Coherence, deference and difference: Primary school teacher identity in Tanzania

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Paper presented at the British Association for International and Comparative Education Conference, Queen's University, Belfast, 8-10 September 2006

This paper applies Derrida's concept of 'différance', as interpreted by Stuart Hall (2003), to the problem of theoretically representing the changing identity of a diverse teaching force. It is based on findings of an interpretative study into primary school teacher identity in Tanzania, in which qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews and school case studies. The findings are presented as a typology of teacher identity types and discussed in relation to other studies of teacher identity, discourses or professionalism carried out in Sub Saharan Africa (Jessop & Penny, 1998; Welmond, 2002) and in Britain (Osborn, et al., 2000; Ball, 2003). In order to avoid 'fixing' artificial identities, attention is given to fluidity of boundaries between the 'types' of Tanzanian teacher identity and the perpetual re-creation of new identities. The concept of 'différance', with its dual meaning of difference and temporal deference, is applied to a description of how younger generations of teachers 'defer to' older identities, even as they adapt them in response to changing social and educational contexts. Policy implications are drawn for teacher management and education in Tanzania. Différance is also applied to conceptualising how international agendas, translated through policy, programmes or initiatives, effect change in teacher practice and professionalism.

Introduction

Researchers of teacher identity face the challenge of drawing out similarities between teachers without homogenising a large and diverse occupational group. For comparative researchers, the risk of over-simplifying is even greater as they compare teachers across countries and cultures, looking for similarities and differences. This can lead to essentialist representations of national teacher characteristics where, for example, teachers in England or North America are characterised as individualist; French teachers as academically-oriented and Sub Saharan African teachers as didactic and demoralised. The common practice of representing teachers' identity or practice in terms of binary opposites, such as teachers as professionals versus teachers as technicians or transmissional versus progressive teaching, only exacerbates the tendency towards essentialised representations. This paper is based on the findings of a study into primary school teacher identity in Tanzania, through which I arrived at a typology of teacher identity types. The findings are discussed in relation to other studies of teacher identity, discourses or professionalism carried out in various countries of Sub Saharan Africa (Jessop & Penny, 1998; Welmond, 2002) and in Britain (Osborn, et al., 2000; Ball, 2003). These four studies use various forms of categorisation to represent the similarities and differences between the teachers they studied. It is argued in this article that attention to the relations between categories and shifts over time not counter essentialism by describing how identities and practice are negotiated. New possibilities are realised as old identities are reconstituted for

present contexts and in response to new policies.   The argument borrows and builds on Derrida's notion of '*différance*', as interpreted by Stuart Hall.

The next section lays out the theoretical concepts that shape the discussion, by introducing meanings of coherence and *différance* (a word which compounds difference and deference) in identity and discussing how these have been represented in various studies of teachers in Sub Saharan Africa and England. The third section describes the context of Tanzania and the methods used in this study. Findings are given in the fourth section in the form of a typology describing three 'types' of teachers identified in the course of the study, their views of themselves, their work and their classroom practice. This is discussed in relation to other studies in section five and implications are drawn for changing teacher's practice and professionalism both within Tanzania and internationally. The conclusion reflects on how the notion of '*différance*' as a theoretical description of teacher identity.

Différance*: Coherence, Difference and Deference

Nias, in her landmark study, claimed that it was possible to trace a shared collective identity for English primary school teachers:

> Of course, it seems contradictory to argue that our understanding of an individualistic profession can be advanced by presenting what appears to be the corporate self-image of a hundred teachers. Nevertheless, unique though each of these teachers was in terms of personality and experience, they shared common views of themselves, especially in terms of motivation, values and ideals. (Nias, 1989:27)

Stuart Hall, in conceptualising racial identity, emphasises the space for difference within a non-essentialist view of Afro-Caribbean identity. Hall sees difference as a motor for dialectic, creating instability and generating change over time. Hence, Hall also conceives identity as forever changing, in a state of becoming. To convey this, he borrowed Derrida's anomalous spelling – *différance*, supplying a noun derived from the French word *différer* meaning both to differ and defer, playing across space and time:

> [D]ifference challenges the fixed binaries that stabilize meaning and representation and show how meaning is never finished or completed, but keeps on moving to encompass other, additional, or supplementary meanings. (Hall, 2003:239).

According to Hall identity is in perpetual motion and hence representations of identity are always incomplete:

> [W]hat is then constituted within representation is always open to being deferred, staggered, serialized. (Hall, 2003:239)

The English word 'defer' supplies further word play, through which temporal delay becomes associated with human relations, the action of respectfully acknowledging the worthiness and superiority of another. Deference to elders or historical practices can be viewed as part of a critical connection to the past. Hence, deference supplies continuity, an ambiguity through which both the future and the past leak into the present. *Différance* implies the possibility of iteration, that something is "repeatable-with-difference" across time and space. Supplemented by the English reading of deference, *différance* looks forward to future 'deferred' meaning and also backwards to the trace of past meanings.

Hence, *différance* absorbs the challenge that Nias and Hall's comments together pose of how to represent what teachers as an occupational group share in common, the coherence in their professional identity, at the same time as recognising differences between individuals and changes over time. Researchers of teacher identity in Britain

and Africa have developed theoretical models that use categories to capture difference in teacher identity and in some cases applied these to explaining teachers' response to changes in policy. The next sections discusses four such models.

Representations of difference in teacher identity and practice

Amongst the methods used to represent coherence and difference in teacher identity, the creation of a small number, usually between two and five, categories is by far the most common. Casey (1993) in her life history research with forty women teachers, selected subjects who belonged to three distinct ethnic groups and hence, could compare between these pre-existing categories. Categories may, however, emerge from the data. Gipps *et al.* (1995:ch2) in their study of English teachers' approaches to assessment grouped subjects into three different categories according to their expressed attitudes and observed behaviour. However, there is a danger of categories 'fixing' teacher identity, so teachers are portrayed as static 'types'. The research reported below found that teachers were constantly negotiating their identity through conversations with colleagues within their school but also those in quite distant locations, for example, friends from teachers' college and other adults (for more on how other adults influence teachers' construction of their identity see Barrett, 2005). Other writers have accommodated fluidity in teacher identity through resisting placing individuals *per se* into categories or types. Welmond (2002:49) made it clear that the four different cultural schemata he drew up for Beninese teachers were not associated with specific actors. Rather, he conceptualised teachers as navigating an identity landscape on which the four schemata were located (see fig. 1). Jessop & Penny (1998) classified discourses, rather than informants, although they did talk about "relational teachers" and "instrumental teachers".

The simplest and most pervasive categorisation of approaches to teaching divides humanist or relational views of teaching from rationalist or contractual views (e.g. Jessop & Penny, 1998; Osborn, et al., 2000; George, et al., 2003). As teachers' practice is inevitably related to their views on what it means to be a teacher, the dichotomy is carried over into pedagogy, as represented in the apparently irreconcilable opposition set up by child-centred and teacher-centred teaching methods. Osborn *et al.* (2000:ch.11), in their study of English primary school teachers' response to reform in the nineties, contrasted a covenant-based professionalism with a contract-based professionalism. The former is "based on trust, and commitment to education as a form of personal development", whilst within the latter teachers "deliver education, which is seen as a commodity for individuals and a national necessity for economic growth". They related these professional modes to Bernstein's competence and performance pedagogies respectively. Competence pedagogies correspond to the set of practices often called 'child-centred' and aim to facilitate learners to acquire creative competences through informal interactions (Bernstein, 2000:42-3). The learner has greater *apparent* control of pace and sequencing as teachers' control is diffused through interpersonal relations with learners. By contrast, the performance pedagogic mode is characterised by rigid structuring of space and time, explicit teacher control of interaction and an emphasis on reproduction of texts (Bernstein, 2000:45-48).

Jessop & Penny (1998) found a similar pattern of division in the narratives of primary school teachers in The Gambia and Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa. They contrasted a relational frame of understanding with an instrumental one. The relational frame

assumed the rhetoric of child-centred approaches. Teachers talked about the intrinsic rewards of teaching, which they chiefly saw as lying in their relationships with children, described as loving, and with colleagues. Instrumentalism was associated with a transmissional view of teaching and learning, which places an emphasis on examination results. This frame included concerns for physical resources, provision of professional development opportunities and administrative support as well as personal concerns for job satisfaction and the extrinsic rewards of teaching, such as holidays, free time and salary. Jessop & Penny describe their frames as distinct but intersecting and do not exclude the possibility of one teacher drawing on narrative themes from both frames. In Trinidad & Tobago, George, Mohammed & Quamina-Aiyejina (2003) also found that trainee primary school teachers struggled to reconcile their ideal of a teaching as vocation with material concerns for their own welfare:

> A tension also seems to exist between trainees' espoused love for, and commitment to, children (and the intrinsic rewards that are associated with such a disposition) and their grave concern about the hardships that they face due to low remuneration and other factors. (George, et al., 2003:202)

Welmond (2002) identified four cultural schemata for primary school teacher identity in the former French colony of Benin, which he organised along two axis in an 'identity map'. 'Teaching as being', meaning that teachers are defined by their qualifications and their possession of certain types of knowledge", was ranged against 'teaching as doing', i.e. the active rendering of their skills and knowledge in the community or in the classroom" (Welmond, 2002:52). This division echoes the English categories of authentic competence teachers and teaching as a performance. However, he associates 'being a teacher' with acquired attributes of a teacher (qualifications and knowledge) rather than the investment of self. Nonetheless, Welmond's schemata includes the 'dedicated teacher', who is "a self-sacrificing hard-working good person, … a moral example', who could comfortably be placed with Jessop & Penny's relational frame. A second schema, the 'efficient teacher', has an instrumental focus on pupils passing examinations. The two other cultural schemata are the *beacon teacher*, who is a vessel of knowledge transforming communities through his or her presence in their midst, and the *civil servant*, who serves as a link between communities and governments.

Table 1: Summary of relational and instrumental views of teaching

	Relational	**Instrumental**
professionalism	vocation relations intrinsic rewards engage 'selfhood' (UK) or self-sacrifice (Africa)	contract resources employment terms performance
practice	Participative or child-centred whole child development invisible personalised control teacher facilitates	knowledge transfer examination results rigid structure and control teacher performs or delivers

The relational or personal view of teaching and the instrumental or performance view of teaching are summarised in table 1 above, with related approaches to classroom

teaching. The relational view represents teachers as people engaged in a network of relations and responsibilities. In England, the emphasis tends to be on the individual teacher, who invests her 'self' and finds reward in one-to-one interpersonal relations with children (Nias, 1989). In Africa and the Caribbean, missionary-like self-sacrifice is rewarded through seeing children develop and friendships with colleagues and status within the community. The instrumental view sees teaching as performing actions in fulfilment of a contract for material reward. Whereas in England, reforms of the past two decades have generated a focus on accountability to centrally specified standards, in Africa and the Caribbean genuine hardship inevitably concentrates discussion in this domain on the living and working conditions of teachers. These themes were also revealed in the research on Tanzanian primary teachers reported below. However, the relationship to pedagogy was found not to hold.

Research methods

Description of data-collection

The purpose of the research was to describe Tanzanian primary school teachers' constructions of their identity as teachers. Teachers' own views were collected through semi-structured one-to-one interviews with thirty-four teachers. As actual practice often deviates from espoused practice and values, the interviews were supplemented by observation. One week's intensive observation was carried out in each of two schools. This included all activities carried out within the school compound, with especial attention given to teachers' interactions with colleagues and community members as well as pupils. In addition, three teachers were interviewed in more depth over a series of three interviews. These three were also visited in their own homes, revealing how their work as a teacher interacted with their family life and influenced their construction of their personal self-identity.

The thirty-four interviews included questions on the following themes:
- (i) career biography, including pre-service training, previous postings, in-service training;
- (ii) describe a lesson taught recently;
- (iii) characteristics of a good teacher, relations with pupils, parents, the community, various levels of administration from school committee to central government and awareness of policy;
- (iv) likes and dislikes about teaching, lifestyle and status.

The teachers interviewed worked at a range of remote, rural but accessible and urban schools. Remote schools were usually understaffed with five or fewer teachers, usually with responsibility for between two and four hundred pupils organised into seven year groups. Teachers lived on the school compound or within cycling distance of the school. Living conditions, such as lack of transport, healthcare and pre-school facilities, impinged on the welfare of teachers' families as well as their pupils. Rural schools located on main roads tended to have around eleven to fifteen staff for between four and seven hundred pupils. Depending on the frequency of public transport and the provision of school housing, teachers might live near the school compound or travel in by bus. The urban schools were large with between one and two thousand pupils and most were obliged by shortage of classrooms to run two shifts in a day. The large teaching staff of around forty teachers struggled with over-large classes of between seventy and a hundred pupils but taught relatively few

periods a week. Teachers often lived at some distance from the school, travelling in on public transport. The research was conducted in 2002-2003 and new legislation making it compulsory for all seven and eight year olds to enrol in the first year meant that overcrowding was a problem for the lower two years only in these schools.

Informants had been primary school teachers in government schools for periods ranging from one to thirty-eight years. During the ninety-seventies, Nyerere's socialist government rapidly expanded primary education to the point of briefly achieving universal enrolment before economic constraints of the eighties slowed expansion. Many of the long service teachers had been recruited at this time with only primary education or an incomplete secondary education. This route into teaching was phased out in the early 1990s and all short service teachers had completed four years of secondary schooling prior to their two years' teacher certificate course. The research was conducted in two regions, Shinyanga in the central northern part of the country and Pwani, on the coast around Dar es Salaam. Shinyanga's economy is predominantly agricultural, although data was also collected in schools in one of the few urban centres (Shinyanga town). It is consistently the worst performing region in the country with respect to statistical indicators collected by the Ministry of Education and Culture (1997; , 2002). The two districts visited in Pwani were very different. Kibaha lies on the main road linking Tanzania's economic capital, Dar es Salaam, with its political capital, Dodoma. The schools visited were all large town schools and local enrolment ratios were very close to universal. By contrast, schools in Mkuranga mainly served villages, in an area with a depressed economy despite proximity to Dar es Salaam.

In each school visited, the headteacher was requested to recommend two individuals for interview who differed with respect to such characteristics as length of service, educational background and gender. Several of the headteachers at smaller schools made the selection in consultation with the whole teaching staff. Most interviewees were selected because they are respected as responsible, competent and articulate colleagues. I conducted the research as an obvious, white outsider at a time when a number of local NGOs, regarded as Western influenced, were running high profile campaigns against corporal punishment and promoting participative teaching methods. These would have influenced informants' preconceptions of my own views of good teaching and so, what they might have said in order to portray themselves positively in my eyes. All interviewees engage in impression-management. Selecting for respected and confident individuals meant that most informants aimed to give a genuine representation of their practice, views and values. Analysis of data had to take into account that the spoken texts of the interviews were produced in the context of interviews with a relatively wealthy and mobile visitor. As someone who had formerly lived and taught in Tanzania for a number of years and spoke Swahili fluently, I had enough cultural fluency to gauge informants motivation and the nature of the 'identity work' they were carrying out in the interview. The two exceptions are discussed in the findings section below. Professional misconduct is widespread amongst teachers in Tanzania. However my research questions concerned the positive values that motivate many teachers day by day. As a Westerner, I did not feel comfortable to ask questions about deviance, concerned this might be construed as judgemental. However, I was aware that some constructions of 'good teacher' were reactions to the prevalence of unacceptable behaviour, such as severe alcohol abuse and excessive absenteeism. These and other forms of misconduct have recently

been investigated by Anangisye and his findings are discussed in the light of the research reported here in Anangisye & Barrett (2005).

Analysis of interview data

Having found recurring discourses, I positioned the thirty-four teachers on a Venn diagram (see fig. 2) to show how many informants used each discourse. Whilst, like Jessop & Penny (1998), I categorise discourses, those discourses remain attached to the people who used them, so that, more like Gipps *et al.* (1995), I effectively categorise informants as 'types'. I use the word 'types' and refer to the model as a 'typology' because these terms convey the simplification involved in any model or representation. The advantage of a Venn diagram is that a single person may occupy two or more categories, or even none at all depending on how many of the discourses they draw upon. The space for overlap complicates and builds boundaries. The diagram can represent a single person, who assumes several overlapping or even contradictory identities, even within the space of a one-hour interview. There is also a space for those who eluded the categorisation. Two informants could not be categorised, who were both older men who had been teaching for more than fifteen years in village schools and from whom I was not able to collect enough information to confidently classify them, possibly because of the cultural difference between them and myself. Their inclusion on the margins of the diagram troubles the typology, suggesting limitations to the research. The numbers indicated on figure 2 are only intended to give evidence for the typology and are in no way statistically representative of the whole population of Tanzanian primary school teachers.

Categorising actual people in this way, and not just discourses, revealed patterns in relation to informants' gender, length of service and nature of posting (remote or urban). Patterns relating to length of service gave insight into deference as well as difference, revealing how ideas and values are passed down between generations and, in the process, adapted and changed. Whilst some teachers did relate their classroom practice to their values, there were also apparent conflicts between pedagogical approaches and espoused values.

Findings: a typology

Fig. 2: Venn diagram showing division of one-to-one interviewees into types
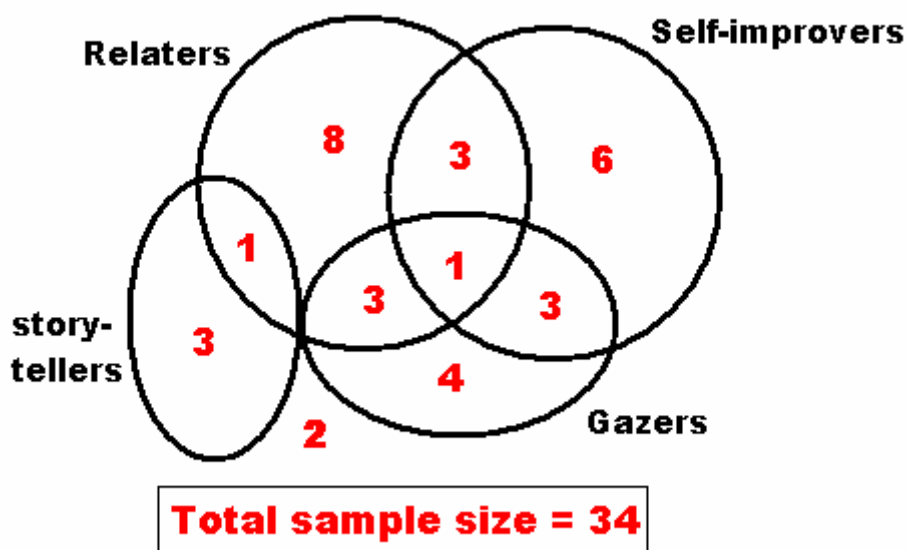
Some themes were universal to all teachers. All teachers regarded themselves as a role model to their pupils. This meant that they were supposed to display the benefits of education through their own appearance and behaviour, in particular dressing appropriately for work and avoiding alcoholism. They likened the teacher-pupil relationship to the parent-child one, often describing themselves as second parents and attributing this sense of shared responsibility to the Tanzanian tradition of caring about others. All teachers shared a grievance over their employment conditions to the extent that, as Hedges (2002) found in Ghana and Welmond (2002) in Benin, this had to be treated as integral to a shared occupational identity. Hence, all teachers adopted elements of both the relational view and instrumental view of teaching.

Table 2: Key features of Tanzanian teachers' discourse by type

| | Relaters | Self-improvers | Vocational teachers | |
			Gazers	Storytellers
Profess-ionalism **Relational**	Love children Collegial friendship Respect from community Intrinsic rewards		Care for pupils Cooperate with colleagues & parents Personal responsibility Vocation & Self-sacrifice Intrinsic rewards	
			Respect from community morals	Personal commitment Personal fulfilment
Instrumental		Career Qualifications	Security Mobility (for women) Non-manual labour	
			Status Lifestyle	
Practice **Relational**	Restrict punishment Participation Compassion	Pupil enjoyment	Competence outcomes Development of whole child	
			Cultural benefits	Empowerment of child

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		Knowledge transfer	
Instrument al	Performance outcomes	Subject specialism	Knowledge transfer
	Exam results	Teaching as performance	Exam results

The Relaters

The eight teachers who fell exclusively into the group I have named '*relaters*' were all female and, with one exception, worked in town schools although two had previously worked in village schools. Relaters gave descriptions of the qualities of a good teacher, teachers who they admired and reasons for liking teaching that drew on scripts referring to their relationship with pupils. They stressed the importance of love for pupils, being close to pupils, conservative use of punishment and understanding pupils' "problems":

> The thing that I liked about that teacher which pleased me was that he loved us children very much, he tried to see the children who did not understand in his class and he tried to explain to that child in his own time. It was his habit not to punish us. (Long service woman teacher, Kibaha)

Relaters talked more about the intrinsic than extrinsic rewards of teaching, giving these as socialising with teachers and pupils or enabling them to be better mothers of their own children. They were the most focused on classroom teaching but this tended to cause them to hold restricted views of what teaching means, explaining it as enabling pupils to understand the material or to pass examinations. This was most especially true of teachers around five years or less into their teaching careers.

> By the end of the year, my main objective is that they do well in the exam for promotion to the next class so that when they reach Year 7 [last of primary] they do even better and can enter Form 1 [the first year of secondary]. (Short service female teacher, Kibaha)

Typically, relaters stressed the importance of *ushirikishaji* or 'participation'. The actual practice of pupil 'participation' varied greatly from repetitive whole-class chanting to complex group activities, such as summarising a story or making a reasoned group decision on how to market produce from the school farm.

The Self-improvers

Five of the six individuals, who can be labelled exclusively as self-improvers, were men and all six had qualified as teachers during the nineties and hence were grade A. They had in common a desire to "improve themselves" through obtaining academic or occupational qualifications, both as a matter of intellectual self-fulfilment and as a means to achieving promotion or exit into better paid work. Whilst one young man had spent four out of the seven years since he qualified in full-time residential teaching courses, it was more common for these efforts to be met with frustration:

> Personally, I am a just a youth, I want very much to improve myself but I get problems. If I send a letter there to the district, it is not passed on. (Short service male teacher, Mkuranga)

Self-improvers liked to discuss their classroom practice in detail, particularly in a preferred specialist subject area, but their descriptions focussed on what they, as the teacher did, to the exclusion of pupil activity and response. They tended to give abstract altruistic motives for teaching, such as "to educate society" or "to help build

the nation" that might have been borrowed from teacher training texts. Most in the group claimed to have chosen teaching themselves, although a few *also* said it had not been a first choice. They were frequently scornful of their employment conditions, a dissatisfaction that both fuelled and was aggravated by their personal ambitions.

Self-improvers, who worked in stimulating environments, attended in-service activities and felt that they were moving towards their career goals, were amongst the most hardworking teachers and achieved leadership positions within their schools early in their careers. By contrast, self-improvers posted to rural schools, counted as the unhappiest teachers interviewed and felt estranged from the education system. In addition, some also distanced themselves from the local community, which they regarded as "unenlightened" (*hawana mwamko*).

The four teachers in the overlap between relaters and self-improvers are of particular interest because earlier in their careers they might have been designated only as self-improvers. They were engaged with the technical challenges of teaching but also appreciated the importance of relationships with pupils. They talked of their work as if they were committed to their profession. However, they had not given up on ambitions to leave the profession. The oldest member of this group had already acquired a diploma and was on his way to exit. This group tended to be older than other self-improvers and had more established interests outside of work. All had children, had built houses and at least two had income-raising projects that that did not demand their presence during school hours.

Vocation teachers: gazers and story-tellers

The vocation teachers had all qualified before the mid-eighties and could be broken down into two subgroups, labelled 'gazers' and 'story-tellers'. I will start by describing the characteristics generic to the vocation group. Vocation teachers were most likely to give altruistic reasons for entering teaching that were also personal, such as "I wanted to develop children in the same way that I had been developed". Many of them came from humble backgrounds and had experienced 'family problems' in their youth or, in the case of the eldest women, were amongst the first generation of women to have entered teaching (in the sixties or early seventies). As a consequence, they considered themselves fortunate to be teachers.

The vocation group tended to have the broadest understandings of the attributes of 'good teachers' that included diligence, being well read, caring towards pupils and cooperative with colleagues and parents. One teacher, who taught in the most remote school visited, offered the following list:

> First to like his work; second to apply himself; third, to create ways to teach; then, another, to love children; then, another, a person who likes to receive advice from his fellows; then, regularly uses his time to improve his work or to study. (Long service male village teacher, Shinyanga)

Similarly, they took a broad view of the benefits of primary education for graduates, including learning to read and write; acquiring knowledge about their country; providing an opportunity for the talented few to reach university; equipping village children with general knowledge and habits of hygiene that would enable them to get by in town environments and helping children to develop into the citizens, leaders, parents or teachers of tomorrow:

> Many already know how to read and write, they can read anything anywhere. Another thing, they begin to do business, now business is a subject in primary school

> [within Vocational Skills]. Health, they know about health, if they are ill they go to hospital, []. Another is, even morals (*ustaarabu*) … they know what is allowed and what is not. (Long service male teacher, Shinyanga)

By contrast, they tended to understand pedagogy in fairly restricted terms as presenting an explanation, assessing pupils' understanding and responding with a repeated or different strategy if pupils had not yet understood. The chief benefit of their years of experience seemed to lie not so much in imaginative or extended teaching strategies but rather in their ability to gauge and respond to their pupils' understanding and learning, a skill that they shared with the older relaters.

The vocation teachers provided an eclectic list of the rewards of teaching. The intrinsic rewards included socialising with children and colleagues, being "in-service" and seeing children pass exams. As well as opportunities for self-improvement, the extrinsic rewards included job security and, for married women, geographical flexibility.

At the same time as being celebrated as an inner inspiration, vocation was resented as a burden, tying teachers to a difficult lifestyle and demanding work:

> If I say the truth, I just do this work like teaching is a vocation but there is nothing that makes me happy. Truly, us teachers in Tanzania, we just hold on to teaching as if it is a religion (*tunaishikia kimungumungu tu*). (Long service teacher, now working in a town school after many years service in villages in Pwani Region)

Their sense of vocation derived from faith in the power of a basic education to enrich people's lives, whatever their futures might hold for them. They were concerned that diminished social status, a low standard of living and the necessity of looking for a second income undermined their ability to carry out difficult work in demanding conditions.

Gazers

The 'gazers' remembered 'gazing' at their own teachers when they were at primary school and being attracted to the 'good life' teaching appeared to offer:

> When I was a student, there were some teachers I used to gaze at them, the way they were teaching, the way they were living. (Long service male village teacher, Shinyanga)

> When I was in Year 5, middle school, I met female teachers for the first time. From seeing that they were in a good situation, they looked good, I hoped that I would become a teacher. (Long service female village teacher, Shinyanga)

These early impressions meant that they placed great importance on smart appearance to the extent that they believed that teachers transformed their pupils and even their parents as much through the example of their own lifestyle and bahaviour as through the act of teaching. Their professional identity as teachers was synonymous with a social identity as respectable citizens:

> A good teacher should have characteristics that cannot put her to shame. … A good teacher is required to be a person who appears to have a good personality, actions, even language. (Long service female teacher, Shinyanga)

Although their views of educational benefits were broad there was a tendency to emphasise the cultural benefits of education, such as personal hygiene and being willing to make use of health facilities for family members.

Storytellers

The storytellers related quite remarkable stories of their entry into teaching. Two were orphans and a third came from a peasant background and was profoundly moved by his own experience of learning to read. The fourth, the only one who had studied secondary school, was unique in rejecting a more prestigious career in favour of teaching because of the high degree of responsibility he felt towards his large extended family. As a teacher, he was able to secure a position close to his home area and ensure his nieces and nephews received an education. All the storytellers considered themselves personally fortunate to have had an opportunity to become a teacher and this heightened their sense of responsibility to youth and children. They were more completely identified with teaching than any group, going beyond the integration of professional and social identity that they shared with the gazers, to an almost complete integration of their professional and personal identity.

Discussion

Identity and practice

Teaching, anywhere in the world, is 'people work'. It is instrumental because ultimately teachers do teach to earn an income in order to survive and thrive. It is relational because the core activity involves intensive interaction with children. Tanzanian primary school teachers acknowledge both these strands but differ in the emphasis placed on each and how they reconcile tensions between the two. Whilst all teachers see themselves as influencing pupils and to a lesser extent communities through *being* a role model, they also see classroom teaching as being what they actively *do*. Hence, teaching is both about being and doing. For relaters and vocation teachers there is little conflict between being and doing as they identify as someone who loves children or is dedicated to their vocation. Self-improvers, on the other hand, find that the job of teaching does not fulfil their personal ambitions and experience a tension between their self-image and their position as a teacher. One way in which they maintain a boundary between their personal identity and their work as a teacher is by holding on to ambitions to exit teaching or gain promotion. We have seen that Welmond opposed teaching as being to teaching as doing in his description of Beninese primary school teachers. For Tanzanian teachers, a more appropriate distinction is between the integration and separation of being and doing. In the literature on English teachers, teachers' separation of their self identity (being) from the act of teaching (doing) is described as 'performance' (Osborn, et al., 2000; Troman, 2000). At another level, however, it is possible to argue that as self-improvers saw obtaining academic qualifications as a route to self-fulfilment, they had internalised the performance value system.

The link between relational identity and competence pedagogy that is outlined in table 1 did not hold for these Tanzanian teachers. Jessop & Penny (1998) also indicated a breakdown in this link when they hesitated to accept at face value relational teachers' claims to child-centred practice given that they lacked a professional vocabulary to link values to curriculum. Relaters claim an interest in aspects of competence pedagogy, whilst demonstrating a restricted understanding of educational purpose as following the syllabus and preparing children for examination success. Their relational view of children pins them down in the present, so that there is what Jackson (1968/1990:147), writing about English teachers, called a "here-and-nowness" quality to their talk. Bernstein associated competence pedagogies with a

flexible emphasis on present experience. Lacking flexibility relaters' absorption in the immediate and present paradoxically draws them into an unreflective acceptance of performance goals for education, which is reinforced by their identification with parents' ambitions for their children to enter secondary school. By contrast, vocation teachers believe that restricted educational processes can achieve an extended range of educational goals or benefits. On the basis of their own experience, they believe in the transformative power of literacy and numeracy together with some basic general knowledge open up a broad range of present and future benefits to children.

The relaters' pedagogic practice reflect the influence of development agencies over education discourse within Tanzania, exercised both through localised projects that target pedagogic improvement and through participation in centralised policy-making (Kiernan, 1995; Buchert, 1997; Kuder, 2004). Older relaters were able to compare the "new participation" to participative techniques used in the seventies, summarising similarities and differences (for more on findings related to pedagogy from this research project see Barrett, forthcoming). So, the enthusiasm for participation amongst Tanzanian teachers can be interpreted as deference, with difference, to pedagogic tradition. Initiatives aiming to promote competence pedagogies could similarly show deference to national and local pedagogical traditions by contextualising new teaching techniques. There is also scope to capitalise on the fact that a great many teachers view themselves as 'child-centred' by encouraging teachers to reflect on the relationship between their espoused values and classroom practice. This process should challenge a narrow focus on 'passing examinations' as the ultimate goal of classroom teaching.

Deference: Intergenerational movement in teacher identity

Teachers with less than ten years experience were concentrated in the relaters and self-improvers group, whilst the longer serving teachers were divided between the relaters and vocation groups. Young teachers still espouse, or defer to, many of the traditional values of the teaching profession in Tanzania, expressed more fully by the vocational teachers. However, they have adapted these to changing social and professional contexts. So, for example, they consider it important to appear smart but younger teachers rationalise this in terms of their relationship with pupils and not their status within the community. The social and professional identities of teachers are becoming more detached, most especially in urban schools, where when they leave the compound at the end of the school day, teachers are much less visible to pupils and their parents. This is because they live alongside other non-manual workers and often at a distance from the school. Self-improvers' reluctance to identify with their occupation may also be related to their age as, like their European counterparts (Sikes, 1985; Nias, 1989:68; Huberman, 1993) teachers gradually commit to and identify with teaching over a period of several years.

At the same time, however, distinct changes in teachers' shared sense of occupational identity are occurring. The individualist logic of neo-liberalism is taking over from socialist paternalism or, as Towse *et al.* (2002) argue in their study of student teachers, "I" is supplanting "we". Distanced from the rhetoric of socialism and religious-like dedication, which was deliberately reinforced by certain teacher training texts (e.g. Mwaduma, 1991), younger teachers look for personal gratification from teaching. This they may find within the classroom and amongst their colleagues but are less likely than in the past to find in relations with the local community or a claim

to social status. The performance model of professionalism that self-improvers tend to take up is currently being promoted by public sector reform programme and an associated discourse of 'good governance' amongst civil servants. This programme is not explicitly targeted at teachers. As changing context weakens the perceived relevance of the vocation discourse, teachers are increasingly claiming a contract-based model of professionalism. Teachers, who feel that government has in the past used a rhetoric of self-sacrifice to exhort teachers to work for low pay in difficult conditions, hope a contract-based model will protect their rights as employees.   On the other hand, this model could be used by the education administration to strengthen accountability and combat misconduct but only if salaries and other official benefits are agreed in consultation with the teachers' union and always paid on schedule (see Anangisye & Barrett, 2005).

The shift towards a performance model of professionalism may also, in part, be attributed to raising the minimum academic requirements for entrance to teacher training. Newly qualified teachers have now spent much of their youth living in cosmopolitan environments, either in towns or boarding schools and then teachers' college, which is residential. The trade-off for recruiting teachers with stronger academic credentials, is that they are less well prepared for living in rural environments and tend to express greater job dissatisfaction (a finding supported by Cooksey et al.'s survey of teachers, , 1991). The door has been closed on people coming from the same sections of society as did most of today's vocation teachers.

Hedges (2002) investigating newly qualified teachers in Ghana, has highlighted the importance of first posting on teacher identity. Improved support to young teachers posted to remote schools, most especially poor performing schools with weak management, might reduce the prevalence of estrangement amongst young teachers. In order to meet the demands of rapid expansion in enrolments, a 'crash programme' for training teachers was introduced in 2002. Students spend the first year studying in a residential college and the second year posted to schools but under the supervision of their headteacher and a teacher trainer from their college. If these mentoring relationships work, a programme designed as compromise may have the unexpected benefit of raising commitment and job satisfaction. However, the support given to these trainees clearly depends on the strength of leadership and collegial culture in the school to which they are posted as well as the capacity of the college tutors to regularly visit all their students. If the transition rate to secondary education is substantially increased, as the Government of Tanzania plans, then in the long term this should become less of an issue as the social profile of secondary school graduates broadens.

International policy implications

The internationalisation of educational policy has been analysed from various theoretical perspectives (e.g. Samoff, 1999; McGrath & King, 2004; Tikly, 2004). Yet, as Steiner-Khamsi (2003:156) says, "the stories of resisting, modifying and indigenizing imported educational goods have not been sufficiently told." Coherence in Tanzanian primary school teachers' constructions of their occupational identity is provided by a shared dissatisfaction with employment conditions and deference to older models of what being a teacher means. This is deference with *différance* because it does not prevent teachers from responding to their changing contexts, including specific policies, programmes and projects. Within the field of comparative

education, scholars have responded to the homogenisation of education policy by pointing out the contextualised nature of education processes (Crossley & Jarvis, 2000). Contextualised policies must include deference to the past at the same time as changing practice and models of professionalism into something different. For policymakers and researchers alike, this demands a respect or deference for teachers' own working out of *différance*, the continual organic process of negotiating new identities for themselves.

Conclusion

Derrida used *différance* to suggest how meaning is never complete but always moving to encompass other meanings. The conflation of the double meaning of the English word 'deference' with *différance*, at the beginning of this paper, is itself an example of this. *Différance* with all its ambiguities, challenges essentialised descriptions that freeze teacher identity at the same time as linking past, present and future representations. Typologies or categorisations are useful means of description but always threaten to fix or essentialise the identities they seek to describe. The advantage of Venn diagram for representing categories is that its spaces for overlaps expand the boundaries between categories. Hence, the overlaps between the three different types of Tanzanian primary school teacher identity represent places where identity is negotiated. There is also space on the margins for discourses or individuals that do not fit the categorisation, so that limitations of the imposed order can be made transparent. Tracing the coherences between the three teacher types it has been possible to see how younger teachers refer to older models of teacher identity, hence creating a coherence over time and space. The points of coherence however do not diminish the differences, even contradictions, between the types. Coherence with difference can also be traced across countries, with Anglophone countries, both in the West and Sub-Saharan Africa sharing a the binary between the relational covenant-based view of teaching and the instrumental contract-based view. However, these two views are rendered differently in different contexts. This understanding of *différance* that embraces coherence, deference and difference reminds us that teacher identity is not homogenous, static and unchanging. On the other hand, neither is it is disconnected from past traditions. Therefore, whilst teachers will respond to the educational ideas promoted by international organisations, such as performance professionalism, child-centred practices and human rights education, they will also continue to be influenced by current and past models of practice and professionalism. Given this, change needs to be negotiated and not just imposed and teachers need to be allowed to reference new practices to current ones.

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