REIMAGINING TEACHERS' WORK:
THE EVERYDAY CREATIVITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN MALAWI

By

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ABSTRACT

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Teachers are situated at a busy intersection, where numerous policies, programs, and priorities meet. In this study of primary school teachers in Malawi, I adopt the notion of "everyday creativity" (de Certeau, 1984) to examine how teachers creatively navigate the multiple and shifting demands of their work. Everyday creativity directs attention to how, in mundane and ordinary moments, individuals exercise "artisan-like inventiveness" as they use available materials, resources, and cultural forms in creative ways (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii).

This study involved nine months of ethnographic fieldwork, predominantly at one school in southern Malawi where I investigated the meanings teachers, and other stakeholders, made of teaching. I pursued two research questions: *how do teachers make meaning of their work?* and, *how is teachers' work framed within and influenced by policies and international development projects?* How teachers made meaning of events, activities, and opportunities involved everyday creativity, and to explore this I drew from interpretive approaches (e.g., Erickson, 1986; Geertz, 1973). My second research question examined the intricacies of teacher engagements with policy—teachers are both used by policy and international development projects, and, at the same time, they put these elements to use in creative ways. Conceptualizing policy as practice (e.g., Levinson et al., 2009) enabled me to explore these multidirectional processes.

I adopted a vertical case study design (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006) to structure this study, which was grounded in one school site and also included interviews and document analysis at district, national, and international levels. Fieldwork at one school site included participant

observation, multiple interviews with 19 teachers, and shadowing two focal teachers. Beyond fieldwork at one school, I interviewed district and national policy officials and conducted document analysis in order to gain context about the policies intersecting with teachers' work and to compare how teaching was being understood across levels of practice.

This dissertation is organized into two parts. *Part I: Framing the study* describes the context of education in Malawi, presents the study design, and introduces the main case study school and focal teachers. *Part II: Reimagining teachers' work* explores both how the terrains of teachers' work are changing at policy levels and how teachers are creatively reimagining their work. Overall, I find that teacher responsibilities are intensifying through and because of policy and that teachers exercise considerable agency in incorporating these responsibilities into their work. This agency is constrained and directed by relationships, policy landscapes, and financial realities.

In a historical moment during which teachers features prominently on the global stage and powerful actors are reimagining what it means to be a teacher (Akiba, 2013; Robertson, 2012), this study provides a window into how teachers themselves are reimagining their work. Through this window, we can also see how competing imperatives for schools have added to teacher responsibility and complicated teachers' work. Yet, teachers engage with these imperatives with everyday creativity. The examples of everyday creativity presented in this dissertation illustrate how, though conditions of teaching in Malawi seem to impede teacher wellbeing, individual teachers creatively engage tools available to them to preserve and even improve it.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

ASPIRE	Girls' Empowerment through Education and Health Activity
DEM	District Education Manager
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
GOM	Government of Malawi
GNI	Gross National Income
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ID	International Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
LEA	Local Education Authority
LTK	Learner Treatment Kits
KGIS	Keeping Girls in School
MASTEP	Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Program
MIITEP	Malawi In-Service Integrated Teacher Education Program
MERIT	Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate Examination
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TDC	Teacher Development Centre
TTC	Teacher Training Centre
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNIMA	University of Malawi
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

PART I: FRAMING THE STUDY

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & MALAWI CONTEXT

Introduction

Teachers' work is at the center of global and national education reforms. Within these reforms, different arguments are forwarded for what the work of primary school teachers should entail. Particularly in Malawi, primary school teachers are viewed as integral players in catalyzing student learning (USAID, 2013; World Bank, 2011), ensuring equal educational access along gender lines (MOEST, 2014), promoting HIV/AIDS awareness (Kachingwe et al., 2005), and spurring national economic growth (MOEST, 2011). These reforms compound the demands placed on teachers and promote competing visions of who teachers are and should be.

Positioned at the center of these multiple projects, teachers also bring their own projects to teaching. They carry out these projects with subtle and often undetected agency, in mundane and ordinary moments, and with "everyday creativity" (de Certeau, 1984). Michel de Certeau's notion of everyday creativity (1984) offers a way to examine the creativity manifested across teachers' work: How teachers engage with international development projects, how they articulate their frustrations with policy, and how they author identities with respect to their profession. Actors with limited power, such as teachers in Malawi, "must constantly play with events in order to transform them into opportunities" (Müller, 2011, p. 284). In this dissertation, I examine how Malawian primary school teachers creatively navigate and reimagine their work. This focus illuminates how teachers strategically create opportunities while also makes visible how constraints—such as policy, donor projects, and resources—direct this creativity.

This study centers teachers in its analysis, and in doing this it decenters policy. Studies centered on projects and policies often bring teacher perspectives into focus because of the ways

these perspectives influence an intervention or policy goal. A teacher's pedagogical beliefs, for instance, are important to understanding a new pedagogical reform (e.g., Tabulawa, 2013). A teacher's attitudes around gender may inform how they implement girl-focused donor projects (e.g., Anderson, 2009). A handful of studies explores teachers at the level of labor markets, examining questions of teacher staffing, deployment, and distribution (e.g., Asim et al., 2019; DeStefano, 2013). These various policy-centered studies contribute to our understanding of the pressures on teachers and the life of policy. Yet, since their view of teachers is organized around understanding particular policies, the view generated of the policy space around teachers is also incomplete (Ball et al., 2012).

Examining the meaning teachers make of their work, and how policies feature in these meanings, exposes the complexity of teachers' work and affords a unique view of both teachers and policy. Within teachers' meanings of their work, I examine how teachers encounter policy, given that policies change and multiple interventions are often received simultaneously. The teacher is at the intersection of a dynamic reform space. As teachers navigate this intersection, connections across projects and policies become salient. In some cases, the sediment of past policy activity affects how a new policy is interpreted. Sometimes, policy shortcomings in one domain influence how projects in another domain are appropriated. By focusing on teachers and their everyday creativity, a grounded perspective of policy is offered. From this perspective, any single policy is decentered, and the multiplicity and connectivity of policy activity come into view.

In studying this, I pursue two overarching research questions. My first research question asks, *how do teachers make meaning of their work*? With this question, I examine how teachers interpret the purpose of the work, attending to the "projects" that teachers bring to their work. In

the second question, I ask, *how is teachers' work framed within and influenced by policy and international development projects?* Given that teachers' work in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)[1] is affected by a multitude of policy and international development projects, I sought to explore the ways projects framed teachers and how teachers took up projects and policy in their work.[2] I draw from sociocultural approaches to policy studies (e.g., Levinson et al., 2009) in pursuing this question.

I adopted a vertical case study design (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006) to frame this study. This design facilitated horizontal and vertical comparison to examine how meanings of teaching vary from teacher to teacher, from policy to policy, and across multiple levels of policy practice. Foregrounding the local level, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork for nine months at one school in Malawi where I interviewed 19 teachers and closely shadowed two teachers. Data generation at other schools and with additional actors suggests how meanings of teaching are differently constructed at other sites in Malawi's educational landscape. In particular, interviewing teachers at six additional schools helps situate and extend themes that emerge from my main case study school. I purposively sampled schools that introduced rural, urban, cultural, and economic variation in order to more comprehensively consider the range of teacher experiences in Malawi.

This study is organized into two parts. *Part I: Framing the study* describes the context of education in Malawi (Chapter 1), discusses the study design (Chapter 2), and introduces the study's case study school and focal teachers (Chapter 3). Like the teachers in this study, I act as a

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[1] A glossary with acronyms spelled out is listed at the beginning of this text.
[2] The line where international development ends and policy begins can be difficult to discern, especially in Malawi where international development actors have been influential in driving the policy agenda for decades (Mundy, 2002).

bricoleur.[3] I operate in this way through employing certain "conceptual tools" to structure specific investigations of teachers' work in this dissertation.

In Part II of this study, I apply additional concepts in each chapter in order to examine particular facets of teachers' work and teacher lives. *Part II: Reimagining teachers' work* explores how teachers' work is being reimagined by teachers as well as other stakeholders. Chapter 4 examines how female teachers are constructed in one girl's education reform as particular "policy subjects" (Ball et al., 2011b). Through analysis of national and international texts, I find that women teachers in this intervention are created as responsible for girls' education. This introduces an idea of teacher "responsibility," which I continue to explore through the dissertation—that is, that teachers are responsible for a range of activities beyond teaching, and that it is through and because of policy that these responsibilities are intensifying. Chapter 5 explores the range of non-governmental organization (NGO) and donor (what I call "exogenous") projects converging at Mitambo Primary School, analyzing how teachers navigated these exogenous project "policy ecologies" (Weaver-Hightower, 2008). This chapter reveals the importance of relationships and inputs (such as money) to how teachers experienced these projects. Chapter 6 presents teacher descriptions of policymaking, finding a shared sense of dissatisfaction and vulnerability among teachers at the case study school, Mitambo. With little perceived support from policy actors, teachers exploited opportunities for immediate and de-facto gains, such as advocating for manageable class arrangements and largely ignoring a new timetable policy that would extend the school-day. The gains described in this chapter are largely individual, and the same is the case in the following chapter. Chapter 7 explores the magnitude and meanings of teacher plans to "upgrade." For a primary school teacher, "upgrading" means

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[3] *Bricoleur* roughly translates to "tinkerer" and refers to using available tools to "make do" (Hatton, 1989).

seeking to advance one's education in order to leave primary school teaching. I examine in this chapter teachers' everyday creativity in their stories of who they are, or the "selves" they authored (Holland et al., 1998). I explore how "primary school teaching" is situated within stories of who teachers are, finding that primary teaching is often framed as a stepping stone that teachers are using in order to obtain a better life. Chapter 8 offers conclusions and implications. In this chapter, I discuss themes that emerged across chapters and consider implications for research and "policy knowledge" (Dumas & Anderson, 2014).

Chapters in this dissertation build towards an understanding of both how teachers' work is being reimagined by global actors and how Malawian teachers reimagine their work. The following sections offer context on global dialogues about teachers' work as well as the educational environment in Malawi.

Current global dialogues about teachers' work

Teachers' work in SSA is being both audibly and silently reworked by powerful actors. The provision of public primary school, rapidly expanding in SSA since the 1990s, is dependent on teachers (Gagnon & Legault, 2015). Teachers are framed as central to the success of educational expansion efforts and feature prominently in global policy dialogues like the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) which seek to ensure, among other things, universal access to primary education. In a separate policy dialogue, teachers are implicated in a "global learning crisis" (Rose, 2014) which demands more scrutiny of teachers' work in order to ensure that students are effectively learning (Robertson, 2012). At the same time these prominent discussions of teachers' work are taking place within global education forums, a less visible recalibration of teachers' work is occurring off the global stage: teachers are being tasked with the work of implementing an increasing number of international development projects (Pot, 2018).

In this section, I review these current global trends in teachers' work which have collectively intensified the focus on teachers while introducing competing imperatives to teachers. These dialogues and debates influenced the work of teachers in this study through leading to mandates that shape teacher responsibilities. A discussion of the specific Malawi contexts follows this review of broad global trends.

Access reforms

In 1990, the *World Conference on Education for All* in Jomtien, Thailand declared and organized international support for universalizing primary education, and in 2000, Education For

All (EFA) goals were outlined[4] to provide a framework for international action in enacting EFA. Fueled by international momentum around universalizing primary education, the majority of SSA countries abolished primary school fees in the 1990s and 2000s in an effort to make education universal. In between 1999 and 2009, global primary school enrollment grew from 646 million to 702 million children, and much of this growth occurred in SSA (UNESCO, 2015). Teacher-focused policy at the time aimed to supply a sufficient number of teachers to meet burgeoning student enrollments (UNESCO/ILO, 2008).

However, efforts to adequately staff schools rarely kept pace with bulging demand for primary school, and the expansions of educational access meant teachers soon contended with class sizes of 80 or 90 students, and sometimes even more in hard-to-staff schools (DeStefano, 2013). In 2015, more than three million teachers were needed in order to adequately staff primary schools in the SSA region (Gagnon & Legault, 2015). The United Nations SDGs advanced the following international target related to teachers, reflecting the spotlight teacher training and staffing continues to garner on the global stage:

> By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states (UN, 2015)

Many SSA countries, including Malawi, fall into the category of "least developed." This SDG target and other international activity direct international attention to teachers and acknowledge how teachers are crucial to educational goals such as universal education.

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[4] EFA goals include 1) early childhood care and education, 2) by 2015, all children have access primary education, 3) learning and life-skills programming, 4) improving adult literacy, 5) eliminating gender disparities, and 6) improving educational quality (UNESCO, 2015).

The expansion of educational access in SSA made the teaching profession one of the largest professions in the region (Gagnon & Legault, 2015). To quickly build a larger teacher workforce, governments often elected to shorten teacher training (Mundy, 2002). To finance this workforce, governments were pressured to lower teacher salary (Samoff, 1999; World Bank, 1994). Studies of teaching in SSA have highlighted how dissatisfied teachers felt given low resources contributed to education and the abbreviated teacher training (e.g., Sharra, 2007). The idea that teaching is "the profession of last resort" is prevalent throughout development and scholarly literature (Kadzamira, 2006), finding fodder in studies which demonstrate that individuals in SSA rarely enter the teaching profession by choice (Mulkeen, 2010). In a 2012 ILO/UNESCO report on teaching in SSA, authors noted widespread deprofessionalization of teachers and low social status of the profession following educational expansion policies like EFA.

A troubling contradiction emerges within these dialogues about educational access and teachers. At the level of rhetoric, teachers are framed as central to the success of universal primary education; at the level of practice, teachers often feel neglected and unsupported (Sharra, 2007).

Learning reforms

While teachers are framed as important to the success of access-based education reforms, they are often at the core of reforms that target student learning. Following the rapid expansion of primary education in the 1990s and 2000s, many scholars and development practitioners raised concerns about the extent to which education systems were facilitating student learning (e.g., Pritchett & Banerji, 2013). Thus, more recently, a shift has moved attention away from

9

"*Education* for All" and towards a focus on "*Learning* for All" (Ginsburg, 2012; Klees et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2014; World Bank, 2011). Today, teacher policies around the world reflect a heightened concern for whether teachers are adequately fostering student learning. In a review of teacher policies in countries as wide-ranging as Afghanistan, India, Malawi, and Mexico, Akiba (2013) noted that national teacher-related reforms increasingly appeared to be "based on the assumption that teacher quality is not as good as we hope to see, and there needs to be a new mechanism to improve quality" (p. 281). For teachers in Malawi and other countries in SSA, this translates to new patterns of assessment and instruction promulgated by actors such as USAID and the World Bank (Bartlett et al., 2015).

The World Bank's Education Strategy 2020 illustrates how powerful actors in global education began operationalizing this "learning" shift. The report, titled *Learning for All: Investing in people's knowledge and skills to promote development*, focuses on the importance of teachers in facilitating student learning outcomes (World Bank, 2011). Bilateral aid organizations, like USAID and DFID, began investing heavily in projects to improve teacher training, especially with respect to early grade literacy (Schweisfurth, 2015).

Scholars caution that these current learning reforms are narrowing conceptions of teaching and learning by focusing only on basic skills (Bartlett et al., 2015). However, within a separate arena of international development projects, teachers' work is being remarkably broadened.[5]

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[5] Many of the same actors who are championing learning reforms and teacher accountability are also broadening teachers' work to include these non-academic dimensions.

International development projects

At the same time that global education reforms are framing teachers as central to access and learning agenda, international development actors are enlisting teachers as front-line implementers for gender equity and healthcare projects. Some of these projects target instruction—such as implementing donor-funded curricula—whereas other projects stretch teachers' work beyond classroom instruction. These include serving as mentors to marginalized students (DFID, 2013) or providing healthcare (Melody, 2014). While previous literature on the work of teachers within international development focuses mainly on teacher-targeted and academic aspects of teachers' work (e.g., Mtika & Gates, 2010; Tabulawa, 2013), in this study I also consider the ways in which the work of teaching is being expanded to encompass non-academic activities.

The enlistment of public servants in donor reforms has long been observed and questioned by scholars (Ridde, 2010; Watkins & Swidler, 2012). Mundy (2002) notes that, in Malawi, at the highest levels of the Ministry of Education, skilled government personnel are utilized to oversee international development projects. Patterns of primary school teachers being mobilized to implement international development projects has more recently been observed, with concerns raised about how this may undermine broader educational goals (Pot, 2018).

Reimagining teachers' work

The title of this study—reimagining teachers' work—refers both to how the terrains of teaching are changing and how teachers creatively reimagine their work. In this historical moment, teachers feature on the global stage, and powerful actors are introducing projects and policy with implications for teachers (Akiba, 2013; Robertson, 2012). Framing teachers as overwhelmed by their circumstances would however miss an important part of the picture, since teachers navigate their circumstances with deftness and creativity. Some studies have highlighted the spaces for agency that teachers create within these challenging conditions, for instance in crafting narratives about their career (Wilinski, 2018) and negotiating the limited resources available in their work (Vavrus & Salema, 2013). Other studies emphasize the strengths and capabilities teachers draw upon to respond to diverse policy pressures (Tao, 2014, 2016).

Welmond's (2002) research with teachers in Benin stresses both the complexity of the policy space teachers occupy and the ways they bring their own goals to this space. Welmond writes that,

> [Teachers are] placed at the uncomfortable intersection of contradictory demands made on education systems. These demands come from all corners: from elite interests, from ambitious groups vying for social mobility, from ideological paradigms that frame the transformative function of education in different ways, from history, and from global forces. Teachers not only respond to these competing demands but also bring their own preferences and ambitions to this occupation (2002, pp. 37–38).

In Benin, Welmond (2002) identifies how common aspects of the teacher identity are at odds with neoliberal reforms around teachers (which frame teachers as "overpaid, underperforming workers" (p. 38)). Welmond predicts that these tensions will lead to frictions in

how reforms will be carried out. Gardinier (2012), studying teachers in Albania, examines how shifts towards democracy generate conflicting discourses for teachers, which teachers selectively adopted.

Like these studies, I adopt the perspective that, in their work, teachers are navigating a crowded intersection, where their goals, ID projects, and policy come together. Malawi offers an exceptional venue for exploring how teachers navigate the shifting terrains of their work. The rapid growth of primary education in Malawi in recent decades has resulted in profound teacher shortages which have compromised the desirability of the teaching profession. The chasm between policymakers and teachers results in policies that are not necessarily responsive to teacher experiences. The concentration of ID interest and reform activity results in a flurry of mandates for which teachers are deemed responsible. These factors combine to create a context that is particularly dynamic, but in many ways mirrors the trends across the SSA region. The following section considers specific facets of the Malawian educational context that are relevant to teachers' work today.

Teachers' work in Malawi

Teachers in Malawi work in a context profoundly shaped by both the contours of primary education and the traditions of teacher training. Today, primary education in Malawi is fee-free and includes eight standards (or grades). The official primary school entry age for Standard 1 is six years old. In Standards 1-4 the language of instruction is the local language of the area (mainly, Chichewa for schools in the south and central regions and Chitumbuka and Chitonga for northern and lakeshore schools). In Standards 5-8, the language of instruction is English, and English continues as the medium of instruction through secondary and tertiary education. Secondary school is four years in Malawi and is currently fee-bearing, though the government intends to soon eliminate secondary school fees (Kadzamira et al., 2018). Secondary school concludes with an examination called the Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE) which largely determines a person's prospects for higher education. A person can rewrite the MSCE multiple times, and some of the primary school teachers in this study were continuing to retake the MSCE in order to open up new career paths for themselves.

At the conclusion of the final year of primary school, Standard 8 students sit for the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE). In 2018, 75% of primary school students who took the PSCLE passed and were assigned to secondary schools based on these examinations scores (Ngwira, 2018). The high pass rate on the PSCLE, however, only reflects the performance of the minority of students who reach the final year of primary school—less than one-third of students, according to a recent study (World Bank, 2010). Additionally, low performance on literacy and numeracy tests have raised concerns that echo broader global dialogues about student learning. For instance, a USAID study in 2012 found that the average Malawian student beginning Standard 4 reads 15 words per minute with 13% comprehension.

Analyses of data from the Southern and Eastern Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality

(SACMEQ) have revealed that Malawian Standard 6 students rank lower than students in peer

countries[6] in reading and mathematics (SACMEQ, 2005).

However, great regional variation exists in educational outcomes across Malawi's three

main regions of the northern region, central region, and southern region. Generally, primary and

secondary completion rates are the highest in the northern region and the lowest in the southern

region (World Bank, 2010). The main case study school in this research was in the southern

region. The regional disparities reflect longstanding differences in educational support and

investment across these three regions (Kendall, 2007). Inequities in educational participation also

exist along the lines of wealth, with wealthier youth more likely to attend primary school than

their less wealthy peers (NSO & ICF, 2017).

Table 1

School resources in Malawi and neighboring countries

	Malawi	Mozambique	Tanzania	Zambia
Pupil-to-teacher ratio	74.09 (2012)	54.84 (2012)	45.83 (2012)	49.22 (2012)
Pupil-to-math textbook ratio	4.6 (2012)	1.4 (2012)	3.8 (2012)	3.2 (2012)
Government per-pupil spending annually	$99.26 (2016)	$162.22 (2013)	$245.26 (2014)	n/a

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Table 1 presents school resources in Malawi, with neighboring countries offering points

of reference. While the average pupil-to-teacher ratio in Malawi is about 74 pupils to one

teacher, scholars have noted large differences between remote and urban schools (Asim et al.,

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[6] SACMEQ countries include Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zanzibar. Malawi ranked lowest among the SACMEQ countries in English reading, and second lowest (after Namibia) in mathematics.

2019; DeStefano, 2013). Within one district, Asim et al. (2019) found one school with a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 27:1 and another school with a ratio of 130:1, identifying that these differences mainly stem from teacher preferences to be located near trading centers and to have access to amenities like running water and electricity. These teacher preferences, the authors argue, ultimately shape Malawi's current system of teacher placement. A World Bank-funded attempt to redistribute teachers through a rural incentive in 2010 was unsuccessful due to ineffective targeting of rural schools (Asim et al., 2019).

Primary school teachers today gain certification through a two-year pre-service training program called Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE). At the time of this study, this program was only offered through residential modes at the six Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) across Malawi. Individuals often enter teaching when they pass their MSCE, but their marks are not strong enough to qualify them for four-year university education. TTCs accept lower examination scores than universities do and thus are a common choice for lower performers (USAID, 2013).

While these details offer a snapshot of formal education and teacher training today, this picture has changed substantially over time. Next, I review important changes in Malawi's history of formal education and teacher teaching.

Formal education: From patchwork provision to Universal Primary Education (UPE)

As with other African countries, formal education was introduced in Malawi through religious missionaries (Banda, 1982; Stambach, 2000). Malawi's missionaries, first arriving in 1859, ranged in denomination and geographic settlement in the country. Formal education at that time can be thought of as a system of patchwork provision, since it was available to those in the

16

catchment area of the mission and was not offered to all children (girls, Muslim children, and children in unreached geographies were excluded). During this time, educational expansion was primarily a vehicle for spreading Christianity and, relatedly, for elevating the status and visibility of a mission. As Lamba (2010) argues, in general, missions rapidly expanded schools in nearby villages with little concern for the quality of education provided. (Although some missions, such as Livingstonia Mission in the north, did strive for quality education.) Given that missionaries had many duties beyond managing schools, it was rare for missionaries to inspect the quality of their schools (Banda, 1982).

Beginning with mission schools in the 19th century, education provision in Malawi has been enmeshed in other goals. As Banda writes, "it was the general view by all missions in the country that education was to subserve Christianity...education was not to be outside of the primary plan of Christian missions, but at the very centre of it" (1982, p. 49). With education and religion deeply intertwined, teachers "were evangelists first and teachers after" (Banda, 1982, p. 3). Initially, missions relied on European missionaries to teach, gradually beginning to train promising African students as teachers. The motivation for those who entered the teaching profession was often based on a religious call, since teachers were evangelists both in and out of the classroom. Banda notes that, "It so happened that sometimes evangelical work weighed heavily against normal classroom work. Many teachers saw the Ministry as more attractive than mere teaching work" (1982, p. 42).

Within formal education's earliest project—spreading Christianity—teachers featured centrally. Throughout this dissertation, I show teaching is a site for enacting a range of projects, and this example from the missionary era reveals the early roots of this theme.

Though Malawi (then called "Nyasaland") became a British colony in 1891, it wasn't until the 1920s that the colonial administration became involved in educational activities. A 1924 survey of education in Britain's African territories, the Phelps-Stokes Report, reported that Malawi's pupil output[7] was the lowest of the British colonies (Banda, 1982). In the 1930s, the colonial government began disbursing grants to missions to expand the provision of education. However, concerted efforts to ensure all children had access to formal education in Malawi came several decades later, long after Malawi had achieved independence from Britain. Especially compared to Malawi's slow crawl towards educational access in the decades prior, these efforts came quite suddenly, as I explain later in this section.

The reign of Malawi's first president, Hasting Kamuzu Banda lasted from 1964-1993, with his presidency commonly described as authoritarian (Lamba, 2010; Mundy, 2002; Muula & Chanika, 2004). For most of Banda's rule, universal primary education provision was not a priority, and budget allocations to both primary and secondary education were among the lowest in the SSA region (Mundy, 2002). While primary enrollments did grow post-independence in 1964, per capita educational spending on primary education fell between 1967 and 1979. Education spending was biased towards higher education for much of the 1960s and 1970s, and in the mid-1980s, Malawi's net primary enrollment ratio was less than 40% with large regional, rural/urban, and gender disparities in access (Mundy, 2002).

Banda identified strongly with Chewa culture, that of the central region where he was born. His regionalism manifested in disproportionate support for his home area. For several years in the 1980s, Banda allocated almost half of the national education budget to an elite secondary

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[7] This secondary source did not provide details on how the Phelps-Stokes Report measured pupil output (for instance, whether it had to do with completion rates by grade or by educational sequence). Whatever the comparative measure was, it was applied across colonies and was represented in the report in a manner that led Banda (1982) to determine that Malawi was lagging behind other colonies in educational provision.

school in his home district called the Kamuzu Academy (Lwanda, 1993). His regionalism also involved a strong mistrust of those from the north (Lwanda, 1993). A northern advantage in education had persisted for decades, in part because of the presence of missionaries in the north who were committed to education provision. Due to their educational advantage, northerners were overrepresented in government positions and the teaching profession. Lwanda (1993) writes of an educational directive Banda issued around the same time he removed northerners from his cabinet,

> The next stage in Dr. Banda's unintended disruption of the Malawi education system came with his regional obsession. In 1989 teachers from the north, despite the shortage of teachers in the south and centre, were ordered back to their region...with northern teachers removed or demoralized standards have gone down in the center and the south, and risen in the north (p. 180)

This instance is significant because it illustrates how teachers are affected by priorities originating beyond the education sector, a theme I revisit in this dissertation, particularly in Chapter 5. This example also demonstrates how regional variation in education has been an ongoing issue in Malawi, with the northern region generally advantaged over the southern and central regions. The main case study school in this dissertation was located in the southern region, where a variety of educational projects today converge, often justified on the grounds of lower educational outcomes in this region (e.g., USAID, 2017a).

In the 1990s, the Government of Malawi (GOM) began focusing on universalizing primary education. Up until this point, Malawi had the lowest primary school pupil enrollments in SSA (Mundy, 2002). Following the *World Conference on Education for All* in 1990, international attention began focusing on universalizing primary education, particularly in

developing nations. Pressure from international actors drove Malawi's Ministry of Education (MOE) to adopt several measures aimed at increasing equity and access of primary school (Mundy, 2002). Beginning in the 1991-1992 school year, tuition waivers were provided for all Standard 1 pupils; as Mundy (2002) explains, the MOE was mandated to do so by the World Bank. Around the same time, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) introduced a project which targeted girls' school participation and waived school fees for non-repeating[8] girls in Standards 2-8.

At the same time, President Banda had declared himself "President for Life" and was raising international alarm with his media censorship and human rights abuses (Lamba, 2010). Banda was forced by foreign donors to call an election (Muula & Chanika, 2004). In this 1994 election, Banda was unseated by his former cabinet minister Bakili Muluzi.

Bakili Muluzi had campaigned for president on the promise of implementing free and universal primary education (UPE), which he urged was central to a broader poverty alleviation strategy (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001). Upon election, Muluzi implemented UPE in one year—the shortest implementation window in the region (Inoue & Oketch, 2008). The government did not have adequate resources and personnel at hand, but at the time international organizations "lauded the government for moving to fulfill the EFA commitment" and raised foreign aid contributions to the education sector; by 2002, 91% of the education development budget was furnished by international funders (Kendall, 2007, p. 289). International actors remain key players in Malawi's education system today.

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[8] In the 1980s and 1990s, grade repetition was a major area of focus for the World Bank and USAID, since it represented inefficiencies in the education system. These donors developed systems for tracking pupil registration and monitoring levels of repetition (Mundy, 2002).

To accomplish UPE, a number of measures were undertaken that eliminated barriers to primary education: school fees were completely eradicated, the language of instruction switched from English to local languages for the early primary grades, and the requirement of wearing a school uniform was eliminated (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001). The number of students accessing primary schools immediately swelled. Kadzamira et al. write that, "Overnight, primary enrolment surged by 50%, rising from 1.9 million to nearly 3 million students" (2018, par. 3). The sudden pressure on schools and teachers was immense:

> Abrupt increase in enrolments meant that access to facilities could not be expanded concomitantly. Rather, it has led to an increased number of children using existing facilities more intensively, resulting in a substantial increase in class size, particularly in early standards (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001, p. 19)

Safuli and Grant Lewis (1997) describe the scale of the challenges Malawian schools faced immediately post-UPE: the educational system was short 38,000 classrooms and 1.7 million desks; 22,000 teachers would be needed to achieve a pupil-teacher ratio of 60:1; and the pupil-textbook ratio was 100:1 in some districts (in Mundy, 2002). The aftershocks of UPE continue to be felt today. Class sizes remain the largest in the SSA region and resources are strained (UIS, 2012). For teachers, this means contending with some of the most challenging conditions in SSA.

The impacts of UPE on the teaching profession have been both sizeable and felt over time. The next section examines one aspect of this: teacher training. I term teacher training in Malawi a "system of ongoing upgrades" because of the ways it is continually retooled in response to the changing nature of primary education in Malawi, and the ways that teachers are also upgrading themselves.

Teacher training: A system of ongoing upgrades

During the missionary era, teacher training was provided through individual missions; some missions offered formal training programs whereas others trained teachers informally through apprenticeships. Some missions would send teachers to other missions that had more established teacher training. In a similar pattern to primary education, teacher education at the time could be considered an uneven patchwork of provision. In-service training was a common practice for providing training to underqualified teachers (Banda, 1982).

Given the diffuse and patchy nature of teacher training undertaken by missionary societies, when the British colonial administration began investing in education it identified teacher education as a priority area for improvement. In the 1950s, the newly established Department of Education began sending select African teachers to Britain for teacher education courses. The Department of Education also began organizing in-service courses for teachers. Still, a survey of primary education in Malawi in the early 1960s reported that, "The training then given in Nyasaland was, with few exceptions, inefficient and unsatisfactory" (Banda, 1982, p. 125). The survey team for this commission recommended more in-service trainings for teachers.

In the 1980s, the World Bank became a key player in supporting teacher training activities in Malawi, and these programs have regularly relied on in-service and distance-learning delivery modes. With plans to incrementally expand primary education in the early 1990s, the World Bank funded a teacher training program called Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Program (MASTEP) which offered a one-year pre-service training component and in-service training through distance education centers (Mundy, 2002). However,

MASTEP's teacher output was relatively low given that primary school access at the time was on-course to expand gradually.

Since the rapid roll-out of UPE in the 1990s, Malawi's teacher education system has been under continual refinement to adjust to the still massive demand for teachers. UPE triggered an overhaul of teacher training in Malawi and an even heavier reliance on in-service training modalities. The immediate need for school staffing prompted the government to recruit approximately 18,000 teachers to implement UPE. Between July and September 1994, the government doubled its teaching force with these untrained teachers who were provided a two-week crash course (Mundy, 2002). Later, they were eligible for one year of in-service training through a program called Malawi In-Service Integrated Teacher Education Program (MIITEP), funded by the World Bank and the British government, which was administered between 1997 and 2003 (Steiner-Khamsi & Lefoka, 2011). MIITEP depended on on-the-ground supervision of teachers, which Mundy (2002) argues did not go as planned and led to many teachers feeling unprepared.

In a study with Malawian teachers who had been trained through MIITEP, Sharra (2007) found that many teachers brought into the teaching field at this time were insecure about their qualifications; students teased them for being "aphunzitsi a ganyu," or "piecework teachers." Many of the teachers in Malawi's primary schools today were trained during the UPE-era. Teachers trained today go through a more robust pre-service training program called IPTE (Initial Primary Teacher Education).[9] However, in-service trainings, often called Continuing

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[9] While teacher training in Malawi, at the time of this study, was offered through the IPTE program, for six years the World Bank funded a distance mode version of IPTE called IPTE-ODL (Open Distance Learning). IPTE-ODL teachers were admitted with lower MSCE scores than traditional IPTE students and underwent three weeks of introductory training before two-and-a-half years of in-school teaching with distance learning requirements. IPTE-ODL was suspended in 2015 alongside a major increase in the traditional IPTE training scheme (Asim et al., 2019).

Professional Development (CPD), continue to be an integral element of teacher learning today in Malawi as well as other countries in SSA (e.g. Akalu, 2016).

While this dissertation focuses on primary school teacher experiences, the connection between primary and secondary school teaching is important to how many teachers think about their work and their career trajectories. The concept of "upgrading"—moving from teaching primary school to teaching secondary school—has a long history in the education sector, beginning with the introduction of secondary education in the 1950s. The colonial government began opening up a handful of secondary schools in the 1950s, and during Banda's presidency secondary schools proliferated (Banda, 1982). The introduction of secondary school came with the attendant challenge of staffing secondary school. The dilemma was that the pool of potential teachers was small and those within it only trained through primary school. With this, the idea "upgrading" emerged—upgrading would allow practicing primary school teachers to advance their education credentials and become secondary school teachers. This occurred through additional in-service coursework and passing examinations.

Opportunities to "upgrade" reemerged at later historical points for primary school teachers, such as post-UPE, when a cadre of primary school teachers were promoted to secondary school in order to keep pace with the first waves of UPE students transitioning from primary to secondary. As I show in Chapter 7 of this dissertation, the notion of upgrading remains important to how many primary school teachers think about their work today.

"Projects" applied to schools and teachers by international actors

The goals for schooling in Malawi have been under continual revision. The earliest "project" for schooling was to spread Christianity. Following independence in 1964, leaders asserted that education would promote nation-building (Banda, 1982). In the era of UPE

education was framed as a tool for eradicating poverty (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001). National and international dialogues have stressed the importance of education for improved economic productivity (e.g., MOEST, 2011). These shifting goals affect teachers' work through prompting curriculum changes, motivating new programming, and introducing or compounding pressures on what schools and teachers are supposed to achieve. Today, we can see the ways multiple goals and teachers' work intersect through international development projects undertaken by a host of international actors.

International actors, historically and today

The international actors involved in the education system in Malawi have fluctuated, as have their modalities of influence. Despite many different actors and approaches, continuity can be seen in the theme that these actors are expressing their goals through schools and teachers.

The earliest international actors to shape Malawi's education system were the missionaries, and their influence on the education system was both deep and wide-reaching. In addition, the British Government played a large role in Malawi during and after colonialism. Immediately following independence in 1964, the United Kingdom was Malawi's main source of foreign aid, but this gradually began to diversify (Lamba, 1993). During Banda's regime, donors operated incrementally and largely within the scope of their predetermined agenda (Mundy, 2002). Under President Bakili Muluzi, who championed free primary education, this changed: the then Minister of Education was recorded as saying, "We went to the donors and said, 'We want free primary education. We are on the train. We are going within or without you. Are you with us or are you not?" (Bernbaum, 1998, in Mundy, 2002, p. 31). While initially donors

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boarded the train enthusiastically in 1994, they soon began pushing for more planning and fiscal responsibility given rising concerns about the sustainability of UPE (Mundy, 2002).

Until the 1990s, the World Bank was the main donor involved in education in Malawi. Banda had developed an elitist system of education—occasionally allocating 40% of the national education budget to one elite secondary school in his home district (Lwanda, 1993)—and this was not actively discouraged by donors. In some ways, donor programs post-independence worsened inequalities, for instance by raising primary school fees in order to generate more financing for education. This came about after a World Bank team in 1982 assessed that the Malawi government would be unable to increase its education budget (except through foreign aid) and urged the Malawian government to increase primary school fees. The Malawi government adopted these recommendations, though only partially, placing a disproportionate financial burden on the earliest grades (Klees, 1984).

Less than a decade later, the World Bank reversed its stance on primary school fees, promulgating the idea that primary education should be freely and publicly available because of the returns it delivered to economies and societies (Gartner, 2013). With World Bank and USAID backing, Malawi began supporting gradual school fee eradication efforts (Mundy, 2002). Under Banda, a system of accepting donor mandates was part of the Ministry of Education's institutional culture. As Mundy (2002) argues,

> Little opportunity or incentive existed for government officials to own and develop their own reforms. A culture of uncertainty prevailed, and Malawian officials seemed to feel most comfortable allowing external bodies to lead the way in setting the educational reform agenda. Donors supported this state of affairs through the continuous use of foreign technical expertise for the sectoral reform (p. 27).

Other scholars have echoed Mundy's concern for MOE's culture of donors driving Malawi's educational agenda (e.g., Chimombo, 1999; Kadzamira & Rose, 2001). For much of the 1960s and 1970s, the World Bank was the main donor in Malawi, but in the late 1980s USAID also joined the educational scene following a congressionally mandated focus on basic education in Africa (Mundy, 2002). USAID had a longstanding objective of reducing fertility internationally, and its educational programming in Malawi was based on an association that educational consultants had identified between girls' educational participation and reduced fertility (Mundy, 2002).

In 1991, USAID launched a project called Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy Education (GABLE). This project brought $20 million to the Ministry of Education, $14 million of which went directly to the Malawian educational budget, conditional on the government's adoption of a variety of policy measures including increasing budgetary allocation to primary education (Mundy, 2002). As discussed in the previous section, the early 1990s saw the introduction of fee waivers for primary education by USAID (specifically for non-repeating primary girls) as well as World Bank mandated MOE fee waivers for the early primary grades (Mundy, 2002).

Following the UPE declaration, donors abandoned incremental approaches in favor of more immediate measures. The World Bank disbursed $22.5 million towards an "emergency primary education project" which included a new teacher training program, MIITEP (Mundy, 2002). The UK also contributed $44.7 million to support MIITEP and to fund the construction of Teacher Development Centers (TDCs), located at the sub-district level of zone, to provide in-service professional development to teachers (Mundy, 2002).

More recently, the World Bank has targeted its education efforts towards mitigating rural staffing shortages. This has involved financing a rural teacher training program (IPTE-ODL) and

developing a rural allowance program to supplement the incomes of teachers in rural schools. The rural allowance was initially conceived of as an incentive, but was implemented in such a way that nearly 90% of teachers ended up receiving the allowance (Asim et al., 2019).

While the World Bank has historically been a major donor to Malawi (MOF, 2012), at the time of this study, the World Bank had frozen its aid to Malawi following a 2013 corruption scandal dubbed "Cashgate." This scandal involved the misappropriation of an estimated $45 million, largely from donor funds, by Malawian bureaucrats, politicians, and business leaders (Goteti, 2018). The World Bank resumed issuing loans to Malawi in 2017 (Rumney, 2017).

Despite the World Bank suspending its aid to Malawi in 2013, roughly 40% of Malawi's annual budget[10] has consistently been furnished by foreign governments over the past decade (Hall & Mambo, 2015; Rumney, 2017). After the health sector, the education sector is usually the largest recipient of aid flows (MOF, 2012). The share donors contribute to the education budget typically hovers around 35-40% of education financing. Often, this funding is earmarked for specific projects (World Bank, 2016). USAID in particular operates with a preference for project support, rather than administering funds to government accounts (Hall & Mambo, 2015). The Cashgate scandal, mentioned above, increased donors' preferences to retain fiscal control of projects or channel money through non-government organizations (NGOs) rather than government-managed accounts (Pot, 2018). This has resulted in a shift away from sector-wide support for education and towards projects.

At the time of this study, the United States (USAID) and the United Kingdom (DFID, the Department for International Development) were the largest donors to Malawi's education sector. Both donors had projects focused on girls' education and early grade reading initiatives.

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[10] In the 2011-2012 year, about three-quarters of this came as grants whereas about one-quarter was disbursed as loans (MOF, 2012).

The Malawi Early Great Reading Improvement Activity (MERIT) is an ongoing (September 2015-September 2020) $65 million USAID project designed to improve reading instruction and skills acquisition (USAID, 2018a). The leading USAID girls' education project during the time of this study was Girls' Empowerment through Education and Health Activity (ASPIRE) at $18.2 million (December 2014-December 2018). This project focused on all primary and secondary school girls in three districts (including Zomba, where I conducted fieldwork) and aimed to decrease structural and cultural barriers to girls' access to schooling (USAID, 2018b).

When this study was conducted, DFID was implementing a $46.7 million project called Keeping Girls in School (KGIS) aiming to improve girls' retention in school (June 2012-September 2018) (DFID, 2018b). Another ongoing DFID project at the time of this study was called Education Support in Malawi (ESM) and reported the goal of "increasing access to quality infrastructure to aid better learning and support improvements in early reading" (DFID, 2018a). The project budget for ESM (April 2015-July 2019) is $21.3 million.

International development projects and implications for teachers' work

Donor contributions to education in Malawi are sizeable, and donor priorities have a large role in shaping both the projects implemented in Malawian schools as well as the national education agenda (Mundy, 2002). Kadzamira and Rose (2001) argue that this contributes to a distance between those who "make" and those who "use" policy and projects:

> Education policy formulation in Malawi does not have the tradition of consulting with stakeholders, including teachers, parents, communities, local leaders and NGOs involved in education...the users of policy (district education officers, schools, teachers, parents,

and pupils) have, therefore, been suggested to be passive recipients of pre-packaged solutions proposed to them by a distant agency (p. 10).

USAID and DFID are two of the largest donors in Malawi in general and in education in particular (MOF, 2012). As mentioned earlier, both agencies have projects dedicated to increasing girls' participation in school and in promoting early-grade literacy. Within these projects, teachers play a central role, as role models and literacy instructors, respectively (DFID-Malawi & Save the Children, 2014; USAID, 2017b).

Some health sector projects—initiated by donors and other international actors—also spill over into the educational arena. USAID's projects, DREAMS and ASPIRE,[11] hold HIV testing and counseling at government-run schools. The DREAMS project also includes a school-based HIV and violence prevention program (USAID, 2018b). While literature on this project does not specify what roles teachers may have, schools will be the sites of this programming. Save the Children, one of the largest NGOs operating in Malawi, is currently contracted to implement a number of these donor projects. Save the Children also has its own activities, such as a malaria treatment project called Learner Treatment Kits (LTK) which aims to reduce student absenteeism through training teachers in how to diagnose and treat malaria (Melody, 2014). I explore the impacts such projects have on teachers' work in Chapter 5.

As Kendall and Silver (2017) argue, Malawi "exemplifies the type of high-poverty, high-aid dependency context in which a flood of international development actors have come to 'fix problems'" (p. 28). Between gender-based violence (WHO, 2013), health issues such as malaria and HIV (Melody, 2014; USAID, 2018b), and relatively low student performance (SACMEQ, 2005), the variety of "problems" which international actors engage is vast. These projects span

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[11] At the time of the study, these projects were operating in select districts, including Zomba District where this research occurred.

both academic and non-academic foci; however, both strands enlist schools and teachers. The foci of these projects, and the ways teachers engage with them, relate to economic conditions.

Economic factors and teacher salaries

Malawi is classified by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a "low-income developing country" (IMF, 2014).[12] In 2011, the annual Gross National Income (GNI) per capita at purchasing power parity[13] was $1,040—less than $90 per month. With Malawi characterized as one of the poorest countries in the world (IMF, 2017), the economic hardships experienced by most citizens of Malawi are persistent and often extreme. Most Malawians are dependent on agriculture for subsistence and cash-cropping; droughts, which are devastating, happen frequently and have concrete effects on the economy (Pauw et al., 2010). Malawi's prospects for economic growth are tempered the facts that it is a landlocked country with few natural resources. This tangibly constrains the government's options for increasing funding, to education as well as other sectors, and also offers some perspective on why foreign aid is so valuable in this particular context (Mundy, 2002).

The economy's dependence on donors directly shapes teachers' work in Malawi. Donors influence the salaries teachers receive, the curriculum they use, and the after-school clubs they implement. This is one of the ways the economic landscape influences teachers' work. Additionally, the poverty and crop dependence of Malawi also influence teacher lives. Most teachers in Malawi are also farmers, and when rains are insufficient, they are among those who

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[12] Elsewhere, Malawi is termed a "low-income country," a "least developed country," and a "heavily indebted poor country" (UN, 2014)

[13] "PPPs are the rates of currency conversion that equalize the purchasing power of different currencies by eliminating the differences in price levels between countries. In their simplest form, PPPs are simply price relatives that show the ratio of the prices in national currencies of the same good or service in different countries." (OECD, 2019)

suffer (though their paychecks provide a buoy). Teachers are also sensitive to the fact that many

of their students are hungry, and that families face real difficulty in affording school materials.

Table 2

Teacher salaries and gross national income per capita (GNI) in Malawi and neighboring countries (annual and at purchasing power parity, PPP)

	Malawi	Mozambique	Tanzania	Zambia
Teacher salaries (PPP[14])	$4,716	$4,992	$4,320	$3,300
GNI per capita (PPP)	$1,040	$940	$2,170	$3,200
Salary/GNI	4.5	5.3	1.99	1.03

Sources: World Bank 2016 and World Bank 2019 (all data from the year 2011)

While primary school teachers in Malawi are more financially secure than most

Malawians, this does not translate into primary school teaching being perceived as a desirable

profession (Sharra, 2007). The status of the teaching profession has been deteriorating for several

decades, with some arguing that this is rooted in structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the

1980s which reduced public sector financing (Carnoy, 1995; Kendall & Silver, 2014). Malawi

had been receiving foreign aid since independence, in the form of both loans and grants. Like

other low-income countries across the world, GOM was burdened by debt to multilateral aid

agencies that had provided the loans. SAPs offered a form of debt relief that required debtor

nations to implement IMF-supported programs engineered to restore medium and long-term

economic growth (Carnoy, 1995; Kaluwa et al., 1992). In Malawi, SAPs were accepted by GOM

in 1981 and were designed to incentivize the production of tobacco and rationalize government

expenditures (Kaluwa et al., 1992).

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[14] Appendix A offers financial reference points.

Around the same time as SAPs were introduced, Malawi's economy experienced several external shocks. The export prices of tobacco were declining, and the cost of exporting in general was increasing. A civil war in the neighboring country of Mozambique increased the cost of exports and imports; goods to and from Malawi were now routed through a more distant port in South Africa. Malawi also received an influx of refugees from Mozambique, putting pressure on the country's limited resources. A drought in 1980 resulted in poor maize and tobacco harvests. Writing in the early 1990s, Kaluwa and colleagues state that, during the time period of SAPs,

> Arguably almost all Malawians have been adversely affected...The prices of basic commodities, especially food, have increased, and Government expenditure of basic services such as health and education have fallen. Furthermore, real wages and employment have been reduced (1992, p. 49).

In response to these conditions, the government and donors increased social sector funding (in education, health, and social development). Much of the funding came from Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants rather than loans. However, Kaluwa and colleagues note that ODA donors require recurring costs to be assumed locally. Even when donors fund a project, recurrent costs arising from it are to be taken up by the local government (Kaluwa et al., 1992). This is a common practice in international development financing, and has implications for teacher salaries (Heynemann, 2003). Though donors such as the World Bank have played an active role in training teachers, they do not pay their salaries.

GOM has also been directly advised to maintain low wages for public servants like teachers, particularly in the wake of UPE and against the backdrop of the extreme financial hardships of the 1980s. In a 1994 report titled "Malawi civil service pay and employment study," the World Bank cautions against the government raising teacher salary,

Teachers are already better remunerated than their equivalently educated and trained

counterparts in the civil service...[and] teachers are by far the fastest growing cadre of the

civil service. A combination of higher average pay and sustained high growth in the

number of teachers could be an explosive dynamite in the Government wage bill in the

foreseeable future (p. 12).

Similarly, a 2016 World Bank study found that teacher salary comprises 84% of recurrent

expenditures on primary education in Malawi, with the authors asserting that this leaves "little

room for financing other inputs necessary for delivering quality education" (p. xvi).

The bind created through donors training but not compensating teachers is particularly

interesting, as it has resulted in a back-log of trained teachers that the Ministry of Education,

Science, and Technology (MOEST)[15] cannot afford to hire. Within the MOEST's budget is a

constant tug of war between hiring more teachers and raising teacher salary, both of which

require significant financial commitment and which donors will not support (personal

communication with MOEST official, 2017). Given the MOEST's limited budget, trained

teachers often wait for several years for the government to officially recruit them and put them

on the pay roll (Hall & Mambo, 2015). Those teachers on the pay roll often experience salary

delays, and rarely get promotions. Teacher pay decisions are thus closely watched by donors and

teachers alike. The Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) threatens regular strikes to pressure the

Ministry to pay teacher salaries when they are late, or to pay arrears for previous missed salary

disbursements. As recently as January 30, 2019, TUM was calling for a strike to pay teachers

outstanding arrears by May 2019 (Mkupatira, 2019).

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[15] This is the current name for the Ministry of Education, which was previously called MOE.

An additional piece of this picture, related to donors and salary, is the counterpoint in the health sector. In 2004 GOM announced a new incentive structure for health personnel in order to reduce "brain drain," with some scholars identifying that this may dampen motivation in other sectors like education (e.g., Kadzamira, 2006). This program is a salary top-up for health sector personnel. It is called the Sector-wide Approach (SWAp), with roughly three-quarters of the salary top-up provided by external donors such as DFID and the World Bank. Nurses and doctors are targeted by this top-up, which close to doubles their wages (Record & Mohiddin, 2006). While the argument of brain drain does not cross over to the education sector, given that teacher exodus has never been a problem (Kadzamira, 2006), it is important to note that donor positions towards salary vary by sector. Moreover, these variations enhance the relative economic hardships experienced by teachers.

A Chichewa proverb—"when the elephants fight, the grass is what suffers"—came up in my fieldwork when a teacher was describing how she felt teachers had been trampled on by those in power. This historical context section has made visible the early roots of teacher vulnerability that manifest themselves in teachers' work today. Typically, concern for teacher livelihoods has been distant from those who set policy; with changes in policy, or new projects, teachers are arrayed as implementers. While teachers acknowledged their vulnerability, they did not position themselves as defeated actors. A conceptual framework of "everyday creativity" (de Certeau, 1984) reveals how teachers instead deftly use their circumstances towards their own ends. The following chapter introduces the concepts I engage in this dissertation and the methods I adopt to understand how teachers, and other education stakeholders, make meaning of teachers' work.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY DESIGN

In this this dissertation, I combine "everyday creativity" (de Certeau, 1984) with concepts of meaning making and policy as practice. To study the meanings of teaching made by teachers, as well as other stakeholders, I adopt a vertical case study design. After describing the concepts that shaped this study, I present the study's methods.

Concepts

The three concepts discussed here—everyday creativity, meaning-making, and policy as practice—cut across this dissertation. Other concepts are woven into specific chapters when I aim to more deeply explore particular themes, and these concepts are explained within chapters.

Conceptualizing "everyday creativity"

In *The Practice of Everyday Life,* Michel de Certeau (1984) argues that, in everyday life, individuals are constantly engaging in *bricolage* or "artisan-like inventiveness" as they use available materials, resources, and cultural forms in creative ways (p. viii). De Certeau writes that, "users make (*bricolent*) innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests" (1984, p. xiii).

The French word *bricolage* is translated into English as tinker, make, or make do. Hatton (1989) connects this concept to teaching, writing that,

> [Teachers] do not consider a project and then ask what tools and materials are required for its completion. Rather, they review the materials they have at hand and ask how they might be used to complete, or approximately complete, the project (p. 75).

While Hatton is describing *bricolage* in the context of teacher pedagogy, this creative process of reviewing materials at hand and applying them to projects arises across many aspects of teachers' work. To appreciate the myriad ways in which this occurs requires broadening how we understand "the projects" teachers are engaged in and "the materials" they appropriate for these projects. Projects can encompass teacher goals for their work, and materials can include things like policy. I use de Certeau's term, "everyday creativity" (p. xiv) to describe these procedures of teacher *bricolage;* by using the term "everyday creativity" I signal the mundane, subtle, and therefore often undetected creativity of teachers.

De Certeau views everyday activities—such as cooking, reading, walking, speaking—as examples of creative practice whereby individuals are using forms such as recipes, books, streets, or language in ways that enable them to fulfill their needs. While individuals may be guided by specific available forms, their actions are not wholly determined by them. Within this gap between form and use is immense space for individual inventiveness, and one that de Certeau argues has been overlooked.

This inventiveness, according to de Certeau, resembles "poaching." As de Certeau explains, "Everyday life invents itself by *poaching* in countless ways on the property of others" (p. xii, emphasis in original). In poaching, those who are using the space and forms (policy, literature, language) invented by others rely on "tactics": "A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking over in its entirety…a tactic depends on time—it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing'…the weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them" (p. xix).

De Certeau's notion of "tactics" has served as an analytic frame in studies of children and other vulnerable actors. For instance, a few studies have used de Certeau's framework to

37

examine how young children creatively operate within classroom rules (Henward, 2015; Oh, 2013). Henward writes, "Children, following de Certeauian logic, bound by the constraints of rules, policies, and practices…will still find space and employ tactics to make do and make a space for pleasure" (2015, p. 210). Examples offered include pretending to be on task while surreptitiously doing something else, or hiding "contraband objects" (p. 217) in pockets. Oh (2013), who studied Korean children in U.S. preschool classrooms, observed tactics such as students sending valentines to themselves and hiding toys within toys as a way to follow the "one toy" policy, arguing that these tactics are often more pronounced in classroom settings where children feel marginalized.

In a study of how NGOs operated within a Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) convention to develop a stance on genetically modified organizations, Müller argued that NGOs included in this multi-stakeholder group were carefully walking a "tightrope" (p. 296) in order to maintain their integration in the International Planning Committee while also sustaining their allegiance to the "rural poor" whose voices they were tasked with representing. Walking this tightrope involved continually seeking appropriate opportunities to insert the priorities of the rural poor into this process. As de Certeau argues, weak actors must always be on the watch for opportunities to assert their priorities within a space designed by others.

Instead of lifting this language of "tactic," I prefer "everyday creativity" because of its focus on the agency of individual actors. De Certeau introduces this terminology when he discusses "procedures of everyday creativity" (p. xiv). This emphasis highlights how agency is something engineered and executed in mundane and ordinary moments. Secondly, focusing on everyday creativity separates this concept from the language of war, which feels like an appropriate cleavage since actors are not always directly engaging with an "opponent." They are

38

trying to get by, and resistance—while it may in some ways be conceived of as an outcome of the creative process of "getting by"—is not always present in the intention.

The opportunistic and tactical nature of everyday creativity is especially pronounced for actors who have limited power, like teachers in Malawi.[16] While I recognize that many actors—such as students, parents, or villagers—often have substantially less power than teachers do, I seek to keep visible how teachers are vulnerable to other actors in the education system who have control over their work. Vulnerable actors, such as teachers in this context, "must constantly play with events in order to transform them into opportunities" (Müller, 2011, p. 284). Within this context, de Certeau's notion of "everyday creativity" offers a way to make visible the creativity manifested across teachers' work: how teachers engage with international development projects, how they articulate their frustrations with policy, and how they author identities with respect to their profession.

The concept of everyday creativity informs how I approach both of my research questions. My first research question asks, *how do teachers make meaning of their work*? With this question, I examine how teachers interpret the purpose of the work; in other words, what "projects" are they hoping to achieve through their work, how do they execute and refigure these projects? Constructing meanings is a fundamentally creative task, and meanings can vary from teacher to teacher and day to day. I turn to literature on interpretivism to conceptualize the dynamic and creative nature of meaning-making. In the second question, I ask, *how is teachers' work framed within and influenced by policy and international development projects?* Given that teachers' work in Malawi is a vibrant site of reform, I wanted to examine how these reform activities intersected with teachers' work. I see this process as multidirectional—policies are

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[16] Scott's (1985) concept of "everyday resistance" helps in extending this idea further. I engage Scott's work in Chapter 5 when exploring teacher engagements with policy.

acting on teachers and teachers are acting on policy (Ball et al., 2012). As they act on policy, teachers create new versions and uses of policy. Literature on policy as practice (e.g., Levinson et al., 2009) supports how I conceptualize of teachers' multidirectional and creative engagements with policy.

Conceptualizing meaning-making

In addressing my first research question, *how do teachers make meaning of their work?,* I draw on literature in interpretivism. Interpretivism examines human interpretations or meanings, viewing meanings as the basis on which people act (Blumer, 1969; Erickson, 1986; Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Pascale, 2011). Meanings are "continually under revision as events unfold" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 7), requiring examinations as conditions change and individuals revise meanings.

In their book on interpretive research, Dyson and Genishi (2005) offer the example of a child losing teeth to illustrate how meaning-making contains individual, collective, and situational dimensions. For some children, a loose tooth symbolizes a chance to get ice cream or an opportunity for economic gain; for others, losing a tooth is characterized by pain and fear. For many, the experience contains multiple meanings. Family traditions, past experiences, and individual disposition all play into the meanings children make around losing a tooth. This example offers a consideration of how meanings are made and how they are influential, since the meanings made shape how a child responds when she discovers a tooth is loose. Interpretive researchers take human interpretations to be dynamic (Glassner, 2000), continually constructed and reconstructed through experience and social interactions (Donmoyer, 2011; Spradley, 1979), and shaped by context (Dyson & Genishi, 2005).

In other words, meanings are not just constructed "from scratch" (Wenger, 1998, p. 54); though meaning-making is a creative process, it is not unfettered. Teachers, for instance, draw from cultural forms, histories, and policies as they think about their work today. A teacher's interpretation of a new government policy may be informed by her impression of historical policy measures undertaken by the government. Or, how a teacher interprets a new international development project targeting his work may depend on how he is already thinking about his work.

I draw on these principles in this study of teacher meaning-making in Malawi. I examine how teachers interpret the purpose of the work; in other words, what "projects" are they hoping to achieve through their work, and how are these projects crafted and continually recrafted? The fact that new stimuli—a loose tooth for a child, a new policy for a teacher—inform and elicit processes of meaning-making shaped my study design. My preference was to anchor myself at one school so that I could observe activity and teacher responses. Because meanings vary from teacher to teacher and day to day, I knew it would be important to interview multiple teachers and the same teachers multiple times. Throughout this study, I was also attuned to the ways policy featured in teacher meaning-making, and I was eager to explore the various ways teachers' work and policy intersected.

Conceptualizing policy as practice

> [Policy is] simultaneously imposed and taken up, reconfigured by its users in ways not
> necessarily imagined or intended by those who produced it, and put to work in a
> multitude of ways. (Saltmarsh, 2015, p. 41)

I adopt the concept of "policy as practice" (Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001) in order to appreciate the range of teacher engagements with policy. I apply this concept to thinking about both international development projects and government-endorsed policy; while there are noteworthy differences, both government policy and ID projects issue mandates, derive from powerful actors, and allocate resources. Because of the ways ID projects operate in Malawi, I view ID projects themselves as a type of "policy." In Malawi, ID organizations have played a critical role in both resource disbursement and agenda-setting in the education sector (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001; Mundy, 2002). Weaver-Hightower (2008) offers the idea of de facto policies to capture particular forms that, while not "official government policy," function in similar ways. In this Malawi, donor and NGO projects generate de facto policy that may not (yet) be Malawian government produced—one version of policy (Levinson et al., 2009). However, these de facto policies often present to teachers as authoritative programs.

Sometimes, the government embrace of such projects is tight, as is the case with a current USAID-funded reading reform (Malawi Early Great Reading Improvement Activity) known also as the "National Reading Programme," pictured on the billboard in Figure 1, depicted with the MOEST emblem and colors of the Malawian flag. In this particular case, separating an ID project from a "government policy" is impossible, since the two operate in tandem.

Levinson and others write, policy "(a) defines reality, (b) orders behavior, and (sometimes) (c) allocates resources accordingly" (2009, p. 770). With such a definition, one can see how even an NGO project can be considered a form of "policy," if it promotes particular behaviors and organizes resources. The notion of how policy orders realities is further developed later in this section. For these various reasons, the policy as practice framework is useful for illuminating aspects of teacher engagements with both ID projects and government policy.

Figure 1

Billboard for a USAID-funded reading project

Policy as practice invites the question, "what *is* policy? And what does policy *do?*"

(Levinson et al., 2009, p. 769). "Policy as practice" stems from a view that "policy" should be

conceived of in a manner that privileges how it is experienced (e.g., Shore et al., 2011; Sutton &

Levinson, 2001). While normative perspectives of policy give disproportionate weight to

authoritative texts as the "definition" of policy (Ball et al., 2012), sociocultural approaches like

policy as practice challenge that what people do in the name of policy is an expression of policy

more readily seen and felt. Thus, a notion of "policy" can encompass both the text-level

discourses ("official policy," like NRP) and the actions that are associated with these discourses

(such as teacher take-up of NRP). Conceptualizing policy as practice purposefully unsettles the

hierarchy and power given to "official" policy, in favor of valuing the policy forms experienced

by those who "live" the policy on a daily basis (Sutton & Levinson, 2001). Starting from the

level of policy as practice also allows us to see not only the enactment dimension of policy but

also how policy situates in people's lives, the power it is accorded, and the ways policy organizes

and reorganizes realities.

The relationship between teachers and policy is intricate. One strand of this relationship involves teachers negotiating meanings of policy, or "sensemaking" as they implement policy (e.g., Spillane et al., 2002). Another strand involves how policy operates on teachers (Ball et al., 2012; Però, 2011; Shore & Wright, 2011): As Shore and Wright (2011) argue, "part of the 'work of policy' is to classify and organize people and ideas in new ways" (p. 3). For example, policy may introduce new ideas about who teachers are supposed to be, or affirm for teachers a sense of their positionality within the broader education sector. To this end, I examine in this dissertation how policies construct teachers as certain "policy subjects," since certain policies "call up" different kinds of teachers and teacher qualities (Ball et al., 2011b).

As articulated by Saltmarsh (2015), policy is "put to work in a multitude of ways" (p. 41). To appreciate the dynamics of teacher engagements with policy, I bring in de Certeau's notion of everyday creativity. De Certeau urges for an examination of the prosaic "procedures of everyday creativity" (p. xiv) of "users": those who *use* various forms—for instance, books, television, streets, or policy. The distance between those who "make" and those who "use" reform in Malawi is often vast, since international development projects may come from Italy, the U.S., or the U.K. (Chimombo, 1999); even government policy was talked about by teachers as a distantly derived construct given that policymakers were viewed as disconnected from the realities teachers encounter. On the one hand, teachers have little agency in determining the official reforms that target their work. On the other hand, in using and defining these reforms, they have remarkable agency. The following description of Spanish colonizers helps develop this idea:

The ambiguity that subverted from within the Spanish colonizers' "success" in imposing their own culture on the indigenous Indians is well known. Submissive, and even

44

consenting to their own subjugation, the Indians nevertheless *made of* the rituals,

representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their

conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by

using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice

but to accept...their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they

lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it. (de Certeau, 1984, p.

xiii)

The connections with policy are clear. As Shore and Wright contend, "even if [people]

cannot overturn a particular policy, they use tactics and strategies to make of that policy

something quite different from what the authors intended" (2011, p. 19). These insights drove me

to examine how teachers were using ID projects and policy, but also to remain aware of how

these policies or ID projects were using teachers. A vertical case study design supported this

exploration.

Methods

Designing the study

In designing this study, I was mindful of the fact that "cases are constructed, not found, as researchers make decisions about how to angle their vision on places overflowing with potential stories of human experience" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 5). I explain in this chapter the principles I applied before, during, and after data generation in order to "angle my vision" towards stories that would allow me to understand how teachers made meaning of their work and how their work was framed within and influenced by policy and ID projects.

I pursue two research questions in this study. My first research question asks, *how do teachers make meaning of their work*? With this question, I examine how teachers interpret the purpose of the work. Studying this involved asking teachers about the joys and challenges of their work, what their goals were, and why they made particular decisions. In my second question, I ask, *how is teachers' work framed within and influenced by policy and international development projects?* This question supported my examination of how teachers' work intersects with policy and ID projects. A vertical case study (VCS) design framed this study.

Constructing a vertical case study design

While I was primarily interested in teachers and their engagements with policy and ID projects, I also wanted to understand teacher actions as they related to actors at other levels within the educational landscape. Participant observation with primary school teachers—two focal teachers in particular—anchored my investigation of how teacher experiences are shaped by specific policy and international development contexts. A VCS design structured my

investigation of teachers' work at local, national, and international levels (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006).

An aim of generating comparisons drew me to the VCS design and shaped my specific research choices. Through exposing differences between cases, comparison can elucidate important factors about particular cases (Anderson-Levitt, 2002; Farrell, 1979). In this study, I compared between teachers, across schools, and across levels of policy in order to understand how different policies shape different teachers' everyday creativity. I sought both horizontal and vertical axes of comparison (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014). For example, including more than one focal teacher enabled me to horizontally compare between focal teachers—how did these teachers apply different goals to their work? How did their teachers' experiences vary? How did they differently operate at the same primary school? Interviewing teachers at six additional schools across Malawi allowed me to consider how themes from my main case study school were unique and how they reverberated elsewhere. Vertically, I compared policy and ID project framings of teachers' work with the framings at local levels. Interviews and document analysis at national and international levels also enabled me to gain context about relevant reforms. Figure 2 illustrates the levels, actors, and sites of this study.

Figure 2

Vertical Case Study design applied to this study

Level	Actors/sites		Methods
Local	Mitambo Primary School (main site)	Interviews with teachers at other schools	Participant observation Interviews & focus groups
National	Ministry of Education officials	Reading curriculum, teacher management policies	Document analysis Interviews
International	Save the Children, World Bank, donor agencies		Document analysis Interviews

Figure adapted from Bartlett & Vavrus (2014)

The local site of Mitambo Primary School was the main research site for this study. I began participant observation at Mitambo, then began tracing the national and international influences salient to teachers at this site (Falzon, 2009). As I observed certain trainings and project activities, I tried to gain more context about these projects, arranging interviews with policy and ID project stakeholders and locating program and policy documents when possible. To extend and contextualize findings from Mitambo, I conducted interviews with teachers at six additional primary schools.

Selecting schools and teachers

The main research site

      I wanted to anchor myself at one school for several reasons. First, coming frequently to one school (2-5 days per week) would allow me to stay abreast of the ID projects and policies that were affecting teachers there. Remaining visible to leaders and teachers would also ensure that I was invited to attend ID project and policy trainings, staff meetings, and ceremonies. Second, I knew that establishing trust with teachers would take time, and that this trust would be crucial to fostering the type of comfort and conversation that would help me understand how they navigated and thought about their work. With nine months to carry out this research, I felt that mainly investing my efforts in one school would generate richer data than trying to divide my time between multiple schools. I did, later on, decide to conduct interviews at other schools during a school holiday, which I discuss in in the section labeled "additional schools."

      When I arrived in Malawi for fieldwork, I did not yet have a case study school identified. I wanted to be based in Zomba because of my research networks and because of the high concentration of donor and NGO activity in Zomba Rural District. I had in mind that I wanted to identify a school that was "typical" to Zomba Rural in terms of financial resources, pupil-teacher ratios, and teacher turnover; it should also be a full primary school rather than a junior primary school since this would allow me to see the range of interventions (some included Standard 1 teachers, others Standard 7). While I knew the school I selected would not be able to represent all of Malawi, or even all of Zomba Rural District, I hoped to find a school that was typical enough to eliminate the possibility that the school was radically different from other schools in Malawi. I also wanted to be at a school that shared a campus with a Teacher Development Center (TDC), since TDCs are often the hub of ID project and policy activity. Other selection factors

were that the school should be accessible by car and that the headteacher should be supportive of hosting a researcher. I worked with staff at the District Education Office in Zomba Rural District to identify three potential sites that fit these criteria, then visited each of the three schools and selected Mitambo based on its accessibility and the receptiveness of the school leaders.

Focal teachers

Shadowing focal teachers was a way to bring into my "viewing frame" the situated and particular ways that teachers make meaning of their work. It was important to include more than one focal teacher so that I could compare teacher experiences. Choosing two focal teachers at one school allowed me to see how teachers even at the same school experience teaching in markedly different ways. Being located at one school was also convenient for logistical reasons, and it additionally helped me continue building rapport with all teachers in the study.

I shadowed two focal teachers at Mitambo, and invited them to be focal teachers after conducting surveys and interviews with the 19 teachers who volunteered to participate in this study. The following chapter on female teachers describes my focal teachers Linda and Maggie. An interest in comparison drove my selection of these two teachers: Linda and Maggie had different teacher training backgrounds, classes, roles at Mitambo, anticipated career trajectories, family obligations, living situations. (I had also hoped to shadow a male teacher, but there were few male teachers at Mitambo and the one I invited to participate as a focal teacher declined.) Language also played a role in selecting my focal teachers. I am an advanced Chichewa speaker but I am not a native speaker, and I have found that primary school teachers are varyingly comfortable with English. I did conduct initial interviews with teachers in the company of a translator, and we defaulted to translating everything in Chichewa. However, it was not feasible

for me to conduct all participant observation with an interpreter, so I wanted to select focal

teachers with whom I could easily communicate. During initial interviews and site visits, I

considered my facility engaging with different teachers. This likely omitted from my field of

vision certain teacher perspectives. One way of addressing this was holding focus groups with

other teachers at Mitambo, which I scheduled in January, February, and March of 2017 and

conducted with a translator. This helped me stay connected with all teachers at Mitambo who

continued to express an interest in participating in the study (even the male teacher, who declined

to be a focal teacher, continued participating in focus groups). I continued weekly Chichewa

tutoring through the course of this project in order to enhance my ability to work with teachers.

Additional schools

In addition, I conducted interviews with teachers at six other schools in order to situate

and extend insights emerging from Mitambo. I selected schools that were both more urban and

more rural than Mitambo, since teacher experiences in Malawi often vary greatly between rural

and urban school (DeStefano, 2013). I also wanted to conduct interviews in the two other main

regions of the country where economic and cultural factors vary. I identified these schools

through convenience sampling, receiving suggestions from contacts at district offices as well as

colleagues from my Peace Corps service in the northern region.

Policies and programs

I also traced out ID projects and policies that were operating at Mitambo. Selecting

particular projects happened opportunistically. I learned about projects, sometimes being invited

by the Primary Education Advisor, headteacher, or teachers to attend trainings for these projects.

For instance, in December 2016, I was able to attend a week-long training for a USAID-funded reading program, and through contacts tracked down teacher guides and arranged an interview with a USAID official in the capital.

Generating data

Fieldwork for this study occurred between September 2016 and May 2017. I generated three types of data in this study: fieldnotes (from participant observation), interviews, and policy documents. The following sections describe data generation activities.

Participant observation

Participant observation is the cornerstone of ethnographic fieldwork, and it is documented through a researcher's fieldnotes. Participant observation involves participating "in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions...collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 1). I conducted 252 hours of participant observation at Mitambo for this study. This included observing teachers in their classrooms, chatting with teachers during breaks, attending staff meetings, and attending trainings related to new policies and ID projects. This ethnographic work enabled me to observe daily practices of teachers and how teachers engaged with international projects.

During participant observation, I always had a notebook where I made "jottings" (Emerson et al., 2011). These jottings were largely notes on what was happening, who teachers were talking to, what they were saying in class, how time was being apportioned, and snippets of conversations. As much as possible, I wrote down what people said verbatim. I converted my

hand-written jottings to fieldnotes upon returning home from school (most days, I was able to type up my fieldnotes the same day, which is the ideal). These fieldnotes are "data" but also reflect some of my early analysis, since I would write in italics analytic insights, cross-cutting observations, or questions to ask in the field.

Interviews

Interview data for this study included teacher background interviews (at Mitambo and six other schools), reflection interviews with focal teachers at Mitambo, focus groups with teachers at Mitambo, and interviews with policy and program leaders. *Teacher background interviews* typically lasted around one hour, during which time I asked teachers to describe a typical day, learned about their roles and responsibilities at the school, their goals for their careers, their motivations for entering teaching, and whether they planned to remain in the teaching profession. Prior to these initial interviews, teachers filled out a survey enrollment questionnaire with some basic demographic information as well. Appendix D and Appendix E present the protocol for these questionnaires and interviews, respectively. I decided to individually interview teachers so that I could hear details of each teacher's days and lives. Individual interviews were also important at Mitambo as a way to get to know each teacher.

All of these interviews, at Mitambo and the other six schools, were conducted with a translator. We decided to translate everything I said into Chichewa/Chitumbuka (and all consent forms were presented with both English and Chichewa/Chitumbuka on the page). Consent forms are included in Appendices B-C. This decision to default to the local language was made mainly to avoid embarrassment if teachers did require translation. While some teachers chose to respond

to questions in English, many teachers preferred to respond to questions in Chichewa; most teachers used a blend of English and Chichewa.

Reflection interviews with focal teachers were conducted at the end of the day when I shadowed focal teachers. I generally asked them about what they had enjoyed about the day, what was frustrating for them, and if anything surprised them or struck them as unusual. Having observed them during the day, I also made note of things that stuck out to me and asked them about these things. These interviews were important for understanding how my focal teachers made meaning of their work *in situ*.

Focus groups with teachers at Mitambo also centered on teacher responsibilities and tasks. In one round of focus groups, teachers helped me enumerate all of the things that teachers do, then described activities which they found most enjoyable and which they found most burdensome. Focus groups were particularly helpful for identifying shared experiences in the teaching profession; teachers would confirm and challenge one another in these discussions.

Interviews with policy and program leaders were conducted to learn about the history and goals of ID projects and policies. Some interviews, like with a leader in the Teachers Union of Malawi, were oriented towards general aspects of the teaching profession.

All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed, and, when necessary translated. While I was still in Malawi, I hired research assistants to transcribe and translate all interviews and focus groups that were conducted in Chichewa/Chitumbuka, reading through transcripts myself and checking excerpts with Malawian friends for quality control. I prioritized these Chichewa files while in Malawi, since I knew it would be challenging to find transcribers once I returned to the United States. I also had many of the English interviews transcribed during this time, and some English interviews transcribed by a Malawian research assistant once I

returned to the United States. I transcribed all interviews with my focal teachers myself in order to stay close to this data.

Documents

Documents gathered during and after fieldwork also spanned multiple levels of practice. Some were written for teachers, while others were for ID audiences. Examples of documents include teachers' guides, policy texts, news stories, and training materials. These documents were gathered opportunistically during trainings (taking pictures of materials distributed), while others involved reaching out to contacts to track down materials. These data sources provide context for understanding teachers' work and contribute to my second research question about how teachers work is framed within ID projects and policy. The various data generated in this project reflect different ways in for understanding teachers' work through a VCS design.

Table 3

Data overview

Interviews (83 recordings)	
Mitambo teacher background interviews (all participating Mitambo teachers)	19
Mitambo teacher focus groups	7
Mitambo focal teacher interviews	8
Mitambo school and zone leaders	5
Additional interviews at Mitambo	4
Teacher interviews at additional schools	31
Policy leader interviews (district and national level)	7

Table 3 (cont'd)

Data overview

Participant observation fieldnotes (172 files)[17]	
Policy documents and news stories (20 files)	
Policy documents	13
News stories	7
Other (20)	
Pictures and videos	20
Total units of data	**282**

Positionality

In participant observation, the researcher is the key instrument for generating data (Buch & Staller, 2007; Creswell, 2012). Because of this, who the researcher is and how they relate to participants substantially shapes the study, its data, and its analysis. My white skin differentiated me from my study participants and made me a consistent source of curiosity. Because of how I stood out, my presence required an explanation in the broader community. At ceremonies, school leadership would introduce me as somebody "helping" the teachers—"Alyssa goes into all the classrooms"—I heard the deputy head teacher once say at a local election I was attending (though this was not strictly true, since I did not go into every teacher's classroom). It may have been easier for school leadership if I had offered to teach, since then they could explain me as a "teacher" which is a more intelligible type of visitor than researcher; however, I had determined

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[17] Notes on data: Presented here is the number of fieldnote files generated. Alternative ways of quantifying this participant observation work would be 252 hours in the field and 261 pages of fieldnotes produced. Additionally, 50 teacher surveys (completed prior to teacher interviews) were conducted; these data are not included in Table 3.

that teaching could pose challenges to my research objectives and so presented myself as a researcher, though I was a researcher who had previously been a teacher in Malawi through the Peace Corps. School leaders would often try to seat me in the front row of ceremonies as an honored guest, something which I anticipated because of my Peace Corps experience and, when it happened, politely declined in favor of sitting with the teachers.

Declining to sit at the front of ceremonies—where the chiefs and district education officials sit—was one of many moves that articulated my positionality in the field. Sultana (2007) explains that positionality is negotiated through everyday acts, such as what a researcher eats, or how they sit. "Such little actions, however mundane, are not insignificant…[they instead] speak to the embodied situatedness" of research (p. 379).

It was important to me that teachers saw me as someone who identified with them; noticing that teachers would buy snacks during breaks and share with each other (and me), I started buying snacks for teachers as well. I would ride my bike to school or take a minibus when possible, since this is what teachers did, instead of driving a car. (However, when road conditions started getting bad during the rainy season I began taking a private taxi since minibuses aren't always safe. When I saw teachers I knew on the side of the road waiting for minibuses, we would pick them up.)

Many of the teachers in this study were, like me, mothers of young children, and they would always ask after each other's children and show pictures on their phones. It was easy for me to ask about teachers' children and offer details about my own child. Most of the teachers had nannies at home, since hiring a nanny is very affordable, so we would relate in talking about finding childcare and the challenges of working as parents. I was keenly aware of the ways my being a mother enhanced my relatability, in part because of how my previous experience while

teaching in Malawi—as an unmarried and childless woman—was often met with perplexed questions of why I was opting for such a lonely state.

Despite feeling in many ways that I fit in with Malawian teachers, I also made a lot of mistakes. In one case, I carried my own chair when a group of teachers were moving from one location to another, only to be scolded by a teacher who said "teachers don't carry their own chairs" and who then called a student to carry my chair. In another case, my hair was a little tangled looking and one of the teachers in my study teased that I looked unprofessional. Because of the rapport I had developed with teachers, these mistakes resulted in teachers educating me about the micro-behaviors they expected of teachers.

However, my rapport with teachers was uneven. I had hoped to closely shadow a male teacher for this study, but Mitambo Primary School had only a handful of male teachers. I invited one male teacher to participate in this study as a focal teacher. He participated in interviews and focus groups, and when I asked if I could shadow him he invited me to observe one lesson then said he was too busy to have me observe consistently. His lesson was an energetic performance, and I got the sense that he considered my presence to require such a performance. He told me repeatedly that he was glad I was at the school since having an inspector encourages teachers to teach better, even though I told him I was not an inspector. Be it because of my gender, or the fact that this teacher perceived me to be an evaluator, I was not able to establish a level of rapport with him that allowed me to get to know his work and his life.

While in many ways my positionality produced limitations, it also led to some insights. The following memo developed during data analysis reflects on my positionality.

Memo: "'But Madam, we need pens'"

The first time I met teachers at Mitambo Primary School in October of 2016, we gathered in the meeting room at the Teacher Development Centre. I had a prepared a questionnaire to administer in order to collect basic information about all of the teachers who wished to volunteer for my study. Teachers trickled in, and once they were settled in seats, I introduced myself, thanked them for their willingness to join my study, and explained that the first step in the research would be filling in a questionnaire. I then distributed printed papers and requested the teachers begin filling them in. "But Madam, we need pens," one teacher said to me. I only had one pen with me, and was surprised that my assumption—that teachers carried pens with them—was apparently inaccurate. Focused on getting the teachers set up to fill in the questionnaire, I took the request at face value. I excused myself briefly from the room, found the deputy head-teacher in his office, and requested to borrow pens from his supply cabinet. He kindly unlocked the cabinet and loaned me pens, which I agreed to return at the end of the day. I went back to the meeting room and distributed the pens to the teachers, stipulating that they should return them when they finished filling in the survey, which they did.

Several months passed before it occurred to me what had happened that day. Teachers were treating this research meeting like a donor or NGO workshop—an occasion when they would be supplied pens, paper, and folders. My response of lending them pens from their own school's supply cabinet must have struck them as entirely bizarre, and is an instance of how I, intentionally and unintentionally, articulated my unusual position at the school. On this first day, the teachers' actions communicated to me what my position was to them—an embodiment of a donor workshop—and their actions also demonstrated that one thing this meant was that I should provide them with pens. Months later, once I'd observed several such workshops, I was able to

59

appreciate that it is common practice for teachers to receive pens, papers, and folders when attending workshops (and teacher workshops are held in the very same room where we had the questionnaire meeting). *(March 29, 2018)*

Analyzing data

      The above writing is an example of an analytic device called a "memo," which Miles et al. (2013) define as "brief or extended narrative that documents the researcher's reflections and thinking processes about the data...not just descriptive summaries but attempts to synthesize them into higher level analytic meanings" (p. 95). I wrote memos on an ongoing basis before, during, and after fieldwork. Regularly writing memos allowed me to make connections across my data sources and begin exploring links to theory. Memo topics have included "the paradox of the female teacher" (12/7/16), "teaching as liminality" (1/10/17), "the teacher 'habitus'" (5/5/17), and "teaching as both failure and hope" (9/27/16). Writing memos has been important in narrowing in on salient themes for more systematic analysis. Memos have also offered a space for exploring topics like how my positionality is influencing data generation.

      Following fieldwork, an early analytic step involved creating a data inventory (Galman, 2013) to describe the 282 pieces of data generated. This involved reading through transcripts, fieldnotes, and documents and developing descriptions of the content. The result was an Excel spreadsheet with a line for each data unit. This data inventory was especially helpful for deciding which data to draw upon in specific chapters of this dissertation. Developing the data inventory was a useful exercise for getting a handle on all of this study's data and how it was beginning to fit together.

      Each of the chapters in this dissertation developed from its own analytic process, which I

describe within the chapters themselves. Generally, I engaged a process Ragin and Amoroso (2010) call retroduction—interdependent inductive and deductive analytic activities—in an effort to apply theory to data and explore new patterns revealed in the data. Retroduction acknowledges how social scientists bring social theory and evidence into dialogue, creating a representation of social life from this interplay (e.g., Lane, 2015; Ragin, 1994; Ragin & Amoroso, 2010).

Researchers who use retroduction appreciate that neither deduction nor induction occurs in a vacuum. In the case of this research, data analysis was not purely inductive, since my exposure to certain social theories steered me to notice particular things even during fieldwork. However, my approach was also not fully deductive, since in the course of data gathering and analysis I made meaning of data in ways that emphasized what I heard and observed from teachers and not simply what social theory could offer.

For analytic work in this dissertation, qualitative analysis software (MaxQDA) facilitated data analysis. I developed deductive codes from particular conceptual frameworks, and generated inductive codes from patterns in the data. In some chapters, I engage concepts beyond those described in this chapter in order to deepen analysis of particular themes related to how teachers' work is being reimagined. Before presenting different ways that teaching is being reimagined, it is important to present a description of the main case study school and the two focal teachers in this study. The following chapter offers this description.

CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCING CASE STUDY SCHOOL AND FOCAL TEACHERS

Mitambo Primary School

Through the course of this study, I learned about Mitambo Primary School from a few perspectives. School-level statistics, which I collected throughout fieldwork, provided basic information for understanding class sizes and physical resources of the school. Shadowing two focal teachers offered a window into how different teachers navigated the school environment. Before exploring these perspectives, I share how teachers told me they would introduce the school to a new teacher assigned to Mitambo Primary School.

In focus groups with Mitambo teachers, I asked what I would need to know if I were a new teacher at Mitambo. A lower-grade teacher replied in one focus group (2/14/17), "We would welcome you with gossip. Take care with the headteacher," and the group laughed. Another teacher added the importance of being punctual: "The headteacher likes that (when we come on time). He even wrote a letter to all teachers telling us to be punctual and to attend the assembly."

The teachers shared that team-teaching or partner-teaching occurred at Mitambo, since there were more teachers than classrooms, so multiple teachers were assigned to the same group of students. Ideally, they said, you should be supporting your partner-teacher with class management. Another teacher added, "We would also tell you that we have a market day on Monday and Thursday. But don't stop at the market stalls on your way into school, since it could delay you and the headteacher wouldn't like that. Go on your way home."

The fact that Mitambo has a lot of students also came up, with teachers mentioning that this gives rise to the challenge of managing the behavior of large classes. One teacher said, "Teaching with a lot of learners and a shortage of classrooms is difficult." Another said something unique about Mitambo is that, as a "center school," "we have more activity. There are

meetings which take place at the TDC [Teacher Development Center, located on Mitambo's campus] which distract learners."

In a different focus group meeting with another group of teachers (2/21/17), teachers also emphasized that the behavior of the learners was hard to manage at Mitambo because there were so many students. They said that the headteacher likes to see that all record books (attendance, lesson plans, and sick books) are maintained. Others stressed the importance of coming on time, again because this is something the headteacher values. One teacher compared Mitambo to a school where she had previously taught:

> The other school where I taught was very remote, and the headteacher was not very strict. The headteacher at that school did not care about the time of coming or leaving work, provided you have come and taught. Whether the teacher has come at 8:00 or 9:00, it did not matter. We didn't keep up with our records. Here, we are supposed to follow every rule and regulation, and to be very punctual.

To teachers at Mitambo, the headteacher played a major role in setting the tone of the school. In addition to telling a new teacher about the headteacher's preferences—for punctuality and record-keeping—teachers also felt it was important to let a new teachers know about the volume of students and potential for behavioral challenges. Another way of knowing the school is through the basic information put forward about the school in school documentation.

In the Mitambo staffroom, where the headteacher and deputy headteacher had desks and where visitors were received, a sign was posted titled "School identification chart." This chart provided details about when Mitambo was constructed as well as the school's classification information. Mitambo Primary School was built in 1969 by the local community. As a

community-constructed school, it is referred to as a "Local Education Authority," or LEA school, rather than a missionary-constructed school.

When the school was initially built in 1969, Mitambo had six teacher houses and 12 classrooms. On the campus today these older buildings can be identified by a darker and more worn brick. Gradually, the campus has expanded and, at the time of the study, included seven teacher houses, 20 classrooms (22 total),[18] and a staffroom.[19] The school had 34 teachers, but with only seven teacher houses the majority of Mitambo teachers were not accommodated by the school's teacher houses. Having more teachers than teacher houses is fairly typical of schools in Malawi (Pot, 2018). A Teacher Development Center had also been built on Mitambo's campus, along with a house for the Primary Education Advisor (PEA), a leader for the Mitambo Zone (sub-district) activities who has an office in the TDC. Mitambo Zone included 12 schools within its catchment area, and teachers from all of these schools converged at the TDC for trainings.

With an enrollment of 2,097 students using 20 classrooms, the average Mitambo classroom had about 105 students during the time of this study. The number of teachers at Mitambo exceeded the number of classrooms. Because of this, at Mitambo, teachers co-taught classes. This involved dividing the subjects among the partner teachers and taking turns teaching. Sometimes partner teachers provided support with class management, which I observed in the lower-grade classes in particular. In lower-grade classes (Standards 1-4), teachers had a bench inside the classroom where the teacher who was not teaching would sit. In the upper-grade classes (Standard 5-8), this bench was outside of the classroom on the veranda. Table 4 below presents basic information about Mitambo Primary School.

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[18] Two classrooms were inactive since they were missing roofs.
[19] The classrooms were donated at separate times by Save the Children and a Japanese tobacco company.

Table 4

Mitambo Primary School information

- Year built: 1969
- Classrooms in-use (2016-2017): 20
- Teacher houses: 7
- Student enrollment (2016-2017): 2,097
- Teachers at Mitambo (2016-2017): 34 (7 male teachers and 27 female teachers)
- Pupil-teacher-ratio (2016-2017): 61.7
- Pupil-classroom-ratio (2016-2017): 104.9

Mitambo was classified by the MOEST as a "rural" school because of its location in Zomba Rural District. However, it could also be considered peri-urban since it is about 10 miles from the city of Zomba, the fourth largest city in Malawi (UNIMA, 2019). Classified as a "rural" school, teachers received a rural hardship allowance of about K10,000 ($14) per month, which boosts their salaries by about 10-15%. This allowance was conceived of as an incentive to attract teachers to rural schools (Asim et al., 2019). Mitambo reflected a rural school in that it does not have running water or electricity, and its students are coming from villages (rather than town). However, many Mitambo teachers live in the city of Zomba, commuting daily via minibus.

The school's proportion of female teachers is 79.4%, which is higher than the average in Malawi of 40.1% (UIS, 2012). This may have to do with Mitambo's accessibility to the city of Zomba. A transfer policy known colloquially as the "following spouse policy" enables a person to seek a transfer on account of their spouse's work. While evidently a gender neutral policy, the

reality in Malawi is this policy is most often invoked by women teachers whose spouses work in town, and because of this it is often called the "following husband" policy by teachers and policy officials alike (Morley, 2014). At Mitambo, many female teachers' husbands work in Zomba town at large employers such as Zomba Central Prison and the army barracks. Several teachers at Mitambo had utilized the following spouse policy in order to request a transfer from more remote schools to the relatively accessible Mitambo Primary School.

With student enrollment exceeding 2,000, Mitambo is a large school. The national language policy of schools means that the local language is taught in Standard 1-4, with Standard 5-8 taught in English. Standard 5 enrollments are higher than in other grades, and teachers shared that this had to do with students getting held back in Standard 5 since they were struggling to cope with the transition to English as a medium of instruction. Reflecting broader trends across Malawi (NSO & ICF, 2017), both boys' and girls' enrollments at Mitambo decline in the adolescent years, Standards 6-8, when non-repeating students would be 12-15-years old. This enrollment decline is more substantial for girls at Mitambo and elsewhere in Zomba Rural District (USAID, 2017a). Table 5 presents student enrollment information about Mitambo.

Table 5

Mitambo student enrollment data, 2016-2017 school year

	Girls	Boys
Standard 1	172	172
Standard 2	176	146
Standard 3	116	140
Standard 4	105	116
Standard 5	219	217
Standard 6	71	76
Standard 7	99	126
Standard 8	61	85
Total: 2,097	**1,019**	**1,078**

There is a large trading center about 0.5 km from Mitambo Primary School. The trading center has a stretch of shops which are open daily. Shops include a tea room, a few small grocery stores, barbers, and video shows. The trading center also has market tables which are populated during "market days" that occur twice per week (Monday and Thursdays). On market days, travelling vendors sell their wares (plates, shoes, clothes), and local farmers sell produce. Especially on market days, the trading center creates challenges of student truancy for Mitambo teachers. Mitambo does not have a gate surrounding it, and noticing if students drift away from campus is difficult for teachers and school leaders.

Mitambo is an outdoor campus, with class blocks (each containing 2-4 classrooms) scattered across about five acres of land and a borehole centrally located on the campus grounds. The borehole is a community resource, with people who live in the nearby area coming to Mitambo Primary School campus to draw water. Mitambo also has a village road through the campus, and because of this is permeable to a variety of interruptions. For instance, a teacher might see someone from the village walk through selling roasted corn and call him over to buy an ear. One market day, when I was shadowing Maggie, an inebriated man from the market

67

wandered onto Mitambo's campus, saying he wanted to marry a lady teacher. Maggie advised me to leave since he would likely harass me, and later I learned that the headteacher and deputy headteacher had escorted him off campus. Though intrusions like this one were rare, the porous boundary between Mitambo and the surrounding area was a noteworthy feature of the school.

The school-day began at 7:15am with an assembly, and the day ended between 12:00 and 2:30pm, depending on the grade level. At the time of the study, Mitambo did not have a school feeding program, though other schools in Mitambo Zone did have such programs. Around the school campus, people sold snacks such as roasted corn, candied baobab seeds, donuts, and rolls, which both students and teachers would buy. Several teachers in this study would make and bring snacks to school to sell, stationing the food baskets outside of their classrooms and overseen either by themselves or by a fellow teacher.

In many ways, Mitambo reflected other schools in Malawi in that teachers contended with large class sizes and limited resources. Its proximity to Zomba town likely influenced the composition of teachers, leading to a higher proportion of female teachers. Mitambo, and Zomba in general, also had a high number of non-governmental organization (NGO) and donor projects operating, and these projects were a visible presence because trainings were held at the TDC on campus. My specific view of Mitambo was influenced by the two focal teachers I shadowed, Maggie Nyasulu and Linda Macheso.

Focal teachers in this study

I invited Maggie Nyasulu and Linda Macheso to be focal teachers in this study because of how they reflected key differences in the experience of being a teacher. Initially I observed these differences through their questionnaires and early interviews, and over time I also began seeing how they related to peer teachers and community members in different ways. This section presents comparisons of Linda and Maggie, with the following section introducing each teacher individually.

Maggie and Linda entered the teaching profession at different times and through different avenues: Maggie was trained in the wake of UPE during MIITEP (1994), and Linda earned her teaching certificate more recently (2012) through IPTE. Linda was also currently in the process of "upgrading," which involved pursuing university studies while teaching, and I was interested in understanding experiences around the upgrading process.

Table 6

Comparing focal teachers

	Linda Macheso	Maggie Nyasulu
Age	28	45
Teacher training	IPTE (2010-2012)	MITTEP (1994-1996)
Years in the teaching profession	5	21
Years at Mitambo	5	4
Standard taught	Standard 1	Standard 7
Number of schools	1	7
Extra duties at Mitambo	Infant section head, LTK	Assistant deputy head teacher, Female Teacher Role Model (FTRM)
Donor projects currently implementing	USAID: MERIT (National Reading Program)	USAID: ASPIRE

At Mitambo, Linda and Maggie were each involved in different ways with school duties and NGO projects, so I hoped that shadowing these two teachers would offer insights into the lived experiences of projects. While they were both mothers (and, in fact, most Mitambo women teachers were mothers), Maggie was a single parent whereas Linda lived with two children and her spouse. The financial pressures on both of these women were extensive yet also different. Linda lived in town, therefore requiring daily commuting costs and the higher expenses of town amenities (Linda's home was equipped with electricity, whereas Maggie's home in Mitambo Village was not). In contrast, Maggie was the sole earner in her household. Maggie was one of the few teachers originally from Mitambo Village, and I was interested in the ways that this shaped her work. Another reason I wanted to shadow these two teachers in particular was because they taught different grade levels. Standard 1, which Linda taught, is a shorter day with younger students; Standard 7, which Maggie taught, is the second to last year before the national examinations. Despite these two teachers both teaching at the same school, their classrooms were on opposite ends of the campus, and they rarely crossed paths while at school. I hoped that shadowing Maggie and Linda would offer vantages from two very different locations at Mitambo. In the next two sections, I provide specific descriptions of each teacher.

Focal teacher Linda Macheso

The year of this study was Linda Macheso's fifth year teaching at Mitambo. Mitambo was the first and only school where Linda had been a primary school teacher following her training through the IPTE program. Linda taught Standard 1, comprised of six and seven year olds. Her classes began at 7:30am and ended at 12:00pm. When this study began, Linda had her own classroom and students. However, less than one month into the study (October 2016), harsh

winds stripped the roof off of her classroom and another Standard 1 classroom. The roof was not replaced during the time of this study, and so Standard 1 classrooms merged. Linda and her co-teacher had 172 students on the register for their class.

Linda, who was 28 at the time of this study, had not planned to be a primary school teacher. Her goal was to be an accountant, but she was unable to gain admittance to an accounting program. While trying to get into an accounting program, Linda started a small business of buying second-hand clothes and reselling them. According to Linda, one of her sisters observed that Linda was struggling financially and decided to fill out Linda's application to become a primary school teacher. Linda reluctantly studied to become a teacher, and with time found that she enjoyed teaching.

Linda liked to sing and dance, and these activities were central to her teaching style. She and the students would laugh while learning and singing new songs, and during our reflection interviews Linda would often say that she had fun with the kids. She had a loud voice which projected well in her crowded classroom—she didn't need to shout to be heard, as was required of many teachers at Mitambo.

Though one of the younger teachers at Mitambo, she was selected by the headteacher to be the section head for Standards 1 and 2, meaning that she was responsible for checking lesson plans of her colleague teachers. At first, she said that her colleagues teachers were hesitant to look to her as a leader since she was so young, but she has over time showed them that she is competent. Linda's father was a primary school teacher, and a few times during fieldwork she mentioned that, though she had been slow to acknowledge it, teaching was in her blood,

> **Linda:** In my whole mind, I never wanted to be a teacher. I never wanted to have a job where I should be standing in front of the audience. In my mind, I always wanted to be in

71

an office. A good working environment. An office, well-ventilated. That's what I always dreamed of. And when I landed in teaching, I was like, 'How did I land here?' But then I started to discover myself…Maybe I was born to be a teacher, but just I didn't realize it early on. That's why I didn't hesitate to go and pursue a Bachelor's in Education. I'm gifted to be a teacher. I was hoping for the wrong thing (3/28/17).

Pursuing her Bachelor's in Education meant that Linda was a university student through the University of Malawi (UNIMA) while also teaching primary school. She was studying at UNIMA through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) program, and the UNIMA campus where she had been admitted was on the opposite end of the country, in the northern region. Studying through ODL enabled her to do most of her assignments remotely. The National Library branch in Zomba town offered an ODL study group where she would work with peers who were in the same program. However, about three times per year, Linda needed to go to the northern region to write examinations. She had arranged for study leave through the Ministry of Education (which required getting approval from her headteacher, the Primary Education Advisor, and the District Education Manager). Securing study leave permitted Linda to leave her teaching duties behind when she went to the university for examinations.

Although in our conversations Linda indicated that she planned to leave primary school teaching, she hoped to remain a teacher in some form. When she completes her Bachelor's Degree, Linda will be eligible to become a secondary school teacher. If she scores well on UNIMA examinations, she may be selected to be a university lecturer.

As a professional, Linda balanced her university studies, primary school teaching, and extra school duties. Sometimes, she found maintaining this balance was a challenge. In one case, Linda introduced a club at Mitambo that she had been trained to implement while in her teacher

training program. The club was called Theatre for a Change (TFAC), but TFAC only had one meeting during the time of this study since Linda forgot about the club after introducing it. This came up one day when I was shadowing Linda,

> *Linda and I are walking along the dirt road toward the market road when a group of about four boys stop her, asking about whether TFAC will continue. She had a welcoming meeting for the club two weeks ago. The students tell Linda that they want to have the club meet every week, and she tells them that she is too busy as a teacher. On top of that, she tells them, she is also studying at the university to get her degree. They push back, "You've just welcomed us to the club, but that's all?" Without committing to weekly meetings, she concludes by saying that the club should meet next week. The boys seem satisfied with this response. Linda and I part ways with them and keep walking, and she explains that she had just forgotten about the club (2/14/2017).*

Linda lived far from the school campus, had a short workday, and tried to study every afternoon. Typically, this meant limiting her extracurricular involvement at Mitambo, and the TFAC club did not have subsequent meetings during the time of this study.

Linda lived about 10 miles from Mitambo and commuted daily via minibus to and from her home in Zomba town. She lived in a rental house with her two young children who were two and six years old. Her six-year-old son attended a private English medium primary school in Zomba town. Childcare arrangements for her two-year-old were inconsistent. She had hired a nanny, but the nanny quit during the study. Linda's in-laws lived near her, and she relied on them for back-up childcare. Linda's husband was an electrician but did not have a consistent employer, making Linda the primary earner in her household.

At Mitambo, Linda's work was influenced by a few NGO and donor interventions (in addition to TFAC, described earlier). Linda was also trained as the Learner Treatment Kit (LTK) dispenser, a program through Save the Children. LTK provided training and resources for designated teachers to diagnose and treat malaria. As a Standard 1 teacher, Linda was also one of

the teachers currently implementing a new, predominantly USAID-funded, curriculum known as the National Reading Programme.

Linda's various involvements in projects, upgrading plans, and general friendliness towards me from the very beginning drew me to her as a focal teacher. I also saw many contrasts with the other teacher I hoped to invite to be a focal teacher (and who agreed), Maggie Nyasulu.

Focal teacher Maggie Nyasulu

Maggie was in her fourth year teaching at Mitambo at the time of this study. She had been in the teaching profession for 21 years. Mitambo was the seventh school where she had taught. At Mitambo, Maggie taught Standard 7. There were two sections of Standard 7, with about 110 students in each section. She shared her Standard 7 section with two partner or team-teachers. For teachers at Mitambo, partner-teaching meant dividing subjects between class teachers. Maggie taught agriculture, life skills, and Chichewa. Her partner teachers, Janet Mphepo and Beatrice Kaminjolo, taught English, mathematics, science, social studies, expressive arts, and religious knowledge.

For most of her career, Maggie, who was originally from Mitambo Village, had taught in the northern region where she had lived with her husband. When she and her husband separated six years ago, Maggie requested a transfer back to Zomba in the southern region. She received a transfer to a school in Zomba Rural District, but this school was far from her home village of Mitambo. When her mother's vision began degenerating four years ago, Maggie needed to help care for her. She requested through the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) a transfer to Mitambo Primary School and was granted the transfer.

Perhaps because she was from the local area, or perhaps because she was very outgoing, Maggie knew a lot of people in Mitambo Village. I walked through Mitambo trading center many times with different Mitambo teachers. Usually these walks were brisk, perhaps with a brief stop to purchase vegetables from a vendor along the way. But when I walked through the trading center with Maggie, it always took a long time. Maggie greeted everyone she knew, and she knew a lot of people.

In our first interview, Maggie explained to me that people in the community call her *mlangizi*, which means advisor or counselor. During this study, I saw the ways that she adopted this advisor role with students, community members, and fellow teachers. She was occasionally invited to preach in her church, and she was the Mitambo leader for a girls' advising group established through a DFID project. Other teachers also looked to Maggie as an example. In an interview with Fatima Chakwera, who was a new teacher at Mitambo during this study, Fatima said that Maggie had shared advice with her when she first came to Mitambo—to focus on her work—and that since then Maggie had been a role model to her. One day when I visited Maggie at her home, I found a teacher at Maggie's house who was there seeking advice from Maggie on a private matter. Maggie explained that teachers gravitated to her for advice on personal issues since many teachers found the school's headteacher to be harsh.

> **Maggie:** God has chosen me to be an assistant to my fellow teachers…I do advise them when they have challenges…Most of them refrain from going to the headteacher with their problems. He doesn't care. Sometimes, he shouts at them. When they come to me, I assist them, listen to them, talk calmly. We find a solution so they can go through with their teaching.
>
> **Alyssa:** What kinds of problems might they come to you with?

Maggie: For example, one teacher came to me when children were vandalizing her classroom. When she had gone to the headteacher, he said, "You are not working hard in class. You are not presenting yourself as a teacher. The learners cannot look at you like a teacher. You are lazy." He was not solving her problem, just blaming her. Now, when the teacher came to me, I helped find a solution. We called the children and sat down with them to discuss what a problem this vandalism was creating (5/3/17).

Maggie had been elected by her peers to serve as the Assistant Deputy Headteacher at Mitambo, which conferred her leadership position at the school. She interpreted this role mainly to mean providing support to teachers at the school. I also observed that Maggie would often attend the school's community-oriented meetings, such as elections for the parent teacher association, which most other teachers did not do. This may have had to do with her leadership role, or perhaps she attended because she lived near the school or because she was from the community.

Her house was near the school, but it was not a teacher's house on the school's campus. She built the house when she moved from the northern region, and she and her mother lived together in the house along with Maggie's children. Maggie expressed a sense of pride that she was able to construct this house using her own finances, and example, she said, that "I am standing on my own, without a husband."

In our conversations, Maggie shared a critical stance towards Mitambo's headteacher that likely underpinned what appeared to me to be a fraught relationship between the two. One could think about the headteacher as someone who controlled a system of rewards and punishments for teachers, which seemed to resonate with how Maggie thought of it. In this system, Maggie often received the headteacher's punishments. On two occasions, he assigned Maggie and other

Standard 7 teachers to do his end-of-term grading. When I asked Maggie why she thought this had happened, she said that this was to "show us that he is the headteacher." She continued, "He said, 'I am busy.' But he wasn't busy. He was just staying in his office." Maggie and the headteacher butted heads around school business on a few occasions, as I documented in my fieldnotes from a staff meeting,

> *In light of low pass rates on end-of-term examinations, the headteacher says that he will go class-by-class to ask teachers the reasons for their results. A Standard 1 teachers says that her learners aren't regularly coming to classes—"they only come during the exam time," she says, and that lowers the class's overall performance. The headteacher interrupts her and says, "so what should we do?"*
> *Mitchell Funsani says "the parents need to be informed of how this is a problem." Maggie piggybacks on this, saying that she sees the problem being that parents are telling their kids not to come to school during normal teaching time. "Or, when the children do come to school, parents are not encouraging them to study at home," she adds. To this, the headteacher says, "I am not looking for complaints." Janet Mphepo (Maggie's partner teacher) interjects. "We are not complaining. Maggie is just explaining the problem." The headteacher recalls that the Standard 7 class has already had a meeting with parents once before. "Maggie, did that bring about any changes?" He implores Maggie directly. Maggie appears somewhat deflated, her voice quieter than before, and says "yes, some." The headteacher then tells all the teachers that they should be meeting with the parents of students in their classes to talk about these issues (4/6/17).*

While the headteacher and Maggie were ultimately agreeing in this instance that parents would be helpful, their interaction reflected a testiness that was a significant aspect of Maggie's work at Mitambo.

Another notable feature of Maggie's comportment was a general embrace of frugality. Unlike many teachers in this study, who had smart phones and devoted considerable resources to their appearance, Maggie flaunted her frugality in a way I saw few teachers doing. She would brag about finding clothes at the market for very cheap (one blazer for K100, about 15 cents). Maggie rarely had a working phone. She used a promotional bag from Kerrygold, a powdered milk company, as her purse. Maggie's self-presentation invited friendly taunting from her peer teachers, such as the stylish Janet Mphepo. On a day that I requested to take a picture of Maggie

(I printed out pictures of all of the teachers in my study to give them as gifts), Janet teased Maggie that she should be sure to hold up her Kerrygold bag in the picture. Maggie was always presentable, but rarely wore weave in her hair or shopped at the expensive retail stores in Zomba town. As the sole earner in her household, Maggie's income was often tight, especially in light of salary delays. To generate extra income throughout the month, Maggie owned a shop at the nearby trading center which her teenaged son helped her manage.

In addition to living with her mother, two of Maggie's sons lived with her at the time of this study. One of her sons was in primary school at Mitambo and another—the one who helped her at the shop when he could—attended the nearby secondary school. Maggie's third child, a primary school aged daughter, lived with her brother's family in Malawi's capital, Lilongwe. Her brother and his wife offered to care for one of her children to help her when she and her husband separated. Maggie explained that she chose her daughter because she was worried about community influences on girls at Mitambo.

While Maggie and Linda were remarkably different teachers, the next chapter explores one project that constructs them both—in fact, all female teachers in Malawi—as comparable. The following chapter begins Part 2 of this dissertation, where I examine how different actors are reimagining teachers.

PART II: REIMAGINING TEACHERS' WORK

CHAPTER 4: FEMALE TEACHERS AS PRODUCED THROUGH ONE POLICY

Introduction: The Keeping Girls in School (KGIS) project

In the previous chapter introducing Linda, Maggie, and Mitambo, I stressed the ways this school setting is particular and each of my focal teachers unique. This chapter offers a juxtaposition through illustrating how one policy portrayed female teachers in a manner that erased context and differences. In this chapter, I adopt Ball et al.'s concept of "policy subjects" (2011b) to explore a Female Teacher Role Model policy introduced through a program called Keeping Girls in School (KGIS) and funded by the UK's development agency the Deparatment for International Development (DFID).

KGIS is a $46.7 million girls' education intervention which aims to achieve gender parity in school enrollment in upper-primary and secondary schools (DFID-Malawi, 2013). The KGIS project contain several interwoven components centered on girls' school completion. In the *Terms of Reference* between DFID-Malawi and Save the Children (Save) (2014), female teachers are framed as one of several "incentives": "DFID's programme will provide an 'Essential Education Package' including secondary school bursaries, cash transfers, girls' latrines, support networks such as Mother Groups and more female teachers, as incentives to keep girls in school" (p. 6).

Through KGIS, all in-service and pre-service female teachers across Malawi were trained as Female Teacher Role Models (FTRMs) in order "to be better role models to girls" (DFID-Malawi & Save, 2014, p. 2). For Mitambo teachers, KGIS's initial FTRM training occurred in 2015. Along with the Mitambo Village Mother Group, a group of women from the surrounding villages who have also received training through this project, Maggie held "Girl Space" meetings with Mitambo's adolescent girls as a part of this project. Maggie was the only teacher at

Mitambo to engage in these activities (confirmed to me in an interview with the Mother Group);

her efforts to encourage her fellow female teachers to participate in KGIS were unsuccessful.

Maggie and Linda took up FTRM duties in markedly different ways (Linda, for instance, did not

implement FTRM despite having been trained as well). These contrasts in uptake are not the

focus of this chapter (Chapter 5 focuses more on teacher appropriation of projects such as this

one). Instead, I present analysis illustrating how female teachers are "produced" within this one

intervention as "responsible" for girls' education.

Conceptual tools: Policy subjects examined through critical discourse analysis

Policy has long been an important subject of anthropological inquiry. In addition to

functioning as an instrument of rule, policy advances discourses that inform and produce social

categories, such as "teacher," or in this case, "female teacher." As Shore and Wright (2011)

explain:

> The importance of policy as a subject of anthropological analysis arises from the fact that
>
> policies are major instruments through which governments, companies, non-
>
> governmental organizations (NGOs), public agencies, and international bodies classify
>
> and regulate spaces and subjects they seek to govern (p. 8).

Relatedly, Ball (1993) argues that policies produce particular subjectivities and

imaginaries. More recently, Ball and colleagues coin the term "policy subjects" to capture this

phenomenon, identifying that certain policies "call up" (2011b, p. 617) different kinds of

teachers and teacherly qualities. In the book, *How Schools Do Policy*, Ball et al. writes,

Do teachers simply make sense of policy, re-iterate it, refract it, or implement it? Or does policy also make sense of teachers, make them what and who they are in the school and the classroom, make them up, produce them, articulate them? (2012, p. 5-6)

Discourse analysis offers a concrete set of methods to apply to studying the female teacher policy subject. I identify instances where female teachers are referenced in texts, the language used around these references, and justifications for the argument that female teachers matter for female students. Specifically, I adopt critical discourse analysis (CDA), which allows me to explore the nexus between language and power relations (Fairclough, 2003).

For this discourse analysis, I selected nine policy texts that have contributed to the evolution of KGIS's female teacher role-modelling intervention. These texts, largely produced by DFID, inform or manifest the development of the female teacher policy subject. I also explored texts used to support claims that female teachers matter to girls' education, including in the corpus originating texts, in order to examine the evolution of concepts and claims. The nine texts presented in Table 7 comprise the core CDA corpus, and are the most exhaustively analyzed for this chapter.

Table 7

Documents in the Critical Discourse Analysis corpus

	Date of Publication	Author	Title (and length)
INTER-NATIONAL DOCUMENTS	2004	The World Bank (Africa Region, Human Development Sector) [Eileen Kane]	Girls' Education in Africa: What Do We Know About Strategies That Work? (176 pages)
	2006	UNESCO Bangkok [Jackie Kirk]	The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls' Education (Advocacy Brief) (20 pages)

Table 7 (cont'd)

Documents in the Critical Discourse Analysis corpus

	Date of Publication	Author	Title (and length)
INTER- NATIONAL DOCUMENTS	2011	Department for International Development (DFID)-Central	Strategic Vision for Girls and Women (6 pages)
MALAWI- SPECIFIC DOCUMENTS	2012	DFID-Malawi	Business Case for KGIS (40 pages)
	2013	DFID-Malawi	KGIS Annual Review (36 pages)
	2014	DFID-Malawi & Save the Children	Terms of Reference: KGIS School Experience Project (6 pages)
	2014	Save the Children	Call for Consultancy: Desktop Research Study (4 pages)
	2014	Government of Malawi	National Girls' Education Strategy (53 pages)
	2015	Save the Children	Keeping Girls in School (KGIS) in Malawi: Three-day Training for Female Teacher Role Models (80 pages)

The production of the female teacher policy subject

During open-coding of the nine policy texts, I captured an exhaustive list of responses to the question "Why female teachers?" I categorized the 105 excerpts identified into seven over-arching categories, the five most dominant of which are discussed in depth below. The categories are termed "logics," as they reveal a particular relationship or assumed causality existing

between girls and female teachers. The term "logics" has been developed to explain how people and ideas become organized around assumptions and theories of action (e.g., Enfield, 2000). Within this paper, "female teacher logic" is used to specifically mean a reasoning around why females matter to girls' education. On average, across these nine texts on girls' education, a female teacher logic appears on every fourth page of text (27.6% of pages contain a logic). (Appendix F presents the logics and density.)

Access logic

Given the variation in documents and authors, it is striking that one logic is mobilized in every text. This is the logic that female teachers correspond with girls' access to education. Across these texts, this logic represents 36.2% of overall mentions of female teachers. Often, an image of a magnet is invoked, as texts describe how female teachers "attract" girls to primary school. For instance, in the World Bank report (2004) *Girls' education in Africa: What do we know about strategies that work*?, the authors write that "evidence from Bangladesh shows that the employment of qualified female teachers attracted girls to primary school" (p. 22). This excerpt, like many others in this sample, does not position the female teacher as an active agent but instead as someone being acted upon (employed). In this example, her properties rather than her actions pull girls to the school.

In other examples, the word "attract" is not utilized, but the same idea—that female teachers pull girls to school and hold them there—is conveyed. In the *Terms of Reference* between Save and DFID-Malawi for the KGIS project, the female teacher is described as an "incentive": "DFID's programme will provide an 'Essential Education Package' including secondary school bursaries, cash transfers, girls' latrines, support networks such as Mother

Groups and more female teachers, as *incentives to keep girls in school*" (DFID-Malawi & Save, 2014, p. 6; emphasis added).

The access logic is often supported with studies that establish a correlation between the presence of female teachers and the presence of girls in school, such as DFID-Malawi's *Business Case for KGIS:*

> Both local and international evidence on the impact of female teachers on girls' education
> is limited. However, there are correlations between the number of female teachers and
> girls' enrolment, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In countries where there are more or
> less equal number of male and female primary teachers, there is close to gender parity in
> student intake. In contrast, in countries where women constitute only 20% of teachers,
> there are far more boys than girls entering school (2012, p. 13–14)

That the access logic is often predicated on correlation is important to highlight, as this challenges the grounds on which the logic stands. For instance, the excerpt above references two highly interdependent variables: gender parity in primary school enrollment and the percentage of female teachers in the workforce. With few girls enrolling in school, it is logical that a small pool would exist from which to draw female teachers. Yet, the excerpt instead insinuates that the paucity of female teachers drives low girls' enrollment, which is misleading. Despite the fragility of the empirical claim being made in the access logic, there is an intuitiveness or "common sense" to it (Gramsci, 1971) that affords sustenance to this and other female teacher logics.

Support logic

In 25 instances, the female teacher is referenced as "support" to girls. There are three ways this support is mentioned: generally supporting girls in their education; specifically

supporting girls in achieving school-related outcomes; and supporting girls in their "critical needs," a notion which comes up three times with little explication (DFID-Malawi & Save, 2014, p. 2).

Most frequently (in 14 cases) the support role of female teachers is tied to outcomes like student retention and achievement. There are thus notable overlaps between the support logic and other female teacher logics, such as the access logic and the learning logic. Yet, the support logic is distinct in that it offers a hazy but somewhat visible mechanism for how the female teacher relates to female students. She supports and encourages girls, almost like a school-coach: the female teacher "can support and encourage girls to successfully complete their studies and maybe even continue studying to become teachers themselves" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 8). While the UNESCO text references the idea of specific school-oriented support, it is within the KGIS program materials that the female teacher as a school-coach becomes concrete. In the context of this program, DFID-Malawi writes that "female teachers provide girls the additional support they need to improve their grades and pass the PSCLE (primary school leaving certificate examination)" (2012, p. 23); female teachers will "raise the aspirations of girls to want to remain in school" (DFID-Malawi & Save, 2014, p. 1). By the time the support logic reaches female teachers in the KGIS training, the female teacher role is constructed as a catalyst for keeping girls in school. The training manual states that, "For the next three days the female teachers will continue together to further explore the roles of female teachers as role models to support girls to stay in school" (Save, 2015, p. 7).

Learning logic

The learning logic relates to the support logic, but contrasts with it by specifically focusing attention on the way female teachers are associated with girls' academic achievement. In the DFID-Malawi text, *Business Case for KGIS,* the authors state, "In a study of five African countries, 5th grade girls' knowledge gains were higher when taught by a female teacher" (2012, p. 9). This logic is mentioned 17 times and in seven of the nine texts (except DFID-Malawi, 2013, and DFID-Malawi & Save, 2014). The World Bank report states, "In Botswana, a consistently positive relationships was found to exist between schools with a higher proportion of female teachers and improvements in girls' achievement levels, without putting boys at a disadvantage" (2004, p. 125–126). The UNESCO report references similar research and includes a parallel note to assuage readers who might worry about creating male disadvantage: "students have shown a positive impact from women teachers on girls' (and boys') achievement" (2006, p. 8).

Role model logic

In eight mentions, female teachers are constructed as role models or "someone to look up to" for girls (DFID-Malawi, 2012, p. 14). This logic is intertwined with others, for instance in the KGIS training where participants explore "the roles of female teachers as role models to support girls to stay in school" (Save, 2015, p. 7). In other cases, the role model logic is presented independently. For example, when explaining a policy that increases the presence of women in the teaching profession, the Government of Malawi writes, "Female teachers are perceived to be role-models for girl learners especially in rural primary schools" (2014, p. 22). In the KGIS

training, female teachers are reminded that part of their responsibility is to "act as a female role model for boys and girls, other teachers, and the wider community" (Save, 2015, p. 74).

Protection logic

The notion that schools are protective spaces for girls—where girls are insulated from danger—has been developed and problematized in a number of studies (Bajaj, 2009; Stambach, 2000). This protection argument is challenged by evidence of abuse and harassment experienced by girls while at school (Shah, 2015). Female teachers thus offer a unique protectiveness for girls, as they can shield girls even within school spaces. It is in this way that female teachers are constructed in the texts reviewed in this analysis. In eight instance, female teachers are presented as protecting girls from sexual advances and abuse. The UNESCO report states, "In schools where girls are in the minority, especially, the presence of one or more female teachers may also ensure protection for girls from unwanted attention from boys or male teachers, and even from sexual abuse and exploitation" (2006, p. 8).

In the KGIS training manual, the protection logic comes up five times, indicating that it is a core component of the KGIS program. Here is an explication of how the female teacher, and her partners, are cast as a shield protecting girls from harm:

> As a female teacher role model at your school, you will actively work together with senior staff and Mother Groups to ensure girls are protected from harm and can report any experiences of harassment or violence and girls will be listened to compassionately and have action taken to create a safe school environment for all girls and boys (Save, 2015, p. 7–8)

Additional logics and cross-cutting themes

While the five above logics arose with the most frequency, I identified two additional yet less-common logics: the change agent logic and the health/hygiene logic. The change agent logic emphasizes that female teachers champion girls' education and challenge gender stereotypes. The health and hygiene logic asserts that female teachers should educate girls about menstruation, puberty, sex, and reproductive health systems.

Across each particular logic forwarded in these texts, a shared emphasis exists on the "utility" of female teachers (Monkman & Hoffman, 2013), or their role-producing specific outcomes. In some cases, the female teacher is linked to girls' access to schooling or safety at school; in other cases, to boys' and girls' learning. Each of these logics promotes an assumed causality between female teachers and these specific outcomes. However, this assumption of causality may be fragile or misplaced. The next section traces how this claim gains support as logics "travel."

Travelling logics: Morphing towards causality

In addition to reviewing the construction of female teachers in texts, I traced logics concerning female teachers to their originating sources in order to see how these claims transform and, oftentimes, elevate in importance. Tables 8 and 9 offer two examples of iterations of claims about female teachers.

Table 8 illustrates how moments of translation around the access logic manifest in a claim that women teachers correspond with girls' enrollments. In the first iteration, UNESCO (2003) references a figure illustrating a correlation between the proportion of female teachers and primary school student intakes. The authors dissuade the reader's temptation to assume that

female teachers cause greater primary school enrollments of girls, given that primary school

enrollments of girls also influence the number of women available to work as teachers—"cause

and effect here are difficult to disentangle," they write (p. 6). In the UNESCO advocacy brief of

2006, this 2003 UNESCO report is directly referenced.

Table 8

Illustration #1, Establishing the female teacher "effect"

Text	Description of Female Teachers
UNESCO (2003), EFA Global Monitoring Report	"One indicator potentially important for gendered outcomes in schooling is the proportion of primary-school teachers who are female. Girls' enrolments rise relative to boys as the proportion of female teachers rises from low levels. Figure 2.15 indicates that in sub-Saharan Africa those countries with roughly equal proportions of male and female primary teachers also tend to have rough equality in primary intakes between boys and girls. In contrast, where the proportion of female teachers is around 20% of the total, school intakes are much more unequal, with intakes of only seven or eight girls for every ten boys. Cause and effect here are difficult to disentangle: increasing proportions of educated women emerging from the schools will affect the number of women available to work as teachers, as well as household demand for girls' schooling" (p. 60).
UNESCO (2006), Advocacy Brief (Jackie Kirk)	"One of the most compelling arguments for increasing the number of women teachers in schools relates to the positive impact that doing so has on girls' education. There is evidence to show a correlation between the number of women teachers and girls' enrollment, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In countries where there are more or less equal numbers of male and female primary teachers, there is close to gender parity in student intake. In contrast, in countries where women constitute only 20% of teachers, there are far more boys than girls entering school (UNESCO, 2003)" (p. 7).

Table 8 (cont'd)

Illustration #1, Establishing the female teacher "effect"

Text	Description of Female Teachers
Save the Children (2014), Call for Consultancy	"A report published by UNESCO entitled 'The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls' Education' (Kirk, 2006) notes that the presence of women in the classroom can impact positively on girls' retention in school and on their achievement." (p. 2)
Save the Children (2015), Training Manual for Female Teacher Role Models	"The presence of female teachers is important for many reasons. These include: • Female teachers have a positive impact on girls' enrollment • Female teachers can have a positive impact on girls' retention in school" (p. 12)"

While the 2006 report notes that correlation in the originating text, the first sentence of the 2006 document conjures up a stronger association in stating that increasing women in the teaching profession "relates to the positive impact that doing so has on girls' education" (p. 7).

This term, "positive impact," is picked up when Save cites UNESCO 2006, and the ideas around women teachers and girls' education become more concise and powerful. Instead of being a "correlation" (UNESCO, 2006) or a phenomenon in which "cause and effect…are difficult to disentangle" (UNESCO, 2003, p. 60), women teachers become imbued with impact potential: "Female teachers have a positive impact on girls' enrollment" (Save, 2015, p. 2). In this citation chain, a claim goes from being couched and contextualized to declarative and universalized; instead of referring to women teachers in sub-Saharan Africa and stressing the correlational aspects of the relationship (as happens in the originating text), these texts increasingly emphasize a powerfully causal relationship between female teachers and girls' enrollment. As the knowledge moves, it also "morphs" (Cowen, 2009)—from correlation, to causation. In the final instantiation, this claim is presented to female teachers in the KGIS

Training Manual, framed as a cause-and-effect relationship that underpins their responsibility to help keep girls in school.

A second example, presented on Table 9, further illustrates the decontextualized, amplified, and universalized nature of female teacher "effects." This example comes from an intervention conducted in Balochistan, a rural part of Pakistan, in 1992 and 1993 (Kim, Alderman, & Orazem, 1998; Rugh, 2000). The intervention, called the Community Support Process (CSP) program, required communities to create village education committees, composed of parents of daughters. These village education committees found local women to serve as teachers at newly developed all-girls schools. The community provided a temporary facility to serve as the school, after which the government built a permanent facility (Kim et al., 1998; Rugh, 2000).

In the original World Bank Working Paper, Kim et al. statistically compared the CSP treatment to a non-CSP comparison group, finding that overall the program resulted in improvements to girls' and boy's enrollments. While the authors proposed that parental participation and local female teachers were important to reducing barriers to girls' schooling, they stressed that "the reason for success cannot be identified from available data" (1998, p. 14). Rugh (2000), meanwhile, indicated that the presence of female teacher "made it possible for many girls to go to school," giving a statistic demonstrating enrollment rates for girls are higher in CSP villages compared to non-CSP villages.

The World Bank (2004) cites both studies when claiming that: "In both Bangladesh and Balochistan the recruitment of local female teachers has been important in attracting girls to primary school, while villages in Balochistan with female teachers had higher participation rates for girls than villages that didn't (Khanderk, 1996; Kim et al., 1998; Rugh, 2000)" (2004, p. 8).

Shedding context around the comprehensive intervention, the importance of female teachers as a stand-alone intervention is emphasized.

The most recent reinterpretation of this claim is from the Government of Malawi (GOM) in 2014, which cites and closely mirrors the World Bank (2004) study. GOM writes, "in Balochistan villages with female teachers had higher participation rates for girls than villages that did not have them" (2014, p. 22). However, what is stripped in this claim now is the importance of local female teachers. While the example gains import, it loses context. What happens is a "flat" model of the "female teacher effects" forms—one in which all female teachers matter to girls, regardless of context.

Table 9

Illustration #2, Establishing the female teacher "effect"

Text	Description of Female Teachers
World Bank Working Paper (Kim et al., 1998)	"Applying the ex-post matched comparison method (equation 15) the measured CSP (community support process) program effect was to increase girls' primary enrollment by 20.8 percent and to increase boys' primary enrollment by 9.5 percent…Although the reason for success cannot be identified from available data, the use of parental participation and local female teachers are apparently critical to breaking cultural barriers to female schooling" (p. 13–14).
Academy for Educational Development Report (Rugh, 2000)	"The Society, an NGO formed to implement the Community Support Project, was contracted to establish girls' schools in these conservative regions of Balochistan. Doing so required communities to find local female teachers with at least a minimum eighth grade education who were willing to teach. CSP upgraded the qualification of these local women through intensive training and follow-up support. The presence of female teachers made it possible for many girls to go to school (rates of participation in villages were significantly higher than non-CSP villages) and the teachers served as role models for girls who might not otherwise have seen professional working women" (p. 98).

Table 9 (cont'd)

Illustration #2, Establishing the female teacher "effect"

Text	Description of Female Teachers
World Bank Report (Kane, 2004)	"In both Bangladesh and Balochistan, the recruitment of local female teachers has been important in attracting girls to primary school, while villages in Balochistan with female teachers had higher participation rates for girls than villages that didn't (Khanderk 1996;[20] Kim et al., 1998; Rugh, 2000)"(p. 8).
Government of Malawi (GOM, 2014)	"Evidence from Bangladesh shows that the employment of qualified female teachers attracted girls to primary school, while in Balochistan villages with female teachers had higher participation rates for girls than villages that did not have them (World Bank, 2004)" (p. 22).

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[20] I attempted to locate this original source, working with the Michigan State University Education Librarian and issuing a call for an inter-library loan, but I was unable to obtain an electronic or hard-copy.

Conclusions and discussion

In the case of the KGIS project, female teachers are narrowly described and fashioned into catalysts for keeping girls in school. With this case, we see the slippery logic that pushes female teachers to the center of these reforms. The female teacher, though at the center, is constructed as a passive presence—a shield, a support, a magnet pulling girls to school. Reviewing these policy texts, and tracing how they link together, illustrates how teachers are created in policy as particular "policy subjects" as well as the ways the teachers are "used" by projects. A similar level of scrutiny could be applied to other projects that, in effect, compound teacher responsibility.

The example presented here deserves particular attention because of how it reflects broader trends in international development. Writing in 1994, Kabeer observed that women were being used as "cheap labor" for development projects (p. 276). In framing female teachers, rather than more actors, as responsible for girls' education, the locus for achieving gender equality concentrates in women teachers, furthering a "feminization of responsibility and obligation" (Chant, 2006, p. 206). This neglects broader institutional realities in which women and teachers too may be marginalized.

Feminist theorists have problematized the use of women in development interventions, in particular the ways this builds upon binary and de-contextualized understandings of gender (e.g., Moeller, 2014; Mohanty, 1988, 2003). Chandra Mohanty has called for critical examinations of how development language and interventions essentialize women from the Global South when they promote the presupposition that all women—across cultures and classes—are homogenously constituted with identical needs, cares, and constraints (1988). More recently, Moeller (2014) cautioned that women and girls are cast as "disproportionately responsible for

ending poverty for themselves and their families, communities, nations, and the world" (p. 577). Such a depiction of women in development invests women with the responsibility for changing their circumstances and empowering themselves and others. Importantly, empowerment is framed in a way that makes "changing power relations the responsibility of individual female actors" (Vavrus, 2002, p. 59).

The idea that women teachers are "responsible" for empowering girls is one piece of a theme I develop in this dissertation—that teachers, in general, are "responsible" for a range of things beyond the scope of what we might think of as teachers' work. The following chapter focuses on my case study school, Mitambo Primary School, and documents and analyzes the magnitude of demands conferred upon teachers there as well as how teachers creatively take up these demands.

CHAPTER 5: APPROPRIATING EXOGENOUS PROJECTS

"Visitors are like the dew." – Chichewa Proverb

Introduction: Mitambo Primary School and "the bakery"

In an article on Save the Children's[21] website, Save Director of Health David Melody recounted a story of visiting a rural school in Malawi where teachers were trained to dispense malaria medication. This teacher training was part of a Save project called Learner Treatment Kits (LTK) that aimed to curb student absenteeism through equipping primary school teachers with the skills and resources to diagnose and treat malaria, a tropical disease that causes frequent absences during the rainy season. Melody narrated his experience of visiting this school where LTK was being piloted, marveling at the "extraordinary innovation" of this initiative that brought together "two separate boxes, health and education." When describing his interaction with an LTK-trained teacher, David wrote that she is "no longer just a teacher—she's now also a dispenser!" (2014, p. 1).

When I conducted fieldwork at Mitambo Primary School in 2016-2017, teachers were also implementing LTK as "dispensers"; in fact, "dispenser" was one of several non-instructional roles bestowed upon teachers through donor and NGO projects. The volume of donor and NGO activity was remarkable to teachers, as highlighted in the following example from my fieldwork.

One day in January, I arrived at Mitambo to shadow one of my focal teachers, Maggie, who was chatting with several colleagues. I greeted Maggie and her colleagues, then they continued talking about another teacher, Tembo. They noticed that Tembo was preparing to attend a training at the Teacher Development Center (TDC). He was a few yards away talking to

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[21] Save is an international non-governmental organization with operations in Malawi along with many other low-income countries.

97

other teachers and then came over to greet our group. Maggie asked him about the event at the

TDC, and Tembo said it was a training for male teachers who had been selected as Male

Champions as part of the Keeping Girls in School project through the Department for

International Development (DFID).[22] Maggie asked whether female teachers would be trained

too, and Tembo replied, "No, this is a different one. It's for Male Champions. They've just

brought this one to us. You know these guys. They're always in the bakery baking new programs

for us" (1/19/17).

This chapter explores the myriad of "baked goods" that arrived at Mitambo Primary

School and how teachers exercised agency in accessing and consuming these arrivals. I use the

term "exogenous" to describe these projects. This designation indicates that these projects

originate outside of Malawi. Exogenous projects at Mitambo enlisted teachers in a variety of

ways, for instance, as supervisors of student leadership clubs, literacy coaches, and role models

to girls. These projects came from a variety of sources. Table 11 presents my effort at listing out

the exogenous projects and sources at Mitambo during the time of my fieldwork.

One of the reasons I selected Mitambo for my research was because of the volume of

exogenous activity present.[23] Malawi, is one of the most donor-dependent countries in the world,

and much foreign aid comes through projects rather than sector-wide support (Dionne, 2014; Pot,

2018). Malawi presents a rich context for studying the convergence of multiple projects in

schools, a phenomenon which occurs to varying degrees within most school contexts across the

world (Furhman, 1993).

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[22] This is the same project described in the previous chapter which trained female teachers as role models to keep girls in school. Whereas all female teachers were trained as Female Teacher Role Models, select male teachers are trained as Male Champions.

[23] While Mitambo had a high concentration of exogenous activity, it is not unusual for schools in Malawi to have multiple projects.

In a country already highly concentrated with exogenous projects, Mitambo Primary School experiences this phenomenon acutely and can be considered an "extreme case study" (Flyvberg, 2013; Yin, 2013). Mitambo Primary is situated in the rural part of Zomba District. Zomba is the former capital city, and many NGOs and charities have main offices or satellite offices in Zomba and work in nearby rural schools, like Mitambo. Additionally, because girls' education participation rates are lower in southern Malawi (NSO & ICF, 2017), many girls' education-focused interventions target this region. Two such reforms, DFID's Keeping Girls in School (KGIS) and USAID's Empowering Girls through Education and Health (ASPIRE) provide similar programming. Save is the NGO implementing both projects, and a schedule of events for Save shows that Save staff devoted one week in March 2017 to "harmonizing"[24] these projects.

Further, Mitambo is a "center" school, meaning that it shares a campus with the TDC where numerous community and school trainings occur as part of exogenous projects. The TDC is visible to teachers walking from the staffroom to their class block, or sitting on verandas outside of their classrooms, so TDC trainings may stimulate conversations about exogenous projects among Mitambo teachers more so than in other schools. This was seen in the opening vignette, when Tembo and Maggie were discussing one training. While these projects and trainings are designed to fix particular "problems"—such as gender inequality, HIV transmission, or education performance—this chapter reveals the ways teachers took up these projects in ways that addressed their own problems.

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[24] Harmonizing is a vague but common word used in international development in Malawi. It indicates establishing coordination among disparate actors working in overlapping areas. The notion of "harmonization" also offers yet another metaphor for thinking about the volume of actors (voices) active in the education space, and the potential for the phenomenon to resemble cacophony.

Conceptual tools: Exogenous projects and policy ecology

Exogenous projects

I use "exogenous" to group together myriad projects that arrived from entities other than the Government of Malawi (GOM). At Mitambo, teachers often called these various projects "NGO projects," despite their deriving from many different sources, either because the provenance of each activity is not easy to discern or simply because the elision makes it easier for teachers to go about their work. When scrutinized, these exogenous projects emanated from a variety of sources, including NGOs, donors, and charities. They gained additional complexity when a project from one organization was implemented through another organization (e.g., a bi-lateral aid organization sub-contracts aspects of a project out to one or several NGOs). Since these projects were often conflated by school-level actors, bringing them together under the umbrella of "exogenous"—and contrasting with "endogenous" or Government of Malawi (GOM) projects—aligns with conceptual distinctions made by primary school teachers.

The term "exogenous" has also been applied to other aspects of the education landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa. Maclure (2006) uses it to describe research of education in Africa commissioned by donors, contrasting these "exogenous" donor-prescribed research projects with "endogenous" projects emerging from African research networks and controlled by Africans.

The categories of exogenous/endogenous offer one of many ways of classifying elements of the "global policy architecture" around education (Mundy et al., 2016, p. 5). Other ways of organizing this architecture include local/global (e.g., Anderson-Levitt, 2003) and local/transnational (e.g., Merry, 2006). "Exogenous" appeals to me because it privileges the positionality of teachers receiving projects from the "outside." Though these projects originated far from Mitambo Primary School, how they were taken up by teachers was mediated by a host

of interrelated school-level factors. I adopt Weaver-Hightower's concept of policy ecologies (2008) to consider how teachers accessed and made meaning of exogenous projects.

Ecologies & appropriation

This chapter applies the concept of "everyday creativity" to examining how teachers access and use exogenous projects at Mitambo. While exogenous projects may appear to be simply delivered to teachers, teachers engage with them and in so doing creatively convert them into resources they value. However, their ability to obtain these resources is mediated by the particular environments they occupy.

A metaphor of "policy ecologies" offers a scope for considering the multiple dynamic and interconnected facets of Mitambo school life that shape how teachers engage with exogenous projects. An ecology is "a system of relationships among organisms and their environments" (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p. 155), and a conceptualization of policy contexts as ecologies requires attention to the ways actors, inputs, and relationships influence the life of policy. As Weaver-Hightower explains,

> A policy ecology centers on a particular policy or group of policies, both as text and as discourses, situated within the environment of their creation and implementation… Every contextual factor and person contributing to or influenced by a policy in any capacity, both before and after its creation and implementation, is part of a complex ecology (p. 155).

For the purpose of this chapter, I feature elements of the exogenous project policy ecology that were most salient to Mitambo teacher experiences, through constraining or directing the creativity with which teachers operated at Mitambo. Focusing on this one particular location

101

enables a view of the nuances around interpersonal relationships and inputs that impact how exogenous projects were appropriated by teachers. Figure 2 below presents a visual of the policy ecology elements described in this chapter. I take this policy ecology to be shifting and dynamic, with certain connections becoming important to teacher engagements with exogenous projects at particular times.

Figure 3

Elements of the exogenous project "policy ecology" relevant to teachers at Mitambo
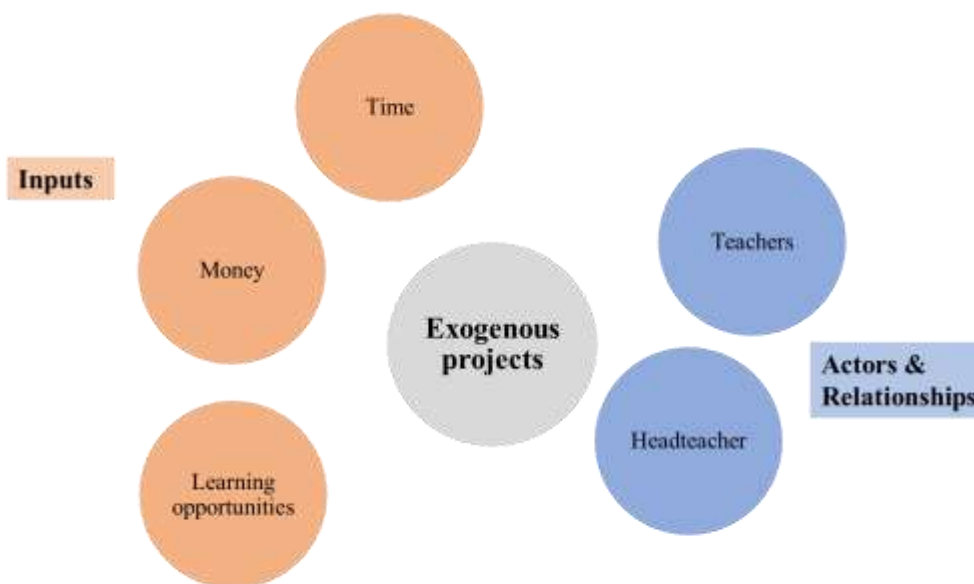
I consider specific ecological elements in this chapter: inputs, actors, and relationships. *Inputs* are resources that can be accessed and consumed within an ecology, such as money and time. *Actors* are the persons or groups with varying power and roles in an ecology. They relate to one another through *relationships*, which can be described as competitive, cooperative, or symbiotic. *Agency* cuts across these elements and signifies the constrained power with which actors in ecologies operate. Table 10 defines these elements.

Table 10

Definitions of ecological features relevant to teachers at Mitambo

Element	Definition	Example(s)
Inputs	Resources available to actors	Money, time, teaching positions, information, administrative support
Actors	Persons and groups with varying power and roles (sometimes multiple roles) within the ecology.	Policymakers, teachers, school leaders
Relationships	The social connections and behavioral interactions among actors in an ecology (characterized by competition, cooperation, symbiosis)	Teachers compete for scarce school resources
Agency	Power and ability to act within and potentially change an ecology	Teachers invited to participate in development of new reading curriculum

How power is distributed, and how this distribution fluctuates, is an important aspect of ecological analyses. Within ecologies, power is differentially distributed among actors. Further, new policies and programs can potentially disrupt or reinforce existing relations of power. An interest in power and agency cuts across this chapter, considering how teachers are differentially positioned to access the benefits of exogenous projects and their vulnerabilities to other actors in the ecology, such as the headteacher and fellow teachers.

Data and analysis process

This chapter looks broadly at both projects and participants at Mitambo Primary School. I mainly draw upon interview, focus group, fieldnote, and document data. My fieldwork began with distributing a questionnaire to all teachers interested in participating in this study. The questionnaire included the question: "Apart from classroom instruction, describe your other duties as a teacher at your current school." At Mitambo, 17 of the 19 surveyed teachers listed one or more extra duties. Some activities were not specific to an exogenous project—for instance, "general cleanliness of learners and school surroundings," or "giving guidance to learners." Other activities indicated an exogenous intervention—for instance, "LTK dispenser" and "puberty matron." Noting both exogenous and non-exogenous extra duties in the first survey allowed me to elicit more information from individual teachers about these duties during initial one-on-one interviews conducted in October and November 2016. Through these data generation activities I began enumerating exogenous projects at Mitambo (Table 11). During fieldwork, I also observed signs posted in the headteacher's office, talked with local education leaders, and asked teachers about activities in order to gain an understanding of the types of activities occurring at Mitambo. I conducted interviews with teachers specifically on the topic of exogenous projects, attended several exogenous project trainings, and sought to obtain copies of project materials.

Following fieldwork, an early analytic step involved creating a data inventory to describe the 282 pieces of data generated. This involved reading through transcripts, fieldnotes, and documents and developing descriptions of the content. For instance, an interview that included a discussion of how the headteacher selects teachers for trainings contains a few bullet points in the description column, with one being "headteacher selection of teachers for trainings." When

my fieldnotes described an "exogenous interruption," I made note of this in the descriptive column. Through consulting this index in its entirety, I selected a subset of data related to exogenous projects to read through and code in MaxQDA.

Having identified the ecological framework as a useful lens for sketching out the feature of this evolving ecology, I developed deductive codes based on the ecological framework, such as: "the teacher actor," "non-teacher actor," "relationships," "structures," and "agency." I developed additional codes while coding, such as "churn of projects," "teacher time," "headteacher," based on specific ways I began seeing exogenous projects interacting with elements of the ecology. I read through coded excerpts and began memoing, teasing out the themes described in this chapter. I went back into my data inventory to identify data to provide more context around particular themes; for example, in describing "the teacher actor," I wanted to review the ways the work of teaching typically demanded more of teachers than classroom instruction alone. In this case, I went back to my data inventory to identify focus groups, questionnaires, and interviews where teachers elaborate on their range of responsibilities.

Appropriating exogenous projects

Mitambo Primary School was heavily engaged in exogenous projects. Table 11 documents all of the projects I identified during fieldwork at Mitambo.[25] I organize these projects into instructional and non-instructional interventions.

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[25] Ball and colleagues (2012) term the activity of identifying all policies/interventions a "policy audit" (p. 7).

Table 11

Exogenous projects at Mitambo Primary School

Project (description)	Source	Timeframe	Mitambo teacher(s) involved
Instructional interventions			
ASPIRE: Empowering Girls through Education & Health (English and Chichewa instructional approaches)	USAID	2016-ongoing	All S5-S8 teachers
Buddy System (an approach for dividing large classes)	Save the Children	2016-ongoing	Standard 1 & Standard 2 teachers
FAWEMA Scholars (also called Teacher Aides) (in-class support in grading and class management)	DFID (FAWEMA)	2014-2016	S1-S3 teachers
FAWEMA training (gender-responsive pedagogy)	FAWEMA	2017-ongoing	Gertrude Bota
Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (new reading curriculum)	USAID (RTI)	2016-ongoing	All S1-S4 teachers, beginning with S1
Special Needs Action Plan (instructional approaches for teaching students with disabilities)	Save the Children	2017-ongoing	All teachers
Noninstructional interventions			
ASPIRE: Empowering Girls through Education & Health-Non-instructional components (Code of conduct trainings, HIV testing day)	USAID	2016-ongoing	All teachers

Table 11 (cont'd)

Exogenous projects at Mitambo Primary School

Project (description)	Source	Timeframe	Mitambo teacher(s) involved
Cash transfer for upper-grade girls (money delivered to girls who stay in school)	DFID (implemented through Save the Children, part of KGIS)	2015-ongoing	S7 teachers
Child-driven club (students trained to be leaders among peers)	Rays of Hope	2016-ongoing	Fatima Chakwera
Female Teacher Role Models (women teachers who lead meetings with girls and trained as role models)	DFID (implemented through Save the Children, part of KGIS)	2015-ongoing	All female teachers with Maggie Nyasulu as chair
Health & puberty club (talking with students about puberty)	Save the Children (according to Mary) / Rays of Hope (Fatima)	2016-ongoing	Christopher Mandala Mary Luso (then Fatima Chakwera)
Learner Treatment Kit (teachers diagnose and treat malaria)	Save the Children	2014-ongoing (at the time of the study)	Mary Luso, Linda Macheso, Christopher Mandala
Male champions (male teachers who serve as champions for girls' education)	KGIS/ASPIRE	2015 or 2016-ongoing	Select male teachers
Reading camps (reading circles in villages with community volunteers)	Save the Children	2012-ongoing	Ellina Malata
TFAC Life Skills Club (HIV prevention)	Theatre for a Change	Linda was trained in TTC	Linda Macheso

Patterns in how these projects operated are important for understanding how teachers took up these projects. One key pattern is the significance of "teacher trainings." Most of these trainings were introduced through training teachers. Teachers attended trainings during school holidays, weekends, or, in some cases, normal working hours.[26] Trainings varied in length, with some as short as a few hours and others as long as a full week. These trainings provided information about things ranging from instructional approaches to health provision, based on the focus of the project. Teachers received allowances or "per diems" for attending trainings. Trainings occurred at the TDC on Mitambo's campus.

Some trainings targeted specific grade-level teachers, such as ASPIRE which included upper-grade teachers or MERIT with Standard 1 teachers. Other projects required school leaders to select specific teachers to attend trainings and implement exogenous project duties. Exogenous projects usually asked teachers to implement something—a new club, a malaria treatment program, or counseling for girls. Some projects also included school-wide ceremonies and assemblies to celebrate projects.

Within this context, teachers accessed, took up, dropped, and resisted exogenous duties in ways that reflected their agency as well as limitations on their agency. One of the ways this occurred was through how teachers accessed and made meaning of trainings.

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[26] This raises an important question about what happened to teachers' other duties when they were engaged with exogenous projects in different ways. I did not see evidence that make-up classes were offered or that missing lessons was considered problematic. Because team-teaching occurred at Mitambo, often co-teachers would take over classes when another teacher was pulled away for a project. Sometimes, other teachers would give students notes to copy from the chalkboard when their teacher was unable to teach them on a particular day.

Trainings influenced teacher time, money, and learning opportunities

Through enlisting teachers in training activities, exogenous project trainings impacted the ecological element of teacher time. Trainings also provided opportunities for teachers to access inputs of money and learning opportunities. While it was not always obvious which input was motivating teachers, it was clear that trainings were highly valued. On one occasion, a teacher who was still on government maternity leave and had a five-week-old infant attended a five-day USAID ASPIRE training. When I asked the deputy headteacher whether she was required to attend, he told me that since ASPIRE is not a GOM project, she was allowed to come during her leave. I was not able to ask this teacher why she attended (since she was rushing to nurse her baby at a nearby teacher house during breaks), but her presence alone suggested that these trainings mattered.

Once I had observed how important trainings were to Mitambo teachers, I began bringing up these trainings (also called workshops or meetings) in interviews. Here is one conversation I had with focal teacher Maggie:

> **Alyssa:** Why do teachers want to go to the meetings? Do you think it is for the knowledge or for the allowance?
>
> **Maggie:** I can say, it's 50-50 chance. They might wish to go to the TDC (the Teacher Development Center is where these trainings, or meetings, are held) to get an allowance. Sometimes they might wish to go to the TDC in order to get knowledge…If teachers are involved at the TDC, you may think that those teachers then have more knowledge when they are delivering the lessons. As to me, I finished my college 1995. If I was still standing still on my own, without imparting any knowledge for how to teach the learners [through trainings], can I be successful? I would have a lot of challenges. But now, I am

having only a few challenges. That is because I gained some knowledge from the TDC

workshops (3/31/17).

Maggie continued to explain that she participated in these valuable workshops mainly

when she was a teacher in the northern region. On-going professional development was core to

Maggie's model of learning to teach. As explained in Chapter 1, in-service trainings have been

part of the pattern of educational training in Malawi since the introduction of formal education

by missionaries in the 19th century (Banda, 1982). Maggie was part of a generation of teachers in

Malawi hired into the teaching profession directly after UPE in 1994, when the government was

scrambling to accommodate the sudden bulge of primary school attendees. This cadre of teachers

was eligible to enroll in primary school teaching without having completed secondary school

through a program which involved two weeks of pre-service training (Steiner-Khamsi & Lefoka,

2011). To remain in the profession, these teachers were later required to complete secondary

school, which Maggie did. This idea of learning-as-you-go is not uncommon for teachers in

Malawi today, with the main teacher training program (Initial Primary Teacher Education, IPTE)

comprised of 50% student teaching.

While trainings for exogenous projects, particularly instructional interventions, could

potentially be valuable in-service learning opportunities for teachers, only rarely did teachers

indicate that they valued what they learned during these trainings. One instance of this came

when I specifically asked Fatima Chakwera whether a training was useful,

Alyssa: Have the ASPIRE trainings been useful for languages?

Fatima: Yeah, they've been useful, especially when we implement what we learn. If you

are doing those things [in your classroom], it's useful. Like, for example, myself, I do

follow some of the things that we learned during ASPIRE. And I think those things have

helped.

Alyssa: What are the things that are most useful to you?

Fatima: Especially the strategies for teaching learners how to read and write…For those

learners who have passed this term, I think, just because they're able to read and they're

able to understand questions, it has helped them to pass (4/5/17).

While Fatima described the ASPIRE training presenting useful ideas, she also suggested

that implementation of training content is not necessarily expected. During the ASPIRE training,

a district official delivered an opening speech to the teachers encouraging them to try

incorporating these methods into their classrooms. She said,

> *"It (ASPIRE) can assist you in delivering your lessons. It can assist the learners. It's very unfortunate, most teachers just go and say, 'I've attended. I'll just sit down now.' Others say, 'there are too many students.' But you just underrate yourselves" (12/27/16).*

The district official's comments suggest an attitude among teachers that trainings will not

necessarily result in improved teaching. Her comment could be interpreted either as the

information is not useful, or that teachers feel their large classes make implementing these

methods infeasible. Either way, she was urging teachers to consider using content in their

courses.

Sometimes, training content was not new to teachers. In an interview with Karen

Chisambo following a training for a different project—Save the Children's SNAP (Special

Needs Action Package)— she described the content of the training designed to promote inclusive

practices. When I asked if it was a new idea for her, Margaret replied, "It's not a new idea.

They're just changing the words they use (laughs)" (2/2/17). For a girls' education project

through USAID in 2016, all Mitambo teachers were trained in the Teachers' Code of Conduct

(12/10/16). Having since looked through texts for DFID's Keeping Girls in School project, I

suspect Mitambo teachers received a very similar training in 2015, which may explain why many

teachers explained to me that the training that day in 2016 was a "reminder."

Writing about trainings in the health sector, Watkins and Swidler (2012) argue that

trainings are a practice in international development that "makes everyone happy" (p. 207)

because they collectively satisfy the needs of the multiple stakeholders involved in international

development: Donors, for instance, want to spread information to Malawian. Participants may be

motivated by a desire to obtain information, or to secure the financial benefits of attending

trainings, or a blend of both.

In the case of teachers at Mitambo, I saw them translating trainings into what that they

need: financial supports. In a system teachers "had no choice but to accept" (de Certeau, 1984, p.

xiii), teachers recast trainings as opportunities for financial advancement. This came through in a

speech by Mitchell Funsani, a Mitambo teacher who had been elected president[27] for a Save the

Children training in 2016. I wrote down the content of a speech Mitchell delivered at the

conclusion of this training:

> *"First I thank the facilitators. We had not expected to receive a transport allowance. We*
> *have just heard the hosting school will not be receiving [a transport allowance]. Let us*
> *thank God. Though we are coming from the center school, we live in different areas. Just*
> *because of the grace of God, our facilitators have opted to make it uniform. Again, thanks*
> *to those here. We've had a nice workshop. My plea is that we should observe what we*
> *have learned. Let us share with those who are not here. Let me repeat. We should take*
> *great things to those who have changed their mind to give us a uniform allowance"*
> *(12/10/16).*

I bring this in because there is no specific mention of the training content (aside from,

like in the ASPIRE speech earlier, a plea to use the content). From this speech, we know nothing

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[27] One of the rituals of trainings is the election of "office bearers."

about what occurred in the training. From Mitchell's recounting, the most important thing that happened was that he and other teachers received a transport allowance. Training allowances were highly valuable to teachers.

These allowances are often generously padded—with lunch allowances for trainings typically around K2,500 (3.50 USD) despite a village lunch costing around K500. (Appendix A offers additional financial reference points.) One week-long training (for USAID-MERIT) was particularly cushioned; teachers who attended this training, which was held over the holiday, received K60,000 during the course of the five-day training. With teachers' monthly salaries around K100,000, those who attended this training raised their income by more than 50% in December 2016 when this training occurred. Notebooks, pens, and folders were also provided to teachers during many trainings to enable teachers to take notes during the trainings; these resources also ended up getting used as teaching materials. Malawi's annual per-pupil spending is estimated at around $100 (UIS, 2016), so these materials are quite valuable. However, how teachers accessed trainings was mediated by relationships.

Relationships shaped teacher access to trainings

The headteacher at Mitambo, Clement Kanowa, played a large role in connecting teachers with opportunities, such as exogenous project trainings. Exogenous projects thus had the effect of enlarging the headteacher's already substantial role of controlling access to coveted opportunities. His role included selecting teachers who could stay in the school's few teacher houses and assigning teachers to the classes they would teach. In my first interview with Clement in October 2016, I asked him how he decided teacher allocation for teacher houses.

Alyssa: Can you say more about how teachers are assigned to teacher houses?

Clement: We assign the teachers to the houses when there is a vacant house to be filled. They come to the headteacher's office and ask for permission so that they can be accommodated in the house…Sometimes, we may just have two houses but four teachers would want to stay in the houses. It becomes hard for you to choose who should be accommodated.

Alyssa: How do you choose?

Clement: In this case we consider the senior teachers…when the teacher was first employed as a teacher, this is taken into consideration.

Alyssa: Do you have a policy that says you should allocate in this way?

Clement: It is our personal consideration (10/27/16).

Beyond determining access to teacher houses, the headteacher's role in class allocation is another significant responsibility. At a staff meeting in mid-December 2016, in between the first and second terms, the headteacher had several agenda items with one being a shuffle in teachers' class assignments.

> *Before stating the changes to be implemented, Clement reminds the teachers that class allocation is his responsibility as a headteacher. He says, "The one responsible for class allocation is the headteacher. The one to decide who should be moved away from that class to another class is the head. At college, you study primary teaching, Standard 1 up to 8. Were you given choices? No. But you are fond of giving choices. But when the head is changing class allocation, you say he is a cruel man." After this preamble, he tells the teachers that one Standard 1 teacher and one Standard 5 teacher will switch places (12/15/26).*

To the teachers at Mitambo, one of the headteacher's most important roles was the matching of teachers and opportunities: opportunities to teach specific classes, to live in teacher houses, and to be involved in exogenous projects. The headteacher's influence did not weigh equally on all exogenous projects; some projects sought specific teachers (e.g., Standard 1, or all female teachers), and so he was not responsible for selection in these cases. But other projects

114

did involve the headteacher selecting teachers. On one day in November 2016, I saw the

headteacher determining who should replace Mary Luso as the health and puberty matron for an

exogenous club, because Mary had left for maternity leave and a zone-level meeting related to

this club would be occurring the next day. My fieldnotes describe the following:

> *I am talking to Christopher Mandala outside of the Standard 8 block, when the headteacher approaches and says that tomorrow there will be a zonal meeting for health club, and the matron and patron need to be there. Christopher tells the headteacher that he is the patron, but there is no matron because she is away. The headteacher asks what to do, who should the matron be? Christopher recommends Fatima Chakwera, saying "she won't eat money." In other words, she is trustworthy, so if the matron duties require any money-handling, they need not worry. The headteacher says "OK, you should tell her" (11/16/16).*

We see in this example the headteacher's crucial role in controlling teacher access to

exogenous projects and how he relies on other teachers in making these selections. Even if

teachers were "fond of giving choices" (submitting preferences to the headteacher), it was the

headteacher who made the determination. This example also suggests how the headteacher may

rely on particular teachers, such as Christopher, to help in making these decisions. With more

than 30 teachers on staff, it was not easy for the headteacher to deeply know the character and

capability of every teacher, so the social capital between teachers (e.g., Fatima and Christopher;

Christopher and the headteacher), may underpin how selection decisions take shape. This also

has the potential of engendering competitiveness and hierarchies among the teaching staff.

At Mitambo, Fatima Chakwera was selected for a number of trainings in a short amount

of time. In an interview towards the end of the school year, I asked her if other teachers might

feel envy because of this, and she said that they might, but that it did not bother her since she had

earned these opportunities through her dedication to work.

Fatima: Envy can be there. Because, some people they do just say, 'why is it only

Fatima? Why is it only Fatima?' But I know the reason. The thing is, how you submit

115

yourself when it comes to work. And also, the thing is that, some people, when they are approached— 'hey, can you do this?'—they refuse. 'Ah, why me? I can't do those things. Me, I don't want to.' So, sometimes, it makes you lose some opportunities. 'Cuz, the way you give yourself to work, you submit yourself to work, the more opportunities come to you (4/5/17).

This equation seemed to make sense for Fatima, a relatively new teacher at Mitambo who worked hard in her various school duties and also had the good fortune of being selected to attend many trainings. The headteacher would ask extra things of teachers, not related to exogenous projects, such as to emcee events or to cook for a function; some teachers accepted and others refused, and here Fatima is referring to how teachers acted when these requests were made.

However, my focal teacher Maggie, who was rarely selected for trainings despite visible involvement in school duties, perceived that trainings were used as a way to reward the headteacher's friends. In one instance, Maggie, who was the lead implementer of KGIS project activities at Mitambo, was not told by the headteacher that a KGIS training would be happening at the school on a Saturday. She explained to me that, in selection, the headteacher was "looking at the same people he loves. You know, these are my friends" (5/3/17).

As with teacher houses, no guide existed for how Clement should make these determinations, and I learned from teachers at Mitambo that headteachers approached selection differently. Clement explained to me that he makes these decisions himself, by looking at the character of the teacher, their dedication, and their reliability. I asked if he considers whether teachers already have extra roles, and he says, "Not really. Some teachers can have a lot of

positions and still be doing their job, whereas others can have just one extra position and fail to do their job. What matters is who that teacher is" (11/30/16).

The headteacher's reliance on particular individuals may have been less pronounced if he had chosen to make selection decisions in a democratic fashion, but this was not his preference. In interviews, teachers told me that in other schools, headteachers brought all staff together and democratically selected teachers for trainings, but at Mitambo Clement was more inclined to appoint teachers. Exogenous projects reveal and perhaps accentuate the vulnerability of teachers to the headteacher in their ability to access coveted benefits. While so far I have mainly focused on how teachers access and make meaning of trainings, a key space for agency also exists in how teachers enact exogenous project duties.

Projects consumed teacher time use

Exogenous projects consumed teacher time, though teachers mediated how this occurred. Beyond trainings, exogenous projects intersected with the Mitambo environment through introducing events and ceremonies held at the school. For instance, an ASPIRE-related HIV testing event was held at the school during the school-week in November 2016. At events and ceremonies, teachers engaged in various activities in different ways—sometimes their role was more central, such as planning skits for activities (like a "Health & Puberty Bonanza" in November); in other instances, they attended events with their students mainly in order to control the noise of student attendees.

In addition to events and ceremonies, teachers were also involved in paperwork related to exogenous projects. KGIS contained a cash transfer component whereby girls received money provided they were attending classes. This transfer targeted girls in Standard 7, and their teachers

ended up taking on the additional work of filling in KGIS attendance forms as requested by the headteacher.

Other exogenous projects more sharply pulled teachers' attention away from classwork, and my fieldwork highlighted the how exogenous projects may come at the expense of classroom teaching. Below is a vignette developed from fieldnotes from January 18, 2017, when focal teacher Linda was engaged in project duties for the Save intervention LTK. As I mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, for the LTK projects teachers were trained in diagnosing and treating malaria:

Vignette: "You can see all of my roles today"

I am observing Linda Macheso, a Standard 1 teachers at Mitambo Primary School who has been trained through LTK. It is now 11:00 am, and I have been observing Linda since she began her lessons with her 79 six-year-olds at 7:30 am. Linda is called outside by a colleague who informs her that students are waiting for her to test them for malaria. She asks the colleague if there is anyone else who can do the tests, since she's alone in class today, and the other teacher says the other LTK teachers are not in. It's the middle of January—the beginning of rainy season—and malaria has struck Southern Malawi in full-swing. Teachers and students alike are out of class frequently with the illness, but back soon once they start taking the medication called "La" (short for Malarone). Linda is outside talking to her fellow teacher, then comes back inside and tells me her colleague has informed her that she will need to go treat learners for LTK, and I'm welcome to join her. "You can see all of my roles today," she smiles. She is the only teacher in her classroom today—her partner teacher has not arrived—so she addresses her class "you may go home early today," she says. We walk across campus to an old office which now

functions as a temporary malaria clinic, where we find nine students waiting for the Linda. In the room, there are bright medical signs with instructions on how to perform rapid malaria tests and dosage charts for malaria medication. Linda unlocks a gray medicine box and gets out the lancets, malaria test kits, La, and painkiller. She gingerly pokes each child's finger and waits the five minutes for the results on whether they have malaria. Linda opens up a box with small plastic bags and pours La tablets into some bags and painkiller tablets into the others, then writes instructions on the bags for medicine. She looks back at the malaria tests, labeled with student names, and approaches each child with the appropriate medication, sending six home with malaria medicine and giving the other three painkillers and sending them back to class. After spending one hour on LTK duties, we go back to her classroom, where she finds the large room empty and uncharacteristically quiet, and begins packing up her bags to go home (1/18/17).

On this day, we see how Linda's division of time was a reflection of her multiple roles, and her awareness of the various directions in which her work was pulled came through when she remarked to me, "you can see all of my roles today." Pursuing these roles simultaneously was often not an option, since one role (teaching her students) required Linda to be in her Standard 1 classroom with her students, while another role (treating sick students) required focused attention with sick children in a private room. Thus, Linda's decisions come down to a form of triage—prioritizing from among multiple dilemmas which to tackle first. She made the prioritizing decision in this particular moment, but this exogenous project produced this situation in which she had to exert agency to reconcile these multiple and competing pressures.

A mix of factors likely guided Linda's prioritization in this moment. It could easily be that sick children seemed a more dire problem than a Standard 1 lesson; or, she was tired on this

119

particular day since her co-teacher had not arrived and so she welcomed the chance to leave a bit early. It could also have been something seemingly extraneous. As Linda was packing up her things, she said to me, "my mindset is not really here for teaching this term. I was supposed to be at the university for my studies, but the university students are striking." Perhaps on this day she just wasn't feeling totally motivated to teach for a combination of reasons. These prioritizations vary between teachers and they vary for particular teachers from day-to-day. However, that exogenous projects produce these "triage" moments for teachers is important to highlight.

In my fieldwork, I observed many such moments where the activities of exogenous projects came into conflict with other school activities. Table 12 features the full set of these moments of "exogenous interruptions" that I observed. These are the instances where I saw teacher attention being hijacked by an exogenous project. I tease out the impetus for the interruption in the column on the right.

The examples in Table 12 illustrate how exogenous projects produced tensions in the work of teaching, in some cases by wholly redirecting teacher attention and in other cases, such as the last example in the table above, through introducing new challenges such as a classroom with no girls in it (paradoxically, this is in service to a larger intervention titled "Keeping Girls in School"). One theme across these exogenous interruptions is that the impetus is usually something external to the classroom and the teacher. A visitor has arrived or is coming tomorrow; a colleague knocks on Linda's door and informs her she is the only LTK teacher here today. Another commonality across these interruptions is that teaching and learning activities are at least modified and at most halted because of these exogenous activities. Methodologically, it was much more difficult for me to see moments when teachers chose to maintain momentum and ignore a possible exogenous interruption.

120

Table 12

Exogenous interruptions

Description	Impetus for interruption
"Something has come up today." (Linda) *The LTK group is coming to pick up records for the past nine months of malaria activities. Linda, who had invited me to observe a club meeting today for a different exogenous project, texts me via What'sApp ("Something has come up today and I won't be able to do the club") to let me know she won't carry out her club duties as planned since she now needs to prepare these records. I come to the school for other teacher interviews that day and when I greet Linda at 8:45am she is writing records (11/9/16).*	-LTK group coming to pick up records
"Hurry girls! The mothers are waiting." (Maggie) *It is exam week and a KGIS meeting is scheduled today. Members of the Mother Group have already arrived at the school and are waiting for the girls to finish their exams. The Standard 7 students are writing Maggie's agriculture exam and the classroom is still full with students writing their tests. Maggie asks me to proctor the exam while she gets chairs set up for the meeting, and I am proctoring when she comes in looking rushed in order to hurry up the girls. "Hurry girls! The mothers are waiting. Rain will find us if you don't hurry!" (12/6/16)*	-Members of the Mother Group are at Mitambo and waiting to start a meeting, which will be held outdoors -It looks like it might rain soon
"Some visitors are coming." (Maggie) *At around 9:55am, a loud speaker begins blaring at the meeting ground in the middle of campus, where some people are setting up for an event. I'm shadowing Maggie and am sitting with the Standard 7 teachers. Maggie explains that "some visitors are coming." When I ask her about the visitors' program, she says, "we have not been given full information about this." A white car pulls up, then visitors begin arriving on foot from the villages and other schools. The event starts at 10:30am and is in celebration of Rays of Hope child-driven clubs (12/14/16).*	-Event set-up at school beginning at 9:55am -Car arrives to school campus -Students, headteachers, teachers, and local leaders arrive to school campus
"You may go home early today." (Linda) *Linda is teaching Standard 1 when another teacher tells her that nine students are waiting to be treated for malaria. At 11:00am…*	-Colleague arrives at Linda's…

Table 12 (cont'd)

Exogenous interruptions

Description	Impetus for interruption
...Linda dismisses her 79 students so that she can treat these nine students, saying "You may go home early today." (Elaborated on in vignette on pp. 117-118) (1/18/17).	…classroom to notify her that she is needed to treat students -Nine students are ill
"Ah, we have a meeting today!" (Maggie) *At 12:50pm, Maggie has been teaching since early this morning when she see members of the Mother Group arrive onto Mitambo's campus. She says we should go check something in the headteacher's office, so we go in and see the KGIS Action Plan chart. "Ah, we have a meeting today!" She says. The topic is "appropriate dress." Maggie tells me that she needs to gather the girls, and she's off like a flash (2/9/17).*	-Members of the Mother Group are at Mitambo
"Should we just teach the boys today?" (Beatrice) *Maggie is cooking today for another function at the school, which happens to have also pulled away one of her co-teachers in Standard 7. This leave Standard 7 understaffed at the same time that a separate school interruption is occurring—a local NGO will be coming to hold an emergency meeting with all of the girls receiving KGIS cash transfers and their parents (it is the local NGO that is implementing the cash transfer aspect of the project). All of the girls have been sent home to call their parents. Beatrice rushes over to Maggie and asks what she should do since all of the Standard 7 girls are now gone—"Should we just teach the boys today?" Maggie and Beatrice resolve that the boys will just be given notes to copy from the chalkboard (5/2/17).*	-NGO visitors coming to school to hold emergency meeting about KGIS cash transfer

Table 12 presents these examples where teachers had little option beyond engaging with exogenous projects. Even in these instances, however, we see how teachers acted in the moment to creatively resolve the competing imperatives assigned to their work. What to do with a room

122

full of 79 students when 9 students need malaria treatment? In this case, Linda dismissed

students early. What about when there are no girls in class because all of the girls have been sent

to call their parents for a meeting? Beatrice and Maggie determined that the boys should be given

notes, that way they were not giving the boys too much of an advantage.

Another key space exists for teacher agency around teacher time-use, as well. It occurs

less visibly but is also suggested by some moments in Table 12. Teachers can also not implement

exogenous projects. The fact that the implementation of exogenous projects usually was

triggered by a visitor, not the teacher, is important. In the first example, Linda suddenly needed

to finish (or produce?) nine months of records on LTK treatment at Mitambo, which at the very

least suggests LTK record-keeping is not something she is doing every day. That Maggie forgot

about a KGIS meeting also indicates that these meetings are not something always front and

center on her radar. However, that these multiple demands on teachers do in fact grow, and in

certain moments exogenous projects become a teacher's main focus.

Conclusions and discussion

A Chichewa proverb, "visitors are like the dew" (*ulendo ndi mame*), is used to mean that

visitors arrive, but their stay is temporary. As a host, one must be hospitable while the visitors

are present. This hospitality entails providing ample food, a comfortable bed, warm bath water,

and sugar for tea. Visitors will not stay forever; like the dew, they will vanish, and when they do

the burden of providing also evaporates for the host.

This spirit of temporary accommodation also characterizes teacher engagement with

exogenous projects, and for good reason: These projects are explicitly short-term, and thus

teachers don't operate with the mentality that these projects will stay. Funding for exogenous

projects often dries up (Swidler & Watkins, 2009), accelerating project endings. These projects often literally present as visitors—NGO staff have arrived for an event; a USAID training is occurring.

In the vignette with which I opened the chapter, Mitambo teacher Tembo equated exogenous projects with baked goods: "You know these guys. They're always in the bakery baking new programs for us." With this, he introduced a helpful metaphor for conceptualizing such projects. They are like pastries that arrive but will inevitably expire. Teachers are provided programs as pastries—pastries which they didn't order—and must make meaning of them within their particular ecologies.

While these exogenous projects, or pastries, arrive at schools to solve a host of problems, this chapter uncovers how teachers use these projects to solve the problems they encounter: low salary and limited teacher training. On average, teachers live on monthly salaries that are about $80 above the World Bank's global poverty level; the financial strains on teachers are often sizeable and the importance of projects that create new financial streams impossible to overstate. Additionally, Maggie stressed that these projects offered needed supplemental training, though I found little additional support for this idea. Future research should interrogate whether exogenous projects offer a mode of in-service trainings which serve Malawi's teachers and students well.

In the introductory chapter of this dissertation, I discussed how the landscape of donor activity in Malawi has splintered in the wake of the corruption scandal dubbed Cashgate. Following this 2013 scandal, donors have diverted funds away from GOM sources and towards NGOs. The possibility of uncoordinated NGO activity colliding in schools has long been a concern in Malawi (Kadzamira & Kunje, 2002). Evidence presented in this chapter suggests that

this may be compromising educational activities, since the time applied to these exogenous projects is typically at the expense of teaching time.

Through adopting an ecological framework, in this chapter I have highlighted the ways that inputs, actors, and relationships are impacted by and impact on exogenous projects at Mitambo. The importance of the learning opportunities and allowances as inputs generated by exogenous projects was crucial to how teachers made meaning of these projects, as well as the significance of the headteacher's role in gatekeeping access to these projects.

Exogenous projects also influenced teacher time use and the landscape of teacher responsibility. In the case of LTK, an exogenous project made malaria a problem that teachers were equipped to solve. In non-LTK schools, teachers may advise ill students to go to the clinic; at Mitambo and other LTK schools, malaria treatment becomes part of a teacher's skillset and thus involved in a teacher's "triage" around their time-use. While some projects sought to improve teachers' abilities to navigate existing dilemma (e.g., Save's Buddy System program which helps teachers manage large class sizes), many projects at Mitambo add to these dilemmas by expanding the volume of problems teachers are tasked with addressing. How teachers resolved these competing demands on their time was largely up to them, but it is noteworthy that these demands intensify through exogenous projects. In certain flashpoint moments, particularly when instigated by a visitor, these projects did consume the attention of teachers. The role of teachers in mediating time-related policy demands also comes through in the next chapter on the "weapons" or actions that teachers undertake.

CHAPTER 6: ENACTING POLICY

"At the very least, one can say that there is much more here than simply consent, resignation, and deference."-James Scott (1985, p. 273)

"If an elder asks you to wash his clothes, just dip them in water." -Chichewa Proverb

Introduction

When I arrived to begin fieldwork at Mitambo in September 2016, a new national policy had just been introduced that extended the school-day. Though the effect varied based on grade level, school-days were officially extended by approximately one hour on average. The data excerpts below highlight some of the apparent contradictions about this policy that I encountered during my fieldwork:

Interview with Simon Chibwana, local education administrator:

Simon: Issues concerning policies, there's no room for discussion. We just impose to the teachers, just, "Here is the policy."

Alyssa: So you're seeing in all of the schools, the timetable is being followed?

Simon: Yes, it's being followed.

Alyssa: Were there any challenges with that one?

Simon: Some teachers, they're just saying, "This timetable is too long, we don't have much time for preparations." Here and there. But we just say, "This is a policy. So we don't have any input on the policy. Just follow whatever is there" (4/26/17).

Interview with Fatima Chakwera, Mitambo Primary School teacher:

Alyssa: What time do you knock off?

Fatima: 2:30 pm (this is the official time stated in the new timetable policy for Fatima's class, Standard 5).

Alyssa: OK.

Fatima: But, frankly speaking, we close our business at 2 pm because by then, most

learners feel tired. In the morning you may have a large number of learners but when we

reach afternoon, the number gets small. You find that there are few learners in class than

it was in the morning because by then, most of them have gone (11/9/16).

Fieldnotes from a day when I arrive to conduct a focus group with teachers scheduled to be in class until 1:50pm.[28]

> *I pick up Gifton (my translator for focus groups) at 1:00pm, and together we go to Mitambo for the focus group with junior section teachers. We arrive around 1:30pm and I expect to have some time to set up and revisit the questions with Gifton before our 2:00pm focus group, since the junior section teachers are on the timetable until 1:50pm. However, I see that the junior section teachers – who (I thought) would be in class until 1:50pm – are sitting under a tree waiting for us. Also, on the drive in I saw Beatrice Kaminjolo, a senior section teacher, walking around at the trading center (she shouted "Alyssa!" And came to our car to greet us). According to the timetable, Beatrice should be at school until 2:30, yet we passed by the trading center around 1:30pm (1/24/17).[29]*

We see in the first excerpt from Simon Chibwana a particular view of this policy—or any

policy for that matter—that those receiving (including mid-level managers like Simon

Chibwana) "don't have any input on the policy" and that teachers and leaders "just follow

whatever is there." We also see how, particularly through teacher action but also through teacher

discussion around the policy, the policy is not being enacted as prescribed. This disconnect

created confusion for me as a researcher: I was trying to respect an official timetable which

teachers were not enacting, but the scale of non-enactment was never overtly stated. What

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[28] I deliberately scheduled focus groups to align with knock-off times on the official timetable as a way to make focus groups maximally convenient for teachers. This timing also gave me some unexpected insight into when teachers actually end their days. On a separate day, 2/14/17, Linda Macheso began texting me to move up her focus group. I was away from Mitambo conducting an interview with a teacher elsewhere, and her text to me at 11:00am said, "Can we start earlier like 11:55 coz school is already disturbed as senior classes are already out clearing the ground (doing manual work). So I don't think there will be any harm." Senior-level students are on the timetable until 2:30pm; infant-level (Linda's class) on the timetable until 12:00pm.

[29] See Appendix G for the times that my focal teachers knocked off on the days I shadowed them.

appeared to me initially as contradictions could be more coherently explained as a story of calculated conformity and resistance (Scott, 1985).

This chapter explores why Mitambo teachers rarely directly challenged policies, despite collective feelings of frustration with government actors and the policies they created. I demonstrate in this chapter how teachers utilized specific means available to them to improve their livelihoods, strategically adopting some forms of resistance while eschewing others. Specifically, I highlight how teachers use discretion over their time to deliver immediate improvements and how they use research with the hope of more systemic improvements. Before presenting these examples, I describe the concept of "routine resistance" offered by James Scott in *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (1985). I engage insights from Scott (1985) to examine routine or everyday forms of compliance and resistance— "weapons of the weak"—utilized by Mitambo teachers.

Conceptual tool: Routine resistance, or *Weapons of the Weak* (Scott, 1985)

When actions are animated by broader power relations and conflicts, James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak* offers an analytic lens for examining the everyday creativity (de Certeau, 1984) that characterizes how vulnerable actors engage with those in power and how they use the instruments (such as policy) that the powerful create. Scott writes that the powerful may "write the basic rules for play, but within its confines, truculent or disaffected actors find sufficient room for maneuver to suggest subtly their disdain for the proceedings" (p. 26). Weapons of the weak typically take the form of action or inaction.

Scott's insights stem from an anthropological account of tenant farmers in a Malaysian village. He conducted research in the wake of Malaysia's green revolution, which accelerated

crop production through mechanization but profoundly impacted the livelihoods of peasant

farmers who depended on small-scale farm labor and lived on rented portions of land that were

increasingly being sold off for industrial farming. To the tenant farmers in this village, the

revolution in the agricultural industry meant limited work opportunities, reduced wages,

heightened rents, and insecurity in housing. Scott's analysis of tenant farmer resistance to

landlord employers focuses on routine forms of resistance that are often masked by overt

compliance. For tenant farmers, speaking up was futile and risky, as one farmer poignantly said:

> Whether you complain or don't complain, it's no use. You can't do anything; you can't
>
> win. If you say anything, they won't hire you to plant...if you're hard up, you have to take
>
> the work. If you refuse, if you don't do it, others will. Only those who are well-off can
>
> refuse. (p. 252)

Where overt resistance will not yield benefits, routine resistance flourishes. Routine

resistance covers its tracks through "symbolic compliance" which represents a form of

conformity—to policy or to social mores, for instance—that minimally follows the written

"rules" while also leaving space for vulnerable actors to subtly resist and improve their

livelihoods. Within symbolic compliance,

> Any intention to storm the stage can be disavowed and options are consciously kept open.
>
> Deference and conformity, though rarely cringing, continue to be the public
>
> posture...however, one can clearly make out backstage a continuous testing of limits. At
>
> the very least, one can say that there is much more here than simply consent, resignation,
>
> and deference (p. 273).

Routine resistance departs from public and organized forms of resistance: "Where

institutionalized politics is formal, overt, concerned with systematic, de jure change, everyday

resistance is informal, often covert, and concerned largely with immediate de facto gains" (p. 33). Reviewing evidence from a variety of disenfranchised groups beyond Malaysia,[30] Scott concludes that rebellions and revolutions are infrequent and often ineffective; in contrast, "weapons of the weak" occur in the background constantly and often measurably improve the lives of those who engage them. Some of the weapons of the weak he identifies include foot-dragging, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, and going through the motions of work but doing work of poor quality.

In this chapter, I posit that "policy processes"—such as policy negotiation and enactment—allow spaces for Malawian teachers to engage weapons of the weak. While two new national policies attempt to regulate teacher time and instruction, teachers in this context are the ultimate arbiters of how they utilize both of these tools. To improve their wellbeing in the short-term, teachers enacted particular versions of these new policies.

To consider teachers in Malawi "weak" or vulnerable actors requires first establishing that this aligns with their interpretations of their positions. The following section presents evocative descriptions of teachers expressing that they are treated by the government as "dogs" and invoking a proverb that equates teachers to grass that is stomped on when elephants (e.g., government leaders) fight. After demonstrating a collective feeling of vulnerability among teachers, I discuss the rare instances of overt rebellion, or teachers' discussion of overt rebellion, and how these instances further illustrate the way teachers feel precariously positioned.

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[30] One example comes from the United States Civil War. Scott states that the official story of the Civil War portrays the Confederacy as being defeated militarily, but Scott argues that this was made possible by an "avalanche of petty acts of insubordination" (p. 31). Approximately 250,000 whites deserted the war or avoided conscription, especially poor whites who were resentful of the slavery institution which did not benefit them. On plantations, the shortage of white overseers, and the slaves' affinity with the Northern cause, gave rise to shirking and flight, which also troubled the confederate army.

Teacher vulnerability

"On the hierarchy, we are on the bottom rank"

While at Mitambo, I conducted seven focus group interviews with teachers. Participation ranged from two to seven teachers in these focus groups. Exploring the discussions that occurred in focus groups can illuminate a shared sense of suffering among teachers. I did not include any questions in the focus group protocol that specifically pertained to government. However, in talking about what "success" means to them or reflecting on their goals as teachers, themes around government, absence of teacher rights, and poor treatment of teachers arose.

I asked Mitambo teachers in focus groups to consider their goals, expectations, and responsibilities upon joining the teaching profession, and how these things had changed with time. Janet Mphepo, a Standard 7 teacher, shared the following:

> **Janet:** When I joined teaching my goal was to teach the learners and to motivate them to go further with their education. I also expected to have all the resources as a teacher, and I would have rights to express what is not right. I thought I would be given an opportunity to take part in policy making about education…I also expected to receive my salary at the end of every month
>
> **Alyssa:** Of all the things you have said, what has changed most?
>
> **Janet:** What has changed is that we receive our salary very late, and teachers have no rights to express what is not working well (2/28/17).

This feeling, that being a teacher is challenging, and formal avenues for expressing this limited, came up at other points throughout the study. Linda argued that teachers are treated like "dogs" by government actors, and other teachers shared similar feelings that teachers are on the bottom rank of the hierarchy:

Margaret: How can you teach, exhausting yourself from morning on, [when] you can't make your ends meet? Now you come to school, and the conditions from this government, from the government to the teachers, we are not recognized, we are not recognized, that much you should know, we are not recognized…A minister in government, she or he went through the hands of the teacher, but once they are on top, they don't recognize us. Each and every department, they don't recognize a teacher. If a teacher has voiced [a concern], they take us as if we are dogs. But if a nurse or somebody from another department voices [a concern], they take them seriously. Why not a teacher, each and every one who can read and write has gone through the hands of the teacher, but why not recognize that teacher? The teacher is the bottom….bottom what?....what should I say?

Karen: Hierarchy. On the hierarchy, we are on the bottom rank.

Margaret: And people laugh at us, you see? Teachers are coming with their small businesses, they want to boost themselves.[31] We are not really recognized by each and every citizen of Malawi. As long as you are a teacher, you are not recognized. I have said this, 100% we are not recognized.

Alyssa: Do others have similar feelings?

Karen: Yes.

Linda: Yes we do (1/17/17).

In another focus group meeting, I asked teachers what success would look like in their careers. While I intended this question to reveal what teachers equated with a successful career,

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[31] Primary school teachers often come to school with rolls and donuts to sell.

many teachers instead used this as an opportunity to state how government action could create the conditions for success:

> **Maggie:** If the government can increase my salary.

> **Fatima:** If the government employs more teachers whereby it will reduce some work.

> **Maggie:** If the government can observe and follow the rules and regulations of civil service…If the government can change the welfare of the teachers, because it seems as if our welfare is not valuable at all. For instance when a teacher dies, the deceased teacher is regarded as a dog to be thrown away (2/7/17).[32]

Some of the ways teachers described being neglected by government include the government delaying salary disbursement, maintaining low salaries for teachers, providing few promotion opportunities, eliminating upgrading policies (thereby making it difficult for teachers to advance their education), and failing to deploy trained teachers whose employment would reduce teacher workloads. Additionally, teachers described the shortage of teaching and learning materials, the dilapidation of school buildings, and the overcrowding of schools as problems which could be addressed by government but are not being resolved.

Several of the new policies being implemented during my fieldwork were perceived by teachers as worsening their working conditions. For instance, the extended timetable policy officially lengthened teacher work hours without increasing teacher pay; a 60:1 pupil-teacher ratio policy mandated that teachers teach alone, rather than supporting each other in team-teaching arrangements; a new reading curriculum's pace was considered too fast for teachers and students. At the same time these new policies seen as making teaching more difficult were

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[32] Maggie's indignation over the government's failure to adequately support teacher funerals came up at other points during this research. Her view is that the government is responsible for transporting a teacher's body to the teacher's home area so the family can hold a funeral. It is because of a government assignment that the teacher is teaching far from home, and it is rarely feasible for the family to pay for the transport of a body across the country.

introduced, policies that were seen as supporting teachers, such as promotion and upgrading policies, were removed or not followed. This seemed to offer evidence to teachers that the teacher perspective is not valued by policymakers, a notion that came through in an interview with Linda Macheso:

Linda: To be honest, it (the 60:1 policy) is not working.

Alyssa: Then what is the point of the policy?

Linda: (Laughs) I don't know. Maybe that's their way of making allowance. They just go to meet at Nkopola (a fancy hotel near the lake), hold their education meeting, then they go. So someone can just accept that point, without even knowing what's happening on the ground. That's why people are saying that, when you are making policies, at least, you should take a few, you should select somebody, you go deep in the rural areas. Take one teacher. In the urban, take one, and you put them together and you let them share ideas with you. Everyone should say what they experience in where they stay. You'll see that the policies that you are making are not effective. But still, they don't hear us (3/28/17).

Linda's sense that teachers are not incorporated into policy making is echoed by scholars in a 2001 article, where Kadzamira and Rose (2001) wrote that this applies not only to teachers but other stakeholders within the Ministry as well:

The education policy formulation in Malawi does not have the tradition of consulting with stakeholders, including teachers, parents, communities, local leaders and NGOs involved in education…The users of policy (district education officers, schools, teachers, parents, and pupils) have, therefore, been suggested to be passive recipients of pre-packaged solutions proposed to them by a distant agency (p. 10).

Ample evidence from my research indicates that feelings of disillusionment and voicelessness were shared by many teachers, with the government positioned as the main culprit. Maggie Nyasulu explained in a focus group that her initial expectations of teaching—that she would be financially stable—have been challenged.

> **Maggie:** Every president comes with his own administration, he stays for 5 years or 10 years, then another president comes and comes again with his own administration… The same people with higher positions are the ones enjoying, while we are still slaves and they shout as us if we make a small mistake, forgetting that this mistake starts from the top positions, they are the ones who are causing this… what does that proverb say?
>
> **Fatima:** When the elephants fight.
>
> **Maggie:** "When the elephants fight, the grass is what suffers" (this is the popular proverb in Malawi which means "when the bosses fight their juniors are the ones who suffer"). They are doing many things there at the top in the name of governing the country, they just see the money when it is entering in their pockets they don't care where it is entering in their friend's pockets now (3/7/17).[33]

As Scott writes, when suffering is an isolated experience, "he (a tenant farmer) may grumble; he may even have fantasies about telling the landlord what he thinks of him…if, however, many tenants find themselves in the same boat, either because they share a landlord or because their landlords treat them in comparable ways, there arises the basis for a collective grievance, collective fantasy, and even collective acts" (p. 44).

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[33] Perceptions of the greed of government actors, particularly related to financial corruption, may have been particularly sharp at this moment because of the recent "Cashgate" scandal, which in 2013 uncovered how many government officials were siphoning money from donor projects (Goteti, 2018).

The magnitude of teacher frustration with government manifested in the sheer volume of negative statements made about the government—during my participant observation, focus groups, and interviews. In focus groups, the absence of any positive mention of the government was striking. In the 19 times the government was mentioned across seven focus groups conducted, in the majority of instances the government was framed as suppressing teacher wellbeing either through its delinquency in fulfilling its responsibilities or in its refusal to listen to teacher voices. While 19 may seem like only a few mentions in the seven focus groups I held, it is sizeable considering I never asked about the government.

Table 13

Coded mentions of government in focus groups

	Negative			Neutral
	Government neglects to improve conditions for teachers	Government does not listen to teachers	Government policy changes negatively affect teachers	
Number of mentions[34]	13	2	4	3
Example	"It is only in Malawi where teachers receive less salary if you compare with other countries…The government is supposed to consider some necessities which people need in life."	"If a teacher has voiced [a concern], they take us as if we are dogs. But if a nurse or somebody from another department voices [a concern], they take them seriously."	"After I joined [teaching], the government policy changed which meant that I could no longer go and upgrade."	"[As a teacher] you have been trusted by the government to come here to assist."

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[34] These are from a total of 19 mentions. However, these numbers add up to more than 19, since a few excerpts fell into two categories

When the government was negatively brought up, it was often accompanied by subtle or direct confirmation among other participants that this view is shared. When Margaret Kachamba said "this government" in a focus group, others in the group laughed:

Margaret: If you have done good there should be incentives for motivation but, this government [people laugh], this education department. No incentives, no motivation (1/17/17).

In one instance, participants did challenge each other on whether the government was the cause of teachers' poor status in communities:

Beatrice: The community is underrating us teachers.

Janet: It's because of your behavior

Beatrice: No they say that the teachers have not yet received their salaries until today, don't become a teacher my child. They underrate us.

Alyssa: Because of the salaries?

Beatrice: Yeah, they are underrating us

Fatima: Who is the cause of this, community or the government?

Mitchell: Government is the cause of this.

Janet: If you are not paid your salary and the community is aware, then they say "my child, teaching is not a career" (2/7/17).

In this exchange, participants dispute who is at fault for teachers' not being perceived as role models in the community, but the claim that teachers are not receiving salaries goes unchallenged. The dilemma at-hand for teachers—who are meant to embody success while not receiving their salary from the government—is profound. (I explore this with further consideration in the following chapter on teacher identity.) However, while some teachers may

attempt to mediate how they are perceived by the community, these attempts are troubled by a broader discourse of teacher poverty. A news article from October 2017 states:

> Malawi government will once again delay paying the salaries of teachers in public primary and secondary schools this month, which is attributed to bureaucracy in the state machinery. The delays are likely to spark further discontent among the teacher employees who are already battling to cope with the increasing cost of living as they are the lowest paid in the public service (Muheya, 2017, par. 1).

It is no surprise to teachers that their wages are surpassed by civil servants in other sectors, such as healthcare, and government inaction to resolve this is seen as culpable. Mitambo teacher Christopher Mandala stated in an interview, "The government should standardize the salaries in different ministries and not by just talking but rather implementing. Because we have been hearing issues of standardizing salaries but nothing has been done so far" (11/9/16).[35]

The multitude of criticisms levied against government actors is staggering, and the frustration teachers felt as they shared such criticisms was palpable. While research conversations present a unique space for articulating and affirming teacher frustration (and even a tool teachers try to use to have their voices heard), teachers undertake actions, and avoid others, in articulating their critiques. I examine this next.

Strike and overt resistance: "They just step on us"

When I came to Mitambo in September 2016, I heard from education officials that the Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) was organizing a strike to protest the government's delayed

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[35] Employees in the health sector receive salary supplements through a donor top-up which has been justified as a means to prevent "brain drain" of medical personnel (Record & Mohiddin, 2006). Such top-ups are not applied to employees in the education sector and result in sizeable disparities in wages between the health and education sector.

payments to teachers. These teachers supervised exams during their school holiday and expected an allowance for this, but several months elapsed without the allowance arriving. In early 2017 an official at TUM explained to me that this strike was called because "we got fed up with all this blame game" between government departments about who was responsible—the Ministry of Education or the national examination board—for paying teachers. The official said, that TUM "just made a public announcement that we are going to strike because no one seemed to care about the teachers. When they heard this, they made everything possible to give the teachers their pay" (1/9/17).

At the national-level, a strike is a visible form of teacher protest. Often the threat of strike provoked government response. Striking is an overt and institutionalized form of resistance, and its effects can powerfully result in systems-level change. While teacher strikes and threats of strike dominate news coverage on the teaching profession, at Mitambo teachers did not speak of striking as a viable option.

In one interview, Mitambo teacher Irene Khunga was explaining the nature of salary delays and how they affect her. I asked her about strikes,

Alyssa: Has there been a strike due to salary delays?

Irene: Yes.

Alyssa: Did you take part in the strike?

Irene: No we did not. Of course we got a letter about that from Teachers Union of
Malawi, but the headteacher did not read it out to us, and we kept on teaching (11/8/16).

Circulars from TUM (and other educational bodies) came to the headteacher's office, since the headteacher was responsible for disseminating information to teachers. In this instance, the headteacher did not share this information with teachers. It wasn't clear whether the

headteacher's withholding this information prevented teachers from knowing about the strike, or if the headteacher not announcing the strike was a cue to teachers not to strike. In either case, the headteacher's influence in mediating teacher resistance comes into focus. How the headteacher gatekeeps other flows from beyond the school was also apparent in the previous chapter about exogenous projects. Possible explanations for why teachers at Mitambo didn't strike include the fact that they may not have known about strikes or, perhaps relatedly, that school leaders did not support strikes. The first explanation, around access to strike information, suggests another facet of vulnerability that teachers experience in their work—that they are vulnerable to those above them for the distribution of important information.

Another explanation for why teachers don't strike is that they are afraid to lose their jobs. As Linda Macheso explained in an interview,

> We are too scared to speak out. 'Cuz when they say, 'Oh you want to strike, strike. There are a lot of people who want this job, we will employ someone.' Someone will say, 'Eh, I don't want to lose my job.' We are not brave enough, even ourselves. So, they just step on us, anyhow. You see? (3/28/17)

Linda's quote is reminiscent of the Malay tenant farmer who said,

> Whether you complain or don't complain, it's no use. You can't do anything; you can't win. If you say anything, they won't hire you to plant...if you're hard up, you have to take the work. If you refuse, if you don't do it, others will. Only those who are well-off can refuse. (Scott, 1985, p. 252)

The parallels in these two quotes speak to a shared experience of vulnerability among workers when power is concentrated in the hands of employers. In Malawi, the perceived ability of the Ministry of Education to treat teachers as dispensable is substantiated by the well-known

fact that a large pool of unemployed newly qualified teachers are waiting to be hired by the government. In Malawi and other donor-dependent countries, the World Bank and other donors avoid paying recurring costs such as teacher salaries (Heyneman, 2003). The World Bank in Malawi has a long history of financing teacher education programs, with the understanding that the government assumes salary costs once teachers are trained and hired. From 2010-2016, the World Bank funded a rural teacher training program (World Bank, 2010), but the government has not been able to hire recent training cohorts, amounting to about 5,000 teachers who have not been hired onto the government payroll and are staying at home (Maravi Post, 2018). The possibility that the Ministry of Education will simply hire a novice teacher to replace a fractious one seems very real to teachers like Linda given the volume of unemployed trained teachers.

Though Linda is not willing to strike, she does not present herself as a quiet and defeated actor. As with any landscape of resistance, the landscape "does not rule out certain forms of resistance, although it surely sets limits that only the foolhardy would transgress" (Scott, 1985, p. 247). One day when I was shadowing Linda, she and I were discussing whether teachers generally feel comfortable speaking freely to their leaders. My fieldnotes from that day describe a conversation Linda and I had while commuting home on a minibus. While Linda asserted that teachers generally do not feel comfortable speaking to leaders, she contrasted herself with most teachers, offering an example of when she spoke her mind:

> *"Let me give you an example of the extended timetable," she says, explaining that someone from the division (the level above the district) came in September to inform teachers of the extended timetable. "I stood up and spoke my mind: 'You think it will change learner performance? What it will change is the attitude of teachers. Why not motivate the teachers instead? They don't get teacher houses. Look at the state of the classrooms.' That's what I told him. And the other teaches said to me afterwards, 'thank you, you have spoken for me'" (2/1/17).*

While Linda's boldness in challenging a policy comes through in her account, what also comes through is the relative silence of other teachers. It is significant that they chose not to support her publicly in front of the division leader, but instead shared with her privately that she had spoken for them. It is impossible to know exactly why Linda chose to speak out on this particular day, but that she did speak out is a demonstration of the frustration she feels as a teacher and the creativity of individuals in identifying moments when resistance is possible.

As Scott writes of the landscape of resistance in the Malay village, tenant farmers did find and exploit a few avenues for open resistance, though rarely pushing things to a point that posed real risks for them. Open resistance was conducted in such a way that it avoided direct refusal and could be disavowed. Similarly, Linda's open resistance avoided directly refusing this policy and instead questioned the logic on which the policy stands, arguing that the policy will have an unintended outcome of worsening teacher motivation. But, as is often the case with open resistance, tangible progress was not made—the division leader did not reverse the policy (though a sense of shared grievance among the teachers in the room was gained). Unlike this demonstration of open resistance, real gains are made possible through routine and covert resistance, though it is important to note that these gains occur at the individual-level and not at the systems-level. I explore such gains in the next section.

A weapon of the weak: "Making" policy

Traditional policy research primarily pursues questions about the effectiveness of policy or, relatedly, the fidelity with which a policy is implemented. This technical approach to policy, Levinson et al. (2009) argue, overlooks the role of power in pervading every aspect of the policy process. I take policy process to mean interrelated activities of policy development, negotiation,

142

and enactment. In analyzing across these activities, Levinson et al. highlight the concept of appropriation: "a form of creative interpretive practice necessarily engaged in by different people involved in the policy process" (2009, p. 768).

As I explain in Chapter 2, a view of policy as practice (e.g., Levinson et al., 2009; Sutton & Levinson, 2001) underpins this research. This approach highlights a crucial distinction between "authorized policy"—made by officials—and "unauthorized policy." Unauthorized policy is the result of "nonauthorized policy actors—typically teachers and students, but possibly, too, building administrators—appropriat[ing] policy…they are in effect making new policy in situated locales" (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 768).

An instance of teachers making policy can be seen in the case of the extended timetable policy—the authorized policy was challenged privately by teachers, and in one instance openly by Linda, but no collective action was taken by teachers to officially alter the timetable. Instead, teachers simply did not follow it, though rarely directly stated that they were not following it. The timetable policy they made was never codified or documented, yet widely recognized by the group of teachers at Mitambo and in line with teacher preferences. The following sections examine how teachers test boundaries, assume silences, and assert their needs as they make unauthorized policy.

Testing and negotiating policy: "They do things, but they don't implement them."

Within the fissure between authorized and unauthorized policy is "a constant process of testing and renegotiation" (Scott, 1985, p. 255). In the case of Mitambo teachers, this process over time and across policies has led some teachers to conclude that policies are "mere talk." A

discussion with Linda about the 60:1 student-teacher ratio policy[36] revealed her feeling along

these lines:

> **Alyssa:** I hear a lot about the 60-to-one policy, but then I see many classrooms with more
>
> than one teacher.
>
> **Linda:** It's just our government. They do things, but they don't implement them. They
>
> say 1 to 60 ratios, but you still find other schools having three or four teachers in one
>
> class. They still talk about it, but they don't move around and check if it's really
>
> working...So this policy, is mere talk. You can't say it's really happening on the actual
>
> ground (3/28/17).

Although Linda said that 60:1 is not "really happening on the actual ground," this policy

is a presence at the school and is colliding with practice on the local level to create new

unofficial versions of the policy. This came through during a staff meeting at the end of the

second term, when the headteacher was trying to compel teachers to distribute classes in ways

that were closer to 60:1. He had worked with the school committee to raise funds to build

temporary learning shelters in order to divide classes which were currently merged, but teachers

were refusing to teach in these shelters. Teachers remarked that these shelters looked like *gafas*

(buildings used to dry tobacco). At the conclusion of the staff meeting, teachers resolved to teach

outside and not in the *gafa*-like shelters. This lasted for about two weeks, since once the rains

came classes were merged and held indoors again.

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[36] The official policy stipulates that there should be one teacher and 60 or fewer students per classroom. This policy was explained to me as mandating one teacher alone is responsible for a class. At Mitambo, there are twice as many teachers as there are classrooms, and teachers routinely resist teaching under a tree. Because of this, Mitambo teachers in every class teach with "partner" teachers, dividing the subjects between each other. This is technically a violation of the 60:1 policy.

At Mitambo, I saw no evidence that teachers were penalized for not following 60:1 or for violating the extended timetable policy. The disjuncture between official and practiced policy appeared most uncomfortable for the headteacher, who was responsible if the school was inspected. With the 60:1 policy in particular, he was sympathetic to teachers, sharing with me in an interview that he felt 60 students for one teacher was too much. With the timetable policy, his own departure from school before the end of the official school-day likely communicated teachers his understanding of the school's policy in practice. Additionally, while he was very strict about teachers arriving on time, and required teachers to sign in everyday to a register kept in his office with the time they arrived (marking a red line between the "on time" and "late-coming" teachers), he did not record when they left campus.

Given that Mitambo was a center school, sharing a campus with the Primary Education Advisor who is meant to oversee their work, one might think that in this context teachers would follow official policy with more diligence. Here, the PEA Simon Chibwana's insistence that the official timetable was being followed could, if anything, reflect tacit permission granted to teachers to deviate.

"In classrooms, we find a way forward"

The level of detail policies prescribed regarding how teachers should use their time was remarkable, especially given that the practice of monitoring teacher time-use garnered little local support. This was apparent both with the new timetable and the National Reading Programme (NRP) which was rolled out in 2016. In NRP teacher guides, lessons were scripted—though policymakers and development officials use the term "transcribed." These lessons were

calculated down to two-minute intervals. The following excerpt, typed verbatim from the NRP

teacher guide's first lesson, illustrates how these lessons flow:

> **INTRODUCTION** (2 minutes)
> *Sing the song Teacher, Children, in the Class. (Note: All the songs' lyrics are given in the Appendix. If you are not sure of the tune, you may make one up.)*
>
> **ACTIVITY 1.1.1 GREETING OTHERS FORMALLY** (8 minutes)
> Today we will great with good morning. I will greet you. We will greet each other. Then you will greet your friends.
> *Gesture to the class and say,* **Good morning, children.**
> *Gesture to yourself and say,* **Good morning, Teacher.**
> *Gesture to demonstrate 'together' and say,* Let's say **good morning, Teacher** together.
> *Say it together with the learners 2-3 times.*
> *Invite a learner to the front and say,* **Good morning,** (name). *Help the learner to say,* **Good morning, Teacher.**
> *Invite two learners to the front. Help them say* **good morning** *to each other,* mentioning each other's names.
> *Point to the class and say,* Now it is your turn. *Gesture to demonstrate 'be in pairs' and say,* Be in pairs. Say **good morning** to each other. *The learners take turns saying:* **Good morning,** (name). **Good morning,** (name).
> *As some in pairs to show the class what they are doing.*
>
> **ACTIVITY 1.1.2. ASKING FOR AND GIVING INFORMATION** (8 minutes)
> Now we will ask and answer **How are you?** I will ask and answer. We will ask and answer together. Then you will ask and answer on your own.
> *Ask,* **How are you?** *Answer,* **I am fine, thank you.**
> *Repeat 2-3 times.*
> *Gesture to demonstrate 'together' and say,* Let's say together: **How are you?**
> *Say it together with the learners 2-3 times.*
> Let's say together: **I am fine, thank you.** *Say it together with the learners 2-3 times.*
> *Invite a learner to the front and ask,* **How are you?** *Help the learner to answer,* **I am fine, thank you.**
> *Invite two learners to the front. Help one learner to ask,* **How are you?** *Help the other learner to answer,* **I am fine, thank you.** *Have the learners switch roles.* (MIE, 2016, p. 17)

NRP is funded primarily by USAID. When I asked a USAID education official about the

decision to develop transcribed lessons, he explained, "There have been a lot of questions on

whether this stifles creativity [among teachers]. What we've seen is creativity is not aligned with

best practices" (1/12/17). At the level of authorized policy, this curriculum is intended to be

followed with precision in order to reflect "best practices." That teacher creativity is seemingly

deterred at the policy level is evident in the curriculum design yet sharply contrasts with the

latitude teachers have to creatively operate within their schools and classrooms.

During a training for NRP, the teachers at the table where I was sitting determined that

this curriculum was not conducive to the learning environments in which they taught. Here is an

excerpt from my fieldnotes during this training:

> *The teachers in my group get into a heated conversation in Chichewa. The crux is the difficulty of really getting kids to understand these lessons with such a huge number of students in their classes...The teacher from Chilapa sitting near me says to the group, "This book (the NRP Teacher Guide) is not the Bible. We can't take it as perfect. In classrooms, we find a way forward. Our learners, they should know n and a. Use common sense on how to get there." At this, Linda (one of my focal teachers) laughs, "Now we're talking!" She says (12/21/16).*

The notion that NRP's curriculum pace was too intense given the conditions of teaching

(namely, number of students) was echoed by other participants during this training. After a

teacher conducted a model lesson, the facilitator asked the training participants what could be

improved. Mitambo headteacher Clement Kanowa said, "the issue is against the planners. The

content is too much for a Standard 1 learner." Others in the room said "ey" in agreement. The

facilitator also agreed with this sentiment, saying, "even in America, this is too much for a

Standard 1 learner" (12/23/16). At other points in fieldwork, I heard an idea that NRP was based

off of practices in America, which may be what the facilitator was referring to in her comment.

Linda shared with me how there had been similar debates at the first training of NRP

several months earlier before I arrived at Mitambo for fieldwork. This first training occurred

during the initial roll-out of NRP, when the magnitude of curricular changes was becoming clear

to teachers, as was the absence of teacher input into the development of the new curriculum.

Linda: They changed the curriculum without consulting us, this is challenging...They call it "American style." In this system the learners are just memorizing and not writing. It is almost a term now since we started doing this and the learners are not practicing writing...It is hard for learners to understand this. We argued about this, but they were unwilling to listen to our views. They just said "receive it," and we did, but it makes teaching challenging (11/1/16).

This idea of "receive it" resonates with Simon Chibwana's initial quote early in this chapter, where he describes policy as something where "we don't have any input." As PEA, Simon has more of a direct line to policymakers than teachers do, but still positioned himself as someone who is a receiver of official policy. However, while teachers were advised by their leaders to "receive" policy, they tacitly devise new policies that suit their needs. Given the distance between authorized policy and enacted policy, the dialectic of testing and negotiating seems a necessary and logical part of making policy operational. This distance has been observed by other scholars (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001; Mundy, 2002).

As this chapter demonstrates, teachers are acutely aware of their voicelessness within the policy formulation process. Perceiving policies to be misaligned to the challenges they truly face, teachers "find a way forward," seizing opportunities to achieve their goals as teachers and improve their wellbeing in both the short and long-term. While instances of policy negotiation largely offer examples of how teachers tried to improve their wellbeing in the short-term (by reducing their workload, shortening their workday, or deviating from an intense curriculum), teachers also sought opportunities to effect longer-term change.

Teacher efforts at systemic change

Overwhelmingly, the weapons of the weak discussed in this chapter were linked to immediate and individual-level gains for teachers. Sizeable buffers existed for teachers to effect systemic change. With strike, these buffers included the gatekeeping role of the headteacher and fear of losing one's job. Moreover, striking was mainly a tool to pressure the government to fulfill its commitments—paying salaries or offering promotion interviews on schedule—rather than to *adjust* its policies. The policy formulation process itself was also buffered from teacher input, with Linda reasoning that policymakers were just accepting points without understanding teacher experiences ("someone can just accept that point, without even knowing what's happening on the ground"). Rarely did teachers have opportunities to improve the circumstances of teachers beyond in the short-term and at the individual-level.

However, I did see evidence that teachers were seeking these opportunities. At the end of one interview, a teacher implored me to ensure my research reaches those in power:

Alyssa: Do you have any questions for me or maybe something to add?

Mercy: I just want to add that, if you can continue with this program I hope it can be of great help to us if all you get from us here reaches those in power. Our concerns can be heard, because there are some people who just distribute items without consulting us first, and they just meet in secret. So if people like you can keep visiting us, I hope our problems can end (11/4/16).

A similar idea, that research could effect policy change, came through on one of the first days I met Mitambo teachers. Here is an excerpt of my fieldnotes from that day,

The first teachers arrive at 10:05 to write the survey. I read my introduction and ask if they have any questions. Janet asks whether the findings will link with the government. I give a reply to the effect of, "Yes, I'll share findings and all names will be changed." She

says, "Good, because there are some problems which we teachers can't solve. We need new policies" (10/12/16).

While teachers can solve many of the problems facing them, through enacting versions of policy that suit their needs, they also aspire to effect systemic change. To teachers, research presented one possibility for this, and it revealed that teachers are asking the question: how can I improve my situation as a teacher and the situation of other teachers as well?

Conclusions and discussion

This chapter has discussed a feeling of vulnerability shared by many teachers. As Janet Mphepo explained in a focus group, "teachers have no rights to express what is not working well." Another teacher said, "They [policymakers] just step on us." The feeling that teachers are neglected was resounding. The distance between policymakers and policy "users" (teachers) is vast, and teachers feel that policymakers' attention to teacher concerns is nonexistent.

Given these conditions, improving the situation for teachers is a matter teachers take up themselves. Knowing that policies will not be enforced, teachers used influence at local levels to advocate for class arrangements which seemed more manageable to them. A timetable policy, designed to extend the school-day, was largely not followed. A curriculum, perceived by teachers as too dense, was heavily modified in practce. These are examples of immediate and de facto gains often achieved through weapons of the weak (Scott, 1985). However, I also saw some evidence that teachers were not content to just improve their situations in the short-term; they strategically sought opportunities—such as research—to have their concerns heard by policymakers, indicating that long-term gains were desired but avenues for achieving them rare.

As in many aspects of teachers' work in Malawi, we see the mounting pressure on teachers, not only to execute these programs and policies but also to take responsibility for

improving their experience in the teaching profession. Why many teachers want to leave the

primary school teaching may be evident; however, the path out of primary teaching is much less

evident. The following chapter reveals how some teachers "escaped it without leaving it" (de

Certeau, 1984, p. xiii)—refusing to identify as teachers despite overwhelming evidence that they

most likely would remain primary school teachers.

CHAPTER 7: AUTHORING SELVES

Introduction

On Saturday, February 19, 2017, Linda Macheso, one of the focal teachers in this study, invited me to a charity event where she was a guest speaker. Linda's cousin worked for this particular charity, which pays school fees for youth who are orphans. The youth had gathered for a meeting, and Linda was invited by her cousin to discuss goal-setting. I met up with Linda and her cousin at the school where the event was held and was struck by the version of Linda that stepped out of the car. Not only was she emerging from a private car—not a minibus, the public transport option she usually took to school—but she had new red curl weave in her hair, her nails were freshly painted, and she was wearing a tight-fitting iridescent blue dress that fell above her knees. While teaching at Mitambo Primary School, Linda usually wore long-sleeved shirts and long skirts. I realized through the course of Linda's speech that her appearance was a piece of a comprehensive performance—of someone who was teaching, but was *not* a primary school teacher.

Linda's speech to the students began with her explaining that her father was a primary school teacher, and that his meager income was never enough to support his nine children. The hardships she experienced growing up, attributed to her father being a primary school teacher, came through as she spoke. She talked about when she was a primary school student and had only one outfit to wear and how she would repair it herself using thread and needle. Fortunately, when she reached secondary school, her sister's husband decided he would support Linda— otherwise she would not have had money for school fees.[37] He paid her school fees for secondary school and continued to pay her fees today for her Bachelor's studies. (Linda was pursuing her

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[37] Unlike public primary school, public secondary school requires fees.

Bachelor's in Education while holding her primary teaching job.)[38] Up to this point, Linda presented in her speech a simple story of success—a mix of hard work and good luck got her to her obviously esteemed position. Then, aiming to surprising the students, she asked, "Did you know that I'm also a primary teacher?" Appearing pleased by the chorus of "no" from the room, she smiled, saying, "If you met me on the road, you wouldn't know that I'm a teacher."

For about one hour, Linda talked to the students about her path to (and intended path beyond) primary school teaching. Her speech supports a broader narrative about primary school teaching, which I'll explore later in this chapter, that primary school teaching is a "stepping stone" to a better life. In Linda's speech, she strives to frame teaching as just that—a springboard which she is using for her benefit—rather than a long-term career that defines who she is. Sprinkled throughout her speech were punchy statements illustrating how she, though teaching at the primary level, refused to be pigeonholed as a primary school teacher. "I am a teacher, so what? So I get paid peanuts, so what? If I wished to always be a teacher, I'd wear long skirts, long shirts." The picture in Figure 4 (from my fieldnotes on 1/25/17) shows Linda on a typical day teaching primary school, where she is performing being a teacher—that is, wearing the long skirts and long shirts that she asserted in her speech typify primary school teachers.

The centrality of Linda's appearance in communicating who she was (and who she wasn't) came up again when Linda said to the secondary school students, "If I tell people I'm a primary teacher, they say, 'what? Why? The way you look, with primary? That doesn't suit you." The suggestion is that, by dressing like someone who works in a bank, she was declaring her distinction from the ranks of primary school teachers who are resigned to stay in the primary school teaching profession.

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[38] Primary school teaching in Malawi requires a certificate but not a Bachelor's Degree

Figure 4

Photo of Linda on a typical teaching day

However, as I go on to explore in this chapter, few primary school teachers in fact are resigned to stay in the teaching profession. Most of the teachers I interviewed similarly aspired to leave primary school teaching, though they found their capacity to do so hampered. Most of the teachers I interviewed similarly never intended to be primary school teachers and many harbored aspirations of leaving primary school teaching through a process of "upgrading," which I explain later in this chapter. Linda was among those teachers "upgrading" herself, which poignantly came through on this day: "Am I nothing?" She rhetorically asked students in the room. "I may be a primary school teacher, but through this I'm just upgrading myself. Life, it doesn't end here."

As an example of everyday creativity, the "selves" or identities authored by teachers result from the interplay between individual inventiveness and available resources. Linda's speech keenly presents how stories are a "site of self," defined by Holland et al. (1998) as a locus of "self-production or self-process" (p. 28). This chapter highlights the agency teachers possess

154

at the level of defining who they are in relation to the work they do, and the resiliency teachers create within conditions of scarce and fragile opportunity. After discussing the conceptual tools that guide my analysis, I present examples of creative self-authoring enacted by teachers in this study. In my discussion, I probe what one theme in teachers' presentations of self—a self who is, in fact, *not* a teacher—suggests about what it means to *be* a primary school teacher.

Conceptual tools: Identity and sites of self

This chapter extends the dissertation's focus of everyday creativity to teacher identity. While agency is evident in the identities teachers construct and represent, equally apparent are the ways identity and its performance are mediated by social, economic, and situational factors. The anthropological work of Dorothy Holland and colleagues (Holland et al., 1998; Holland & Lachicotte, 2007; Holland & Lave, 2009) most informs this chapter's approach to the complexities of identity. I also adopt a supporting concept of boundary work (Lamont, 1992; Lamont & Molnár, 2002) which concentrates on how individuals strategically position themselves. In this section, I present the conceptual tools I engage in this chapter as well as the significance of stories as "site of self" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Holland et al., 1998).

Identity and boundary work

The concept of "identity" has been applied by scholars in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Across and within these fields, debates persist regarding identity's coherence and stability (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007). Holland and Lachicotte (2007) separate identity-focused research into work emerging from Erik Erikson and work emerging from George H. Mead, both psychologists writing in the early and mid-20th

155

century. Erikson argued that identity is a consistent and coherent "core" that one maintains throughout his or her life (an "essential self"), whereas Mead stressed the dynamic and even contradictory aspects of identity. As Holland and Lachicotte summarize, to Mead, identity is "a complex emergent phenomenon continually produced in and by individuals in their interchanges with others and with the culturally transformed material world" (2007, p. 108). Holland and colleagues' interpretation of identity grows from Mead's work. They understood identity as complex and emergent, "unfinished and in process." In the book, *Identity and agency in cultural worlds* (1998), Holland et al. write that:

> Identities—if they are alive, if they are being lived—are unfinished and in process. Whether they be specific to the imagined worlds of romance…or generic to ethnic, gender, race, and class divisions, identities never arrive in persons or in their immediate social milieu already formed. They do not come into being, take hold in lives, or remain vibrant without considerable social work in and for the person. (p. vii)

These facets of identity, as complex, emerging, continually "in process," and products of creative work (Calabrese Barton et al., 2013), are key to how I explore identities articulated by teachers in this study. This production is characterized both by teacher creativity and by constraints. Holland and colleagues similarly balance a sensitivity to both limitation and creativity in identity-making. This balance animates their investigation of identity within "cultural worlds," as they explain in their book's objective:

> To respect humans as social and cultural creatures and therefore bounded, yet to recognize the processes whereby human collectives and individuals often move themselves—led by hope, desperation, or even playfulness, but certainly not by rational

plan—from one set of socially and culturally formed subjectivities to another (1998, pp. 6-7).

Through such processes, many individuals in this study endeavored to "move themselves" beyond or away from the subjectivity of "primary school teacher." The idea of identity-making in relation or opposition to others features in Mead and Vygotsky's early theorizing of identity as well as Bakhtin's notion of dialogism. Across these concepts, a self-other interplay ("dialogue," in dialogism) shapes how individuals construct and enact identity. While this self-other dialogue can happen between current and former "selves," it can also happen between one's self and others in society. As Holland and Lachicotte explain, in making identities, "People identify themselves with (and against) actors in particular domains of their lives" (2007, p. 132).

The sociocultural concept of boundary work concentrates on one aspect of identity-making processes—establishing who "we are" by declaring who "we are not" (Fominaya, 2010). As "a central process in the constitution of *self*" (Lamont, 1992, p. 45), boundary work involves groups and individuals creating and enforcing symbolic distinctions between themselves and others (Lamont, 1992; Lamont & Molnár, 2000). Symbolic boundaries are defined as "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space" (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). Previous work has engaged symbolic boundaries to examine teacher identity, for instance exploring how teachers resisted being categorized by new accountability reforms as "teachers of reading," crafting their identities as comprehensive educators in opposition to these tropes (Anagnostopoulus, 2007).

Through boundary work, individuals or groups declare who they are *not,* which can reveal dimensions of who they *are*. Like any declaration of "self," they are announcing this both

to others and to themselves: "People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves who they are and then try to act as though they are who they say they are" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 3). This chapter specifically explore teacher stories and the ways individuals strategically position themselves as teachers or non-teachers as they author selves.

Stories as sites of self

My analysis of stories focuses on how individual construct their past, present, and future. As Wilinski (2018) argues in a study of pre-primary teacher narratives in Tanzania, how individuals construct their narratives is evidence of "agency in a context of limited opportunity" (p. 33). My examination of stories relates to narrative inquiry, which Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe as "stories lived and told" (p. 20). While narrative inquiry typically looks at the past and present, I include stories of the future as part of a person's narrative, since the past, present, and future are all part of a continuum in which events are recalled, imagined, and rendered meaningful. As Clandinin and Connelly write, "Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum—the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future—each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future" (p. 2). While grounded in experience, stories are also imaginatively constructed.

How individuals construct the future has long been an interest of social theorists (e.g., Joas, 1997; Mische, 2009), with recent scholarship emphasizing that imagined futures can be understood through the lens of identity. Writing on Malawi, Frye (2012) identified girls' educational aspirations as "assertions of a virtuous identity" (p. 1565), arguing schoolgirls describe their plans to pursue higher education as a way to signal their ambition, effort, and sexual abstinence. Frye (2012) notes that, in Malawi, widespread "bright futures" campaigns in

the 1990s, which were promoted by donors and NGOs, advanced the notion that bright futures were accessible to youth who prioritized education (and avoided sex, pregnancy, and early marriage). While education's viability as "the" path to a bright future is increasingly seen as tenuous (Kendall & Silver, 2014), the bright futures metaphor has persisted. Frye (2012) writes,

> In newspapers, in NGO documents, in school curricula, in the language of students themselves, education is consistently discussed in relation to images of light and clarity, while the experiences of the less educated are discussed using language such as "bleak," "dim," and "blind" (p. 1597).

Within this context, linking oneself with further education (and bright futures) may be particularly powerful for communicating identity. As others who study stories of the past and future have demonstrated, individual constructions of narrative tell us about how they construct themselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Souto-Manning, 2014; Wood & Kroger, 2000). Narrative, Wood and Kroger (2000) argue, is "a form of representation…individuals construct their identities through their own and others' stories" (p. 3). Souto-Manning (2014) reinforces this point, stating that "Personal identities are constructed and (re)conceptualized as we share our narratives" (p. 162). This is the aspect of narrative that most significantly contributes to this chapter, which takes teachers' stories to be a form of self-presentation.

Examining narratives can uncover how social and institutional forces shape individual lives, as well as how individuals' everyday stories impact these forces. A branch of narrative analysis termed "critical narrative analysis" seeks to balance individual stories with these broader environment. As Souto-Manning writes, this focus allows research to "learn how people create their selves in constant social interaction and both personal and institutional levels, and how

159

institutional discourse influence and are influenced by personal everyday narratives" (2014, p.

165).

Data sources and analysis

While the other chapters of this dissertation center on my main case study school,

Mitambo, this chapter also draws from in-depth interviews conducted with teachers at six

additional schools in Malawi's three main regions (N=31). I conducted these interviews

throughout February, March, and April of 2017. The interview protocol was an expanded version

of the initial background interviews I conducted with Mitambo teachers in October of 2016

(N=19). I focus the analysis for this chapter on teacher responses to the following questions from

these interviews:

1. Why did you decide to become a primary school teacher?

2. When you entered primary school teaching, where did you hope it would take you?

3. If you were advising a relative on their career, would you encourage them to consider

   primary school teaching?

4. Do you plan to remain a primary school teacher?

The following codes were developed through inductive or deductive approaches and

applied to the transcripts: "if you work hard…," "problems with being a primary school

teacher," "heart," "good life," "finances," "support to relatives," "hopes through teaching,"

"thwarted plans," "MSCE," "upgrading," "success stories of people who upgraded," "career

ambition-previous or current," "why did you become a teacher?," "with time, I am enjoying it."

These codes primarily gave rise to the sections on teacher stories.

In addition to coding these 50 transcripts, I coded additional interviews related to teacher

stories and fieldnotes from illustrative moments from fieldwork, such as the example with which

I start the chapter. Checking in with my data inventory provided a way to identify such data to include.

Stories of past and future

A common theme throughout my interviews with teachers was the absence of any desire to be a primary school teacher. This emerged in how teachers constructed their pasts and their futures. In my interviews with teachers, I posed the question, "why did you decide to become a teacher?" Many teachers immediately corrected me, stating "I did not choose to be a teacher." Here for instance is a conversation with Goodall Muula at Mayamiko Primary:

Alyssa: Why did you choose to be a teacher?

Goodall: I did not choose this. It just happened, because all that I wanted did not happen (2/21/17).

This idea of "it just happened" also came up often among teachers. Barbara Daluni at Mvuu Primary told me that she became a teacher because "I was jobless. I didn't want to be a teacher. It just happened." Arrival to teaching is often phrased as something that happens to a person—as if individuals just find themselves in the teaching profession, carried there by their circumstances rather than their own desires and initiative. Some teachers talked about relatives applying to the teaching profession for them. Mitchell Funsani at Mitambo Primary said, "I had no intention of becoming a teacher. I was not interested in this profession, but due to some problems, my brother was the one who applied for me. I was just told to go and do the interview for the teaching." I organize this analysis of self-authoring through story around three themes that commonly emerged in or across interviews: entry into teaching as a result of punctured plans, the emergence of the upgrading plan, and variation in teacher plans to upgrade.

Punctured plans and entry into teaching

The majority of the teachers I spoke with did not aspire to become teachers. They aspired to be nurses, journalists, typists, doctors, and soldiers. One teacher at Mitambo, Mary Luso, said to me: "my career was to become a typist." But, instead of pursuing her career, she had to become a primary teacher. As Table 14 shows, 87.5% of the teachers I interviewed did not aspire to be primary school teachers.

Table 14

Career ambitions

When you were in secondary school, did you aspire to be a primary school teacher?	N=48 total	%
Yes	6	12.5%
No	42	87.5%

However, their original aspirations were disturbed for one reason or another. Leonard Chaula at Lusungu Primary tried one job after another before going into teaching. Failing to achieve any of these jobs, he decided to go for teaching:

Leonard: [In secondary school], I was like, I will find a better (good) job. But I am through, now where is that better job? I tried many jobs: mechanic, carpentry and joinery. I also had some interviews in health and at another time wanted to be a soldier but wasn't successful. That's when I said, 'let me try teaching' (3/2/17).

A few life events regularly came up as inflection points that thwarted one's earlier aspirations. These include pregnancy, financial hardship (often linked to losing a parent), and underperformance on the MSCE. In Malawi, girls and women who are pregnant are not allowed to be in school. The Readmission Policy of 1993 permits them to return to school one year after

162

childbirth (Kendall & Kaunda, 2015), though at the time of this study this policy was not being systematically implemented and many student mothers were not returning to school (Silver, 2018). For many women teachers in this study, pregnancy had presented a significant interruption to anticipated life trajectories. Beatrice Kaminjolo at Mitambo explained her background:

> **Beatrice:** At first I did not want to be a teacher, because I saw that my own primary school teachers were suffering. I wanted to be a journalist. When I was in form four (the final year of secondary school), I became pregnant. This disturbed all the plans I had of becoming a journalist. When I delivered my baby, I went back to secondary school but with the desire to get into any profession that comes to my way because by then the desire of becoming a journalist left me (11/8/16).

Debora Jokala, a teacher Chimutu Primary, was selected for a diploma program to become a secondary school teacher, but was unable to attend because she was pregnant when she would have needed to start the program. Other people explained their participation in the teaching profession as the result of financial hardship. Thandiwe Lungu at Lusungu Primary said,

> **Thandiwe:** I decided to go for primary school teaching because, I can say, lack of funds, lack of money. I grew up in an orphanage. Now it happened that after completion of my secondary school phase, I was looking forward to doing what my heart desired. But because of no parents, I could not finance the course I had applied for…So, after looking at the state of things, I just decided to apply for primary teaching because then it was free of charge. I said, let me just go this way, maybe I could get to where I desire or maybe just stay there, we shall see (3/2/17).

Since primary teaching training has historically been free for individuals, many of the teachers I interviewed explained economic hardship as driving them into the profession. Through entering a salaried profession, teachers manage to dodge a very plausible and pervasive life possibility: that of extreme poverty. Kelvin Khamanga at Lusungu Primary explained that being a primary teacher has elevated his life:

> **Alyssa:** Do you feel like you are making progress as a primary teacher?
>
> **Kelvin:** Yes there is progress, because I can see there is a difference now compared to the way I was in 2005 [before I started teaching]. There is much progress. With the little that I get I manage at home. I don't need to go out to beg. I am able to [financially] assist my relatives (3/3/17).

Kelvin's comment reveals that he was hardly getting by prior to teaching. Joining the teaching profession has afforded welcome stability for himself and a chance to support his relatives. In contrast to the common narrative of being driven to become a teacher by circumstances, one teacher at Mitambo, Ellina Malata, shared with me that she decided to go into teaching because her child was struggling in primary school and she wanted to be able to help him. Ellina's motivation for enrolling in teacher training—to learn how to become a good teacher—stood out to me at the time, and still does, because it featured only this once in my interviews about motivations for entering teaching.

Overwhelmingly, individuals in this study entered primary school teaching for pragmatic reasons, but while there continued to nurture larger ambitions. Wezzie Phiri explained of herself, that, "I dream of something bigger. Bigger than being a teacher" (2/14/17). Among many of the teachers in this study, their dreams involved upgrading.

Emergence of the plan to upgrading

When Gosten Assani at Mayamiko Primary School started teaching, it was just because of lack of other options, but it led to a dream of "upgrading." "There was no hope as I began teaching, but I see that there is hope now," he said. When asked what hope he sees, he continued, "If I can move from this level to another level, that will be good….I need to upgrade. I need to go to Domasi (where one earns a secondary teaching diploma)" (2/24/17).

The notion that primary teaching will take a person to another level came up often in my interviews. When I asked teachers about where they thought teaching would take them, a number of related phrases emerged: Clara Nyirenda described it as "just a good start." Elsa Kachala stressed that "it is just the beginning, that's all." Thandiwe urged that teaching is "not my final career, no, but it has just been my foundation." Flora Gondwe said it can be a "start pack." Matilda Thunga mentions that it should be a "starting point." These various phrases get at the idea that primary school teaching is framed as something that can launch a person to a better life. While primary teaching itself was not the career teachers desired, they saw how it could take them somewhere more desirable. The following sections offer relevant context on "upgrading" as well as three teacher trajectories through this context. What is clear from both the context and the stories of teacher navigation is the ways in which teachers are positioned "in the wing" seeking opportunities, and the strategies they use to equip themselves to do so.

The "upgrading" landscape at the time of this study

In Malawi, "upgrading" means to further one's education credentials while already employed, and it typically refers to someone moving up within the same system: for instance, moving from primary to secondary school teaching. The path for upgrading is not clearly spelled

out in policy texts. My approach to learning about this landscape likely resembled what a teacher might do—I asked around. As such, what follows is a snapshot of how upgrading appeared to me at one particular point in time, based on interviews, What's App chats, and listserv communications. As I describe in Chapter 1, at various points in time upgrading has been formalized and promoted by GOM, for instance following UPE, which indicates the ways this landscape around upgrading is subject to seismic shifts.

At the time of this study, I found that two main paths existed for primary school teachers to upgrade. One route involves obtaining a Diploma (three years of tertiary study; a primary teacher is eligible to study after six years of service provided strong MSCE scores) or a Degree (four years of tertiary study, no service requirements, but primary teachers typically need to rewrite the MSCE in order to get into a Degree-granting program). Teachers in my study who were aspiring to leave primary teaching were pursuing or planning to pursue one of these two main paths, though a later listerv message I received indicated the first path may be closing down. A radio transcript that circulated September 19, 2018, suggested that a Diploma may no longer enable a person to teach at the secondary level. The transcript implied that any teacher at the secondary level who does not have a Degree will need to upgrade to obtain a Degree. The transcript read:

Beginning 2019, all Diploma teachers who are currently teaching in secondary schools have to undergo upgrading... "Only Degree candidates will be employed in 2018-2019 year to teach in secondary schools," said the Minister of Education, Science and Technology. When asked on this matter, the Minister said, "Diploma has lost its value. We need teachers who can fully inculcate our secondary students with what they deserve. So in this year, all Diploma teachers will be given a list of primary schools to head to"

[suggesting that those now underqualified secondary school teachers will be demoted]….According to the investigation made by Zodiak Broadcasting Station, a lot of Domasi college students who graduated in 2018 [with Diplomas] are most affected by this development (Bwalo la Aphunzitsi, 2018).

The resulting listserv discussion around this proclamation from the Minister centered on whether this would indeed be implemented. Practically, for primary school teachers, the Bachelor's Degree is the most reliable pathway to securing employment at the secondary level (or tertiary). If a teacher upgrades within the education sector, they are eligible for paid study leave. If they pursue studies outside of the education sector, they cannot get paid study leave. As one upgrading teacher, Wezzie Phiri, explained to me: "If you are changing the field it means you will be on unpaid leave. So no teacher can take that risk." To obtain paid study leave, teachers apply through their local education administrators (school headteachers) who take the application to the zone leaders (primary education advisors) who send the application through the district office to the central Ministry of Education. This takes time, yet there is evidence that this path can work for primary school teachers provided they remain in the education sector.

Pursuing the upgrading path involves toil and uncertainty. The main avenue through which one upgrades is to go through the University of Malawi (UNIMA) system for a Degree. To do this, a teacher needs to rewrite the MSCE, which is typically taken at the end of secondary school. The MSCE sorts individuals into tertiary education. A score of 6 is the top score one can get on the MSCE; a low score is the most competitive, so a score of "6" would mean a student earned "1s" on all six papers. For an individual to get into UNIMA, scores typically range from 6-16, depending on their home district (a quota system aims to geographically balance UNIMA admissions). However, new Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs through UNIMA

accept students with scores that are slightly less competitive. To gain admittance to Teacher

Training College, one would have an MSCE score in the high 30s with good marks on the

English portion of the exam. Though grading is now changing, in the past a 46 has been the cut-

off score for passing the MSCE.

In order to rewrite the MSCE, one typically re-enrolls in secondary school at the Form 4

(final year) level. Most teachers choose to repeat the third and fourth year (Form 3 and Form 4)

in order to prepare for the exam. The way primary teachers manage to do this is through

attending "open" secondary schools in the afternoon; these schools are also called "night

schools." Government secondary schools run in the morning, but any secondary school can

register with the government as an open secondary school. This means that secondary school

teachers set the fees and any student can attend – whereas the traditional day students are those

assigned to the school by the government.

Navigating the landscape: Insights from three teachers' stories

The complexities of the upgrading landscape are most visible through tracing how

individuals pursue their plans to upgrade. The stories of Wezzie Phiri, Linda Macheso, and

Christopher Mandala reveal the complex topography as well as the mix of ingenuity and

industriousness required to navigate it. I'll preface these stories by noting that it is a rarified

group of teachers who are able to advance to tertiary education. Other teachers, like Richard

Yamikani at Mvuu Primary School in the Central Region, continued writing their MSCE again

and again to get a desirable score; at the time of this study Richard had written his MSCE four

times. However, the following three teachers have each, through different pathways, created

upgrading trajectories for themselves.

Wezzie Phiri: Rewrote MSCE and got into UNIMA-traditional

Wezzie Phiri's original MSCE score was 38 points, a passing score which enabled her to become a primary teacher. She was looking for any work in order to earn some income: "I just took any job I could find, so that maybe I could go to secondary again...Even if it was cleaning the hospital, I would have just gone for it," she said.

As a new primary school teacher, Wezzie was single with no children, and able to use her income primarily for her own education. Wezzie was not posted to Mitambo Primary but to another school. (I came to know her because she was temporarily assigned to Mitambo during her pregnancy because of the long bike ride to the more rural school where she was assigned. The PEA made an informal arrangement to help her so she would not need to bike while in her third trimester.)

The school where Wezzie taught was near a secondary school, but when she learned that this secondary school did not have a good record of producing top MSCE scores, she figured out another option. She moved from the primary school village to a house along the paved road so that she lived in between the rural primary school where she taught and Zomba town, where she was able to attend night school at a competitive secondary school.

In my interviews with teachers, I asked them to describe their daily schedules, and Wezzie chose to describe a typical day during the stretch of time when she was both teaching at primary and studying at secondary. She taught from 6am-11am every morning, then biked to the secondary school in town. From 1-3pm, she studied at secondary school. She would come home, study, sleep around 8 o'clock, then wake up from 1-3am to study. She would go back to sleep then wake up for the day at 5am. All told, this had Wezzie biking about 15 miles daily. "I was very focused, very focused," she said. "It was very hard for me. I just had to sacrifice the time,

because I just wanted something from it." At this time, Wezzie was teaching Standard 8, the final exam year. Her students were preparing to write the primary exit exam at the same time she would write the MSCE:

> **Wezzie:** I also told them (my students), 'I am also learning. I will be writing the exams as you will be writing.' I was telling them, 'you have to work hard, because I manage to go to school, and also I manage to come here to teach you.' So they were really motivated. 'If our teacher is going back to class, that means that education is really important.' And it's our school that did well (on the examinations) that year.

Wezzie also did well on her examinations, dramatically improving her MSCE score (16 points). She was accepted to UNIMA's diploma program in industrial laboratory technology in May 2017 in Blantyre. This program is in another city, so Wezzie moved to the city with her young son (her husband stayed behind in Zomba). She was assigned to the industrial laboratory technology program based on what she had indicated as her preferences and how she had performed on various subjects for the MSCE. Her top choice was education, but that was not where she matched. The challenge, as indicated earlier, is that she cannot get paid study leave if she is not studying in the education sector. She explained to me that now she must request a transfer from the lab technology program dean to the education sector. When I asked her why she didn't say initially she was a primary teacher when applying to UNIMA, she said: "we cannot tell them the truth. If we do we may reduce the chances of being selected." Wezzie is currently trying to obtain a transfer to the education program, and has heard from the dean that he plans to support the transfer.

Linda Macheso: Earlier MSCE scores got her into UNIMA-ODL

Linda is a Standard 1 teacher at Mitambo who decided she would upgrade pretty much as soon as she began primary school teaching. Her child was two months old when she began going to night school at a nearby secondary school. Linda had obtained 22 on the MSCE, which is a competitive score, but was not strong enough to initially qualify her for UNIMA. During the time she was studying to repeat her MSCE, she came across an advertisement for UNIMA's Open and Distance Learning (ODL) program. She applied and was admitted with her original MSCE score to a Bachelor's in Education program.

As a Standard 1 teacher, Linda's school-day wrapped up earlier than upper-grade teachers (around noon), and she used her afternoons to study for her Bachelor's. She liked to study at the National Library Branch in town. Her ODL program had group meetings on Fridays, and she was able to leave school Fridays early enough to attend these meetings. During school holidays, she would go to Mzuzu (in the northern region) to sit for examinations. While most of the coursework occurred remotely, the examinations occurred in person. Linda's goal was to earn a distinction—based on strong performance on examinations—so that she could become a college lecturer.

Fees for the ODL program are, however, quite high, and the ODL program requires purchase of things like a laptop. Linda was financially supported by her brother-in-law, but in late 2017 he left her sister, and the financial support was terminated. To support Linda's education, Linda's husband Andrew moved to South Africa where he can work for higher wages. Linda's in-laws live near her and are able to provide childcare.

Christopher Mandala: Started one private diploma program, planning to start another

Christopher Mandala was first posted to teach in a primary school in another district. While teaching there, he was admitted to a Zomba-based private university's theology diploma program. He applied for a cross-posting through the district office in order to relocate to Zomba to reduce his commute to school, since the diploma program had many face-to-face meetings. "When I reached here (Zomba), I learned more about the institution. I found out that the government stopped recognizing this school's qualification (as sufficient to teach secondary school)." From 1999 to 2010, the Ministry of Education had recognized a theology diploma as adequate qualification to teach at the secondary level. But Christopher learned he would need to gain an additional secondary teaching certificate on top of that. "It would take someone five years to get the diploma, then two years to get the certificate, so you can see the whole program takes two years. So I stopped [that program], and now have another plan to upgrade."

Christopher has found another private institution that is recognized, and plans to enroll once he has gathered adequate resources. When I ask him why he will stay in the education sector, he says a few times that he should not waste the five years he has spent in the teaching profession, since this contributes to his promotion potential. Though promotions are rare, longevity in the profession matters. However, upgrading puts a teacher on a new level, "When you have upgraded, the government has no option but to increase your salary."

Additional expressions of the upgrading plan

The majority of the teachers I interviewed communicated a desire to upgrade, though their pursuit of upgrading was at varying levels of expression. For about one-third of the teachers (36.4%), they were currently in the process of upgrading; this could mean attending secondary

172

school to be eligible to rewrite the MSCE or attending a tertiary institution. A higher proportion

of the teachers in this study—nearly one half—expressed upgrading desires that they were not

actively pursuing at the time of this study.

Table 15

Upgrading plans among teachers in this study

Upgrading plans	N=44 total	%
In progress (currently in secondary or tertiary school)	16	36.4%
Has upgrading plans, but not currently in school	19	43.2%
Planned to upgrade, but has let go of these plans	6	13.6%
Never planned to upgrade	3	6.8%

Many teachers, even in areas where cell reception was poor and the roads hardly

accessible, maintained a grasp on the landscape around higher education in Malawi. To know

this landscape is not something that can happen without conscious effort. Understanding the

possibilities around upgrading is made challenging by that fact that this landscape changes, as we

saw with Christopher Mandala's upgrading story: Christopher moved to Zomba to be close to a

private college where he had enrolled, then he learned that the credential offered by this college

and other colleges of its kind was no longer recognized for teaching secondary school. To

upgrade requires planning, consistent information-gathering, and remarkable adaptability.

Clara Nyirenda at Ubali Primary School in the northern region explained in detail her plans to go

to a school at the opposite end of the country, referencing in our conversation the exact annual

cost of attending (about one-third of her annual salary). At the time of the study Clara was living

too far from a secondary school (and had financial responsibilities for financing the secondary

education of her sister), Clara's plans were not being realized. Examples like Clara's are quite common. Maintaining the ambition of upgrading, for Clara and others, allows teachers to continue develop themselves through information-gathering and planning as they remain poised to seize available opportunities.

While the majority of teachers I interviewed expressed a plan to upgrade, these plans took different shapes: Some were actively pursuing upgrading; others planned to or tried but let go. The largest portion of teachers I interviewed (19 of 44, or 43.2%) had vague plans to upgrade but were not currently studying at the secondary or tertiary level. Thandiwe Lungu at Lusungu Primary said, "in my mind it's there but I have not started any step" (3/2/17). Ken Mphandula said "plans are there" and he is currently studying at home, preparing to go back to secondary school (3/7/17). Some teachers plan to go back to secondary school; others are waiting on the appropriate tertiary option to become available so they can apply. Another group is waiting for their children to complete their education so that they can afford to once again allocate resources to their own education. Roselyn Mbewe for instance said, "I will try to upgrade myself to become a secondary school teacher. The enormous financial responsibilities that I have are the ones keeping me from upgrading. But I hope in future I will go to either Domasi or Chancellor College when I have the chance to upgrade" (4/19/17).

Some teachers who had been in the profession for a long time wondered whether would truly get a chance to upgrade. Gregory Tambala, who had been teaching since 1994, said:

> **Gregory:** I expected that, by now, I would have moved out of primary school. It was also my expectation that I will have what I want in my life, which still is possible, but the question remains: Until when will I be a primary school teacher? (2/27/17)

Other teachers wrestled with this same question, many concluding that they would ultimately retire as primary school teachers, thus letting go of the dream that they will indeed upgrade. Flora Gondwe, who had been teaching since 1994, explained that she had hoped to upgrade, but her financial responsibilities prevented this from happening.

> **Flora:** The time I decided to be a primary teacher, I thought that I would have a chance to continue with my education so that I can be a secondary teacher. But due to the responsibility I had, I failed to do what I had planned.
>
> **Alyssa:** What responsibility?
>
> **Flora:** I am the first-born in my family of eight children. My father was a polygamist and those of us in our family (the children of my mother) were not recognized [by my father's family]. As a result, I took the responsibility of caring for my siblings who were coming behind me. After starting my job, I started paying fees for someone, after finishing paying fees for her, another one comes…It caused the problem for me of not having a chance to continue with my education (3/3/17).

For Flora and other teachers, the costs of paying for children and relative's schooling precluded her own schooling. Financial constraint was one factor that featured in why a person might enter teacher, and here we see that financial constraint is also something that might keep a person in teaching. As with Flora, the number of dependents makes a big difference for whether a person can upgrade. Teachers who have children in secondary school or beyond have a particularly hard time justifying using their paycheck on their own education. One teacher, Gertrude Bota, went back to secondary school at the age of 53 since her children were finally finished with school.

However, many teachers said that they had let go of their plan to upgrade. Most of the teachers who had let go of the upgrading ambition were veteran teachers. Maggie Nyasulu, who began teaching in 1994, had tried to upgrade more than a decade ago, but due to pregnancy, took a break and has not been in a financial position to resume. Chimwemwe Makona, who began teaching in 1993, had tried to leave teaching for another field, but life events prevented her from taking the one opportunity that had been presented:

> **Chimwemwe:** I wanted to become a soldier, but when I had the chance (she was selected for the program), I had just given birth to twins, and my mother had recently died…I am old now and I have the responsibility of paying fees for my children, for which I am struggling. So I have decided to let my children go further with their education, and I will stop here (2/21/17).

Chimweme's story also brings into sharp relief the fragility of opportunity—that opportunities come, and one must be willing to take them at that moment. In Chimweme's telling, this was her chance, and she simply could not take it then.

Interestingly, while most teachers talked about going back to school to jump education levels, only one teacher (Ted Semelani) expressed an interest in rising to an administrative level within primary teaching. It is also worth noting that not all teachers want to upgrade. Beatrice Kajimonolo said, "I am just lazy to go back to school" (11/8/16). Beatrice's candidness also reveals what upgrading says about a person: that they are *not* lazy. Indeed, as we saw with the example (particularly Wezzie's), to pursue a plan of upgrading is to take on a lot of risk while expending physical, financial, and time resources. To align oneself with the upgrading plan also signals that a person is hard-working and an active pursuer of a better life, as I explore in the following section.

"Life, it doesn't end here": Self-authoring through stories

Upgrading could be considered an optimistic attachment—an object or idea an individual nurtures in order to maintain proximity to what it represents. As Berlant (2011) writes about attachments,

> All attachments are optimistic. When we talk about an object of desire, we are really talking about a cluster of promises we want someone or something to make us and make possible for us…To phrase 'object of desire' as a cluster of promises is to allow us to encounter what is incoherent or enigmatic in our attachments, not as confirmation of our irrationality, but as an explanation of our sense of our endurance in the object, insofar as proximity to the object means proximity to the cluster of things that the object promises (p. 23, original emphasis)

This perspective is helpful for considering why so many teachers identify with the goal of upgrading despite it being so elusive. For many teachers, the upgrading ambition represents the hope that a better future remains possible for them, and upholding this ambition is a declaration that they are deserving of such a future. In this way, the power of imagined pasts and imagined futures in crafting selves comes into focus. By framing primary school teaching as a stopover to a better life, individuals assert that they believe in their potential. Christopher Mandala views upgrading as the only way to secure a promotion from the government, and because of a belief that he is deserving of a life beyond primary school teaching, he continues toiling to upgrade. As the profiles of Linda, Wezzie, and Christopher teachers reveal, upgrading can be an arduous process. It often involves rewriting secondary school exams, studying while teaching, relocating, leaving children with relatives, and frequently recalculating and reconfiguring one's plan. Aligning oneself with this upgrading plan signals an identity of ambition and perseverance. As

Beatrice, who is not upgrading, remarked ("I'm just lazy to go back to school"), going back to school is a statement of one's commitment and industriousness. For an individual to "upgrade" demarcates a boundary between oneself and others who may be "lazy to go back to school."

Throughout these stories, the inventiveness of teachers in *using* primary school teaching is evident. Many individuals lamented their arrival in the teaching profession, often something they felt forced to do (in some cases, they literally did not even apply for teaching, with relatives applying for them). In this case, they are presenting their history in such a way that distances them from actually wanting teaching for themselves. With some exceptions, teachers by and large presented themselves as *not* teachers for the long-term. As Linda put it, "I may be a primary school teacher, but through this I'm just upgrading myself. Life, it doesn't end here." Through this creative presentation, teachers position themselves as empowered actors, using primary teaching for what and where it can get them, but not allowing it to define who they are.

Conclusions and discussion

This chapter has examined themes in the stories that teachers tell about their career trajectories, finding that, in one form or another, the "upgrading self" is present in many teacher narratives. The upgrading primary school teacher is not in teaching to stay, but rather is using teaching in order to achieve a better life. This framing requires often significant physical, financial, and imaginative energy but in some version was undertaken by most of the teachers I interviewed across seven schools for this study.

Primary teaching is not a place that many people want to stay. Among teachers I interviewed, most had a story of how their other plans were derailed and how they plan to get back on track. The dissatisfaction with being in the primary teaching profession may stem from

many of the factors discussed in Chapter 5. The prevalence of teachers disassociating with the profession also suggests that primary school teaching is equated with resignation, failure, and a difficult life. Pursuing the upgrading path suggests something about who teachers are: They are hardworking and committed, and they believe they are deserving of a better life.

However, many individuals found themselves stuck in the profession, since leaving it is challenging. In this context, opportunity is fragile. If a person isn't ready, an opportunity is missed. This was the case with Chimwemwe Makona, who missed her opportunity to be a soldier because she was not able to take the chance when the opportunity presented. The mindset of being perpetually poised to take opportunity makes sense in this context, where opportunities come suddenly and the window for seizing them narrow.

Stories of upgrading suggest an alternative to the narrative of teaching that is often presented about teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa. The teachers I interviewed—particularly those on the upgrading path—were working tirelessly trying to advance themselves, by and large through formal schooling. However, the teacher upgrading plan also reflects a troubling paradox: to be a primary school teacher in Malawi means one has achieved some success through formal schooling—those who are teachers have completed secondary school, passed the MSCE, and completed a form of tertiary education. Yet, they are unhappy with the life on the other end of this effort, and return to formal schooling to propel themselves. A pervasive model of success in Malawi—that education will lead to a better life (Frye, 2017)—is both challenged and reinforced as teachers are upgrading.

The upgrading phenomenon can also be understood within a broader context of shrinking state resources. Instead of getting a promotion through the government, individual teachers expend massive personal financial resources to upgrade themselves. This could be seen as an

example of the "antipolitics machine"—an apparatus which dislodges problems from their political and structural context, making them appear individual rather than structural (and, as teachers describe them, they are issues of the individual—my family, my pregnancy, etc.) (Ferguson, 1994). However, it also raises questions about the broader system that is (or is not) supporting teachers. The lack of government-based promotion opportunities traces back to World Bank restrictions on the size and cost of the civil service (Kendall & Silver, 2014; World Bank, 1994). The burden for navigating the landscape thus falls on industrious teachers, but also suggests how unsupported teachers otherwise feel.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation has considered the ways primary school teaching in Malawi is put to work by a number of agendas, especially the agendas of individuals who find themselves teaching. As the previous chapter illustrated, many teachers framed themselves as "using" teaching in order to advance themselves. As Linda said, "I may be a primary school teacher, but through this I'm just upgrading myself." Through primary school teaching, myriad agenda are expressed: Female teachers are made responsible for girls' education reform, and teachers in general implement a range of health and youth-focused international development projects. New curricula are introduced that rely on teachers as front-line implementers. At the policy-level, teacher responsibilities are mounting and teacher creativity is deterred. In explaining the logic of transcribed lessons for the National Reading Programme, the USAID education official I interviewed about curriculum stated, "What we've seen is creativity is not aligned with best practices." This stands in stark contrast to the creativity that flourished among teachers who mediated these policy demands.

The concept of everyday creativity applied in this dissertation directs attention to how, in ordinary moments, individuals engage in *bricolage* or "artisan-like inventiveness" as they use available materials, resources, and cultural forms in creative ways" (de Certeau, 1984, p. xiii). Individual creativity is particularly important in a context where opportunities are not being created *for* teachers. Among teachers in the study, limited government promotion opportunities and ongoing financial uncertainty generated challenges for individuals who wanted to advance themselves. Instead, teachers creatively found other avenues to improve their wellbeing.

In this conclusions chapter, I summarize the chapters of this dissertation, develop themes that arose across this study, tease out the study's contributions to policy studies, and describe the "policy knowledge" (Dumas & Anderson, 2014) this study offers.

Review of chapters

The chapters in this dissertation have explored, through different entry points and angles of vision, how teachers' work is created in policy and how teachers create their work in mundane and ordinary moments. *Part 1: Framing the study* offered an introduction to education in Malawi and to this study. My research questions, which asked how teachers make meaning of their work and how teachers' work is framed within and influenced by policy and ID projects, drew on the concept of everyday creativity.

In *Part II: Reimagining teachers' work*, I engaged different conceptual tools to more deeply examine specific facets of teachers' work. Conducting critical discourse analysis of a female teacher role-modelling policy (Chapter 4) exposed the particular ways that female teachers were made "responsible" for girls' education. This responsibility, however, coexisted with a passivity since female teachers were likened to a magnet, a shield, or a support.

However, the role-modelling policy was only one instantiation of how teachers were made "responsible" actors (as seen in Chapter 5). Not only in the discourse of policies, but also in the daily work teachers enact through ID projects, we see how teachers are responsible for a host of things—from student health to girls' empowerment. At Mitambo, the matching of teachers and responsibilities was mediated by relationships with the headteacher and fellow teachers. The provision of per-diem allowances contributed to the allure of trainings for these interventions, yet the headteacher's gatekeeping role meant that some teachers disproportionately

benefited from these trainings. However, how teachers translated new responsibilities into daily practices was a key space for agency. Although exogenous projects may appear to be simply "delivered" to teachers (as pastries which teachers did not "order"), teachers engaged with and creatively converted them into resources they valued. However, their ability to obtain these resources depended on the power-laden environments teachers occupied.

Teachers' creativity in meeting their needs can be understood more broadly in a context where teachers felt their needs had been neglected by the government (something Chapter 6 in particular demonstrates). A framework of "weapons of the weak" (Scott, 1985) offered a view into how teachers used tools available to them—while eschewing others—in order to improve their livelihoods. On the one hand, teachers had little agency in determining the official reforms that shaped their work. In using and defining these reforms, however, teachers exhibited remarkable agency. With little perceived support from policy actors, teachers exploited opportunities for immediate and de facto gains, such as constructing manageable class arrangements and largely ignoring a new timetable policy that would extend the school-day. The gains teachers obtained through these actions and inactions were largely individual. Similar individual benefits can be observed through teacher narratives about their careers.

Though few teachers are able to exit the teaching profession, teachers creatively disassociated with the teaching profession in the stories they told about themselves and their trajectories (Chapter 7). Analyzing the "selves" teachers created, with respect to their profession, brought into focus the ways that, at the most individual levels, teachers operated with immense creativity. I adopted Holland et al.'s (1998) framework of identity as lived and in-process in order to analyze teacher narratives as "sites of self." The majority of teachers I interviewed, across seven schools in this study, never intended to be primary teachers, and were actively

183

seeking an exit from primary teaching through a process known as "upgrading," or advancing

one's education in order to leave primary school teaching.

These various chapters speak to different dimensions of everyday creativity—in

translating demands into responsibility, in constructing meanings of training, in negotiating new

policy, in authoring selves. These chapters also surfaced how creativity is both constrained and

directed by teacher vulnerability to school leaders, financial insecurity, and fragile opportunities.

Themes across chapters

Individual improvements

Considering this dissertation as a whole illuminates several broad observations. One

cross-cutting theme is the individual-level at which teachers were seeking improvements and

achievements. In the case of exogenous projects, individual teachers who attended trainings

benefited from obtaining allowances (and, perhaps, learning opportunities). These financial gains

were not distributed evenly and became a source of competition for Mitambo teachers. Given the

magnitude of economic uncertainty inherent in being a teacher in Malawi, it is easy to see why

these allowances were so coveted.

Similar immediate, and short-term, gains were visible in Chapter 6. Exercising a range of

"tactics," reminiscent in some ways to what Scott called "weapons of the weak," allowed

teachers to improve their livelihoods through shortening their workdays, organizing their

classrooms to reduce their workload, and deviating from high-paced curriculum. These gains

were made possible through developing "unauthorized policy" that aligned to teacher

preferences (Levinson et al., 2009). As was the case with exogenous projects, these gains were

realized by individual teachers or perhaps, at most, a group of teachers at one school. While a

limited example, the ways that teachers compelled me to use my research to effect policy change did however suggest that many teachers are not satisfied with immediate and individual gains. Yet teachers were not optimistic about avenues for systemic improvement. In many ways, the system that controls teachers' work is buffered from teacher voice in ways this and other chapters exposed.

The focus on authoring selves (Chapter 7) further revealed the ways that individual-level improvements absorb the focus of many teachers. As Christopher Mandala said, "once I have upgraded, the government has no option but to promote me." The broken promotion system was sidestepped by teachers like Christopher who had the energy and resources to "upgrade." The power of the upgrading narrative in sustaining hope for many teachers—presenting to teachers the notion that they should be able to improve their lots through individual toil—was the dominant narrative of upward mobility that teachers in this study embraced. Pursuing upgrading brought to light the scarcity and fragility of opportunity—one of many layers of vulnerability teachers experienced. While teachers are vulnerable within systems, they are also vulnerable (in upgrading and in access to exogenous projects) to competition from their peers.

Teacher vulnerability

The chapters in this dissertation have also, in different ways, uncovered layers of vulnerability that teachers experience. As Chapter 7 highlighted, teachers feel vulnerable to government actors. One Mitambo teacher, in a focus group, invoked the Chichewa proverb, "When the elephants fight, the grass is what suffers" when describing how teachers often feel trampled by those in power. With changes in policy, or new projects, teachers are arrayed to implement them. The vulnerability teachers feel is unmistakable, and within this climate it is

185

easy to see the roots of this vulnerability. The historical review of Malawi's educational context revealed how teachers' work was dramatically impacted by the abrupt UPE declaration of 1994 (Mundy, 2002) and how other historical moments, like President Banda's directive to uproot all northern teachers, have impacted teachers' work (Lwanda, 1993).

In addition to vulnerability to national leaders, another layer of vulnerability that impacted teachers' work was the capriciousness of school leadership. Given the influence the headteacher had over teacher house allocation, class assignments, and the micro-aspects of day-to-day school operations, exogenous projects seemed to further enhance his authority over teachers. Conferred with the additional role of selecting teachers for coveted trainings, his power over teacher wellbeing grew. However, from the Mitambo headteacher's perspective, policies offered no guidance on how headteachers should distribute resources such as a teacher houses. In selecting teachers for trainings, he too was without guidance.

Relationships sizably impact teachers' work in other ways. For Linda, her ability to obtain study leave to go to UNIMA depended on her getting approval from several local leaders. For Maggie, transferring schools when her mother needed her care required appealing to the Primary Education Advisor. For Wezzie Phiri, who wanted to upgrade to become a secondary school teacher, she needed to transfer programs through the dean in order to study in the education program instead of the science program to which she was admitted. Others have also observed the importance of relationships with respect to national systems for how teachers are assigned to schools in Malawi (Asim et al., 2019). Relationships play a large role in mediating teacher opportunity, and policy can potentially enlarge (or reduce) the importance of these relationships.

This importance of relationships in allocating opportunities is especially significant because of the fragility of opportunity in this context. As is the case with vulnerable actors elsewhere (de Certeau, 1984; Scott, 1985), teachers in this study were continually on the watch for opportunities. Chapter 7 offered examples of this. For many individuals, primary school teaching was one such opportunity to improve their livelihoods. While teachers were rarely satisfied being primary school teachers, it is important to note that there are many other individuals in Malawi for whom primary school teaching may have been a missed opportunity. Despite having employment, the majority of teachers in this study continued to be searching for new ways to advance themselves, most commonly through a process known as "upgrading." Narratives of upgrading teachers offered examples again of the vulnerability of teachers, yet also how teachers exhibited agency within circumstances of vulnerability. In the case of Linda, who was in the process of upgrading, she was financially supported by her brother-in-law (her sister's husband). However, when her brother-in-law left her sister in late 2017, Linda needed to find a new funding source. Linda's husband moved to South Africa, where he could make more money, to look for work as an electrician.

Though vulnerable, teachers in this context were not powerless. They were continuously poised for new opportunities, industriously gathering information to guide their course, and creatively searching out possibilities to support themselves and their families. The mental, physical, and imaginative energy teachers expended in order to improve themselves was remarkable. Equally remarkable is the ways this responsibility was concentrated in individual teachers. Responsibility for one's wellbeing is only one dimension of the "responsible teacher" policy subject I identify in this dissertation.

The "responsible teacher" amid policy plenty and shortage

Across these chapters, a key juxtaposition emerges—a multitude of interventions arrived at Mitambo Primary School, yet these are interventions that teachers are not demanding. At the same time, teachers remarked on an absence of government intervention (teacher livelihood improvements) which they have been demanding. While these two policy streams operated on teachers in different ways, there is a confluence in how they both construct a teacher who is "responsible." Teachers are responsible for girls' education; they are responsible for themselves and their wellbeing in the absence of government support. They are responsible for improving their lot through "upgrading" themselves. The conceptual approach of this dissertation emphasizes how teachers creatively navigate their landscapes, and as such brings into sharp relief the ways teachers feel unsupported in this process.

This "responsible" teacher relates to the individualized teacher described above. Gupta and Ferguson (2002) describe a broader trends in the Global South towards focusing responsibility on individuals, rather than structures. They propose the term "responsibilization," arguing that, in the context of shrinking state resources, there has been a "devolution of risk onto the 'enterprise' or the individual (now construed as the entrepreneur of his or her own 'firm')" (p. 989). Given teachers' uncertainty around receiving salaries, and pressures on GOM to expend less on teacher salaries (World Bank, 2016, 1994), teachers present an example of the lived realities of this "responsibilization."

As the teacher role becomes dense with responsibilities—both proliferated by new policies and exacerbated by policy shortcomings—it is important to also scrutinize who is *not* responsible. In tasking teachers with treating malaria, responsibilities which have traditionally

resided in the health sector migrate to teachers. [39] In conferring responsibilities of girls'

education on female teachers, non-teacher and male actors are not being framed as responsible.

As teachers take on responsibility for their career trajectories, because the government is not

promoting them according to schedules, the government is not fulfilling what teachers believe to

be its responsibilities. Exploring shifts in responsibility is arguably a necessary task in an era of

"accountability," particularly as the gaze for "accountability" fixes on teachers (Robertson, 2012;

Hansen, 2018).

The "responsible" teacher could be considered a "policy subject" (Ball et al., 2011b)

worthy of further investigation in Malawi and other contexts. This dissertation raises questions

about how teacher responsibility is being reworked through a multiplicity of policy activity and

inactivity and the (unintended) consequences of that reworking. When responsibilities are

proliferated within conditions of teacher vulnerability, one also wonders how teachers are able to

hold other actors in their education systems "accountable."

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Implications for research and policy

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Contributions to policy studies

Through examining the meanings teachers made of their work, and the role of policy

within these meanings, this study has illuminated the multiplicity of policy activity

simultaneously influencing teachers' work. The audit of policy and programmatic activity in

Chapter 5 revealed 14 interventions currently occurring at Mitambo Primary School. This

analysis also highlighted that the ways in which teachers made meaning of any one program

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[39]From a systems perspective, a rationality exists in assigning these extraneous duties to teachers; teachers are well-educated and are often the only public servants in the remotest areas. While enlisting teachers in these activities presents an efficient solution, this dissertation offers examples of the collateral damage to teaching (and, potentially, to student learning) that can emerge from this pattern of service delivery.

were mediated by the broader policy landscape. In a context of financial insecurity, the importance of financial gains presented through a new intervention was unmistakable. Although understanding policy singularly can provide deep insights, I argue for more explorations that look horizontally across policies in order to appreciate the volume and nature of activity simultaneously shaping teachers' work. Looking horizontally across policies can also illuminate policy echoes that a singular focus would not reveal.

The chapters in this dissertation have also adopted two different vantage points for considering teachers and policy. The chapter on female teachers sees teachers through *policy*; in this chapter, I ask, how does policy frame and create teachers? Other chapters examine policy through *teachers*—how are new policies encountered by teachers and interpreted in their contexts? These different perspectives have enabled me to consider the intricacies of teacher engagements with policy and to add complexity to understandings of how teachers and policies relate. Ball and colleagues call these different "ontological relationships" between teachers and policy (2011a, p. 611). Looking across these vantages revealed parallels in how teachers are becoming "responsible," both in policy discourse and in navigating policies in their contexts.

This study was driven by a goal of understanding how teachers creatively made meaning of their work at a time when many other actors are reimagining teaching. The grounded accounts of teachers' work that this dissertation presents may help those interested in teacher policy appreciate how a flurry of policy activity translates into lived realities for teachers. I explore the policy connections of this dissertation in the next section.

Contributions to policy knowledge

A conceptualization of policy as practice informs the policy implications of this study. A notion of policy as practice encompasses "official policy" as well as actions associated with policy. It takes national governments to be one of several entities that produce official policy (Levinson et al., 2009), providing space to acknowledge how entities such as donors and NGOs also generate official policy. In the case of Malawi, these non-GOM actors are important to the complexion of authoritative influences on teachers' work, and thus I keep these actors in mind in my discussion of policy knowledge.

Dumas and Anderson (2014) propose the concept of "policy knowledge" as an alternative to "policy prescription" (p. 7), explaining that policy knowledge includes "information and ideas useful in framing, deepening our understanding of, and/or enriching our conceptualization of policy problems" (p. 8). With the goal of contributing "policy knowledge" about the work of lives of teachers, I offer several observations to connect this study with broader policy dialogues about teachers' work in Malawi and SSA.

This study offers a window into the work of teachers in Malawi at a time when teachers' work is complicated by the long-term impacts of universal primary education and a battery of present-day international development activity. Themes from this dissertation may be relevant to other environments where school access is expanding and teachers are being mobilized as front-line implementers in ID projects.

Many contexts in SSA and the Global South are experiencing or will soon be experiencing growth in school access, with the commitments of the 2015 *Sustainable Development Goals* codifying this as a global goal. SDG-4 reflects this, stating that, "By 2030,

ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes."

The multiple targets within SDG-4 call for an expansion of school access across many levels—primary, secondary, and even pre-primary (UN, 2015). Teacher needs and priorities are crucial to the effectiveness of this goal. Teachers in this study offered examples of the human resource challenges this goal could give rise to if teacher needs are not considered in tandem with educational growth. In the examples with teachers in this study, teachers expressed how they felt their needs were consistently neglected while their workload was intensifying. Without their needs being met through official policy action, teachers devoted considerable activity to meeting their needs.

The Government of Malawi is among the governments that have recently announced an intention to abolish secondary school fees, which would align with the SDGs' call for universal secondary schooling and would invariably have implications for the teaching profession (Kadzamira et al., 2018). In enacting universal education goals, it is imperative to consider the needs of teachers at the outset, and not as an after-thought. Future research could examine cases where education provision is being scaled up in ways that avoid negative ramifications for the teaching profession. Such research could contribute to a knowledge base for how to grow educational enrollments with teacher concerns in mind.

With intense scrutiny on teachers and their work, and notions of "best practice" driving reforms in realms like reading, it is important to also ask what "best practices" are with respect to engendering motivation and commitment among those in the teaching profession. In 1966, the ILO and UNESCO commented on such practices in "The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the status of teachers," a document developed to serve as the "international standards

192

for the teaching profession" (UNESCO/ILO, 2008, p. 8). These recommendations cover such things as teacher professionalism, co-operation in policy issues, professional freedom, and salaries. Related to professionalism, the authors stress the importance of teaching being regarded as a profession and a form of public service. On policy issues, they write, "There should be close co-operation between the competent authorities, organizations of teachers, of employers and workers, and of parents as well as cultural organizations and institutions of learning and research, for the purpose of defining educational policy and its precise objectives" (p. 9). This dissertation revealed a contrasting picture. One teacher interviewed in this study, Irene Khunga, described policy formulation and dissemination as follows, "there are some people who just distribute items without consulting us first, and they just meet in secret" (11/4/16). Similar sentiments were expressed in other interviews.

While the ILO/UNESCO recommendation of teachers with policy voice may strike many as idealistic, it is useful in holding up the case of teachers in Malawi for comparison. In Malawi, the lack of teacher voice in the work teachers are assigned to do is staggering. Though teachers in this study saw this as a national issue of GOM officials not listening to teachers, the issue is also influenced by the weight of global actor influence on teachers' work. The cross-currents teachers face in trying to express concerns about their work are immense. Robertson (2012) raises a key question about the role of global actors in shaping teachers' work across the globe: "What are the social justice implications for teachers and students located in national settings but where power is concentrated in spaces not open to political contestation?" (p. 586). In being told to just "receive" new policy, teachers are unable to meaningfully engage with actors who shape their work. This is a theme worthy of continued attention. Additionally, if teachers feel this way,

one can only imagine that for many students and parents, there are even fewer opportunities to exercise voice in the education system.

One observation across teachers' work is the ways that teachers (and even their superiors) position themselves as "just receiving" new policies from GOM and ID actors in the form of curricula, trainings, and mandates. While teachers had agency in how they made sense of these items, the pattern of teachers viewing themselves as recipients was resounding. In one example, when Linda and other teachers resisted a new USAID curriculum, she was told by the trainers to "receive it." Linda described the following,

> [In this new curriculum,] the learners are just memorizing and not writing. It is almost a term now since we started doing this and the learners are not practicing writing...It is hard for learners to understand this. We argued about this, but they were unwilling to listen to our views. They just said 'receive it,' and we did, but it makes teaching challenging (11/1/16).

Interestingly, Linda's observations about this curriculum mirror what some scholars (e.g. Bartlett et al., 2015) have highlighted about USAID's global reading assessment and policy tool, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). This example from Linda, as well as other examples presented in Chapter 6 ("in classrooms, we find a way forward"), suggest that for teachers to exercise professional autonomy in deciding how to teach their students to read signifies as an act of resistance rather than their responsibility as teachers. This could indicate yet another shift in responsibility worthy of further focus—teachers are being told they are *not* responsible for how they teach, though they *are* responsible for administering curriculum designed by others.

Interrogating how multiple reforms pile up on teachers reveals that teachers are simultaneously constructed as both "responsible" and "passive" actors. They are passively receiving these new "responsibilities"—just receiving them—but within these reforms their role is to serve as a dispenser—of medicine, of curriculum, or of mentoring programs. I propose that this could have the cumulative effect of hollowing out teachers' work through undermining the professional competence of teachers while simultaneously keeping teachers busy with projects that are not germane to student learning. A focus only on one of the many policy lines impacting teachers omits from view the cumulative and potentially deleterious impacts of the broader reform space encircling teachers' work. Attention to this broader space is crucial, particularly as global discourses stress the need for teachers to be held "accountable" for student learning (e.g., Bruns et al., 2011; USAID-Malawi, 2013).

The irony in teacher-focused accountability conversations about student learning, for teachers in Malawi and likely elsewhere, is that for teachers to prioritize student learning comes about as an act of defiance. This dissertation offered examples of teachers trying to ignore student malaria treatment demands in order to continue teaching or resisting a new curriculum that felt unmanageable and potentially harmful. Not only did teachers feel unsupported in their efforts to take responsibility for student learning, but messages they received discouraged them from doing so. As the gaze of accountability focuses on teachers (e.g. Akiba, 2013; Robertson, 2012), research can play a key role in documenting and examining the changing nature of teacher responsibility.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Financial reference points

- Pre-tax monthly salary for a new (Grade L) teacher: K120,000 (USD 170)
- Post-tax monthly salary for a new (Grade L) teacher: K97,000 (USD 137)
- Linda Macheso's monthly rent in Zomba town: K50,000 (USD 71)
- Average monthly rent from surveys with 17 teachers at additional schools (some schools more/less rural than Mitambo): K25,000 (USD 35)
- Bottle of Coke: K300 (USD 0.42)
- Lunch at a restaurant at Mitambo trading center: K500 (USD 0.71)
- Daily minibus commuting costs from Zomba to Mitambo: K1,000 (USD 1.41)

Exchange rate in December 2016: 707 Malawi Kwacha to 1 USD (this is the exchange rate applied throughout this study)

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision on whether you would like to join the project. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

Study Title: Teachers' Work in Malawi

Researcher: Alyssa Morley (Ph.D. Candidate)

Department and Institution: Educational Administration, Michigan State University, USA

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

This study is concerned with the work of teaching in Malawi. I suspect that the work of teaching is complex, and I hope this research can help bring to light the realities teachers encounter and how they cope. Through this project, I seek to document what the work of teaching looks like and to understand how teachers view their work. I will use qualitative methods for this research, including individual interviews, group interviews, and observation.

2. WHAT YOU WILL DO

If you choose to participate, I will ask to conduct an initial interview to learn about your background and your work as a teacher. Involvement in the research will begin with this initial interview, and there will also be a possibility of subsequent interviews and additional research activities based on your

FOMU YOVOMEREZA KUCHITA NAWO KAFUKUFUKU

Mukupemphedwa kuti muchute nawo kafukufuku. Ofufuza amayenera kukupatsani fomu imene imakufotokozerani za kafukufuku, imalongosola kuti kuchita nawo kafukufuku ndi chisankho chanu, imafotokoza kuwopsa ndi ubwino wochita nawo kafukufuku, ndiponso imakupatsani mphamvu kuti mupange chisankho chochita nawo kafukufu kapena ayi. Mukhale omasuka kundifunsa mafunso onse amene mungakhale nawo.

Dzina la Kafukufuku: Ntchito ya Uphunzitsi m'Malawi

Wofufuza: Alyssa Morley (Ph.D. Candidate)

Department ndi Sukula Yanga: Maphunziro, Michigan State University, USA

1. CHOLINGA CHA KAFUKUFUKU

Kafukufukuyu akufufuza za ntchito ya uphunzitsi m'Malawi. Ndikuganiza kuti ntchito ya aphunzitsi ndi yayikulu komanso yovutirapo, ndiye ndikuyembekeza kuti kafukufuku wanga angathe kuwulula poyera mavuto amene aphunzitsi amakumana nawo ndi momwe amawagonjetsera. Ndidzachita kafukufuku wanga pocheza ndi aphunzitsi aliyense payekhapayekha komanso m'magulu ndi kuwonera aphunzitsiwo akuphunzitsa m'kalasi.

2. MUDZACHITA CHIYANI MU KAFUKUFUKUYU?

Mukaganiza zochita nawo kafukufukuyu ndidzakupemphani kuti ndicheze nanu koyamba kuti ndimve za mbiri yanu ngati mphunzitsi. Kucheza kumeneku kudzakhala koyamba pakutenga nawo mbali kwanu mu kafukufukuyu ndipo tidzachezanso kena

continued interest in the project. The other research activities include group interviews and observation in your classroom.

For the language of interviews and other research activities, you will choose whether you would prefer English, Chichewa, or a blend of the two. We will select a time and location based on what is convenient and comfortable for you. If you choose a language other than English, I will bring a translator to the interview so that we can communicate freely. You do not need to prepare for interviews or any research activities; we will discuss things you already know about (your personal background, your job, your family, etc.).

komanso padzakhala zochitika zina za kafukufuku ngati mutafuna kupitiriza kuchita nawo. Kupatula kucheza nanu panokha tidzachezanso m'magulu ndikuonerera mukuphunzitsa kalasi lanu.
Pakucheza kwathu komanso pazochitika zina za mukafukufukuyu, mudzakhala ndi ufulu wosankha chiyankhulo chogwiritsa ntchito pakati pa Chingelezi ndi Chichewa kapena kusakaniza ziyankhulo ziwirizi. Tidzasankha nthawi ndi malo amene mungakonde kuti ticheze nanu. Mukasankha kuti tidzacheze m'chiyankhulo china kupatula Chingelezi ndidzakhala ndi munthu womasulira kuti tidzathe kumvana bwinobwino. Simukuyenera kukonzekera mwapadera kucheza kwathu kapena pa zochitika zina zilizonse za kafukufukuyu; tidzakambirana zinthu zimene mukuzidziwa kale (mbiri ya moyo wanu, ntchito yanu, banja lanu ndi zina zotero.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

We do not expect any direct benefits in this study beyond having the opportunity to reflect on teaching in Malawi and share your views on the work of teaching. However, your participation in this study may contribute to overall understanding of teaching conditions, which could result in activities by government or donor groups.

3. PHINDU LIMENE MUNGAPEZE

Sitikuyembekeza kuti inuyo mungapindule ndi kafukufukuyu kupatula kuti muthandiza kuwunika za ntchito ya uphunzitsi ndikupereka maganizo anu pa ntchitoyi. Komabe, kuchita nawo kafukufukuyu kungathandize kumvetsetsa momwe aphunzitsi amagwirira ntchito yawo zomwe zingachititse kuti boma kapena mabungwe othandiza achitepo kanthu pa ntchito za maphunziro.

4. POTENTIAL RISKS

The only risk to you is a possible breach of confidentiality. To safeguard against this, all data collected will be secured, and pseudonyms will be used to protect identities. Sometimes, I will use a tape recorder. I will not share these recordings with anyone.

4. ZOWOPSA ZIMENE ZINGAKHALEPO

Chowopsa chokhacho chimene chingakhalepo ndi chakuti mwina anthu ena atha kudziwa chinsinsi chanu. Pofuna kupewa zimenezi, nkhani zones zimene tikambiranae ndidzazisunga mwanchinsi ndipo ndidzagwiritsa ntchito mayina ongopeka monga a anthu, malo kuti anthu asathe kukuzindikirani. Nthawi zina ndidzagwiritsa kawayilesi kojambulira mawu. Zomwe ndidzajambule sindidzaziulula kwa wina aliyense. Ine ndekha ndi amene ndidzazigwiritse ntchito.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

5. KUSUNGA CHINSINSI

Every effort will be made to maintain your privacy throughout the project, to the maximum extent allowable by law. To do this, interviews will be arranged at a time and location of your choosing. In addition, data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only I can access. Data may also be made available to the Institutional Review Board at Michigan State University, upon their request.

As I transcribe interviews, I will substitute a pseudonym for names and places that would reveal your identity. The key will be kept in a separate, password-protected file so that your real name cannot be linked to your pseudonym.

While there will be likely be publications and presentations at professional meetings as a result of this study, your name will not be used. If you participate in this study, we would like to be able to quote you directly without using your name.

6. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- You have the right to say no.
- You may change your mind at any time and withdraw.
- You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

Tidzayestesa kukusungirani chinsinsi ndi ulemu wanu mogwirizana ndi malamulo panthawi yonse ime tikuchita kafukufukuyu. Kuti izi zitheke, inuyo mudzasankha nthawi ndi malo oti tichezepo. Powonjezera apo, tidzagwiritsa ntchito nambala yachinsinsi potsekula m'makompyuta amene tidzasungemo mauthenga a kafukufukuyu yomwe ine ndekha ndi amene ndingatsekule. Komiti yowona kuti kafukufuku akuchitika motsatira ndondomeko ya *Michigan State ethics committee* ndiyokhayo imene ingathe kuona zotsatira za kafukufuku ngati itafuna kutero.

Pamene ndikulembera zomwe ndinajambula pakucheza kwathu mayina anu komanso mayina a malo ndidzawasinthu ndikugwiritsa ntchito mayina opeka popewa kukuzindikirani. Chizindikiro tidzachisunga mu fayilo yobisika yogwiritsa ntchito dzina kapena nambala yachinsinsi kuti kukhale kovuta kulumikiza dzina lanu lenileni ndi lopeka lija komanso dzina lopeka lija.

Ngati tidzasindikize komanso kufotokozera anthu ena pamisonkhano ya akatsiwiri za zotsatira za kafukufukuyu, sitidzaulula dzina lanu pochita zimenezi. Ngati muchite nawo kafukufukuyu tikufuna kuti tidzathe kugwiritsa ntchito mawu amene mungayakhule koma osakutchulani dzina lanu.

6. UFULU WANU WOVOMERA, KUKANA KAPENA KUSIYA KAFUKUFUKU

Kuchita nawo kafukufukuyu sikokakamiza. Simadzalandira chilango kapena kutaya phindu lina lililonse limene munayenera kulandira chifukwa chakuti mwakana kuchita nawo kafukufukuyu. Muli ndi ufulu kusiyira panjira nthawi ina iliyonse ndipo simudzalandira chilango kapena kutaya phindu limene munayenera kupeza.
- Muli ndi ufulu wokana.
- Mutha kusintha maganizo anu nthawi ina iliyonse ndikusiya kuchita nawo kafukufukuyu.
- Muli ndi ufulu kusayankha mafunso ena amene simukufuna kuyankha kapena

7. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY
You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for participating in this study.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher at (Contact information redacted)

You can contact the research ethics committee at Michigan State University:
Institutional Review Board
Email: irb@msu.edu

Alternatively, you can contact the Director of my affiliated research institution in Malawi:
Dr. Dixie Maluwa-Banda (Director, Centre for Educational Research and Training)

(Contact information redacted)

kusiyira panjira kuyankha mafunso nthawi ina iliyonse.

7. NDALAMA ZOGWIRITSA NTCHITO NDICHIPUKTA MISOZI POCHITA NAWO KAFUKUFUKUYU
Simudzalandira ndalama kapena chipukuta misozi chamtundu wina uliwonse chifukwa chochita nawo kafukufukuyu.

8. MOMWE MUNGANDIPEZERE
Ngati pali vuto kapena muli ndi mafunso okhudza kafukufukuyu, chonde ndilembereni kalata pa (Contact information redacted)

Mutha kuyankhula ndi komiti ya Ethics ku Michigan State University:
Institutional Review Board
Email: irb@msu.edu

Mungathenso kuyankhulana ndi Mkulu wa bungwe lomwe likundithandiza ku Malawi kuno a Dr. Dixie Maluwa-Banda (Director, Centre for Educational Research and Training)

(Contact information redacted)

APPENDIX C. Research Consent Form – English and Chitumbuka

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision on whether you would like to join the project. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

Study Title: Teachers' Work in Malawi

Researcher: Alyssa Morley (Ph.D. Candidate)

Department and Institution: Education, Michigan State University, USA

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

This study is concerned with the work of teaching in Malawi. I suspect that the work of teaching is complex, and I hope this research can help bring to light the realities teachers encounter and how they cope. Through this project, I seek to document what the work of teaching looks like and to understand how teachers view their work. I will use qualitative methods for this research, including individual interviews, group interviews, and observation.

2. WHAT YOU WILL DO

If you choose to participate, I will ask to conduct an initial interview to learn about your background and your work as a teacher. Involvement in the research will begin with this initial interview, and there will also be a possibility of subsequent interviews and

FOMU YAKUZOMERA KUCHITA KAFUKUFUKU

Mukupempheka kuti muchite kafukufuku. Uyo wakupanga kafukufuku wakuyenera kumupani folomu iyo idumbenge vinandi vya kafukufuku, ilongosolenge kuti kuchita nawo kafukufuku ni khumbo linu, idumbenge kuofya na uwemi wakuchita kafukufuku ndipo ikumpani nkhongono yakuti mungawa na khumbo lakupanga nawo kafukufuku panyakhe yayi. Masukani pakufumba mafumbo agho mungawa nagho

Zina La Kafukufuku: Nchito Ya Asambizi Mumalawi

Uyo Wakupanga Kafukufuku: Alyssa Morley (Ph.D Candidate)
Department Na Sukulu Yane: Masambiro, Michigan State University, USA

1. CHAKULATA CHA KAFUKUFUKU

Kafukufuku uyu wakupenjapenja za ntchito ya basambizi muno mu Malawi.Nkhuyanayana kuti ntchito ya basambizi njikulu kweniso yakusugzirako, sono ninachigomegzo chakuti kafukufuku wanga zunula/chombola masugzo agho basambizi bakukumana nayo na umo bakuwa magzira. Nizamupanga kafukufuku Wane pakuchegza na musambizi waliyonse payekhapayekha kweniso mumagulu na kubekelera basambizi naumo bakusambigzira muchipinda chakusambiliramo.

2. IVYO MUZAMUCHITA MUKAFUKUFUKU

Para mwayanayana vyakupanga kafukufuku uyu, nizamumlombani kuti nichegze namwe kuti nipulike za mbiri yinu nga msambizi. Kuchegza uku kuzamuwa kwakwamba kwakuti imwe mutole gawo mukafukufuku uyu ndipo tizamuchezaso, kweniso pazamuwa vyakuchitika vinyakhe pa kafukufuku para

additional research activities based on your continued interest in the project. The other research activities include group interviews and observation in your classroom.

For the language of interviews and other research activities, you will choose whether you would prefer English, Chitumbuka, or a blend of the two. We will select a time and location based on what is convenient and comfortable for you.

If you choose a language other than English, I will bring a translator to the interview so that we can communicate freely. You do not need to prepare for interviews or any research activities; we will discuss things you already know about (your personal background, your job, your family, etc.).

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

We do not expect any direct benefits in this study beyond having the opportunity to reflect on teaching in Malawi and share your views on the work of teaching. However, your participation in this study may contribute to overall understanding of teaching conditions, which could result in activities by government or donor groups.

4. POTENTIAL RISKS

The only risk to you is a possible breach of confidentiality. To safeguard against this, all data collected will be secured, and pseudonyms will be used to protect identities. Sometimes, I will use a tape recorder. I will not share these recordings with anyone.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to maintain your privacy throughout the project, to the maximum extent allowable by law. To do this,

muzamukhumba kulutiligza kupanga kafukufuku uyu. Kupatula kuchegza namwe pamwekha tizamuchegzaso mumagulu nakuonera umo mukusambigzira mukalasi.

Pakuchegza kwithu na vinyakhe vakuchitika mukafukufuku uyu muzamuwa na ufulu wakusankha chiyowoyero icho mukukhumba pakati pa Chitumbuka na Chizungu. Tizamuzunula nyengo na malo agho mungatemwa kuti tichegze namwe.

Para muzamuzunula kuti tichegze muchighowoyera chinyakhe kulusyana Chizungu nizamuwa namunthu uyo wazamumasulilanga kuti tizapulikane makola. Pakukhumbikira kunogzekera kwapadera yayi chifukwa chakuti tizamudumbirana ivyo mukuvimanya kale (mbiri ya moyo winu, ntchito, banja linu na ninyakhe ivyo vingasangika)

3. PHINDU ILO MUNGASANGAPO

Pakafukufuku uyu palije phindu lililonse kupatulapo kuti muzamutivwira kuwunika vya ntchito ya usambizi nakupereka maghanoghano yinu pa ntchito ya usambizi. Kweni kuchita kafukufuku uyu kungaovwira kupulikisya nambo basambizi bakugwilira ntchito, ivyo vingachitisya kuti boma panyakhe mabungwe bachitepo kanthu pantchito za masambiro.

4. WOFYI UWO UNGAKHALAPO

Chakuofya icho chingakhalapo ntchakuti, panyakhe banthu bangakhumba kumanya vyakubisika /visisi vinu pakuopha ivi nkhani izo tizamukambirana tizamuvisunga mwa kabisibisi ndipo tizamugwilisya ntchito ka wailesi kakumbula magzo. Ivyo tizamujambula zizamuphalilika kwa munthu waliyose chala kweni ine nekha ndiyo nizamugwilisyira ntchito

5. KUSUNGA VYACHISISI

Tizamuyegzesya kumusungirani vyachisisi vinu mwakulingana na malamulo panyengo iyo muzamupangira kafukufuku kuti ivi vichitike muzamuzunula nyengo na malo agho

203

interviews will be arranged at a time and location of your choosing. In addition, data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only I can access. Data may also be made available to the Institutional Review Board at Michigan State University, upon their request.

As I transcribe interviews, I will substitute a pseudonym for names and places that would reveal your identity. The key will be kept in a separate, password-protected file so that your real name cannot be linked to your pseudonym.
While there will be likely be publications and presentations at professional meetings as a result of this study, your name will not be used. If you participate in this study, we would like to be able to quote you directly without using your name.

6. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- You have the right to say no.
- You may change your mind at any time and withdraw.
- You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

7. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY

You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for participating in this study.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

tizamudumbilanapo. Tizamugwilisya ntchito nambala ya kabisibisi pakujula mumakomputa agho tizamusungamo mauthenga gha kafukufuku. Ine na komiti yakuona para kafukufuku wakuchitika ndise tizamuwa nama zaza yakujura mwakuyana na ndondomeko ya Michigan State Ethics Committee.

Para tizamufumisya kweniso kuphara kwa banthu banyakhe pa maungano ya kafukufuku uyu tizamuzunulapo yayi zina linu.Para mungabanawo mukafukufuku uyu tikukhumba kuti tizakagwirisye ntchito magzo agho muzamughowoya kwambura kumuzunulani zina linu.

6.UFULU WINA WAKUZOMERA,KUKANA PANYAKHE KULEKA KAFUKUFUKU

Kuchita kafukufuku uyu nkhwakuchichigza yayi ndipo muzamupokelapo yayi chilango chilichonse para mwakana kutolapo gawo. Muna ufulu wakulekegza panthowa kafukufuku uyu nyengo iliyonse ndipo muzamupokelapo chilango chilichonse yayi.
- Muna ufulu wakukana
- Mungasintha maghanoghano yinu nyengo iliyonse nakuleka kafukufuku
- Muna ufulu wakusankha mafumbo agho imwe mukukhumba yayi kugzora panyakhe mungalekera panthowa nyengo iliyonse.

7. NDALAMA PANYAKHE CHIFYULA MASO PAKUCHITA KAFUKUFUKU

Muzamupokelapo ndalama panyakhe chifyula misonzi chilichonse yayi chifukwa cha gawo linu pakafukufuku uyu.

8. NAMO MUNGANISANGIRA

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher at (contact information redacted)

You can contact the research ethics committee at Michigan State University:
Institutional Review Board
Email: irb@msu.edu

Alternatively, you can contact the Director of my affiliated research institution in Malawi: Dr. Dixie Maluwa-Banda (Director, Centre for Educational Research and Training)

(contact information redacted)

Para pali masugzo panyakhe mafumbo yakukhwasyana na kafukufuku uyu, chonde munganilembera pa (contact information redacted)

Mungaghowoyaso na komiti ya Ethics ku Michigan State University: Institutional review board.Email: irb@msu.edu

Mungaghowoyaso na mulala wa bungwe ilo likuovwira ku Malawi kuno a Dr.Dixie.Maluwa-Banda (Director,Centre for Educational Research and Training)

(contact information redacted)

APPENDIX D. Research Enrollment Questionnaire[40]

Part 1: Personal Background

1. Please write your:

    1a. Name:_____

    1b. Age:_____

    1c. Gender:_____

    1d. Home district:_____

    1e. Tribe/ethnicity_____

    1f. Religion_____

2. Are you married? Circle YES   NO

    2a. If "yes," what does your spouse do for work?_____

3. Who do you stay with in your home?

    _____

4.   Do you live in a teachers' house? Circle YES   NO

    4a. If no, where do you live?_____

    4b. How far is it from your school (approximate kilometres)?_____

    4c. How do you commute?_____

    4d. What is the daily cost of your commute (if any):_____

    4e. If you pay rent for your house, how much do you pay per month?_____

5. How many children do you have?_____

6. Apart from teaching, do you have additional jobs and income sources? Circle YES   NO

    6a. If "yes," describe the sources:_____

---

[40] This questionnaire was translated into both Chichewa and Chitumbuka and was administered prior to teacher interviews.

Part 2: Teaching Background

7. Where did you earn your teaching certificate?_____

8. What type of teaching certificate do you have?_____

9. The date you began teaching:_____

10. The date you began teaching at your current school:_____

11. Your current pay grade:_____

12. At your current school, what standard do you teach?_____

   12a. How many learners do you have in your class?_____

   12b. Do you team-teach (or partner-teach)? Circle YES   NO

   12c. Apart from classroom instruction, describe your other duties as a teacher at your

   current school:_____

   _____

13. At how many schools have you taught?_____

14. How did you arrive at your current school? (for example, requested a transfer here, placed by the

   DEM, etc.)_____

15. Are you currently seeking a transfer out of your current school? Circle YES   NO

   15a. If "yes," what actions have you taken?_____

   _____

16. Can we contact you for future research activities? Circle YES   NO

17. If "yes," please write your phone number(s):_____

18. If you have additional contact details (email address, P.O. box), please share these:_____

_____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you would like to share any additional
information with us, please write it on the back of this paper.

APPENDIX E. Teacher Background Interview Questions[41]

1. Apart from [current school], where have you been a teacher?

2. I'm interested in what the typical activities are for teachers. Walk me through a typical day, from when you wake up to when you go to sleep.

3. What activities do you most enjoy in your work?

4. Generally, where do you encounter challenges? (probe, as specific challenges are mentioned, as how do you cope?)

5. (refer to questionnaire) You listed that you have [such duties] aside from classroom teaching. Please describe what these duties entail.

6. I'm interested in teacher career paths. How did you decide to become a teacher?

    6a. When you were in secondary school, was it your goal to be a primary school teacher?

    6b. Do you plan to remain a primary school teacher?

    6c. Are you currently in the process of upgrading (studying at a university, repeating secondary school, or planning to rewrite the MSCE)? If so, please describe what you are doing and what your plans are.

7. When you were beginning as a primary school teacher, where did you hope teaching would take you?

8. If you were describing to a teacher trainee what it's like to be a teacher, what would you say?

9. Pretend I am a new teacher about to begin teaching at your school. I happen to meet you on the way (walking or on a minibus). What would you tell me about what I should expect? (How does this school compare to other schools you know of or where you have taught)?

---

[41] Most of these questions were asked in initial interviews with Mitambo teachers, but some were added later on in fieldwork when conducting interviews with teachers at additional schools. These interviews were audio-recorded and conducted with an interpreter.

10. If you were advising a young brother or sister on their career, what would you tell them if they were considering teaching?

11. In your view, what makes a person a good teacher? (In other words, what are the qualities of a good teacher?)

12. What impacts do you hope to have as a teacher?

13. Is there anything else that we should know about your work?

14. Thank you for your time and openness. The next stage of my research will involve conducting observations with some teachers. I will invite these teachers to participate based on my study design and their interest in participating in this study more extensively. Would you be interested in further involvement in this study?

15. Do you have questions for us?

APPENDIX F. Logics about women teachers and the frequency of their appearance across texts

Density of logics in text

	World Bank (2004)	UNESCO (2006)	DFID-Central (2011)	DFID-Malawi (2012)	DFID-Malawi (2013)	DFID-Malawi & STC (2014)	STC (2014)	GOM (2014)	SC (2015)	Total
Mentions of female teacher logic	22	17	4	8	4	9	7	4	30	105
Pages of text	176	20	6	40	36	6	4	53	80	381
Density (logics/pages)	12.5%	85.0%	66.7%	20.0%	11.1%	150%	175%	7.5%	37.5%	27.6%

Specific logics and their appearance in texts

	World Bank (2004)	UNESCO (2006)	DFID-Central (2011)	DFID-Malawi (2012)	DFID-Malawi (2013)	DFID-Malawi & STC (2014)	STC (2014)	GOM (2014)	SC (2015)	Total (% of overall logics)
ACCESS *Relate to girls' access (enrollment, retention)*	15	8	3	2	1	1	3	1	4	38 (36.2%)
SUPPORT	-	2	-	3	2	6	1	-	11	25 (23.8%)

Support or encourage girls

LEARNING *Relate to girls' learning (achievement, literacy)*	6	1	1	2	-	-	3	2	2	17 (16.2%)

	World Bank (2004)	**UNESCO (2006)**	**DFID-Central (2011)**	**DFID-Malawi (2012)**	**DFID-Malawi (2013)**	**DFID-Malawi & STC (2014)**	**STC (2014)**	**GOM (2014)**	**SC (2015)**	**Total (% of overall logics)**
ROLE MODEL *Are role models or someone to look up to*	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	5	8 (7.6%)
PROTECTION *Relate to the safety of the school or reduction in violence against girls*	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	8 (7.6%)
CHANGE AGENT	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	7 (6.7%)

211

*Are champions
or advocates
for girls and/or
challenge
stereotypes
about what
women can do*

HEALTH & HYGIENE *Teach girls about puberty and menstruation*	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (1.9%)

APPENDIX G. Student dismissal times documented in fieldnotes

Student dismissal times for days I observed Maggie Nyasulu (Note: for Standard 7, the official timetable states that students knock off at 2:30pm)

Date	Students Dismissed from Classroom	Notes
12/6/16	12:30pm	KGIS activity at 12:30pm
1/5/17	n/a	I leave at 12:20pm and Maggie is still teaching
1/19/17	1:20pm	
2/9/17	12:45pm	KGIS activity from 1:15-2:00pm
2/16/17	n/a	I leave at 1:40pm and Maggie is still teaching
3/22/17	n/a	Maggie is not teaching today but instead preparing tea and food for teachers grading mock examinations
3/31/17	1:00pm	At 1:00pm, Maggie and I go into town together since she is collecting her salary

Student dismissal times for days I observed Linda Macheso (Note: for Standard 1, the official timetable states that students knock off at 12:00pm)

Date	Students Dismissed from Classroom	Notes
1/18/17	11:00am	Linda dismisses students at 11:00am and from 11-12 performs LTK duties
1/25/17	11:00am	From 11-12:55 Linda is grading Standard mock examination
2/1/17	11:25am	
2/15/17	10:10am	School-wide tree-planting activity from 10:30am-12:00pm
2/22/17	12:00pm	

3/14/17	11:45am	

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