To what extent does UK Government policy discourse shape the professional identity of teachers in England?

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Abstract

A strong sense of professional identity is vital for a teacher's understanding, engagement and commitment to their role and helps them make sense of their work and wider relationships. It is also a key element in the development of agency and career stability. Understanding teacher professional identity helps policymakers make sense of how teachers commit to, and engage with, policy making formulation and enhances implementation. This research study ascertains the main characteristics of teacher professional identity through a review of the existing literature. Guided by Michel Foucault's theory of power, it uses critical discourse analysis of 32 policy texts to uncover the way that government policy discourse may shape this identity. Through semi-structured interviews with 12 practising teachers, the study evaluates the extent to which policy discourse shapes teacher identity of secondary school teachers in England. Findings suggest four characteristics of teacher professional identity: the self; knowledge of the subject discipline and how to engage pupils in this; the impact of experience; and the centrality of emotions, both in seeing teaching as a vocation and engaging student emotions.

The critical discourse analysis indicates government policy discourse presents teachers in a negative light in a consistent and sustained manner. Far from being afforded professional status, teaching is presented as a technical skill with teachers charged with inadequacy and failing pupils through an unthinking enthralment to progressive pedagogies and an unwillingness to reform. Greater accountability within a reformed autonomous corporate structure with teachers taking more responsibility for social and economic policy are central planks of this reform agenda. Interviews with teachers suggest that teacher professional identity is indeed shaped by government policy discourse, but not in the way policymakers may hope. Teachers consistently push back on claims of inadequacy and embrace their professional status. Policymakers' claims of the dominance of progressive ideologies is dismissed by a pragmatic approach to classroom practice. Far from shaping the teaching profession, policy discourse highlights deep misunderstandings between the profession and policymakers entrenching teacher identity further away from policy objectives.

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Author's Declaration

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research focus

The aim of this research is to use critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews to explore the extent to which governmentality, as exercised through government policy discourse, shapes the professional identity of secondary school teachers in England.

The professional identity of teachers is deserving of study given the impact it may have on the quality of education provided to pupils in schools. An active professional identity can aid a teacher in their daily practice as well as ensure teachers remain productive and make substantive career progression over the longer term. As Sachs (2005:15) states, it provides a 'framework for teachers to construct their ideas of how to be, how to act and how to understand their work and their place in society'. As well as providing an insight of what it is to be a teacher in an ever-shifting environment, professional identity can prove invaluable in the development of both initial teacher education and continuing professional development. In particular, it can be useful to policymakers when considering how to alleviate issues that may arise in response to work-related change (Beijaard et al, 2004:109). Understanding teacher professional identity also helps us understand how interactions are shaped between teachers and other actors in the education environment and how teachers may relate to broader issues in education, in particular changes in education policy (Patrick & McPhee, 2011:132).

A significant body of research on teacher professional identity has developed, particularly since the 1990s. Beijaard et al (2004:107-9) suggest this research focuses on three differing elements: the formation of teachers' professional identity; its central characteristics; and teachers' perceptions of their professional identity. My research contributes specifically to understanding how teachers perceive their professional identity. Of crucial importance to this research is the identification, and understanding, of the internal and external factors which form teacher professional identity (Patrick & McPhee, 2011:132-136) and the tensions between these (Beijaard et al, 2004:113). My approach is based on perceptions I have developed as a practising teacher and my sense that teacher professionalism has been diminished by the dominance of neoliberal ideas and policies, both by policymakers and, to a degree, the teaching profession itself. Neoliberal thinking largely underpins education reforms, shaping a concept of 'professionalism' determined by pre-defined, measurable

standards that are deemed easily transferrable to others with little or no reflection on the part of the teacher (Patrick et al, 2003:240).

In exploring professional identity, I draw upon the ideas of subjectivisation developed by Michel Foucault to explore ways in which the development of the 'self' are crucial to the development of teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009:178-80). I use interviews to investigate the extent to which teachers' reflections compare to the ideas of policymakers about what the role of the teacher should be. I also explore external factors, in particular the socio-political-cultural context that affects teachers, as well as the changing expectations placed upon teachers, including those related to accountability (see Forde et al (2006:61-64; Patrick & McPhee, 2011:133-136). When initially seeking out a suitable research question for my Ed.D research, one of the key conclusions I drew from an early reading of the literature was that these external factors were understated in the existing research (Beijaard et al, 2004:125-126; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009:186). This an imbalance which this study hopes to begin to address.

1.2 Policy context

Policymakers in England have had a keen focus on education and schooling for several decades. The ongoing shift towards neoliberal thinking in policymaking, the fallout from the 2008 financial crisis and the desire to remove local government influence in education all play a significant role in shaping the policy environment in which this research takes place.

The change in political and economic models towards neoliberalism began in the late 1970s following the collapse of the dominant Keynesian economic models. This was a precursor to a broader shift in policy making towards neoliberalism, being 'a certain imagination of the 'market' as a basis for the universalisation of market-based social relations' (Shamir, 2008:3). The period of ongoing neoliberal education reform which began in the 1970s was prefaced by the publication of the 'Black Papers' from 1969-1977 in the journal *Critical Quarterly*. This series of articles criticised the abandonment of the grammar school system and attacked the teaching profession for excessive use of progressive teaching techniques and a 'dumbing down' of education in schools where 'the concepts of hard work and discipline are treated with contempt' (Cox & Dyson 1969:2). While James Callaghan's 'Ruskin College speech' in October 1976 set the tone for greater

government intervention, it was the Thatcher governments of the 1980s which began a period of 'hyperactivism' in education policy (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987), criticised since as 'policy overload' (Ball, 2013:3). Margaret Thatcher embraced the idea of neoliberal thinking in public sector policy which led to liberalised markets, deregulation and greater encouragement of competition in both the public and private sector (Dumenil & Levy, 2005:8). This approach continued under the Labour governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown and underpinned recent changes to public examinations in England, driven by a desire for a more 'rigorous and traditional' approach to education (Gove, 2013). Reinforcing much of this has been the rethinking of the purpose of education away from social policy towards it being a central tenet of economic policy and the development of the knowledge economy (Brown, 2006:233-234).

The second contextual policy issue is the economic concerns that followed the banking crisis of 2008 and a legacy of large-scale public sector spending cuts as a means to reduce levels of government borrowing. Despite government claims that money provided to schools remains at an all-time high (Greening, 2017), school budgets have seen significant real-terms cuts in income over the past decade and this is expected to continue in the medium term (Belfield & Sibieta, 2017). The combination of pay freezes and pay caps has left teacher salaries lagging behind annual inflation increases and salaries in other graduate professions, suggesting it is a less attractive career option for graduates (Hazell, 2017a).

The second contextual issue relates the austerity programme post-2008. Hazell (2017b) suggests real terms funding cuts for schools creates 'a vicious cycle where job losses increase workloads, resulting in teacher burnout and people exiting the profession, which only piles additional pressure on those who remain' (Hazell, 2017b). 13% of new teachers leave the profession within a year, and 30% leave within their first five years (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017:14). For those who remain the number considering leaving the profession increased from 45% to 74% from 2011-2016 with 90% of those citing excessive workload as a problem (Wiggins, 2016). Attempts to decrease workload alone may be too simplistic an answer to the problems of retaining teachers. Lynch et al (2016:14-15) suggest teachers feel undervalued as a result of increased workload driven by policy changes. My research seeks to develop a greater understanding of how government policy aims to shape teachers' views of their role in education and how they respond to reform.

The third contextual issue relates to the ongoing shift in school governance with central government seeking to remove the influence of local authorities in the education system. Since the first City Academies opened in 2002, underperforming schools were encouraged through financial incentives to rebrand as academy trusts independent of local control but funded by, and responsible to, central government. In 2010, this programme opened to all schools with financial incentives used to encourage schools into academy status. Since the first City Academies, policymakers claimed academy schools raised standards through business acumen, innovation and a culture of high expectations (Bates, 2013: 286; Papanastasiou, 2017:85), despite little supporting evidence (Gorard, 2009:101-113). It remains government policy to encourage schools to convert into academies despite attempts to force schools to convert were abandoned in 2016. This position maintains the broad policy stance of all governments post-1979 where the key drivers in education policy remain individualism, choice, competition, autonomy and accountability (West, 2014:333-6). I will consider policy more fully in chapter 5.

1.3 Background and professional context

1.3.1 Professional and academic background

While not unique, my career path to the classroom was not a common one. I left school aged 18 and began work in the banking sector, moving into investment management before ending this first career some 19 years later as a senior investment manager working on private client share portfolios. While content in my role, I maintained a love of the Arts and long considered a move into education for a career change. The formal requirements to perform the role of an investment manager were minimal compared to that of a teacher. Obtaining Securities Institute registration required a single, short examination following a six-week course with additional diploma-level qualifications desirable, but not necessary. The requirements to qualify as a teacher in the English state sector were significantly more stringent with an undergraduate degree and postgraduate certificate the minimum requirement, followed by a single year of school-based training as a newly qualified teacher to achieve Qualified Teacher Status. My perception of the difference in the status of the two roles was stark. Moving from my plush, air-conditioned, state-of-the-art offices in the City of London to a former cupboard that now operated as my departmental office was just the first significant change to which I needed to accustom myself. The response from nearly everyone I spoke to, either in my old career or my new, was one of disbelief

that I would want to make such a move. It was viewed as a backwards and 'downwardly-mobile' step. Following years of wanting to make the jump from office to classroom, this was a major surprise to me. While I viewed teachers in the highest regard, thinking back to my own favourite teachers who instilled in me a lifelong love of History and English, others saw teachers as downtrodden, poorly paid and disrespected. Unconsciously, the seeds of this dissertation had taken shape in my mind.

My academic career was similarly unconventional. Starting work at 16 or 18, rather than attending university, was a common route among my peers and I spent much of my early twenties working on furthering my career in banking through professional examinations. While the process of learning appealed to me, my interests lay beyond the curriculum demanded by my professional studies. Therefore, at the age of 28, I began my undergraduate degree in Politics, Philosophy and History at Birkbeck College, London, attending evening lectures and seminars, two to three times a week after work. This opportunity to study subjects I enjoyed opened up a lifelong enjoyment of academic learning that led me to the Ed.D course. Following the completion of my four year undergraduate degree, I took a sabbatical from work to complete a full-time postgraduate degree in American Politics, followed by a two-year part-time postgraduate degree in Contemporary History and Politics. It was at the end of this that I started my teaching career, completing my PGCE and taking a position teaching History and Politics. However, the desire to learn did not leave me and, in 2010, I began part-time degree course in English Literature, which led me to my current role of Teacher of English.

Progression through the management ranks was not attractive to me and I have preferred a lateral form of career development teaching across subjects. This is partly for family reasons but also driven by the single regret about my career change - that I had not moved into teaching sooner. This mindset has led me to prefer to stay working in the classroom but also that, after fifteen years of teaching, the role remains fresh and challenging for me. Reflecting on teaching career, I remain surprised at the difference with the private sector where, despite a relatively strict financial regulatory regime being in place, my sense of agency was far higher. While my days are mostly spent teaching pupils in the classroom, there are significant controls placed upon me relating to curriculum, teaching methods and standards. I spend far longer than I had expected having to concentrate on productivity and performance, rather than on teaching and learning and developing the enjoyment of my

specialist subjects in my pupils so that they feel sufficiently engaged to continue their learning independently. I certainly recognise Forde et al's charge (2006:4-5) that increasing levels of accountability and standardisation in schools have resulted in a perception of reduced autonomy for the teacher in the classroom.

The greatest surprise to me as a teacher is the strength of the inspection culture which provides the buckle holding together the system of accountability and standardisation. What informs much of what I do on a daily basis is grounded upon advice from Ofsted, a clear example of disciplinary power through which teachers are now 'the object and target of power… that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases it forces' (Foucault, 1977:136). Enormous effort is expended by teachers implementing policies in light of this disciplinary power for fear of the repercussions of receiving a poor inspection report. My perception of the overall impact of this is that, in England, teachers have limited control over what they teach and how they teach it, and pedagogy is reduced to a system of learned competencies and standardised processes. I find myself agreeing with those who claim schools suffer from performativity and managerialism, driven by a standards agenda which focuses solely on what is measurable and ignores many vital parts of non-measurable teacher (Ball, 2002:215-228). Decisions are made centrally and passed to school leaders who, in turn, pass responsibility and accountability down to middle managers who have no agency to influence these decisions. My initial impression when considering the research topic was that the professional identity of teachers was potentially shaped by managerial impositions as constructed within a politicised process where the 'good professional' has limited agency but merely implements, but rarely creates or shapes, policies that enhance teaching and learning.

My interest in Michel Foucault's theories of power is likely related to my background in the study of Politics. I came across Foucault's work on disciplinary power in the second module of the Ed.D and, when reading how sociologists such as Stephen Ball use Foucault's ideas to understand the impact neoliberal policy may be having on education, I was drawn to his work and ideas.

1.3.2 Professional context and significance

If professional identity is defined in terms of attributes ascribed to a particular group, then teacher professional identity is defined by those attributes ascribed to those who engage in

teaching as their job. However, defining what those attributes may be is a complicated issue, and as Beijaard et al (2004:113-121) indicate, some works on the subject fail to provide a clear and explicit definition. Beauchamp & Thomas (2009:177) suggest this is due to the dynamic and shifting nature of teacher professional identity. However, some main features are generally agreed upon: the relationship between 'identity' and 'self' (Nias, 1989:151-171); the link between the 'self' and the context in which teachers work (Coldron & Smith 1989:711-726); the existence of simultaneous core and sub-identities (Gee: 2001: 99-125); that identity comprises a notion of agency; and developing professional identity is part of what it means to be a teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009:177). While Pring (1993 in Avis, 1994:63-4) sees identity as being shaped by individual traits such as expertise, knowledge, values and attitudes, Avis sees context as an essential addition to this list. Avis views Pring's schema as displaying a 'historical forgetfulness' of the conditions and struggles that teachers continually find themselves engaged with (Avis 1994:65). It is also important to look at how perceptions of the future impact how a teacher may view their own identity (Bernstein 1996:78-9). Reflecting upon my own professional identity, I acknowledge all four main characteristics as contributing factors. However, I recognise that within the classroom, my personality is what drives my identity both at an intellectual and emotional level.

Considering how teacher professional identity is currently being shaped is an important source of investigation. Ball (2016:1047) argues England is 'the social laboratory of neoliberal education reforms' and that policy technologies of 'market, management and performativity' have led to a period of significant change in education (Ball, 2013:48-61). In the past, teacher identity was seen as an 'effective weapon' against government cynicism that the profession can autonomously deliver education (Avis, 1994:63), a changed approach by policymakers may now shape and utilise that weapon to meet their own ends. Decades of neoliberal-based education reform has created a perception of teacher professional identity as based on skills and competencies, rather than principles and judgments. Ball (2016:1049-55) argues continued policy initiatives based on performativity, managerialism and accountability may undermine the professionalism of teachers.

1.4 Research questions

My professional background and experience, along with the interaction with ideas explored on the Ed.D course, led me in the direction of this dissertation. Modules in the first two years on professional reflection, government policy, ethics in education and educational futures all helped shape my thinking and interests. The third year Open Studies modules allowed me to formulate my research idea and methods. My trial study involved a short discourse analysis on government texts relating to the proposed new funding model for schools and two interviews with headteachers to trial my use of interviewing, transcription and thematic analysis. Having worked with so many conscientious colleagues and watched their deep frustrations about the disparity between their expectations when they came into teaching and the reality of the role, I was drawn towards researching what may contribute towards this gap and, given aspects which appeared to frustrate teachers emanated from government, it seemed worth considering what influence government policy discourse may have on the teaching profession.

In order to explore this area, I created the following research questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of teacher professional identity?

2. What view of the teaching profession does government policy discourse present?

3. To what extent does policy discourse shape teacher professional identity?

These questions guided the research process throughout.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I have taken policy to be delineated according to Ball's (1994:16-24) distinction between 'policy as text' and 'policy as discourse'. While policy as text appears fixed, policymakers cannot control the way that policy is later decoded through differing context-dependent interpretations and mediations by those who receive policy. However, this dissertation is particularly focused on policy as discourse. As outlined above, discourse defines reality as a normalized - way to talk and think about a topic. Ball's suggestion of policy as discourse links to this production of truth. We therefore see the two ideas – policy as text and policy as discourse – as interlinked. The

way that policy as text is interpreted and mediated can depend upon prevailing dominant discourse.

I have also been guided by the work of Foucault on discourse, although Foucault (1972:80;107) accepted his failure to 'fix the vocabulary' in relation to his equivocation over the term 'discourse' and admitted he had 'used and abused' the term in different senses. However, one of Foucault's clearer definitions suggests discourse is 'a certain way of speaking…in a system of prohibitions and values' (Foucault, 1972:193). A discourse is tied to a specific discipline, such as education, but is also impacted by the broader social structures of society. For the purposes of this dissertation, I take discourse to refer to the normalised way to think and communicate about a given topic that defines what can, and what cannot, be said. It encompasses who can speak with authority as well as when, and where (Ball, 1994:21). In this way, discourses define the reality of the social world. By defining reality, discourses produce knowledge, and are themselves produced by power relations in the social order which legitimise those forms of knowledge. In this way, discourse creates meaning in texts which tend to be conducive to the ideas that are the foundations of its production and therefore are a technique of control and discipline.

As Stephen Ball (1993:10) suggests, the meaning of the concept 'policy' can be taken for granted yet it remains so complex that a single definition cannot encompass its breadth and depth. As Trowler (2003:95-6) explains, in its narrowest form it can be both a product, a written statement of intent, and therefore static and fixed but is better considered as a process involving conflict between actors, interpretations and complex practices. Olssen et al (2004:71-72) link policy to governance, suggesting it to be any course of action (or inaction) 'relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources.' In this way, policy becomes about the exercise of political power. Understanding Garret and Forrester's (2012:3-5) conceptualization of 'big-P' and 'little-p' forms of policy was helpful to this dissertation. 'Big-P' policy relates to government-sanctioned legislation or policy initiatives where 'little-p' policies are formed at the local level such as the secondary school. While 'Big-P' policy is analyzed in the critical discourse analysis in Chapter 5, it is both 'Big-P' and 'little-p' policy that forms the basis of discussion in the interviews reported in Chapter 6.

1.5 Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation begins with a review of existing literature on teacher professional identity, explaining my understanding of the concepts of 'professional' and 'identity' before considering the term 'teacher professional identity' and why it is a valuable area of study. I then outline in greater depth the different aspects of teacher professional identity discussed in the literature. In chapter 3, I sketch out the theoretical framework underpinning the dissertation, namely the ideas of how power operates in society as outlined by Michel Foucault. Chapter 4 will explain the interpretivist methodology used in the research, namely analysing government texts using critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews of twelve practising teachers. Chapters 5 and 6 will present the data from both the discourse analysis and interview and chapter 7 will provide a discussion of the data perceived through a Foucaultian perspective. Chapter 8 will conclude my own reflections on the findings. Running through the dissertation is a thread that links the extent which teacher identity may be shaped by power relationships linked to policy discourse.

1.6 Conclusion

This introduction sets out the aims and organisation of the dissertation and introduced the personal and professional background to why I chose the topic of teacher professional identity. In the next chapter I outline, with close reference to the existing literature, what is meant by the term and consider the different aspects that make up the professional identity of teachers.

Chapter Two: Literature Review - Teacher professional identity

2.1 Introduction

Developing a sense of professional identity can be seen as the expansion of 'self' (Kelchtermanns, 2005:1000). Cooper and Olson (1996:83) suggest the development of professional identity is a process and a product. A process that is both personal and collective: personal in the sense that every teacher will develop their identity, either consciously or unconsciously; and collective in that teachers work within a context where professional discourses shape their personal worlds (Sfard & Prusak, 2005:15). This collective discourse can also be a product used to distinguish teachers from other workers (Sachs, 2001:155) and allow them to both reflect upon, and confront if necessary, personal and professional tensions and contradictions within the 'contexts and human relationships' they encounter in their careers (Olson, 2008:139). In this way, teachers both define their professional identity, as well as being defined by it (Brooke, 1994:69).

This chapter will explore the first research question concerning the main characteristics of teacher professional identity. I firstly outline what is meant by the terms 'professional' and 'identity' and how our understanding of these complex concepts has developed over time. I then expand on the development of a distinct professional identity for teachers and outline why professional identity is an important concept for members of the teaching profession. Key to the literature review was understanding what is meant by teacher professional identity. Four elements of teacher identity were discussed in the literature: the self; skills and knowledge; context and discourse. Building a picture of teacher professional identity based upon both the self and the underlying contexts within which the teacher works stresses the importance of the professional teacher as a person as well as someone in possession of certain occupational knowledge and fulfilling a particular role (Nias, 1989:13).

2.2 What is meant by the terms 'professional' and 'identity'?

The standard dictionary definition of the noun 'profession' refers to 'an occupation… especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification'. The etymology of the word derives from the Middle English use of a Latin phrase 'professio', meaning to

'declare publicly'[1]. To be a 'professional' in today's sense remains a form of public declaration, but the standard dictionary definition falls short in developing the complexities behind the concept. Barber (1963:672) outlines a sociological definition of the term 'professional' as including four aspects: a high degree of specialised knowledge; self-regulation through an ethical code; a form of recognised qualifications; and a sense of working for the benefit of the community. However, this orthodox definition feels insufficient as it fails to incorporate either elements of the individual self or the power relations that go along with the concept of being a professional. For a profession to exist, it must, according to Barber's definition, have some form of external recognition from the community. Added to Barber's four criteria should be a sense of self-perception that goes along with being a member of a profession. While some still define a profession as being based upon the possession of knowledge and complying to specific codes of conduct (Hoyle & John, 1995:1), it should move beyond this to also embrace a statement of intent, relating to a desire for autonomy and, importantly, responsibility, within a given social field (Furlong et al, 2000:5). It is this embracing of autonomy and responsibility within a given field that goes to the heart of professional identity.

While the concept of identity may initially be straightforward to understand by its standard dictionary definition, 'the sameness of a person of thing at all times or in all circumstances'[2], the nature of how these characteristics is formed and reformed is complex. Early 20th century sociologists saw identity as a stable construct formed by the individual themselves, either through how they perceived themselves or their own interpretation of feedback from others (Cooley, 1902). As thinking developed others, such as Mead (1934), also perceived identity as stable, but saw identity-formation as being a dynamic, continuous process based upon experiences and social interaction. These early ideas of identity failed to take account of the different ways individuals may act, or perceive themselves, dependent on the professional context in which they are placed. Ball (1972) suggested these differing identities could be placed within two categories: 'situational identities' which could be multifaceted depending upon context; and 'substantive identity' or core identity which was stable and more closely reflected the true

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[1] "profession, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/152052. Accessed 14 April 2021.

[2] "identity, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/91004. Accessed 14 April 2021.

self. By the late 20th century, more sophisticated notions about the nature of identity were being developed. Wenger (1998:149) outlined differing dimensions of identity, and how it was formed by an individual, based upon traditional aspects such as negotiated experiences and the individual's own perception of these, but also the range of contextual relations between the 'social and the personal'.

Gee (2000:100-7) outlines how identity comprises differing perspectives dependent on a person's natural state, the position of authority held, the way they are recognised in the discourse of others and the affinities they have with other groups. Seen in this light, teacher identity is a complex and socially situated concept (O'Connor 2008:125-6) and impacted by aspects such as gender, role, subject taught and perceptions of pupils and colleagues. While all aspects of identity come into play in every situation, some will be more predominant depending upon the context. Kelchtermans (1993:448-50) identifies similar interrelations of multiple identities in the formation of teacher identity, although this is based more specifically upon self-identity, incorporating aspects such as self-esteem and the motivations a person has for being a teacher.

2.3 What is meant by the term 'Teacher Professional Identity' and why is it important?

Teacher professional identity has not always been viewed as a crucial component in teacher development. As Nias (1989:18-19) indicates, while great importance has rightfully been attached to the idea of knowing and catering for the individual child for many years, formal attention has not been paid to the concept of the individual teacher until relatively recently. It was only towards the end of the twentieth century that teacher identity and its link to professionalism emerged as a separate research area and an important area of research (Beijaard et al, 2004:107).

Traditionally, teacher identity was viewed through given surface traits: the knowledge, expertise, values and attitudes that being a teacher required (Pring, 1993). This development could be based upon aspects such as the subject taught, relationships with pupils or simply a teacher's conception of the role (Beijaard, 1995:282-4). Generally, it was perceived as a static phenomenon, an impression Beijaard et al (2000:750) indicated teachers supported, viewing their identity as based on aspects such as subject knowledge as well as pedagogic and didactic knowledge. However, the consensus in the literature

suggests professional identity is more complex. It incorporates multiple senses of identity developed as part of an ongoing process involving the teacher making sense of their own experiences, their own personal histories as well the context in which they worked (Day & Leitch, 2001:407-9; Beijaard et al, 2004:122-3; Flores & Day, 2006:220; Sachs, 2005:15; Jourdan, 2015:108). Beijaard et al (2004:122) point to teachers using reflection as part of their practice leading to professional identity becoming a continual process of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences. While it was regarded as inadequate by some given the continuing predominance of expertise over aspects of empowerment (Avis, 1994:68), the use of reflection is key to the development of teacher identity, moving the concept beyond the simple definition of basic traits that were common among teachers.

A strong sense of professional identity provides a framework for teachers to construct their role, both for themselves and for others (Jourdan, 2015:108). Teacher identity 'can be central to the beliefs, values, and practices that guide their engagement, commitment, and actions in and out of the classroom' (Cohen, 2008:80). Identity helps teachers to develop their own sense of 'how to be, how to act and how to understand' their work and place in society (Sachs, 2005:15). In this way, it can also help teachers move beyond the immediacy of the 'what' that they are confronted with, to consider issues of 'how' and 'why' (Brooke, 1994:69). As Watson (2006:510) suggests, for teachers, 'who we think we are influences what we do'.

Professional identity is also important for helping teachers make sense of their work in relation to other stakeholders in education including children, parents, managers and government, but also within the wider social world (Maclure, 1993:311). In addition, professional identity is an important aspect in the development of teacher agency, guiding and shaping the decisions a teacher makes to allow them to offer their own contributions to education (O'Connor, 2008:125). It is suggested that a flaw in initial teacher training is that it places too much focus upon how teachers create the right environment for learning and that a greater focus on providing teachers with the theoretical tools to make the philosophical and pedagogical choices about the type of teacher they want to be would boost this sense of agency and provide a stronger foundation to tackle to changing challenges faced in the classroom and beyond (Alsup, 2006:126-7). Without a strong sense of identity, teachers may allow themselves to be manipulated through the 'externally initiated controls' that sometimes impose themselves through school and government

policy (Sachs, 2001:155; Avis, 1994:63). In this way, a better understanding of teacher identity could prove helpful for both schools and policymakers. Teacher identity is important for understanding how teachers engage with policy and commitment to, and engagement with, policy is essential if teachers are to commit to it in a sustained way and support its success (Jourdan, 2015:107).

Beijaard (1995:292) suggests a strong sense of professional identity will provide teachers with a high degree of career stability, ensuring good relations with pupils and that they function well within a school organisation. A positive sense of professional identity can also override any dissatisfaction teachers may experience as a result of their working conditions by providing a sense of job satisfaction through development of self-esteem (Beijaard et al, 2004:115-119). Essentially a strong sense of professional identity could be viewed as crucial to the overall well-being of a teacher (Thomas and Beauchamp, 2011:762). As discussed in chapter 1, teacher retention rates are under strain and an understanding of teacher identity could play a role in addressing this as it can provide an understanding of why people become, and remain, teachers (Cross & Ndofirepi, 2015:95-6).

The literature identifies four interlinked features of professional identity which form the foundation of my exploration in the remainder of the chapter. These four features are:

1. Personal identity or the Self
2. Skills and knowledge possessed by the teacher
3. The context in which the teacher operates
4. The prevailing discourse around the teaching profession

2.4 The formation of teacher identity (I): The Self

Perhaps the most complex and crucial aspect of the formation of teacher professional identity is centred around the notion of self, or self-concept (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009:178). Developments in psychology have advanced multiple forms of 'the self' which ally to the idea of a teacher occupying multiple identities. This could take the form of 'multiple selves' continually being reconstructed (Cooper and Olson, 1996:83), or a more stable 'core identity' with a series of 'sub-identities' drawn upon, depending upon the context (Gee, 2000:99). It would appear intuitive that, given the dynamic nature of teacher

professional development, a different sense of self exists between a person at the early stage of their teaching career and after a lengthy career in the teaching profession, by which time they have 'incorporated their professional identity into their self-image' (Nias, 1989:181). I now explore how aspects of the self, outlined by Beauchamp & Thomas (2009:178-84), namely emotions, narratives and reflection, and agency, contribute toward the construction of teacher professional identity.

2.4.1 The role of emotions

Emotion is a key aspect in the formation of self-identity and is reflected in the expansion in the research over the past decade upon the subject of teacher identity. Uitto et al (2015:125) introduced a special issue of *Teaching and Teacher Education* on the subject of teacher emotions by highlighting that, from 1985-2002, the journal published nine articles on the subject whereas from 2002-2014 this had jumped to 61 articles and highlighted that, despite the increased attention, debate remains on how to define the term. Reviewing the literature, Zembylas (2007:59-66) offers three competing views of how emotions are produced: physiologically by the individual; socially through relationships or contexts; and transcending both the individual and contextual realms and instead are processes within which the physiological and social realms are created. Whichever view is adopted, emotions are viewed as important within both realms.

Day and Leitch (2001:403) highlight key assumptions offered in relation to the impact emotions have on the formation and development of teacher identity: first, emotional intelligence is at the heart of good professional practice; second, emotions are key to rational decision-making; third, emotional health is crucial to effective teaching. Hargreaves (1998:838-41) also suggests the centrality of emotions, seeing teaching as a form of 'emotional labour'. Seen in this light, teaching is not simply a technical or cognitive practice, but involves a teacher activating, colouring or expressing either their own feelings or the feelings of others, be they pupils, parents or colleagues. It involves understanding others at an emotional level where 'one person has to enter the field of experience of another' to interpret their actions (Denzin, 1984:137). This requires the teacher to be 'pedagogically sensitive' to the particular qualities and needs of the child before them (van Manen, 1991:48). Hothschild (1993:7) suggests continuously acting out such emotions could be viewed as emotionally draining to the teacher, but Hargreaves (1998:840) believes many teachers view this is a key part of the caring nature of the role.

Emotions are viewed as 'intimately involved in every aspect of the teaching and learning process' (Schutz & Lanehart, 2002:67) and as being 'at the epicentre of teachers' work' (O'Connor, 2008:117). This is unsurprising given the constant interactions with others and the profound feelings that teachers are prone to express about their work (Uitto et al, 2015:124). In the process of becoming a teacher, emotions clearly inform and define a notion of identity (Zembylas 2003:223). Nias (1989:203) sees emotions providing the link between the personal and professional aspects of identity than is the case in 'in occupations where the person can easily be separated from the craft'. While Brody & Hall (1995:447-60) suggest gender differences in how teachers experience emotions, empirical evidence indicates the emotional aspects of teacher identity does not differ significantly between male and female teachers (Hargreaves, 1998:842).

The literature presents a tension in relation to the role that the emotion of caring, defined as 'those emotions, actions and reflections that result from a teacher's desire to motivate, help or inspire students' (O'Connor, 2008:117), plays in the identity of the teacher. The traditional view of professionalism, based upon the 'major professions' of medicine and law, is one built on systematic forms of scientific and technical knowledge, a 'model of technical rationality' (Schon, 1991:23). The focus here is on developing professional identity based on technical competencies and ignoring the focus of 'minor professions' on human interaction and emotional understanding (Hargreaves, 1998:850). This concept of the 'model profession', based upon these traditional, masculine views of professionalism which de-emphasise emotion, is viewed by Shapiro (2010:618-9) as a 'dangerous myth' that has led to a form of imitation by some in the teaching profession. This imitation leads to a more clinical and detached professional identity and Shapiro sees this de-emphasising of emotions leading to a dehumanising of relations between teachers and pupils, as well as between colleagues in the profession.

Despite the centrality of emotions and caring in the formation and development of teacher identity, the literature conveys a perception among policymakers that no tangible or measurable benefit in emotional labour exists and therefore its tends not to feature in teaching standards. Constanti and Gibbs (2004:247) see this as reducing the 'worth' of emotions in teaching while Forrester (2005:274) suggests policymakers view caring as 'non-work', where no clear economic benefit exists. O'Connor (2008:117-8) sees

removing emotions and caring from policy suggests teachers could view them as optional so teachers may, or may not, embrace them depending on the form of professional identity they wish to develop. Dillabough (1999:378) suggests the irrelevance of the private sphere within formal teaching standards could be viewed as a form of disciplinary power which seeks to marginalise and repress individual beliefs. Zembylas (2003:104-6) highlights that a tension exists for many teachers in that society allows certain emotions to be encouraged and others forbidden. This implies discourse dictates social rules with regard to the communication of emotions which influences the teacher's emotional experience and key aspects of teaching identified by Hargreaves (1994:175) of human nurturing, connectedness and warmth are devalued. The focus of teacher standards on technical competencies may be separating teachers from their professional craft.

2.4.2 The role of narrative stories and reflection

A second approach to the way in which teacher identity is constructed within the notion of the self is the incremental way in which the life-long experiences of teachers are interpreted, re-interpreted and reflected upon (Kelchtermans, 1993:443; Burns & Bell, 2011:952-3). By narrating and reflecting on experiential stories, either to themselves or in discussion with others, Freese (2006:100-19) suggests teachers become more in tune with their teaching selves. This helps establish goals or achieve the sort of professional identity they wish to adopt, their 'designated identity' (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009:182-3). Rejecting the traditional view of a unitary identity, some have applied a positional approach, such as Dialogical Self Theory, to teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Soreide, 2006). This psychological approach implies differing positions of the self exist: the 'internal self' (the way one perceives oneself); and the 'external self' (the way one is perceived by others) (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011:310). This approach suggests teacher identity is an ongoing process in which individuals themselves are active, reflecting upon and interpreting their experience and creating a diverse set of subject positions ('I' positions) that are internalised by individuals who use these when presenting themselves to the world (Arjava, 2016:393). Burns and Bell (2011:953-4) see these as central to the construction an understanding of the world and one's place in it. While individuals may construct narratives, they are also constructed by those narratives (Watson, 2006:510). In this way, language becomes a key resource in the professional identity development and the language used by teachers when reflecting on their role may impact how they perceive themselves as teachers (Cohen, 2008:80).

When subject positions of groups such as teachers cluster together, a sense of 'narrative positioning' occurs. Prominent narrative positioning of teachers includes 'student-centred', 'reform-oriented' or 'having a role in the community' (Soreide, 2006:532-533). Teacher identity can be informed by identification with, or distancing from, these different narrative positions (Watson, 2006:514-522). Common forms of collective narrative positioning for teachers are important as whether a teacher chooses to identify with, or distance themselves from, particular positions impacts both how they view themselves as teachers as well how they are viewed by others. The dominant discourses within which teachers operate will both inform and impact how they respond to differing narrative positions (Soreide, 2006:545). This range of subject positions make identity both multiple and dynamic, which conflicts with traditional views of the fixed self although, while subject positioning is deemed to change in different contexts, a continuity of identity, or a 'coherent sense of self' can be perceived (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011:309-10). This indicates agreement with theories proposing a 'core' sense of identity (Gee: 2000:99-125). By this reading, teacher professional identity is developed through personal narratives and evolves in a continuous negotiation between different subject positions (Arjava, 2016:393).

MacLure (1993:312) cites the value of personal narrative given its promise of great explanatory power and 'emancipating the voice' of the teacher. It helps researchers understand perceptions made by teachers of features relevant to their identity (Beijaard, 1995:281). Having teachers construct metaphors to make sense of experiences can reveal their values, belief and principles (Gillis & Johnson, 2002:37). This technique has also been used to help teachers reflect upon their identity as metaphors help 'demystify the personal into professional practice' (Hunt, 2006:317), allowing participants the linguistic freedom to be descriptive about their identity and engage more with 'who they are' rather than 'what they do' (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011:764). In this way, the construction of teacher identity can be conceptualised as a learning process, rather than simply the effect of experiences on the individual (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005:423).

Limitations of this narrative-based approach exist. Stories and reflection require a degree of imagination and teachers working in highly bureaucratic environments may find this acting as a limiting force on their ability to recount certain experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006). Teachers may not always have stories or metaphors to hand, or they can

feel trite or irrelevant (Thomas and Beauchamp, 2011:765). Individual stories and experiences can be very singular in terms of identity and may ignore key notions of teacher identity such as collective struggle (Avis, 1994:68). However, identity is constructed and developed over a long period of time so how teachers react to experiences through both reflection and evaluation can be a key part to the development of professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009:182-3).

2.4.3 The role of agency

The final aspect of the self which contributes to the formation of teacher professional identity is that of teacher agency. Beijaard et al (2004:122-3) identified agency as a key element in the construction and development of teacher identity. While teaching as a profession relies heavily upon communities of practice and a shared sense of occupational culture, a sense of individualism exists in the way the teacher brings their own attitudes and actions to the role (Nias, 1989:14). Agency is seen as a key element of identity working as both a product as well as a process that allows teachers to help make sense of themselves. The key point is that agency is not possessed without a particular purpose; it is used to produce a desired result. Agency is therefore not simply about the ability to pursue valued goals but there must exist a chance to achieve those goals or, if necessary, to reconstruct them (Day et al, 2005:611). Agency can help develop psychological constructs such as 'self-efficacy' and 'self-concept' and develop the ability to move ideas forward and even change the contexts within which the teacher operates. As Beauchamp & Thomas (2009:183-4) indicate, agency offers the individual a sense of empowerment.

If one accepts teachers occupy multiple identities, then agency may arise from the freedom to choose which identity they inhabit given a particular context (Stronach et al, 2002:117). Parkinson (2008:51) sees a link between teacher agency and the context in which they work while Day et al (2005:613) suggest agency occupies the space that exists between context and multiple identities. Agency could therefore be seen as something which develops over time as teachers develop both their multiple identities and the confidence with which to begin to express their own sense of agency. Cooper & Olsen (1996:87) indicate early career teachers suppress their agency by taking on a 'prescribed role' of what a 'good' teacher looks like. Reynolds (1996:75) agrees they seek to blend in and become 'enculturated' into the teaching profession. One estimate is that it takes around

three years before a teacher begins to move beyond this desire to resemble other teachers and to develop their own sense of agency (Day et al, 2005:608).

Existing research indicates teacher agency has been undermined by decades of neoliberal-driven education reform. Sachs (2001:150-3) identifies two competing discourses which shape professional identity for teachers: managerial professionalism and democratic professionalism. Managerial professionalism, based upon principles of developing improvement in the teaching profession through competition and individualism has driven the reform agenda by seeking to develop entrepreneurial identities in teachers. Competing with this is a form of democratic professionalism based upon principles of teacher collaboration and co-operation and seeks to create activist identities with teachers improving through working together in communities of practice (Sachs, 2001:157-9). Reviewing the narratives of teachers, MacLure (1993:319) noted that increased teacher responsibilities and reduced discretionary power led to 'teachers at all levels report[ing] a fast-diminishing sense of agency or control'. According to Parkinson (2008:53), this instability in the power relationship between teachers and the institutions that limit their agency through policies such as accountability and performativity has contributed to a sense of 'identity-crisis' for the profession, leaving a situation where 'little of the conscious agency of the teacher remains'. The teacher measuring their success based upon their own ethical and professional judgement is replaced by the desire to satisfy what is deemed by others to be 'good' work (Lasky, 2005:913). This process may develop into 'cynical compliance' where teachers spend more time fabricating what the perception of 'good' teaching looks like, rather than developing their own sense of professional purpose (Ball, 2003:224-226). While many teachers will choose to follow a path of 'narrative determinism' and allow their agency to be limited by outside forces, others may seek to express their freedoms and establish a counter-hegemonic practice that asserts their sense of agency (Parkinson, 2008:56-8). However, even for these teachers there remains an 'opportunity cost' attached to such resistance in terms of relationships and well-being (Day et al, 2005:610). Either choice, compliance or resistance, simply limits agency by degree. Separating them from their own experience may threaten the traditional view of the teacher, that of the dedicated and responsible individual who serves society (Parkinson, 2008:56-7) and replaces it with teachers who simply exhibit 'grudging compliance with external demands' (Hargreaves, 1994:127).

The sense of self in the formation of the professional identity of teachers is therefore dependent upon three distinct, but interrelated, elements: emotions that are felt as a teacher, reflection upon narrative stories and the sense of agency. The sense of self is the most complex and multifaceted of the forms of identity to be discussed and the one most unique to individual teachers. Each teacher comes to the profession with different experiences of teaching from their own time at school, so this personalisation of the experience is developed before they set foot in the classroom and the divergence from other teachers only widens once their teaching career begins.

2.5 The formation of teacher identity (II): Skills and Knowledge

The traditional way of viewing professional identity is that it is based upon a set of 'rational factors', namely specialised knowledge and possession of a certain set of skills and capacities (Chen, 2016:68). This set of knowledge, skills and capacities separate teachers as a group from others in society. By this reading, professional identity is based upon what Schon (1991:21-24) refers to as 'technical rationality' where professional knowledge is standardised and based upon specialised and specific knowledge. Professional work is viewed as the rigorous application of scientific theory and technique. While it was once deemed sufficient to have subject knowledge and some on-the-job training (Hoyle and John, 1995:46), teachers today must develop a range of pedagogical, curricular and didactic knowledge and skills (Beijaard et al, 2000:761-2). In England, this goes beyond initial teacher training and schools are expected to have programmes of continuing professional development in place for their staff.

While professional skills and knowledge form part of what teacher identity may be, debate exists in relation to its significance in the development of identity. For some, the very act of a teacher being seen as a professional is based upon a 'certain body of knowledge in my field and the skill to use it effectively' (Brooke, 1994:69). Jourdan (2015:117) holds subject expertise to be primary driver in teacher professional identity and states teachers themselves allocate differing levels of status to subjects that also impacts upon identity. Paechter and Head (1996:21-30) cite subjects such as Art or PE that focus on the body as being perceived to have lower status than subjects that focus on the mind, such as Mathematics or English. Beijaard (1995:282) indicates experienced teachers in particular find validation in the sense of esteem with which their subject may be held.

Skills and knowledge are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to teacher identity. Clearly, to deny the existence of a set of knowledge and skills that sets teachers apart from other groups would suggest that anyone can teach (Avis, 1995:68-9). However, the nature of teaching goes beyond the technical competencies that exclude human interaction and emotional understanding so the teacher as a person is equally important as the teacher as a 'possessor of occupational knowledge and skills' (Nias, 1989:13). In England, a strong focus exists on the development of skills and knowledge within initial teacher education and continuing development. Beauchamp & Thomas (2009:1) highlight university-based teacher education is often criticised as an insufficient grounding in the complexities that teachers face in the school setting. Hebert and Worthy (2001:898) suggest that 'new teachers' expectations…conflict with the real world of schooling' while Flores and Day (2006:224) cite early career teachers reporting their initial teacher education had a 'relatively weak impact upon the way in which (they) approached teaching and viewed themselves as teachers'.

The shift in England away from university-based initial teacher education towards a system where teachers are placed in schools on day one has increased this focus upon knowledge and skills as a key requirement to develop as a new teacher. This reform has not been without criticism with some teachers reporting concerns it leads to teachers having limited understanding of the wider purpose of education (Hodgson, 2013:15). Watson (2006:510) conveys that teachers trained simply in 'what do I know in this situation?' will not gain the in-depth understanding of the teaching role when compared with teachers who reflect upon concerns such as 'who am I enabled to be in this situation?'. Alsup (2006:125-131) agrees that preparation for teaching should go beyond simple focus on teaching content to include finding value and meaning in teaching, developing the teacher's philosophy and beliefs. Basing teacher identity too narrowly upon knowledge and skills is therefore deemed insufficient as it relies simply upon notions of expertise rather than expressions of empowerment (Avis, 1995:64-8).

In summary, while professional knowledge is accepted as an important aspect of teacher identity, a 'balance needs to be struck' across the differing dimensions of what kind of knowledge is required to make a person a teacher and what it actually means to be a teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009:179).

2.6 The formation of teacher identity (III): Contextual factors

The third significant element in the construction of teacher professional identity is the impact of the context in which teachers work. Given the social nature of contextual relations, differing relationships will have differing impacts upon teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011:308-9) and these can hold implications for teachers' own views on identity (Maclure, 1993:314). Context can be explored at different levels: the socio-political 'macro' level which includes government policy; the 'meso' level of the organisation where the teacher works; and the 'micro' level, being the regular, face-to-face encounters a teacher may have (Day et al, 2005:610-1). To gain a full understanding of teacher professional identity it is necessary to combine analysis across all three levels as they are inter-related (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011:316).

Context is also important in how it affects the inter-related aspects of teacher emotions and the development of the self. Kelchtermans (2005:1002-4) argues that emotions are mediated by both spatial and temporal contexts, while Schutz et al (2006:344) note the link between the interplay of teacher emotions and social/historical contexts. Socio-political context can also have an impact on the discourses which teacher and others use to view the profession. This negotiation of the positioning between self and context can be played out in multiple settings and is continuous (Arjava, 2010: 393).

In my research, I found no literature that argued the context in which teachers operate has little, or no, impact on the development of identity. Instead, there is discussion of the types of contexts that impact identity, with differences between those who emphasise the role of personal contexts or 'lived experiences', that occur beyond teacher education and experiences in the classroom and those who see professional contexts as more central to the development of identity (Cross and Ndofirepi, 2015:97). For adherents to the idea that personal contexts have a significant role to play in its development, teacher identity is viewed as being both retrospective as well as prospective (Bernstein, 1996:76-9). Teaching is one of the few professions where the practitioners will have been required to play the role of the 'client' before starting their career. This means pre-service teachers already have begun to develop their teacher identity prior to starting their careers (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2006). Other forms of personal history may also interact with the professional life of the teacher (Day & Leitch, 2001:407-9). Pre-teaching identity formation may include aspects such as family influence, community obligation, the desirability of other career

choices and an individual's own experience of school (Cross and Ndofirepi, 2015:100-5). For those that view the professional context as more significant, the main issues tend to be at the meso- and micro-level, namely the status of the subject taught, the nature of the pupil population and the teacher's relationship with pupils, and the impact of the school environment and culture (including relations with colleagues and managers) (Beijaard, 1995:282-284 & 291; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009:184). This last point is particularly important for professional identity with learning communities where mutual support, sharing ideas and bonding were viewed as key to developing the communities of practice which contribute to a positive sense of professional identity (Cross and Ndofirepi, 2015:109-110). The 'school culture' encompasses the norms and values shared by staff but can also incorporate stakeholder expectations, the chosen curriculum or the physical environment and resources available (Beijaard et al, 2000:752-3).

Context at the micro level can have both a positive or negative effect upon professional identity. A school culture that supports the work of the teacher creates an environment that positively impacts professional identity. A climate where teachers co-operate, involve themselves in additional tasks and feel they have a genuine stake in the development of school policy will affirm teachers' sense of adequacy (Beijaard, 1995:292). In contrast, a climate where teachers feel inadequate or undervalued leads to a sense of 'spoiled identities' where 'ambitions and ideals have been abandoned' (Maclure, 1993:317-8). Such identity crises may occur because of a perceived misalignment between a teacher's own sense of professional identity and the context within which they work (Kira & Balkin, 2014:131). This can occur due to what Nias (1989:44) refers to as 'institutional bias'. As school routines and practices are rooted in power differentials, dominant members of staff, particularly school managers, hold institutional power. Staff, especially new staff and early career teachers, may find their values at odds with this 'bias'. Negotiating this position can be problematic for staff as they seek to protect their identity without losing support or confidence of colleagues. These contextual tensions and dilemmas bring about the sense of multiple selves as part of teacher identity (Arjava, 2016:393; Beijaard et al, 2004:121). Differing contexts will also mean teachers undergo an identity shift as they move through their careers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999:131). This could be in relation to differing career phases (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2006) or in relation to the role that the teacher holds (Ball et al, 2011:625-39).

2.7 The formation of teacher Identity (IV): Professional Discourses

The final aspect of teacher professional identity is that of discourse. The term 'discourse' here relates to a framework of ways of speaking and thinking that is generally accepted by groups and individuals and used to interact with each other in meaningful ways (Miller Marsh, 2002:456). When individuals are communicating with each other, it would take unnecessary effort to have to continually explain every piece of information that a speaker may be required to say to make their meaning explicitly clear. A great deal of information is provided indirectly, for example though implicit cues or information. In this way, discourse can be understood as 'a cultural practice that constitutes a tool in organising social relationships in the construction of a shared world' (Cohen, 2008:83). These implicit pieces of information can be generated historically, culturally, politically or socially and are generally accepted by society (Miller Marsh, 2002:456). However, while omnipresent as a key organising principle in society, discourse is not always perceived as benign and 'reflects the socially sanctioned dominance of certain ideologies and the subjugation of others' (Sinclair, 1996:232). Discourse is viewed as part of the construction of professional identity and links closely to the narrative stories teachers develop for themselves as well as the contexts within which these are established, thereby creating a link between the self and wider social context which is also subject to occasional change (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009:181-2). As well as positioning teachers, discourse can position other actors such as pupils or parents in particular ways in relation to teachers (Miller Marsh, 2002:453).

Discourses are therefore both complex and powerful as they inform society what is to be expected as the 'right' way to be or act. In this way, it defines what the normal perspective needs to be and therefore 'what is 'normal', or not; what is 'acceptable', or not; what is 'right' or not; what is 'real' or not' (Gee, 1999:2). To know a language you have to know the cultural models, or discourses, that create the meaning of that language within a particular culture but these discourses can also limit new cultural possibilities (Gee, 2008:114). Dominant discourses assert certain priorities and can therefore lead to social conditioning that is hard for individuals to work against, even if they are aware of them (Miller Marsh, 2002:455). In this way, dominant discourses as part of the process of identity formation links closely to the concept of disciplinary power which will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

In terms of identity production, discourses which are shaped by larger social forces can limit the choices an individual may have in seeking to craft their own identity (Miller Marsh, 2002:460). These can be helpful to teachers in understanding their 'role identity' or the place they have in society and the function they are expected to fulfil, both as a teacher but also in their personal lives. In this way, discourse suggests the development of professional identity is a social function (Cohen, 2008:81-3). However, the role teachers play in society places them at the centre of a number of competing discourses that can be highly contested and which teachers have to actively negotiate (Cohen, 2008:80). Differing forms of discourse can create differing forms of professionalism and make the construction of professional identity difficult. Miller Marsh (2002:458-60) highlights how student teachers brought up within an educational discourse that focused on individualism found it difficult to get the most out of collaborative learning. An individualist educational discourse looks for students to compete to stand out from the rest. Teachers then faced with working in a collaborative system may feel a frustration when unable to achieve personal success.

Teachers regularly have to negotiate discourses that may compete with their own view of the profession. One difficulty felt by teachers is that, in an age of increased accountability, performativity means that teachers have to conform to what Holloway and Brass (2018:363) call 'ontological frameworks', normative values and beliefs that are associated with the dominant discourse. Tensions can arise for teachers whose own view of their role differs from this dominant discourse. This discourse could arise from government policy although, as mentioned above, could be formed by dominant teachers, particularly managers and long-serving colleagues, within their own school. Maclure (1993:316) indicates a sense of alienation from the values of their workplace leads to a 'sense of bewilderment and frustration' among teachers unable to reconcile their own professional identity with that of the institution or education system within which they work. This negotiation between competing discourses can lead to a sense of 'emotional dissonance' and can impact both relationships with colleagues and impact upon professional identity (Alsup, 2006:187).

Conversely, negotiating tensions that exist between discourses can be embraced as change-making. Engaging in the overt contest between conflicting discourses can be beneficial as well as challenging and the 'bi-Discoursal', those that can master two contesting

discourses, can be the 'ultimate sources of change in society' (Gee, 2008: 167). This area of 'borderland discourses' can lead to teachers confronting ideas about themselves and their profession, particularly when the dominant discourse operating at the national or local level does not match their own view. Competing discourses range from a fundamental crisis in the profession, such as the 'discourse of derision' (Ball, 1990:22-43), to idealised notions of teachers presented in the media (Cohen, 2008:80). For some, teachers are undergoing a period of 'revisioning their occupational identity' which involves them being de-skilled and their work intensified' (Sachs 2001:150). Cohen (2008:91) suggests this leaves teachers as passive receivers of policy who perceive their role as simple information deliverers isolated from colleagues. This could leave the teacher with a very different perception of the role, as a producer of knowledge who works in collaboration with colleagues with an ability to act as an agent of change in the policy arena.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined what is meant by the term 'teacher professional identity' and its importance. An understanding of teacher identity is valuable for teachers themselves, but can be equally valuable for managers and policymakers seeking to implement educational change at the local or national level. In the latter part of the chapter, I outlined the four key components to teacher professional identity: The self, including the role of emotions, narrative stories and the sense of agency a teacher feels; the skills and knowledge a teacher possesses; the context in which the teacher operates, both locally and nationally; and the discourse about the teaching profession. As the dissertation focuses on how the operation of political power may shape this sense of identity, the next chapter will focus on the theoretical framework I use to examine how power may operate in this field, namely the approach to power proposed by twentieth century French philosopher, Michel Foucault.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework - a Foucaultian approach to power

3.1 Introduction

To answer the third research question, the extent to which government policy may shape the professional identity of teachers, requires understanding of how power operates in society and how government uses strategies to achieve its policy aims. The laisse faire approach taken to education by government in the 1970s when teachers had greater autonomy shifted in the 1980s. Conservative and Labour governments since then have sought to directly influence and shape the teaching profession through strategic utilisation of mechanisms of government such as policy, curriculum and discourse (Ball, 2013:81-117). Using Foucault's theory of governmentality (2007:87-114), this research explores ways in which government policy discourse operates in the field of professional identity.

Governmentality is a form of power operating in a field where individuals seem able to act with some autonomy, but where those who govern are able to utilise policy to shape the actions of individuals. While the perception may be that teachers are able to develop their own professional identity with relative independence from governmental interference, the reality is that a host of differing techniques of power, defined by Foucault as those 'that could be used to take control over bodies… to increase their productive force' (Foucault, 1975:241-2), emanate from government and act upon teachers, potentially limiting their genuine autonomy.

In this chapter, I examine governmentality focussing on differing techniques of power: sovereign power, disciplinary and bio-power. Each will be explained more fully below. For Foucault, these techniques operate through a triangular notion of power, with all three acting together on the population (Foucault 1991:102). Identifying and understanding the differing techniques of power is an important part of this research as each operates differently and so may act to shape compliance and resistance of teachers in different ways.

3.2 Foucault's concept of power

To understand the concept of governmentality, we need first to understand Foucault's concept of power. While Foucault adapted and contradicted his position on power over

time, I focus here on four key aspects of his theory: 1) power is relational; 2) the state is the location of relations of power; 3) power is productive; 4) power produces knowledge

First, unlike understandings of power that suggest it can be possessed (Lukes, 2005), Foucault (1998:94-6) saw power as a capacity which only exists in a relational way: at least two actors must be involved. Foucault believed power could only be exercised over free subjects where the potential for refusal or revolt exists. Second, if power is relational, then the state cannot *possess* power, but acts as a location or configuration of almost infinite micro-relations of power at every social level all working together, or even against each other simultaneously (Foucault, 1980:122). Third, power is always productive in that it creates types of behaviours. For Foucault (1998:94), almost all our behaviours are the product of some form of this 'microphysics of power' acting upon us in our daily lives. Finally, Foucault saw mechanisms of power producing different types of knowledge, continuously investigating and collecting information about the existence of peoples. Power and knowledge operate interchangeably: it is the different configurations of power-knowledge that underpin Foucault's theories of how power developed from sovereign power to disciplinary power, biopower, and eventually governmentality. It is through these diffuse forms of power that governmental institutions can control the conduct of populations.

3.2 Sovereign Power

For Foucault (1998:135), an essential element of sovereign power 'was the right to decide between life and death' which was the pinnacle of forms of control over people through overt use of force. Foucault deems this provision of the power to the sovereign to 'take life, or let live' to be a form of power which operates through a means of deduction or subtraction - the power to seize taxes, property or even life itself (Foucault, 1998:136). This power would be exercised through the formal mechanisms of sovereign power, such as 'laws, edicts and regulations' (Foucault, 2007:102). By this view, power operates on the individual through overt prohibitions and punishments which thereby seek to suppress forms of individuality. Power becomes a quantifiable and tangible commodity that an individual can possess, or not possess; a zero-sum resource which is distributed in society, something that can be held and then accumulated or depleted, so if an individual gains power it must always be at the expense of others.

Foucault (1998:136-7) contrasts the sovereign form of power which is seen as *deductive* in that it seeks to 'seize hold of life in order to supress it', with other techniques of power which are *productive* in that they 'exert a positive influence on life'. Power therefore need not be about subtraction, but about production: power enables life to be rendered as productive and efficient as possible by managing and administering its routines so that now 'the ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death' (Foucault 1998:138). This power of managing and administering life could be found not in the official institutions of sovereign power, such as the government or the law, but instead in unofficial institutions such as societal norms and peer pressure or unwritten rules of behaviour. This distinction between the concepts of official laws and unofficial laws driven by opinion were not unique to Foucault. John Stuart Mill outlined how those whose actions could be hurtful to others, yet did not violate sovereign laws, could be persuaded to change their ways by 'disinterested benevolence', or public opinion (Mill: 2001:70).

So this 'power over life' is a productive one that produces an effect by using unofficial, rather than legal, channels and functions through social norms by enforcing power through both positive and negative reinforcement. The location of this version of power is therefore very different from that of sovereign power. Rather than being a tangible commodity that can be possessed, these forms of power are intangible and are found everywhere and in everything. In Foucaultian terms, these represent a 'microphysics of power' that rely upon 'dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques and functionings' that work within a network of relations (Foucault, 1977:26).

3.3 Disciplinary Power and Biopower

3.3.1 Disciplinary Power

The technology of disciplinary power regulates behaviours of individuals through the regulation of physical space, time, activities and conduct though systems of surveillance. Unlike sovereign power, which is located in identifiable institutions, disciplinary power is located everywhere in society operating 'an infinitesimal power over the active body' that 'implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion' (Foucault, 1977:137). It is calculated to manipulate a host of minor processes in society which, when taken together, produce what Foucault terms the 'docile body' (Foucault, 1977:138). Unlike sovereign power, which acted purely for the survival and strength of the sovereign, disciplinary power takes charge

of the existence of individuals with the purpose of regulating them to improve their efficiency, rather than repressing them (Foucault 1977:157).

Foucault (1977:48-50) argued that the location of power within the body of the sovereign meant this power was open to direct challenge. Foucault uses the example of the use of punishment as a public spectacle to illustrate his point. As crime was judged to be a form of rebellion against the sovereign, it was deemed that the sovereign needed to exert a public punishment against the body of the criminal in order to reassert authority. This could take the form of mundane punishments, such as fines or the pillory, to terrible tortures as outlined in Foucault's famously graphic description of the *amende honorable* made by the regicide, Damiens (Foucault, 1977:3-6). For the sovereign, the purpose of the public punishment was a political one: to arouse terror in the people to re-assert the power of the ruler. In this way, the sovereign would re-assert authority and the political order (Foucault, 1977:53-58). However, public executions by the mid-18th century developed a sense of a carnival atmosphere and themselves became the site of illegality and immoral behaviour, such as excessive drinking or stone throwing. Public punishments no longer frightened people so that punishment as a spectacle lost its coercive effect (Foucault, 1977:59-63). This failure was crucial in the removal of public punishment as an apparatus of power and its replacement with a new apparatus that was distant from the public, namely the prison (Foucault, 1977:63-75).

Foucault rejected the idea this reform to the system of punishment was grounded in a 'new respect for the humanity of the condemned' but was 'more a tendency towards a more finely tuned justice' (Foucault, 1977:77-8). The new system of punishment was not due to a 'recourse to sensibility' on the part of the sovereign, but upon a calculation, or an 'economic rationality', of how to distribute power more effectively (Foucault, 1977:92). Foucault's illustration of the use of public displays of violence upon the body of the condemned shows how sovereign power was insufficient on its own to meet its end, that of asserting the power of the sovereign. A new form of control, or a new 'calculation' of power, was required by the sovereign to maintain control, one that regulated the behaviour of citizens and reduced general illegality (Foucault, 1977:94-100). The body could no longer be the site of punishment and point of control over the behaviour of the citizen. Instead, the penalty sought to punish the individual by changing their behaviour targeting not the *body*, but the *soul*. This would be objective of disciplinary power (Foucault,

1977:101). In this way, a 'whole army of technicians' such as wardens, chaplains, doctors and educationalists take over from the judge and executioner by seeking to manipulate the soul (Foucault, 1977:10-11). For Foucault (2007:29), 'the territorial sovereign became an architect of the disciplined space'.

The chief function of disciplinary power is to train the individual through three societal instruments: surveillance, normalisation and the examination. Firstly, surveillance operates as a system of observation seeking to coerce and manipulate the behaviour of individuals through continual monitoring. It is this process of a hierarchical observation that induces the effect of disciplinary power. Foucault (1977:170-7) illustrates hierarchy using the factory where specialised and distinct personnel monitor the workers. In society, this monitoring is omnipresent, always alert and supervising behaviours of others in every aspect of their life. The instrument of surveillance is therefore integrated into society making it perpetually at work. In this way, power has a 'capillary form of existence…power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (Foucault, 1980:39).

The second instrument of disciplinary power relates to normalisation. For Foucault (1977:179), a penal mechanism sits at the heart of the system of disciplinary power which seeks to both define and repress the sorts of behaviour that juridical systems of punishment allow to escape. These penal mechanisms consist of a host of subtle procedures such as petty humiliation or minor deprivations and are applied for the even the slightest departure from the 'correct' form of behaviour. Utilising the instrument of surveillance, these multiple and continual observations identify and punish any form of societal nonconformity. The rule to which society is to conform may be laid out in regulations but could equally be artificial and simply defined by 'natural and observable processes' which tell us what is 'normal' behaviour. The disciplinary punishment is therefore corrective and trains the individual to adhere to the norm. In this way, certain behaviours are defined and repressed, enforcing new practices on those who depart from correct behaviours. A hierarchy in society is therefore key. Society is ranked into those who conform with the correct behaviours and the 'shameful' class that do not. This threat of punishment perpetually compares individual actions to the actions of the whole and seeks to differentiate individuals from one another. It therefore introduces a constraint of

conformity to individuals within society and traces where the line is to be drawn between behaviours deemed normal or abnormal. In short, disciplinary power seeks to normalise behaviour and establish homogeneity in society (Foucault, 1977:177-84). Disciplinary power is effectively the normalisation of individual bodies through continual micromanagement that takes place in society through specific mechanisms based upon surveillance and judgement.

Finally, the third instrument of disciplinary power, namely the examination, combines the previous techniques of observations and normalising judgements. As sovereign power used the ceremony of punishment as the spectacle to underpin its authority, so disciplinary powers make the examination its own form of spectacle. The examination focuses upon each individual making them a describable and analysable object, a case to be classified, trained, corrected and thus normalised. It is therefore the idea of the examination that transforms the visibility of an individual into a form of power over them. For Foucault (1977:184-93), the disciplinary age is one of infinite examination which leads to the compulsory objectification of the individual: the examination is used as a tool to atomise society to ensure each individual is either normalised or excluded.

Disciplinary power is therefore 'centripetal' (Foucault, 2007:44) in that it isolates a space and encloses individuals, continually regulating and dividing everything an individual does into what is permitted or forbidden. In this way, it works on the principle that 'man is wicked, bad and has evil thoughts and inclinations' that must be curtailed (Foucault, 2007:44-7). Disciplinary power is therefore an anonymous form of power functioning on the individual through forms of surveillance and utilising the norm as a point of reference with which to impose itself upon the behaviour of the individual. However, the purpose of power here is not designed to repress individuals or exclude them from society, but to be productive, producing a new reality for the individual (Foucault 1977:192-4). In this way, Foucault (1998:139) says that discipline is about 'optimising capability' and making the body work more efficiently.

One way that Foucault illustrates the strength of disciplinary power is the idea of panopticism, where disciplinary power is enforced through a form of internalised surveillance (Foucault, 1977:195-200). Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham's model of the panopticon prison, a central tower capable of viewing into a peripheral structure which is

split into cells. Each cell is back-lit so the activities of the occupant can be continually observed from the central tower by guards invisible to prisoners. Power, in the form of the central tower, is constantly visible to prisoners who are unaware whether or not they are being watched. The prisoner becomes induced into 'a state of consciousness…that ensures the permanent functioning of power' (Foucault, 1977:200-1). This becomes a form of self-monitoring as the prisoner, unaware whether he is being observed or not by a power that is both visible and unverifiable, 'internalises the gaze' and self-regulates his behaviour within the guide of the norm. This subjection of the individual therefore becomes automatic and there is no need to actively constrain the individual as their subjection 'is born mechanically' (Foucault, 1977:202).

3.3.2 Biopower

While Foucault introduced his idea of biopower a few years after his discussion of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1998:140), it was an important step in developing the concept of governmentality. Where disciplinary power centred on the 'body as a machine' to render it docile, with a view to seeking to organise its capabilities and increase its utility, biopower operated on the entire population as a biological species. Biopower operates on the body not at the social level targeted by disciplinary techniques, but at the biological level, focusing on aspects such as birth, health, death, the longevity of life, and the factors that cause these to vary (Foucault, 1998:139). Foucault believed that these biological factors could be supervised using regulatory controls so that 'power gave itself the function of the administering of life' (Foucault, 1998:138). So in the way that disciplinary power seeks the normalisation of the individual, biopower seeks the normalisation of entire populations. While both seek to optimise the efficiency of life, Foucault viewed them are 'two completely different systems of power' (Foucault, 2007:66).

Foucault (2007:70-3) shows how the study of human beings as an entity, through the collection of data and statistics, objectifies the population and turns them into subjects who are told how to be. While the concept of a 'population' had been understood since feudal times, Foucault saw the way that power was exerted upon it had changed in the modern period. Where the mercantilist system differed from the traditional sovereign view of the population is that it began to view the population as a productive force and not 'the simple sum of individuals inhabiting a territory' (Foucault 2007:70). However, while Foucault criticises the mercantile system for positioning the population as existing solely for the

needs of the sovereign, this new technique of power seeks not to get subjects to simply obey commands, but to utilise a range of methods to manage the population based upon their own desires (Foucault, 2007:70-3). The development of the collection of statistics allowed power to be utilised with increased scale, moving from the individual to the population as a whole. With the information gleaned from statistical analysis, biopower could identify norms through statistical averages and, most importantly, identify the outliers, or 'aleatory instances' (Foucault, 2003:246). With this information, biopower sought not to change any specific phenomenon in society or focus on the specific individual, but rather to ensure that 'security mechanisms have to be installed around the random element inherent in a population of living beings so as to optimise a state of life' (Foucault, 2003:246). Biopower therefore becomes a form of large-scale statistical surveillance of the population ensuring the population falls within the statistical averages and reducing the scale of aleatory instances. This ensures the population maintains the shape of a statistical bell curve with outliers identified and action taken to limit them. As Foucault (2003:246) puts it, 'to intervene at the level of their generality'. The central difference between disciplinary power and biopower is simply the scale of the monitoring.

3.4 Governmentality

The concept of governmentality develops Foucault's earlier thinking on power to explore how government administers the population through sovereign, disciplinary and bio-power. It does so through the 'ensemble of institutions, procedures, calculations and tactics' constituting a new science of government. For Foucault (1991:101-3), what government 'now has to do with' is not territory but how to administer the population and guide its conduct in a way that best suits its needs. In this way it presents a new face of power, namely government. The tools of this new form of power are a host of techniques and strategies that direct the way that individuals behave or, as Foucault terms it, consists of, 'manipulating, maintaining, distributing and re-establishing relations of force…in a field of relations of forces' (Foucault, 2007:312). In essence, it is a coming together of all the technologies of power discussed above and the complex application of them within a wide field of differing power relations between the modern state and its subjects.

Foucault developed the concept of governmentality through a genealogy of the ways in which the modern concept of government came in to being, how different forms of statehood emerged, stabilised and changed over time (Lemke, 2012:26-27). This new

'science of government' focused on managing the population for the benefit of all, rather than solely that of the sovereign, hence the term 'pastoral power':

> "What government has to do with is not territory, but rather a sort of complex composed on men and things. The things with which in this sense government is to be concerned is in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility etc; men in their relation to that other kind of things, customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, etc; lastly, men in their relation to that other kind of things, accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death etc." (Foucault, 1991:93)

For Foucault (1982:783), government was no longer about the imposition of laws upon a population, but about developing a 'knowledge of the conscience of the population and seeking to direct it'. This is achieved by employing tactics, of which laws are just one of many, to arrange the state and everything within it to achieve desired ends for the benefit of the population (Foucault, 1991:95; 2007:65). Foucault's concept of a government focused upon how men and things relate expands renaissance ideas of government of securing the ruler's sovereignty towards management of man's relationship with what he encounters in society, both positive and negative.

Foucault's ideas around the concept of governmentality have been taken up by other scholars. It is referred to as the 'conceptual architecture' of the modern state (Ball, 2013a:60), exercising a range of strategies, techniques and procedures upon the population of a state to transform the calculations of individuals (Miller and Rose, 1990:2). To a degree, governmentality represents a sleight of hand where rational individuals are persuaded to think and act in a particular way, to have power exerted upon them, without it being so explicit as to appear like an individual is either being coerced, or is co-operating with the source of that power. The population is now 'an object in the hands of government…but ignorant of what is being done to it' (Foucault, 1991:100). As McNay (1994:122-3) defines it, governmentality is about the ability to direct the mind 'to manipulate the consciousness' of the subject. At the same time, the subject believes that they have been given responsibility for their own production (Perryman et al, 2017: 746). This development of the concept of 'population' was therefore a threshold moment in the

development of governmentality and management of that population, either at the individual level or at the biological level, became a key practice of government.

Foucault presents governmentality as concerned with how power is used to 'shape, guide, manage or regulate the conduct of persons' (Rose, 1996:41). In this way, Foucault (1991:92) presents government in terms of the government of the family stating:

> "The art of government…is essentially concerned with the question of how to introduce economy - that is to say, the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family (which a good father is expected to do in relation to his wife, children and servants) and of making the family fortunes prosper - how to introduce the meticulous attention of the father towards his family in to the management of the state... to govern a state will therefore mean to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviours of each and all, a form of surveillance and control attentive as that of the head of the family over his household and goods".

Foucault suggested that the development of liberalism was based upon the exercise of political sovereignty over both a territory and its population and is reliant upon a critical link between the government of the state and the government of the self (Besley and Peters, 2007:131). In this way, liberalism is seen not as an ideology, philosophy or economic theory but rather as a form of governmentality, one that provides autonomy and self-control to individuals while ensuring they remain subject to political rule (Lemke, 2000:4). This redefines freedom as 'a kind of well-regulated and responsibilised liberty' (Barry et al, 1996:8).

To link the technologies of government with the technologies of the self, the body is viewed as a 'central component in the operation of power relations' (Smart, 1985:75) and the state institutions produce forms of knowledge that 'enable them to act upon the governed reality' (Lemke, 2012:28). Foucault (1980:52) believed 'the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. This knowledge works on the technologies of the self: the body, the soul, the thoughts and the conduct of a subject in order for them to effect change on their own to

transform themselves (Foucault, 2000:177). This is a key point relating to how Foucault saw power and knowledge as 'intimately and productively related' (Barker, 1998:24-5), as 'two sides of a single process' (Sheridan 1980:162) and able to 'operate interchangeably' (O'Farrell, 2005:101). Hence the translation into English which generally reads as 'power/knowledge'. Power/knowledge is key to governmentality as a form of power as it can only be exercised by 'knowing the inside of people's minds…their souls…their innermost secrets' and 'implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982:214). The state no longer just requires knowledge of the law and justice, as in the case of Machiavelli's prince, but rather a knowledge of the population, their objectives and dispositions (Foucault, 1991:96).

If the state is not a single homogenous entity but is instead the site of a wide range of differing power relations which have become 'governmentalised', differing forms of the conception of the state, for example democracy or dictatorship, will utilise differing technologies of power (Lemke, 2012:31-3). State power is the result of these power relations coming together, rather a cause of these relations (Rose, 1996:43). Dean (2010:29) suggests the state is where a range of institutions, rationalities and practices merge in what are known as 'apparatuses of security' with a view to organise and guide the conduct of individuals. Foucault uses the metaphor of the shepherd caring for his flock to term this sort of power, hence the term, 'pastoral power'. Alongside this is another form of power, 'politzeiwissenschaft', translated into English as 'police' power (Foucault 2007:317-8). The meaning here relates not to an institution, or police force, but to a more archaic version of 'police' as form of juridical and bureaucratic power that regulates the actions of individuals, giving it a wider meaning than usually associated with the term in English (Barker, 1998:64). Police power seeks to manage individuals and the space in which they operate to ensure they remain productive, both for their own benefit as well as for the benefit of the state (Foucault, 1988:79-82).

The concept of pastoral power is based upon the Greek, Hebrew and Christian tradition of a caring shepherd, one that is responsible and has individual knowledge of each member of his flock. In return, the flock are dependent upon the shepherd and submit themselves to him (Foucault, 1988:67-71). The theme of keeping watch over the flock is key to pastoral power. Foucault (1988:62) saw this as devotion to the flock with the shepherd acting and working for their benefit. To achieve this, the shepherd must pay close attention to the

flock, keeping a check on each and every one of them so that he knows each in detail. 'Concrete, precise and measured knowledge' is therefore a necessary component to exerting pastoral power (Foucault, 1988:76-7). In this way, pastoral power is a form of 'individualising' power which has the ability to direct the mind to 'manipulate the consciousness' (McNay, 1994:122-3). In keeping with the development of governmentality from demographic changes and increasing urban development from the late 18th century on, pastoral power became more prevalent with the development of urban centres, where such forms of control became more possible.

The idea of 'police' power works alongside pastoral power as an apparatus of security deployed by government and is a technique where the state intervenes to improve the quality of life of individuals by managing the 'morals and virtue' of the population (Foucault 1988:77-8). Foucault ascribes the concept to Turquet de Mayenne who first presented the idea of police power as part of the organisation of government for the management of 'men and things' (Foucault, 1988:79). The 'things' that Foucault refers to relates to 'men in their actions', a purposefully broad definition which includes anything from their use of resources, customs, habits and ways of thinking, both in good fortune and bad (Foucault, 1991:93). In this way, 'life is the object of the police' and the purpose is to ensure that people not only survive and live but 'do even better than just that which, in turn, will foster the strength of the state' (Foucault, 1988:81-2). In this way, police power is one which is 'totalising' (McNay, 1994 121-4).

3.5 Governmentality and Teacher Professional Identity

Foucault's theory of power is a useful one to explore the concept of teacher professional identity and how this may be shaped by government. Existing literature tends to focus on the formation of discourses, the application of technologies of government and the processes of subjectification are used as tools of governmentality (Finmar, 2008: 3-18). These provide a useful lens through which to consider the two ways identified in the literature in which teacher professional identity can be impacted upon, namely the discourse of self-improvement and reflection and attempts to define and develop systems of normalisation in teaching.

The first way in which governmentality is in evidence in respect of professional identity is through forms of policy discourse that suggest self-improvement is a key part of what it is

to be a 'professional' teacher. One example of this can be found in an OECD recommendation (2013:69) suggesting it was the 'professional obligation of every teacher to be engaged in a career-long quest for better practice'. This links to the growing reliance by the neoliberal state on individuals developing as 'entrepreneurs of the self' (Simons and Masschelein, 2006:419-20) by the development of their own 'human capital' throughout their careers to develop the wider knowledge economy (Brown, 2006:233-234), referred to by Little (2003:438) as 'the missing piece of the jigsaw' in terms of economic development. This 'entrepreneurial self' involves recognising your own needs and producing, or investing to develop your own human capital, to satisfy those needs. This discourse encourages teachers to become self-governing learners and subjectifies teachers by requiring them to take responsibility for their own development. Perryman et al (2017:754) suggest that 'a lack of interest [for teachers] in self-improvement becomes increasingly difficult if not impossible'. The shift in language for teachers from '*continuous* professional *development*' to '*continuing* professional *learning*' highlights how the linguistic practices of discourse can impact upon the perceived requirements of what it is to be a professional. Replacing 'continuing' with 'continuous' makes the development of the teacher as something that is permanently in play, rather than something which is taken up at intervals. Switching 'development' to 'learning' places the responsibility upon the subject, namely the teacher, clearly implying what has been termed as 'an all-embracing subjectivisation' (Watson & Michael, 2016:264-8).

Linked to the discourse around self-improvement is the importance placed on reflexivity, where the individual looks back and examines their behaviours with a view to making self-improvement. For a teacher to be able to articulate their professionalism, they are forced to do so through what has been termed 'the cult of self-reflection' (Perryman et al, 2017:748). In this way, governmentality can be said to act upon what it is to be a professional teacher, utilising the discourse of self-reflection through governmental technologies such as Teachers' Standards and thereby subjectifying the professional nature of the teacher. Reflection pervades both initial teacher training and continuous professional learning in the English teaching system and remains a key part of the current Teaching Standards which states 'appropriate self-evaluation (and) reflection…is critical to improving teachers' practice at all career stages' (Department of Education, 2011:7). By incorporating self-reflection as part of improving practice for teachers within the formal framework of

Teachers' Standards, the process becomes a form of performativity as it produces a determined type of reality (Mulcahy, 2011:96).

The second key way in which governmentality may impact professional identity is the definition and development of normative accounts of what a professional teacher should be. One form of this definition of the norm links to differing discourses developed by the organisations such as the OECD which use a 'subtle discipline' through the spread of its ideas and knowledge, particularly through PISA or TALIS data, to define what the norm in teaching should be (Woodward, 2009:5). Despite concerns that its neoliberal approach promotes a narrow view of education (Volante et al, 2017:42), Ball (2013:38-9) suggests its advisory role to national governments exerts 'widespread influence… in multiple but indirect ways'. School initiatives which seek to 'share good practice' or identify certain teachers as 'accomplished', displaying 'masterliness' or having 'advanced skills' are all ways which give teachers opportunities to learn from each other in a positive way, but these also could be viewed as strategies to shape teachers using governmentality (Watson & Drew, 2015:449). The power of expertise on the 'self-regulating capacities' of individuals is a key tool of governmentality (Miller and Rose, 1990:1-31). Teachers continually looking at their practice and comparing it with their peers deploys 'technologies of the self' and engages teachers in a form of self-understanding of themselves and self-transformation of their practice. In Foucault's words (2000:177) they 'modify themselves to attain a certain state of perfection'. Normative ideas of what a 'good' lesson or 'good' practice or even a 'good' teacher looks like can be used to shape how teachers view themselves as professionals and how they adapt themselves to fit this profile (Moore, 2004).

This idea of the norm is utilised through the technology of the 'gaze' upon the teacher. This is achieved through differing forms of surveillance, most notably the classroom observation. While Ball (2003:224-6) suggests that the performative nature of the system of surveillance in schools has prompted subtle forms of resistance such as fabrications of good practice, Perryman et al (2017:747) indicate submission to the gaze is viewed as a 'constituent part of teacher professionalism' and has altered the nature of that professionalism with its greater focus on 'technique and technical competence rather than values and judgement'. In addition to surveillance, training, both initial and career-long

including forms of coaching or mentoring, are also identified as opportunities to influence the nature of the teacher 'self' (Perryman et al, 2017:750-3)

This research aims to explore the extent to which technologies of government are apparent in the discourses and to evaluate the extent policy discourse shapes teacher professional identity. If government is utilising technologies of government that, either through calculation or inadvertently, govern the behaviours of teachers, then power is being exerted over what it is to be a teacher, thus potentially shaping professional identity. This may not necessarily be a bad thing as the stated aim of government policy is to improve the quality and outputs of the education received by our young people. The purpose of using governmentality as a conceptual framework in this research is not to suggest that all governmental influence over the identity of teachers is necessarily a good or bad thing, it is simply to highlight that power is being exerted and that this has the potentiality to be dangerous. As Foucault (1997:256) points out, 'dangerous…is not the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism'.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an outline of Michel Foucault's theory of power with a particular focus on the art of government, how government utilises different techniques and strategies to subtly achieve its aims. This involves utilising different forms of power identified by Foucault, namely sovereign, disciplinary and bio-power and how these come together to form governmentality. This concept was then applied to the field of teacher professional identity to show how the existing literature identifies ways in which governmentality can be used to shape the identity of teachers. Having now set the scene in terms of teacher identity and my theoretical framework, I now turn to the methodology I applied in my research.

Chapter 4: Paradigm, methodology and methods

4.1 Introduction

Using an interpretivist approach, I undertook the research in two stages. Firstly, I conducted a critical discourse analysis of policy texts relating to teaching and leadership using a framework inspired by the dialectical-relational approach of Norman Fairclough (2010:230-254). Underpinning this were the conceptual ideas of Michel Foucault outlined in chapter 3. Secondly, I conducted interviews with twelve teachers to ascertain their views on their professional identity to explore the extent which governmentality as exercised through government policy shapes their professional identity.

In this chapter, I outline the research process by considering the following: the aims of the study; the research approaches; and the ethical issues. I then offer a summary of the texts analysed as part of the Critical Discourse Analysis as well providing an overview of the participants interviewed as part of the research.

4.2 Aims and Paradigm

This research seeks to define teacher professional identity before looking at how government policy discourse presents a particular view of the teaching profession and evaluating the extent this shapes the professional identity of teachers.

To explore the possible effects of government discourse on teacher professional identity, I created a research design as follows:

i)   Consideration of paradigm and overall theoretical grounding for the research
ii) Creation of aim and research questions.
iii) A literature review on the professional identity of teachers
iv) Creation of research design: a critical discourse analysis of policy texts relating to Teaching and Leadership in English schools from May 2015 to May 2018; semi-structured interviews with twelve practising teachers the summer of 2018.

I decided on an interpretivist paradigm. This relates to my ontological approach which rests on the belief there is no single truth in existence waiting to be discovered in an objective manner. In this way, reality only exists with an experience of that reality. In any

given situation, there may be propositions that could viewed as true, and it is the individual's interaction with these 'truths' that determine which best fit their experience of the world. As we all experience the world differently, different forms of truth are available. Epistemologically, therefore, the idea of objectivity is unobtainable. Facts do not exist in seclusion but interact with each other, are interdependent and are created by an individual. As a result, they become theory-dependent and viewed through a values-based lens. Being subjective in nature, the relationship between the knower and known is linked closely together (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105-106). The Ed.D work completed prior to this dissertation that had the greatest impression on me related to the central importance of power in society, and I was interested in the interrogation of institutions and processes for signs of oppression and control. Two key goals of critical inquiry, emancipation and empowerment, underpinned the research through both self-understanding, the investigation of what is 'taken for granted', and the unveiling of less explicit elements of control over the teaching profession (Weaver and Olson, 2006:461; Tripp 1992:13).

However, my approach sought to go beyond structures and view the narratives behind these and the way they are experienced by individuals as equally important to developing our understanding of the social world. In this way, the underlying aim of the research was not to solve existing problems in education, but to shed light on the issue of external influences on teacher professional identity and tease out the complexities of policy influences. As a practising teacher, I am invested in the field that I researched and brought to this my set of values and beliefs. Following Edwards (2002:159-161) I sought to approach my methodology to handle this in a responsible manner.

4.3 Positionality and ethical considerations

From an ethical viewpoint, as a member of the teaching profession I gave careful thought to the motivation behind my choice of topic as the issue of professional identity was a cause of frustration for me and, as a former union representative, I had pushed back against some accountability policies introduced in my school. This was through an application of a lawful 'action short of strike action' which set out an approach for classroom observations upon which members had agreed. Following Sikes (2006:111) I satisfied myself that my choice of topic was based on a genuine concern to highlight the need for change and not a 'way of getting one's own back'.

Ethical judgements were based on likely consequences with a view to the maximisation of utility. Some basic moral principles I kept in mind were: respect for individuals, avoiding harm to others and treating people fairly (King and Horrocks, 2010:106-107). When planning, carrying out and analysing interviews, I was conscious that approaching the subject of their professional identity might prove unsettling for some teachers, possibly leading to emotional upset, frustration or even anger as they were prompted to consider, and even question, their identities. While I did not anticipate this causing any long-term harm to participants, interview questions were asked in such a way to allow participants a choice in whether to answer or not and informed consent was obtained through the use of a participation information sheet and a written consent form. Procedures were agreed with my supervisor in the event of a participant becoming distressed which involved termination of the interview and my contacting her immediately for advice.

I recognised consent was an ongoing process which can be renegotiated by participants at any point in the process, even after the interpretations have been written (King and Horrocks, 2010:110-117), and participants were aware they could remove themselves from the research at any point. Confidentiality and anonymity were consistently maintained. In terms of confidentiality, all data was kept secure in locked drawers, or password protected folders on my computer. Anonymity was ensured through the use of pseudonyms rather than real names at every point in the research process, from data collection to writing. This was particularly important as interviewees were critical of the working practices at their employment. In accordance with my duties as a teacher, participants were aware in advance that certain areas, for example breaches of child protection, could not remain confidential.

Regarding my use of Critical Discourse Analysis of policy texts, I applied the same principles of respect, avoiding harm and fairness and sought to ensure all interpretations remained closely linked to the remit of the research question.

4.4 Research Method I: Critical Discourse Analysis

While there are a number of different forms of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), they all have in common the objective of analysing aspects of language in order to explore any concealed interrelationship between language and ideology (Qianbo, 2016:36). Norman Fairclough's version of CDA includes aspects of power within this relationship, and

hidden forms of power in particular (Fairclough 2015:78-83). It is this interrelationship that prompted me to make use of CDA to approach the second research question focusing on the view of the teaching profession presented by government policy discourse. This explored the connection between what policy texts might say in relation to teachers and the underlying power dynamics that may shape teacher professional identity. Fairclough sums up the value of understanding this interrelationship when stating, "in order to change the world, to understand what needs changing…we need to be constantly seeking to improve our understanding of the existing reality" (Fairclough, 2015:5). To help our understanding, the process of discourse analysis of the policy texts under review is to "dissect, disrupt and render the familiar strange through interrogation" the forms of domination that impose themselves upon us, often in an unseen manner (Graham, 2005). By understanding these power structures and the ideologies that reinforce them, CDA can highlight ways in which ideologies that are hegemonic in society can go unchallenged because they are presented as common-sense and value-neutral (Wodak & Meyer, 2016:2-9). Exploring texts through CDA should facilitate a critical interpretation of the way that government policy may be shaping the professional identity of teachers.

According to the theory which underpins CDA, the relatively stable, dominant forms of social activity, known as social practice, operate through the use of discourse (Fairclough, 2001:231). Discourse itself is a 'group of ideas or patterned ways of thinking' (Lupton, 1992:145) which can be identified through language. Social practices are therefore developed through the use of language, both in speech and in writing. In this way, discourse analysts suggest that how we see the world is largely determined by language which is used to create dispositions in people. By shaping and maintaining these dispositions, society's ideas and values are developed and certain types of social practices are created, sustained and legitimised and a discourse is formed or perpetuated (Machin and Mayr, 2012:16-18). Critical discourse analysis is based on this inherent interrelationship between language and society and is a helpful framework for offering an account of how language both mediates and structures social life (Mulderrig, 2017:459-460). While language is used in ways that are determined socially, CDA theory also holds that social contexts are based upon the use of language. This mutual reliance means that language will often go beyond simple 'text' and becomes a process which is socially conditioned, creating a discourse. So the language that is used when discussing teachers, particularly by those in a position of power over education policy, can be key to creating

dispositions both in teachers themselves as well as the rest of society and thus contributes to a discourse through which teachers are perceived by both themselves and others.

While every example of discourse is unique, 'discourse events' can be aggregated and themes can be located (Lemke, 1998). This aggregation at the societal level can lead to a form of social conditioning that can also have an impact on how language is interpreted, but the focus on my research was how the professional identity of classroom teachers might be affected by discourse. While not identical, the situational, institutional and societal forms of social condition would be broadly similar. According to Fairclough (2015:67-70), the social condition in which discourse takes place can determine the nature of the discourse. The frameworks within which discourses operate could be seen as the social field and the development, and reproduction, of habitus ensure participants behave in a particular way. Other educational actors such as school leaders, governors or parents might be influenced by different social conditions, known as 'orders of discourse'. In an environment where the collective power of the teaching profession has been weakened, the power of government discourse could be perceived as having been strengthened. In this way, discourse is both a technology that reproduces power relations, but is also a consequence of these power relations (Wodak & Meyer, 2016:9-12).

Fairclough (2015:73) argues that power interacts with discourse in two ways: 'in discourse' and 'behind discourse'. Power 'in discourse' takes place when there is an encounter between two participants who are unequal in power and where power is exercised by dominant members to either control or constrain the contributions of non-powerful participants. Constraints can take the form of what is said and done (content constraints), the social relation between participants (relations constraints) or the 'subject position' that participants occupy. Much of the power that is exercised in these social situations can be implicit or hidden behind class or race and is often dependent upon societal ideas about the ideal. Those who don't conform to the ideal in a given situation often will feel in a subordinate position and have hidden power imposed on them (Fairclough, 2015:73-83). Of greater relevance to this research is Fairclough's emphasis upon the power 'behind discourse'. This concept suggests there is a social order of discourse based on standard language and codes of behaviour that is accepted by society. This hidden power of this culturally hegemonic order subordinates those within the discourse. Fairclough (2015:83-98) uses the example of standardised English being

recognised as the form of Received Pronunciation. Despite this being just one form of class dialect amongst many in Britain, it is deemed to be culturally hegemonic and places those in possession of it in a dominant position to those who are not. In this way, cultural capital is an indirect, but often significant, component of the exercise of power behind discourse. Power behind discourse is neither permanent, nor undisputed, and forms part of a range of continuing social struggles that take place in the situational, institutional and societal spheres. The power behind discourse is key to understanding the how policymakers may, either intentionally or unintentionally influence the development of teacher professional identity. For example, a strong and continual focus on, say, the benefits of managerialism in public services can contribute to make this a dominant part of the way public services are viewed.

Fairclough draws on Foucaultian ideas of power which, despite being largely invisible, is crucial to understanding social dynamics. If language is key to power relations, then analysis of language can be used as a means of exploring these power relations. Foucault's theories, in particular those on disciplinary power and governmentality, can then be applied to consider how social practices are discursively shaped, as well as the subsequent effects of discourse upon social practices. Alternative forms of critical discourse analysis such as the discourse-historical method focus on the discourse itself, seeking to demystify the manipulative nature of discourse and identifying contradictions and inconsistencies within discourse to improve communication (Riesigl & Wodak, 2016:22-61). By critiquing not just the discourse, but also the existing social reality behind the discourse, Fairclough's form of CDA also begins to question why the discourse is the way that it is (Fairclough, 2015:3-7) and can be used to reveal 'what is most invisible and insidious in prevailing practices' (Ball, 1995:267). This makes this type of CDA particularly appropriate for the form of policy analysis I undertook as part of my research as it draws upon inferences from both structural and linguistic features in texts as well as making significant use of the work of Foucault in the process of discourse analysis (Graham, 2005).

Fairclough's position also suggests discourse often embodies ideology that is so embedded in the consciousness of all participants that it is viewed as common sense. Language is therefore not simply a tool for communication, but one of social construction and domination (Machin & Mayr, 2012:24). The language used in policy texts could influence the subjectivity of teachers, as well as demonstrating implicit and explicit assumptions and

inferences about teachers. In this way, policy texts may create, or re-shape, the 'meaning systems' that develop around the sense of what teacher professional identity may be. By utilising Fairlcough's approach (2015:101-127), I deployed a critical stance to the use of language in the policy texts to explore meanings that may not always be apparent from the language if it were approached 'context-blind'. Statements made in the texts were not simply questioned, but alternative meanings were actively sought out (Chigona et al, 2009:7) based upon the hidden assumptions implicit in the message. I was able to draw upon the ideas drawn out from the literature review as well as my own experience as a teacher to find where this 'automatic gap-filling' was expected from the audience.

I carried out a critical discourse analysis of texts between March 2016 and March 2018. This began with the General Election which installed a majority Conservative government in March 2016 and ran for two years to get a sense of continuity in the discourse. To allow for a range of texts in this period, I undertook the analysis on 18 texts directly outlining policy (colour coded red in the table below) and 14 texts reporting on policy (colour coded blue in the table below). The speeches and written opinions all originated from senior government ministers or those in charge of non-ministerial government departments such as OFSTED. The texts all involve policymakers 'in performance': that is delivering speeches or news reports or utilising press releases. These text genres were deliberately chosen as they provide an opportunity to explore how policymakers make use of discourse to influence the direction of policy. While formal policy documents could be used to focus on the actual changes made, these formal policy texts tend to be borne out of the discourse created in these performance-style documents. The use of speeches, articles and media releases lays the foundations for discourse to be shaped which, in turn, smooths the passage of policy reform either through legislation or executive order. In short, these types of text highlights how policymakers foreground particular messages in the persuasive discourse, thereby setting the tone for the broader context for policy.

To assist with the identification of individual policy texts when the data from the critical discourse analysis is presented in chapter 5, each is accorded a signifier. All texts are available at www.gov.uk/search/news-and-communications. These texts are as follows:

Table 1: Texts analysed as part of the Critical Discourse Analysis

Date	Text Type	Full Title	Signifier
5 March 2016	Speech	Nicky Morgan: end the demography of destiny	Speech 1
10 March 2016	Speech	Sam Gyimah: the importance of school funding reform	Speech 2
17 March 2016	Speech	Nicky Morgan: educational excellence everywhere	Speech 3
09 May 2016	Speech	Nick Gibb: the role of leadership in school improvement	Speech 4
07 July 2016	Speech	Nicky Morgan: celebration, ambition and inspiration	Speech 5
02 November 2016	Speech	Nick Gibb: The role of freedom and autonomy has played in school improvement	Speech 6
26 January 2017	Speech	Nick Gibb: the evidence in favour of teacher instruction	Speech 7
16 February 2017	Speech	Nick Gibb: the importance of an evidence-informed profession	Speech 8
23 June 2017	Speech	Amanda Spielman's speech at the Festival of Education	Speech 9
19 October 2017	Speech	Nick Gibb: the importance of knowledge-based education	Speech 10
02 November 2017	Speech	Nick Gibb: The power of greater freedom and autonomy for schools	Speech 11
17 February 2017	Speech	Justine Greening: teachers - the experts driving social mobility	Speech 12
13 April 2016	News story	10 facts you need to know about academies	News story 1

30 November 2016	News story	New funding for school improvement	News story 2
20 February 2017	News story	Justine Greening's vision for the teaching profession	News story 3
07 March 2017	News story	Theresa May: Why I'm giving education a huge boost	News story 4
10 March 2017	News story	New HMCI vows to make sure Ofsted is regarded as a force for good	News story 5
14 September 2017	News story	New training opportunities for thousands of teachers	News story 6
01 October 2017	News story	New education and skills measures announced	News story 7
19 October 2017	News story	New route into classroom for aspiring teachers	News story 8
02 November 2017	News story	Justine Greening launches Institute of Education	News story 9
19 January 2018	News story	Drive to raise education standards in areas most in need	News story 10
06 March 2016	Press release	Plan to make teaching a more flexible long-term career for women	Press release 1
07 March 2016	Press release	Fairer school funding plan revealed	Press release 2
17 March 2016	Press release	Nicky Morgan unveils new vision for the education system	Press release 3
14 December 2016	Press release	Plans to end the postcode lottery of school funding revealed	Press release 4

24 March 2017	Press release	New report with practical advice for teachers on pupil behaviour	Press release 5
03 April 2017	Press release	£2.4 billion funding boost for England's schools	Press release 6
29 March 2017	Exchange in Parliament	Prime Minister's Questions	Parliament 1
21 July 2016	Parliamentary statement	Written statement from Justine Greening on schools funding	Parliament 2
16 March 2016	Parliamentary statement	Oral statement to Parliament: George Osborne's 2016 Budget statement	Parliament 3
12 September 2016	Parliamentary statement	Oral statement to Parliament: Justine Greening - Schools that work for everyone	Parliament 4

The texts used as part of the discourse analysis were all located on the Department of Education website archive. Texts were pasted into a word processing application and line numbers included to make identification of key lines easier for analysis. A three stage critical discourse analysis was then undertaken on each text in turn as follows:

1) Description: texts were then read and notes made upon the formal properties and structures of the text using the questions suggested by Fairclough (2015:129-30) which focus on labelling aspects of vocabulary, grammar and textual structures.

2) Interpretation: using the three questions proposed by Fairclough (2015:171-2) focusing on the context, the type of text and any aspects of difference or change over the course of the text, I considered the processes behind the production of the text and the way the text may be interpreted by others.

3) Explanation: Using Fairclough's (2015:172-5) approach, I considered three key areas of social organisation: societal, social and situational, and considered the relationship of interactions which determined the creation of the discourse and, most importantly for this research, its interpretation and effects. Essentially, this stage provided data on how identity may be shaped by the reproduction of discourse.

Having completed a discourse analysis on the texts, discursive themes were identified as outlined in the chapter 5.

4.5 Research Method II: Interviews

Interviewing participants who were practising secondary teachers was essential in exploring the findings from analysis of policy texts. While I could draw on my experiences as a teacher, these are singular and, while my findings cannot be generalised, the exploration required me to move beyond my experience. By using interviews, I was able to explore not just experiences, but also motives and opinions, of participants to allow me to consider the research problem from perspectives other than my own (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:3).

I used a series of interviews that allowed me to investigate the views of a range of other teachers in depth, enabling me to hear them frame their identity in their words and also to build a 'holistic snapshot' of current professional identity (Alshenqeeti 2014:39). The process allowed me to get to the story behind the experiences of participants as they were able describe the world in their terms (Dilley 2004:129). As Siedman (2006:7) points out, 'stories are a way of knowing'. While alternative, similar methods of data collection were available to me, such as using questionnaires or observations, a series of in-depth interviews was a more appropriate method to allow me to probe opinions and understand the context within which the professional identity of different teachers is understood and developed. Schultz's (1967:26-8) analogy of an observer watching a woodcutter chop wood applies here. The 'observational understanding' gained by the observer will be very different from the 'subjective understanding' of how the woodcutter views his behaviour. Alternative methods of understanding how teachers view their professional identity would not allow me the access to gain a fuller 'subjective understanding' of the teacher.

Interviews can take a range of epistemological approaches. The positivist approach, utilising fixed questions across a broad topic range seeks an external reliability that I knew was inappropriate for my approach. To paraphrase Steinar Kvale's metaphor, the positivist is like a miner seeking nuggets of truth in the hope of finding a vein of knowledge that is there to the gathered (Kvale, 2007:19-20). My proposed use of a small number of in-depth interviews was closer to his metaphor of the interpretivist traveller embarking on an interactive and reflective interpretation of how one comes to 'see' and then transforms

these 'sights' into knowledge (Edwards and Holland, 2013:12-13). The purpose of the interviews is not to find a knowledge that is generalisable to all teachers but to gain a sense of the perspectives of teachers and how they interpret their professional identity. This approach also fits with the interpretivist ontological approach of creating knowledge through interaction within the social sphere, in this case, the interviewer and the interviewee.

The form interviews may take range through a continuum from highly structured through semi-structured and unstructured (Edwards and Holland, 2013:2-3). Structured interviews involve closed-ended questions and limited freedom on the part of the interviewer or interviewee to move beyond fixed questions, which mean they were of limited use for my research. At the same time, unstructured interviews, which allow greater degrees of flexibility and freedom for the interviewer or interviewee to develop conversations in any direction they wish leave a likelihood that much of the data gathered would not be directly relevant to my research. Semi-structured interviews, which maintain parameters for a sufficiently focussed interview – that is for the interview to stay sufficiently focused - but also be allowed to flow and ensure depth and data that is rich in detail (Dornyei 2007:140).

While I initially considered using the 'three interview series' proposed by Irving Siedman, (2006:16-20), I felt the approach of three separate interviews would be too time consuming and may lead to an excessive amount of unnecessary data. However, my final approach of a single interview was heavily informed by the ideas behind Siedman's approach. The interviews began with a focus on the career history of the participant to put their experience in context by asking them to give some detail about their professional background. The focus then turned to their experiences of the way their identity as a teacher may be shaped and finally to their reflections on policy and how this may impact their identity. While time-consuming, this approach allowed for reduced idiosyncrasies between interviews, a more in-depth investigation and more relaxed and forthcoming participants. The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee appears to be crucial to the development of useful data. Whereas the more structured, closed-ended interview tends to view the interviewee as a 'subject', for the more open, less structured, interpretivist approach the interviewee is viewed as 'participant' and greater equality can exist within the relationship, particularly if the researcher sees the participant as a co-

producer of knowledge (Edwards and Holland, 2013:4-5). I sought to ensure a more equal and participatory interview.

The interviews produced a large amount of data which was transcribed and analysed carefully. This was an extremely time-consuming process, but one which will yielded invaluable data in relation to the research question. I transcribed all interviews verbatim and utilised the guidance on avoiding problems in transcription by countering the three main threats to transcription quality outlined by King and Horrocks (2010:144): recording quality, missing context and 'tidying up' transcribed talk. Two digital recording devices were used for each interview and I ensured vocal sounds such as sighs or laughs were included in the transcription. I was conscious that failing to approach transcription appropriately would invalidate my findings before even reaching the first analytical hurdle. Dilley quotes Rubin and Rubin (1995) in explaining that analysis of data goes beyond mere technical skills and is "… a philosophy, an approach to learning" (Dilley, 2004:129). In the words of Steinar Kvale, interviewing is a "craft" that "defies homogeny" (Dilley, 2004:130). Given the large amounts of data produced, I knew a form of coding would be required to find the connective threads between the experiences of the differing participants (Siedman 1998:110). Much like discourse analysis, this involved "working out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in a text" (Kvale, 1996:201) to "access objective knowledge" not just about the participant, but about the social world they inhabit (Edwards and Holland, 2013:1-2). While I used the basic three-stage thematic analysis involving descriptive coding, interpretative coding and theme development (King and Horrocks, 2010:152-158) in my trial study, with a greater number of participants in the main research I opted for Template Analysis.

As a style of thematic analysis, Template Analysis is a set of procedures to guide the exploration of qualitative data. This was broadly based on the work of Nigel King[3]. As King and Horrocks (2010:166-73) outline, it is based on the coding of data using an initial template based on a sub-sample of data. The template analysis was undertaken in five stages:

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[3] See King, N. and Brooks, J. (2017) *Template Analysis for Business and Management*, London, Sage and Nigel King lecture (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH_CjbXHCSw).

1. Read through the transcripts and, in margins, noted everything discussed.
2. This note-taking generated codes, which were written on index cards
3. These were sorted into themes.
4. Taking each theme at a time, I went back to the transcripts to add detail to the index cards and then sorted these into sub-themes (and sub-sub-themes to four hierarchical levels)
5. Using a sub-sample of four interviews, an initial template was created
6. This template was applied to the remaining eight interviews and themes were revised and redefined.

No a priori themes used to avoid blinkering the research. The six main themes identified were as follows:

1. How does the teacher understand professional identity?
2. What features make up their identity?
3. How has their identity changed over time?
4. To what extent does the teacher follow government policy?
5. What impact does government policy have on the teacher?
6. Does the teacher resist policy in any way?

There are some potential pitfalls with using in-depth qualitative interviews that I needed to consider. Ethically, they involve a significant intrusion on participants both regarding confidentiality and time involved. Guarantees of confidentiality and objectivity were provided and adhered to, and I ensured the sole focus of my analysis was on the words of the participants and any subjectivity regarding participants' appearance, attitudes or values were ignored (Edwards and Holland, 2013:14). While I did leave open the possibility to email participants with follow up questions, I did my best to ensure the interview data was as rich as possible at the first time of asking as it was both ethically and practical not to take up more of the participants' time than was necessary. In my interviews, the questions and areas of discussion needed to move the participant beyond standard, simple complaints about the education system, but not put participants in a position where they felt out of their depth and unsure of the substance of the discussion. Equally important was that I did not lead the participant: I made sure I thought carefully about the wording of my questions,

and ensured that after the interview participants were given opportunities to change or remove what they wanted to from their transcripts (Alshenqeeti, 2014:41).

Interviews were undertaken with twelve teachers in May, June and July 2018. All participants taught in a three-school Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in a large suburban area in England. The participants all worked in single-sex, selective schools which, to some extent, set them apart from many schools in England. All three schools enjoyed long, independent histories and had been governed by their local education authorities until the passage of the Academies Act 2010, after which the schools opted to convert into standalone academy trusts. Over the course of the next five years, the three schools joined together to form a multi-academy trust. Again, the primary rationale provided by trustees was that the schools could not remain financially viable in the medium term as independent trusts, supporting Baxter and Floyd's (2019:1064-5) findings which indicate financial considerations were principal factors for governing bodies in strategic discussions around conversion and expansion of academy trusts.

The table below details some essential characteristics of the participants. Invitations were sent to all teachers within the MAT, and the 12 participants were selected from a list of 23 volunteers. Participants were chosen to elicit responses from a demographic range of ages, subject areas, and lengths of service to try to gain a breadth of opinions and perspectives. As can be seen from the number of years teaching, all but three of the participants were teachers prior to the large scale move to academy conversion post-2010 and six of the twelve participants worked in their current school at the time of the initial conversion to academy status so will have their own experiences of the changes in governance described above. The gender of participants is predominantly female, which reflected the nature of the teaching staff across the MAT. Details of the participants, who are referred to by a pseudonym, are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers interviewed May-July 2018

Name	Gender	Age	Main subject	Years teaching	Additional responsibility
Jessica	F	20-30	History	4	None

Olivia	F	20-30	Geography	6	Pastoral middle manager
Amelia	F	20-30	English	9	Academic middle manager
William	M	30-40	Science	10	None
Emily	F	30-40	Science	11	Academic subject co-ordinator
Freya	F	30-40	Drama	2	None
Sophia	F	40-50	Science	12	None
Thomas	M	40-50	Maths	24	Academic middle manager
Mia	M	40-50	Science	14	Academic middle manager
Daisy	F	40-50	Maths	12	Former Senior Leader
George	M	50-60	English	39	Former academic middle manager
Alice	F	50-60	English	7	Academic middle manager

All participants provided signed consent and were provided with a participant information sheet outlining the research. The set of questions used as a guide for the interviews were informed by the existing literature and the findings from the critical discourse analysis and developed in conjunction with my supervisor. These began with some brief biographical information to settle participants before examining their interpretation of profession identity and government policy. As the interviews were semi-structured, discussions were allowed to move away from the set questions and some of the most valuable data was gained at this point. Interviews were recorded using two audio recorders and, as outlined above, transcribed by me and analysed using basic three-stage thematic analysis developed by King and Horrocks (2010: 152-158).

4.6 Trustworthiness

Nutt Williams and Morrow (2009:576-582) suggest three categories of trustworthiness in qualitative research: integrity of the data; balance between reflexivity and subjectivity; and clear communication of findings.

Integrity of the data refers to how adequate and dependable the data is. At various stages of the research process I had to make judgements to ensure the integrity of the data. I have articulated above the judgements made in relation to the strategies of data collection and analysis in both the critical discourse analysis and interview process. I analysed 32 policy documents in total which both outlined and reported on policy. As outlined in Section 4.4 above, a wide range of texts was chosen from across the period under review. By varying the text genre, I was able to reduce the possibility that the discursive themes identified did not arise only in specific forms of government communication. I have been transparent in the outlining of my methods and the reporting of my data so the process can be replicated. I have made Chapters 5 and 6 rich in examples which support my interpretations to provide greater transparency of the coding and thematic decisions made during analysis. As outlined in section 4.4 and 4.5, the approaches used were chosen to enable exploration of the research questions: Norman Fairclough's version of discourse analysis was chosen for its focus on hidden forms of power (Fairclough 2015:78-83); Nigel King's Template Analysis allowed for a systemic building up of emergent themes.

As outlined above, demographic diversity in interview participants was considered to maximise the breadth of opinions and perspectives. To limit potential interpretation bias, an initial coding template was arrived at by using a sub-sample of four interviews, rather and a priori codes. I ensured that participants' voices were foregrounded in the analysis chapters to ensure my interpretation could clearly be seen to be grounded in the data. Ethical care of participants was taken throughout in line with university guidelines and all were aware they could remove themselves from the research at any point.

I acknowledged in section 4.3 the existence of subjectivity and sought to balance this with sustained reflexivity, exploring and managing potential bias in interpretations for both the critical discourse analysis and template analysis. I recognise that a different researcher may arrive at different conclusions. At each step of the research, I maintained close contact with

my supervisor who encouraged critical conversations about the data collection and analysis allowing continuous reflection on the process.

The research questions are made explicit in chapter 1 and answered directly in chapter 8 and continuous reference and links are made to the existing literature throughout the presentation of data to highlight their relevance.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I framed the research process I undertook for both the critical discourse analysis and the conducting and analysis of interviews. The use of discourse analysis and the application of Foucaultian theory of power is key to understanding how power may be exerted on teacher identity through policy discourse. Interviews of teachers provide a sense of the extent this power may operate in shaping teacher identity and teachers' response to this. In chapters 5 and 6, I present the findings of this research, starting with ways that government discourse may shape teacher professional identity and then moving on to how these may be viewed by teachers.

Chapter 5: Findings - Critical Discourse Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discourse analysis responding to the second research question: what view of the teaching profession does government policy discourse present? I analyse policy texts relating to teaching and leadership in English schools from March 2016 to March 2018. This period involved significant upheavals in British politics including a national referendum on membership of the European Union in 2016, a change in prime minister, a snap General Election in 2017 and a subsequent minority government. This period also saw three Secretaries of State for Education, a change in the Chief Inspector of Schools and the passage of a significant piece of education legislation, the Education and Adoption Act 2016 giving central government new powers to to intervene in schools rated by Ofsted as 'inadequate'. Also, there was a government White Paper (Educational Excellence Everywhere) published in March 2016 but shelved in October that year after several of its key provisions, such as forcing all English schools to become academies by 2022, was met with opposition from within the Conservative Party. In addition, a Green Paper (Schools that work for Everyone) had not moved beyond the consultation stage by the end of March 2018.

Despite the fluidity of events and personalities involved, the policy texts indicate some distinct discursive themes. These themes indicate how policymakers, either consciously or unconsciously, use language which positions the teaching profession as unfit for purpose and places expectations on it to improve in the way government desires. As Ball (2003) notes, such language potentially acts to shape and change the way teachers think about themselves. While this analysis focuses on the period after the end of the Coalition government, these policies continue existing neoliberal thinking in education policy both during and before the period of the New Labour government (1997-2010) (Ball, 2017:82-104). The New Labour period was notable for: the extension of the academy and free school systems; continued emphasis on accountability to drive improvement in standards; and continued emphasis on education as part of economic policy. Ball (2017:105-6) termed the period of the Coalition government 'a radicalisation of existing New Labour policies'.

The critical discourse analysis highlighted four main discursive themes:

i) Teaching and the teaching profession in England requires improvement

ii) Nostalgia encouraging the profession look at past educational practices to provide the solutions for the problems in education today.

iii) Championing the benefits of school autonomy along with high levels of accountability and central control.

iv) Positioning the role of the teacher as key to delivering social and economic policy goals.

In chapter 7, I discuss the findings of both the discourse analysis and interview findings from a Foucaultian perspective of power.

5.2 Discursive theme 1: Teaching and the Teaching Profession in England requires improvement

Doom-laden warnings and extreme language about a crisis in education have long been part of the educational landscape in Britain with complaints about the education system commonplace in the last century (Marshall, 1997:116-117). These have ranged from concerns about pupils having a 'limited command of English' (Newbolt Report,1921) or an 'inability to express themselves in English' (Spens Report, 1928) to there being a 'serious failure of secondary schools' (Norwood Report, 1943). The 'New Right' developed the most recent inculcation of this, termed the 'discourse of derision' (Ball, 1990:22-42).

The policy discourse develops a message of teaching and the teaching profession requiring improvement in two main ways. Firstly, by suggesting the teaching profession fails pupils in England through continual references to children that do not receive a good standard of education, as defined by the regulator. The language in the texts I analysed regularly uses exhortations for 'every child' or 'all children' to be in schools rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, or refers to pupil 'attainment gaps'. Secondly, a message which propounds that the standard of teaching in schools is inadequate is developed through regular reference to pre- and in-service teacher training as not being fit for purpose. The policy discourse rarely criticises overtly, instead using subtle references to the need to 'strengthen' and 'improve' existing training or advocating an aspiration to 'equip teachers' with the necessary skills to handle life in the classroom. These oblique messages imply these skills are currently lacking within the teaching profession.

5.2.1 The failings of teachers

The first message underpinning this discursive theme is that the standard of teaching requires improvement. Discourse associated with this message runs across several texts which propose that, while there have been improvements in the number of children receiving an education deemed 'good' or 'outstanding', a significant minority of children remained in schools considered by the regulator to be 'underperforming'. Prime examples of the sort of the language used here are:

- *The government announces new funding to address underperformance and help ensure every child has a good school place. (News story 2: 30 November 2016)*

- *...Yet despite the progress we have made, there are still 1.25m children attending primary and secondary schools in England which are rated by Ofsted as requiring improvement or inadequate. (News story 4: 07 March 2017)*

A linguistic move used regularly across a range of the texts analysed involved the co-occurrence of the words 'every' or 'all' with 'child', 'children' or 'young person', as evident in the first example above.

An imperative urging the need to 'ensure' or 'make sure' some form of improvement was required followed the use of this emotive phrase in a range of documents and across all types of text analysed: speeches, news stories, press releases and statements to Parliament. The tactic also appeared across the entire period examined. The message behind the co-occurrence was to highlight aspirations for a future education system and imply the need for government reforms. Further specific examples are detailed below but, in addition to these, the language also appeared in News 3, News 6, Press release 3 and Press release 4 which illustrates the prevalent of the discourse:

- *I am ambitious for the education system, and that ambition is clear: educational excellence everywhere. Our white paper builds on the reforms that started in 2010 which focused on making sure that every child gets the best start in life. (Speech 5: 07 July 2016)*

- *PM: ...an additional 1.8m children are in good or outstanding schools, and this Government's policy is to ensure that every child gets a good school place. (Parliament 1: 29 March 2017)*

- *This £2.4bn investment, together with our proposals to create more good school places, will help ensure every young person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. (Press Release 6: 03 April 2017)*

- *(address from Justine Greening): We want to ensure every child can reach their potential, wherever they are growing up and great teachers are at the heart of this. (News story 9: 02 November 2017)*

The discourse implies too many schools are failing and, by implication, too many teachers are not good enough. The first example, Nicky Morgan's speech in July 2016, raises some additional points of interest. Her use of the personal pronoun 'I' implies that others are not ambitious or at least are not ambitious as she is to improve schools. The repetition of 'ambition' infers that only 'educational excellence everywhere' is acceptable, and she considers anything less than this as a failure. However, this may be an unrealistic ambition and at no point does Morgan explain she means by 'educational excellence'. The shift towards the collective pronoun 'our' conveys the government is building upon past reforms and subtly implies the education system before this was not good enough and that the reforms aim to change this. Again, Morgan does not explain why six years of reform have not delivered an improved school system. The phrase 'the best start in life' is all-encompassing and makes for popular rhetoric that few would disagree with, but is rather vague in terms of outlining what this means or how it may happen.

To fully understand how this discourse may be working, it is worth taking a closer look at an exemplar of this approach. This text is from a news story on the DoE website entitled 'Justine Greening's vision for the teaching profession' and summarises the key points made in Greening's speech to the Chartered College of Teaching in February 2017. The website stated:

- *The Education Secretary also outlined plans to strengthen the teaching profession so that every child has access to an excellent teacher (News story 3: 20 February 2017)*

Linking the 'plans to strengthen' the teaching profession with 'every child' having access to an excellent teacher points to weaknesses in the teaching profession as the cause for attainment gaps and that some schools and teachers do not reach the required pedagogical standards. The use of the noun phrase 'excellent teacher' also develops a sense of hierarchy in the teaching profession, where simply being a 'teacher' is not sufficient. In the news story, this sentence prefaces a bullet point list of reforms. These include a 'newly strengthened' accreditation system for new teachers, funding 'to enable new, high quality' continuing professional development and a 'new, fully revised gold standard national professional qualification' (News story 3). Repetition of the adjective 'new' implies that what has come before is not good enough, again ignoring the fact that the existing regime is one shaped, in part, by six years of Conservative or Coalition policies. The discourse insinuates that reform is necessary for all three areas of schools: new teachers; experienced classroom practitioners; and leadership. Linking these to the message that 'every child has access to an excellent teacher' again evokes failings in the teaching profession although these failings are never stated with any precision or outlining what needs to be done to support improvement.

Several texts referred to the 'attainment gap'. This concept relates to pupils living in the most deprived communities doing significantly worse at all levels of the education system than those from affluent backgrounds. There were regular links in the texts between the concept of the attainment gap and the need for better teaching as a solution from successive Education secretaries with Justine Greening quoting Matt Hood, Director of the Institute of Teaching, now known as the Ambition Institute, a private provider of CPD in receipt of government funding to set up bespoke training programmes for school leaders and teachers. He was replaced by a former aide to another past Education Secretary, Michael Gove at the end of 2019[4].

- *When I spoke about educational excellence everywhere in November, I highlighted those areas where underperformance is most entrenched, where educational*

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[4] Source: Schools Week 2 October 2019 (https://schoolsweek.co.uk/matt-hood-to-leave-ambition-institute-role/ - last accessed 11 March 2020)

standards are not just low, but where a culture of aspiration is almost entirely lacking. (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)

- *We believe the best way to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their wealthier peers is by improving teaching through better teacher training. (News story 6: 14 September 2017)*

- *Quotation from the Director of the Institute of Teaching, Matt Hood: Having an expert teacher in every classroom is the best way to make sure that every pupil, regardless of their background, gets a great education. But teaching is complex - becoming an expert isn't easy. To improve teaching, we have to improve training teachers because most of what's out there isn't helping them to get better. (News story 9: 2 November 2017)*

The discourse in these quotations positions a direct link between the attainment gap and the need to improve the quality of teaching. The implication is that teachers are at fault for any existing disparity in pupil attainment. The use the verb 'believe' in News Story 6 is of particular interest here. The text asserts that the 'best way to close the attainment gap' is by 'improving teaching' but presents no evidence to support this assertion. However, the message the reader receives is that any attainment gap that exists is a result of failure within the teaching profession and that closing this attainment gap is a relatively straightforward process. In announcing the government White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', Nicky Morgan proposes that one reason for the attainment gap is that young people are not inspired to achieve their potential. The concept of a 'culture of aspiration' is not defined and no blame is attributed explicitly for its lack, but by linking it to 'underperformance' and low educational standards, the implication is that it is teachers who are not doing the inspiring. Morgan again uses the personal pronoun, implying she is taking ownership of the policy and subtly providing herself with expert credentials.

The choice by the Education Department to use comments from Matt Hood is revealing. A paradox lies in the dualist position he takes in stating that teaching is complex and becoming an expert is not easy but also indicating that children need an expert teacher in every classroom. As with the phrase 'excellent teacher' in News story 3, the use of the noun phrase 'expert teacher' notes a difference with the 'teacher'. This phrasing continues a

discourse of a hierarchy and implies that the standard 'teacher' is somehow inadequate, although never is a definition offered as to what the difference may be between an 'excellent' or 'expert' teacher and the rest of the profession. Expressing the inadequacy of many in the teaching profession repeats the message discussed above that teachers are failing children because not 'every' child gets a 'great education'. Again, what a 'great education' looks like is never defined. The passage implies that teachers currently do not have the expertise to work with specific children and, while not explicitly mentioning children from poorer backgrounds, the phrase 'regardless of their background' implies economically disadvantaged children. Following this is the somewhat patronising statement that 'teaching is complex' and 'becoming an expert is not easy', implying that many teachers cannot make the leap to 'expert' teacher on their own, but that 'to improve teachers' requires external training. The quotation ends with a damning indictment of existing training that 'most of what's out there isn't helping them to get better', a sweeping and unsupported assertion. The discourse here ignores any responsibility that the government may have for the supposed poor state of the existing system. By attributing the quotation, policymakers distance themselves from the delivery of the criticism without diminishing the message and the use of unsubstantiated and colloquial language may indicate an appeal to those not well-versed in the complexities of the issue.

The policy texts were noteworthy in their use of praise to preface particular negative discourses about teachers. The following quotations provide examples of where praise is juxtaposed with references to the need for further school reform:

- *The truth is, and it may not feel like this, we are in a golden age of education in this country… (we need) a zero-tolerance approach to underachievement, no excuses for failure and bringing a culture of aspiration back to all our towns and communities. (Speech 1: 5 March 2016)*

- *…it is about making the most of the fact that we have the best generation of teachers ever…Our Education and Adoption Act (will) allow us to turn around not just failing schools but those who have coasted over a period of time and failed to stretch pupils to reach their potential. (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *And as we approach the end of another school year, we should also celebrate the efforts of teachers and leaders in schools throughout the country. Their hard work, commitment and exceptional ability to bring about excellent educational outcomes for young people represent our 'educational treasures'...These are challenging times for some schools to get the teachers and leaders they need in order to drive up standards. I recognise that schools find it frustrating if they can't secure the talent they rightly expect. (Speech 5: 7 July 2016)*

- *We want to ensure every child can reach their potential...and great teachers are at the heart of this...I want high-quality professional development to be a fundamental part of a teacher's career these programmes...will give them the skills, confidence and knowledge they need. (News story 9: 2 November 2017)*

In Speech 1, Nicky Morgan states that 'we are in a golden age of education' without ever qualifying what this assertion may mean, before stating there is underachievement, excuses for failure and limited aspirations within the school system, presenting a mixed picture to the reader. Morgan presents a similar picture in Speech 3, where it is stated 'we have the best generation of teachers ever'. At no point is this assertion supported, nor is any attempt made to define what makes 'this' generation of teachers better than those in the past. Following this praise is the mention of schools failing their pupils and introduces the metaphor of the 'coasting' school into policy language in the 2016 White Paper. These were schools:

- *'where underperformance is most entrenched, where educational standards are not just low, but where a culture of aspiration is almost entirely lacking' (Speech 3: 17 March 2016).*

Morgan repeats the move in Speech 5 where she praises teachers for 'their hard work, commitment and exceptional ability' before intimating schools struggle to get the sort of teachers they need 'in order to drive up standards' as they 'can't secure the talent they rightly expect'. Justine Greening takes a similar approach. By using the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we', Greening separates the position of the government and takes ownership of those positions. This position could be perceived as excluding teachers from wanting the same thing - to ensure each child achieves their potential. However, she does commend

teachers for the potential they have for helping children reach their potential before indicating that she wants them to have the 'skills, confidence and knowledge they need' which implies teachers do not presently have these traits. This tactic is used despite suggestions that this form of faint praise juxtaposed with provocations and insults towards teachers may be counterproductive, as teachers ignore both flattery and the recriminations in equal measure (Coffield, 2017:xvi).

While texts are rarely overtly critical of the teaching profession, they do convey a sustained message from policymakers that significant failings in the education system exist and that the fault for these lies with the teaching profession. Despite acknowledgement of some failings in the systems of accountability, the discourse makes clear the government believe teachers themselves bear responsibility for seeking to 'game the system' (News story 5) when chasing a good inspection report. One criticism made against schools is that they seek to fabricate performance for inspection purposes. This fabrication could be the use of 'tick-box' exercises to ensure certain types of work are highlighted that schools believe the Inspectorate may wish to see. Alternatively, schools narrow the curriculum or pupils are excluded to boost results (News story 5, Speech 9). Using badges and stickers to highlight certain types of work for inspectors and hiring external consultants to prepare for inspections came in for particular criticism as tactics schools employ to fabricate practice for accountability purposes (News story 5, Speech 9). Such criticism of the profession appears to ignore that external accountability measures can act as a form of coercion on teachers (Downing, 2008:80-83) so that gamesmanship and the creation of the impression of good teaching become increasingly forced behaviours on teachers (Ball, 2003:215-228). In this way, the loss of internal accountability measures, underpinned by a moral agency and maintained by commitment, loyalty and a sense of duty (Olssen et al, 2004:194-195) may explain the types of behaviour that the policy texts criticise. In some ways, government criticism of teachers acknowledges the distrust of accountability systems, accepting this leads to teachers spending excessive time on the measurable aspects of the role and less on intangible, but equally important, aspects such as fuelling a passion for a subject or developing pastoral relationships (Ball, 2003:220-224).

5.2.2 The failings of teacher education and training

The second message underpinning discursive theme 1 is that the teaching profession itself requires improvement and proposes the teaching profession is at fault for education

failings. This message ran through a range of texts using vocabulary such as 'raising standards', 'ambition' or 'improve' when referring to the teaching profession.

One move was to present teachers as needing to develop their skills and knowledge, for example:

- *A new accreditation system to recognise teachers' expertise and ability in the classroom rather than just their completion of a training course is part of a new vision for schools to raise standards. (Press release 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *QTS should be the foundation stone for the teaching profession to build on. And I want to strengthen it as a first step to ensuring that people entering teaching in the future join a profession that... empowers them with access to sustained high-quality training. (Speech 12: 17 February 2017)*

- *Education Secretary Justine Greening set out her ambition for a high-status teaching profession backed by high-quality continued professional development (News story 3: 20 February 2017)*

- *Quotes Tom Bennet, teacher and behaviour expert, 'There are many tremendous schools doing a superb job, and some schools that could improve a great deal'. (Press release 5: 24 March 2017)*

- *We believe the best way to close the attainment gap...is by improving teaching through better teacher training (News story 6: 14 September 2017)*

In proposing a new accreditation system for the teaching profession in Press Release 3, the system under which all existing teachers would have been accredited is denigrated as just 'the completion of a training course'. This stance indicates one reason for standards being low at present is that the existing teachers did not receive sufficient induction into the profession. A year later, Justine Greening presents the same message, that the existing Qualified Teacher Status needs strengthening, again implying qualifications held by existing teachers need improvement. Presenting Greening's ambition for a 'high status' profession' in News Story 3 implies the profession is not thought to be one of high status.

Press Release 5 uses blunt language to state that schools could improve quoting Tom Bennett as a 'teacher and behaviour expert' although no credentials are offered as what makes someone a behaviour 'expert'. Bennett began a blog titled 'The Behaviour Guru' in 2010 and has published a book of the same name before being appointed an adviser to the government on behaviour in 2015. As in other texts above, policymakers distance themselves from accusations directly by quoting others, but a specific choice has been made to include such language within a press release to support their argument. In addition, simple solutions are offered to complex problems: for example, News Story 6 offers 'better teacher training' as a solution to the attainment gap. At no point in the texts was reference made to where the specific inadequacies may lie in existing training, nor what 'better' teacher training might look like.

Policymakers' positioning of the nature of teaching is crucial. In the discourse, policymakers take a simplistic view of the nature of teaching: that teaching is a technical practice which any individual can be 'trained' to do. The expansion of programmes such as School-Centred Initial Teacher Training and the freedom for academies in England to employ teachers without postgraduate teaching qualifications is evidence of this. In the policy texts analysed, these 'teacher apprenticeships' are presented as solutions to supposed inadequacies in the system of teacher training:

- *We will replace the outdated QTS mark, and instead introduce a more meaningful accreditation. Rather than being an almost automatic award to staff who complete ITT and a year in the classroom, the new accreditation will be awarded when teachers have demonstrated deep subject knowledge, and the ability to teach. Most fundamentally of all...it will be for the teaching profession itself to decide when a teacher is ready to be accredited (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *Developed in partnership with the sector, the new apprenticeship will provide hands-on experience for new recruits and a chance to learn from excellent, experienced teachers during training , as well as the incentive of potential employment as a qualified teacher at the end of the apprenticeship course…working alongside great teachers and learning at first hand is the best way to create great teachers. (News story 8: 19 October 2017)*

Nicky Morgan again uses the collective pronoun to take ownership of the policy and the verb 'replace' to drive at government action before indicating the existing qualification is 'outdated' and stating it is awarded 'almost automatically' with no further explanation as to why this may be the case. Similarly, describing the new qualification as 'more meaningful' again denigrates the existing accreditation with no supporting explanation. However, the statement that the new standard for a qualified teacher will require 'deep subject knowledge' and 'an ability to teach' could imply the current qualifications are awarded without these qualities. Morgan appears to be intimating the profession has failed with the existing accreditation system, but simultaneously shows she is willing to leave it to the profession to decide new accreditation. News Story 8 is less directly critical of the existing system, but the opening words of the quotation imply that the 'sector' is in agreement with the government stance that the system needs reform. At no point is the idea of 'the sector' expanded upon to explain what this means. Declaring that new teaching apprenticeships provide 'hands-on experience' insinuates a deficit in current procedures. The terms 'excellent' and 'great' teacher are used with no real explanation of what they mean. Finally, the use of the term 'training' to describe the way to 'create' great teachers reduces teaching to a technical skill. The discourse suggests that policymakers view teachers as competent 'technicists' – a view that conflicts with rhetoric of teaching as a profession and the resulting sense of agency felt by teachers.

5.3 Discursive theme 2: Nostalgia is the future

The second discursive theme presents a message of nostalgia urging a return to perceived traditional ways of teaching and learning that will improve school standards, a message Ball (2013:107) terms as an 'agenda of restoration'. This discourse is presented through sustained attachment of negative terms to progressive educational values alongside positive evidence and praise for traditional educational approaches. This feeds into a long-standing debate in education between traditionalism and progressivism dating back to the 1960s and the Plowden Report[5] (Howlett, 2013:3), acknowledged as 'one of the greatest challenges in teaching' (Darling-Hammond, 2012:189). Ball (2013:106-113) argues that the traditionalist approach focuses on three central tenets of education. Firstly, a more

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[5] The Plowden Report (1967) or its official title, Children and their Primary Schools: A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office - http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/plowden/plowden1967-1.html.

rigorous curriculum placing traditional subjects such as Mathematics and English at the centre; secondly, examination-based assessment consistently requiring high standards of written English; finally, pedagogical focus on performance and discipline. In contrast, progressivism is presented as being more 'student-centred', valuing student participation and where freedom of choice and personal development take priority over subject knowledge and examination performance (Trowler, 2003:115-117).

The central message of the nostalgia discourse heavily criticises progressive ideas. Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, gave several speeches across the period employing sustained use of negative language when describing progressive curriculums or pedagogies. The following lengthy extracts give a sense of the language used by Gibb when describing what he perceives as progressive education:

- *Growing evidence is being gathered by cognitive scientists, and, increasingly, we understand how to maximise what pupils learn and how teachers improve retention of knowledge. We understand that certain classroom activities contain so much distracting information that pupils experience cognitive overload and therefore information is less likely to be retained. In the words of Professor Willingham: People are naturally curious, but we are not naturally good thinkers; unless the cognitive conditions are right, we will avoid thinking... We live in an era of unrivalled technical and scientific enlightenment. But in England, in the 21st century, we have seen teachers taking into account the imagined learning styles of their pupils - such as visual, auditory and kinaesthetic - which is both a waste of effort and can have a negative effect on pupils, according to the Education Endowment Foundation. (Speech 8: 16 February 2017).*

- *This statement and similar statements are used throughout the world to argue for so-called 'child-centred' pedagogies. These 'child-centred' approaches to teaching focus on eliciting and developing ethereal and often poorly defined skills in pupils. Teacher focus is turned away from ensuring all pupils are taught the core of academic knowledge that they need, and instead teachers attempt to inculcate creativity and problem-solving as if these skills transcend domains of knowledge. We know from decades of research - and most recently from the boom in understanding the workings and limits of human cognition - that this view is deeply*

misguided. Children need to be taught the body of knowledge that we all take for granted. In too many countries - including Britain - educationalists have argued against knowledge and in favour of skills. I believe this has been deeply damaging to millions of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The question before us today is 'how can evidence or should evidence be turned into policy, action and change?' The answer is, I believe, important but straightforward. We should eschew easy-sounding tautologies and truisms that advocate by stealth or accident teaching methods that are not effective and we should honestly assess what the evidence says about the efficacy of knowledge-rich curricula and teacher-led teaching methods. (Speech 7: 26 January 2017)

In Speech 7, Gibb's use of dismissive terms such as 'so-called', 'ethereal' and 'often poorly defined' when referring to progressive 'child-centred' pedagogies are used to undermine the concept. The metaphor of the teacher focus being 'turned away' from core academic knowledge, which is itself presented as an imperative through the use of the word 'need', illustrates a sense of the teacher physically being unable to see what needs teaching. Proponents of progressive education are presented as academically dishonest and offering "easy-sounding" promises (a phrase repeated by Gibb in Speech 10, 19 November 2017). This position presents teachers 'attempting' to inculcate creativity and problem-solving skills, rather than succeeding. This position proposes pupils are not learning without explicitly placing blame upon teachers. In seeking to present the benefits of traditional pedagogies as credible, it is suggested that the benefits are underpinned by 'decades of research' which makes it appear foolish to ignore. Similarly, the hyperbolic metaphor 'boom in understanding' suggests significant advancement in our knowledge about cognition and again implies large scale of support for traditional pedagogies. Speech 8 follows a similar path indicating 'growing evidence' to support Gibb's point of view with no substantial support to this assertion. Gibb also uses the phrase 'we understand' twice to imply a link between himself and the audience, implying there are others who do not understand the point he is making. The reference to 'cognitive scientists' and Professor Dan Willingham in particular, seeks an appeal to expertise to strengthen the point made. As a well-known proponent of the use of scientific knowledge in teaching and the making of education policy (Willingham, 2009), Willingham is utilised by Gibb to provide credibility to his position. At no point does Gibb balance his argument with evidence from

experts from an alternative position. Both quotations end with emotional condemnations of the progressive view, calling it "deeply misguided" or a 'waste of effort'.

Gibb presents progressive education as the dominant philosophy in English schools without giving evidence to support this assertion. For example:

- *Many in the world of education assume that for pupils to become proficient in using their knowledge of science and history, they must be allowed to behave like scientists and historians in lessons. Teachers are encouraged to prepare lessons that are centred on the interests of pupils and discouraged from teacher-led approaches… Teachers are implored to allow pupils to debate and discuss ideas, design and carry out their own scientific experiments and analyse historical sources. In the immediate aftermath of the PISA report publication last year, many educationists seized on the results to call for a more 'child-centred' approach to teaching. (Speech 7: 26 January 2017)*

- *Similarly, many teachers believe that pupils best retain knowledge if lessons are structured in such a way that they discover information for themselves. For many, it is a truism that the best means of teaching pupils is to allow them to discover. (Speech 8: 16 February 2017)*

- *...here was also a widespread feeling that qualifications, in particular GCSEs, did not represent the mastery of a sufficiently challenging body of subject knowledge. (Speech 4: 9 May 2016)*

- *He also adds an excellent critique of the dominant pedagogical approaches that grip far too many modern foreign language classrooms in our country. (Speech 10: 19 October 2017)*

Across these four speeches, Gibb presents a hidden hand is at work that 'encourages', 'discourages'' or 'implores' teachers to adopt certain behaviours, using emotive verbs to urge that educationalists 'seize' on evidence and suggest teachers are 'gripped' by specific pedagogical approaches. At no point are these assertions supported by evidence, nor is evidence presented to confirm who the 'many' teachers are that create this 'widespread'

support for these 'dominant' approaches. Gibb never states what is wrong with child-centred learning and conflates child-centred learning with the need to understand how students conceptualise different modes of thinking across different subjects.

In Speech 10 (19 October 2017), Gibb cites Finland's fall in PISA rankings as evidence to support the dangers of child-centred pedagogies. Finland's rankings fell from 2006 to 2015 from 1st to 13th in Mathematics, 1st to 5th in Science and 2nd to 4th in Literacy[1] when compared against other countries[6]. Gibb advocates this fall is 'due to the movement away from… the teacher-centred educational culture' in Finland. However, Sahlberg (2016:70-95) suggests educational success of Finland was less to do with a teacher-centred culture and more likely driven by a limited focus on testing, as well the prestigious nature of the teaching profession where teachers were allowed greater autonomy and tended to stay in the profession for life. Sahlberg (2016:138) also suggests Finland's weakening in PISA rankings is related to societal changes and increased societal inequality, rather than changes in educational culture.

The texts analysed present the traditionalist approach as more effective than progressivism and suggest evidence in favour of this is overwhelming. Evidence is drawn largely from the United States to support the use of traditional approaches to curriculum and pedagogy, including Daniel Willingham (Speech 8), Eric Hirsch (Speech 7) and The Knowledge Network (Speech 4) as well as Deans for Impact (Speech 8). For example:

- *The work of E. D. Hirsch - the educationist who has most influenced my thinking - has made clear the importance of ensuring all pupils are taught the body of academic knowledge they need to be culturally literate. His work on developing the core knowledge curriculum has inspired the work of many of the most successful and innovative academies and free schools in England. (Speech 7: 26 January 2017)*

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[6] Source: Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture, https://minedu.fi/en/pisa-2015-en - last accessed 14 December 2019.

One further example is Nick Gibb's use of Barak Rosenshine's 'Principles of Instruction' (Rosenshine, 2012:12-39). Rosenshine was an American psychologist specialising in teacher instruction who outlined a mode of teaching focusing on teaching curricula in small chunks with lots of guided practice and regular repetition of tasks. While addressing PGCE students at Buckingham University, a private institution which promotes traditional educational methods, Gibb outlines what he sees as Rosenshine's merits (see Speech 8 extra below):

- *[Rosenshine] debunks another pervasive teaching myth; the myth of too much teacher-talk. I trust no one here has been told to be a "guide on the side, not a sage on the stage" by this university - an unevidenced trope designed to prevent teachers from spending time talking to their class… Still today, I occasionally hear of schools and teacher training institutions where teachers are prohibited from addressing the class for more than 20% of the lesson, as if listening to a knowledgeable adult would harm the education of pupils. The most effective teachers, according to Rosenshine's evaluation of the evidence, do not overwhelm their pupils by presenting too much new material at once. Instead, they intersperse explanations with directed questioning and multiple examples. Consequently, these teachers spend far more time at the front of the classroom. (Speech 8: Nick Gibb: 16 February 2017)*

The Rosenshine model of 'drill and practice' is presented as a panacea for learning, rather than as a model for developing specific skills or learning certain knowledge. Alternative views are not offered. For example, that basing education on such 'drill and practice' principles ignores 'the whole game' of teaching, essential aspects such as developing motivation and an enjoyment of learning a subject as well as allowing pupils to take a degree of ownership of their learning (Perkins 2009:25-53).

Both Nicky Morgan and Theresa May lent support to Gibb's view of the benefits of a knowledge-based education:

- *It is the determination of teachers to prove that all children thrive when given a classical liberal education – after decades of being told that Shakespeare and good*

behaviour isn't for children from certain backgrounds – that has been the most important consequence of greater teacher autonomy (Speech 11: 2 November 2017)

- *through a knowledge-based curriculum that ensures young people master the basics, and then introduces them to all of the very best that has been thought and said (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *...to give the best possible start in life also requires a solid grounding in academic subjects from the very beginning (News Story 4: 7 March 2017)*

Both Morgan and May make claims about academically rich, knowledge-based curriculums as their policy preferences underlining a nostalgic belief that a return to traditional forms of knowledge influenced by the likes of Eric Hirsch will drive improvement in the future.

As well as naming and praising academics and think tanks that support traditional approaches of education, accolades go to organisations in the English education system who seek to follow traditional ideas. Michaela Community School, a Free School in north London opened in 2014 is presented in two different speeches as an example of a school which follows traditional curriculum and teachings philosophies:

- *Michaela Community School is arguably using freedoms more radically than any other school in the country. Marking is kept to a minimum; behaviour is immaculate; the school day has been extended; the teachers all proudly teach from the front; testing is frequent; the curriculum is knowledge-rich; and the results are extraordinary - as anyone who has visited the school will testify (Speech 6: 2 November 2016)*

- *[Michaela Community School] shows an admirable disregard for the way in which English schools are normally operated. The school is unapologetically strict and demanding: desks are in rows; corridors are walked in silence; and pupils memorise subject content for weekly tests (Speech 4: 9 May 2016)*

Gibb celebrates the success of Michaela Community School highlighting aspects of the school he sees as necessary: immaculate behaviour, desks in rows, a more extended school day, a knowledge-rich curriculum and pupils memorising subject content for regular tests. However, with such an extensive listing of the strengths of Michaela Community School Gibb also obliquely highlights the absence of these qualities in other schools emphasising what most existing schools in England are not and what Gibb believes they should be. In addition, saying the school 'shows an admirable disregard for the way in which English schools are normally operated' openly suggests schools are not operating in this fashion and their approach is less effective.

Gibb also praises new training organisations which policymakers view as going back to what is arguably an older model of apprenticeship in teacher training based upon the 'craft tradition' (Forde et al, 2006:9-10). TeachFirst, an employment-based initial teacher training scheme, is commended for 'challenging prevailing education orthodoxies' (Speech 4) and Buckingham University for endowing its trainee teachers with 'high levels of subject knowledge' (Speech 8). Again, while such comments may celebrate achievement in specific organisations, they also subtly imply that other providers fail to place subject knowledge in a sufficiently important position.

5.4 Discursive theme 3: Freedom and Control

The third discursive theme offers two contradictory ideas: that of increased freedoms for schools allied to greater governmental control through accountability measures. Trowler (2001:112-4) has termed this duality the 'centralisation-decentralisation paradox' where power is centralised, but greater freedoms over aspects such as curriculum development, term dates and staff pay and conditions are offered simultaneously to schools. Exley and Ball (2010:14-15) criticised the system as the 'disarticulation of state involvement towards a system of fragmented centralisation in education' perhaps signalling the beginning of the end of state education. This section shows strong support in the policy texts for school autonomy and continued expansion of the academy and free-schools system, allied to continued high levels of accountability for teachers.

5.4.1 The benefits of school autonomy

Several texts use discourse perpetuating the claim that greater autonomy for schools leads to a more efficient school system. Throughout several texts, a link is suggested between

school autonomy and higher levels of innovation and improvement in school standards, as seen in the examples below:

- *That is exactly what a system where every school is an academy does - providing weaker schools with the expert support they need to improve and giving the best schools the ability, freedom from meddling, money and power to innovate, build on their success and spread their reach further (News story 1: 13 April 2016)*

- *As FASNA has argued for a quarter of a century, freedom for schools and academies facilitates innovation and drives up standards. We will continue to promote academisation because associated school freedoms can stimulate innovation and sharing that drives improvement. We know this is the case because we see it in the current system…FASNA promotes autonomy for schools, believing that autonomous schools are the best vehicle to innovate and raise standards for their pupils, in the best interest of local communities. This is a belief that we share (Speech 6: 2 November 2016)*

- *It is the expansion of academies and free schools that have been the biggest driver of increased diversity and progress in our school system over the past seven years. (News 4: 7 March 2017)*

In all three texts, a link is made between greater autonomy for schools through the expansion of academies and free schools and higher levels of innovation. No specific evidence is provided to support this link. In Speech 6, Nick Gibb makes a speech to FASNA (The Freedom and Autonomy for Schools – National Association) later rebranded as The Confederation of Schools Trust, a pressure group lobbying on behalf of autonomous schools, making a direct link between autonomy and higher standards. In Speech 7, Theresa May asserts that autonomy has increased 'diversity and progress' in schools without defining what either of these terms may mean in practice while the news story intimates that only schools in an autonomous system are able to share expertise.

The texts also develop a sharp criticism of government involvement in education. Central government itself comes in for criticism, applying the language of government against itself. Some examples are:

- *That desire for greatness has underpinned all of our reforms since 2010 - and it is why we chose to free teachers and school leaders from the shackles of central government diktats, allowing them instead to innovate, challenge orthodoxies and tread new ground… (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *When I first became Schools Minster in 2010, it was clear that - whilst power had passed from local authorities to schools - the Department for Children, Schools and Families as it was then known, had become addicted to meddling in the minutia of school administration…Schools had gone through a period of 'initiativeitus', with a constant turnover of 'clever wheezes' emerging from the department, or one of its ever-growing panoply of quangos. national strategies, national curriculum re-writes, a Five-Year Strategy, Every Child Matters - all burdening schools with bureaucracy and complex guidance (Speech 4: 9 May 2016)*

In both speeches, the language of authoritarian control is used to describe the involvement of government in education. Nicky Morgan uses robust and emotive language such as 'shackles', 'diktats' and 'orthodoxies' while Nick Gibb uses more dismissive phrases such as the neologism 'initiativeitus', 'clever wheezes' and a 'panoply of quangos'. Far from presenting government as necessary or helpful, it is presented as 'meddling' or 'burdening' schools while the teaching profession itself is portrayed in almost heroic terms as being 'free', 'innovating' and 'challenging'. Such language presents a paradox in the government's overall approach. While discourse presents teachers as the problem elsewhere, here they are the innovating solution to the problem the discourse insinuates elsewhere they are party to creating. Additional unexplained phrasing such as for teachers to 'tread new ground' add a sense of confusion given other messages that recommend teachers should be returning to traditional forms of curriculum and pedagogy.

As well as this appraisal of central government, the critique of local authority operation of schools is more developed and widespread and utilises contradictory criticisms suggesting that local authorities either ignore schools or exert excessive control over their operation. Examples of the criticisms of local authorities ignoring schools included:

- *...the perverse situation which persisted before in which schools were islands and stronger heads were unable to spread their reach and influence and weaker schools were left to languish under the monopoly of LA control (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *What it does mean is the end of the local-authority monopoly on running schools and central government deciding a single approach to what services are delivered, where: schools will now be required to make a conscious choice over what will work best for their pupils. While there are well run local education authorities, there are also some local authorities that have been allowing schools to underperform, coast or fail for a long time (News story 1: 13 April 2016)*

The language used in the criticism of local authority control of education is generally harsh and emotive with the system described in both texts in the negative sense as a 'monopoly' and as 'perverse', where schools are left to 'languish' or that local authority inaction leads to schools allowed to 'underperform, coast or fail'. Paradoxically, in the same News Story, local authorities are simultaneously charged with meddling in school affairs. As well the first quotation in this section which mentions 'meddling', the same texts later states:

- *Whereas one-size-fits-all approaches dictated from County Hall gives an impression of local control, in fact, it's academy headteachers and governing bodies that hold direct relationships with the parents they serve and have the power to be much more responsive to their communities. If a parent tries to lobby County Hall for change, they'd have to persuade them to change things for the whole local authority; if the academy is approached, it's their responsibility to make a change at the school the parent cares about (News story 1: 13 April 2016)*

Here, local government is again cast in the negative as 'dictating' unsophisticated 'one-size-fits-all' solutions. In this narrative, local authorities become a form of Schrodinger's Cat, simultaneously neglecting and meddling in the affairs of schools, while also being slow to reform.

Alongside the discourse that local authorities make for poor school governance is one promoting the benefits of greater autonomy for schools. In the 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' white paper of 2016, the government made clear its intention for every school in England to become an academy by 2022. While the formal policy was dropped later that

year, policymakers continue to push for schools to convert to academy status. The initiative is depicted in revolutionary terms, presenting it as a physical battle between the forces of freedom and those of authoritarianism. Some examples of this use of language are:

- *...By unleashing the proliferation of ideas, it is no longer the exclusive prerogative of LA advisers or education faculties of universities to dictate pedagogy or curriculum to teachers...By empowering teachers and headteachers and promoting an atmosphere of innovation and evidence, power is wrestled from the old authorities. (Speech 11: 2 November 2017)*

- *...They were founded on the core belief that the future of our education system was best served in the hands of professionals on the frontline, not politicians and bureaucrats in Whitehall or town halls. (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *We now have a school system where autonomous schools are able to break free from the intellectual and bureaucratic constraints of the past, allowing school leaders to beat a new path of previously unimaginable success (Speech 4: 9 May 2016)*

- *Empowering the frontline and moving control away from managers and bureaucrats and directly to the frontline is an effective way of improving performance (News 3: 20 February 2017)*

The discourse suggests control rests with 'bureaucrats' who 'dictate' to teachers who work 'on the frontline' with 'intellectual and bureaucratic constraints' and positions the government on the side of teachers seeking to 'empower', 'break free', 'beat a new path' or 'wrestle back control'. This sustained imagery of struggle and battle gives the reader the impression of a continuous, almost Manichaean, power struggle over the operation of schools.

In addition to the message of a struggle against the supposed vested interests of local government, autonomous schools are presented in a universally positive light across a range of policy texts using language such as 'dynamic', 'responsive' and 'excellence'. Crucially, derivations of the verb 'to innovate' were used across the texts. As well as the

examples below, such sentiments recur in Speech 4, Speech 5, Speech 6, Speech 11 and Press Release 3:

- *Why have we done this? Because it's abundantly clear that academy status leads to a more dynamic, more responsive and ultimately higher-performing education system, it allows successful school leaders not just to consolidate success but to spread that excellence right across the country…The past 5 years have demonstrated incontrovertibly that autonomy and freedom in the hands of excellent leaders and outstanding teachers delivers excellence. We also know that excellence can be delivered in the most challenging of environments (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *These improvements are being driven from the ground - by confident, innovative leaders like you, who've embraced autonomy to achieve truly remarkable progress (Speech 1: 5 March 2016)*

- *Academies and free schools have control over the curriculum they teach, and with the National Curriculum setting the standard high, innovative schools led by exceptional head teachers have developed world-class curricula (Speech 10: 19 October 2017)*

Nicky Morgan's speech indicates it is 'abundantly clear' academy status is a superior system and that the expansion of school autonomy under her Coalition government has 'demonstrated incontrovertibly' it 'delivers excellence'. The hyperbole underlying these claims is not supported with any specific evidence and at no point is it explained what 'excellence' in schools might look like. As I discuss further in chapter 7, the atomisation of the school system creates a disciplinary space vital for the application of disciplinary power.

A crucial part of the government's positive message about autonomous schools is the link to sharing of good practice where successful schools can help struggling schools. This idea of successful academies collaborating and supporting less successful schools is shared across a range of texts. These included News Story 4 and Speech 11 as well as the examples below:

- *A system based on academies and free schools working dynamically together can't stagnate, because where schools are struggling, they'll be able to benefit from collaboration and support, and where they simply aren't delivering the school can be re-brokered to a new MAT or parents and teachers will be free to set up new schools. This system of collaboration and competition which lies at the heart of a MAT-based system means that schools will continue to strive for excellence and be firmly focused on the future…A key part of the government's message about the positivity of autonomous schools is the link to the sharing of good practice where successful schools can help struggling schools (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *And this is how improvement in any sector occurs: autonomy allows exemplary institutions to emerge, and the innovations which made those institutions exemplary can in turn migrate to drive improvement elsewhere Speech 4: 9 May 2016*

- *We will continue to promote academisation because associated school freedoms can stimulate innovation and sharing that drives improvement. We know this is the case because we see it in the current system Speech 6: 2 November 2016*

In Speech 3, Nicky Morgan suggests another paradox in the government's argument, that increased autonomy simultaneously leads to benefits from the opposing forces of 'collaboration and competition'. While autonomy is based on neoliberal ideals of competition in the public sphere, collaboration is held up to be a major advantage of autonomy over the system of local-authority led schools. There is no clear indication of how this may occur. In Speech 4, Nick Gibb states that innovations 'migrate' from school to school without any explanation of what this means in practice. Nicky Morgan gives a more transparent hint saying schools could be 're-brokered to a new MAT'. Her use of the language of private enterprise suggests a Darwinian approach of survival of the fittest. Finally, in Speech 6, Nick Gibb repeats the mantra of 'sharing' good practice with no real indication of what sharing good practice looks like. He asserts that 'we see it in the current system' with no evidence to support this.

This focus on collaboration-driven improvement goes some way to understanding the rationale behind the government's desire to expand the multi-academy trust programme,

echoing West and Bailey's (2013:152) identification of a post-1979 pattern of educational reform where new institutional forms are layered on top of each other. However, despite the rhetoric indicating autonomy equates with raising standards, the reality is the benefits of autonomy focus less on arguments about standards and more on coping with austerity, as evidenced by the incentivisation of shifting towards autonomy based upon higher levels of school funding (West & Bailey, 2013:147-55). The evidence supporting the benefits of academy trusts remains limited (Gorard, 2009:101-113), including areas in which significant improvements are claimed such as innovation, business acumen or higher expectations (Bates, 2013:286; Papanatasiou, 2017:85). Indeed, Gorard (2014:268-284) cites unintended negative consequences such as increased socio-economic inequality and a widening of the attainment gap are direct consequences of the expansion of academy schools since 2010.

5.4.2 The need for accountability

While the government advocates schools are left broadly autonomous, it simultaneously sets targets and organises regulatory regimes as part of a robust system of accountability, presenting it as key to driving school improvement. Ball (2009:100-103) refers to this system as 'polycentric governance' and suggests this blurs the lines between the public sector, the private sector and the complex 'heterarchies' between stakeholders such as funders, providers and users within a system of academies and free schools (Exley and Ball, 2010:4).

Even critics of the existing system of accountability accept schools are too important and expensive not to be held accountable (Drucker, 1993:177-190). Coffield (2017:14-15) acknowledges the accountability regime has been vital in revealing areas of underperformance in the school system such as dealing with bullying, poor primary-secondary transition and ensuring faith schools promote diversity and tolerance. However, some critics suggest the system has moved into an era of 'hyper-accountability' (Mansell, 2007:3) where a range of negative consequences exist involving an 'ontological insecurity' for teachers and the development of teachers fabricating practice (Ball, 2003:215-228). Coffield (2017:32-3) cites that 'Campbell's Law' - that the unintended consequences of accountability will ultimately corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor' - now exists in the English schools system distracting teachers from trying new curricula, teaching methods and ultimately ending up gaming the system.

Policymakers accepted past regulatory regimes were at fault, promoting teaching fashions based upon personal prejudices or being overly burdensome. For example:

- *I want to be clear - I never want our inspection system to be a barrier to talented leaders taking on and supporting new schools. And I want to reiterate that just like every other commitment in our manifesto, when we said we will reduce the burdens of inspection, we meant it (Speech 1: 5 March 2016)*

- *I have no interest in using this role to impose my personal prejudices about how you should run your schools, nor will Ofsted on my watch become a vehicle for promoting the latest educational fashion or fad. And I won't be pushing you to jump through increasingly convoluted hoops, only to change direction a couple of years down the line (News story 5: 10 March 2017)*

- *And, more generally, we are thinking about how evidence is used across the whole of Ofsted…I also want us to have a much greater engagement with the wider research community. My hope is that, by sharing and analysing more of what we find, we can play a larger role in informing education policy. Not a role that is based on personal prejudices or hobby horses, but on proper evidence from the ground (Speech 9: 23 June 2017)*

Nicky Morgan acknowledges inspections have been viewed as a 'burden' by schools which acted as a 'barrier' in recruiting leaders. In the same week, a news story on the Department of Education website quoted the incoming Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, expressing her desire not to 'impose my personal preference' on the management of schools, subtly indicating this has been the case in the past. Similarly, she insinuates past Ofsted regimes being 'a vehicle for promoting the latest educational fad or fashion', making schools 'jump through increasingly convoluted hoops only to change direction a couple of years down the line'. This repudiates what has come before. The title of the news story itself states the inspectorate wishes to be regarded as a 'force for good' and implies acceptance of past criticisms of the system. Spielman expands upon this a few months later when she states the inspectorate will have 'a much greater engagement' with the research community and will 'share and analyse more of what we find' to play a 'larger role in

informing education policy'. Use of adjectives such as 'greater' and 'larger' plus the use of adverbs such as 'more' all show an acceptance that this has not been sufficient in the past.

However, the central discourse presented is of the positive benefits of an inspection regime and having a set of standards against which teachers should be measured and continually held accountable. A range of texts suggest robust accountability increases standards in schools and incentivises teachers:

- *Sure enough, politicians can make things easier or harder for you to succeed: we can make sure that you have the resources you need and that the accountability system we design leads to the right incentives (Speech 1: 5 March 2016)*

- *Evidence from around the world clearly demonstrates that educational performance is improved by giving autonomy to front-line teaching professionals and holding those professionals to account for the outcomes they achieve for young people (News story 1: 13 April 2016)*

- *The government believes that autonomous schools - within a strong framework of accountability - are the best vehicle to support teachers and headteachers to improve pupil outcomes (Speech 6: 2 November 2016)*

In Speech 1, Nicky Morgan takes ownership of the accountability system that 'we design' and makes a clear link between accountability 'leading to the right incentives' for teachers. News story 1 and Speech 6 both link accountability for teachers and improving educational performance. Both refer to the 'outcomes' for pupils, although neither text makes clear what sort of outcomes might be improved by the accountability system.

While school autonomy may appear to represent a principle of trust in the teaching profession, there is a danger that accountability prohibits a genuine autonomous space emerging. In particular, a system of accountability ignores a fundamental tenet of public sector work where workers see value in the trust that comes from serving others and the sense of obligation that overrides personal interest (Schick, 1996:25). Accountability regimes have therefore been criticised for undermining the pride and professional commitment that many teachers may value, carrying with it the accusation of an erosion of

trust, diminished moral agency and a de-professionalisation of teachers (Olssen et al, 2004:185-194). Coffield (2017:28-9) believes that having work denigrated publicly can lead to additional stress for teachers who find their professional status threatened. I will outline in chapter 7 how the discourse promoting the benefits of accountability can utilise disciplinary power through the normalisation of the teaching profession.

One discourse developed through a number of the policy texts was the desire for policymakers to define and dictate the perception of success. Specific forms of statistical measures were used, based around the language of Ofsted gradings. This suggests policymakers seek to control how success in schools is measured, specifically excluding alternative measures. A consistent tactic in policy texts was using statistics to illustrate improvements in school performance to highlight perceived successes in government policy or to push for further reform. One device linked the expansion of the academies programme and the increase in the number of children in schools deemed at least 'good' by Ofsted. A clear example of this is the repetition by Theresa May of the statistic which highlights numbers of children in schools which received favourable inspections from Ofsted:

- *...what matters is the quality of education in schools. An additional 1.8 million children are in good or outstanding schools than there were under the Labour government… and this government's policy is to ensure that every child gets a good school place (Parliament 1: 29 March 2017)*

- *Today, almost 1.8 million more pupils are taught in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, with 89% of schools in England rated good or outstanding - the highest proportion ever recorded…Yet, despite the progress we have made, there are still 1.25 million children attending primary or secondary schools in England which are rated by Ofsted as requiring improvement or inadequate (News Story 4: 7 March 2017)*

When using the statistic as evidence, policymakers make no mention of any contribution made by teachers. Instead, the statistic highlights the success of the existing government, hence the use of 2010 as a starting point. On both occasions when May uses the positive statistic about schools, she juxtaposes this with a negative comment about the quality of

education and the necessity to embark on further reforms. Successive Education Secretaries use the same form of statistic in the texts analysed: Nicky Morgan (Speech 3), Justine Greening (News story 3) and Damian Hinds (News story 9) all link the increased number of children in good or outstanding schools with a lexicon of the government policy success:

- *We have 1.4 million more pupils in 'good' and 'outstanding' schools since 2010 because our reforms, translated into reality on the ground by the hard work of school leaders and teachers, really do work. But, for all that we have unlocked excellence, as I have said many times before, we do not yet have that excellence everywhere and for me, the everywhere is non-negotiable (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *Education Secretary Justine Greening has (1 October) announced a series of measures to place education at the heart of the government's ambition to provide opportunity for all and ensure we are building the skills needed to secure the nation's prosperity. The announcements will build on the government's record of driving up standards in education – with 1.8 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 (News 7: 1 October 2017)*

- *The announcement builds on the government's record of 1.9 million more children now in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 (News story 10: 19 January 2018)*

The figure increases from 1.4 million at the beginning of the period under review to 1.9 million towards the end, but the presentation remains unchanged. The sustained use of this form of evidence implies a discourse being developed by the government that seeks to determine the Ofsted rating as the accepted 'gold standard' measure by which a school is deemed 'effective' and teachers praised. While Mansell (2008:57-8) indicates a correlation between examination results and Ofsted gradings, the absence of other widely used measures when speaking positively about systemic improvements, such as pupil attainment against benchmarks, further strengthens the power of the Ofsted grading against these alternative measures. The very nature of 'effectiveness' in teaching outcomes is an elusive concept and could refer to aspects as wide-ranging as academic attainment, well-being, employability, social mobility or social cohesion (Whitty and Power, 2015: 25-26).

However, policymakers are clear that schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' are deemed worthy of praise and, by implication, schools with lower ratings are not. The change of language use in Ofsted gradings from 'satisfactory' to the more urgent sounding 'requires improvement' underlines the pressing desire to move schools into the top two grading tiers.

As I will explore more fully in chapter 7, the Ofsted inspection is used as a form of examination, an application of the Foucaultian concept of power-knowledge which sets up a discourse placing inspections at the heart of measuring teacher success. This discourse and practice places the government in a position of power. Despite the claims that Ofsted operates independently of government, there is much to imply government policy influences the inspectorate. Education Secretaries choose new inspectors with little significant scrutiny from Parliament, as evidenced by Amanda Spielman's appointment in 2016 without the support of MPs on the Education Select Committee (Vaughan, 2016). As Coffield (2017:11) points out, the adoption of 'British Values' as a focus of inspection in the aftermath of the political fallout of the 'Trojan Horse Schools' scandal in Birmingham implies a hidden political hand, which undermines claims of complete independence. Finally, linking the twin roles of Ofsted as both ensuring accountability and school improvement provides the inspector with a vested interest in seeing the increasing numbers of schools rated good or outstanding each year. Despite the discourse of an ever-improving school system based upon the language of Ofsted gradings, PISA average-point-scores and rankings indicate little, if any, progress has been made in core subjects across the same period[7].

5.5 Discursive theme 4: The wider policy role of the teacher

The final discursive theme positions teachers with degree of responsibility for both social and economic policy. Despite the nebulous link between the classroom and broader areas of government policy, texts regularly used figurative language and hyperbole to place teachers in a significant position to influence broader policy objectives.

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[7] PISA Average Point Score and Rankings from 2010-2016 were: Reading 494 to 498 (25th to 21st); Maths 492 to 492 (28th to 27th); Science 514 to 509 (16th to 15th). Source: http://www.oecd.org/pisa/ - last accessed 14 December 2019.

5.5.1 The teacher's role in social policy

As mentioned above, few examples exist of direct praise for teachers in the texts. More common are positive comments about teachers for the potential they have in shaping young people's lives and, by implication, society as a whole. However, in none of the policy texts reviewed was there a direct reference for the positive effect of the work teachers currently do in this regard. Indeed, if the acquisition of examination credentials were a measure of teacher success in enabling social mobility, there is no evidence of praise for teachers, despite an upward trend in student achievement in the period under review[8]. Instead, praise tends to come in the form of potentiality, rather than existing reality, developing a discourse placing teachers in a position of responsibility for social mobility.

This placing of responsibility is achieved through consistent use of motoring metaphors evoking teachers propelling social policy forward:

- *I hope we agree that the education system can and should be a motor to drive social justice, helping to build a fairer society, where people are rewarded on the basis of their talents and the efforts they put in (Speech 1: 5 March 2016)*

- *Teachers are the great drivers of social mobility in our country. We know that the single biggest in-school influence on a child's life chances is the quality of teaching they receive (News story 1: 13 April 2016)*

- *(When discussing new funding arrangements) It will provide a crucial underpinning for the education system to act as a motor for social mobility and social justice (Parliament 2: 21 July 2017)*

In all three texts, the metaphor used is of teachers acting as a 'motor' to 'drive' forward policy outcomes related to social policy, making government policy sound dynamic and moving forward. The unsubstantiated assertion that teachers are the 'single biggest in-

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[8] Source: Guide to GCSE results in England 2019, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guide-to-gcse-results-for-england-2019

school influence' on young people's life chances highlights the desire to lay praise upon the profession for their potential.

Another frequent metaphor placed teachers 'at the heart' of delivering a fair social policy. As well as the two examples below, the phrase appeared in Speech 1, News Story 7 and Press Release 4:

- *As the Prime Minister has made clear, this is a one nation government - focused on unlocking real social justice and improving the life chances of those who so often have been left behind. Education is at the heart of that agenda… (Speech 1: 5 March 2016)*

- *We want to ensure every young person can reach their potential, regardless of their background or where they are growing up, and great teachers are at the heart of this (News 6: 14 September 2017)*

Using emotive language and placing teachers 'at the heart' of social policy heightens their importance in terms of their centrality and for providing life for the policy. Such appeals to emotion and hyperbole are frequent across policy texts suggesting the power of teachers in social policy as transformational either at the individual level of the 'child's future' (Speech 3) or the societal level in 'enriching communities and advancing civilisations': (Speech 9) below:

- *The Prime Minister made this point eloquently, in his life chances speech in January. Education is at the heart of this government's mission - because a good education transforms a child's future (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *Because education should be about broadening minds, enriching communities and advancing civilisation. Ultimately, it is about leaving the world a better place than we found it (Speech 9: 23 June 2017)*

While suggestions of the importance of teachers in social policy were framed around praise for their role, underpinning this flattery is a subtle positioning of teachers as having responsibility for the delivery of policy outcomes. This responsibility may be unfair as it

ignores the notion of cultural or social reproduction which indicates educational inequality starts long before a child begins school (Bloodworth, 2016:63-76). This social reproduction is based upon the development of 'habitus', or the conscious and the unconscious aspects that make a person whom they are, based upon their cumulative experience (Guillory, 2000:26). If the effectiveness of pedagogic work is dependent upon the 'habitus' created by previous pedagogic work (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), the success of teachers in social mobility is heavily dependent upon the development of habitus both before school and outside of school. As social class plays a significant role in habitus development, this limits the influence of teachers. Marks et al (2006:122-5) view the development of cultural capital as the most significant factor in affecting educational inequality. If family cultural capital is such a crucial factor in determining a child's academic success, the uneven societal distribution of cultural capital can lead to the creation and development of an inherent societal inequality (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990:71-72). This problem may mean that teachers are unfairly set up as having significant responsibility for social mobility. In some ways, this was acknowledged by a former education minister who stated, 'the best way to predict a child's exam results is to look at their family income and social background.' (Laws, 2014).

This discourse may be shaping societal expectations of the teaching profession. Praising the importance of teachers as potentially central to shaping society has the effect of positioning them as having significant responsibility for social mobility. This praise remains double-edged for teachers. Not only do texts offer no evidence or examples of teacher success, but it is also possible that the discourse overstates the role of teachers and sets them up for potential failure in the future through no fault of their own.

5.5.2 The teacher's role in economic policy

Echoing Ball's claim that educational outcomes an integral part of economic policy (2013a:13-25), the second role identified in the texts links education and economic policy, an approach suggested as consistent with other OECD countries since 1990 (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009:440). While schools have greater autonomy policy influence on schools exists to focus education as a means to formulate skills to develop the nation's knowledge economy (Brown, 2006:233-234). The development of a productive workforce is presented as necessary, both for the development of individual economic success as well as for national economic prosperity.

A clear emphasis across a range of texts is that there is a need to focus education on skills and knowledge to develop a highly-skilled workforce to allow the next generation to prosper as individuals:

- *All of us here recognise that in a globalised world, where the young people you teach are going to have to compete for jobs not just with young people from the same town, county or country, but with their peers from across the globe, we cannot afford to let our education system stand still (Speech 1: 5 March 2016)*

- *Tomorrow's Spring Budget…will also focus on giving our young people the skills they need to secure the high-paid, high-skilled jobs of the future (News Story 4: 7 March 2017)*

- *Now, more than ever, we owe it to the next generation to equip them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to take on the challenges they will face (Speech 5: 7 July 2016)*

- *As part of its Plan for Britain, the government wants every child to have access to a 'good' school place, giving them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the future (Press release 6: 3 April 2017)*

In Speeches 1 and 5, Nicky Morgan uses the language of a contest indicating that young people must be 'equip[ped]' to face 'challenges' from workers in other countries to 'compete' for jobs. In News Story 4 and Press Release 6, framing skills and knowledge as 'needed' presents them as an imperative. This urgency is expressed emotively in Speech 1, which advocates that 'we cannot afford to let our education system stand still'. Recognition of the changing nature of the global workforce, where young people are going to have to compete for jobs with their peers in a global workforce, is used as a rallying cry for the maximisation of young people's intellectual capital to ensure they secure 'high-skilled', and therefore 'high-paid', jobs in the future. By viewing the benefits of education as accruing to the individual, government discourse takes a neoliberal view of human capital theory seeing education as a private good, a commodity to exchange in the market for status and

money as opposed to seeing education as a public good which enhances moral, ethical, social, cultural and political awareness (Olssen et al, 2004:146-150).

However, it has also been argued that increases in human capital can boost national economic growth (Schultz, 1961:3), placing education as 'the missing piece of the jigsaw' of economic development (Little, 2003:438). In the texts, a discourse presents Britain in direct competition with other nations in a high stakes battle for economic superiority and an element of fear is introduced, suggesting that Britain is falling behind in this battle:

- *Because the latest data from OECD showed us that in 2012 our children were no more literate or numerate than their grandparents' generation. Because in other parts of the world from Germany to Hong Kong, we see our competitors in the global economy, surging ahead, demanding more of their children and reaping the rewards… Our country can't afford a 2-tier education system…it's morally wrong and economically self-defeating (Speech 3: 17 March 2016)*

- *Education Secretary Justine Greening has (1 October) announced a series of measures to place education at the heart of the government's ambition to provide opportunity for all and ensure we are building the skills needed to secure the nation's prosperity. (Quotation from Justine Greening): We want to deliver the skilled workforce our economy needs to stay competitive (News 7: 1 October 2017)*

- *Too few pupils are being taught a foreign language. In an ever more globalised world, having an economy with a voracious appetite for people with knowledge of a foreign language and being a great trading nation and host to the world's financial capital, we must do more to ensure more pupils study languages at GCSE (Speech 11: 2 November 2017)*

In Speech 3, Nicky Morgan uses a series of active verbs to describe other economies saying they are 'surging', 'demanding' and 'reaping', making these appear more dynamic and subtly implying Britain is not. News Story 7 reports new educational measures, the benefits of which are to 'secure the nation's prosperity'. In Speech 11, Nick Gibb continues the theme of educational changes being required to meet the challenges of

globalisation. Former Prime Minister, Theresa May, summed up the subordinate relationship of education to economic policy by suggesting education reforms:

- *will ensure British businesses have a future workforce to succeed and support a modern industrial strategy that spreads growth and prosperity to all sections of society (News Story 4: 7 March 2017)*

The discourse, exemplified by May's comments, appears to reject a belief in education for its own sake. Instead, education is posited as necessary for economic success, both for the individual and the nation as a whole. Critics of this view suggest it ignores more fundamental weaknesses in the economy (Coffield, 1999:486-7) , excessively focuses on STEM subjects over the arts and humanities (Bullen et al, 2014:3-22) and develops a sense of knowledge as a commodity which can increase social inequality (Ball, 2013:25-8). Also, it remains unclear where the value of education lies in the development of human capital. Rather than placing teachers as vessels to transport knowledge and skills to their students, it proposes that passion for learning teachers instil in their students transfers itself to the workplace. By this view, the development of innate curiosity is presented as the main contribution of education to human capital (Little, 2003:448-9). Indeed, Brown (2006:235-6) argues that the shift to a post-industrial élite necessitates workers having a more significant emotional investment in their work and that human capital theory underplays the importance of interpersonal and creative skills, focusing instead too heavily on aspects of technical competence.

5.6 Discussion

The discourse analysis raises some key points which link with the existing literature. With regard to the presentation of a failing teaching profession, Ball (1995: 260) states this presents teachers as the 'causes of general social and economic problems within society at large'. In the United States, forms of authoritative negative information, or sometimes disinformation, about public education are 'hostile myths' (Berliner & Biddle, 1995:xiv); in the UK, Ball (1990:22-42) refers to a 'discourse of derision' (noted above in section 2.7) in 1990 to describe the attacks on education by the New Right. Delamont (1999:4-6) suggests this discursive approach is used by policymakers to portray education as dysfunctional to undermine confidence in the system to create a sense of moral panic. As Ball (2017:15-16) explains, policymakers develop a form of reality to suit their ideological needs so they can

enact continued reform. While the neoliberal Conservative governments from 1979-1997 focused on endogenous competition making schools behave more like businesses and introducing market forces, post-neoliberal Labour and the Coalition governments focused on exogenous contestability, allowing new providers beyond the public sector to operate within education. Each framed the problem within education to suit the needs of the type of reform they proposed. I show later in this chapter that the current government frame problems around progressive teaching, the negative influence of bureaucratic control and the needs of globalisation to suit its calls for reform.

New routes into teaching place beginner teachers with limited professional knowledge directly into a school with a view that the skill of teaching passes from one practitioner to the next. However, as Forde et al (2006:9-10) explain, there are four broad traditions that shape the teaching profession, namely craft, moral, artistic and scientific. By focusing purely on developing the craft and skills-based elements of the role, teacher education may not sufficiently develop the broader elements that support student teachers to form the confidence and ability to continue the development of their understanding of teaching and learning. Also, skills-based training might also fail to help students develop the moral judgements that remain key to the nature of being a modern professional teacher. Linked to this, and most importantly, having a set of competencies passed on from teacher to teacher may not necessarily make new teachers competent. It is crucial to understand in what situations these competencies are used. This aspect of a teacher's development is likely to be left to the teacher to develop independently. To update a pertinent example provided by Heilbronn (2008:20-48), being able to use technology in the classroom is a competency but dealing effectively and sensitively with a pupil who has made a homophobic comment requires more than learned skills. Technical competency is therefore a necessary, but insufficient, condition to be a professional teacher, which requires judgement on how to act when faced with an infinite number of possible educational scenarios (Biesta 2015:5). The school-centred apprenticeships allow graduates to train while on the job while being paid. Applying such an incentive indicates policymakers may also assume self-interest on the part of teachers in using 'rent-seeking behaviours' (Olssen et al, 2004:186-7) rather than seeking to act for the public interest, the traditionally perceived motivation for many entering the teaching profession.

The divide between traditional and progressive educational ideas is not a new phenomenon and finds its roots in the dualisms of Greek philosophy. Competing ideas around facts v values or thought v action have long driven debates in Western culture (Lackeus et al, 2016:779). The 'left-right' political dichotomy may not always explain support for traditionalism or progressivism. However, for decades, there has been a link with political viewpoints (Skidelsky, 1969:13) despite propositions that debates between the competing ideological camps have tended to 'generate more political heat than pedagogic light' (Bennett, 1987:226). Perhaps a significant misconception of the debate is that it is about scientific or technical aspects of education. However, the profound disagreement between the two camps may be on the point and the purpose of education (Carr, 1998:48). The central rift may be the fundamentally different philosophical positions of objectivism and subjectivism when approaching curriculum, assessment and pedagogy (Lackeus et al 2016:779). When seeking to evaluate the differing perspectives, each is viewed through the lens of teaching methods. The reality may be relations between the two competing ideas are more complicated. Hence, a danger exists that the approach adopted by policymakers is somewhat simplistic and bears little relationship to what schools are like or how teachers work (Moore, 2000:28). However, the critical point is that, despite the rhetoric from the government, teachers appear not to place themselves in one camp or another. Taking a one-sided approach misses the value provided by the other side. The traditionalist view misses the intersubjective and relational value of education while a purely progressive view ignores the importance of explicit instruction for underlying cognitive architecture (Lackeus, 2016:779).

Bridging the divide between traditionalism and progressivism is one of the many 'chronic educational dilemmas' (Labaree, 2012:157) faced by teachers. Carr (1998:49) suggests the complex nature of the debate means recommending a mixed economy of pedagogical methods will not clear up the issue. Ackerman (2003:346) indicates that teachers are inclined to view the different approaches as the 'intertwined taproots' of education and continually strive to combine the two imaginatively. A review of research shows teachers create hybrids blended from the two extremes so that it may be better to describe the choice made by teachers as 'hugging the middle' (Cuban, 2007:1-29). Therefore, the narrative presented in the texts of a teaching profession in the grip of progressivism may both simplify the issue and present teachers with a false dichotomy. There appears

evidence in the academic literature that teachers have sought to find their own approaches for dealing with the rift between the differing traditions (Darling-Hammond, 2012:40).

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the discourse, or the underpinning social story, that is presented and consider the potential intended or unintended impact of this. In doing so, I have sought to capture the meanings behind the language and consider how the various discourses present specific views of teachers and teaching, and so may shape the professional identity of teachers. The discourse presented appears to be largely negative towards the teaching profession, suggesting failings in the quality of teaching and teacher training and an attempt to shape the philosophy underpinning teaching in England. Behind this appears to be a desire to shape teacher attitudes favourably towards proposed educational reforms. In the next chapter, I present the findings of my interviews with twelve teachers to consider how they view their identity as well as their responses to the discourse presented here.

Chapter 6: Findings – Interviews

6.1 Introduction

As outlined in the Methodology chapter, twelve participants were interviewed in the summer of 2018. All worked in a multi-academy trust in a large suburban area in England, continue my examination of the characteristics of teacher professional identity and focus on how participants understood their professional identity. I explore participants' understanding of the term 'professional identity' and then focus upon the four characteristics identified in the literature review as being the significant features of teacher professional identity: the self, particularly aspects of personal identity and experience; knowledge and skills required to practise as a teacher; discourse, both external and internal to the profession; and the context in which participants worked. I then move on to explain how participants felt their professional identity changed over time.

The second part of the chapter focuses on participants' perceptions of the discursive themes raised in chapter 5: the debate between traditional and progressive forms of teaching; the increasing autonomy and accountability in schools; and how teachers respond to governmental power in these areas. Further analysis of the issues raised in the interviews will be analysed through a Foucaultian lens more fully in chapter 7. Finally, I consider teachers' perceptions of discourses about the profession, both external and internal and, importantly, those emanating from policymakers.

6.2 Characteristics of Teacher Professional identity

This section explores teacher perceptions of the main characteristics of their professional identity, namely, the self, skills and knowledge, context and the impact of experience.

6.2.1 The importance of the self

The literature review highlights the self as the most significant aspect affecting teacher professional identity. Cooper and Olson (1996:83) suggest this multi-faceted aspect of teacher identity is continually in flux and develops through the course of the career and, as Nias (1989:181) suggests, has an impact upon the personal identity of the teacher. The interviews supported this idea with teachers recognising the impact their personal identity had upon their teacher selves, as well as the symbiotic nature of this relationship between personal and professional identity.

When initially asked about their understanding of professional identity, participants generally felt that they had not given much explicit thought as to what this was, but the starting point for some linked to their internal self. Both Olivia and Jessica were working out for themselves what the term meant:

> *Jessica: I think my understanding of it would be how you see yourself as a teacher…it is what makes you the kind of teacher that you are.*

> *Olivia: (pause) Erm, I would see it as how do I see myself as a teacher… so I would understand it as the different role or personas that I have to take on to be a teacher…*

Jessica went on to differentiate between aspects of teacher identity such as the pastoral or academic side and felt teachers might see themselves differently depending on the emphasis they placed on each side. Olivia similarly considered the different roles a teacher may have to play as being part of the development of differing personae.

Alice and Mia also summarised professional identity as related to the roles they fulfilled but developed this further to include ways they conducted themselves:

> *Alice: It's a perceived persona I think, it's how one conducts oneself within the professional environment, within the workplace, both at the workplace and beyond. I feel there's a certain responsibility to act in a certain way beyond the workplace.*

> *Mia: For me, the foundation is all your skill and knowledge and then over the time period you develop a fully rounded self that is able to be professional, but authentic at the same time, and understanding yourself and your role as classroom teacher.*

While Jessica and Olivia see their professional identity as something developed internally, Alice and Mia saw their external actions as being a part of what constituted their identity. Mia presents an interesting idea of identity as the coming together of concrete skills and

the 'fully rounded' self that only develops with time. Her phrasing suggests that early in her career she did not feel as rounded and that she needed to shape this aspect of her identity. Of particular interest in Alice's response was that she felt her conduct was under scrutiny beyond the workplace, meaning that she never felt she was 'off-duty' as a teacher as her behaviour in her personal life was impacted by the fact she was a teacher. This sense of responsibility indicated both an obligation and a sense of accountability outside of her professional role.

Both Jessica and Olivia were less experienced teachers and held a more concrete notion of identity. Experienced teachers such as Alice and Mia generally recognised that they had an individual personal identity and inhabited a 'persona' in their professional life, which was separate, but related, to this personal identity. This relationship was seen as symbiotic with personal identity, forming a significant aspect of professional identity.

One essential characteristic that participants generally agreed upon was that elements of their personal identity were vital to the make-up of their professional identity. Mia suggested that 'I've been doing it for so long, I've invested in it and developed and therefore I think I am quite similar'. As Beijaard et al (2004:122) suggest, reflecting upon, and making sense of, their own experiences and emotions appeared to be a crucial part of the continuous process of professional identity formation.

Olivia best summed up the general feeling among the participants:

> *Olivia: I think I find it hard to detach myself from me as a teacher. The job is a lifestyle, so if I describe myself the teacher, then I am describing myself the person. I think the two are quite closely linked.*

Olivia's inability to detach her sense of personal self from her professional identity shows a crossover from the professional life with the personal life. The two most common aspects of this crossover with personal identity linked to a caring nature and a teacher's sense of humour as being essential parts to the development of professional identity. Alice mentions her 'caring side', and Sophia believed 'being interested in people' and 'the way I would treat other people outside of school would be the same as how I treat people here' were vital aspects of themselves that they bring to their professional identity. Thomas stated that

he was 'very much here for the students'. Olivia also felt 'the caring part of me comes across - I do like working with kids' and, as a pastoral middle-manager, expressed how she saw caring as a vital aspect of her professional identity:

> *Olivia: I like that I am seen as someone they could come to for advice…they seemed to think I genuinely cared. As a tutor, my greatest fear is they think I don't care and I am not doing enough for them pastorally. When they express that the pastoral care isn't strong here, which they have done in surveys, I take that very personally although they may see it as a school system and the way the school is run. You can't help it as a teacher to think you are the problem.*

As Olivia mentions above, it can be difficult to separate the professional role from the self and she took criticism of the role she plays professionally personally.

Sophia, Freya and Daisy also felt care for pupils was an essential part of their identity as teachers:

> *Sophia: Asking me personally if it makes me a different teacher to other people. Yeah, I think if you were to ask the students, and in fact if you go to the board or read the cards[9], they would all say that I'm really caring and that I put a lot of effort into them.*

> *Freya: I care deeply for the pupils and I think they can see that. I think they are humans and I have to treat them that way. It's a difficult thing to pull off, but I feel like I'm doing okay.*

> *Daisy: I have strong Christian beliefs and I believe the individual is sacrosanct and all individuals are to be valued regardless of anything. That's a strong kind of ethos that I would bring into the classroom is that I really do try to differentiate between students, I do try to value them individually.*

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[9] At the time of the interview, the departing Sixth Form pupils had been encouraged to write messages on cards to individual teachers which were posted on a noticeboard outside the staffroom.

For all three teachers, caring was something they drew on as part of their personal identity. Both Sophia and Freya indicated a need for that to be recognised by their pupils indicating how important the nature of caring was to their sense of identity. Daisy also indicated that validation was important to her:

> *Daisy: ... some of the comments from Year 13's who wrote lovely, lovely cards. Actually interestingly, one wrote to me, "Thank you for noticing that I was looking very tired because I hadn't realised myself." She's a student with a place at Cambridge in my Further Maths class. She said, "Thank you for noticing that I was overtired, actually wasn't looking after myself properly, because you made me think about that".*

By recounting this story, Daisy reiterated how important it was to her as a teacher to have a caring nature and felt a sense of professional pride that she had made a difference to this student. George best summed up the caring role with this metaphor: 'I see myself as the Good Shepherd. They need looking after, and they need a lot of direction to get them into the pen'. This supports Rubin's (1985:20) view that teachers who found job satisfaction viewed teaching not just as a job but 'as a means of satisfying the demands of the spirit as well'.

Significant personal upheavals could also lead to changes in professional identity, albeit temporarily. Freya recalled that a few months previously a close relative had passed away:

> *I found that very hard and I think my personality changed. Before I'd go into class and, "Hi kids," Very positive, very bubbly and they'd use words like that to describe me to then being quite flat. "What's wrong with Miss"... That, I found quite difficult.*

Freya admitted that her teaching personality changed and that pupils picked up on this, but found it difficult not being able to address this with pupils as the boundaries of professional behaviour did not allow this. Similarly, Olivia felt that the responsibilities she undertook as part of her professional persona impacted her personally. As a pastoral middle-manager, she felt it hard to separate the professional with the personal when dealing with issues of mental health in pupils:

Olivia: I think about them and I have had sleepless nights about a particular word I may have said to a pupil, whether they have misinterpreted it, if it is going to be taken out of context or misunderstood by them in some way. Have I done enough for them – definitely that goes home.

Day et al (2005:604) suggest the integration of life events and experiences with those at school is a key element bringing the self into the professional persona, but Olivia's response indicates the potential dangers of this crossover. Thomas also recalled a time when work pressures meant he had sleepless nights and felt this hurt his productivity but, more importantly, he worried 'how much education has gone into my home life'. While positive aspects of a teacher's personality such as a caring nature or sense of humour can bear fruit in the professional sphere, teachers may be unable to leave their professional identity at work, which may impact on them personally.

The process of personal identity being symbiotic with professional identity was echoed by many participants who suggested that being a teacher could have a significant impact on their personal identity. This crossover echoed Brooke's (1994:69) notion that teachers both define their professional identity, but are simultaneously defined by it. Particular aspects where the development of professional identity led to a change in the personal identity were a more assertive attitude, a positive change in personal behaviours and, for younger teachers, it formed part of their ongoing maturity.

The second main aspect of personal identity that some participants felt was essential to bring to their professional role was their sense of humour. Freya understood her position of responsibility required a professional distance in her interpersonal relationships with pupils, but admitted it was not always easy, saying: 'I think I've always been the joker out of all of my friends, but then I do have banter with the girls. Sometimes when they're talking, I'm like, "Ooh, tell me the gossip." I want to kind of be a teenager again'. Freya found her sense of humour helpful to build relationships with pupils but, as a relatively new teacher, found balance with professional expectations difficult. Jessica and Olivia also felt their ability to use humour in their everyday lives was an important tool they brought into their professional role:

Jessica: I think I have tried to use humour in my lessons and I think I do that in my everyday life.

Olivia: I tend to give a lot of personal stories. I know that some teachers don't like to do that but I like to use lots of anecdotes. I like to think I bring my sense of humour to the lesson. Sometimes they laugh (laughs).

Like Freya, Olivia indicates she recognises that a sense of distance should exist between pupils and teachers and that what she may find a humorous anecdote may not always work with pupils. This self-deprecation adds another layer to the concept of humour being a part of Olivia's professional identity. This issue of maintaining a professional distance, yet demonstrating care for pupils, is a difficult one for teachers to negotiate and can have drawbacks in terms of student engagement, learning and personal growth (Broidy, 2019) as well as pedagogical reasons where getting the 'distance between the teacher and the taught' wrong can make it harder to develop cognitive development (Freire,1996:57).

For a profession involving continuous interaction with others, a surprisingly common theme was that many teachers self-identified as being naturally shy and suggesting that developing as a teacher helped them overcome shyness in their personal lives. When Amelia began teaching she indicated she needed to 'produce a performance' which was different from her natural self:

Amelia:. I think as a person, I'm quite shy and I used to really struggle to make eye contact with people before. I think teaching has done me the world of good for that, because it's forced me to do those things…I think teaching has really been the making of me and I know I've doing it for nearly a third of my life now. I wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't been a teacher.

Reflecting on the impact this had on her as a person, she suggested it gave her greater self-confidence, reinforcing Nias' (1989:181) assertion that the professional can begin to incorporate itself into a teacher's self-image. The impact of her professional role on her as a person is best summed up by her belief that being a teacher made her 'the person I am today'. Jessica also felt teaching helped her develop self-confidence during critical formative early adult years in her first full-time job, stating that:

> *Jessica*: When I first started teaching I would have been 23 and I think now, being
> 27, these have been formative years and I have developed a lot of confidence
> outside of school as well and that has played a part in that.

Despite being a mature entrant to the profession, Alice also reflected that her six years as a teacher had impacted her personal identity. Admitting she was 'an intensely shy person…not a natural speaker who would give a speech or get on stage' and who sometimes asked herself 'why I'd force myself to stand up in front of 30 students', Alice found that those around her in her personal life had indicated that she has changed as a person since becoming a teacher offering anecdotal evidence from family members,

> *Alice*: My mother says since I've become a teacher, I've become very
> schoolmarm-ish, but there again, it's another level of relaxation, there's different
> sort of confidence… I think she means my tone, and perhaps, I'm quicker now to
> intervene or give an opinion…Now, I can give you another anecdote from when I
> just been to see my sister, and she said, I can't remember who she was talking
> about but how people about perceive me, and she said, "They're intimidated by
> you."

When describing her shyness, Alice made the analogy of teachers with actors suggesting that 'you often hear that actors are often very shy', one which Freya, who also saw herself as 'incredibly shy', recognised too describing herself in the classroom as 'a great actress'.

While it was apparent that personal identity of the teacher was generally a significant factor in the development of their professional identity, many teachers acknowledged the latter was a distinct identity from their personal self. Amelia, William and Freya all referred to themselves as 'Mr. [Surname]' or 'Ms. [Surname] in the third person when referring to themselves as teachers, as if this were separate personae. William and Freya also both referred to the 'uniform' they put on in terms of their dress as part of separating their personal and professional selves.

Jessica, Amelia and Thomas felt their professional identity was distinct from the personal, reporting themselves more introverted when beyond the work environment:

> *Jessica*: *I think in this work it is a lot about you, in that you are standing in front of the class and leading the lesson and taking charge. At home I am less likely to do that, especially with friends. I am probably more confident at work than I am at home in knowing what I am doing and knowing what kind of approach I want to have.*

> *Amelia:* *When I'm not teaching I think I go back to being more introverted then. I think that generally, they're quite separate… I think I do like being a lot quieter in my spare time… what I would say was my 'Amelia persona', I think is quite separate.*

> *Thomas*: *I 'm very different at home, I'm much more relaxed. I'm very much the introvert. However, in a classroom, I'm a completely different person.*

For Jessica, 'leading' and 'taking charge' formed parts of her professional identity where she felt less confident in personal life. The persona she inhabits as a teacher seems to enable her to look and sound confident in ways she may not feel without the professional persona. Amelia similarly recounted that she remained introverted in her personal identity and appeared comfortable with this, clearly referencing her personal persona as 'quite separate' to her professional one. She also used an anecdote of her friends being unable to picture her professional persona as a teacher. None of Amelia's friends were teachers and suggested to her they 'can't imagine you teaching'.

Both Jessica and Amelia were comfortable not to mix their personal and professional personae and to occupy different identities at work and at home, ensuring that, while the self was a vital part of professional identity and significant crossover existed, personal identity can remain distinct. George agreed: 'it's a different persona to being outside, and I generally take good care not to mix the two. When I get to work, I assume an identity in the classroom which I wouldn't do outside of it'. Interestingly, these responses tended to contradict much of the literature which suggested that being a teacher cannot be separated from one's larger life (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017:181) and that being a teacher forms part of the larger life that unfolds for a person (Clandinin et al, 2015:13). The extent to which the

participants manage to separate their professional from their personal selves cannot be measured, but certainly their perception of a difference is an important one.

6.2.2 The important of skills and knowledge

Teacher subject knowledge is perceived as having an important effect on pupil learning (Metzler & Woessmann, 2010:1-24), but one of the hardest things to get my participants to discuss in any depth was how their skills and knowledge impacted upon their identity. All participants, bar George who began teaching in the 1970s, undertook some form of university-based teacher training. All did their training in England, bar Emily and Thomas who trained in Ireland and South Africa respectively. As a result, all had very similar levels of induction and continuing professional development. In terms of the development of professional identity, participants tended towards discussing their ability to engage pupils in their learning.

Having a keen interest in their subjects and a desire to share this were essential components of their professional identity for both Jessica and Freya. The development of subject knowledge into what Shulman (1986:42) terms 'pedagogical content knowledge', or the broad principles and strategies needed to deliver content effectively, is a key part to identification as a teacher (Hobbs, 2012:719-21). The most experienced participant, George, was the only one to state he saw 'excellent subject knowledge as a prerequisite for a teacher' although a number of other participants made reference to their love of their subject. When it came to her subject, Jessica suggested that she had 'quite a nerdy identity' personally, by which she meant:

> *Jessica*: *The real intricacies of History and the little stories where you digress and go off about some kind of odd story that other people may not find interesting, but I decide to share with everyone... and loving the subject, and the people I teach about, and the historians we talk about. It's all about the History.*

> *Freya*: *I think the thing I found since becoming a teacher is my life has changed... I think I do find myself (pause), someone will say something and I will go, "Oh, I know a biology fact about that." and I think, "Oh gosh, I'm so boring"... I'm very, very- what does my friends say? I'm geek chic. I'm very geek chic. I do. I love to read and I love to tell the pupils facts.*

> *William: I think it all stems from a love of the subject and the love of the topics. That's what I am very enthusiastic about. And the idea that I could impart that knowledge on the young people and they'd enjoy it like I have, I think it's fantastic. So it's almost I'm not really working,*

Jessica enjoyed that teaching allowed her to embrace her knowledge of History and saw her ability to share this knowledge and to instil her passion for the subject into others as important. For Jessica, her identity was 'all about' her subject. Freya also embraced what she termed her 'geek chic' side, her love of Biology and particularly her desire to share this with others. Both appeared to enjoy the opportunity to embrace that 'nerdy' aspect into their teaching persona, seeing it as having a positive aspect in the classroom and as a way to shape themselves as a teacher. William also felt the primary driver in his professional life was his love of his subject and being able to impart that on his pupils. Daisy similarly reported enjoying that her pupils said to her that 'you so love Maths, Miss'. The sense of satisfaction that pupils will 'enjoy it like I have' appears to be crucial in her desire to teach. The importance of having a passion for their subject supports Day's (2004:12) assertion that passion goes beyond enthusiasm but is associated with 'enthusiasm, caring, commitment and hope' which he deems key characteristics in effective teaching.

Alice and Sophia similarly identified their intellectual curiosity or inquisitiveness as essential drivers for them as teachers:

> *Alice: My inquisitive side… my desire to share information. Whether it be about books, or articles, or plays. That side of me, my personal enjoyment is always thinking about how it can be used as a teacher? When I was driving in yesterday, there was something about Maya Angelou and she is on our new 16 x 16 list[10]. Sometimes, I don't know when to stop.*

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[10] 16x16 is a list provided to all GCSE students at that school and relates to 16 book suggestions that should be read by the age of 16.

> *Sophia: Being interested in people and interested in things, just things you've seen and read and sharing it with the class. That crossover of intellectual curiosity... People expect it of you. The kids love that too.*

While Alice enjoyed that she could embrace her inquisitive nature on a professional level, one issue lay in that 'I don't know when to stop'. Although she did not suggest this was a problem for her, it does reiterate some of the concerns above that professional identity can impinge on the personal. Sophia similarly enjoyed the way her professional life allowed her to utilise her intellectual curiosity and saw this as one of the expectations of her professional role. This sense of emotional commitment to learning supports what Fried (1995:6) believes 'is at the heart of what teaching is'.

Both Mia and Daisy shared similar sentiments. However, they went further, indicating that a critical part of their professional identity was the ability to make an intellectual connection with pupils that goes beyond merely displaying a love of their subject, or a love of learning:

> *Mia: I am very much driven by the emotional side of learning, which I still feed into all of the time. That students need to feel. We've got to buy in to what they want to learn and especially with a subject like Chemistry. Especially for the sciences as for them, it doesn't seem to be that relevant to their lives.*

> *Daisy: I think finding that balance between being an imparter of knowledge and a promoter of thinking skills to reach whatever ends are required, and finding that balance of relationship between teacher and student. I think that takes a while to find that balance and identity in that. I feel as though I've found that now.*

For Mia, the 'emotional side of learning' was hugely important, supporting Day's (2004:176) belief that tapping into the capacity of pupils to 'become excited by learning' is emancipatory. Being able to impart knowledge or develop skills was important but what she valued was to get pupils to 'want to learn' her subject. Similarly, Daisy recognised there a balance exists for the teacher being an 'imparter of knowledge' and a 'promoter of thinking skills' which was a crucial part of what her professional identity might be.

6.2.3 The importance of school context

A number of participants agreed the context in which they worked had an impact on their practice and identity, supporting Day's (2004:134) assertion that a key influence upon a teacher's capacity to exercise passion for their role is school context. The participants quoted below mentioned a range of contextual issues as impacting upon professional identity. Some issues related to working in selective or single-sex schools, but the main themes that arose focused on issues of pressure on measurable aspects such as examination results, collegiality and morale and the increasing workload for teachers.

Some teachers highlighted the pressure to achieve ever-improving examination results as impacting their identity. They indicated a perception that responsibility for pupils achieving good grades was now with the teacher, rather than the pupil. Mia had a clear view that her school saw the 'output' of teachers as 'increasing results' which, along with the difficulties of austerity, she found frustrating given she was having 'an effective pay cut on an annual basis'. The effects of the financial crisis on public spending meant teachers' pay had been falling in real terms for over a decade. Mia expressed a frustration that 'they want more output for less' feeling she was expected to work harder to produce better grades each year, while simultaneously finding herself 'poorer and poorer'.

Thomas and Daisy, both experienced Mathematics teachers, also expressed frustration at this approach. Thomas' frustration lay in what he felt was poor logic:

> ***Thomas****: All we are told is that results are increasing in the country. Results are increasing. They're getting better, they're getting better, they're getting better. I just thought to myself, "Mathematically, that's insane". Because you've got to have ups and downs. The fact that you keep getting better and better and better, then you don't trust them, you don't trust what's coming out.*

> ***Daisy:*** *I think their overriding interest is in the exam results. I really do. I think that would show up in the league tables and things like that. They just want to look good in the league tables.*

The frustration expressed by Thomas and Daisy suggests they did not place the aspiration for annual improvements in examination results or placings in league tables as highly as

their school leading to a conflict between their sense of identity and the expectations placed upon them.

Olivia, a Head of Year working to prepare Sixth Form pupils for university, suggested the general attitude of parents and pupils was that responsibility for grades lay with the teachers, a sentiment that Alice agreed with, suggesting that in a high-achieving school an expectation exists on teachers to achieve outstanding results:

Olivia: I get lots of parents who clearly feel it is our 'duty' to do a lot to get the children the grades, to fudge predicted grades so that they can get to the right university and then once it is fudged, it becomes our responsibility for that student to get that grade...I think pupils know we are accountable and they believe that it is our job to get them the grades.

Alice: It's the 10 A-stars, regardless how you get there. I mean you're going to push your elbows out, and you're gonna trample over anybody, including teachers, to get the 10 A-stars. Lo and behold, if you don't get the 10 A- stars, who's accountable? The teacher.

Olivia summed up the mood of a number of participants regarding the focus on examination results suggesting 'It makes us sound like a factory'. Similarly to Thomas and Daisy, Olivia suggested a disparity between what motivated her as a teacher, and the motivation underpinning the wider school community of parents and pupils for better examination results. The practice of benchmarking each pupil with an estimated grade and holding teachers to account for the final performance of pupils against those benchmarks has become a practice to raise standards in schools as part of the culture of performativity (Ball, 2013:57-61). The teachers quoted appear to suggest the pendulum of responsibility had shifted too far in the direction of the teacher, and this changed their role. They spent less time inspiring pupils to enjoy learning and more time, in the words of Jessica, 'telling them what to write in the exam'.

Linked to overall pressures to achieve better examination results was teacher morale, which was also reported by some participants as having an impact upon professional identity. A suggestion was raised that levels of morale were different depending upon the

department in which they worked. William, who had experienced both high and low morale in his career, summed up the impact on morale on a teacher:

> *William: I was in a department where there was a lot of and tension as two people were forced on long term sick by the higher-ups and there was just a very uncomfortable…and I think from that experience, I began to lose confidence in teaching, as well as myself. And so I went to the Head and said this isn't really for me. I thought - if this is teaching, then I've made a big mistake'.*

At his previous school, William felt difficult circumstances in his school influenced him significantly. Given the problems within both his department and the school as a whole, William's loss of confidence led him to reconsider his whole identity as a teacher and whether to continue in the profession. His growing apathy with teaching changed when he moved to a new position in a collegial department at his current school, initially as a supply teacher to earn some money while he considered his options:

> *William: Then I came here and I thought - wow this is so great. It's more relaxed so much more togetherness... If you've got a good idea there's lots of discussion about how to teach something, and how not to teach something, and safety aspects to consider. So it was great and it really opened my eyes. I thought I've got confidence back in teaching and confidence in the teaching world as well.*

The difference in William's morale had an impact on how he viewed himself as a teacher. Sophia also noted the importance of professional context on morale. Indicating that in the past, there had been 'dissonance' in her department, which had disappeared as others moved on, Sophia also found the collegial environment and intellectual discussions about pedagogy she had with colleagues were crucial for 'why I'm teaching – I love that'. George reported a similar experience, albeit as an experienced departmental head himself. At a previous school, following a change in management, he felt his collegial approach to departmental decision-making was questioned, and he was told to be more autocratic, which he felt was 'not in my nature'. This challenge to his professional values impacted him negatively and he reported he did not 'cope very well' as a result. Collegiality, both between colleagues but also between staff and management appeared critical to morale. It was an essential factor in the professional identity of these participants. Guarino and

Santibafiez's (2006:201) review of literature indicates collegial support as a key factor in improving the motivation of teachers. The influence of these meso- and micro- level school contexts supported Kelchtermans (2005:1002-4) assertion that the emotions one experiences in teaching are rarely separate from the school context. Cochran-Smith (2004:391) also concludes that school conditions, where staff are supported and opportunities exist to work in a professional community, are key to teacher effectiveness.

Some participants also raised the issue of excessive workload having an impact on the way they viewed themselves as teachers. At the beginning of the century, Timperley and Robinson (2000:47) identified teacher workload to be a significant factor in teacher identity suggesting a link with increased levels of stress, low job satisfaction and teacher burnout which eventually leads to teachers leaving the profession. Two decades later, Perryman and Calvert (2020:3-4) suggest workload remains the most cited reason for leaving the profession. Olivia, Emily, Jessica and William all expressed concerns about the impact it had upon them:

Olivia: I guess we have a very high workload. And it is always increasing, it is always getting harder.

Emily: I think the workload is just the overwhelming thing for most teachers now, and if they take time to reflect on themselves - they might not have time to reflect on themselves (laughs) - then they're probably just going to be complaining about how much they're expected to do

Jessica: The pace of work in schools in England is terrible – everything needs to be done now and no one cares that 'now' is a week before Y11 go on study leave. That is a big problem.

William: I had my first holiday where I didn't do any work. It was a half-term. It would have been the October half-term this year and it was the first holiday - including the PGCE - the first break in 10 years where I hadn't done any work at all.

The quotations do not express adequately the frustration felt by participants when discussing this issue. The repetition of 'always' by Olivia, the ironic laughter from Emily and the use of vocabulary such as 'terrible' and 'big problem' give some sense of their feelings. William's anecdote of his first break from teaching in ten years highlights his feelings this should not be the case, but also that workload does not necessarily reduce with experience. Thomas agreed, indicating he spends a large amount of time at home working and that 'clearly, something's not quite going right here'. The problem of excessive workload was reported to have particular effects upon both personal and professional identity. Jessica and Emily both explicitly stated that excessive workload meant they lost part of what they wanted from being a teacher:

> *Jessica*: *I don't get the joy of planning those great lessons which is what I loved doing on my PGCE and that was where you feel you are doing something that will have an impact. It was great fun as well. And there is less of that because there is no time in the day… that zaps my positivity because I want to improve the lessons but I don't feel I have time to do it.*

> *Emily*: *I found it quite difficult to get back that excitement because I'm just too tired… If you're just doing the minimum to survive within the overloaded work schedule that you have, then you're not going to be able to think about how to make it better.*

Both felt they lost either 'positivity' or 'excitement' about being a teacher but, importantly, felt excessive workload inhibited time to reflect and improve upon their practice, which was a frustration for them. This loss of time to independently improve their practice felt like an important part of their professional identity was lost.

6.2.4 Effect of experience on Teacher Professional identity
One aspect of experience mentioned on numerous occasions was the influence of teachers, either teaching peers or their own teachers or mentors. William felt that both his favourite teacher at school and his training mentors were key influences upon him. He recognised differences in personality meant it was not possible to replicate others' approach entirely, suggesting that 'our personalities are different and I cannot do what [the teacher] did'. However, he believed that the kind of teacher he had become was formed partly by

amalgamating elements of what he had taken from others. Alice also felt her identity drew on influences from her experience of teachers at school:

> *Alice: They always say that you will always have a favourite teacher or there are teachers who'll influence you in ways you don't understand whilst you're expecting it. I suppose (pause) but you're not doing it consciously.*

While acknowledging an influence, neither felt this was a significant influence. While William could not replicate the teaching style of another, Alice felt it was not a conscious process, but it formed one of the 'many layers' influencing her professional identity. Amelia admitted she had tried to replicate the styles of those teachers she found exhibited a more confident identity while training but found 'I couldn't emulate that without looking like an idiot'. Amelia reflected upon the experience:

> *Amelia: I think your teaching identity really is very personal and I find that you won't get anywhere by trying to copy someone. It's about finding it, isn't it?*

This process of the teacher adapting their impressions of others and personalising it appears an integral part of the development of the professional self and this personalisation of their own identity is an important one if it is to guide their actions and influence their behaviour (Cohen, 2008:80). Beauchamp & Thomas (2009:178-84) note that the impact of the emotions and narrative stories that teachers experience from the moment they enter the classroom as a pupil play a vital role in the development of their professional identity.

Some participants recognised that professional identity changed as they developed confidence as a teacher. Alice and Jessica suggested experience as a teacher led to a more confident and relaxed identity in the classroom. Alice reported she felt 'more relaxed' and 'comfortable' in the classroom indicating she initially found it difficult and had developed a clear persona that differed from her early days in the classroom. Similarly, Jessica stated she was now more willing 'go off and talk about odd areas of History' where previously she 'wouldn't have wanted to show that side of myself'. Olivia felt it took a few years to develop a confident identity in the classroom but, in her fourth year of teaching suggested she noticed a change and that 'it seemed to shift to being more teacher-led according to my observations. Be confident in my expertise is how they worded it'.

Mia agreed she had more confidence and was less formulaic in her teaching after 17 years in the classroom so she could 'improvise and respond to student needs'. Amelia best summed up the shift in identity experienced after a period of time in the classroom:

> **Amelia**: It wasn't until my fourth year of teaching, I remember thinking, "I can do this, no problems"…I think it is just down to experience because there's just so many scenarios really that you've dealt with…You know, more or less, how some things could be done before you try it. I do still try new things quite a lot and take a bit of a risk but I've got something to compare it to.

Olivia, Mia and Amelia indicate it took a few years for them to develop a level of confidence about their classroom practice which then led them to view themselves differently; in Amelia's words 'I can do this'. All indicated expertise or confidence were vital factors in this development to their identity. For all these teachers, the passage of time changed the way they delivered their lessons and created a more relaxed persona in the classroom.

Professional identity outside of taught lessons also appeared to change over time. A sense of confidence that comes with experience led William to believe he was now 'a bit more thick-skinned'. Having the self-assurance to ignore advice grew to the point that he began a passive form of resisting what was told to him. When discussing recent lesson observations, he suggested his attitude toward them had changed with experience, suggesting he now views feedback as not 'the right way to do it, it's just a different way of doing it'. Sophia suggested she felt her opinion was worth more than when she started when she felt 'I wasn't really sure what I thought' and was now more willing to express herself to colleagues 'if I believe something does or doesn't work'.

Amelia also commented that her interactions outside the classroom had altered, making her look at herself differently:

> **Amelia**: Again, it wasn't until I was in my fourth year of teaching when less experienced colleagues were coming to me for advice and I was actually able to give them concrete examples of things to do that I felt, "Actually it's sounding like

I'm more experienced, it's sounding like I'm able to give them advice." That was
when I felt everything clicked really.

Being in a position to help others appears to have added to her confidence and sense of professional identity by achieving something she was unable to at the beginning of her career.

6.3 How policy shapes teacher professional identity

6.3.1 Traditional v Progressive education

One major discursive theme from the analysis of government texts presented in chapter 5 was a nostalgic message urging a return to traditional ways of teaching and learning. This indicates a belief by policymakers that teachers retained an adherence to progressive, child-centred pedagogies. The responses below indicate that participants were aware that the government was seeking to promote teaching values from a 'traditional' approach to teaching, but they did not identify themselves as beholden to one ideal or another.

While teaching standards and accountability measures can be used as a tool of government to influence teachers, the framing of public examinations is a more subtle tool which may change the way teachers approach their role. From September 2015, teachers in England began to teach new GCSE and A level specifications introduced by the Coalition government. The media message promoted by the government was that the new qualifications would be 'high-quality, rigorous and demanding'[11]. Jessica felt the enlarged content in History increased time-pressure to complete the course and had a 'negative impact' and 'put people off the subject as all they see is that it is about learning dates rather than about the enjoyment of it'. In English, Sophia agreed 'the new GCSE is tighter on time' and both conveyed either a lack of enjoyment or increased stress as a result of the changes.

Other participants intimated examination reforms led to a change in the way they approached their lessons. Amelia suggested time constraints meant the message in her lessons was often 'this is what you need to know, write it down' and Alice agreed that 'we

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[11] Michael Gove's (Education Secretary) written statement to Parliament on GCSE and A level reform, 9 April 2014 (https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/gcse-and-a-level-reform - last accessed 4 June 2020)

spoon-feed' and that 'at GCSE, I am more teacher-led because of the content that we have to get through'. Jessica also felt she had been forced to change her approach to focus on how to answer the variety of different questions pupils may face in the examination:

> *Jessica: With the previous GCSE the skills were embedded within the lesson and most of what the lesson was: what happened, why it happened and what were the consequences of these major periods of recent History, and actually using their brains. I feel now we have spent so much time learning how to approach what must be over 20 different types of question and learning at such a rapid pace that we have no time to go into detail.*

The use of the phrase 'actually using their brains' highlighted the sense of frustration Jessica felt at the reformed examinations. This analysis supports Morby's (2014:509) suggestion that the attainment gap widened as a result of the reforms due to differences in cultural capital as pupils from 'environments rich in exchangeable literary and linguistic capital' benefit over those from poor socio-economic backgrounds.

Jessica and Amelia expanded on the negative impact the examination reforms had on their identity. Jessica saw a political agenda behind the desire to have more British history on the curriculum suggesting 'we already have a lot of British History – we actually need to know more about the wider world more than just Britain itself'. Amelia stated:

> *Amelia: It's still unreasonable to expect some of the students to sit there and do a 2 hour and 15 minute exam, closed book and write four essays in that time. I think essentially what happens to those students is they go in, they do two questions and then they fall asleep for the rest of it. That's pretty much accepted. I worry about what it does to those students emotionally and mentally because it's setting them up to fail and they know that.*

Amelia also suggested concerns that examination reforms were setting some pupils up to fail which did not fit with her beliefs as a teacher. Both felt the impact of the reforms diverged from their sense of professional identity and their philosophy as teachers was being challenged.

Overall, the responses indicate that teachers are aware that the reformed examinations, particularly at GCSE, forced them to adapt their teaching approach to give more teacher-led instruction and focus on examination technique. The mood was that reforms had not been a positive experience either for pupils or teachers and there appeared a degree of resentment there was an enforced shift in the nature of teaching as a result, supporting Stock's (2017:143-156) assessment that the new direction of public examinations grafted 'a sense of traditionalism' back into education with the implication of a desire to conserve elitist values.

What was particularly interesting about the responses concerning the traditional-progressive debate was that contrary to policymakers' suggestion that teachers predominantly use child-centred pedagogies in the discourse, many participants suggested they 'hugged the middle' (Cuban, 2007:1-29). Most participants resisted the label of traditional or progressive when asked to self-identify. Some tended towards a more cautious approach and indicated the context in which they were teaching was more important than any deeply held pedagogical philosophy. Jessica, Freya and Olivia all said they were either 'in between' or 'somewhere in the middle' with all three indicating their approach was determined by the context of the class and year group in front of them. Emily summed up her approach:

> **Emily:** *I think I have to be more traditional with the young girls because there is 30 of them in a room to manage. By Year 10 or 11 there's 20-something and then less than 20 for A-Level. You have more freedom. It's hard to be progressive when you've got 30 stuffed into the room.*

When faced with a binary choice, all four offered a third option based on context. The teaching methods employed were dependent upon the context of the class, but even this context varied between teachers. Olivia indicated she did more child-centred activities with pupils aged 11-14 (Years 7-9 in England), while Emily found it easier to manage a similar class if she was leading the lesson. Emily also indicated she did not favour one side or the other but tended toward the traditional suggesting the 'knowledge-centred curriculum matters more to me', Freya felt the curriculum meant there was a need to adopt a more didactic approach sometimes to ensure content was delivered:

Freya: I think that when I came in I was probably more lecture style with my year 12's, because I was very much aware that there was a lot of content that I had to teach them. Then lower down the school maybe you can be a little bit more interactive…Where's the balance? You can get them to as many bloody card sorts as you want, but if you've got to deliver content, you have to deliver content.

These participants indicated they did not label themselves as either 'progressive' or 'traditional' and positioned themselves between the two. None wished to denigrate the ideas of one ideal, but instead suggested they only moved between the positions. When asked to say which side they tended towards, Alice and Sophia felt they verged towards the traditional methods of teaching, albeit giving different reasons for this. Alice perceived it as the favoured method of independent schools and that a focus on aspects such as good diction and grammar gave pupils greater confidence in later life and helped level the private-public divide in education. Sophia felt this was a more effective teaching method and cited Michaela Community School as a school rigorously applying traditional methods and felt that 'reading about it makes me feel like "oh, I must be doing something right". So it's quite nice'. Sophia indicated that:

Sophia 'if you watched me teach on mute, I would look like I'm just delivering it all from the front. And I think - I've got the knowledge, you need it, so the best way for me to get it into you is for you to listen'

While Alice felt she was being forced into a traditional approach to give her students the same opportunities as pupils from independent schools, Sophia's mindset was based on a belief that knowledge needed to be transferred from her to the pupil.

6.3.2 Accountability and Autonomy

Another major discursive theme identified in the discourse analysis related to a government message indicating schools benefited from greater autonomy from both local and central government control and that this should be allied with a robust system of accountability. Of all the policy areas discussed in the interviews, the accountability system was the one that provoked the most emotional response from participants.

As classroom teachers and middle-managers in an established multi-academy trust, participants were used to the newer form of governance. The main concern for some of them was a feeling that their schools and departments were losing their individual identities as part of standardising processes. Sophia and Emily felt standardisation of their subject schemes of work meant they were losing the personal stamp they could put on their lessons. Sophia felt it made it more likely she could be called to teach across any of the schools in the MAT as 'you can do your planning here and deliver it in another place'. Emily also felt there was a sense that each department was being placed in competition with their counterparts elsewhere in the Trust:

> **Emily :** *Schemes of work are being rebranded as schemes of learning and they must all be in a consistent format. That is just purely so they can be audited. I don't see how that is going to have any positive effect on teaching or on learning. I find it extremely frustrating and it really dispiriting and has demoralised a lot of people.*

Both felt that standardising the schemes was about organisational coherence and Emily, in particular, could not see any benefit for her pupils. This frustration was shared by Jessica, who had experience teaching in a large academy chain who felt the corporate branding of resources used in the classroom, took away 'the personal connection with the teacher' and created a sense that 'this is how it needs to be delivered to get someone a C at GCSE', placing examination results as more important than genuine learning or enjoyment of her subject, something that did not fit with her sense of self as a teacher.

With more direct experience of its effects, participants were more opinionated about the accountability measures they faced. In terms of overall measurements of schools, Olivia felt the proclivity of data about schools available to parents meant they developed unreasonable expectations about what a school could achieve for their child. She believed it encouraged a view that 'if the data is good then that means my daughter is part of it, and should be doing well', rather than seeing children as an individual with specific strengths and weaknesses. Olivia believed that 'you can only know a school so well by its data'. Sophia believed the range of data measures meant there was always some measure upon which teachers' failure was assured and that managers would use this as the measurement of choice as 'they look for the one we can make an improvement on'. Sophia expressed her frustration that she was not trusted as a professional to do the job to the best of her ability,

stating 'I don't know that they trust us just to get on with it'. The distrust of school league tables as a guide for future performance is borne out by statistical analyses suggesting they can be unreliable and misleading (Leckie and Goldstein, 2011:833-6).

As scientists, both Emily and Sophia expressed an understanding and appreciation of data, yet both remained sceptical of how it was used in schools to drive improvement. Emily believed pupils should be tested and results recorded but expressed a concern that 'the comparison with the targets and benchmark scores, I think that has become excessive'. Sophia summarised the position by understanding the need for data, but expressing a cynicism about its value:

> *Sophia: I like data, I like to measure stuff. I like all the data management in Chemistry and I'm forever looking at spreadsheets and the colours (laughs) I love all of that, but I know it's all with a very big pinch of salt. So if the data says what I want it to say, then I really like (laughs) and if it doesn't, I'll find flaws in it.*

As well as a general scepticism of school performance data expressed by the above participants, other frustrations included the additional work created as part of data collection. George felt the role of the head of department had changed:

> *George: The main role is the production of data, a much more managerial function than, if you like, a pedagogical supporting function. Were I applying for a Head of Department job now, I'd be very aware it's very different from the one I applied for back in 1989.*

For George, what it meant to be a middle-manager had changed with data collection and the use of data a key managerial tool. When asked to explain the 'pedagogical supporting function' he used to fulfil, he felt a key part of his role used to be 'modelling oneself' for less experienced colleagues. Alice also expressed frustration at data collection, recalling that she was asked to complete paperwork following a peer observation to evidence the activity when she felt the benefits to her and her colleagues' practice had already taken place through the observation and verbal feedback. While compliant, Alice expressed frustration at having to complete a task for which she saw no value and suggested 'Well, I just have to do this, but I find that I get cross about it'.

Having experienced a different system in Ireland, Emily was particularly vocal about the work she had to complete to fulfil data collection requirements. The completion of spreadsheets and form filling she completed in England led to her feeling less satisfied with her role, in large part because time spent 'doing things for evidence' was time taken away from making an 'impact'. She also believed the time spent on such tasks was increasing as the complexities of a teacher's role was hard to record, leaving her feeling:

> *Emily: ...really stressed and it didn't give the satisfaction, because I possibly was working 60 hours a week in Ireland, but it was 60 hours on physics and learning...the forms just get longer and longer every year and the amount of time spent filling those is just so disproportionate. It's just recording, you're just doing things for evidence rather than for impact... I remember talking to somebody it and I would just feel eroded. My sense of identity was eroded.*

Later in the interview, Emily expressed her biggest frustration as:

> *Emily : Doing a practical in science in a particular way that it will tick boxes for the exam board, rather than what I think the beauty of the experiment is.*

> *Interviewer: How does that make you feel as a teacher?*

> *Emily : Annoyed and frustrated, especially as the tick boxes keep changing from one curriculum to the next.*

Emily's enjoyment of her subject is shown in her talking of the 'beauty of the experiment' but she believes this is getting lost because of the need for tick-box practices. What she wants to get across to pupils in her lessons about her enjoyment of her subject is being frustrated by the needs of accountability measures. This echoes Perryman's (2009:627) analysis that the work of teachers becomes 'built around passing inspections with little or no space for any initiatives, schemes or plans' that do not relate directly to the agenda of the regulator.

The primary interaction with accountability for the participants tended to concern their school's performance management system. Alice and Thomas felt the whole approach to performance management in teaching, what Perryman (2009:616) terms 'the relentless gaze' suggested a 'lack of trust', as insulting to them professionally:

> *Alice: But I'm not always looking to try and pull the wool or get away with things. I'm here to do a job and a good job and to the best of my ability... I think it's that lack of trust.*

> *Thomas: I almost feel I've actually got to come to school and prove through my performance management that I should be here.*

While participants expressed frustrations at systems of accountability, there was also a sense that they were being shaped by it. Amelia believed the robust system of accountability at her previous school 'affected my practice' as it put her in competition with colleagues, as well as placing pressure on her to achieve targets or else be 'found a failure'. As relatively new to teaching, it was interesting both Freya and Jessica were very focused on targets they had been set even though they were both quite cynical as to their value:

> *Freya: So pace was something I had to work on as well, and that I understood, and I got to that. I do think it was almost like, "Oh, well, you need to have this word because OFSTED like it."*

> *Jessica: I think sometimes observations where comments have been made about something like pace. Also if one pair out of 15 is off topic, that means I get called out – which is just impossible to get them all on it all the time.*

Alice and Thomas shared similar sentiments. Alice feared accountability had made her 'probably more cautious, less willing to be creative' because 'how can you just have a go if there's a threat, and I do perceive it as a threat, that any moment somebody is going to come in with a clipboard'. Her use of the word 'threat' in relation to the process of drop-in observations was telling in terms of her mindset. Thomas and Daisy both agreed with the

sentiment that the creativity necessary in teaching was being lost and that 'they've taken the humanity out of teaching':

> **Thomas:** *Education is very much a creative career. The whole thing is that they're taking something that's creative, taking something that is driven with inspiring people and they're turning it into something measurable and technical.*

> **Daisy**: *Teaching is a collaborative industry. It forgets that its people dealing with people. The children are human beings, they're not production units, and this is what they're turned into.*

For both, a key aspect of teacher identity, the creative nature of the role, was in jeopardy due to the need to collect data that measures teacher performance. The self-regulation, or self-government (Rose, 1999:204) that underpins performativity certainly appears to act as a limiting factor on these teachers and the 'exacting discipline' of the accountability regime becomes an omnipotent presence to impact their practice (Wilcox and Gray, (1996:120).

One subject nearly all participants agreed on, was that they adapted their practice when being observed to give the observer what they thought they were expecting. Perryman (2009:622) refers to this as 'fabricating the stage'. In this way, participants offer an inauthentic version of themselves. Amelia, Emily and Olivia all indicated they changed their observed lessons to 'please' the observer and admitted they would 'play the game' or introduce 'gimmicks' into their lessons to fulfil what they are told makes a good lesson. Their cynicism was best expressed by Olivia:

> **Olivia**: *I guess I make alterations for observations based upon what I know the person observing me likes and I know that will reflect well in my performance management… you know the whole 'every student making progress', so we all went to the holding up the mini whiteboard 'gimmick' or the traffic lights. I dislike it because I think it is a waste of time.*

William, Freya and Alice had similar feelings on fabricating their teaching for observations. William indicated he would adapt his regular teaching to focus the lesson on

whatever would allow him to show evidence of meeting a particular target. Freya reported she had seen colleagues 'turn it on for an observation' and then revert to type in normal lessons while Alice felt the whole process was 'a bit of a show' even for the observer, and finds that as line manager herself , 'you have got to find something to improve on' regardless of the overall quality of the lesson or the teacher concerned. Alice's comment echoed that of former head of Ofsted, Michael Wilshaw, who expressed frustration that teachers were trying to pull the 'proverbial wool' over the eyes of inspectors (Wilshaw, 2013).

Ball (2003:215-228) suggests this sort of fabrication is a betrayal to the authenticity of the individual, which creates a cost to the 'soul' of the teaching self. Perhaps the biggest paradox of the comments from the participants relates to Ball's point that the accountability measures were designed to create transparency in teaching but made the system more opaque. Freya also suggested fabrications could harm pupils' learning:

> *Freya*: *You lose respect from the pupils by doing a bells and whistles lesson when somebody comes in just because they're there, and I'd much rather have the respect of the pupils, who I see day in day out, than their respect of somebody with a clipboard [laughs]. I think their learning will be better overall. I think that respect is very important.*

As Freya suggests, the most important observation regime to her is the one imposed on her daily when in front of her pupils and the respect she builds up over time can be threatened if they see her acting differently. Freya implies she sees observations which divert from the typical lesson as unprofessional behaviour as it sends the wrong message to the pupils and sets a bad example.

Another crucial impact that accountability had on teacher identity related to the feeling that targets were always set that made them feel inadequate in their professional role. Accepting that perfection in teaching was not possible and that there was always room for improvement, Sophia still felt it she needed some validation that she was doing a good job.

> *Sophia*: *You always get feedback and you always have to have something to work on. That annoys me intently. That really annoys me because you're never perfect,*

which I accept, but you always have to have something that's wrong... I think it
makes you feel like you're not good enough on a really basic level if every time
you do something, you try and show your best and you're told what you should
have done it different. When you're only seen a couple of times a year, you want
to hear you are doing a good job. especially when you put so much effort into the
job.

Alice agreed she found performance management led to her losing confidence. As a manager herself, she felt it would be frowned upon if she did not find fault in observations and so sought out problems – what she termed 'car crash observations', where observers look for what has gone wrong:

***Alice**: Whenever there's performance management, no matter what you do, I feel*
I'm never ever good enough. Therefore, that's not good for one's self-confidence.
I'm never good enough because you're always going to suggest a different way. I
can't go in an put down the target of, "Great, keep it up. Target: go and share
your ideas with somebody else" - that would just be frowned upon? It has to be
the car crash observation, look for something, anything.

Both Sophia and Alice expressed accountability that focused on targets felt like fault was consistently found, leading to a loss of confidence and a feeling that 'you're never good enough' no matter how good a job they felt they were doing. This supports Berryhill et al's (2009:2) analysis that accountability policies put teachers in a position where they did not feel effective.

6.3.3 Teacher resistance to policy

Foucault (197:95-6) states 'where there is power, there is resistance'. As policy becomes a site for power relations between government and teachers, it also remains a site for resistance to policy. While participants generally felt they had a professional duty to follow policy, some reported elements of passive resistance to aspects they felt diverged from their sense of identity.

While expressing frustration at aspects of policy, Amelia, Alice and Emily all suggested they acquiesced with policy implementation. Amelia felt that as a middle-manager there

were times 'when I've had to get my team on board with something that I haven't agreed with myself' but felt she always presented this to staff and would 'have to be a bit diplomatic and it's part of being professional'. Emily indicated she had participated in 'action short of strike action' a few years previously through her union but now felt standing up for what she felt was important 'seems to fade away, and I don't feel like I have the energy for arguments anymore'. Alice summed up those expressing apathy towards policy that it was easier to go along with it than openly resist, saying 'sometimes you have to deliver things that you just have to do, and I don't always see the sense of it, but I don't have a strong enough voice'.

A greater willingness appeared among participants to question policy as they became middle-managers or developed greater experience in the profession suggesting a shift in professional identity with regard to policy came with increased status in the hierarchy and greater experience. Daisy felt she was 'more in control' of her decision-making, making her more proactive when engaging with policy rather than being reactive suggesting she was now 'a do-er, rather than just having things done to me'. Olivia felt she 'definitely questions it more' because 'before, I didn't need to justify it to anyone, I used to just step back and accept it a lot more'. Like Amelia, holding a different role in policy work created a different relationship to policy and thereby changed her professional identity from someone who did not just simply cope with policy but was forced to defend it (Ball et al, 2012:63-67). As an experienced teacher, Sophia was more willing to question policy and preferred to see a rationale that suited her teaching philosophy and had 'a student impact', otherwise, she felt she was 'wasting my time'. Again, this would suggest that, for Sophia, experience as a teacher changed her professional relationship with policy implementation.

Both Mia and Thomas felt questioning policy helped them come to understand it. Mia said she could move from a position of 'no way am I doing that' to 'okay, let me think about it, alright?' when allowed to question and challenge policy. Thomas also felt questioning policy was a key part to accepting policy:

> **Thomas**: *My role as Head of Department is making certain my staff follow along with policies. If I can't engage and debate these polices then how can I say 'okay, you got me on board, I think this is going to move us forward'.*

While Thomas felt his managerial role expected him to adhere to policy, questioning and debating policy with management was one way he could overcome any personal resistance.

Some participants did indicate they employed passive resistance, either by ignoring policy directives or looking to interpret them in ways to suit their sense of professionalism. Mia reported that she could find ways around direct opposition to policy:

> *Mia: Will I say, 'I'm not doing that'?. Probably not to be honest. I will say, ' I won't be able to do it to that timescale or to that level of detail required'.*

Being able to subvert policy she disagreed with, rather than oppose it outright appears to be a defence mechanism when policy and professional values diverge. Jessica's resistance to the government's policy for a greater focus on British values was a prime example of this sort of behaviour:

> *Jessica: I guess I try to go off-piste where I can introduce what I think is important. I do it more at KS3 as a bit of a protest where I try to present British History through the lens of other countries. So when I teach the British Empire, I don't project the British experience, but what it was like in India, what it was like in Africa, what it was like in North America. How did they change? I find a British focus very worrying. It's as if you only learn about British History, you will become more patriotic. I don't think you have to be patriotic and not be a terrorist, I don't see any connection there.*

In disagreeing with the policy perspective that a focus on British history in lessons would create better citizens, Jessica offered her personal 'bit of a protest' by focusing on the perspectives of other cultures. Her statement that she found the British focus 'worrying' indicated her sense of teacher identity was being challenged and her refusal to participate in making pupils 'more patriotic' suggests a clear divergence between what she saw as her role as a teacher and the intent of policy.

Similarly, Emily, Sophia and William suggested they were willing to ignore targets or comments from performance management if they disagreed with them. As a part-time

member of staff, Emily felt having six performance management targets was excessive and indicated 'I just thought I'm not going to be able to do that. I'm not going to be able to achieve all of those, so I just didn't think about them so much'. Being willing to simply ignore targets set as part of performance management, Emily expresses a desire not to allow the accountability system to have a negative impact upon her. Sophia suggested that with greater experience as a teacher she has a confidence to reflect on comments from observations 'and then you temper it, so it can be manageable within your own personality, because you can't be anybody else'. William summed up a sense of passive resistance backed up by a sense of self-confidence in his practice:

> **William**: *As you get wiser, you look back and you see this as a cycle. Things are going round and round and actually you just nod to say 'yes' and carry on doing what you're doing because you feel quite safe in your job and you still do good lessons.*

Again, greater experience appears to have altered these participants relationship to policy. They feel more able to either ignore or translate policy implementation to suit their own sense of identity. The manifestation of resistance among participants appears to fit with the three phases outlined by Terhart (2013:488) focusing on the necessity for reform, the operation of reform and the benefits of reform. Participants tended to resist when they could not positively rationalise these three areas.

6.4. How internal and external discourses shape teacher identity

6.4.1 External discourses

The third characteristic of teacher professional identity relates to the discourse, or the socially accepted framework of thinking and speaking about the teaching profession. Gee (1999:2), indicates that prevailing discourse can impact the way teachers construct their identity. It prescribes what is 'normal' within the profession and society as a whole. This can lead to a form of social conditioning which, even though an individual is aware of the discourse operating as such, becomes hard for them to work actively against (Miller Marsh, 2002:455).

Participants were asked how they felt the profession was viewed from within the profession itself and beyond, and how this impacted upon their identity. After a long career

in teaching, George believed 'there is much less esteem and respect for teachers now than there used to be'. The following participants all agreed there existed a negative discourse in society about the teaching profession:

Alice: I think they undervalue them. Everybody has an opinion and it's based on perhaps a personal bias... and teachers are lazy because…they leave school at 3:20, so there is that misconceived perception of teachers.

Sophia: I think, lazy, spending too much time on classroom management therefore you're not planning for a full lesson because you know you're only going to teach 20 minutes of it.

Amelia: They think that they are lazy, they never bother marking work, they go home every day at 3 o'clock. Actually, I remember some of those things being said by my parents when I was growing up.

Jessica: I think that depends on the age of the people. I think people my parents' age will think that everyone is very lazy and goes home at 3:20…. I think it's not seen as something where you need to be clever…that is it is about getting people to be disciplined.

It is noticeable that all four participants used the word 'lazy' to describe public opinion suggesting an ingrained perception. Alice felt frustration that teachers were undervalued by society and this perception was due to people's experiences at school both as a pupil and parent. The lack of understanding about the nature of the role could be different among generations with the older generation holding a more negative impression of teachers. Mia also suggested the older generation 'still think we have these long holidays'. Alice felt society does not regard teaching to be an academic profession and was supported by Freya, indicating the move away from university-based teacher education meant 'it's almost like they're saying there isn't any academia in teaching'. This repeated a feeling that Alice expressed in an earlier quotation when she said she felt teaching was not considered professional or intellectual, but that 'anybody can have a go at this'.

The frustration that the teaching profession was being unfairly treated linked to the sense that discourse had shifted in recent years toward the teacher being held responsible for examination results. George believed there had been a shift to the teacher 'being accountable for the results of students'. Olivia quoted an article about a school where pupils were told the responsibility for grades rested mainly with the teacher:

> **Olivia**: *I read somewhere of a Headteacher who told his sixth formers that 40% of the responsibility for getting good grades was on them and 60% was on the teachers. That attitude puts massive pressure on us.*

To repeat an earlier quotation from Olivia, 'I think pupils know we are accountable and they believe that it is our job to get them the grades'. Her perception that pupils know teachers are accountable and view it as the teacher's job not to get pupils to learn, but to get them good grades. Her final sentence indicating 'that attitude puts massive pressure on us' underlines previous comments from participants about the different attitudes of teachers towards the commodification of education, their 'output', and the expectations of other stakeholders. Alice conveyed her view that education was holistic but that the broader societal discourse around education, focusing on a consumer model, was at odds with this:

> **Alice**: *You can see the attitudes of the students in institutions, that they, "What can you give me?" Everybody's become a consumer so everybody has this sense of entitlement …Therefore, we're losing sight of what education is. Education is a holistic approach to foster curiosity and wider interest in the world, and manners, and interaction with other people.*

These comments, along with others earlier on about excessive focus on grades as outcomes by schools, suggest a disconnect between what teachers perceive society expects from them and their professional values.

6.4.2 How professional discourse shapes identity

As well as a discourse developed external to the profession, a strong internal discourse develops through how teachers think, speak and feel about themselves which can impact their identity. In the quotations above, participants tended to be defensive against attacks on their profession from outside; however, there was a degree of criticism levied from

participants about the profession itself. The most common of these was the degree of negativity expressed in conversations with other teachers, which some participants felt harmed their professional identity.

Younger participants felt this particularly strongly, suggesting more experienced teachers could be 'moany', 'cynical' and 'negative':

> *Amelia: They're mainly older. They did come across as being quite moany to be honest and I don't think that I am that way.*

> *Jessica: The older teachers are just so cynical. You see all these adverts about inspiring people in the adverts and as soon as you get there, that is completely out the window. No one talks about inspiring pupils anymore…I do find that every discussion I have about teaching always becomes negative at some point or another. It doesn't stay on that positive trajectory… There are a lot of people who you talk to and they clearly just hate it. And you think, why are they still doing it?*

Both Amelia and Jessica were critical of older teachers and Jessica referenced the impact this had on her after she joined the profession, expressing frustration no one appeared to talk about the positive aspects of teaching. Continually negative presentation of teaching as a career by older colleagues drained Jessica's enthusiasm, a term she later called 'eating their young'. Expanding on this feeling, Jessica felt her professional values were out of step with others, and this slowly ground down her positivity. Fearing her identity might be altering, she was concerned she could be 'turning into one of the moaners' supporting Perryman and Calvert's (2020:3-4) assertion that people join the profession for largely altruistic reasons, wanting to 'make a difference', but succumb over time to a 'discourse of disappointment' about the realities of teaching.

6.4.3 How Government discourse shapes identity

The last major theme from the interviews concerns how teachers respond to government policy relates to the discourse formulated by policymakers about teachers. In chapter 5, this discourse was presented as being critical of the profession, suggesting that the standards of teaching needed improvement and that the training teachers received was inadequate.

Jessica perceived that policymakers do not really 'know what goes on in schools', a reason why they criticise teachers and maintain pressure on the profession to improve. Jessica also criticised policymakers for insufficient effort to find out the realities and to 'listen to the problems that teachers have'. Sophia agreed with this, believing government was 'lacking in understanding' and that 'they don't understand the pressure'.

Both Olivia and Amelia indicated a lack of understanding or appreciation for the difficulties faced by teachers was one reason so many were leaving the profession. Amelia was particularly frustrated that high standards were placed on teachers by policymakers who failed to provide the necessary support to help the profession achieve these:

> *Olivia: I think they view us as civil servants to work for the community. Something like law is different. We are more like workers with a set of skills… It goes back to being unappreciated, a lack of recognition…they are trying to get fresh blood in, new people in, but they are not nurturing what is there already.*

> *Amelia: Education is not their priority, but I know from just the issues with recruiting in schools that, it should be a priority because we've got schools with pupils having a different teacher every week, and on long term supply. We can't live up to these high standards that are being expected of us, unless we have the tools.*

Frustration at government criticism while simultaneously providing insufficient help to teachers, was a theme with other participants. In particular, a feeling there was much too much reform in a system continually being tinkered with, making the role of the teacher harder. Both Thomas and Emily complained about the changing 'goal posts' with Emily suggesting this led to 'uncertainty and insecurity'. Similarly, George wished government had 'an awareness of how difficult it can be to constantly implement change'. Sophia and Alice summed up the mood with the example of the changed public examinations:

> *Sophia: Stop messing about with the syllabus would be good. They seem to like to keep changing it. I think that each government thinks they know what's best, or even each Education Secretary (laughs)… they think they've got the answer.*

Alice: Some ringfencing of policy so that there is a common policy created and everyone is pulling toward that rather than - on a bit of a whim - which is what it appears to be.

No participant questioned the intentions of policymakers, but Sophia felt the continuous cycle of Secretaries of State meant an ever-changing policy landscape for teachers while Alice expressed similar frustration and suggested some ring-fencing of policy would allow a level of certainty for teachers.

Alongside the perception of continuous policy-tinkering was the feeling among participants of an increased responsibility being passed to teachers for a range of issues. Alice felt that societal change, which meant more parents working full time led to teachers being expected to fulfil roles previously done at home as 'parents aren't doing it, are they? They expect us to do it all'. Freya felt teachers were held responsible when there is a bad press concerning young people suggesting 'teachers get a bad rap, because I think we are blamed when anything goes wrong, because we're standing in the classroom with them'. Amelia specifically picked out economic policy as an area where teachers were given added responsibility with policymakers wanting the UK education system to compare favourably with economic competitors such as China and Singapore. Amelia believes that one of the main outcomes that government now looks for from education was 'workers of the future, knowledgeable and going to be able to compete on an international level'.

Jessica summed up the mood of teachers who felt the government sought to pass a portion of responsibility for a wide range of society's issues on to the teaching profession in this exchange:

Jessica: We should fix everything (laughs). I think schools are expected to fix every problem that pupils might have. So if children are getting in trouble outside the school, then somehow the school need to fix that. If there is terrorism, then people look at the schools and say they have failed them at some point…For example, the government keep talking about children from lower income families falling behind. I agree that needs to be addressed. But solutions like giving those

schools an extra teacher to reduce class sizes is not keeping up with the scale of the problem.

Interviewer: So who do you feel the government are blaming for that attainment gap?

Jessica: (firmly) Teachers.

Interviewer: And who do you think is to blame.

Jessica: (firmly) The government.

While the policy discourse in relation to the attainment gap placed responsibility on to the teaching profession, Jessica's response rebuffs this approach.

Irritation also existed among participants about the focus by policymakers on ever-improving grades. George suggested there was 'a perception that it is never as good as it used to be' while both Olivia and Alice saw 'grades' as the primary expectation on teachers, although both felt a divergence with their own values:

Olivia: Most teachers come into teaching because they love their subject or they want to motivate young people. I didn't become a teacher to focus on grades.

Alice: Having an education is about having an intellectual curiosity and a wide general knowledge and an interest in a wide range of subjects. But I don't think we are doing that. The government prefer us to spoon-feed them information because it works for the exam results. They can then tick that box.

For Emily and Freya, the pressure placed on teachers to continually achieve better examination grades similarly impacted them as teachers:

Emily: They're so afraid of the grades that they're going to get. I've got brilliant students who should love the subjects, who should be coming to school and love

learning and they just come in and they cry because they're afraid that they're not going to get a grade 9.

Freya: It doesn't really matter what crap is faced, as long as the grades are what they're meant to be to get them to where they need to go. I think it's a shame because for me being at school is also about crafting a human being to be the best possible person they can be, and that's not based on grades. No one ever came into teaching to get kids a whole load of A stars.

For Emily, the focus on grades impacted her ability to inspire pupils to enjoy her subject while Freya felt the overemphasis on grades meant other aspects of schooling which were essential to her, such as developing the individual, got lost. Echoing Olivia's statement about not becoming a teacher to focus on grades, Freya summed up the mood of these participants by suggesting 'no one ever came into teaching to get kids a whole load of A stars'.

Sophia and Amelia were also frustrated at the focus on inspection gradings as the benchmark upon which schools are compared. Sophia believed Ofsted inspectors could never be objective and inadvertently brought their own biases to bear about a selective school in a nice suburban area: 'they think we've got it easy. So we have to overperform to be deemed as good as another school'. Amelia was also concerned that the pastoral role 'can't be measured' but that it formed 'probably 50% to 60%' of the work a teacher does. Both expressed a belief that flaws existed in the grading process as inspectors either do not understand the context of the school they are inspecting, or that large parts of the teaching role cannot be measured or observed in a short inspection visit echoing Drake's (2008:20-4) argument that tight inspection schedules, inadequate data and limited contact with stakeholders leads to a lack of detail in final inspection judgements.

Thomas best summed up the frustration of participants at the Ofsted process:

I'm sorry, you're now saying that everything else we do makes not an ounce of difference. You are bringing everybody, students and staff down to a single number.

There was also frustration that government expected more from the teaching profession while providing less in real terms funding each year as a result of the austerity programme. William suggested the general negative feeling towards the teaching profession among society at large meant the government thought 'they can screw teachers more because they get, generally, the public backing them'. In a similar vein, when asked how they felt about the government line that they were putting more money in actual terms into schools than ever before, the response from participants was reasonably uniform. What Alice referred to as a 'nonsensical' position, Amelia and Freya both summed up as:

> **Amelia:** *They may have, in a very politician like way, said that they've put more money in than they have in the past, but yet the actual levels of funding to schools is being cut.*

> **Freya:** *Where is it? [laughs] I suppose that's what I'm thinking, where is it?... It's shocking that we don't have enough textbooks.*

These responses indicate an ironic loss of confidence in the veracity of position taken by policymakers. Freya's questioning of evidence of extra funding and her observation that textbooks were unavailable for her classes give a sense of the frustration felt at government rhetoric on the funding issue.

Having expressed their views on government and the effects of policy upon them, participants outlined their perception of what the government think of them. Generally, there was a very pessimistic response with Jessica believing teachers were viewed as 'self-pitying and lazy'. Amelia indicated that, with regards to the wider negative discourse in society about the teaching profession, 'a lot of that comes from things that different government ministers, or whatever, have said or implied'. Perhaps most telling in terms of the way participants felt teachers were viewed by policymakers was when they were asked if they believed they were viewed as professionals:

> **Jessica**: *(firmly) No. Absolutely not. Just look at removing teacher training from the way it was before. They don't want people to do PGCEs any more, they want people to receive training in schools and that is not the same as a 'professional'.*

Mia: Not at all. No, it's constantly implied we're not good enough.

Alice: I think it goes back to the earlier question. It's like when Michael Gove was education minister, he thought he knew better. He went back to his own personal childhood, and said…because it did me good, and therefore, it's going to do today's generation good."

Alice's response draws upon the nostalgic discourse presented by policymakers, such as Michael Gove, who introduced more rigorous public examinations from 2015. Her frustration lay in a belief that policymakers, with minimal experience of working in education, felt they knew better than teachers themselves. George agreed with this sentiment suggesting that 'there's a perception it's never as good as it used to be'. Jessica expanded on her answer saying she felt 'angry… very underappreciated and very undervalued'. She went on:

Jessica: I think it makes you feel like you're not seen as equal to people who have decided to do law or business and I think if they want graduates to become teachers then they need to show that it is a graduate profession and not just something where you go to a teacher training college then that's enough. If they want people to be teaching students who can then compete on the world's stage, then they need to make sure that teachers actually feel like they are professionals.

The notion that teaching has become a technical skill where the workforce should be 'managed and controlled' rather than a 'profession to be respected' has long been a complaint of teachers (Tomlinson, 2001:36). The responses of many participants suggested they did not see teaching through the same neoliberal lens as that underpinning government discourse (Keddie:2017:1246). As Perryman and Calvert (2020:6) indicate, the need to demonstrate their competence leads to a further sense of deprofessionalisation and the mismatch between the aspirations of teachers and the job they are expected to do by government acts as a demotivator.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the voices of the teachers I interviewed. In relation to government policy and discourse, participants expressed general disagreement with

policymakers as expressed in the discourses explored in chapter 5. Participants also demonstrated a degree of resistance towards policy. Overall, the findings indicate a sense of misunderstanding between teachers and policymakers. In the next chapter, I explore this misunderstanding and disagreement further by analysing the data through the perspective of Michel Foucault's theory of power discussed in chapter 3.

Chapter 7: Discussion of data

7.1 Introduction

I argued in chapter 3 that, since the 1980s, both Labour and Conservative UK governments used mechanisms relating to policy, curriculum and discourse to achieve strategic goals. These mechanisms minimise overt use of governmental power and use strategies such as managing discourse to achieve its goals. Foucault (2008:28-9) terms this internal limitation of governmental power as 'frugal government' in that it economises power in a way that makes it most likely to be effective in achieving its desired outcomes. For Foucault (2008:1-2), this 'art of government', or governmentality, relates to the ability of 'guiding men, directing their conduct, constraining their actions and reactions'. In this chapter, I complete my exploration of the third research question and discuss how the discourse analysis and interview data suggests that discourse may seek to shape identity and how teachers respond to this. I do this by analysing the data using three specific aspects of Foucault's theory concerning power: disciplinary power, power-knowledge and governmentality.

7.2 Disciplinary Power

Disciplinary power is essential in Foucault's theory of power and helps us understand the critical discourse and interview data more fully. Foucault (1977:170) outlines three fundamental mechanisms of disciplinary power: hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and the examination. All three are found in the discursive texts in chapter 5 in the following discourses set up and perpetuated by the UK government:

- Greater autonomy for schools improves teaching standards and outcomes
- Teaching and the teaching profession requiring improvement.
- The existence of the attainment gap is the fault of the teaching profession
- A system of robust accountability will improve teaching standards and outcomes
- The Ofsted inspection grade presents the truth about the standard of a school and its teacher

Whether intentional or not, aspects of disciplinary power run through the discursive texts and this exercise of power may produce a form of docility on the part of the teaching profession.

7.2.1 Disciplinary space & hierarchical observation

For disciplinary power to operate successfully, there needs to be a form of identifiable disciplinary space. Foucault (1977:147) argued that the school showed 'the organisation of serial space as one of the great technical mutations of elementary education' when thinking about the use of disciplinary power to create docility in pupils. The discourse analysis and interview data indicate that schools can readily form compartmentalised spaces through which disciplinary power can act. Through the discourse of encouraging greater school autonomy on one hand and accountability on the other, schools have been partitioned from local authority control making them individualised from other schools and teachers themselves more individualised in their roles. Using a Foucaultian perspective, my data suggests this de facto atomised architecture creates schools as disciplinary spaces. Foucault (1977:197) writes that key to exerting disciplinary power within a given space is the creation of an 'enclosed, segmented space'. In terms of the application of disciplinary power, the development of greater school autonomy creates clearly defined observable spaces which allow schools to be easily measured and ranked, allowing for the 'shameful class' to be identified and reformed towards the expected norm. The discourse and interview analysis also indicates that by partitioning schools from local authority control, teachers themselves have been rendered more individualised in their roles. Evidence from the interviews suggests this atomisation leads to power being enacted upon teachers in similar ways through technologies such as the performance management system. The structure of the school system is perfectly suited for supervising, hierarchising and rewarding. Whether by conscious design or not, as Piro (2008:42) argues, the nature of the teaching role has become a space which demands conformity. I discuss this conformity, together with the impact of school isolation, in greater depth below.

Encouraging greater school autonomy and limiting local authority roles in education frames schools as individual units - something which could, in Foucault's words (1977:143), 'break collective dispositions' and 'organise an analytical space'. The discourse analysis highlighted that viewing schools as segmented spaces allows disciplinary power to be formulated through the mechanisms of individual observation and measurement that compares, ranks and holds schools accountable for their success or failure. In creating these atomised spaces a paradox emerges in that techniques of policy appear to rest on neoliberal principles and the granting of more autonomy to schools and teachers through

the process of decentralisation. Ball (2013a:108) indicates these policy techniques provide the state with new modes of governing and new ways to shape and reshape the identity of those working in education. For example, the government can shape the behaviour of schools through curriculum change or funding. In addition, Baxter (2016) submits that rapid levels of change in the English education system have been managed, in part, by a raised bar for the inspection and regulation of schools, particularly a greater reliance on performance measures and evaluation against government targets. In this way, 'surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action' (Foucault, 1977:201).

I outlined in chapter 5 how government discourse indicated that more successful schools could help those deemed to be 'struggling'. This help explicitly includes 'inadequate' schools being 'rebrokered' to new multi-academy trusts (MAT) with oversight powers removed from governors and managers and transferred to the MAT (Baxter & Cornforth, 2019:2-4). The introduction of business language and practices into the public sector is a central tenet of neoliberalism, a topic Foucault (2008) lectured on extensively in 1970. Foucault saw neoliberalism as transforming classical liberalism to establish market relations as a critical foundation to a society where 'the formal principles of a market economy' are 'projected on the general art of government' (Foucault, 2008:131). Rebrokering allows supposedly failing schools to be swallowed up by those deemed successful, introducing forms of market relations into state education. The market economy essentially provides social policy intervention, nullifies anti-competitive mechanisms and enables competition (Foucault, 1998:159-160). However, as Baxter and Floyd (2019:1065-7) indicate, the reality of the MAT system suggests that expansion of trusts tends to focus on financial stability, rather than educational grounds, and the UK government often struggles to find sponsors for schools deemed seen as failing financially. In addition, the business model tends to render schools as branded corporate entities.

Interview participants who indicated a distaste of the standardisation that comes with working in corporate entities appeared to recognise a change in their professional role as a by-product of the move to greater school autonomy. Glancey (2006:5) notes that the more the architectural structure of the school system bases itself on carceral models to separate individuals, the more likely it will have the effect of 'crushing any sign of individuality or creativity'. Disciplinary power relies upon a mechanism of observing individuals to effect

or coerce specific forms of behaviour (Foucault, 1977:170-1). The 'architecture of observatories' created by disciplinary spaces is key to facilitating discipline which operates more effectively when observable units are distinct and individual to each other (Foucault, 1977:172). A sustained observation regime, including the continual threat of observation, forms the accountability system for teachers. This system acts as a type of panopticism where regular, random observations allied to a performance management system reliant on a system of rewards and sanctions can lead to teachers modifying their behaviour as if they are continually under surveillance. As outlined in chapter 6, the regime of the constant possibility of surveillance leads to teachers operating in an environment where they adopt a 'state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault, 1977:201). In consequence, a permanent state of surveillance ensues, and the interview data suggests teachers change their behaviour, as in Jeremy Bentham's 'panopticon' prison model (Foucault, 1977:195-228). I discuss this behavioural change in greater depth below.

7.2.2 Normalising judgement and the Examination

The second instrument of discipline suggested by Foucault relates to the normalising judgement (Foucault, 1977:177-184). The use of teacher standards, reforms to the teacher appraisal system and policies which make it easier to remove teachers create the normalising standards which teachers are to internalise and adhere. The discourse analysis indicated policymakers made continual references to parts of the teaching profession as failing and the profession having responsibility for the existence of the attainment gap. Forms of punishment for those not adhering to the norm range from the withholding of pay progression to formal capability procedures. This system works in the same way as the penal punishment described by Foucault (1977:269) in that it 'must have as its essential function the transformation of the individual's behaviour'. The effect of potential punishment upon teachers is to change their behaviour and ensure conformity with the 'normalised' model of the teacher. Non-conformity with standards brands a teacher as failing, and they are expected to change or to face some form of punishment. The system does not just seek issues of incompetence but renders all as potential failures as needing improvement.

Policymakers repeatedly referring to the attainment gap and identifying teachers as the cause underpins a message of the need to improve the quality of teaching. Using

derogatory terms to describe the culture in some schools names and shames parts of the profession not meeting the accepted, policymaker-defined norm. Government targets for improvement become an examination for the teacher against which they are judged. Pointing out this non-observance to the norm is not an arbitrary punishment, but forces those deemed outside the norm to reform their practice. Teachers achieve normalisation by achieving an acceptable Ofsted grading, so disciplinary power here forces teachers to reform their behaviours in such a way as to meet these normalising practices. The examination, in this case the Ofsted inspection, brings together hierarchical surveillance and normalising judgements. Policy discourse citing Ofsted inspection gradings as the critical measure to determine what is, and what is not, a successful school creates a version of reality which presents a supposed truth about school performance. The mere expectation of an Ofsted inspection has made what Ofsted judges as 'good' teaching a dominant presence for teachers. Teachers therefore engage in a form of self-monitoring. Evidence from the interview data suggested participants adapted their practice as a result of what was perceived as expected from the regulator, indicating self-monitoring is induced. Far from being able to ignore the presence of Ofsted between inspections, the data implies the daily routines of teachers are governed by Ofsted requirements and their school's desire to be judged positively.

Despite the discourse suggesting normalising accountability leads to improved standards in schools, my data sustains those normalising judgements that come with accountability measures could be counterproductive (see also Ball, 2003:215-228; Page, 2017:1-13). The normalising judgements that come with accountability measures led to some participants indicating a loss of creativity and reduced ability to inspire. The data suggests that accountability measures may limit of teacher creativity and innovation. This loss may create a learning environment with little room to develop the passion and enjoyment of a subject from both teacher and pupil. The disciplinary regime, which leads to teachers becoming normalised into mechanistic responses to teaching may also limit the opportunity for innovative thinking from pupils. As Manzone (2016:253) suggests, 'the desire for a 'We are Ofsted Outstanding' banner outside the school comes at a price of greater uniformity and less creativity'.

Evidence from the interview data supports the argument that accountability tends to commodify teachers and learners through neoliberal practices. As Ball (2003:224) notes,

this eradicates their value as a person as authentic social relations are replaced by judgemental relations as teachers' value is based solely on productivity measures. The data suggests a by-product of making teachers observable commodities can also lead to fabrications of reality as teachers focus upon possible surveillance of their practice. The data also implies a form of gamesmanship, where teachers spend time on second-order tasks to create the impression of good teaching for inspection purposes, leading to inauthenticity in their teaching. The ultimate result could be teachers themselves begin to believe that good teaching no longer seems to matter if it is not measured and recorded (Ball, 2003:224-226).

My discourse analysis supports Foucault's belief (1975:145-6) that the place that a school occupies in classification, or one's ranking, is vital. Classifying and ranking through inspection grades can be used by the government to exert power over schools through the normalising judgement. Continual negative reference to schools that fail to meet the required standard deems their departure from the norm to be, in Foucaultian terms, an offence (Foucault, 1977:178-9). As Foucault (1977:181) submits, continual use of rankings 'marks the gaps' between schools and acts as both a punishment and a reward. The 'good' or 'outstanding' school is mentioned positively in government discourse to be praised and rewarded. As a result, schools occupying other classifications are supposed to be motivated to improve. As Foucault (2007:45-6) states, disciplinary power 'regulates everything' and proceeds by creating binary divisions between the permitted and forbidden. The discourse separates schools deemed 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate' – and by extension teachers in those schools – into 'the shameful class': metaphorically 'dressed in sackcloth' (Foucault, 1977:181-2). The phrase perpetuated by Nicky Morgan of the 'coasting school' is key to ensuring this naming and shaming of certain types of schools to pressure them to follow the government's version of the norm to make 'themselves worthy' by 'changing their conduct and their progress' (Foucault, 1977:182). Disciplinary punishment has the 'function of reducing gaps' so it is 'essentially corrective' (Foucault, 1977:179). In effect, the naming of the 'shameful class' as part of the application of disciplinary power is to make them disappear as schools adopt the standards deemed acceptable by the government and improve their Ofsted grade and place in league table rankings. As Foucault (1977:199) says, the whole purpose of discipline is to bring 'into existence a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal'.

Policymakers are not simply blaming teachers for perceived underperformance, but look to exert power over teachers to force reforms to professional practice to meet a normalising standard. Discourse seeks to shape the professional identity of teachers so they adapt or maintain existing behaviours to meet the needs of the normalising judgement of policymakers. The evidence from the interviews indicates that my participants have a belief that policymakers misunderstand the nature of teaching, and the teachers appeared not to accept the basis of the normalising judgements being imposed on them. This response itself suggests resistance against the disciplinary power and mirrors Mowat's (2018:299-321) suggestion that schools formed only a part of the problem of the attainment gap and that to address the gap, government needs to address a wide range of other socio-economic and relational variables.

The discourse analysis also showed a scepticism from policymakers to university-based initial teacher training courses which focus on aspects of academic theory in favour of exclusively school-based schemes which place a greater focus on practical aspects of teaching. This supports Forde et al's (2006:17) assertion of a 'deep distrust of higher education institutions' in the formation of education policy. From a Foucaultian perspective, the idea of training the individual towards a specified norm is part of the normalising aspect of disciplinary power. As Avis (2006:109-111) points out, favouring practical skills over academic theory and agency development may result in reducing teaching practice to a system of learnt competencies and standardised processes. In turn, this means teacher training may be reduced to simple practice in schools where skills and processes are passed on by practising teachers with less emphasis on the sophisticated ideas of didactics or pedagogy. The result is the 'correlation of the body with the gesture', the imposition of operational discipline on the teacher (Foucault, 1977:151-153). While professions like medicine and law continue to 'educate' new practitioners, the accepted language when referring to the teaching profession in England is that they are merely 'trained'. The discourse suggests policymakers do not view teachers as professionals, but as competent 'technicists' which teachers could perceive as reducing their sense of professional agency. Viewing the discourse analysis through a Foucaultian lens suggests an underpinning desire for teachers to docilely implement policies at the direction of government in the same way that they implement technical skills and process.

Linking the disciplinary mechanisms of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement is the examination which forms a 'normalising gaze' that makes it possible 'to qualify, to classify and to punish' (Foucault, 1977:184). My data presents the Ofsted inspection as the primary form of examination. This can create a version of the truth about that school by which society makes its judgement. If accountability holds individuals 'in a mechanism of objectification' through observation and normalisation, then the Ofsted inspection is the 'ceremony of this objectification' (Foucault, 1977:187).

The discourse may be asserting normalisation by placing such importance on the Ofsted grade. For Foucault (1977:190-1), the examination opened up two possibilities: it makes an individual a 'describable and analysable object' which then makes possible 'the measurement of an entire phenomena'. The centrality of the Ofsted inspection creates a model that normalises particular constructs of effective schooling and teaching. Foucault (2007:57) suggests the position of the optimal model is key to the operation of disciplinary normalisation. The discourse may also use the Ofsted grade as a way to influence the way that teachers view themselves. It can be used as a form of power by policymakers to permanently and invisibly shape teachers by the 'chain of their ideas' (Foucault, 1977:102-3). Continuous observation, normalising judgements and infinite examination means that teachers live in a state of "compulsory objectification' (Foucault, 1977:189) which may shape their behaviour and identity. The crucial point concerning disciplinary power is that it is teachers themselves emanating disciplinary power, both upon themselves and those around them in a 'permanent economy' of power (Foucault, 1977:170).

The interview data also indicated a rejection by participants of the Ofsted grade as a statement of truth about their performance, thus rejecting the normalising standard the discourse may impose on the profession. Participants resisted the creation of regimes of truth and attempts at normalisation created and sustained via government rhetoric. A number of participants refused to accept the performance of a school can be reduced to a single number. Similarly, they cast doubt on the ability for accountability to measure large parts of a teacher's role. Participants disliked the demand for quantitative measures against which they can be judged for inspection purposes and some saw the excessive focus on the measurable aspects of the role reducing the value of the teacher. This supports Ball's (2003:220-224) assertion that important non-measurable aspects of the teacher's role may become secondary as teachers focus their efforts on proving they are doing their job

against aspects which can be measured, thus distorting their role. Participants placed greater emphasis on the vocational aspects of the profession. No participants indicated they saw teaching as merely a job, while several saw teaching as a lifestyle choice, one that impacted their personal identity. While the policy discourse made no mention of the caring aspect of teaching or the importance of developing relationships, the interview data expressed teachers saw a caring nature and the ability to engage pupils on an emotional level as crucial to their role. Overall, the interview data indicates a rejection of attempts in the discourse to define what is 'normal' for schools suggesting participants rebuff attempts to shape their professional identity

7.3 Power-knowledge and the naming of truth

As outlined in chapter 5, policymakers make extensive use of personal pronouns to claim ownership of policy ideas and use quotations from ideological allies which are presented as self-evident truths while denigrating opposing views. In this way, policymakers seize the discourse and alternative views are excluded or worse, portrayed as taboo, positioning it not as an opposing view, but one which is null and void (Foucault, 1981:53). Thus, through their use of language, policymakers claim 'privileged and exclusive right to speak', excluding the voices and opinions of others (Foucault, 1981:52). The nostalgic portrayal of traditional education as positive with progressive ideas about teaching portrayed as beyond the pale was a prime example of this. This exclusionary practice forms part of the ''will to truth' (Foucault, 1981:55-6), exerting pressure on those who engage in discussions on teaching of what can and cannot be said, as well as the views of others which should or should not be repeated. However, the interview data showed no participants labelled themselves as firmly "traditional" or "progressive", despite the belief of policymakers that progressive ideas were dominant. Equally, while participants indicated a mixing of different teaching methods to meet their needs, no participants appeared to be influenced by the assertion that traditional teaching methods were superior.

Policymakers use their official titles and trappings of office to promote this will to truth, to claim the right to speak the 'true' discourse. This power to shape and influence discourse places policymakers in a position to exert forms of power over the teaching profession. One key aspect of this is through what Foucault (1981:61-2) terms 'the rarefaction of the speaking subjects', meaning there is a limitation as to who can speak authoritatively on a given subject. When policymakers refer continuously in the texts analysed to 'I' or 'we',

the personal pronoun positions the speaker as authoritative and may exclude the views of others. Similarly, by quoting only specific individuals, as Nick Gibb does regularly by quoting only those who support his view of traditional education, a 'gradation among discourses' (Foucault, 1981:56-7) is perpetuated seeking to pronounce some writings and ideas as valuable to the exclusion of others. Again, the interview data indicated the extent to which this influenced teachers was limited. While sympathetic to the pressures faced by policymakers, many participants conveyed they did not feel policymakers understood the difficulties faced by the profession and did not appear receptive to the owning of policy by ministers.

The discourse analysis also highlighted how the government might use data as a 'truth' to exert power on the teaching profession. The Foucaultian concept of power-knowledge helps us understand how power operates in this regard. The use of data is hugely important in the operation of power. Today, for the government to exert any influence upon the management of the economy, a vast array of data is continually required about the state of the economy, be that inflation data, employment statistics or economic forecasts. Possessing this knowledge gives governments the power to act and exert influence within the field of the economy and these actions will often give rise to new knowledge, and so on. The types of knowledge required to exert influence within the field of education policy include anything from school examination performance data (e.g. RAISEonline or Progress 8 in England) to Ofsted inspection reports to school financial accounts. Foucault saw the link between the development of inquiry and data as:

> *'a political form, a form of management and exercising power which…has become a way in Western culture of authenticating truth, acquiring things which will be true, and transmitting those things. The inquiry is a form of power-knowledge.' (Foucault, 1996:341).*

For the government to exert influence upon the teaching profession, it requires knowledge about the state of schools. Holding technical knowledge, termed 'connaissance' or 'knowledge of things' (Foucault, 2007:274), allows the government to describe the reality within the state, which itself gives the government power. This is the link between knowledge and power (Foucault, 1977:274-5). The choice of the Ofsted grade as the crucial form of knowledge about schools allows government to authenticate what society

deems the 'truth'. However, as outlined above, the interview data indicated teachers disagreed with this approach to inspection data suggesting a limit to the attempt to exert power upon them from the positioning of Ofsted gradings as the truth about a school.

Foucault's concept of veridiction helps us understand how government discourse may influence how teachers (and others) view the profession. This concept refers to a way of creating a view of the world through an authority rather than something being independently true. Foucault (2008:31-3) used the example of neoliberalism, which places the market as a space for veridiction, where society deems the logic of the market to be the defining authority for decisionmakers. The discourse analysis implies that the Ofsted inspection regime is a space to produce 'truth' as if it were an objective fact. By focusing upon the grading, and repeating the statistics of schools deemed 'good' or 'outstanding', the government discourse positions its policies as delivering measurable success. The power to name what success looks like in schools authenticates that success and allows the government to make it appear as fact. In this way, the government uses discourse as a means to develop a new form of veridiction, that Ofsted is the authority to deliver a form of truth about schools through the grading system. By pinpointing the number of children in schools outside these categories, the government can focus attention on standards of teaching in England and imply there remain aspects which are inadequate and that the training regime is substandard. This message is developed through the placement of responsibility for the attainment gap onto schools or placing focus on the number of schools that do not achieve an acceptable Ofsted grading. Using messages indicating a need for the teaching profession to 'strengthen' or 'improve' with government-proposed reforms are at the centre of this development.

A vital part of the inspection model is to focus on schools' self-evaluation to promote a more rigorous accountability system. Indeed, while Ofsted inspects schools on seven critical areas of pupil outcomes (e.g. attainment, progress, behaviour), there are eight key areas of judgement related to the leadership and management of a school (Jones & Tymms, 2014:321). While Foucault (1977:11) suggested an army of technicians replaced the executioner to manipulate the prisoner from a distance, so the inspection becomes part of the technical regime to manipulate the body of the teacher from a distance.

7.4 Governmentality & Microphysics of power

My data supports the argument that performativity in schools extends a system of accountability by making it a regime that employs judgements and comparisons as a means of control and change (Ball, 2013:57). To ensure that schools deemed to be underperforming meet the norm demanded by government, teachers are encouraged through the policy technology of accountability to influence their behaviour as a form of performativity. Foucault developed his theory of power to suggest a 'microphysics of power' existed in society (Foucault, 1977:139), by which he means that power is not located in any particular place but is spread everywhere and is therefore identifiable throughout society. In the teaching profession, the tools of performativity are teachers themselves, making them 'both the objects and instruments of the exercise of power' (Foucault, 1977:170).

The accountability system, operating at the school level through the Ofsted inspection and the individual level through performance management, can be seen in this light. It makes the teaching profession the object of power, but as it is teachers themselves who are making themselves accountable, they also become the instruments of that power. The centrality of the Ofsted grade and pressuring schools to deploy higher levels of accountability creates the 'specialised personnel who become indispensable…constantly present and distinct from the workers' (Foucault, 1977:174). While some years may pass between Ofsted inspections, the interview data suggests inspection casts a continual shadow over teachers which impacts their work. Performativity may be applied by teachers to their peers, but also to themselves as power exerts itself upon the individual to internalise the desire to make changes to meet the norm. While teachers internalise this control, rules and procedures are set externally to the teacher, but the teacher uses these to discipline their behaviour. By internalising behaviours to meet the expected norms, these become natural and ingrained into the profession. Therefore, this 'integrated system' is 'multiple, automatic and anonymous' (Foucault, 1977:176-7).

Evidence from the interviews moves forward Foucault's (1977:186) suggestion that the school constituted the 'uninterrupted examination' of student' which leads to a 'perpetual comparison of each other'. My participant data suggests that the uninterrupted examination and perpetual comparison has also become the normal state of affairs for the teacher. The data supports the proposal that, for teachers, Foucault's suggestion (1977:189) that 'we are

entering into the age of the infinite examination and of compulsory objectification' has become a reality. Foucault (1977:1-2) refers to this standardising practice as the 'temporal elaboration of the act'. This standardisation controls the actions of the teacher through its development from the inside. Teachers begin to act docilely and become 'meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine', subject to 'permanent coercion' and 'indefinite progressive forms of training' (Foucault, 1977:169). Through this exercise of power, policymakers develop additional responsibilities for the role of the teacher. The interview data indicated additional responsibilities included some responsibility for the development of a productive workforce or the application of aspects of social policy, such as developing greater social mobility.

My data also supports the argument that some aspects of the teacher's role may have become secondary, as teachers focus their efforts on proving they are doing their job against measurable aspects, distorting the role of the teacher (Ball, 2003:220-4). Continual observation, both peer and those internalised by the self, can have unintended negative consequences for the quality of education provided. The demand for something quantitative against which society can judge teachers leads to an excessive focus on what is measurable, such as examination results, and teacher value can be reduced to this measured performance. The interview data highlighted the importance teachers placed upon the non-measurable aspects of the teacher's role, such as developing a love of learning, enjoyment of a subject or pastoral work.

7.5 Conclusion

To conclude, an essential aspect of governmentality implies a form of calculation on the part of the government (Foucault, 2007:102-3). In this chapter, I have sought to view the data using Foucault's theory of power. This allowed me to ascertain the teacher identities deemed acceptable by policymakers, and are to be proliferated, and those deemed unacceptable, and to be eradicated. The discourse analysis can shine a light on the discursive strategies employed by policymakers which, as discussed in chapter 3, can make power 'insidious and invisible' (Ball, 1995:267), The interview data indicates a certain amount of resistance to the operation of this power. Teachers appear to hold a different understanding to policymakers about the nature of education. Many eschew a strong focus on measurable attributes in favour of intangibles, such as the development of emotional contact with pupils and a love of their subject. In the final chapter, I will discuss the overall

findings from the research and the extent to which these fit with the existing literature. I will also consider the key questions it raises for future research.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I provide a full response to the three central research questions about the characteristics of professional identity, the view policy discourse presents of the teaching profession and the extent this discourse shapes teacher professional identity. My research findings suggest the professional identity of teachers in England is influenced by policy discourse, but often in different ways than may be the intention of policymakers. I conclude with some reflections on my personal practice as a teacher and suggestions for future research.

8.2 Research Question 1: What are the main characteristics of teacher professional identity.

My research indicates the main characteristics of teacher professional identity are:

1. The importance of the self in shaping teacher professional identities;
2. The importance of subject-specific knowledge and skills, and of engaging pupils in the subject
3. Developing identity with experience – becoming more confident.
4. The importance of emotions – both their emotions as teachers and feeling education as a vocation, but also engaging student emotions in the subject.

My findings suggest the most important aspect of teacher professional identity is the sense of the individual self that a teacher brings to their professional self. This takes the sense of professional identity beyond the role of teaching and into the realm of an individual's personal behaviour, standards and emotions. Far from being perceived simply as a job of work, my participants see the role as an all-encompassing vocation requiring they sacrifice something of their personal self. This notion of crossover from personal identity could be both helpful to personal identity, but also a hindrance. The crossover appeared to work both ways with the development of a professional identity impacting on the personal, supporting Nias' (1989:181) view that teachers incorporate their professional identity with their self-image over time. These findings support key conclusions in the literature review (Day & Leitch, 2001:403-15; Hargreaves, 1998:838-41) suggesting emotions were 'at the epicentre' of teaching (O'Connor, 2008:117). The suggestion that the personal seamlessly

interacts with the teacher's professional life supports Day and Leitch's (2001:407-9) contention that personal histories are key to professional identity. The findings also support Hargreaves' (1998:842) empirical evidence that emotional aspects of teacher identity do not differ significantly between teachers of different gender. Family influence, community obligation and individual experiences of schooling were all important to my participants' professional identities. This echoes findings by Cross and Ndofirepi (2015:100-5), whose study identified the importance of similar factors. One aspect of my findings distinctive from the literature was the focus of my participants on the importance of a caring nature and individual humour.

In terms of engaging pupils on an emotional level my findings indicate teacher identity is shaped less by the achievement of measurable success and more by instilling an intellectual curiosity and enjoyment of their subject from pupils. This concurs with Denzin's (1984:137) assertion that teaching goes beyond simple transferral of knowledge and requires an understanding of pupils at an emotional level. The findings also support Watson's (2006:514-522) suggestion that key to teacher identity development is the ability and willingness to identify with, or distance from, different narrative prevailing positions. While Jourdan (2015:117) asserts subject knowledge is a primary driver of teacher professional identity, the findings from the data strongly agreed with Nias'(1989:13) belief that levels of human interaction were important, and the nature of the teacher as a person was more crucial than their possession of occupational knowledge. That Nias' work was among the earliest on teacher professional identity indicates that, despite the growth in research in the past three decades, the fundamental importance of teaching as an interpersonal activity has not diminished. In this way, my findings suggest participants reject teaching as a set of learned competencies and the ability to develop an emotional connection at an intellectual level remains key to what it is to be a teacher (Hargreaves, 1998:850). Conveying knowledge was important, but instilling curiosity and enjoyment of their subject in pupils was more essential to the sense of self-validation participants sought.

8.3 Research Question 2: What view of the teaching profession does government policy discourse present?

Overall, my research indicates that government policy discourse presents the teaching profession in a negative light in a consistent and sustained way. The discourse does this in five main ways:

1. Teachers are presented as inadequate and as failing their pupils
2. Teaching is presented as a technical skill rather than a profession
3. Teachers are presented as being in thrall to failed progressive teaching methods
4. A more autonomous corporate structure and greater accountability would drive improvement
5. Teachers should take greater responsibility for wider policy areas, especially social and economic policy

Any positive comments about the profession usually precede a negative attack and only those agreeing with the government's view of education are held up for praise. The discourse presents the profession as resistant to reform and undermining government policy by gaming accountability systems. This negative presentation is used to highlight the need for education reforms and, applying Foucaultian language, may be seeking a form of docility from the profession. By presenting teaching as a technical skill, rather than a profession, policy discourse presents teachers as a technicists, or skilled workers where the ability to do the job can be passed from one practitioner to another, rather than a high level profession viewed in the same light as the legal or medical professions.

The presentation of teachers as resistant to reform and unable, or unwilling, to move away from progressive teaching methods highlights a clear ideological standpoint from policymakers presenting progressive thinking as deeply flawed. The support for robust accountability measures to produce improvements in teaching standards was highlighted by the Ofsted inspection grading presented as the primary measure of success for the profession. Finally, the profession is positioned as having a share in the responsibility for both social policy and economic policy, with education held up as key to social mobility and economic success, both at the personal and national level.

This negative presentation of teachers in government discourse epitomises much of the 'discourse of derision' (Ball, 1990:22-42) sustained in the literature over recent decades (Delamont, 1999; Smith 2003, Furlong 2019). As both Entman (2004) and Lecheler & de

Vreese (2019) have pointed out, policy discourses are an important vehicle for the public to make sense of policy and can be used to apportion blame or inform solutions and thus can have a meaningful impact on public opinion. The purpose may also be to shape opinion of the teaching profession of itself. By communicating desired norms of behaviour, government veridiction dominates perception of what is 'normal' and thus an individual's behaviour. Using such forms of control, a government can arrange 'men and things' in such a way that it's ends may be achieved (Foucault, 2007:95). The extent which this is successful is the third main research question addressed.

8.4 Research question 3: To what extent does policy discourse shape teacher professional identity?

Policy discourse appeared to have a limited impact on participants' sense of their professional identities: if anything, the presentation of teachers through the discourse appears at odds with the way teachers view themselves and their practice. Teachers showed resistance to the discourse which presented their professionalism in what they perceived to be an unfair light.

8.4.1 Teachers are presented as inadequate and is failing their pupils

My data suggests professional identity is influenced by the negative presentation of teachers, but in an opposite way of government intention. Far from making the teaching profession more docile, the tactic entrenches teachers, making them more resistant to government reforms. Teachers feeling underappreciated and undervalued suggests a clear gap between the policymakers' perceptions about the profession and how teachers see themselves, and participants sought to push back against what they perceived as unfair criticism. This was focused on four main themes:

1. That policymakers do not understand the work of the teacher and have little appreciation of the difficulties of the role
2. Criticism of their performance was unfair because sufficient funding was not available (due to real terms cuts in schools' funding)
3. Government interference in schools was counterproductive and added to workload
4. The expectations on teachers were unreasonable

As a result, participants placed blame back onto the government. Despite these dismissals of government criticism, teachers' frustration indicated their identity was impacted as the context in which they worked altered, leading them to justify their position to themselves. This echoes Kemmis and Grootenboer's (2008:43) assertion that dispositions can be formed through social content. The neoliberal underpinning of education reform was also a problem for many participants. The importance of the 'ontological framework' (Holloway and Brass, 2018:363) mirrored conclusions in the literature where alienation from dominant thought could bring about negative feelings (Maclure, 1993:318; Miller Marsh, 2002:455). In this way, resistance follows what Foucault (1997:291) suggests as a discourse being imposed on teachers by the wider culture and society. This also supports Ball and Olmedo's (2013:85-6) suggestion that subjectivity becomes a site of struggle and resistance under forms of neoliberal governmentalities as teachers focus on what they want to become.

8.4.2 Teaching is presented as a technical skill rather than a profession

Far from persuading teachers to view themselves as skilled technical workers, policy discourse had an opposite effect of leading to participants to resent the perceived slight on their work and embrace their status as professions. Downgrading their professional status left participants angry and contributed to the feeling of being misunderstood and a mistrust of government motives discussed above. While educational theory was not something participants drew upon daily, it helped when dealing with new uncertainties and experiences. Participants saw teaching as an academic pursuit, not just based upon high level subject-knowledge but also a strong grounding in pedagogy and didactic instruction. The uncertainty expressed about the rise of school-centred initial training highlighted this. I would suggest teachers embraced the dispositions of *episteme* (theory) , *techne* (technical craft) and *phronesis* (moral actions) to develop a form of *praxis* required for professional conduct (Kemmis and Smith, 2008:15-16). However, policymakers see the predominance of just *techne* as a requirement for training teachers.

8.4.3 Teachers are presented as being in thrall to failed progressive teaching methods

The presentation of teachers as being in thrall to progressive ideas and unwilling to accept supposed overwhelming evidence for traditional teaching methods was met with incredulity by some participants, again suggesting a fundamental misunderstanding on the part of government. Far from the presentation of a profession unthinkingly accepting

progressive educational practices, participants thought critically about their approach and were flexible enough to adapt between progressive and traditional methods dependent on circumstances and generally adopted a mixed approach to their practice. In this sense, the discourse had very little impact on participants. However, one important point to note was the resentment felt by some participants that the post-2015 examination reform had forced them to adopt a more traditional approach to their teaching.

8.4.4 A more autonomous corporate structure and greater accountability would drive improvement

Participants felt most strongly about resisting this aspect of discourse, accepting the role requires a form of *eudaimonia*, an ancient- Greek concept suggesting one looks to live well and act well for the benefit of the wider community (Kemmis and Smith, 2008:17-18). Acting as public servants appealed to participants making them suspicious of the corporate nature of academy trusts and embrace of private sector practices. While participants acknowledged the need for some accountability, there was disagreement that increased accountability leads to increased standards. Frustration at accountability took the following lines:

1. Too much time spent on second order tasks
2. Loss of autonomy forced changes to their role and practice
3. A sense of inadequacy felt at continual fault-finding
4. A need to be cautious and less innovative in lessons.

This frustration led to fabrications being justified as in the best interests of themselves and their students, suggesting accountability did little to influence professional identity in the way policymakers hope. This justification to resist policy echoes the Foucaultian stance on care of the self: a constant practice by teachers of justifying, on ethical grounds, a rejection of the normalised conception of themselves developed through disciplinary mechanisms (Foucault, 1997:93-106). As Foucault (1997:95) suggests, this could be seen as 'both a duty and a technique, a basic obligation and a set of carefully worked-out procedures' to ensure a sense of self-worth is maintained.

Of particular interest was the rejection by participants that Ofsted grades serve as a measure of success or failure. Participants expressed deep misgivings about the inspection

process and the primary focus on measurable aspects of the teaching role. Participant focus on non-measurable aspects of pastoral care and developing an emotional connection with students suggested a further disconnect between teachers and policymakers. This supports Ball's (2003:224) assertion that 'performance has no place for caring'. By questioning the supposed obviousness of preferred performance measures, participants showed an ability to critically assess own identity which mirrored the strategy reported in a previous study by Ball and Olmedo (2013:88-91).

8.4.5 Teachers should take greater responsibility for wider policy areas, especially social and economic policy

Policy discourse did influence teacher identity in this area. Participants saw societal changes leading to more parents working full time had placed greater responsibility to the teaching profession for pastoral issues. Working with young people was a key driver in participants wanting to work in schools and no participants were willing to turn their back on those in need of extra support. However, this did not detract from the sense of frustration that teachers had to 'fix everything'.

8.4 Professional reflections

8.4.1 Reflection on the findings

As a practising teacher, I began this dissertation with a good grounding in the research issues raised. Indeed, many of the responses from participants were similar to those I may have offered. In terms of shaping my professional identity, the depth of the sustained negativity that arises in government discourse about the teaching profession was what struck me the most. Despite significant changes in personnel under different Education Secretaries and direction of government priorities under different Prime Ministers, the line positing the teaching profession as failing pupils and resistant to change was consistent. The depth of misunderstanding that government has for the daily work and aspirations of the teacher was also surprising to me and perhaps explained some of my own professional frustrations over the past decade.

I was also taken by the extent of goodwill that teachers have for government. The participants appeared to genuinely want government policy to be successful as they saw this as the route to better education for the young people under their care. Whatever negative comments they expressed was not a knee-jerk reaction to oppose government for

its own sake, but genuine frustrations borne of a lack of understanding of the benefits of policy. As Foucault (1982a:211) might suggest, resistance is not against the institutions of power, but rather the technique of power. I suggest this communication gap between government and the teaching profession is one that needs to be bridged or it will be difficult to achieve the sorts of outcomes for students both sides desire.

After 15 years in the classroom, I have seen fashions come and go in terms of continuing professional development, but have witnessed the ability of colleagues to sail their own steady course through much of this. The surprise that participants expressed at the line of questioning about their practice following either a traditional or progressive slant was telling to me in that, far from the misapprehension of government discourse, teachers were very pragmatic and flexible in their approach. Similarly, the collective rejection and resistance to being forced to adopt certain ways of teaching currently in fashion with policymakers showed to me that teaching remains a profession sufficiently confident to remain independent of external interference.

Perhaps the one aspect of the research that struck me most personally was the impact that the internal discourse can have on the profession, particularly on younger teachers. The comment from one participant that older teachers 'eat their young' was particularly troubling to me and I have since actively sought to protect younger colleagues from the possible negativity that inevitably comes from colleagues working in an increasingly pressurised environment.

8.4.2 How has the process of becoming a teacher-researcher impacted me?

As a result of the Ed.D process both my personal and professional identity has altered and the link between the two is clearer to me. Like many participants, I see myself as introverted and not someone who would make a natural classroom practitioner. The admission from others made me recognise in myself a growing personal confidence since joining the profession. I am not convinced I have changed dramatically as a teacher in the classroom over the course of the research. I am more explicitly aware when reflecting on my practice, but believe continual reflection drove my progress even before I formalised the process in my mind. However, I recognise a growing confidence when dealing with colleagues as a result of a more developed understanding of my profession. It was also comforting to hear some of my own frustrations expressed in the voices of others.

In terms of profession practice, I have learned several things as part of the dissertation process. Firstly, Foucault and Fairclough both deepened my critical thinking skills. I now more consciously reflect upon hidden influences on my actions. Many become simply points of recognition, interesting asides that require no action. Occasionally, this recognition of hidden forms of power has allowed me to determine my own level of resistance. Taking the cue from some of the interview participants, this resistance can be simple questioning of a policy initiative to a more active reframing as a form of care of the self. Despite my background as an English teacher, Fairclough's work also had a deep impact, and I have developed the life skill of noticing key words or phrases and their impact on shaping ideas. This has been helpful, not just in my classroom teaching but in my analysis of policy initiatives. Secondly, I believe I have learnt more about my profession. The participants I interviewed all inspired me in different ways and my admiration for those in the teaching profession grew the more I analysed what they said. Teaching is a difficult career with long hours and stressful days. My appreciation of the individuals whose greatest desire is to inspire young people grew in tandem with my frustrations at the negative discourse around them. I now have a strong desire to defend that professionalism and find myself more willing to challenge those both inside and outside the profession who undermine this. In addition, I learned that the profession needs to look after itself, particularly in its treatment of new teachers. The positivity that brings us all to teaching need not be lost in the flux of workload, targets and a 'moany staffroom'. Experienced teachers have a duty to protect and nurture the profession rather than, as Jessica graphically suggested, 'eating their young'. Again, I have actively sought to support new entrants to the profession to maintain the positivity that brought them to the role.

Reflecting upon the research process, there are some things I would look to do differently. While I enjoyed the support of Ed.D colleagues, I found the research process very solitary and I would certainly be more engaged with the wider research community. I have tried to engage on social media platforms, but find them time consuming although I do recognise their value as a tool for engaging with others. Finding and managing time to engage with other researchers in an informal way would be useful for staying up to date with existing research. Also, I would invest more time in investigating how to present my research. My greatest challenge was the presentation of large amounts of qualitative data and, despite the

inevitable feelings of inadequacy it brings, I would have benefited from more time reading past Ed.D dissertations with a focus on how data was presented.

The process of becoming a teacher-researcher has widened my knowledge of education policy, its history and existing debates. I gained a greater appreciation of the complications involved in policy implementation for all the different levels of the education hierarchy from policymakers to senior management to classroom teachers. I also developed an understanding that teachers are a distinct societal group with a broadly collective sense of values and goals. To treat teachers as part of a recalcitrant 'blob' is to miscategorise them and misunderstand their motivations and desire to embrace teaching as a vocation. I will continue my role as a teacher-researcher by leading a research programme at my school focusing on using existing research to find solutions identified by school leaders to problems important to my school.

8.5 Contribution to existing research and implications for future research

This research contributes to the strength of existing thinking in the field of teacher professional identity, particularly in terms of the role of the self and the importance of emotions. The duality of a caring nature and a sense of humour in both personal and professional identity for a number of participants underlines this. What remains key is that understanding the teacher as a person remains crucial to understanding their professional identity. My research also highlights that this line of thinking is not currently understood by policymakers who misinterpret the individuals who make up the teaching profession. The needs of the individual do not appear particularly high on the government agenda. An article that initially stoked my interest in teacher identity in the first year of my Ed.D included the comment that teachers 'are valued for their productivity alone. Their value as a person is eradicated' (Ball, 2003:224). Nearly two decades later, I view the key contribution this research makes to existing literature is identifying that the teacher as a person is still not valued and needs to be considered more highly by policymakers. My findings suggest teachers require a sense of validation that they are doing a good job in difficult circumstances and to be treated as professionals. Only by understanding what makes those working in the classroom tick will educational standards rise in any meaningful way.

As a result, I suggest that future research should continue to consider understanding the teacher as a person and how both formal and informal policy measures, such as discourse, impacts them. Focusing on the experiences of teachers and the emotions these engender as well the sense of agency teachers feel will go some way to develop this further. As stated above, this has been central to the research literature since the earliest work of Jennifer Nias (1989), but each generation of teachers develops fresh experiences, emotions and insights. Support to develop resilience in the face of the sustained negative discourse from policymakers may help teachers develop this. Also, while my research indicates a caring nature and sense of humour as key personal attributes for the professional teacher, there may be other personal attributes that individuals bring to their teacher identity which could be identified. Finally, as stated in the literature review, external factors were underrepresented in the existing literature and the impact of professional contexts in shaping professional identity as a teacher moves through their career could build upon some of the ideas expressed in this research.

8.6 Conclusion

In this final chapter, I have addressed the central research questions and have argued that policy discourse attempts to shape teacher professional identity but that it is broadly unsuccessful and even counterproductive. The research shines a light on a wide and deep misunderstanding that exists between policymakers in the UK government and the teaching profession in England, a gap which needs to urgently be addressed for genuine educational improvements to be achieved.

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