the necessity of transference is the awareness that the message being transferred is not necessarily their own but one which they have been contracted by society to deliverin the form of the curricula specifications. Reflected in the teachers' responses above is the understanding of the three sides of the communication triangle… understanding the audience, the message and the process of getting the message from the source to the recipient. Equally important is the likely obstructions to that communication process. These are elements, however, which essentalised representations of their lessons, derived from fixed expectations of teachers' sense of self and the purpose of communication may either overlook or underestimate. Observation of classroom lessons reveal and are often conducted from stated or unstated assumptions regarding both the teacher and their audience, acceptable practice and the presumed purpose of classroom communication. It is difficult for researchers to put on hold their own expectation of what should be good practice, to answer the question what is actually taking place in this lesson and why. The lesson observations revealed an embodiment of communication patterns and power relations sanctioned in the adult/child relationships and professional rhetoric (Akyeapong 2002). Within this community children were expected to show respect to adults who were similarly expected to be knowledgably and to use that knowledge to improve and protect the child. Within the

school pupils were seen to stand to acknowledge the teacher's entry into class and raised their hands to indicate a desire to contribute to a discussion.

The lessons I observed were not always the same though the following general framework could be discerned from the pattern of teacher/ pupil interactions.

Table 6.3 **General Lesson structure**

1. **Introduction** Review of past lesson/song /poem/ teacher inspection of pupils preparedness for lesson, presentation of key concepts	2. **Development of key concepts** as outlined in lesson objectives through question and answer, , activity, teacher talk	3. **Summary of key points** Classroom discussion/ practice-personal/group or whole class oral exercises	4. **Assessment** of key points learnt /taught Individual Assignments/ lesson notes.

Each lesson had specific objectives stated in both the schemes of work and lesson plan which were expected to be achieved within the allocated time of 30 or 35 minutes depending on level. The delivery of the lesson reflected a relationship in which teachers were seen to provide leadership and structure to classroom activity. In 65% of the 49 lessons observed teachers used the chalk board as a vital symbol in their communication patterns. Though both the teacher and pupils had access to the chalk board it was the teacher who granted access to individual pupils to this symbol of power, attention and knowledge. In most cases the teacher used it as a central nerve to give focus to the discussion in which he or she took the lead. Pupils who accessed the chalkboard felt privileged, knowledgeable and involved or threatened and exposed. Moving between the pupils and the chalk board, the teacher used it to draw attention to the subject and topic and to illustrate key points, give assignment or signify important

points in the form of notes. The ECD teacher had flash cards of all the letters of the alphabet and all the numerals up to 20 constantly pinned at the bottom of the board to which frequent reference was made.

In 63 % of the lessons observed the communication involved using individual pupils in an in a learning activity ranging from the manipulation of learning objects around the room, or solving a mathematical problem on the board. Admittedly these activities did not last the length of the lesson and were more visible in the lower primary lessons but they were part of a sequence that complimented the question and answer discussions which dominated most of the classroom communication. Though in 78% of the lessons observed pupils actually sat in group formations, only in 20 % of these lessons were the pupils involved in a learning activity that utilised group dynamics. In 28% of the lessons there was whole class activity such as song, recitation or movement as part of an introduction or practice of key concepts of the lesson development. The actual lesson was supposed to initiate a learning communication which extended beyond the timetabled slot. In 75% of the lessons observed written assignments later assessed by the teacher or note taking as a summary of concepts discussed in the lesson was the final part of the communication. The set textbook served as the focus of activity or practice during the lesson development particularly in language and mathematics lessons where pupils were required to provide the correct responses to set exercises. All lesson observations reflect different levels of questions and answers to review previous lessons, focus attention to specific content, seek opinion or refer to personal experience but mainly to a create a link in a series of related pieces of information. The example below taken from Mr. Kadi's lesson illustrates how some of the questions not only serve recall purposes but also signpost content necessary to retain.

Extract 6. 4 Mr. Kadi's Science Lesson(1)

Mr. Kadi: Yesterday we stopped at.., we looked at heavenly bodies. The solar system - the family of the sun.We say they are 9 known planets. Who remembers the formula for recalling their names?Yes, Kimani?

Kimani: **M**y **V**ery **E**ducated **M**other**J**ust **S**how **U**s **N**ine **P**lanets

Mr. Kadi: Very Good. Now name them, yes….

In the exact above, Mr. Kadi's class 6 Science lesson begins with a recall of what was learnt in the previous lesson, utilizing a catchy mnemonics to aid his pupils recall of information they may need to use possiblytwo years later in their national examinations. In Mrs. Mutai's class 5 CRE lesson the question and answer is taken to another level as shown in the extract below.

Extract 6.5Mrs. Mutai's CRE Lesson

Mrs.Mutai: Moses was herding his father in law's sheep when he saw a green bush burning without being consumed. *Akasongea akaambiwa*[He drew closer and was told] you are standing on holy ground. He was told to go and set the Israelites free. After many miracles pharaoh let the Israelites free. And then what happened when they got to the red sea, what happened? They lifted their eyes and what did they see,Pharaoh's army coming after them- *kama ungekuwa wewe ungefanya nini* [If you had been the one, what would you have done?]—

Pupil: Ningeliea! (I would cry)

In this lesson, Mrs. Mutai code switches strategically to ask the question: what would you have done? The build up to the question invites the pupils to put themselves in the emotional context of the Israelites - the object of the Egyptian army's pursuit. The pupil's instantaneous response reflects an awareness of the danger they perceived the Israelites to be in and what seemed to her a reasonable reaction. Opportunity, however brief, is availed for reflection and a personalised response. As stated in the previous section, Mrs. Mutai's questions frequently drew upon the pupils experience in her CRE lessons because she saw the lessons as part of the wider scheme of moulding the pupils to be what society wants them to be.

In the extract below from Mr. Kadi's Class 6 Science lesson, the question and answer is developed around an activity. Pupils were guided to analyse a flower whilst at the same time relating the object to a corresponding illustration on the chalk board.

Extract 6. 6   Mr. Kadi's Class 6 Science lesson(2)

Teacher:	We want to see where it starts. We look at reproduction in animals- female and male parts. In plants it starts in flowers. [The teacher draws a flower and numbers the parts of a flower on the board. Teacher distributes bright orange flowers to excited pupils in their groups of three].
	We shall begin by looking at female parts. As we look at his flower it is bright coloured- what colour is it?
Class :	Orange!
Teacher:	A beautiful colour, attractive, makes it good to look at. We call it petal. Say Petal.
Class:	Petal.
Teacher:	Again
Class:	Petal
Teacher;	It makes the flower very attractive. We call all of this the corolla. We shall number it one, here [pointing at illustration]. Spell corolla, Saina?
Saina:	C. O. R. A. L. L. A
Teacher:	Now slowly tear away the bright section. Pole Pole. *Rarua pole pole-.Pole pole*.[Very carefully/slowly remove] the outer part very slowly/carefully, slowly. [Teacher demonstrates]. What do you see?
Class:	(Hands up) teacher, teacher!

Through question and answer in this lesson, Mr. Kadi through progressively helps his pupils not only to identify the different parts of the flower but also to link the parts on the plant to an illustration similar to what they are likely to encounter in a text book or examination script. Though pupils engage in a learning activity by tearing down the different sections of the flower to make visible all the reproduction properties, the

entire lesson is in his grasp and he is able to control what the pupils pay attention to and therefore what is considered important in the observation.

Regardless of level or subject, the teachers played a significant role in determining the nature of communication, the timing, pace and manner in which their pupils shared the learning space. Even when few pupils were allocated a participatory role, all were expected to attend and reach a pre-determined understanding of the content. Whilst this method of delivery possibly creates a communal sharing of information, it unfortunately makes pupils as dependent on teacher direction as the teacher is on curriculum direction. The opportunity for creativity is thus constrained by the need to be right in the transference of specified knowledge. What counts is not so much how much fun pupils have in the lesson but how well they can grasp what is prescribed within a dedicated time slot. Through translation, repetition and through question/answer session the teacher attempts to focus pupils' attention on the key aspects of the lesson as stipulated in the lesson objectives.

The supplementary lessons in Upper classes often adopted slightly different formats. Based on the review of past examinations, they expanded the discussion of the content at hand to include other relevant content from previous years' coverage. Set examination questions served as the satellites from which to review content taught in lower classes. Extracts from Miss Chebet's lesson serves as an example:

Extract 6.7   Miss Chebet's Social Studies lesson.

Miss Chebet: Question. 28. What is the third creature in the development of man from ape called? First of all what was the earliest man called? Cheleng'at?

Cheleng'at: Ramapithecus

Miss Chebet : Good (Teacher writes Ramapilhecas on the board)
Next, Manuel
Manuel: Australopithecus
Miss Chebet: Another name for this man?
Violet: Kenyapithecus
Miss Chebet : Able to walk upright. Another phase

Nelson: Homohabilis

Miss Chebet: A man with ability he had a thumb and ability to hold tools. Another early man

Kiprotich: Homoerectus

Miss Chebet : A man who could walk upright. Danile and Tito please pay attention. Homo erectus lived in caves. Another phase

Wanyama: Homo sapiens

Miss Chebet: An intelligent thinking man. [Points to distracted girl] My girl what is the problem? [The girl sits up straight and says nothing]Then we have Homesapien - modern man, a man who could think… Go back to question 28. The third form of a creature in the development of man, which is the third stage? [counts the phases on the board] Homohabilis. Formula to remember is:HES

Eric : Madam what is the study of early man called?

Miss Chebet: A very good question! Archeology and the people who study early man are called Archeologists… Let us turn to QUESTION 29 causes of conflict in society. Let us mention all the forces that undermine unity and bring conflict in society, Salome?

Miss Chebet: Poverty.

Nelly: Misunderstanding

Pupil: Boundaries

Miss Chebet: Let us look at Kenya and see what causes conflict. I will give you an example- nepotism, when you favor your relatives. Let's say for example Mr. Otieno is the managing Director of KCC,[Kenya Cooperative Creameries] Mrs. Otieno is his Deputy, Their son is the company secretary. This is nepotism and it will bring conflict.

Demsa give me another example

Demas: Tribalism

Teacher: Very good, Dina?

Dina: Corruption

Teacher: Very good- bribing. Another one, yes?

Wanyama: Racism

In this one lesson Miss Chebet was able to revise evolution of man and causes of conflict in society separately taught in earlier lessons within the same lesspn.

Where group activity was incorporated, it was invariably rather limited in length and controlled as Mr. Kidaki's Mathematics lesson in Class 5 illustrates.

Extract 6.8   Mr. Kidaki's Class 5 Mathematics lesson

Mr.Kidaki:	Good morning class. (pupils stand up)
Class:	Good morning teacher and how are you?
Mr.Kidaki:	Fine. Please sit down. (pupils sit down) Today we are going to do fractions.

(Mr. Kidaki writes the date, subject and topic on the board and then hands one strip of manila paper to each group leader.)

I want you to fold your strip very, very carefully into nine pieces. How many pieces?

Class: Nine!

(Mr.Kidaki demonstrates how the paper should be folded and ensures each group has done it correctly.

Mr. Kidaki: *Eh hio ni gani? Hesabu*. (Which one is that? Count!) One two … (counts with members of group) Sawa? (Ok?)

Toroitich: Teacher.

Mr. Kidaki :   Wait, I will come to your group.

When you have finished folding them, you number each fold like this(demonstrates)One two … till nine.

(He goes round to ensure each group has mastered the folding and the numbering.)

Now shade five parts.

(Walks to another group)

Shade only five.

Are there nine folds? *Iko sawa?* (Is it ok?) Make sure they are equal.

(Lifts the strip from one group) These are done well, they are equal.

	Lift yours we see. (Each group leader lifts their strip) *Sawa*! (Ok!) (Pointing to the textbook, Mr. Kidaki says) You are asked what fraction is shaded. Make sure that your strip looks like mine. *Si lazima upindue.* (It is not a must to turn it) Just look at the shaded part. What fraction is shaded?
Class:	Teacher, teacher (many hands raised and one pupil from group 2 selected to answer)
Wasike:	5/9
Mr. Kidaki:	Someone from Group 2 show me the nine parts (A pupil in group 2 points out and simultaneously counts the nine folds.)
Mr. Kidaki:	*Amepata*? (Has he got it?)
Class:	Yes
Mr. Kidaki:	*Re-ap* (clap) for him. Eh, now someone from group 4 show me the shaded parts (A pupil lifts a strip and counts off the five shaded parts)
	Good, *re-ap* (clap) for yourself
	So we say 5 of all nine equal parts are shaded. So the fraction is 5/9. Do you understand how we arrived at 5/9

During lesson observations the teachers' pre-occupation with the transference of knowledge was also observed in their different classroom tones, the constant repetition of key phrases and the signposting of significant information. Though the vast majority of lessons I observed were heavily reliant on the teacher, I could not strictly classify them as lectures, neither could they be labelled as mere 'chalk and talk'. Strong arguments can be made against this form of controlled classroom communication in favour of more inclusive, learner centred, interactive strategies. However, as my fieldwork progressed I came to appreciate that even classroom communication is an embedded community practice responding to the purpose of the communication and local conventions. Wilkins et al. (2011:p.4) argued that 'learning is also influenced by social, historical and cultural factors, so academic and cognitive activities presuppose and create social identities.' He further linked the

underachievement of minority ethnic pupils to their majority ethnic teachers' failure to understand these differences. Attempts to homogenize teachers' professional identity and essentailise their practices into right or wrong approaches overlooks both the identity of the learners and their teachers and can considerably undermine their confidence in their capacity to appropriately name both what they do and how it could be improved.

There was a discernable difference between lessons at Lower and Upper Primary. To begin with pupils at lower primary sat in pre-determined groups of nine sharing a desk at the ratio of three pupils to a desk. Pupils from class 6 sat in rows and were periodically moved into groups according to the teachers' discretion. Some of the Lower Primary lessons were held in the fields while some Upper Primary science lessons involved stepping out of the classroom. Whereas the lessons at Lower Primary were generally more activity based facilitated in Kiswahili, the lessons in Upper classes become more teacher- led followed by textbook driven assignments assessed by the teacher. From childhood, the pupils would have learnt through songs, oral narratives, play and the observation of adult behaviour and this is continued practice in the ECD classes. As the pupils journey further into upper classes the communication pattern narrows to an identification of what needs to be assessed hence the intensification of the question and answer approach. The absence of literature beyond religious and school textbooks could be considered a contributory factor to the communication patterns limiting pupils' personal research and pre-conditioning them to an over reliance on teachers' capacity to communicate lesson content orally. This conversational question/answer approach to teaching could be interpreted as the teacher's deliberate attempt to link lesson content to familiar communication patterns. Whilst this should be a subject of a separate enquiry, this manner of lesson presentation borrows from and feeds back into the general community communication codes. Understanding learning as a social practice requiring balance in personal and social activity brings into question the logic of professionalism: should a professional teacher's

practice, even in communication, be guided by community norms or by what is considered effective in delivering desired learning objectives in neutral contexts or by progressive methodology? What opportunities are lost or gained in new approaches to classroom communication that varies from the general community discourse? The answer to these questions can only be useful if they are generated through the teachers' active involved on a professional platform since they have direct influence on their classroom practices, a teacher's sense of self and their internalised role prescriptions.

During a post lesson discussions participants were encouraged to reflect on how effectively they felt their lessons went. It was significant to note that the lesson progress and perceived outcome had a very direct impact on the teachers' sense of self. Their comments reflected a connection to their classroom pulse, recognising when pupils responded to or failed to respond to their direction. After a lesson that was thought to have gone particularly well Mr. Kidagi commented:

> When you teach something and pupils are able to comprehend you feel happy. When you make your evaluation and you see how many got it right you feel happy or if they carry their hands up when you ask questions in class then you know they are with you.

Teachers considered pupils' participation in the question answer session, however limited and their scores in the written assignments as feedback indicators of involvement. On the other hand, when the lesson doesn't go as well as was intended or pupils do not seem to respond as anticipated a teacher may feel demoralised as Mr. Kidaki explains:

> When you teach something and pupils don't understand it is very frustrating. When exams come people will wonder whether you taught. In English this week there were a lot of spelling errors, and they are copying [the exercise] from the textbook.

The unsuccessful lesson is frustrating because it has direct links to his sense of identity, raising doubt as to the teachers' capacity. This occasionally led to repeat lessons for which there is no official timeslot.

The necessity for such lessons was echoed by Mrs.Mutai in her post lesson discussion:

> When they don't get it , it is very frustrating. I gave an exam to class 5y. Some of them could not construct a proper sentence. They had poor handwriting, others put capital letters in the wrong places. I have to repeat the lesson on making sentences and distinguishing sentences from phrases.

The effect of unsuccessful lessons was expressed in nearly the same terms by all the participants. Recognition of strength and weakness from the point of view of the actor is an important part of any baseline. Building upon this recognition is an affirmative way of allowing for positive identity constructions and sustainable development.

Whether the teachers tailored the lessons I observed to my expectations or not, they still reflect the teachers' knowledge of what is expected of them. I became increasingly aware teachers as communicators, were caught up in a web of messages emanating from three diverse sources:

- Statutory sources

  The essence being that the norms, values, and society's aspirations are already encapsulated in the national curriculum. The teacher's role therefore is to communicate its contents efficiently and effectively and then assess pupils' understanding and retention of it.

- Parents/local community

  The unwritten but constantly reiterated messages teachers are subjected to from this source include the cultivation of local values, adherence to strict discipline, and the aspiration for pupil transition to higher education seen as a means of accessing a significant share of the national resources.

- Teacher's personal biography

An individual teacher's disposition, background, learning experiences, professional training, affiliations and peers influence their work ethics and relationships with pupils and parents.

The legitimacy of the teachers' role seemed to rest upon their proficiency in transmitting messages originating from both statutory and community sources. They either have accepted and internalised these as their own or conversely have been pressurised into conveying them by virtue of their position.

This section has focused on how teachers' understanding of communication is influenced by the need to deliver the curriculum within specifications andalso by the general community discourse. As communicators, teachers are shown to be transmitters of messages that originate from external sources which in turn limits their authorship of what is contextually relevant. Though learning is a social activity echoing the social conventions of a community, teaching is a professional activity that invites reflection on its theoretical basis and the commonality aspired for in professionalism. As Goodson and Hargreaves (2003) indicates, the knowledge that teachers have is implicated in the people they become. Opportunity for teachers to share and evaluate their pedagogical knowledge is important to the teachers they become. Considering the importance my participants attached to communication, further investigation into how social conventions could aid or hamper choice of communication patterns is suggested. Similarly the interplay of power relations in adult /child relationships has been implicated in learning processes. Literature presents arguments for child-centred learning practices with the belief that such pedagogies promote a breakdown of teacher/pupil hegemonies and encourage learning (Mockler and Sachs 2006), yet Foucault argues 'even child-centred instructional formats [have] not dissolved or tamed power relations but merely reformulated them' (Deacon 2006: p.185). Hegemonic influences remain implicated whichever way power relations are reformulated. As long as someone outside the immediate context determines what should be learnt, it is

difficult to diffuse this influence. Further consideration into how curriculum space and learning assessment formats influence pedagogical choices including child centered learning requires further investigation.

Coldron and Smith (1999:p.716) argue, 'teachers' professional identities are manifest in their classroom practices'. I have indicated in chapter 2 how these practices within Kenyan classrooms are the subject of much criticism often classified as, 'outdated and archaic chalk and talk' lectures that bear little fruit (Ojiambo 2009:p.135). Whilst acknowledging the lack of teaching resources and poor infrastructure, as contributing factors there is also comment about teachers' specific choice of teaching approaches and seeming lack of motivation. Ackers and Hardman (2001: p.256) found lessons in Kenyan primary schools to be dominated by transmission of facts and most lessons to 'be dull and repetitive'. They deduced a form of conservatism among the teachers which they attributed to deeply internalised cultural sources. Whilst there can be no excuse for dull lessons, changes within classroom practices are unlikely without understanding the dynamics that engender this cultural conservatism. The social conventions, the environmental constraints and the timetabling structure regulating these lessons should be further researched and discussed. Considering traditional forms of education in most African communities was and still is practical in nature the reasons for the teachers transition to the transmissional mode in formal education deserve further investigation. Commenting on the differences between traditional approaches to education and those observed in current classrooms Woolman (2001: p. 40)argues:

> In contrast to traditional African education where methods involved active participation, observation and learning by doing instructional methods in most African schools tend to be dominated by rote learning, pupil passivity, limited verbal interaction and reliance on text and test.

He cites shortage of trained teachers, which is not the case here, and also the climate of competition and high testing which encourages memorization more than acquisition of applied skills, critical thinking or creativity. It could be argued that it is not teachers' capacity to utilise

active or learner centered learning that is at contention, but rather the conviction regarding the purpose of classroom communication, their sense of self, the pace and the timeframes within which it should be seen to be achieved. Given the transition from stable traditional teaching learning practices to continuously evolving classroom based learning practices it is worth considering how teacher/pupil relationships are affected by changes in perceived purposes for classroom communication. The emphasis on transference of knowledge is underpinned by a seeming lack of ownership in what has to be taught and learnt in their classrooms. Cultivating that ownership begins with listening to teachers talk about their work and what they consider important to the improvement of their practice.

6.5 Teachers' Professionalism as Requiring Discipline, Dedication and Self Sacrifice

Teacher's sense of being professional was frequently framed as volunteering or self-sacrifice requiring self-discipline and dedication. In answer to the question, what does teaching mean to you, Mr. Kidagi said:

> Teaching is a calling. A person must sacrifice. You must work extra. You must do your own research and reach the target.

Associating teaching to a calling may stem from the catholic influence over the school and serves to illustrate the roots of occupational professionalism engendered through missionary routes to education in this context. However, mention of sacrifice to reach set targets is also associated with organisational professionalism which conditions what the sacrifice is made for. The repeated emphasis on the word *must* indicate two possibilities in interpretation- self-sacrifice as a necessary condition to fulfill their role in whatever circumstances or as a statutory requirement. The ambivalence aptly captures the conflicting discourses of professionalism within the teachers' internalised role expectations. In a similar interview Mr. Kimutai, who had come into teaching against his better judgment but who had attained the position of deputy head teacher also commented about his career:

> I have accepted it now. It requires a lot of sacrifice. Challenging work. Somebody must be patient. You have to volunteer for other issues not be rewarded all the time. Do your work to perfection. Intellectual- diversities, conversant. Ready for challenges.

Having accepted teaching as a career he recognises that the fulfillment of his job requirements go beyond knowledge realms to a readiness to respond to unforeseen challenges. The intellectual diversity of his learners require patience and a willingness to go beyond the narrow confines of job specifications in search of what he calls perfection. In a similar interview, Mrs. Mutai in answer to whether teaching was a profession said:

> Yes. It is a profession. It requires self-sacrifice. It involves so much- your heart – loving the job not because we get a lot. If it is to be paid we need a lot of money.

Mrs. Mutai associates teacher motivation not so much with pay, even though that was part of the initial attraction into the profession, but with a sense of purpose, a mission driven from a love of the job for its own sake.

Some of my participants believed being professional equates with self-sacrifice because of the seeming imbalance between the volume of work required of them and the disproportionate remunerations received. From their standpoint more was being asked of them than they were paid to give. Though some were initially attracted to teaching because it promised a relatively stable income, most recognised the income did not equate to the amount of work or the conditions under which they worked. It is difficult to categorise and quantify all the work a teacher does or should do in a working day. ECD teachers in particular, exemplified self-sacrifice in their terms of employment and nature of work. Whilst entrusted with the responsibility of initiating their pupils to the rituals of education and life-long learning in addition to the personal support including toilet and feeding arrangements, the salary of the ECD teachers in this school was incredibly low. Though on different pay scales, they were still expected to project all the attributes of a professional teacher including manner of dress. In recognising the need for sacrifice or volunteering their time, their comfort, their resources, and their voices in the interests of their work

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commitments, teachers reflect the altruism associated with occupational professionalism noted earlier (Hagreaves1998).

Whereas pre-service qualifications were seen to be the passport into teaching, it is dedication, discipline and self-sacrifice that are said to keep teachers in the occupation. Even those who joined the profession reluctantly stay because they feel they are making a difference to someone. As earlier seen Mrs.Lunani, links being professional to:

> A professional teacher is dedicated, disciplined and you see their outcome. We assess ourselves - CATS, exams and results are released.
>
> You can also see pupils are active
>
> Can read
>
> Participate fully in class
>
> Class control

Mrs. Lunani's comment is significant in that it indicates that teachers assess and judge each other as being or not being professional on the basis of whether or not they are guided by certain internalised role expectations. Evidence of personal commitment, dedicated, disciplined approach to routine work, resulting in classroom control and increased pupil participation and achievement are here valued as indicators of being professional. Teachers determine each other's professionality on the basis of their pupils' classroom behaviour and achievement. For this reason a teacher was expected to work:

> Mrs. Mutai : wholeheartedly- sio kulazimishwa (not under compulsion). The way you do your work, not to stay at home because you feel like or you just chat with others during lesson time. As a professional you know where you should be and what you should do.

Being professional therefore was associated with a certain epistemological orientation to ones job that required wholehearted adherence to set routines as expected in organizational professionalism. Watching their varied duty

rotations from lesson preparation and delivery, daily assessment of pupils work, counselling sessions with parents and pupils, share outdoor activities, inter-school competitions, staff and parent meetings, I came to an appreciation of why discipline and dedication would be seen as a necessary ingredient to their identity. Any routine intervention not properly followed through cannot hope to produce the results it was designed to deliver. Maintaining these routines requires commitment and dedication from those responsible for their implementation.

Self-sacrifice was not only evident in the length of their school day, but also in the intensity of school activities. It takes a considerable degree of energy and discipline to repeat routines without showing fatigue. Some teachers had taught in Lower Primary classes for well over ten years; Mrs. Lunani for example, had taught at this level for close to twenty years. Year after year they helped pupils to transit through the rest of the primary levels, whilst they remained in the same classes repeating recommended classroom routines. A teacher does not just do what s/he wants or feels like, but follows specified routines that dictate what should be done at specific times as Mr. Kimutai says:

> The programme, you go by the programmes. It requires you to prepare before you give pupils information.

This necessity for preparation, punctuality and attention to duty in a certain manner as has already been illustrated. As Mrs. Mutai and Mr. Kimutai had earlier argued, without dedication andself-discipline it is likely for a teacher to justify skipping certain elements of the routine or fail to prepare adequately for their lessons which would then account for inadequate curriculum implementation. Observation of the rhythm of the participants school day, demonstrated how cursory attention to contractual obligations would be inadequate in meeting the needs of the learners in their circumstances. Contractual obligations do not make exceptions on the basis of student background or learning environment. Nor is distinction made on the basis of location of learning or likely language barrier that might limit participation or achievement of intended learning outcomes. Offering a predetermined curriculum to a large, diverse pupil

population perhaps calls for a predictable pattern of events and an understanding of the school pace, how it is regulated and supported. However as the evidence here suggests keeping apace with curriculum specification requires discipline dedication and self-sacrifice.

How teachers fulfilled their routine work under the pressure of increased expectations is what counts as professional practice, but perhaps what seemed to me as acts ofself-sacrifice was the numerous little things they did automatically and did not think to mention; the attention routinely given to pupils' welfare, the time taken to listen to their tales, the settling of disputes and generally creating an environment in which pupils felt safe. Sitting under 'the Shrine' at lunch time, we were regularly joined by a little boy in the fourth year of school whose tales of his family life was as moving as it was unexpected. The ease with which he regularly joined the teachers at the shrine was not only an indicator of his need but the assurance that he would be listened to and supported. School, I came to recognise, was a place where a small number of adults took care of a large number of children, all with diverse needs, craving recognition and encouragement. Teachers spent a considerable amount of time both in and out of lessons guiding, correcting and comforting pupils according to these individual needs. This is an important aspect of a teacher's role as children only learn when they feel secure and appreciated. Commenting on the intensity of a teachers work Mrs. Mutai adds:

> Classroom work. Counseling the pupils, and the community. Caring, as a teacher for the children, See that they are clean. It is not possible for someone to teach if they are not professionals. *Huwezi kutoboa*! [You cant make it!].

Because of the diversity and intensity of calls on the teachers time Mrs. Mutai felt that one could not make it unless they were pushed by a sense of altruism associated with being professional. The necessity for self-sacrifice as has already been explained lies in the challenge to bridge the gap between what is prescribed to be learnt, where it should be learnt and the needs of those who need to learn. Whether these challenges can be solved by higher levels of training, curriculum adjustment or further

material support is a matter of separate enquiry. Pupils have different starting points and home support mechanisms. In some cases, the parents helped with homework, but in the majority of homes in this context, a child would not have held a book until they came to school. Since learners then have different backgrounds and aptitudes, most teachers concur with Mr.Kidaki's observation: 'Unless you use remedial time you cannot cover the current curriculum'. To create this extra time means teachers must of necessity give up some of their own personal time as earlier discussed. Therefore teachers in Upper Primary, particularly in Classes 7 and 8 have regular additional lessons, which occasioned a supplementary timetable.Mr. Kadi says, 'We have teachers who come on Saturdays and Sundays'. Inability to appropriately cover the syllabus as set is always seen as a teacher's lack of commitment, yet others might openly concede, 'It is not possible to cover the syllabus' [within the allocated time]

Whilst the Kenya Institute of Education allocates 35 minutes as a sufficient time slot for a Class 4 or 5 lesson, a teacher may feel, like Miss Chebet, pupils need more time to satisfactorily master the assigned content. What is important she points out is that:

> Yes. I have covered the level of syllabus in most subjects because of the extra tuition hours. I have sacrificed my own time to reach where I am now. If I followed the normal timetable I would not be where aim today. Teaching is a blessing. It is like a pastor. You cannot be paid what you deserve. Teaching is a learning process.I update my knowledge each time I prepare lessons.

Miss Chebet further adds:

> Professional teachers ensure that children are taken at their pace but that they cover the syllabus. The teachers create time to ensure that they marry the children's needs to the specifications of the syllabus within set timeframes.

The missionary tones behind conception of teaching as a blessing, like a pastor, reflect the motivational force which loop back to the power of occupational professionalism. Taking children at their pace requires flexibility in terms of what must be learnt and when it should be learnt, but covering the syllabus adequately is something that is expected to be done

within pre-determined timeframes. Marrying children's needs to the syllabus requires familiarity with those needs, familiarity with the curriculum and dexterity at weaving one into the other. This was thought to call for both self-sacrifice and professionalism on the part of the teacher. Though the curriculum is thought to anticipate and provide for learners' needs, it is the teacher who interacts with the learner and his environment and establishes the actual need. The teacher is the one who determines the relevance of the curriculum to a specific class of pupils, so s/he should be the first to identify irrelevant elements, gaps or areas that need improvement or a new approach. Unfortunately to date, creating additional lesson time in order to match pupils' expressed needs to curriculum requirements has been the more common approach to addressing possible disparity. As Miss Chebet observed:

> Their professionalism is measured by their ability to marry needs of the pupils to the specifications of the syllabus.

Teachers' self-sacrifice is further necessitated by the otherness of the language of instruction. As Trans Nzoia East is a multicultural district, many children will have learnt or heard a second language spoken in their neighbourhood before they join school. However, they are still in the process of mastering their mother tongue and Kiswahili, so patience is required on the part of the teacher to guide pupils through the learning tasks in a second or third language. At ECD and Lower Primary levels, the teacher, as previously stated, is allowed to instruct children in their mother tongue, though Upper Primary pupils are expected to learn in English. The conceptual difference between the languages poses a special challenge for teachers and pupils alike;

> Miss Chebet: Getting words for family members in the children's first language I noticed that the problem was in perception. For example in their languages they have no word for cousin.

In school, pupils are introduced to English and start a literacy programme in both Kiswahili and English simultaneously. Although they are not taught in English from Class 1, they are expected to be fluent enough to

receive their lesson instruction in English from the fourth year of primary school. Teachers of the pre-school level and the Lower Primary are therefore under considerable pressure not only to induct children into school routines, but also to help them learn in the two languages (English and Kiswahili), so there is a lot of code switching at lower and middle levels to allow for effective participation. For those children who have had little literacy exposure at home, school becomes the place where they first learn letter and number formations. Even in ECD where lessons are supposed to be held in mother tongue, efforts are made to introduce the children to a few words of English. For example, this extract from Mrs. Wafula's numbers lesson, shows that though pupils learn the numbers in English, the instructions for each learning task are in Kiswahili.

Extract 6. 9 Mrs.Wafula's Numbers lesson

Mrs.Wafula: *Wangapi wana kondoo nyumbani*? [How many have sheep at home?]

Class: [Hands shoot up], *mimi, mimi mwalimu*![Me, me teacher!]

Mrs.Wafula: *Kondoo ana miguu mingapi?*[How many legs does a sheep have?] Mlongo?

Mlongo: *Minne.* (Four)

Mrs.Wafula: Good. Class, *sema* [say] four.

Class: Four.

Mrs. Wafula: *Sema* [say]sheep.

Class: Sheep.

Mrs. Wafula: *Kondoo anaitwa* sheep. [a sheep is called sheep.]

Class: Sheep.

Mrs. Wafula: [Pointing to the picture of a bird] *Nini hii?*[What is this?]

Class: *Ndege.* [Bird]

Mrs. Wafula: *Sema* [say] bird.

Class: Bird.

Mrs.Wafula:*Ndege hupatikana wapi?*[Where are birds found?]

Class: *Mtini*. [In trees]

Mrs. Wafula: *Ndege ina miguu mingapi*? [How many legs does a bird have?]

Class: *Mbili*.   [Two]

From this extract one can see that language and numerical instructions are taking place simultaneously.

A disproportionate portion of the teachers' day is devoted to their role within the school. Long work hours have a consequence the teachers' choice of association, conversation and activities which influence their thinking processes and sense of self. Although the participants came from different ethnic backgrounds and spoke different languages, within the school they are expected to use the official languages of English and Kiswahili and to keep to a particular dress code. Whilst appreciating the impact their sacrifice possibly has on students' lives, one cannot help wondering about the consequences of such a long day on their personal lives. If this pace of work continues over a whole career, they would be sacrificing not only time, but possibly the quality of their family lives, thus making their families pay the price for someone else's education. This prolonged stay within the school setting also has implications both in terms of the salience of any aspect of a teacher's identity and on the development of that identity away from the institution.   Secondly, expectations of high pupils' achievements, regardless of the material circumstance of their classrooms reinforce the misconception that teachers' sacrifice is all that matters to pupil achievement.   Such assumptions encourage unrestricted enrolments and drastic changes that require more from teachers than they are able to give. A self-sacrificing teacher is not thought to be limited by class size, infrastructure, learning resources or diversity in their learners' capacity. They are thought to want to prove their worth as does Mrs. Mutai who says:

> I feel good. I shouldn't be called a teacher for nothing. When you help a child and he succeeds the parents treat you with respect.

If the community understands their children's achievement to be the direct product of teachers' self-sacrifice and shows its appreciation by treating

them with respect, a circle of expectations is sustained. Teachers value their professional reputation and realise their self-esteem is greatly influenced by their capacity to deliver a community's wishes. They labour to produce desired results. They are then judged to be professional or unprofessional according to their learners' achievements. On the other hand, questions can be raised as to whether responding to community expectations in this way is an act of self-sacrifice or compulsion.

Teachers' self-sacrifice stretched to the use of their personal resources for pupils' welfare. On a number of occasions, teachers offered a portion of their lunch to pupils whose parents could not afford to put them on the lunch programme. Teachers also made contributions towards the medical and funeral expenses of parents. During my fieldwork, contributions were made towards the hospital bills of two parents and the funeral of one. Perhaps it could be argued these contributions were made as part of the community's welfare system, in which case, teachers who travelled to teach in the school were contributing by virtue of being teachers in this community. Teachers were particularly attentive to pupils who fell ill in school and arrangements were always made to convey seriously ill pupils to the health centre, three kilometres away. During one of my lesson observations, a Class 8 pupil fainted and was brought out of class. Three female teachers working under the 'Shrine' immediately abandoned their lesson preparation and rushed to give first aid as another arranged for transportation to the health centre. One teacher even provided her own *lesso* (cloth) to cover the girl whilst waiting for transport. In cases where parents were thought to be the source of the pupil's injuries, the teachers involved the village administration in protecting the child's welfare. Financial support was sometimes sought to enable a past pupil to retain a place in secondary school and since the school takes pride in the number of pupils who transit to the next level, on some occasions teachers agreed to contribute towards the school fees of former pupils whose parents had failed to raise the full amount. A parent testified to this fact during a Class 8 meeting 'I have seen the head teacher pay school fees for some of our children'.

Participants understood self-sacrificeto steer the regular routine that assured results. Self-sacrifice was seen to be the incalculable cost of education. Whilst self-sacrifice is a virtue and their determination to help their pupils achieve regardless of their circumstances was admirable, it nevertheless has the disenabling effect of making teachers more self-abandoning, thereby making them tolerant to working conditions which militate against their best intent and the drive for quality education. Could they perhaps, as envisaged in democratic teacher professionalism (Sachs 2001), act through their professional body and local networks to advocate for minimum education standards and an appropriate allocation of national and local resources to educational infrastructure? However, self-sacrifice in this school was understood to mean teachers' preparedness to give more of themselves and their resources towards the implementation of educational curricula they didn't question or develop.

Alongside self-sacrifice was self-discipline and dedication. So important was teachers' self-discipline to the overall purpose of education, the administration often revisited the topic in staff meetings. Mrs. Lunani, the senior teacher made this remarks in one staff meetings:

> Teaching is a noble profession. We behave in a way to nurture professionalism. A professional does not carry his/her anger until things go astray. We are the most social people. We control ourselves and not allow socialising to go beyond boundaries. We must be disciplined as we encourage pupils to be disciplined. We give children a message, they like to ape teachers. If we don't use good language, the picture we give them is not good. It is bad for us to give cause for teachers to be talked about negatively in the community.

The reference to being professional as a foundational argument here is premised on an understanding of the shared occupational orientation and necessity to represent and protect their identity from reproach. In this case, the necessity for self-discipline is located in the need to provide role models for the learners who are apt to imitate their teachers. Discipline in their use of language is thought to play an important part in teachers' sense of identity as use of abusive language would reflect negatively on them and become a source of comment within the community with consequence

on their overall influence. She makes the case for self-discipline and moderation at all times in all things even outside school hours. If, however, teaching as a career regulates an individual's life to this extent then the boundary between professional and personal identities is immaterial making disparaging comments about professional capacity to be personal. The salience of the teacher identity then has consequence on educational processes and can only be sustained by accompanying levels of recognition and support.

This section demonstrates how participants understood professional identity as being synonymous with self-discipline, dedication and self-sacrifice in view of the enormity of their task. Self-sacrifice was perceived to uphold routines and facilitate pupil achievement and in turn earn teachers the community's respect. Their self-sacrifice is evidenced in their endeavour to fulfill curriculum requirements despite local challenges. The construction of a teacher's professional identity based solely on self-sacrifice, in my view, positions teachers as voiceless links between the curriculum and the recipients. With their agency diminished, they remain simply implementers and forfeit their rightful place in the process of change. Without this role, can teachers be called professionals? Similarly, perceptions of education quality built on teachers' self-sacrifice, sidesteps the true cost of education, which could lead to the borrowing of inappropriately priced educational practices. Hargreaves (1998:p. 19,a) makes the argument:

> A prerequisite of the way forward is to work with the grain of the physchology and experience of teachers by ensuring that they themselves actively contribute to better professional practices. Teachers like doctors or engineers tinker to discover what works best and in so doing they creatively search for and test the solutions to the problems. The task is to find on a grand scale a new way in which teachers can create the professional knowledge (which includes the associated practical skills) they need, devise ways of testing whether this know how works and then find effect give ways of disseminating the outcomes.

6.6 Teacher's Moral Purpose

Fullan (1993:12) posits that at its core, 'teaching is a moral profession'. This was a role expectation endorsed by my participants who saw themselves as responsible for the kind of person their pupils became. They claim to make a difference in their pupils' lives. This section discusses teachers' views and comments regarding their moral purpose in the light of Avalos (2010:p.4) argument that paradox in teacher professionalism:

> … involved in entrusting teachers with the responsibility of building a new social and economic order through education, while requiring them to correct the effects of the new social order over the next generation by engaging in tasks linked to social protection, which are precisely those recognised in results based pressure climate.

Teachers in my context were similarly caught in the paradox of engendering amongst their pupils those social values that include cooperation, compassion, community mindedness and self-sacrifice while at the same time striving to excel, to outshine and distinguish themselves from the rest. It is a competitive world they will live in and so learn to do so from school. As has already been seen the instruments for measuring teacher professionalism whilst recognising their moral purpose, utilise the quantifiable indicators of school mean scores.

My participants understood being professional to entail the moral duty of preparing pupils for the future and their place in society as reflected in the following comments on what makes her a professional:

> Miss Chebet: how I handle pupils and bring them, shape them to be the way society wants them.

How society wants pupils to be is summarised in the objectives of the national curriculum for primary schools shown below:

1. Foster nationalism, patriotism and promote national unity.
2. Promote socio-economic, technological, industrial needs for national development.
3. Promote individual development.
4. Promote sound moral and religious values.

5. Promote equality and responsibility.
6. Promote respect for development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures.
7. Promote international consciousness and foster positive attitude towards nations.
8. Promote positive attitudes, good health and environmental protection.

Adapted from (UNESCO 2006)

Beside economic, industrial and technological advancement, the objectives of the Kenyan education emphasise the pivotal role formal education is expected to play in shaping pupils values and their national identity. The long and arduous journey towards nationalism and national unity navigates through regional and social identities, whose powerful influence can, if not harnessed obstruct its course. It can only be reached through the conviction and enthusiasm of those who in their diversity still feel part of a national entity. Similarly, the definition of sound moral and religious values in a milieu of diverse cultural and religious values requires an educational engagement on a platform of openness and respect to help learners interrogate their differences and their choices knowing how these position them in relation to others whose differences do not necessarily equate to evil. In a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society such as Trans Nzoia East, for individuals to build a post-colonial identity away from core ethnic origins whilst simultaneously navigating the diverse forces of globalisation is a constantly negotiated reality. As explained in Chapter 5, individuals are caught between identities shaped by their ethnicity, though these are possibly not shared by their immediate neighbours, or by diverse religious affiliations or other forms of identity introduced through twenty first century modernity. Individuals therefore have to negotiate their personal and career identities through a plethora of values whilst concurrently holding onto and protecting a shared sense of community with dissimilar others. In such an environment, education is expected to serve as a cohesive tape binding multi-ethnic groups together helping them to forge a shared national identity. It is assumed to be a platform for unity and recognition regardless of background or difference. This is a very difficult

position to be in since teachers as individuals are also confronted with these same choices and it is how they navigate through them that provides immediate reference for their pupils. In a staff meeting occasioned by a misunderstanding between two members of staff a teacher made the following comment:

> We are role models, not just for pupils but for the whole community. But if we utter words without weighing them, what then? Let us behave like people who are professionals. Let us live up to the respect of our pupils and parents.

In the comment about behaving like professionals the teacher projects an understanding that professionals behave in a particular way and that as an occupation of professionals they should be seen to live up to their expectation. The weight of responsibility to be role models in the community means that teachers have to make deliberate efforts to represent the social values that their communities espouse especially in their role as *loco parentis*. What gives the teacher the power or position to exert such influence? In the answer above it seems to be the occupational orientation to the role of a teacher that is hoped to influence behaviour. This expectation has also a historical association reflected in Mrs.Mutai's response in regard to what she thought parents expect of her:

> We are in contact with their children. We mould the life of a child. A teacher is a counselor, is knowledgeable. As a counselor, a teacher counsels those with torn clothes, you mould their houses. In our language a teacher can be compared to *Kirwokik* or *Moterenik (*overseers of initiation processes*)* – they counseled children during initiation and were highly respected for their role.

From Mrs. Mutai's comments it can be deduced that the public trust in teaching as a profession is thought to be attached to their capacity to shape pupils' lives and family fortunes, a view also reflected in the parents' expectations. It was a fact that once enrolled, pupils spend a proportionately longer time of day with their teachers than parents. The classroom teacher is likened to the traditional overseers of initiation ceremonies who were respected for their role and authority in inculcating social values and for instilling a sense of pride, belonging and

responsibility in the young. Where, and if teachers have similar impact on the young people's lives, they have a place in society's esteem.

Having accepted teaching as his career after initial reluctance, I asked Mr. Kimutai what being a teacher means to him now. Among other factors the one that gives him great satisfaction is the knowledge that, as a teacher he is seen to be:

> Somebody who cares...Somebody who can mould a person. Somebody who can help someone to understand themselves and be dependable. Bring people from unknown to known.

The perception that professional teachers mould pupils implies an understanding of education as an identity formation process. When the number of years pupils spend in primary school is taken in conjunction with their maturation process, it is reasonable to suggest primary school teachers have a strong influence on pupils' personal development. In helping pupils to understand themselves and become assets to society, teachers fulfil an important moral purpose. The assumption that teachers bringing somebody from the known to the unknown presumes a journey in which teachers either make known the qualities of a child or cause a child to get recognised by the society values they have been taught. That journey also involves helping the child to understand themselves.

During my stay in the school I noticed how the teachers' attention was dived between meeting the classroom needs and the welfare concerns of individual pupils. Counseling cases, formal and informal always involved the lower primary teacher who inducted the child in the school system. When the results were released lower primary teachers monitored the overall performance of the pupils they taught in lower even when they were not in their class. There was a sense of pride when teachers in conversations referred to past pupils who were thought to be making progress in given fields. The close bond between the teacher and their pupils was difficult to define but indicated a link between pupils' progress and teachers sense of self.

Besides serving as role models teachers also incorporated messages of the desired social qualities in their lessons Mr. Kidagi said:

> You need to give examples. You say these are good behaviours that society expects you to have. You ask them for examples. No fighting. I gave them the example of respect. You don't respect someone for what they have but for who they are. I gave the example of respect for the flag, we stand at attention during the flag raising to show our respect and also we show respect to older people and leaders.

It is significant that Barrett (2006)reflected the same sense of moral responsibility that teachers in Tanzania, felt. They saw themselves as mirrors through which entire communities can appreciate what it means to be educated.

As earlier stated by Ojiambo (2009), Kenya is not lacking in theoretical recommendations but rather in the practical approaches to make these objectives a lived reality in primary schools. Teachers fully embracing their moral purpose and supported in their endeavour can help to bridge this gap. Individuals who matriculate through the system are expected to have not only developed 'sound moral and religious values', but also to have reached their potential, have an awareness of health and environmental protection and be respectful towards people of differing backgrounds. It is thus evident teachers have an important role to play in individual and national identity development. In a fast changing society this formation of identity is frequently confronted by change and teachers as professionals should be prepared and willing to take up this challenge.

6.7   Summary of Teachers' Internalised Role Expectations

The distinctive contribution of this chapter has been in discussing the key themes around which teachers' professional identity is experienced in this context. Teachers' internalised role expectations are presented as shaped by practices gained in training, the interface between curriculum and examination requirements, communication skills framed by professional and community discourses and by their individual sense of discipline,self-sacrifice and moral purpose.

Though training was considered an essential entry requirement into professionalism, evidence of one's professionality was sought in the behaviour and attainment of their pupils at periodic zonal and national examinations. Teachers judged themselves and each other in a manner that reflected both occupational and managerial discourses of professionalism.

The National curriculum has been reflected as a source of authority and a challenge, providing a framework by which others can judge their professionality. The extent of teachers' curriculum knowledge was judged on the basis of their current qualification and the achievement of their learners. Limited opportunities exist for the teachers to interrogate and extend their pedagogical and subject knowledge while their knowledge of the communities and pupils they work with remains underutilized. Teachers engaged with the curriculum content within their classrooms in a manner that reflected an awareness of pupils' needs, social conventions and the pressure to keep within given policy specifications. In the light of the centrality of the curriculum to teachers' work and identity, their perceived distance from its development process whilst within organisational professionalism underutilizes their contextual and self-knowledge.

Discipline, dedication and self-sacrifice wereconsidered essential to achieving curriculum coverage in their under resourced environment. The emphasis laid on these personal qualities blurs the distinction between personal and social identities and makes the case for occupational professionalism as a subtle influence on sustainable reforms.Teachers understood their role to entail the care and guidance of pupilsin keeping with the community's social values. The association of teachers' identity with their pupils' achievement privileges the allocation of attention to elements that are deemed to be measurable indicators of teacher identity.

Extensive debate on appropriate classroom approaches in relation to social conventions, curriculum specifications and theoretical groundings were touched on with the recommendation for further research.

7.0 Pertinent Suggestions to Teachers' Professional Identity

Overview

Beijaard et al. (2004) urged for more attention to be paid to the role played by professional landscapes, particularly that of 'significant others' in defining what counts as teachers' professional identity. The distinctive contribution of this chapter is in making visible this contribution by presenting the social suggestions(Vahasantanen et al.2008) of parents and pupils of a particular landscape. Pupils, represent the corresponding 'other' (Stets and Burke 2003: p. 4) with whom teachers interact and take into account in enacting their identity. It is also pupils that are the yardstick by which teachers' competence is judged. Besides the pressure of their expectations, parents also represent a kaleidoscope of adult identities shared or differing from individual teachers which challenge and bring into focus the boundaries around teachers' professional identity. Parents also share the educational costs and as such are significant stakeholders in considering the outcomes of education reforms. Both pupils and parents exhibit a desire for change in personal circumstances which they hope education can deliver, hence the emphasis on high achievements and the acclaim for teachers who are thought to sacrifice to make pupil's success possible.

7.1 Introduction

Understanding identity to be co- constructed, Wilkins et al. (2011: p. 4) argue that:

> A key element in the co-construction of identity is the negotiation between participants of the meanings and practices, each bringing an understanding about these roles based on previous experience.

The construction of identity therefore has to do with the forging of meanings and practices based on prior experience. Studies on professional identity have often examined how teachers negotiate these meanings with each other or with administrative structures

(Vahasantanenet al. 2008).   This study not only presents teachers'
understanding of what they see to lie within their role boundaries but also
makes visible the meanings and expectations significant others have of
them.The argument has already been made that:

> To a large extent identity has to do with the meanings that
> individuals make about themselves and with the meanings that
> others make about them (Avalos 2010:p.3).

Making evident the meanings of these significant others helps to develop a
more comprehensive understanding of the identity under study. Ybema et
al.' (2009:p.302) advise that 'identity studies should pay attention
simultaneously to self definitions and the definitions of others'. Prytula
and Weiman (2011: p.4) see teachers' professional identity to be
constructed through not only 'the maintenance of one's beliefs but over
time influenced by others' beliefs and the context of learning'. This study,
investigates teachers' professional identity from a sociological approach
which looks at identity from a broad perspective:

> Because the self emerges in and is reflective of society, the
> sociological approach to understanding the self and its parts
> (identities) means we must also understand the society in which the
> self is acting and keep in mind that the self is always acting in a
> social context in which other selves exist.

> Stets and Burke (2003:p.2)

Although it was not possible to engage with every aspect of society that
shapes my participants social suggestion, this chapter explores the
expectations of the parents and pupils who form a significant part of their
professional landscape.

7.2 Pupils' Role in the Construction of Teachers'

Professional Identity

Within the learning environment 'significant others' include not only other
teachers, but also learners who experience and possibly influence the
evolution of teachers' beliefs. Barrett (2006: p.44) identifies pupils as:

. . .the most important group with which teachers interact and with respect to whom their responsibilities are defined.

While pupils have few or no forums in which to categorically state their requirements of teachers, they nonetheless have these expectations. They are also the mirrors that reflect teachers' work and the means by which teachers garner approval and immediate affirmation or discouragement on the identities they project (Vahasantanenet al. 2008). In their discussion on identity construction, Stets and Burke (2003:p.3) state, individuals 'receive feedback from the structures they and others create to change themselves and the way they operate'. Pupils' expectations, their needs, their limitations and more importantly, their achievements, or lack of, fuel discussion on the teachers' internalised role expectations thereby influencing teachers identity construction.

In order to understand the identities salient in teacher/pupil interactions, I arranged to observe lessons, and hold focus group discussions with pupils in Upper Primary classes. As previously discussed in the last chapter, teacher/pupil interaction was predominantly governed by the social conventions regulating adult/child relationships within the community. In each of the lessons I observed, there was a certain communication protocol indicative of these conventions. As previously mentioned, pupils stood up collectively to greet a teacher entering their classroom, and remained standing until authorised to sit down. All classroom seating arrangements - whether in groups, pairs or individually - were determined by the teacher. Lesson observations helped me focus attention on the practices which served to awaken pupils' awareness of their subjection to the existing social order. Whilst the teachers felt these conventions were essential to maintaining social order, they nonetheless promoted a perspective to authority with possible implications on the latter'sself-worth and future interactions. Perceptions of power, or its absence, amongst the pupils and their parents influenced their understanding of their entitlement and obligations which nonetheless deserves further enquiry in relation to its impact on child development.

7.2.1 What Pupils Expected from their School

During focused group discussions, I began by asking pupils what they hoped to gain from school. One could argue that seeking their social suggestion in this way was a form of manipulation as the reason of my enquiry was dressed in a question regarding the purpose of attending school rather than directly addressing teachers' identity. There are two ways of looking at this question. Teachers were important to the pupils in so far as they helped them achieve their objectives of being in school, therefore knowing that purpose brings one closer to the nature of pupils' social expectations in regard to their teachers' identity. Secondly, understanding identity to guide action, anticipating the form of action entailed in pupils expectation of schooling helps to draw attention to the form of suggestion that goes into the formation of their teachers' identity. I have chosen to present their responses in table formant because of their brevity and the visual impact.

Table 7.1   What Pupils Expect From School

Class level	Class 5	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8
Pupils expect from school	To learn Not to be ignorant Be taught what to do To understand	To get education To be prepared for employment Save our future lives Have good	To learn Make our lives better if we are poor Prepare for the future	To learn Prepare for the future Live the future To be important in society To gain knowledge and skills for example read and write

Study and get a job	morals	Get a job
So we can judge for ourselves	Learn language	Get education
	To get education	Improve life
	To get ready for employment	
To help parents		

Some of the pupils' expectations for school feeds into and corresponds with the teachers' various internalised role expectations. For example, the pupils' expectations of schooling appear to be premised on the assumption that a set of knowledge and skills which they do not presently possess but which can be attained through schooling is necessary for a successful future. They expect to:

- Learn
- Gain knowledge and skills for example read and write
- Be taught what to do
- Prepare for the future
- Be prepared for employment

Correspondingly, teachers feel they should be good communicators helping their pupils to know and be what 'society wants them to be'(Miss Chebet). Teachers understand the set national curriculum to encompass the knowledge and skills that pupils seek, especially when education is perceived to :

- Remov[e] ignorance
- Make life better
- Prepare for the future
- Get a job

Unlike traditional societies where the youth were educated into specific roles according to their gender and parental occupations, formal education

is seen to widen career options. Pupils dreamt of careers in medicine, engineering, aviation, law and political leadership. Like their parents, Class 8 pupils saw school as having a direct consequence on their self-definition; *a way of becoming important*. In traditional society, those who executed exceptional feats achieved eminence. Gaining such distinction in modern society was narrowly understood to begin with school achievement hence the desire and desperation for such success. Pupils who came from economically disadvantaged families particularly saw it as the door through which to escape poverty, as with employment they could improve the quality of their parents' lives. Since pupils' recognised, educational achievement was dependent upon the efforts they invested in the present, they were not averse to relinquishing recreational time to attend additional lessons and accepted forms of discipline in the light in which they were given. Teachers aware of pupils and community expectations seek to demonstrate their capacity to accurately deliver and facilitate their attainment. However, it is not difficult to see how for pupils who underachieved or failed national examinations, the lofty image of a future based on examination success, so long engrained in them , made it difficult to accept and manage an existence away from mainstream education.

Similarly, pupil expectations that school will make their life better and help them to maintain good morals feeds into the teachers' moral purpose. Pupils expected to be told what to do, to have good morals but at the same time be equipped to judge for themselves. Class 5 pupils considered people not versed in formal education as 'ignorant'. They expressed the wish for school to help them:

> Remove ignorance
>
> Be able to understand
>
> Be able to judge for ourselves
>
> Be taught what to do

Education as a path to removing ignorance was a concept initially introduced by missionaries and enforced at independence by Kenya's

founding president (Kenyatta 1938). The definition of ignorance merits further inquiry, but understood in the light of the African identity dilemma previously discussed in Chapter 2, its definition influences what is prioritized in education. Amongst my participating pupils, school knowledge was thought to remove ignorance as it not only taught one how to 'understand' and 'judge' for oneself, but was also viewed as a direct link to future employment. The pupils desire to judge for themselves seemed to be premised on the belief that they must first learn the basics. It could be argued however that perhaps opportunities for self-judgment were constraint by pedagogical choices oriented towards making them what the global society wanted them to be.

Having established pupils' aspirations, I sought to understand why they were in the particular school. Among the reason given where:

> The schools performance
>
> The teachers
>
> The sports facilities
>
> The lunch programme

It was significant that the schools' performance had the greatest impact on the pupils' choice and is itself indicative of what is valued. Not surprisingly such indicators of performativity had pride of place in the teachers' internalised role expectations.

7.2.2 Pupils' Expectations of their Teachers.

Having established their expectations of schooling and their school in particular, I sought to elucidate the role teachers were expected to play in the attainment of pupils' educational goals. In answer to the question: What does your teacher do for you that no one can else can, the pupils gave the answers presented in Table 7. 2.

Table 7.2.**Pupils Expectations of Their Teachers**

	Class 5	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8
What does your teacher do for you	Teach us	Teach	Teach us	They make sure you have understood.
	Remove ignorance	Advise us	Love us	They do extra work even not in the syllabus
	Cane us to remove ignorance	Help - how to		
		pass your exam	Teach us	Cover past papers
	Help with difficult work	*Akili nzuri*(good brain/mind)	until we understand	*Give us homework*
	Teach us how to maintain ourselves	Teach me good language	Discipline	
	Make me love the subject	Pass exams	Teach us to respect parents	They come on Saturdays and Sundays
	Teach us how to read	Lead to university	Teach good morals	Help us to be aware of HIV/AIDS
	When…if you feel disturbed, you… teachers can help, you can go and disclose to the teacher		Teach us how to maintain ourselves	Help us to avoid sex. They leave their work and come to teach us

It could be argued that their responses were conditioned more by their schooling experience rather than what they truly would have liked to see. However, it is those responses shaped by their schooling experience that is useful in analyzing pupils' social suggestion in the construction of teachers' professional identity. Mention of teachers teaching, teaching until pupils understood enforces the importance of communication in conveying the intended content as a vital part of that identity. The understanding is also linked to revising and helping to pass examinations.

Good teachers were those that not only helped pupils to love the subject and overcome obstacles related to it but also to help pupils prepare for and

pass examinations leading to university admission. The image of good teachers as doing extra work including weekends, covering past papers as a means of anticipating not only the examination content but structure and approach fits in with teachers' perceptions of the need for self-sacrifice as part of being professional. Passing examinations was considered important to the jobs they needed for the future. This clearly ties in with the seemingly disproportionate importance teachers attached to examination success.

Pupils also saw their teachers in the role of advisers and counselors and expected them to guide them towards self-discipline and moral choices, hence the references to good language, the avoidance of sex, good morals and respect. The pupils' expectation corresponds with the teachers' own understanding of their role in moulding pupils to conform to established social values which included respect, hard work, and moral integrity.

Teachers were also expected to be impartial in judgment and approachable -

> Teachers do not discriminate
> If you feel disturbed, teachers can help
> You can go and disclose problems to the teacher

Pupils expected teachers to 'love' or care for them. This expectation was probably influenced by the close relationship they forged with ECD and Lower Primary teachers, who in turn continued to monitor their progress through the school. This 'love' was also evidenced in the support all teachers offered pupils who were unwell, bereaved or in need of counsel and other forms of child protection. This form of parental love was in part a community expectation and possibly lay behind the teachers' willingness to sacrifice their time and resources. The pupils, it would appear, seemed to appreciate discipline as the cornerstone of success and as such, expected their teachers to instill it both in individuals and the classroom. This understanding emanated from their parents and the community and though Kenyan law forbids any form of corporal punishment, the teachers were not entirely averse to its use. The pupils expected to be disciplined as a way of removing 'ignorance', so any disciplinary measures the teachers

thought appropriate were accepted on the understanding it was for their ultimate good.   It is also significant that the pupils expected teachers to teach them to respect the parents, as this was a continuation of the community narrative in and out of school: respect for those older persons in positions of responsibility as will be reflected in the parents' responses.

This section illustrates how pupils' expressed social suggestions are seen to compare with the teachers internalised role expectations influencing the salience of certain discourses in teachers' professional identity. Pupils recognised their teachers were the chief means through which they would gain the knowledge and skills necessary for further education and gainful employment.   To this end, pupils expected their teachers to be knowledgeable, diligent, self-sacrificing and supportive. They also expected the teachers to instill and personify self-discipline, moral integrity and respect. Like the community, the pupils expected their teachers to love and care for them. As has been earlier discussed, teachers understood and responded to these expectations accordingly.   The difference lay in the opportunity pupils had to judge for themselves.

7.2   Parents' Place in the Construction of Teachers' Professional Identity

Parents are among groups of people Barrett (2006:p.44) recognised as important to the negotiation of teachers' professional identity:

> …all groups of adults who are interested in children's education (eg parents local community members, education administrators, political leaders), are implicated in shaping teachers identity even as subjectively perceived by teachers themselves.

Besides being a significant part of teachers' clientele, parents also represent the wider and diverse social structures which challenge and impact individual teacher's sense of self. Diversity in parent profiles also helps to illuminate the contextual variations against which teachers' professional identities are constructed. Teachers and parents interact at

different levels forming part of a larger social structure with corresponding role expectations.   Thus within the larger social structure my participants also shared certain sub identities such as ethnicity, church membership, socio-economic groups, or even family with the parents.   These sub identities, though not necessarily salient, could cast a shadow on teachers' subsequent identity construction within the school's social structure. My participants for example, interacted formally with parents during enrolment, class or whole school parent meetings and during specific case related incidents, but informally at community gatherings such as market days, church services, weddings, funerals, initiation ceremonies, and public rallies.   The figure below illustrates the sub structures that interacted within my research school.

Figure 7.3   Interacting and Competing Social Structures
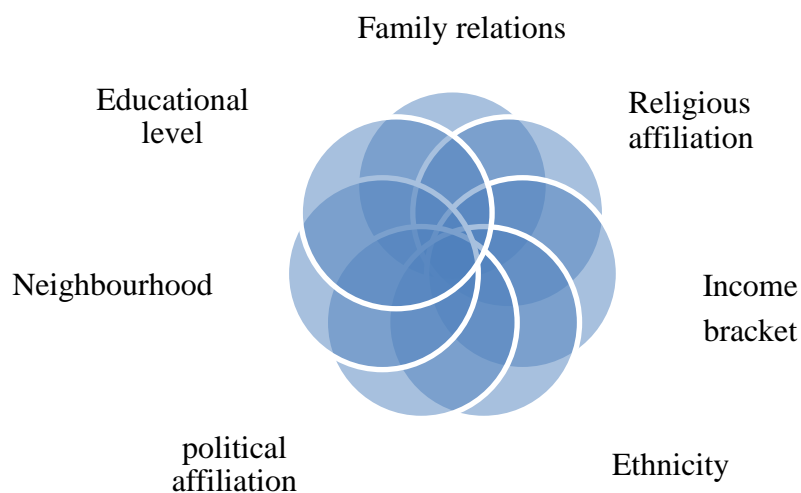
Role expectations and emotions generated through the interactions in other social structures to which some parents and teachers individually feel inclusive or exclusive may spill over and impact on their school interactions, highlighting the multiplicity of intersecting social structures and accompanying sub identities (Boreham and Gray 2005).   This multiplicity of intersecting identities serve to demonstrate why teachers' professional identity construction is an ongoing process, as both teachers and parents navigate beyond their internalised role expectations in other social structures to respond to and focus on what is pertinent within the

school. Here, they have to forget differences of ethnicity, income or religion and instead focus on preparing the youth for their future. When the teachers and the community both judge the school to be fulfilling its objectives, the impact of the other social structures is often overlooked. However, any decline in desired pupil achievement invites negative comment based on this diversity. It is in the subjugation of these multiple identities that the salience of teachers' professional identity is highlighted within the school.

When education is considered a lifelong project starting from infancy, it becomes evident some of the teaching/ learning interactions are carried forward from home into school and beyond. The pre-institutional learning experiences a child has have the potential to create expectations or tensions in teacher/ pupil relationships. A child's experience of learning interactions are first introduced in the privacy of their homes by a parent or significant adult. Children learn a language, some social skills and their sense of identity before joining a learning institution. More importantly, parents engender certain aspirations in their children that increase or divert interest in educational aspirations and pursuits. Addressing a parents' meeting, a parent whose daughter had done well in the previous national examination made the following comment:

> A parent is the first teacher. Bring up your child knowing where he or she is. Not to allow your daughter to go to their aunts' or relatives and you do not know what they are doing there. Stay with your child. My daughter got 364 marks. Even though Turkana is far and very different I allowed her to go and she is doing well. She is top of her class. If we parents and teachers support each other everything is possible.

His undeniable pride in his daughters' achievement places him as a role model to other parents. The argument he makes is that parents have expectations in their children that might be undermined where a parent allows a child to stay for extended periods of time with other members of the extend family. To achieve the goals or intentions that they hold for their children, parents were urged to keep them under their own watchful eye and to cooperate with the teachers. The expectations that parents have

for their children depend on what they think is possible, desirable and advantageous which in turn is likely to be influenced by their own experiences and knowledge. He also makes the argument that success in school depends on the relationship parents forge with teachers. Parents may expect teachers to interact with their children in particular ways, cultivating values that they ascribe to, whilst teachers may institute forms of interactions and attempt to instill values that are challenged by a child's upbringing. In situations where a child finds it difficult to adjust to school Mrs.Wafula found that the reason could be situated in this difference.

> You look at a parent and you know whether the problem is the child or it is from home.

In meeting the parent of a child experiencing difficulties in school, a teacher may gain better acquaintance of the reasons behind the child's thinking and behaviour. Family related attitudes could also influence a child's pre- school attitude to certain subjects as Mr. Kimutai observes:

Mr. Kimutai: Negative attitude is the biggest problem. Children learn from home and from their family that Maths is hard. Family perceptions matter.

Whilst not all problems arise from a child's background, the difference between the management at home and at school can contribute to seemingly disruptive behaviour. During my field work I witnessed occasions where parents were invited to school to discuss such individual pupils' cases. Though it is not ethically appropriate to discuss the details of each case, it was evident that the priorities and circumstances of the parent in question influenced the support available to the child to fit in and benefit from school programmes. In some cases differences were observed following these joint parents -teacher discussions. It is thus acknowledged parents first introduce children to learning, shaping a child's ontological orientation and creating expectations of learning activities and teacher identity. Tensions may arise when differences occur between home and school content, approaches and expectations. Bourdieu (in Goldthrope 2007: p.3) saw variations in learning outcomes arising primarily from the way:

> … the children of what he calls the 'dominant classes' are crucially advantaged over the children of subordinate classes in that they enter the education system already well prepared to succeed within it. In their case a clear case of continuity exists between the culture of the home and that of the school.

Whilst economic differences should not be an excuse for under achievement in poorly situated schools, it would nevertheless, be unrealistic to dismiss the likely impact these differences make on pupils' starting points. The differences raise questions as to what should count as knowledge and how it should be gained.

Dissimilarity of home and school notwithstanding, the cross over in teacher/parent roles can engender reservation as to whether teaching has a sufficiently specialised body of knowledge to qualify it as a profession. Hargreaves and Lo (2000:p.12) show teacher/parent relationships can be 'marked by anxiety, tension and misunderstanding'. Tension may arise out of their intersecting identities and role boundaries, particular histories, high expectations and/or disillusionment. Parents may feel vulnerable when they do not understand or feel adequate to question teachers' role or approaches in the management of their children's learning. During our introductory meeting with the school's chairman he said:

> Parents regard teachers as important people- but from the fence. Teachers decide what and how to teach the children.

This may be occasioned by theirlevel of engagementwith what is learnt and how it should be leant further constraint by their limited involvement in determining the formal curriculum. It appears that a parent's self-perception and level of entitlement makes a difference in teacher/parent relationship with resulting implications on a teachers' professional identity.

Parents in Kenya have the right to place their children in a public primary school of their choice; their selection therefore is a mark of confidence in a given institution. During focused group discussions I asked why parents chose this particular school for their children. My approach to determining parents' social suggestion by asking why they chose a particular school

could be contested. It could be argued that the relationship between reasons for choice of school and the identity of teachers is farfetched and that the question was skewed towards establishing reasons for the choice of institution rather than what they saw as important to the definition of teachers' professional identity. However, considering that the answer to this question could have included many other factors such as distance to school, level of contribution to the school levies or personal preference, it is significant that most of the answers cited relate directly to teacher indicators. It is therefore reasonable to assume that reasons for choice of school indicate likely nature of social suggestion brought to bear on the construction of teachers' professional identity. A sample of their answers is provided below:

> Mr. Rono: Performance- over 20 children from this school have joined university. Discipline. From the time this school started I have never taken my children to another school. My first born is about to finish university. He learnt here.

> Mrs.Ruto: like this school because parents and teachers are united.

> Mr. Mwangi: The leadership of this school are God- fearing. They know where each child is coming from and they do not discriminate on tribal lines. This school is like Jacobs well in the bible.

> Mr. Kaemba: The teachers of this school work as though they are in a private school.

> Mrs Lagat: The teachers are very hard working.

The first reason given is the assurance that their children be supported in this school to transit to higher levels of education. Evidence of previous success whether within their family or neighbouring families was very important in making that choice. It is noteworthy that teachers' internalised role expectations correspondingly prioritise successful curriculum implementation and pupil achievement as the mark of a

professional teacher. The second reason for choosing the school was the belief their children can be helped to maintain a certain level of discipline and assurance of spiritual support by 'God fearing' hard working teachers. As a Catholic sponsored school in a mainly Christian neighbourhood, it was expected that teachers would model and engender Christian and shared community values among their pupils which was also reflected in the teachers' moral purpose. Evidence of such spirituality is also sought for in the leadership of the school. Being in a multi ethnic community parents needed assurance their children would not be discriminated against on the basis of their origin, a fact reflected also in the children's choice of school. On enquiring further as to what was meant by, 'teachers working like a private school', Mr. Khaemba commented:

> Madam, if you are teaching in a private school, you must give results, otherwise your employer will sack you and find another teacher who can give results. They [teachers] work long hours and sometimes earn very little.

The affirmative comparison of teachers in a public school to those in private schools raises questions of management and more importantly of how context in the different schools impact teachers' professional identity. Vahasantanen et al.'s (2008) research may be informative in this case, though further research is necessary to understand why teachers in private primary schools are said to 'give results'. Given expectations of God fearing leadership, it would not be difficult to see how a teachers' lifestyle would be a subject of comment if it differed substantially from parental expectations. Considering the diversity of the catchment area, school becomes a meeting point of diverse social values requiring a dispassionate platform of discussion on social values.

Since identity gains recognition in context, parents further contributed to the construction of teachers' professional identity by either bestowing or withholding recognition or positive reinforcement (Cohen 2008) to their projected identities or meanings. The positive reinforcement bestowed upon teachers by way of a kind word, compliment or token following pupil achievements engenders an identity construction directly linked to such

achievement. As soon as the national examinations results were released, parents showed their appreciation by spontaneously bringing such gifts as chickens, eggs, loaves of bread or rice to the school. Towards the end of my fieldwork, a celebration of the school's previous year's results was held. It could of course be argued that by rewarding teachers for pupil achievement, the parents were transferring their expectations of good results and subtly pressuresing the teachers to maintain that level of performance. If this was the case, then teachers could not claim to be self-sacrificing since their choice had been conditioned by the parents' compulsion. Whether teachers were motivated by the potential for parental award or not may be disputed, but the argument provides evidence of a potential relationship between teachers' internalised role expectation and the parental suggestion in the form of recognition.

Pupils' performance was the sole subject of teacher /parent class specific meetings with parents of children in classes 6,7 and 8. They followed with keenness the comparative achievements of their pupils in relation to other schools in the region. In the extract below taken from the head teacher's address to parents of class 6 pupils following a zonal examination for upper primary pupils, she presents and discusses the results. The table below formed part of her presentation:

Table 7.4   Zonal Results for Class 6

School and position	Status	Number of pupils	Mean score
… School 1	Private school	46	351
… School 2	Private school	18	345
… School 3	Private school	22	332
ResearchSchool4	Public school	103	262

Since her pupil population was higher than the schools with higher mean scores she added the following comments for the benefit of her audience:

If I take my best 46 candidates where does that leave the first school or if I take my best 18 candidates where will school 2 be? So this is a good school. Let us cultivate and add fertilizers to this good school.

From her presentation, parents could see for themselves their children had achieved relatively better results than other public schools in the zone and that their school compares favorably with expensive private schools despite its higher enrolment. This shared sense of achievement was later enforced in a separate meeting. In his speech to class 8 parents, the school Chairman also a parent of previously successful candidate said:

My son is going to St.Joseph's Boys. When he was in here.[When he was] in Class 4-5 the teachers helped to make him more aggressive and focused in his studies. He did well. Our school did well. 110 pupils scored between 300 - 400 marks in this zone. 24 of those pupils were from this school. A pupil with the highest marks from a certain large school in the zone had 297marks. Our highest pupil had 372. We are proud of our achievements. We support you, the head teacher and the Class 8 teachers whose work is very visible.

It was a matter of pride for him that 24 of the best candidates, including his son came from this school. He credits the head teacher and her staff in securing what he considered 'very visible' evidence of pupil achievement. Towards the end of my fieldwork he handed over the school to the new chairman selected at the Annual General meeting. In his handing over speech reference was again made not only to the school's past achievements and the teachers' hard work but also to the improving achievement of the current class of candidates.

Chariman: I thank God for allowing me to address you all and for giving me this heavy responsibility. I was a class 8 representative on the school management committee last year. My class did well. This year's class is doing well also. They have done 7 CATS with the following mean scores:

CAT 1	256.15
CAT 2	265.83
CAT3	231.36
CAT4	294.55
CAT 5	281.85

Do you think we are going somewhere with this year's class?

Whilst the image of progressive success encouraged parents to support teacher initiatives, it is not difficult to see how any drop in achievement would probably result in the same parents reassessing their options and possibly moving their children to institutions considered more successful. Although agreeing to the recommendations for contributions to support school activities, not all parents could afford the levies suggested at SMC meetings. Few openly stated their inability to pay their contributions - 'one can only scratch where one can reach', a parent once confessed. Others kept their inability to themselves and failed to pay on the agreed date resulting in their children being sent home by the SMC representatives. Perhaps because of their level of education or because of the school's comparative achievements in past examinations, parents seldom openly challenged measures or recommendations that were proposed by the school administration. Dissenters were more inclined to raise their objections outside the official meeting as the following example cited by the school chairman illustrates:

> One parent in Class 7 was not happy with what was agreed upon and begun to stir other parents, but he was not successful.   You have seen we were number 4 [in the Class 6 Zonal examination] There was no other public school ahead of us.   Help us to protect the integrity of our school.

Though parents who expressed their disagreement were in the minority, they nevertheless serve to highlight the tensions in parent/teacher relationships revolving around increasing education costs which impact teacher/pupil contact with consequence on the overall learning process.

During focus group discussions I sought to establish parents' social suggestion to teachers' professional identity by determining their goals for sending children to school.   When asked, what they hoped their children would gain through schooling parents said:

Mr. Rono:	To get educated and to get a job
Mr. Khaemba:	To learn to be a good citizen
Mrs. Ruto:	To learn things from others
Mr. Sagini:	To grow up properly
Mr. Rono:	Learn to lead
Mr. Mwangi:	School helps someone to be innovative
Mrs. Lagat:	He sees something and he remembers it
Mr. Rono:	If the child succeeds he will make my name known. You see, like if he becomes a DC. They will be calling him Alex Kiprotich Rono So whose name will be heard – mine! He becomes a light to the family.

Like their children, parents linked schooling to securing employment. Without the safety net of a comprehensive social security system, parents whose sole income was based on subsistence farming as explained in chapter 5 understood the fragility of their situation and wished for a better standard of living for their children. Though not all educated people in the neighbourhood had secured outside employment, those who had, had some level of formal education. By focusing on the possible long-term outcomes of education, parents were prepared to make immediate, short-term sacrifices to supplement education costs. Even though skills gained in primary education are inadequate for the job market they facilitate transition to secondary and tertiary level which in turn were thought to open these opportunities.

Where a person is formally addressed by their surname, their success brings that family name to prominence. This understanding highlights the collective selfhood earlier referred to in Chapter 3 and illustrates how a child's education is laden with community aspirations. The expectations of parents rests upon pupils, who in turn are expected to succeed and raise family status. Unlike the social reproduction within family settings

discussed by Bourdieu (in Goldthrope 2007), where parental positions influence children's cultural and social capital, here a parent's capital could be enhanced by a child's education and subsequent standing in society. As illustrated by Mr. Rono above, education was seen as a ladder out of poverty, an empowering tool and a possible vehicle for social mobility. An understanding of this perception is important when engaging with parents perceptions of teachers' role. As beneficiaries of formal education, teachers were held up as role models in the community and expected to facilitate pupils' exit from less viable livelihoods. This hope and expectation exerts pressure on the construction of teachers' professional identity, privileging their role in delivering examination success. Perhaps it is from this same position that the relevance of education to existing livelihoods in current homesteads need to be revisited.

It is significant to note that parents hoped the school would provide their children with the opportunity to learn, not just from teachers, but also from each other, to be creative and to become better citizens and leaders. Given the level of self-directed exploration and pupil autonomy in learning one may question how the school and teachers responded to this parental expectation. Contrary to the parents' aspirations the education system in place was accused of 'dampening initiative and curiosity, producing docile and dependent minded graduates' (Ojiambo 2009:p.135). As earlier discussed, the opportunity for children to learn from each other, to be creative and to lead was compromised by the approaches chosen to deliver examination results which were seen as a requirement for getting a job. Essentially, the competing interests in parental suggestions influence school level priorities, making their recognition of academic achievement significant in teachers' professional identity. The parents desire for their children *to grow up properly u*nderlies the teachers' moral responsibility and efforts to maintain a given discipline code as personal restraint and self control was seen to be the mark of somebody who had 'grown up properly'. Growing up 'properly' also implies pupils being shaped to fit within a pre-specified community mode, making education a form of

'moral orthopedics' (Deacon 2006: p.183). The expectation that pupils will be taught to lead was also stated on the understanding, whilst being productive in a global society, they would still fit within the existing local social structure. Inherent within this understanding is a potential source of tension, as it is expected that pupils would be taught to navigate global expectations while at the same time maintaining a solid hold on contextual values.

When asked to specify the qualities they expected of a professional teacher parents repeatedly cited four qualities:

- *kielimu* - education
- *tabia* - good conduct/behaviour
- respect
- *usafi* - cleanliness

Parents saw teachers to be in possession of certain education by virtue of their training, as Mr. Rono said:

- *Ni wao ndio waliosomea* [They are the ones who studied for it [education].

The perceptions that teachers are professionals because of their training ties in with teachers own expectation of training as a source of professional identity. The comment about respect is particularly informative since teachers cannot teach children to respect parents if they look down on them. It is possible because of the differences in formal education, standards of living or other identities for individual teachers to overlook this community value. Showing respect for the older generation is a culturally embedded practice that parents hold to be dear and was reflected in what the children hoped their teachers would help them to learn. Parents expected teachers to be knowledgeable but also to mirror the qualities they themselves wished to cultivate in their children. The teachers were naturally individuals with different lifestyles and preferences, so interest in their conduct during private social events, their manner of dress and use of personal time raises the question of how teachers' professional identity is constructed. For example, the form of

Christianity embraced in the community condemns the use of alcoholic drinks so the teachers were reminded not to draw undue to their personal lives as seen earlier. The parents chose the school because they said the leadership in the school was 'God fearing'. This scrutiny of teacher's private life shows the difficulty in demarcating their personal and professional identities. Any diversity of lifestyle is an opportunity in itself for tensions to arise in teacher/ parent relationships with consequence on the learning process. This raises the question: who should draw the line between what is or is not acceptable in teachers' professional conduct and on what basis?

Mrs. Ruto 's comment below captures one of the general expectation that the community has of a teacher:

> A teacher is a parent. In fact he stays longer with the children than us. They help in disciplining the children.

Since their children spent more time in school than at home during term time, the parents considered it the teachers' role to care, correct and guide them in keeping with community values. This *loco parentis* role was reflected in the teachers internalised role prescription and was particularly the case with the younger children in ECD and Lower Primary classes. Mr. Rono's observed that:

> When a child is young there is nothing in his mind. What he becomes is what his teachers make him to become.

Whilst arguments can be made to the contrary, this understanding comes from a recognition teachers have a profound influence on children's lives. Though complimentary to the teacher, this comment has unfortunate disempowering undertones of inadequacy on the part of the parent and comes from a system that places less value on their world view, choosing instead to supplant it with views professed from other platforms. They seem to feel the need to rely on an external source to define and name what their children become. This sense of inadequacy inhibits their ability to recognise their own children's potential and the value of their

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knowledge and heritage. Their presumed sense of vulnerability essentially forges a different relationship between parents and the teacher who are credited with the capacity to make the child 'become someone'. 'Becoming someone' is here seen to be synonymous with acquiring a certain forms and level of knowledge advanced through formal education, which in turn is aligned with global expectations. Education and globalisation are said to be mutually implicative categories where the market defines the attributes of success which in turn has implications on becoming a person (Jansen 2007). The teacher is thus expected to engender in pupils qualities and skills society and market forces can recognise and use.

Some parents also recognised ,as did Mr. Sagini, that:

> *Maisha ya mtoto ni vile akili yake inampleleka.* [A child's life is how it is directed by his/her mind]. *Hata kama unampleleka salon,* [Even if you apprentice her to a hairdresser] it won't work unless it is her calling. A child won't do what God hasn't given her. Children in this school have talent. *Waalimu kwa kujiotolea kwao wanasaidia ile iko kwa mtoto kutoka na kuonekana wazi.* [Teachers by their sacrifice help to make evident the talent in each child].

Mr. Sagini, like Mr. Rono, credits the teachers with the capacity to bring out a child's potential, but compounds his argument with the rider, each child has a particular disposition against which no compulsion can prevail. There appears to be a note of resignation in his comment as the inference is, a teacher can only work within a child's innate intelligence and aptitude.

Breakdowns in parent/child relationships occasionally placed the teacher in the role of mediator and counsellor. The construction of the teacher's identity as a counsellor entails a knowledge of community norms, values and other support mechanisms. In such instances, parents recognised teacher professionalism in the manner in which the issues were confronted and solved:

Mr. Khaemba: …has the child's mind in [their] hand. You see some of us just use the stick to talk to the child, but a teacher knows when to use the cane and when to talk. They know the correct time. Children listen to their teachers more than their parents. These teachers have helped me. If it was not for them my son would not be in school now. They told me to put away the stick and to leave his discipline to the class teacher. Now my son is in Class 8. He had given up. Given up completely.

This parent's comment illustrates how social suggestions might arise from experience in context. The support the parent gets from teachers in the management of his child's conduct reinforced the perception that teachers are skilled counsellors/mediators. The teacher here was also accredited with the role of benign disciplinarian, someone who could skillfully lead a child along an acceptable path. It is possibly for this reason the parent said, 'Children listen to their teachers more than their parents'. On other occasions, however, when teachers had limited success, the head teacher and her staff admitted to needing parental and community support:

Also this section of [a catchment area] children don't do well except … [one boy who went to university] let's ask ourselves what the problem is. Unless this problem is solved, we shall all be affected. Help these boys. There are those who have left school. They need your help or else they will be bag snatchers soon. Five boys I know left school and because I was trying to help them, they threatened me for reporting them to the chief.

During fieldwork, these cases appeared to be in the minority, but serve to illustrate the limit of a teachers' capacity to independently influence pupil behaviour. Although the problem was presented as a regional one, it is nevertheless an example of the disillusionment or even hostility engendered against formal education by pupils to whom it has lost the allure. There were a number of cases where parents were invited to the school to discuss individual pupil's behaviour and performance. Lower Primary teachers repeatedly held performance related counselling sessions with parents whose children were not adjusting well to school routines. Two specific cases of truancy in Class 1 and 8 occupied the teachers' attention for most of the term.

In meetings and counselling sessions, teachers advised parents on such personal matters as to invite reflection on the boundary of their identity as this extract taken from the headteacher's speech illustrates :

> Do not let your children see you quarrel with your wife. Set a good example for them and encourage them.
>
> *Kesha*. We are saved. When you go to *Kesha* ask where your children are. Your child comes first. When you wait for the Holy Spirit in *Kesha* another spirit has come upon your child at home.

Kesha is an overnight religious vigil mostly for adults held either in a private home or on church premises. Her concern for the welfare of children left unsupervised whilst their parents attended night vigils is not contested in this meeting. In other contexts, her advice might be taken as too personal and intrusive, yet these comments remain unchallenged by the audience because they accept her authority to speak in the role of a counsellor and also their collective understanding of the self as expounded in Chapter 3.

The parents credited teachers with a particular knowledge of the environment.

> Mr. Sagini: They study behaviour and know how to correct children and how to live in the *mazingara*. (environment).

The Kiswahili word *mazingara,* translated here as environment, incorporates the natural cultural surroundings. The teachers were credited with knowledge of the cultural diversity and the various identity formation processes their pupils undergo and could therefore anticipate areas where certain school programmes might be affected by ethnic specific rituals. For example, during one parents' meeting the head teacher requested Luhya parents, in the interests of the school schedule not to circumcise their male children during the short August break as is the favoured time, butrather delay the ceremony to December- the second official initiation season. This would afford the initiates a longer recuperation period and the

families could conduct their time honoured rituals without interfering with the school programme.

For the most part though, the collective desire to improve family fortunes through children's educational achievement made parents amenable to both teachers' and SMC proposals. When asked whether they were satisfied with the school, the parents offered the following comments:

> Mr. Rono:I like this school because parents and teachers are united. From the time this school started, I have never taken my children to another school. My first born is about to finish university. He learnt here.

> Mr. Mwangi: The leadership of this school are god fearing. They know where each child is coming from and they do not discriminate on tribal lines.

> Mr. Khaemba: The teachers are very hard working.

Since wide sweeping changes were being contemplated in the education system, parents' were asked what their initial thoughts and feelings were towards the proposed changes and the role they considered the teachers should play. As a group, they felt they had not been sufficiently informed or consulted and their level of understanding was dependent upon their engagement with media coverage, but on the whole it was superficial.

> Mr. Sagini: We do not know what 3.3 is? What is wrong with 8.4.4?This 3.3 might cost us more.

> Mrs. Lagat: *Itaanza na darasa gani?* (In which class will the changes begin from?)

Seen as a researcher in their presence, parents sought details regarding the proposed changes. The inquiry had triggered anxieties and excitement previously stalled by lack of similar forums that was difficult to bring to a close.   Though parents felt as did Mr. Rono that teachers, *Ni wao walisomea elimu* [are the ones who studied education], in their view education changes were instigated by:

> *Mr. Mwangi:* *Watu wakubwa*[Big people].*Watu wa kubwa watoto wao hawasomi katika shule hizi.* [Children of big people do not learn in schools like these]. *Sasa wangetuuliza.*[So, they should have asked us].

> *Mrs. Langat:* *Serikali.* (Government)

> Mr. Rono: Research.

> Mrs. Ruto: *Wataalamu.* (Specialists)

Their understanding was that teachers were allocated a limited role in education change and that important people, possibly researchers and specialists from the Ministry of Education formulated the changes in offices removed from schools and parents who nonetheless would have liked to be involved in the planning stage. As Mr. Mwangi pointed out, their opinion should have been asked, because their children attend public schools whilst '*Watu wakubwa'* have the choice of private education. When pressed to articulate the specific changes they would have canvassed for, Mr. Mwangi said:

> Something to do with drug abuse.

This comment illustrates how detached the parents were from the content of their children's education as drug and alcohol abuse already forms part of the curriculum. This lack of awareness was either due to limited consultation or ineffectiveness of the curriculum content to address the problem. Whilst the parents felt the process of education change should be divorced from political instruments, the teachers whom they relied upon to develop educational programmes looked to education specialists to give them direction. Education specialists on the other hand, move under the direction of political leadership lifting the process of education change well above those whose lives are directly affected.

Mr. Rono, whose children had been directly affected by previous education change said:

> Look at 8.4.4, they said the government would cater for all things. They hurriedly implemented it. They gave us a few tools once and

then they were gone. Nothing has happened since then. So ordinary people do not benefit.

Now if this new system comes we shall have a new syllabus which requires new books, while there are many books from the old system still in our cupboards at home. Who will pay for the new books?

You see Madam, politicians only know politics. Some may want to be the only ones who are educated so they make it difficult for the rest of us. Why haven't they told us about this new system? We don't know why they want it. We don't know how it will benefit us, but they are running away with it.

Mr.Rono articulated a number of issues that were also the concern of other parents and of value to curriculum development. First, is the pace at which changes are formulated and the span of consultations. Though the Select Committee on Education change had convened stakeholder meetings at various levels, the parents in this context felt they had neither been informed nor consulted on the proposed changes. Secondly, recognition of the costs a new education system would entail and the possible wastage of present resources. Third, is the possible marginality of identities, where certain individuals are deemed to be protected by virtue of income from the possible anomalies of the changes in the system they have created. Fourth is the question of relevance- how would a new system improve on the old. As Mr. Sagini earlier queried, 'We do not know what 3.3 is? What is wrong with 8.4.4?'

This section has demonstrated how parents interact with and form a significant part of teachers' professional landscape directly influencing the formation of their professional identity. Parents are part of the social context that provides the norms and values governing teacher/pupil relationships in school. During a child's formative years, parents introduce teaching/learning experiences that shape expectations of adult/child relationships in learning situations. These expectations, so early embedded in a child's epistemology, will vary according to context with consequence on the negotiation of teachers' professional identity. This cross over in role boundaries and expectations, their histories, aspirations

and possible sub identities to which some parents and teachers are included or excluded may be a source of tensions within a school and create doubt as to whether teaching is a profession. By their aspirations, recognition and support, parents both allow and entrench the enactment of teacher identities that are perceived to further the realisation of given ambitions for their children. Though they recognised teachers play a marginal role in education change, they expected them to prepare their children for a productive life in a global world, whilst simultaneously instilling local values.

The parents' dilemma; entrusting their children to an education system they respected, but of which they had little knowledge or influence gives meaning to Kelly et al.'s(2008: p. 1) argument that:

> We are educating current students for jobs, pathways and life worlds that are still in formation - some that have yet to come into existence. This challenges longstanding curriculum directions that have their roots in modernist traditions where boundaries of knowledge were assumed to be known and the skills needed for the future learning and work taken as identifiable and quantifiable.

Teachers and curriculum developers would therefore need to maintain open and ongoing dialogue with regard to content and methodology. Considering the emotional and financial investment parents in this context put into education, is now not the time to question how the new system would make community livelihoods more sustainable?

7. 3 Summary of Social Suggestions pertinent to Teachers' Professional Identity

This chapter contributes to the knowledge of teacher professionalism and professional identity by discussing the themes drawn from pupils and parents discourses which constitute pertinent social suggestions to teachers' professional identity in this context. Subject, pedagogical and context specific knowledge including social values and policy frameworks are valued as was the care and protection of children. Pupils' respect for teachers established through cultural norms feeds into the teachers' sense

of moral purpose and encourages them to assume other parental roles including discipline, counselling and/or mentoring which reflect an altruistic orientation to occupational professionalism. Whilst parents reflect the diversity of values against which teachers' professional identity is constructed, the cross over in some teacher /parent role boundaries extends discussions on what being professional entails. Teacher/ pupil and teacher /parent interactions are discussed as reflecting an understanding that teachers are the vehicle by which children are helped to love and perform well in examined subjects, to become what society expects of them and to build a better future. The degree of trust in a teacher was dependent on their success in this regard. Parents, aware of the demands of employment, looked to the teacher and the school to equip their children with the social capital necessary for a changing world. Through their continued support for teacher initiatives and periodic awards, they exerted tacit pressure and give salience to certain elements of teacher professionalism.

8.0 How the Expressed Expectations Limit or Expand Teachers' Role in Education Change

Overview

This chapter shows how the emerging discourses on professional identity impacts teachers' contribution to education change. Key issues include a sense of ownership over curricula and instructional materials, time allocation and adequacy of supporting structures. The understanding of teachers' duties and responsibilities as tied to implementation of set programmmes limits their engagement with what could change. The expectations of pupils and parents for immediate tangible sense of achievement focuses teachers' attention on short term education aspirations of successful transition to the next level, limiting attention to overarching educational frameworks and how they could be improved.

8. 1 Introduction

In the last two chapters, teachers internalised role expectations were discussed in relation to the social suggestions held by pupils and parents in a specific landscape. All parties however emphasised the value of knowledge, self-sacrifice and the need to demonstrate professionalism by tangible results in pupil achievements and behaviour. As earlier emphasised in the literature:

> The extent to which teachers are able to exercise leadership will be affected by the way they construct their professional role, what they perceive the role boundaries to be and what they see to be constrained within those boundaries. (Frost ad Harris 2003: p. 487)

This understanding helps to show professional identity is continuously negotiated and how the manner of its construction sanctions or limit engagement with certain leadership functions. They also note that teachers are not passive but active participants in the construction of their professional identity guided by their interpretation of what is contained within their role boundaries. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) saw a heightened awareness of this professional identity leading to a strong sense of agency. This chapter shows how participants' perceptions of what lay

within their role boundaries could limit or expand their opportunity to contribute to education change.

8. 2   Key considerations.

At the time of this research a number of education changes were already evolving both at national and county levels.   As earlier discussed in Chapter 2, the 2010 devolution of governance in line with the new constitution meant that restructuring was already taking place in Trans Nzoia County with the appointment of a County Education Director.   At the national level, a Working Committee was leading discussions likely to result in a major overhaul of the entire education system. I was keen to observe my participants' involvement with this change process and gauge their own sense of responsibility and feelings towards the changes in the light of their moral purpose as envisaged by Fullan (2001).   Though my participants judged themselves to be professionals, the conflicts in the form of professionalism embraced and their history of implementing set programmes led them to judge their professionality by how well they followed rather than contributed to the creation of education programmes.

When specifically asked what lay between those boundaries lists such as the one generated by Miss Chebet were presented:

>Prepare lesson plans
>
>Keep classroom order
>
>Oversee cleaning of school environment
>
>Mark books
>
>Counsel students
>
>Discipline students
>
>Oversee club activities
>
>Supervise, coach games
>
>Set exams
>
>Counsel parents
>
>Attend meetings.

All these activities reflect a routine that has for years determined the teachers' role. Though alluded to, leadership of education change did not claim a prominent place in what lay within the boundaries of their internalised role expectations. For example, though Mr. Kimutai had oversight for curriculum implementation within the school, he felt that his mandate did not extend beyond that level. In response to the question, what is a teacher's role in bringing about change in education? Mr.Kimutai lamented:

> Teachers are not given a chance to change anything. Commissions sit and issue directives. Had it been that they were given a chance …teachers could have been given priority since they are affected directly, they feel the weight of policy recommendations.

A history of following directives, as valuable as it is in programme implementation, is an unfortunate snare into a state of inertia and perpetual dependency. Because it is known that commissions will sit and commissions will set directives, the necessity to take a position on the value of what is recommended does not arise. Whilst commissions have often developed valuable recommendations as discussed in Chapter 2, Mr. Kimutai's comment indicates how the external control in organizational professionalism limits teachers agency over organisational goals. His comment further reflects the understanding that contributing to change is a matter of invitation, a chance which so far was thought to be elusive. In response to the same question Mr. Kidagi observed:

> The teacher doesn't have time to contribute to change. Implement. Implement. Implement what has been said. Even in the classroom he is pinned down to the syllabus. Mwalimu si msomi [A teacher is not a scholar] Wasomi wanadevelop syllabus[scholars develop the syllabus]

Whilst concurring with Mr. Kimutai, Mr. Kidaki's response highlights two additional obstacles as seen by the teachers. Time allocation is cited as a constraint, a fact which other teachers also mentioned in their separate interviews. The programme of work at the school level is such that teachers have little or no time set aside for reflecting on current practice, let alone larger structural changes. A large proportion of teachers' time was consumed in lesson preparation and presentation, testing and marking

pupils' assignments, co-curricula activities and the care and support of individual students or consultations with parents. Everything considered, it is the management of time that seems to be the most important resource and cost. The challenge seems to be how to incorporate teachers' appraisals and recommendations of the effectives of their routines in a manner that can save time and lead to improvements. Could teachers' professional platform be utilised to identify and address elements and circumstances that make the additional lessons necessary or to contribute towards achievable curriculum specifications that could be a valuable investment? We make room for what we consider important. The extent to which teachers' participation in the change process is valued is reflected in the opportunity availed for them to reflect upon their work in a systematic occupational manner and the extent to which their recommendations are utilised to inform further reforms.

The argument that a teacher is not a scholar and the accompanying feeling of inadequacy based on this belief undermines teachers' confidence in the value of their own classroom experience, knowledge and practice in relation to other people's thinking regarding their work. This disenabling belief is what pushed ambitious teachers like Miss Chebet to seek post qualification study as an attempt to reclaim their confidence and to relocate to positions from which they might exercise agency. Whilst scholars give a considerable amount of time to studying and investigating practice, it would be counterproductive if those who initiate learners to the love of learning feel excluded from the art and craft of scholarship. As both Mr. Kimutai and Miss Chebet admit, there are lessons for the teacher in their own classrooms about teaching and learning. These lessons, and not just additional paper qualifications are what might build momentum towards contextual solutions to quality education challenges. The kind of thinking that privileges paper qualification rather than reflexive practice has for generations been behind mechanisms for education change that recycle education practices and challenges. If on the other hand, actual scholarly engagement is deemed more valuable as a source of good practice, then how much more valuable it could be to incorporatecontinued

learning in teaching as a strategy for change. This perhaps would provide a way to link the thought worlds (Schoplin 2009) within the classroom with those in academia and policy tables. As we saw earlier, teachers like Mr.Kadi (page154) credit the Kenya Institute of education with the capacity to research and develop appropriate curriculum specifications. Coming to terms with actual classroom challenges and possible solutions tried and tested in this context calls for a level of confidence in the judgment of those who work here. In the example of the Innovative Links project and the National Schools Networks projects discussed on (page 40), Sachs (1997) illustrated how Australian teachers reclaimed their professional identity by recasting themselves as learners and researchers, and through application of the principles of participation, learning, collaboration and activism. Perhaps in the Kenyan context, use of serving primary teachers by KIE(the Kenya Institute of Education) to address specific curricula and regional challenges might be informative.

The practices learnt in college stress a planning process which also invites the teacher to say whether the objectives of the lesson were judged to have succeed or not, but there is little forthright discussion on what does not work. Teachers lack of preparation or pupils' backgrounds quickly become the scapegoat. As previous sections have shown teachers were aware of the lessons that did not achieve their objectives and efforts were made to extend learning periods to make amends or revise what was covered in years past as part of the examination preparations process. While Lower primary teachers briefly discussed their curriculum management issues at their level during lesson preparation , Upper Primary teachers operated more independently and only met once a term in their subject panels. Consultation with colleagues at Upper Primary which could have been useful as a reflective tool was informal and needs based.

Whilst policy machinery was in motion at national levels to deliberated administrative and proposed term structures, within the school efforts were geared towards maintenance of established routines, with occasional mention of new developments and policy directives. Though teachers felt they had ownership over school level programmes from time to time their

judgment in this area was over ruled by policy directives from above. For example, some of the approaches that teachers had earlier relied on to address perceived curriculum difficulties including extended tuition were legislated against as they were judged elsewhere to be detrimental to the children's welfare and banned from public schools. Teachers spend a considerable amount of time managing routines that were thought to deliver desirable learning outcomes, routines that were themselves a subject of review in education changes. As the head teacher acknowledged during the debriefing staff meeting:

> The point about change, we have implemented changes that we feel can help these children to do well, but as for curriculum changes, those we have not been actively involved because we have not been invited to do so.

It is clear from her statement that teachers saw curricula reforms to lie outside their role boundary, a matter of participation by invitation, yet their relatively fixed positions within the system helped them to develop a view regarding what delivers desired learning outcomes. Since they have a sense of ownership over school routines they make personal sacrifices to sustain the changes they initiate in this context. Routines allow actors in relatively fixed places, in this case the teachers, to understand from repeat experiences what does or does not work within their context based on what Hargreaves(1998) calls 'tinkering' with their work. As Mrs. Mutai said, 'as a professional teacher, you know where you should be and what to do.' They are sensitive to the movements within their rotations and can with each other's support apply themselves to experiment with what could work better in their current circumstances. But to utilise this support they need confidence in their judgments and support in increasing the space in which to reflect professionally on their routines. If the syllabus is a vital tool for giving direction and authority, teachers as frontline interpreters have a working knowledge of it in their context. They have direct contact with pupils and the parents who seek to benefit from education. They are therefore strategically located to carry on extended consultations in their community about what the children need to learn and how that might be

improved. This contextual knowledge is what House(2000) indicated to be lacking in large scale education reforms.

However, the familiarity induced by routine can lull a person into unproductive adhesive patterns of interactions which may have outlived their course. The conservatism earlier referred to by Ackers and Hardman (2001) could be a result of this snare. Having taken teachers a considerable amount of time to weave a pattern of activities they felt delivered the desired student outcomes; one for which they had made sacrifices to create and maintain, one can see why they would be hesitant to move away from and experiment with new unknown routines. On the other hand, as the head teacher has expressed above, when they are convinced of the need for change then they take the steps to ensure successful implementation. Understood from this angle one can see that introducing change from out of set routines requires an appreciation of the motivation and the mechanisms sustaining routine momentum. It requires expanding and building the moral purpose for change that involves routine actors in identifying the segments in their routine that need change and the reasons for the search for new routines. If the actors are involved in locating the need for change, if their voices are called upon and involved in devising the new routines they are likely to deal with the uncertainty associated with creating new routines (Hargreaves 1998, a). However, if the dialogue around change is built on the understanding of their inadequacy and lack of creativity it would not be surprising they would seek a reactive position in the ensuing deliberations and implementation. This is not simply a matter of legislation; it is a matter of perception and practice.

Teachers recognise that they do not have the same capacity. Amongst themselves they recognised and utilised the varying capacity on the staff in addressing specific classroom challenges. If the discussions at their periodic curriculum reviews is taken into account it can provide a baseline from which the nature of change desired is approached. During post lesson discussions it was clear teachers had an understanding of whether or not their lessons had been successful with accompanying consequences on

their sense of self. When lessons do not go as planned they have a very personal effect on the teacher as Mrs. Mutai confessed:

> When they don't get it, it is very frustrating. I gave an exam to class 5 Y. Some of them could not construct a proper sentence. They had poor handwriting; others put capital letters in the wrong place. I have to repeat the lesson on making sentences.

Their desire to have impact in their lessons is a motivation that can be built upon to improve their capacity to contribute to change. However, where teachers are perceived as interpreters and inadequate implementers they can easily lose sight of their role in education change.

The peripheral engagement with the ongoing change process was largely due to what teachers saw to lay within the boundaries of their role expectations. Teachers judged themselves to be professionals because they were trained as such and sought to demonstrate their status through self-sacrifice and accurate interpretation of a given syllabus which in turn facilitates their pupils' transition to secondary schools based on achievement. If training was seen to be crucial in shaping teachers' internalised role expectations then an important opportunity for expanding or constraining the tentative boundaries of their professional identity lies here. During lesson observations, teachers were seen to be guided by their training in such routines as pre-planning lessons, lesson sequence, chalk board use, pupil assessments and communication protocols. It was in training they were taught their place within the education structure and how they might interact with the rest of the system.Notice how some teachers were taught to understand their position as expressed by Mrs. Lunani:

Question :   Do you think teacher s can contribute to education change?

Mrs. Lunani: It is beyond, but we can pass through other peoples to advise the government eg other teachers are needed instead of a teacher handling 60 pupils.

Her response puts contribution to change outside her role boundaries though she confesses access can be facilitated through intermediaries. If an

instrumentalist view of their role was emphasised and if a banking approach to knowledge was adopted(Friere1972) during training it would not be surprising that their role in education change could be limited from the very beginning. Though this thesis makes no categorical conclusion on the kind of training my participants received it is reasonable o assume, based on participants own admission, training shaped their relationship with knowledge and the change process. Secondly, if training is the genesis of being professional then one is forced to ask how it prepared teachers for their leadership roles. As earlier seen, it is the objective of the government to prepare teachers who have an awareness of innovation in the field of education and who can develop a rational approach to problem solving through research (see pg 144).However, there was no evidence of training institutions involving post qualification teachers in reflection on current classroom practices. Bearing in mind the diversity of learners lifestyles and contextual influences on their work the interrogation of such influences on teaching and learning in training could be regarded as a useful step in education change. Similarly, as social contexts change with consequences on what is important to learn and ways of learning, how can training prepare trainees for the known and for the infinite unknown? As Mr. Kimutai indicated earlier (pg 147)one can only attempt to change or improve their work after they have a sufficient grasp and acceptance of their role. Facilitating sharing of successful classroom experiences and making visible this change is an important means of developing professional knowledge.

Whilst not actively engaged in driving the current reform process from the frontline, teachers were aware that there were changes being proposed and they even had views regarding the effectiveness of what was proposed.

> Miss Chebet: The resources will be nearer, also the offices. It will be convenient. On the other hand, teachers may have an opportunity to say what can be taught. The trouble is we are used to a central system. Mind set change is a challenge. But we shall be free of some of these vices in having a local office.

Mr. Kidagi: It will not benefit this generation unless they pump in resources and manpower. It might be beneficial in developing talent. We would like professionals to implement. At the moment these people see this they change, after five years they change again. Professionals set targets.

Mrs.   Mutai :I am not for the proposed changes.   They [pupils]are still too young.   When they introduced 8.4.4 children reach university when they are still very young, so if you finish primary education in six years children will not be old enough for transition.

Mrs. Lunani: As for change, you see when this 8.4.4 came we began in the middle. If they change we should begin at the very beginning at ECD. Children were caught in the middle

Their comments range from cautions optimism to complete opposition based on previous experiences of similar innovations. Miss Chebet aptly recognises that changes in policy should go hand in hand with changes in mind set, which do not necessarily occur concurrently. Whilst she feels devolution brings the administration closer to schools and affords the opportunity for teacher involvement in education change, the mindset that prioritises central governance dependency undermines the optimism needed to seize the new opportunities presented by devolution of governance. However, she hoped that once this adjustment was achieved perhaps then teachers may have a voice in the forms of education practices suitable for their context. Having lived through the transition from the 7.2.3 system to 8.4. 4 system, Mrs. Mutai and Mrs. Lunani are very aware of the difference between intention and action. Considering that the 8.4.4 system was adopted to increase the length of time pupils spend in basic education, 6.3.3 was understood to go against this very grain. From their point of view, the changes might not achieve the desired objective as pupils would be leaving school too young to make the career decisions required of them. Mr. Kidaki argues that lack of funds and inadequate planning may limit the full benefits of what is proposed even affecting the educational outcomes of a whole generation. His argument in favour of

professionals is based on the knowledge educational changes are driven from a political platform which changes every five years. This apprehension was not limited to teachers alone but was also reflected in the parents' interviews with a distinct anxiety over a possible waste of resources that might be occasioned by curricula change and attendant costs.

> Mr. Rono: Now if this new system comes we shall have a new syllabus which requires new books, while there are many books from the old system still in our cupboards at home. Who will pay for the new books?

Among other things, being professional has to do with knowledge (Sachs 2005). Assumptions regarding teachers' knowledge influence their relative involvement in the change process. Whereas there maybe teachers who are of a certificate qualification, there are others like Miss Chebet who have advanced their knowledge through further education. It is hoped that with time more graduate teachers will come into the primary school teaching force but that depends on how their professional identity is conceptualised. If persons with similar qualifications but different positions are recognised and encouraged to make decisions that regulate teachers work, it is unlikely that enterprising individuals will want to come into teaching. Increased regulation over content, approved methodology and learning materials with a corresponding despair over teachers' capacity to follow set regulations makes redundant the claim to professional competence of the teachers in question. Though teachers are workers in knowledge their relationship with it is regulated and controlled by managerial structures that identify and debate on many platforms away from them the gaps in what they teach and whether they teach it correctly. Their concern for ensuring that they have passed on the knowledge they are contracted to pass on often influenced their choice of teaching methods in ways that others have found unsuitable. What knowledge is valued and advanced in teaching begins with recognising and expanding professional knowledge not as consumers but active participants in its creation. The growing narrative of teachers in this context as ineffective instruments

diminishes the value of their knowledge which in turn affects their relationship with knowledge that is shared from elsewhere. It would appear that unless the relationship between teachers and what they teach is reviewed it will be difficult for them to realise their creative energies in ways that can enrich the change process in their context. That is why in countries that are said to be moving from good to better, teaching is fully conceptualized as a profession. As Mourshed et al.(2010: p. 20) states:

> Good to great: the interventions at this stage focus on ensuring teaching and school leadership is regarded as a full-fledged profession; this requires putting in place the necessary practices and career paths to ensure the profession is as clearly defined as those in medicine and law.

For teachers to grasp their opportunity to exercise leadership in educational change they need a professional body that builds upon the moral purpose of their work. Teachers were members of a professional body KNUT (Kenyan National Union of Teachers), which had representation at all levels. However, instead of being the platform on which communities of teachers at school, county and country level interrogate their own professional practice and how that could be improved, it was perceived chiefly as an instrument of securing and protecting teacher remunerations. As important as this may be, the sole pursuit of remuneration diverts the union's attention away from the core function of building their professional standing. The ensuing void allows for the rather managerial perception to teacher professionalism which privileges the Kenya Institute of Education, the Quality Assurance and Monitoring Departments with the responsibility of demarcating what should be learned and the teachers' role in it. During the discussion forums at national level, KNUT representatives participated as a stakeholders vigorously rejecting or accepting expert recommendations but not offering proposals generated though their own processes.

8. 3   Summary

This chapter debates the opportunities present or lacking in the way teachers' professional identity is conceptualised in this context.

Opportunity is identified in teachers' location within education contexts which privileges them to continuous access and conversations about the meanings and purpose of education with key stakeholders. Their management of routine structures is also identified as a possible opportunity since they are in tune with contextual operations and are seen to sacrifice to realise changes that they feel necessary to achieve objectives they identify with. They are trained to comment on the effectiveness or otherwise of lesson processes. However lack of opportunity and confidence to collectively reflect and name what works or does not work in their context is a missed opportunity. Despite the changing policy environment this chapter illustrates how mindsets influenced by a history of following directives issued from above is seen to militate against a sense of ownership with the change process. Similarly, perceptions of leadership, capacity and confidence influence teachers' understanding of their role in the change process.Their comments regarding what should or should not change were perceived as a matter of opinion, outside the boundaries of their role expectations.

Engaging in change requires reflection on Avalos'(2010:p. 4) argument:

> The degree to which a teacher feels personally efficacious is also the degree to which he or she becomes a conscious agent in educational contexts with strength to improve and alter them.

9. 0   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis contributes to knowledge of teacher professionalism by illustrating how the construction of teachers' professional identity limits or expands their contribution to the wider discourse of education change. Within teachers' self expectations and the social suggestions of significant others lay evidence of the subjectivities and social institutional discourses that are perceived as opportunities or handicaps to teacher agency. Despite the participants' claim to professionalism, the meanings they attach to their experiences reflect conflicting discourses of teacher professionalism (Sachs 2001) which require at one and the same time an altruistic orientation to fulfill organizationally determined policy specifications. Their position in a history of reforms driven through managerial specialist led committees and presidential decrees along with the prescriptive curricula place marginal value on teachers' contextual experience and their role in developing relevant knowledge forms responsive to their context. Whilst their self-sacrifice and commitment are valued, their work schedules and perceptions of leadership for education change place the overall reform process outside their immediate jurisdiction.

The general background and context in which education change is pursued and legitimised, particularly the need to remain competitive in a globally linked world have been discussed. The strengths and weaknesses of preferred models for change, for example, the reliance on successive specialist-led commissions, working committees and presidential decrees in Kenya have been discussed. This thesis has demonstrated how despite the increased decentralisation of governance, participants are resigned to the mechanisms for change that are centrally driven. Whilst education commissions and presidential decrees provide authority, leadership and expertise for such change each is seen to be limited by its mandate and remains susceptible to the forces that legitimise its authority and funding. Despite numerous reforms, some of their recommendations have been repeated, revised or repealed whilst debates continue on the quality of education, regional disparity and the comparative advantages of private over public schooling. This invites reflection on the adequacy and

resilience of approaches so far utilised to promote education quality and equity. Ojiambo (2009:p.147) argues that what is lacking is not further theoretical recommendations, but the means to bridge the 'chasm between theory and practice'. Could conceptual clarity on teachers' professional identity be this bridge? Since teachers, at the forefront of educational delivery, are often depicted in this context as choosing inappropriate teaching approaches or generally failing to meet set standards, this thesis makes evident their own perceptions of factors likely to be overlooked, which condition their pedagogical choices and which separately deserve further enquiry.

The challenge in defining teachers' professional identity is shown to stem, in part, from the diminishing analytical value in the overloaded constructs used in the definition. In separately exploring the constructs of 'identity' and 'professional', the thesis highlights the debates and various discourses of self, subject and identity (Gee 2001), that limit conceptual agreement over the intrinsic meaning and application of teachers' professional identity. Whilst *identity* is shown to be central to motivation and agency, its form, content and influence are shown to be variously conceptualised and contested, possibly accounting for the diversity of research on teachers' professional identity. In approaching professional identity as 'the meanings [a teacher] has as a group member, as a role holder or as a person' (Stets and Burke 2003:p.8) this thesis provides a definition of teachers' professional identity in a manner that allows the subjectivities that generate or constrain motivation for change to be made evident. Secondly, whilst the context and nature of one's immediate and interacting social structures are shown to either inhibit or expand an individual's opportunity to exert a given identity , the extent of any limitation is equally contested which puts to question the usefulness of essentialist definitions. Within the African context perceptions of self from a communal perspective, though also questioned, provides a different frame from which to understand the power of their figured world in teachers' professional identity. Similarly, difficulties in defining professional identity emanate from the fluidity and mysticism allowed to shroud the construct

professionalism permitting different users to deliberately exploit it to motivate, coerce or sell services and products as they choose. From its genesis professionalism was associated with select occupations said to use scholarly knowledge for the stability and wellbeing of society. However, discussion of professionalism has moved from concern into approved traits of professionals to the power of professionalism as a force for change (Evett 2009) and is now variously discussed as organizational or occupational. The power of occupational professionalism borne out of lifelong learning coupled with experience is said to provide legitimacy for professional identity as a platform for change (Sachs2001). Organizational discourses of professionalism see it as a tool to assure quality through standardization and quality control (Sachs 2001). Lack of conceptual clarity means that professionalism can be exploited accordingly. Changing work environments have reconstituted work relationships through organisational professionalism which emphasis 'supervision, assessment and audit' (Evett 2010: p.19).How teachers' professional identity evolves depends largely on individual teachers' internalised role expectations, their continued collective reflexivity on the knowledge investment in the strength of teaching as a profession and the level of social suggestion within their work environment. Significantly contextual perceptions of professional identity are associated with teachers' contributions toquality education (Mourshed et al. 2010).

Recognising the difficulties and controversies entailed in seeking an objective social reality, or in selecting variables significant in the study of identity, this sociological study adopted an interpretive/constructivist approach and used thematic analysis to provide a subjective definition of teachers' professional identity in a specific context. Whilst accepting the limited generalisability of these findings, it is acknowledged that even collective identities, such as teachers' professional identities are processed through subjective lens of the members' meaning making process (Sachs 2001). The enactment of teacher/pupil and teacher/ parent identities, the context, content and partiality of the emerging discourses have been discussed. The findings make visible the discourses and subjectivities

likely to be obstructed through other research designs but which nevertheless are significant to understanding how the opportunity for a wider platform for education change could be missed by the way professional identity is constructed and how that in turn impacts the researched population. The limitations and partiality of the study in the light of the research instrument and approach have been discussed as have the ethical issues and validity of the data collection methods. The challenges attendant to ethnographic enquiry into identity particularly how such enquiries are interwoven with ethical issues, researcher identity and positionality have been illustrated. Though this research does not lay claim to a definitive causal relationships,nor is it said to be representative of every Kenyan teachers' professional identity, it nevertheless provides a depth of description that highlights issues that deserve further research.The validity and integrity of the research, in my estimation, depends on whether participants can recognise themselves in the final report.

Teachers claimed that their internalised role expectations are shaped by pre-service training, the interface between curriculum and examination requirements, pedagogical practices also influenced by community norms and by their individual sense of discipline, dedication, self-sacrifice and moral purpose. In judging each other's' professionality on the basis of pupil behaviour and attainment at periodic zonal and national examinations teachers show what is valued and engage with the curriculum content in a manner that assures evidence of achievement to earn community trust. The assessment of teachers' professionality on the basis of pupils' achievement associated with organizational professionalism privileges the allocation of attention to those elements deemed to be measurable indicators of such identity thereby undermining other educational objectives not similarly assessed. Also, as curriculum interpreters teachers have a tacit knowledge of its application in their context(Hargreaves 1998(b) and a relationship with the learners and their communities, an essential baseline which remain underutilised in their distance during education reforms processes.

Their classroom communication, a subject of much debate has been shown to reflect teachers' understanding of their context, the purpose and the social conventions discussed elsewhere as conservative. Considering traditional forms of education in most African communities were and still are practical in nature(Woolman 2001) the reasons for the teachers' transition to the transmissional mode in formal education deserve further investigation. Whist others have argued that 'Today's educational struggle in Kenya is for pedagogy, more specifically, for an African pedagogy that is responsive to the African condition' (Ojiambo 2009: p. 2), the opportunity to realise this pedagogy depends on how teachers' professional identity is conceptualised and how they are supported to process their practical experience and gain confidence in their tacit knowledge. Though learning is a social activity echoing the social conventions of a community, teaching as a professional activity invites reflection on the theoretical underpinnings of educational practices in relation to the identities, objectives and challenges of learners. Their opportunity to challenge their own knowledge forms in relation to learners needs could be an important step towards responsive pedagogy.

Etzioni (1969: p. v) challenges teachers' privilege to professional status arguing that:

> Their training is shorter, their status is less legitimate, their right to privileged communication less established, there is less of a specialized body of knowledge, and they have less autonomy from supervision or societal control than 'the' professions.

His arguments invite reflection on the content, structure and processes of teacher preparation and management which have been discussed in this thesis. In as much as participants recognised the need to upgrade their knowledge through additional qualifications, the necessity for structural occupational reflection on practice at different levels as a route for improving educational quality, as opposed to additional paper qualification has been discussed. A contradiction exists in organizational structures that place curriculum development as an area of specialisation dependant on level of qualification outside teachers' professional scope and yet place

responsibility for learning outcomes upon them on the basis of qualification. Without the requisite qualification, their role in curriculum development and education change is restricted, and without this involvement, they are deprived of the degree of ownership essential to developing pedagogical practices core to their work and responsive to their contexts. The borrowing of pedagogical practices will continue. As long as the borrowing continues the ensuing gap will propagate dependency on effective practices developed elsewhere making it difficult to address the contextual elements affecting education quality. Only in understanding how perceptions of identity have placed them in their relative positions can they understand how to move the education agenda forward.

Discipline, dedication and self-sacrifice associated with occupational professionalism were considered essential to the enactment of teachers' role especially in achieving curriculum coverage in their under-resourced environment. Counterarguments could be made to the effect that since self-sacrifice is internally motivated, it cannot be conditioned or regulated as a basis for teachers' professional identity and that doing so would be seen as an abuse of good will, sidestepping the true cost of education. Teachers understood their role to also entail the care and guidance of pupils in keeping with the community's social values but this was a role for which there were no measurable indicators so their work in this area goes unnoticed.

Though the social suggestions of all parties were not explored, Barrett(2006) shows the contribution of pupils and parents to the construction of teachers' professional identity to be significant. A relationship was suggested between pupils' expectations and their teachers' internalised role expectation. Pupils are the mirrors that reflect teachers' work and the means by which teachers garner approval and immediate affirmation or discouragement on the identities they project by their acceptance or tolerance. Pupils expected their teachers to love and care for them, to give up more of their time to help them love their subjects and pass examinations, to get jobs. Parents are part of the social context that provides a kaleidoscope of norms and values governing teacher/pupil

relationships. The cross over in role boundaries and expectations, their histories, aspirations and possible sub- identities to which some parents and teachers are included or excluded provide a context against which the 'otherness' of teachers' professional identity can be constructed. By their aspirations, sense of entitlement, recognition and support, parents both allow and entrench the enactment of certain teacher identities that are perceived to further the realisation of given aspirations for their children. Though they recognised teachers play a marginal role in education change, they expected them to prepare their children for a productive life in a global society, whilst simultaneously instilling local values. Teacher/ pupil and teacher /parent interactions reflect an understanding that teachers are looked upon as professionals on account of the certainty of achievements. The degree of trust in teacher professionalism was dependent on their success in this regard.

In the light of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Further to this thesis, research to determine:

   a) the extent to which the definition of teachers' professional identity as presented here, is shared by teachers in other socio-economic contexts in and outside Kenya;

   b) how this definition of teachers' professional identity compares with national policy provisions;

   c) the proportion to which the application of professional identity is shaped by occupational scholarship, context or one's selfhood;

   d) the influence of the social conventions of different professional landscapes on teachers' pedagogical choices and pupils' learning outcomes;

2. Should the results of this research be collaborated, I would wish to echo Lang et al.s (2002: p. 9) recommendation for 'a radically different idea of teachers' role in change and ultimately a radically different image of teacher professionals'. A re-conceptualization of the communication with teachers as partners in the search for quality education and not impaired instruments of implementation is recommended. Within Kenya for example, the Kenya Institute

of Education could facilitate further engagement with teachers in a manner that allows their voices on actual classroom experiences, both from successful and underachieving regions, to inform policy reviews.

3. Further discussion is needed on how teachers' professional identity can be strengthened in the light of Etzioni's (1969) criticism, to serve as a strong platform from which education change is deliberated. Further to Bunyi et al. (2011), appraisal of teacher training programmes' capacity to interrogate and equip the professional self of trainees with the pedagogical and change agentry skills responsive to changing classrooms is recommended.

4. As the seed and motivation for sustainable change lies in naming one's self and work, it is recommended teachers be facilitated to systematically and proactively theorise their work on an ongoing basis. Key Resource Teachers in Kenya should be recognised and utilised as a staff development tool, extending opportunity to not only address region specific education challenges through coordinated professional platforms within schools, clusters and zones, but also to acknowledge their success in this regards. Until the teaching profession can organise itself in ways that allow its members to articulate and disseminate their wealth of knowledge, teachers will remain distanced from the development of effective education practices.

This research has been a journey that has taken me to thought worlds and experiences that have challenged my beliefs and expectations bringing me to new thresholds of understanding. The most important lesson has been that though knowledge is always with us it finds a place and expression when through reflexivity we have the courage to name our experience and inform our consciousness. It has been a privilege to work alongside my participants, learning of their commitment to their pupils, appreciating the pressures they face and coming to an understanding of the issues affecting their professional identity. Shakespeare (1980) asked, what is in a name,

by their service and self-sacrifice teachers give meaning to their name. I have come to a juncture in my research journey where I feel equipped to collaborate and support teachers at different levels to address issues raised during this research. This thesis provides a basis for further investigation into ways professional identity can serve as the fourth logic (Hargreaves and Shirley 2009) towards effective education practices. Whilst the dissemination of its findings began during the final phase of data collection, with the publication of Kimaliro and Woolley (2013) and research conferences since then, further dissemination is necessary to engage stakeholders in deliberating the professional identity appropriate for the next generation of teachers.

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