Positioning Diversity in Kenyan Schools

Teaching in the Face of Inequality and Discrimination

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AFRICAN MINDS

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1

> 'I always say this: A teacher can change a society.'
> (Research participant)

Education can play a central role in providing opportunities and in improving life for all people. Hence, great efforts have been made to realise the United Nations' Education for All agenda and to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education' for all (as stated in Sustainable Development Goal 4).[1] In the *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (African Union Commission 2015) education is highlighted as key for empowering the youth and children (and for developing their potential) and for the well-being of all people. However, schools, as the main providers of formal education, have increasingly come into question concerning their role in manifesting and perpetuating social inequalities rather than reducing fragmentations, social categorisations and hierarchies. The Unesco World Inequality Database on Education[2] reveals the vast disparities in countries concerning access to (and success in) education between, for example, rural and urban, female and male, rich and poor, children and youth. The United Nations Development Programme points out that inequalities often start before birth and 'accumulate through life, often reflecting deep power imbalances' – with education, education policy and

institutions playing a key role in reproducing or transforming inequalities 'formed deep in history' (2019: 10).

In Kenya, severe disparities in education achievement exist between different socially and geographically positioned groups (Ng'asike 2019; Unesco 2020[3]). Monitoring reports show that the best and the worst performing districts in East Africa are in Kenya.[4] Because of its social diversity, inequality and disparities in education, Kenya was a particularly interesting case for this study, which puts teachers at its centre. Teachers' experiences and professional practices in dealing with diversity and inequality and, thus, their potential for redirecting society towards equality, are the focus of this book.

Social diversity and inequalities as a challenge for education

Questions of social disparity and social cohesion are debated extensively by educationists around the world who seek ways for education systems to respond to the social inequality and increasing social fragmentation that destabilise democracies (Banks & Banks 2019; Spreen & Vally 2006; Walgenbach 2017). Over the past decades, these debates have increasingly employed the notion of *diversity* as an analytical perspective that has been generated in scientific and philosophical contexts as well as in political and social movements since the 1960s. Diversity emerged as a concept closely linked to the struggle for recognition and participation by marginalised social groups, and inherently connected to questions of social (in)equality. Referring to its origins, Vertovec states:

> Contemporary scholarship on diversity condenses and builds upon decades of significant empirical and theoretical work surrounding key concepts like race, gender and sexuality as well as subjects such as discrimination, social movements and social inequality. (Vertovec 2014: 1)

Scientific interest in diversity in education settings relates to the empirical and theoretical analysis of social categorisations regarding

identities and affiliations and their interplay. Thus, group-centred diversity approaches foreground how education systems and schools discriminate and misrepresent specific social groups, and how these structures and mechanisms can be transcended to achieve equality, more social justice and less discrimination (Banks 2015; Ladson-Billings 2014; Sayed & Ahmed 2011; Walgenbach 2017). This includes efforts to equip schools and teachers to cater for groups of learners who do not meet what is considered the 'norm' in a particular school or education system. Special needs education, culturally responsive pedagogy, refugee, girl-child or multicultural education approaches have, among others, shaped some of the thinking around heterogeneity and diversity in schools in past decades.

Looking from another angle at discrimination and inequality in education, power-critical approaches focus on the social mechanisms, including the power relations and discourses, that (re)produce inequality between different societal groups – aiming to deconstruct these mechanisms and dissolve boundaries. These deconstructionist or power-centred approaches interrogate the ways in which differences concerning, for example, gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation or ability are constructed and become significant with regard to education and social inequality.

Intersectionality provides a framework to integrate multiple axes of difference in their simultaneous and interconnected effects. It serves as a lens to view group constructions as fluid, temporary and flexible rather than essentialised and homogeneous. When focusing on the contested space of distorted power relations and on the oppressive systems and discourses that produce axes of difference in a society, schools and teachers cannot be regarded as neutral players; they must be seen as entangled in these configurations that produce social inequality.

Synergistically, the two main concerns of diversity in education are, first, to affirm different social identities and categories referring to ethnicity, class, gender, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, age and so forth – and to acknowledge that these are powerful in shaping educational processes. This includes rearrangement of

the contents, methods and organisational aspects of learning and teaching towards accommodating this diversity. Second, diversity in education intends to criticise and deconstruct differentiations, categorisations and boundary-making along specific axes of difference with their impact on particular identities, and to sensitise learners about the social mechanisms that produce inequality. This includes the development of diversity-related competencies that aim to combat discrimination, marginalisation and hierarchisation of specific groups and identities in a society.

Focusing specifically on the nexus of diversity and education, this book analyses diversity in schools and the ways in which teachers perceive, experience and respond to social diversity in their professional practice. The theoretical concepts used to look at the research problem are set in the critical interpretivist paradigm in which reality is seen as being subjective and constructed on the basis of power relations:

- *Intersectionality* interrogates the structures and discourses that produce social boundaries and categorisations that intersect and emerge as powerful with regard to inequality and discrimination in education.
- The *postcolonial lens* offers perspectives that consider colonial continuities to be a still-influential, powerful oppressive system when looking at diversity and education in Kenya – aiming to find areas for decolonisation.
- *Critical diversity* and *critical pedagogy* focus on process orientation for strategies and solutions: how educational practice can be geared towards (more) social justice and equality.

Drawing on these theoretical avenues, the aim of this book is to gain deeper insights into the ways in which teachers perceive and experience diversity, and how schools accommodate diversity in their institutional frameworks and practices.

The concept of *diversity* has been criticised for its openness and lack of theoretical and conceptual clarity (Vertovec 2014).

Pointing to the need for contextualised research, 'we must move past intuitive notions of what diversity means for teaching and teacher education to more research-based approaches to innovation and improvement' (Ladson-Billings 2011: 396). Given the lack of clarity and analytical rigour, as well as the dearth of research on what diversity in educational contexts implies, I have chosen a grounded theory case study design to approach my subject of interest. This develops diversity categories and conceptualisations relevant to the specific context from the data – instead of interrogating predetermined categories of difference.

Through initial discussions with Kenyan teachers about challenges concerning various issues of social inequality and diversity, it became clear that these factors significantly affected the professional practices of teachers in Kenya – and that severe inequalities concerning educational opportunities exist, depending on specific social identities and geographical positions. One component of diversity stood out in the Kenyan context: the axis of difference concerning ethnic group affiliation, and its politicised ethnicism (referred to as 'tribalism'). As Nyairo points out, postcolonial Kenya is grappling with ethnolinguistic group affiliations that are 'repeatedly misrepresented as a marker of fixed identity' (2015: 273), reducing individuals to the representation of ethnic blocs in many spheres of public life, and shaping their chances in various ways. These representations often go hand in hand with politicisation, ethnic stereotyping, tensions and conflicts over resources and political power. Nderitu also emphasises the role of tribalism when thinking about diversity in Kenya:

> Kenya eats, sleeps and dreams 'Tribe'. 'Tribe' is the determining factor for many social, economic and especially political decisions in Kenya … Due to the history of a Kenya that is defined by ethnic divisions, 'tribe' has become the organising principle of politics. (Nderitu 2018b: 20)

Consequently, these divisions also affect educational institutions[5] (Alwy & Schech 2004). At the same time, the country's sociocultural

and epistemological diversity can be seen as an abundant resource with significant potential for human development.

Kenyan education policies stress the role of education in general, and schools in particular, in promoting peace and appreciation of the country's diversity. The Kenyan Ministry of Education (MoE) wants schools to become 'channels of cultural integration' and promoters of diversity in unity, nondiscrimination, peace and inclusion (Republic of Kenya 2012: 14). The guiding principles and national goals of education also emphasise the role of schools in fostering the appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity and in eliminating hate speech and tribalism.[6] Hence, Kenyan schools are tasked to find ways to conciliate its (culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, etc.) diverse society – to achieve the country's goal that education be a major contributor to building an inclusive, democratic and nondiscriminatory society.

Thinking and theorising about diversity in an African context, with its history of colonisation and anti-colonial struggles, can be daunting because many of the social categories and discriminatory practices found today can be traced back to their invention and misuse by European colonisers. This also applies to the rigid ethnic identities that were defined, ascribed and used for various divide-and-rule purposes and policies by the colonisers (wa-Mungai & Gona 2010). This study draws on postcolonialism to interrogate today's social categorisations as being closely connected to Kenya's history of racial oppression, colonisation and anti-colonial struggle. The postcolonial lens, with its central notion of *othering*, offers a tool to scrutinise colonial continuities in teaching practice and institutional frameworks. The relevance of including postcolonialism relates to interpretation of the findings and also, to reflection on the research process itself. My position as an outsider to the research context (being a white German academic moving in the distorted power relations between the North and the South with the former's long tradition of exploitation and knowledge extraction for the benefit of Europeans) requires conscious reflection on the intentions, methods and outcomes

of the research process. For instance, one could argue that the concept of education as schooling is not, in itself, an African concept. Precolonial African education systems were replaced by imported formal Western education in the form of schooling and enforced by the colonial powers (Ki-Zerbo 1990). After colonial rule, the Kenyan government and education ministry made some effort to integrate indigenous knowledge and mother tongue-based teaching into the school system as basis for nondiscrimination and inclusion. However, the Western system and languages still prevail in formal education settings (Owuor 2007) and are, in most cases, determinants of the opportunities people have in life. Consequently, postcolonial educational inequality remains a serious problem given that education, globally and locally, is deeply involved in political struggles over the distribution of resources and plays a major role in dividing societies into the haves and the have-nots. Formal education confers ideological and structural power to control the means of producing, consuming and accumulating symbolic and material resources (Brock-Utne 2002; Ginsburg & Lindsay 1995). Therefore, selection, exclusion and conformity need to be investigated as integral parts of any formal education system.

In so doing, this study of diversity in postcolonial Kenyan school contexts from the teachers' perspectives follows a critical paradigm and intends to instigate transformations towards decolonising education and towards social justice. My involvement over several years in university-based cooperation projects between German, South and East African universities and our joint activities in teaching, learning, capacity building and teacher professional development in the 'East and South African-German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management', provided the basis for this study. It also facilitated constant exchange and discussions about teacher education, curriculum development and education research in African contexts.

The main questions that emerged for me from this cooperation and exchange were the following:

1. How is diversity experienced and interpreted by teachers in their professional practice in postcolonial Kenya?
2. What are the drivers, strategies and consequences of experienced diversity in Kenyan schools?
3. Which strategies for schools and teachers can be recommended to help reduce the reproduction of social inequalities in schools?

To achieve a contextualised understanding of the meaning of diversity from the teachers' perspectives, I use Vertovec's (2014) framework, which distinguishes between the configurations, representations and encounters of diversity. To find answers to the questions above, I interviewed Kenyan teachers (in public primary or secondary schools), using elements of narrative inquiry and the problem-centred interview technique. In the narrative section of the interviews, the teachers talk about their biographical experiences of diversity, discrimination and exclusion based on their own identities (see Chapter 4). These narratives offer insights into the representations and encounters of diversity in the Kenyan context; they can also be regarded as a resource for teachers in their professional teaching practice. The problem-centred interview section focuses on the teachers' diversity-related experiences and professional practices as teachers in various Kenyan schools (Chapter 5). The data were organised, coded and theoretically sampled according to grounded theory methodology (Charmaz 2014a), which falls into place with the critical interpretivist paradigm. This process guided the way towards the development of a grounded theory of diversity in education in postcolonial Kenyan school contexts focusing on the teachers' professional practices.

The book is presented as follows: Chapter 2 sketches the theoretical avenues for researching diversity in education in order to flesh out the critical interpretivist paradigmatic stance and sensitising concepts relevant to the research. The sensitising concepts helped clarify the notions of diversity and relevant theories that I used as a lens to guide the construction of a grounded theory.

In order to demarcate the case, namely schools and teachers in postcolonial Kenya, Chapter 3 outlines developments in the Kenyan education sector, as well as education disparities and axes of difference that can be identified from the literature. It includes findings of previous empirical research on diversity in education in Kenya, identifies the research gap and discusses the methodological and ethical implications for this study.

The findings from the interviews with the teachers concerning the configurations, representations and encounters of diversity in the Kenyan postcolonial education context are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 focuses on the research participants' diversity experiences growing up and going to school; Chapter 5 presents their diversity experiences and practices as professional teachers. The categories that emerged from the data as significant axes of difference and social categorisations (including the ways in which they have affected the teachers' lives, education and teaching) are described using examples of the different types of diversity encounters.

Chapter 6 comprises the construction of contextualised theory from the categories found in the data in relation to the theoretical lens of the study. To develop the theoretical model, I used the coding paradigm suggested by grounded theory scholars Strauss and Corbin (1998), which provides a structure for putting the central findings in relation to each other. The theoretical model developed to answer my research question includes

- context factors and how they affect the schools and teachers in terms of diversity (these offer insights into the configurations of diversity in the Kenyan school context);
- causal factors or drivers for the question of how diversity is experienced by teachers in schools (these offer insights into the representations of diversity in the Kenyan school context);
- intervening conditions (conceptualised as the teachers' biographies) and strategies with regard to diversity, including their consequences (these offer insights into the encounters of diversity).

The final chapter, Chapter 7, synthesises the results and the study's contributions to the related debates. It draws conclusions about the potential implications of diversity in education in a more general sense. It also highlights recommendations derived from the findings – and signals new avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Diversity in Education

2

In recent years, the theorising of multiple forms of social difference under the term *diversity* has also become of interest to the field of education research because it enables specific angles for recognising, looking at and deconstructing inequality and disadvantage. Yet, thinking about difference in educational settings, and especially in schools, is not new. Existing theoretical avenues that draw on current debates mainly in the United States, South Africa and Euorpe help to better understand and analyse the biographically and professionally related diversity perceptions, experiences and professional practices of Kenyan teachers. In European countries, the notion of diversity in education has been mainly of interest from migration-centred and anti-racist perspectives. I will include some of these debates exemplary from Germany because they provide relevant deconstructionist perspectives for this book.[7]

Diversity: What kind of difference?

Diversity has a long tradition in various disciplines and subject fields: genetic diversity, workplace diversity, biological diversity, human diversity, cultural diversity and many other diversities have been subjects of study. Hence, Walgenbach (2017) talks of diversity as a travelling concept between disciplines and regions, lately gaining influence in education sciences outside the Anglo-

American language area. The various discourses, concepts, policies and strategies referring to diversity illustrate the current popularity of the term in various political, social, educational, scientific and private business arenas:

> While it can [be] argued whether or not the present is actually characterized by more social difference than earlier periods, one thing is for sure: the current period is pervaded with discourses about diversity. (Vertovec 2012: 287)

Vertovec (2014) ascribes the immense interest in diversity partly to the success of identity-based political and public campaigns such as, for example, women's, African American, anti-apartheid, LGBTIQ, disability-based and other movements around the world. Similarly, Czollek et al. (2009) state that the notion of diversity as generated in scientific and philosophical concepts, as well as in political and social movements in the US and elsewhere in the 1960s, is closely linked to the struggle for the recognition and participation of marginalised social groups. It is therefore inherently connected to questions of social (in)equality (Banks 2015; Czollek et al. 2009).

The basic definition of diversity, found in the Merriam Webster dictionary, is:

> The condition of having or being composed of differing elements, e.g. the inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization.[8]

Diversity as variety, multiplicity of difference, dissimilitude or unlikeness in a sociological framing focuses on social and cultural diversity and, hence, on collective identities as opposed to genetic aspects of difference (Haring-Smith 2012).

A significant body of literature on diversity in education refers to international debates on inclusion, the right to quality education for all and special needs education (Ainscow et al. 2019). According to Hauenschild et al. (2013), diversity represents

a discourse about social differences and broaches the issue of adequate political, educational, economic and legal responses to pluralistic societies (Hauenschild et al. 2013). In this sense, diversity refers to individual and group characteristics, which are partly innate, partly individually acquired and partly effective through laws and institutional practice like class, sex, nationality, religion, (dis)ability or age. Leiprecht (2017) points out that diversity has partly substituted terms like *heterogeneity*, which in the binary construction of homogeneity/heterogeneity turned out to be problematic in public discourse because heterogeneity has been mostly regarded as not 'normal' but a problem. Unlike heterogeneity, diversity generally has a positive connotation, and the fact that it does not have a negative antonym allows for a wide range of interpretations (Leiprecht 2017; Vertovec 2014) – which may be another explanation for its recent popularity in various disciplines. This also suggests a general difficulty to understand diversity analytically and study it empirically given inherent normativity. Riegel (2012) points out that (socially constructed) differences in a society become significant through their social implications because they mark symbolic boundaries and structure the society in a hierarchical manner. So, what is the main focus of studies looking at social diversity?

Diversity studies: Moving in ambivalent spaces

In his *Handbook for Diversity Studies*, Vertovec explains this as the study of

> modes of social differentiation: how categories of difference are constructed, manifested, utilized, internalized, socially reproduced – and what kind of social, political and other implications and consequences they produce. (2014: 10)

Questions around modes of social differentiation investigate, for example, categorisations, social inequality, in-group/out-group, self-ascription and ascription by others, group and category,

symbolic and social boundaries, identity and intersectionality (Vertovec 2014). The empirical and theoretical work that diversity studies builds on refers to concepts such as race, gender, sexuality and subjects like discrimination, social inequality, status distinctions and social movements. However, Vertovec (2014) highlights that challenges arise when academics attempt to probe diversity analytically and critically whilst, at the same time, the term is used normatively or instrumentally in the public – often without clear content or overall direction. Further, diversity in the social sciences does not come with an elaborated and broadly shared theoretical framework – which holds true for educational sciences as well.

Cooper (2004) identifies a number of theoretical dilemmas and challenges with diversity that emerge at the intersection of values, collective identity and social structure. One of these is the identification of criteria that determine whether particular forms of social treatment and practice can be considered a social relation analogous to gender or class, and whether bias, prejudice or discrimination is sufficient evidence for this social relationship. Cooper (2004) argues that, in the framework of equality, it is too broad to merely look at a group's experience of oppression given that any group that experiences oppression or discrimination – even if the group's choices, identities or preferences are perceived as socially harmful – could present themselves as disadvantaged and call for an end to oppression. Hence, Cooper (2004) advocates differentiation between specific constituencies in terms of inequality on analytical and normative levels. This would include recognition of the relationship to dominant constituencies and discourses of normalisation (Cooper 2004). Concern for multiple forms of inequalities rooted in recognition of multiple forms of social difference needs to be negotiated in democratic societies relative to the question: 'Which differences should be supported (because they challenge social relations of inequality and domination) and which should not?' (Fraser 1997). Cooper (2004) argues for a more structural approach to looking at differences by evaluating the mainstream, the common

and normal as institutionalised, systemic processes through which differences arise – instead of putting groups, their practices and identities at the centre of study.

In a more general sense, Vertovec points to the opportunities of the concept of diversity, stating that it

> can help scholars think about modes of difference, their differentiated qualities, the processes that surround them and the ways that they are negotiated in social practice. (Vertovec 2014: 6)

Research into diversity is confronted with a number of questions and ambiguities, namely, diversity's boundaries and values – which and how many differences to look at, and which to neglect, and how to distinguish between differences that should be encouraged and those to be discouraged. This accompanies the question of whether to include or exclude a normative basis and, thus, delegitimise certain forms of difference. Research into diversity and diversity concepts also moves in an ambivalent space where group identities, social categorisations and differentiations are utilised and reproduced through defining, and often naturalising or essentialising, differences. What seems imperative in conceptualising diversity research is to ask ourselves how the wider normative context of the struggles for equality and diversity, power relations and normativity should be included (Cooper 2004; Leiprecht 2017; Vertovec 2014).

Like most authors, Thomas Faist (2014) discerns a difference between diversity as a management technique in organisations, and diversity that raises questions of social inequality in the sense of power struggles along the boundaries of, for example, gender, class, ethnicity, religion and age. Understanding diversity in the latter sense allows for tracing the mechanisms through which diversities or differences turn into social inequalities (Faist 2014).

Mecheril and Tißberger (2013) note that scientific interest in diversity refers to the empirical and theoretical analysis of social categorisations regarding identities and group affiliations and their interplay. Understanding the diversity of differences as constitutive

of social realities and institutional contexts, the concept of diversity enables the incorporation of gender, ethnic, cultural, generational (etc.) regimes in its concern (Mecheril and Tißberger 2013).

Group-centred or deconstructionist?

Approaches that seek to understand diversity in the context of the (re)production of social inequalities and power relations can be distinguished as group-centred or deconstructionist approaches (Cooper 2004). Minorities' attempts to secure equality of participation and power commonly centre on their shared group identity. These emancipatory and transformatory approaches to diversity originating from the group-centred approach are opposed by system-centred or deconstructionist concepts of diversity that reject group recognition as the basis for their politics. They argue that emphasis on group identities and politics based on group recognition valorises false commonalities within, and creates rigid boundaries between, collectives – which ultimately limits, and does not encourage, diversity (Cooper 2004; Squires 2006). Another challenge that Cooper (2004) identifies concerning the group-centred approach encompasses that of minority groups using the language of group rights to promote disagreeable and reactionary forms of difference, for example, right-wing forces that make their entitlement claims; she also censures that group-centred approaches promote the assumption that groups are homogeneous and discrete. Hence, critique of group centredness – and taking subjective group perception of oppression and discrimination as grounds for accepting group demands as legitimate – has been expressed on the grounds that it becomes almost impossible to distinguish between radical and reactionary articulations of diversity. In this context, concerns have been raised for diversity theorists to critically reflect on the normative basis and on power asymmetries for theorising diversity (Cooper 2004).

To avoid some of these challenges, deconstructionist or system-centred approaches to diversity pursue the elimination of social classifications altogether. This again raises the question of how

deconstructing systemic factors and interrogating social structures can help to identify and address social inequalities and their effects. Focusing on social dynamics, which produce the organising principles of inequality, means to neglect the perspectives group-centred approaches offer in terms of the analysis of social inequalities and political representation, as well as the perspectives for transformation and greater equality. Cooper (2004) points to the limitations of both – the group-centred and system-centred approach – and proposes a social dynamic approach to inequality that focuses on individuals rather than groups, and where certain divisions emerge as organising principles of inequality to frame the study of diversity. By doing so, she shifts the focus from issues of group recognition to the organising principles of power, and to processes that prohibit equal participation and equip individuals with different capacities to shape the social and physical world around them. Hence, the interplay of values, collective identity and social structures, as well as their individual representation and reflection, are the focus of this approach (Cooper 2004).

Similarly, Fraser (1997) has argued that, in order to judge the value of different differences, we need to interrogate their relationship to inequality and social justice. She also points out that claims for social justice have increasingly divided themselves into two types: the first type seeks a more just distribution of resources (e.g. between the North and the South, the rich and the poor); the second type refers to the politics of recognition:

> Here the goal, in its most plausible form, is a difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect … This type of claim has recently attracted the interest of political philosophers, moreover, some of whom are seeking to develop a new paradigm of justice that puts recognition at its centre. (Fraser 2009: 72)

According to Fraser, claims for redistribution and recognition are rarely conceptualised together – which she attributes to the tendency to decouple cultural politics of difference from

the social politics of equality. This, she argues, is not adequate because conceptualising justice today needs both recognition and redistribution (Fraser 2009). Combining recognition/representation and redistribution when looking at social justice and diversity is particularly relevant for this case study, which looks at the Kenyan context (see Chapter 3).

Another group-centred approach to investigating diversity in the context of social inequality refers to the construction of status:

> A mere difference between people becomes a status difference when status beliefs develop that associate greater social esteem and competence with people in one category than with those from another and these beliefs become widely disseminated throughout a population. (Ridgeway et al. 2009: 44)

The status construction theory formulated by Cecilia Ridgeway (2018), building on former works on status and status construction, focuses on the development of shared beliefs about social differences that lay the basis for unequal treatment. If these beliefs, biases and prejudices based on gender, skin colour or ethnicity towards groups and individuals are widely shared, they become a status difference and consequential for social inequality (Ridgeway 2018). However, questions on how groups themselves, and the biases and prejudices attached to them, are constructed in the context of a wider notion of power relations are not the focus of status construction theory.

Thomas Faist suggests focusing on the categorisations of heterogeneities and on the social mechanisms that link the initial condition (heterogeneity or diversity) and the effect (inequalities):

> Examples of social mechanisms significant for the (re-)production of inequalities are – in addition to boundary making – exclusion, opportunity-hoarding, exploitation and hierarchization … while inclusion, redistribution, de-hierarchization and 'catching up' constitute mechanisms which can further equality between categories of persons and groups. (Faist 2014: 266)

With these different perspectives and ambiguities in mind, Vertovec (2014) suggests a framework for researching diversity employing a deconstructionist approach that encompasses

- configurations of diversity – all structural and external conditions including policies, laws, geography that 'enable or constrain peoples' opportunities for action and social or physical mobility' (Vertovec 2014: 15);
- representations of diversity – understood as social concepts, categories, discourses, hegemonic narratives that stem from and reflect power relations in a society; and
- encounters of diversity – human interactions, relations, communications, networks and conflicts.

The configurations–representations–encounters approach provides a useful theoretical framing for analysing diversity as it occurs on different levels of the Kenyan education context.

Critique of diversity

The concept of *diversity* has been criticised for its conceptual vagueness and for a number of other problematic connotations, found particularly in affirmative management approaches that uncritically reproduce social categories and collective identities. Diversity, as used in the public discourse and the business sector, refers to practically any category of difference – often going along with normative programmes and a celebratory rhetoric (Vertovec 2014). In an economic understanding, diversity is seen mainly as a concept that helps companies to become more productive, to tie certain social groups to their corporate identity and to become more competitive in the globalised market (Czollek et al. 2009; Steyn 2014). This largely management-related concept of diversity focuses on different social and individual identities in the context of organisations or corporations. Questions of inequality or power differences are almost absent in this notion of diversity (Vertovec 2014). Following from the explications above, other causes for

criticism of diversity include the risk of equalising differences and experiences of discrimination and oppression of various groups. It can also mask marginality and shift the attention from inequality to 'feel-good' measures, often referring to cultural markers alone. Another angle of criticism is that diversity potentially reinforces normativity, can be patronising and often is used merely as a formality or façade.

Framing diversity

These problematic connotations and warranted criticism of *diversity* call for a definition and delimitation for this particular investigation. The notion of diversity as it is used in this book frames diversity as the variety of collective identities and multiple groupings or social categorisations (e.g. ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic and cultural categories) and their significance – including social practices generating and dealing with these categorisations in a given society. These practices cannot be separated from prevalent power relations and dynamics and they include discriminatory, excluding and separating, as well as inclusive, productive and cooperative ways of dealing with varieties and social categories.

Diversity perspectives in education and school contexts

Teaching and learning commonly take place in contexts characterised by social and cultural difference, structured along hierarchies and inequalities on various levels (Riegel 2012; Walgenbach 2017). Schools reflect this social diversity along various categories (gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, (dis) ability, home languages etc.) in their students and teachers. In such settings, schools cannot be considered neutral operators or mere recipients of the social diversity conveyed to them, but as actors in the process of (re)producing, co/deconstructing differences and their meanings (Hormel & Scherr 2009; Walgenbach 2017). Attempts to conceptually grasp various differences between learners

in schools have been addressed under the term heterogeneity and, lately, diversity. Yet Riegel (2012) points out that education and schools rarely consider diversity adequately in their institutional frameworks.

The literature on diversity in education around the world reflects the increasing impact that rights-based and social movements, migration, globalisation, linguistic, religious, socio-cultural diversities as well as a diversification of lifestyles and identities have had on educational institutions (e.g. Appelbaum 2002; Banks 2015; Blommaert 2013; Clark 2020; Hauenschild et al. 2013; Ladson-Billings 1999; Leiprecht 2009; Lutz & Wenning 2001; Omodan & Ige 2021).

Historically, diversity perspectives have been put on the agenda by African–Americans, women and minority groups (particularly since the 1960s in the United States) who demanded that schools and other educational institutions reflect their experiences, cultures, histories and perspectives (Banks & Banks 2019). Influential concepts that developed from those debates are multicultural education (Banks & Banks 2019), anti-racism/anti-bias education (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey 2011; Gillborn 2006), social justice education (Adams & Bell 2016) and culturally relevant/responsive education (Ladson-Billings 2014). These include questions of appropriate teacher education and preparation for culturally diverse classrooms, as well as curriculum reform (Banks & Banks 2019; Sleeter & Cornbleth 2011).

Appelbaum (2002) regards diversity education as an enhancement of multicultural education that grew from political work in the United States in the 1960s. Since then, various critical works have informed multicultural education, including cultural studies, critical pedagogy and critical race theory. According to Appelbaum (2002), the term 'diversity education' reflects on these developments and refers to educational concepts that have been more fully informed by these works. Highlighting the commonalities of multicultural and diversity education, Appelbaum points out that they are:

> a framework for understanding and participating in the process of schooling: to think as a multiculturalist, pluralist or diversity educator is to understand education and schooling as a social, cultural and political activity. (Appelbaum 2002: xv)

In this reading, diversity education aims to build socially just societies where diverse identities are recognised and acknowledged, cultural and social differences handled in constructive ways and equal chances and opportunities granted to all individuals.

The view of diversity education as an enhancement of intercultural and multicultural, gender, special needs and other group-centred approaches to education is shared by other authors too (Leiprecht 2009). By embracing several categories of differentiation like, for example, class, gender and disability instead of looking only at one, diversity education builds on group-centred approaches and opens them up to a wider perspective on issues of difference and discrimination in education (Leiprecht 2009).

It can be said that educational concepts that seek to address difference and (cultural) heterogeneity have, in the past decades, revealed close links to academic, social and political discourses around human rights, integration, inclusion, racism, social justice and (anti-)discrimination. Generally, they aim to accommodate the experience and identities of diverse learners in educational institutions and want to create better understanding between 'different' people (Gogolin & Krüger-Potratz 2010). Historically, these concepts have developed along one specific line of difference to address particular target groups of learners whose identities are marginalised, not regarded as 'normal' and are discriminated against on structural and institutional levels. Consequently, concepts have emerged from particular social circumstances (especially in the United States, South Africa and Europe) in close response to questions regarding social inequalities, immigration and discrimination. The contexts for a number of these discussions have been aspects of decolonisation, cultural/ethnic diversity, especially in the US since the mid-1950s, in South Africa after the

end of apartheid in 1994, and in European countries as a response to increasing migration movements. On the issue of diversity in highly fragmented societies that look for social cohesion, Banks asserts that

> to create a shared civic community in which all groups participate and to which they have allegiance, steps must be taken to construct an inclusive national civic culture that balances unity and diversity. Unity without diversity results in cultural repression and hegemony. Diversity without unity leads to ethnic and cultural separatism and the fracturing of the nation state. (Banks 2015: xx)

That view expresses the debatable need for nation states to create a national identity, but not at the cost of individual and diverse cultural identities.

Since the early 1990s, efforts have been made to analytically consolidate questions relevant to particular target groups like girls/women, disabled people and marginalised cultural groups with regard to education (Hauenschild et al. 2013; Verma et al. 2007). Walgenbach (2017) distinguishes two fundamental approaches to diversity education, which have developed in the past decades and link with the different traditions and definitions of diversity mentioned above: (1) affirmative diversity and diversity-management approaches and (2) diversity approaches that focus on and critically analyse power relations. In an attempt to bring both approaches together in a common definition of diversity education, she points out that (a) diversity education aims to value social group characteristics and identities as a positive resource for educational institutions, and that (b) the educational objective of diversity education refers to the positive handling of diversity and the development of diversity competencies (Walgenbach 2017).

While affirmative diversity and diversity management approaches provide the overall framework for Walgenbach's (2017) definition, Hormel and Scherr (2005, 2009) place the conditions and (re)productions of social inequality and discrimination between

(socially constructed) groups at the centre of their conception of diversity education. From their analysis of the German immigration context, they argue that under conditions of social inequality, the central task of education and educational concepts is not to affirm differentiations but to enable a comprehensive debate about classifications and socially produced differentiations that serve as justification for discriminatory treatment (Hormel & Scherr 2005, 2009). Scherr (2011) considers diversity as a critical perspective that looks at the interconnectedness of social classifications with socio-economic inequalities and political power relations.

Approaches and concepts seeking to address particular educational challenges connected to discrimination, inequality, intercultural conflict, exclusion and academic achievement of minority groups have increasingly been discussed as diversity education. Whether diversity as a concept for education and educational research will develop further and prove to be useful for research with a particular focus on education remains to be seen. However, part of the recent success of diversity is its openness and ability to connect to various discourses. Depending on the paradigms and discourses that different diversity education concepts originate from, various approaches and goals have been followed, criticised and reworked, or have led to the development of new concepts (cf. Gogolin & Krüger-Potratz 2010; Lutz & Wenning 2001). Hormel and Scherr (2005) argue that in order to make structures of social inequality and its production visible, diversity approaches need to enable critique about generalisations, prejudices and stereotypes; reflect the imagined borders between groups as ambiguous and socially constructed; and enable communication about group differentiations that should be irrelevant. Hence, according to Hormel and Scherr (2009), diversity education cannot be reduced to relevant aspects of political education and social learning; it should, at the same time, aim to overcome structural and institutional forms of discrimination. To understand processes of discrimination on different levels, they suggest distinguishing between discrimination as (a) an individual practice, (b) a group practice, (c) a social practice based on cultural

attributions, (d) a legal practice based on laws and status groups, (e) an organisational practice based on specific normalities, which are organisation-specific and (f) a secondary practice based on education, social status, income and so forth (Hormel & Scherr 2009). Programmatically, they suggest using the core element of a human rights-based anti-discrimination approach, which allows for a reciprocal recognition amongst equals as the normative objective (Hormel & Scherr 2009).

While the critical analysis of and education about structures and (re)production of social inequalities and discrimination are in the focus of this approach, more affirmative concepts stress the competencies needed for dealing with diversity. From the context of affirmative intercultural and diversity education and management, various conceptual models of 'intercultural competence' have emerged, encompassing as a set of attitudes, skills, behaviour and knowledge supporting understanding and cooperation in culturally diverse settings (see e.g. Barrett 2011). While the often uncritically affirmative and essentialising notions of diversity and 'different cultures' applied in this context are problematic, specific components of what has been researched as valuable competencies and soft skills to successfully deal with social diversity can serve as a useful reference for this study. Adapted from an intercultural competence framework (Barrett 2011) for this study, the competencies to be developed in learners include:

- attitudes like valuing diversity, tolerance of ambiguity and respect for others in general;
- skills like communicative and conflict resolution skills, as well as empathy, self-reflexivity and multi-perspectivity;
- knowledge about historical, general cultural and political contexts, different perspectives and own prejudices and biases; and
- behaviours, including flexibility and adaptability and acting for the common good.

One can argue that these competencies are useful in any kind of context and society. However, when thinking about diversity

in education and particularly in schools, they remind us that it is not sufficient to teach children and young people about how diversity is constructed and used in an academic and cognitive way. The development of skills, attitudes and behaviours that will enable learners to build relations, live and cooperate with people of diverse backgrounds, and understand their own place and positionality in relation to others, will need other than purely academic approaches.

For the current debate on diversity in educational sciences, a number of concepts seem particularly influential. By drawing on the body of literature about heterogeneity, intersectionality, postcolonialism, critical diversity and critical pedagogy, the next section amplifies the theoretical lens for this investigation.

Heterogeneity

In school contexts, particularly in Europe, differences concerning individuals, groups or educational organisations have been widely addressed under the label of heterogeneity (different kinds) as opposed to its antonym, homogeneity (uniformity). According to various authors, heterogeneity has gained attention since the first programmes for international student assessments were carried out around the turn of the millennium, and which raised questions about the right way of dealing with heterogeneity in the school system and in class (Tillmann 2008; Walgenbach 2017). Heterogeneity focused on learners whose families had newly migrated into the education systems and who challenged some of the teaching practices and ways in which schooling was organised. Another aspect discussed referred to learners' different achievement levels and potentials, and whether selective or inclusive education based on potential achievement levels might produce better results. Discourses about heterogeneity in education take various positions when looking at differences in school settings: some refer to it as a challenge or a chance, others focus on social inequality, yet others try to understand the differences in a descriptive way and some highlight heterogeneity as a challenge for teaching and

instruction (Walgenbach 2017). Critique has been raised, for example, that discourse on heterogeneity is oriented towards a perceived 'normal development' of learners with a focus on the discrepancy between this perceived normality and learners' actual achievements and developments. This again neglects the impact of social inequality and disadvantages (Katzenbach & Börner 2016). Although the discourse on heterogeneity has developed an impact on discussions about differences in education, mainly in Europe, other concepts and perspectives have been adopted more prominently in the global context to voice the need for education to reflect on (social) differences and inequalities.

Various authors (e.g. Riegel 2012) see the need for schools to look beyond a perceived normality and problematic heterogeneity of learners in order not to take a deficit perspective on specific learners – and to look at the social structures, institutional and professional practices that produce specific disadvantages. In order to include such a diversity perspective in education and social work, intersectionality has become a powerful analytical tool.

Intersectionality

Developing specifically from American black feminism, intersectionality was born of the political-theoretical debates and struggles of the 1960s and 1970s in the US. First termed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality became a tool to simultaneously analyse and reflect on the relationships between different constructions such as race, gender and class – and the social positioning that accompanies these constructions and differentiations (Collins 1998; Crenshaw 1994). Using case analyses in legal studies, Crenshaw (1989) demonstrated that discrimination laws based on single-issue frameworks like gender or race did not do justice to the experiences of discrimination of (black/white) women. Hence, intersectionality became a tool to analyse and deconstruct overlapping and intersectional experiences of discrimination and subordination by including multiple identities and their social positioning (Walgenbach

2017). Leiprecht and Lutz (2015) emphasise that differences and social inequalities should be regarded as the result of power struggles and as discourses to legitimise oppression, exploitation and marginalisation.

Employing intersectionality as a perspective in social research therefore enables a view in which the interrelatedness and interdependency of different social categories like female and Muslim, with their modes of functioning, are brought to the centre. Intersectionality allows for research on groups formerly conceptualised as homogenous, for example, women in the US, to be seen as a heterogeneous group (white, black, lesbian, disabled, rich etc.) of women with a variety of different experiences connected to their social identities. For Yuval-Davis, intersectional analysis does not focus on specific marginalised people or ethnic minorities but is a valid approach for analysing social stratification altogether:

> What is clear is that when we carry out intersectional analysis, we cannot homogenize the ways any political project or claimings affect people who are differentially located within the same boundaries of belonging. (Yuval-Davis 2016: 369)

Brah and Phoenix highlight that intersectional analyses make social positionalities such as race visible and intersecting with other categories like class, gender or sexual orientation, and show that they are 'simultaneously subjective, structural and about social positioning and everyday practices' (2004: 75). By including power relations and conditions of dominance that produce and legitimise specific patterns of oppression, intersectionality studies go beyond looking at social inequalities. They, rather, seek to understand structural power relations like patriarchy, sexism, racism, classism, ableism and heteronormativity in their social and historical dimension and on the macro-, meso- and micro-levels (Walgenbach 2017). Intersectionality is thus a relational framework for mapping different inequalities, and an analytical concept that helps to unveil overlapping inequalities and the power

relations associated with difference *and* space dimensions (Riegel 2016). Walgenbach (2007) distinguishes these levels as follows:

- social structures (e.g. international and gendered role divisions of labour, state regulations, private vs. public property);
- institutions (e.g. schools, family, military, churches);
- symbolic systems (e.g. representations, norms, discourses, knowledge bases, practices of recognition, symbolic violence);
- social practices (e.g. interaction, performance, distinction, physical violence); and
- subject formations (e.g. identity, processes of subjectification, subject positions, social-psychological processes).

Intersectionality has also shaped educational debates and concepts in past years, together with a focus on multiple interrelated forms of discrimination in educational settings. It serves as a tool and lens for analysis and reflection of social categorisations and their constructions and reproductions, meanings and impacts in schools and other educational contexts (Leiprecht 2017). Leiprecht (2018) points out that intersectional analysis has also become an integral part of diversity-sensitive social work, which looks into the socially produced categorisations, boundary-making and discrimination that position specific identities in the centre – and others on the margins – of society. Consequently, it has become routine to analyse processes of group constructions and their homogenisation as well as distinctions and practices of essentialising differences (Leiprecht 2018). Thus, diversity perspectives and practices in education and social work using the concept of intersectionality centre on nondiscrimination, and against oppressive structures and practices (Leiprecht 2018). They can generally be regarded as an explicitly critical approach to power and social hierarchies, aiming to change the social conditions towards social equality in consideration and recognition of diversity.

Intersectional analysis also forms part of the set of tools adopted for critical diversity literacy, a framework that has developed in the African context (see below). Besides intersectionality, this framework

embraces postcolonial studies in its conception and reflects on the African context for looking at diversity. Before elaborating on the critical diversity framework, I will introduce postcolonialism as another sensitising concept relevant to this study.

Postcolonialism

The interdisciplinary field of postcolonial inquiry looks at the social, cultural, economic and identity processes of colonisation and decolonisation, liberation and the global system of hegemonic power – especially after the formal end of direct-rule colonisation and imperialism (Loomba 2015; Young 2016). The three most prominent figures to have inspired debates on postcolonialism are Edward Said (Orientalism), Gayatri Spivak (the subaltern) and Homi Bhaba (hybridity) (Varela & Dhawan 2015). Said (1978) examined the discourse on Orientalism as a Western projection in which people of the Orient are constructed as a counterpoint of Europeans – as the other. This Eurocentrism came with a positioning of the self positively. Oriental language, history and culture were studied within this framework of ontological and epistemological difference and positional superiority of Europe (Said 1978). While Said's theoretical contribution has been widely received in critical analysis of postcolonial relations, criticism has been raised that he remains stuck in the offender-victim dichotomy that does not take account of any ambiguousness or ambivalence.

In her influential essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Spivak (1994) focuses on the subaltern, namely, people not belonging to a hegemonic class – for example, people living in rural India. She criticises well-meaning Western intellectuals for their claim that the 'masses' could speak for themselves, which would mask the intellectuals' own position of power (Spivak 1994). She also points out that it is necessary to understand the logic of epistemologies in order to change them (Spvak 1994). In the context of development aid and North–South cooperation, postcolonial reflection means questioning the promise of the colonial mission to 'civilise' and bring a better life for everyone, and to break with the logic of

defining what a good life is in order to then participate in the 'help-business' (Spivak 2008; Varela 2010; Varela & Dhawan 2015).

The concept of hybridity, which originally meant a cross or a mixture (e.g. between different plants or cultures), has become prominent in the postcolonial discourse through Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall and others. Towards the end of the 18th century, hybridity formed the basis of a fearful discourse for mixing races. Later, in postcolonial discourse, hybridity has served to study the effects of mixing on culture and identity (Loomba 2015). Bhabha (2004) theoretically transformed the term hybridity into an active element of resistance against colonialism. According to her, hybridity posts a problem to colonial representation because it reverses the effects of colonial contempt in a way that makes space for the rejected other's knowledge to be included in the foundations of authority, dominance and oppression – and makes the presence of the colonial authority not immediately recognisable (Bhabha 2004). However, the concept of hybridity in postcolonial studies has been criticised for being linked to racist discourses in negative ways.

Loomba points out that colonialism took place in various types and forms and therefore colonial histories were experienced in many different ways, which also explains why postcolonialism carries different meanings around the world:

> We certainly cannot dismiss the critique that … 'postcolonialism' has become so heterogeneous and diffuse that it is impossible to satisfactorily describe what its study might entail. (2015: 5)

Varela and Dhawan (2015) suggest that postcolonial theory can be understood as the study of resistance to, and consequences of, colonisation that also interrogates processes of continuing decolonisation and re-colonisation – including the production of epistemic violence. Both Loomba (2015) and Varela and Dhawan (2015) highlight that colonialism and postcolonialism should not be seen as a linear process in which postcolonialism means *after* colonialism. This would not do justice to the complex and

conflicting processes and consequences of colonisation and new forms of accessing and exploiting the resources of former colonies.

Hauck (2012) summarises the three central convictions of the postcolonial discourse as being (1) anti-essentialist, and including the notion of hybridity of all cultural and social formations, (2) anti-Eurocentric, including the notion of a reciprocal constitution of the self and the other and (3) anti-colonial, including a firm conviction of the interdependency of modernisation/economic development on one side, and colonial/postcolonial stagnation on the other side.

While the concern of postcolonialism lies mainly with questions of racialised oppression and constructions of the other in postcolonial or migration settings, education as such is not in the prime focus of this debate. However, education is a central area for strategies of decolonialisation and ways to practically address structures and implications of postcolonialism. Unlike postcolonialism, the concept of intersectionality does not focus on one category such as ethnicity/race; it has widened the perspective by including the various social relations and their underlying processes of power, dominance and normalisation that are being discussed intensively with regard to educational contexts.

Varela (2010) points out that linking diversity with postcolonialism is not a self-explanatory endeavour. However, discussions on postcolonial approaches around redistribution, recognition and transformation intersect with debates taking place in critical diversity (Varela 2010). To analyse diversity approaches through a postcolonial lens, Varela (2010) suggests distinguishing between intention, method and outcome. In this sense, *intention* would aim at transformation in terms of decolonisation and therefore set a normative target; *method* would include consideration of various forms and experiences of discrimination and their dynamics, taking seriously the problem of essentialising identities; *outcome* would refer to a movement towards social justice and thinking on, and keeping alive the idea of a political utopia of social change (Varela 2010):

> In a critical version, diversity can be understood as a strategy guided by utopia which entails ethical thoughts of recognition and equality. (Varela 2010: 251, own translation)

When looking at diversity with a postcolonial lens, Varela (2010) argues that it would not be sufficient to only focus on power asymmetries. To enable change, we also need to include the thinking and imagination of different futures. Thus, the overall objective could be seen as democratisation of the society, which builds on recognition and respect of the other.

Utilising postcolonialism as a sensitising concept for this study requires conscious reflection of ongoing struggles for decolonisation in contemporary Kenya. Taking into account the historical interconnectedness of colonisation and formal education, existing notions of diversity in education should be linked to questions about the colonial heritage, in which education served as a means to devalue and alienate people from local environments (Fanon 1967; Freire 1996). This view interrogates power and knowledge, representation and educational norms and standards as well as Eurocentric and essentialising discourses (including the logic of epistemologies) as a basis to enable change.

An approach that attempted to integrate the different theoretical considerations mentioned above into a contextualised study of diversity in the African context is that of critical diversity.

Critical diversity

Drawing on intersectionality, critical race theory and postcolonial studies, the critical diversity approach was developed in South Africa by Melissa Steyn; amongst others, the approach

> focuses on multiple axes of difference where power dynamics operate to create the centres and margins of gender, race, ability, sexual orientation, age etc. as well as their varying intersections. It also acknowledges the centuries of colonial history and

> ideologies of Western/European (white) superiority and African/Asian (black) inferiority. (Steyn 2014: 381)

Hence, the dynamic social locations in which people are positioned based on their identities, group affiliations and power relations in place, are central to this approach.

> A critical approach to diversity names the ideological systems put in place by and for these positionalities as well as the hegemonic discourses that reproduce them, such as whiteness, heteronormativity, patriarchy, eurocentrism etc. (Steyn 2014: 382)

Steyn (2014) also points to the subjective positions in relationships of privilege and power, which mean that not all white heterosexual males will benefit the same from the privileges afforded to whiteness, maleness and heteronormativity. While acknowledging hegemonic discourses and power structures as organising principles for social relations, she also refers to the space for subjectivities and the possibility of inconsistencies or contradictions when looking at individuals (Steyn 2014).

From this approach, Steyn (2014) developed a framework called critical diversity literacy, which includes the analytical cornerstones of a diversity programme in sociology at university level. Although it is framed as a literacy programme for sociology students, these cornerstones of skills and competencies provide insights to how diversity can be unpacked in various settings, and particularly in contexts with a history of colonisation and racialisation. Steyn (2014) explicates the critical diversity approach in the following ten points, which may not be exhaustive but can be refined according to different contexts. Critical diversity includes:

1. an understanding of the role of power in constructing differences that make a difference;
2. a recognition of the unequal symbolic and material value of different social locations. This includes acknowledging hegemonic

positionalities and concomitant identities (e.g. white-ness, heterosexuality, masculinity, cisgender, able-bodiedness, middle-classness etc.), and how these dominant orders position those in nonhegemonic spaces;
3. the ability to unpack how these systems of oppression intersect, interlock, co-construct and constitute each other, and how they are reproduced, resisted and reframed;
4. a definition of oppressive systems such as racism and (post) colonialism as current social problems and (not only) a historical legacy;
5. an understanding that social identities are learned and are an outcome of social practice;
6. the possession of a diversity grammar and vocabulary that facilitate a discussion of privilege and oppression;
7. the ability to 'translate' (see through) and interpret coded hegemonic practices;
8. an analysis of the ways that diversity hierarchies and institutionalised oppressions are influenced through specific social contexts and material arrangements;
9. an understanding of the role of emotions, including our own emotional investment, in all of the above; and
10. an engagement with issues of the transformation of these oppressive systems towards deepening social justice at all levels of social organisation (Steyn 2014).

By including transformation and social justice on various levels (as in list item ten above), the critical paradigm employed in this framework facilitates a perspective that goes beyond understanding and unpacking diversity. Instead, it facilitates connections to educational sciences and approaches that similarly locate themselves in a critical paradigm and aim to transform and change social relations towards equality. This includes, among others, social justice education, anti-racism, anti-bias and decolonising education, as well as multicultural and culturally responsive education, which a critical diversity education can draw on. Looking into these approaches that have developed from

various particular contexts goes beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I will introduce critical pedagogy as the lens for this study because, centrally, it looks at power relations and social inequality and can serve as a broad framework for the notion of diversity in education as understood in the study.

Critical pedagogy

Based on a vision of social and educational justice and equality, critical pedagogy is grounded in the belief that education is inherently political (Kincheloe 2008). Critical pedagogy is therefore concerned with the ways in which relations of power and inequality are manifest or challenged in schools (Apple & Au 2009). Grounded in critical theory, critical pedagogy was first mentioned in Henri Giroux's *Theory and Resistance in Education*, which was published in 1983. Prominent scholars like Paulo Freire (1973, 1996), Michael Apple (1998, 1999; Apple et al. 2009), Peter McLaren (McLaren & Kincheloe 2007), bell hooks (1994) and many others have contributed to the theory and practice of critical pedagogy, challenging educational debates about democratic schooling, teacher education and social change. Critical pedagogy draws on former progressive philosophical and educational movements concerned with advancing democratic ideals around the turn of the 19th and into the 20th century. Peter McLaren and Henri Giroux highlight the influence of the American philosopher and educator John Dewey (who worked extensively on the purpose of education in democratic societies) on critical pedagogy (Giroux et al. 1989).

In critical pedagogy, education is seen in its systemic context, appreciating the relationship between schooling and other social dynamics (Giroux et al. 1989). Critical education is particularly interested in the margins of society – in the experiences and needs of individuals faced with oppression and marginalisation, and in the transformation of oppressive power relations in various domains. To understand the forms and processes of power relations that produce oppressive conditions, Apple and Au (2009) point to the

need for us to reposition ourselves in order to see through the eyes of marginalised and dispossessed people. They also highlight the need to understand so-called neoconservative and neoliberal policies and their belief in the value of social hierarchy and a meritocratic society that reproduces social inequalities through its education policies and systems (Apple & Au 2009).

Martusewicz et al. (2011), in their approach to ecojustice education, call attention to how value-hierarchised thinking grounded in the dominant value systems of modern thought has informed schools in past decades. Specific modernist discourses of progress, efficiency, usefulness, industrial or technological development and so forth, create a belief system and value hierarchies that are presented as natural and normal, and which endow some people and positions with more power than others. In this way, racism, sexism, ableism, ethnocentrism and other oppressive ways of thinking and knowing form part of the discourses that create value hierarchies of superiority and dominance (Lowenstein et al. 2010).

To clarify critical pedagogy's orientation towards social justice, Apple and Au (2009) refer to Nancy Fraser (1997) to show that issues around the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition need to be jointly considered. Both types of social justice – the redistributive (economic) claims and the claims for the politics of recognition (cultural and identity struggles against domination) – form the normative basis for critical pedagogy (Fraser 2009).

Even though it merely serves as a very broad orientation, which offers multiple forms and ways in which schooling, education policy, teacher education and curriculum can be described and looked at, critical pedagogy can serve as a general theoretical perspective to look at diversity in Kenyan school contexts. The notion of diversity proposed by this perspective links to the abovementioned concept of intersectionality as an analytical tool to deconstruct multiple forms of categorisation and discrimination within specific power relations. Postcolonialism with its central notion of othering will furthermore provide a powerful tool to

look at diversity in the East African context with its history of colonisation and racialisation.

In critical pedagogy, teaching and learning in schools is not neutral and cannot be separated from questions of democracy and justice (Kincheloe 2004). Critical educators, therefore, reflect on the institutional practices and policies of schooling that lead to specific categorisations, restrictions and punishments and restrain or exclude students who do not fit the proper demographic (Kincheloe 2004). In that way, all decisions made in the school become political and need to be questioned as to which groups of students and identities are privileged over others. In the classroom critical educators engage in co-constructing knowledge and meaning with their students/learners, aiming to build a critical consciousness of who they are in relation to the social world surrounding them and to mitigate the effects of power on them.

In this idealised vision the teachers acknowledge their own social positions and political agendas and direct all their practices towards the empowerment of learners to become highly skilled democratic citizens who are able to improve their own lives and social environments (Ellsworth 1989; Kincheloe 2004). However, in reality, teachers are implicated in reproducing social power relations in schools, and education itself has been described by critical educationist as a process between the conflicting poles of subordination and liberation (Ellsworth 1989; Riegel 2016). Nevertheless, critical educators point out that we need to be able to articulate that transformative, just and egalitarian vision of critical pedagogy in which learners are experts in their own interest areas and inspired to use education to do good things in the world (Kincheloe 2004).

Within a critical pedagogy framework, the focus on diversity in school contexts provides an orientation towards social justice and asks how the operating systems of power and domination (patriarchy, sexism, classism, ableism etc.) hold marginalised positionalities for specific identities, while privileging others at the same time. The kind of consequences this holds for the teachers, who move between the reproduction of dominant conditions on

one side and transformation on the other side, will be discussed in the following section.

Teachers and diversity

A number of education scholars have identified the need to include diversity issues in teacher education, given that teachers need to be prepared to deal with diversity matters in their professional practice. Mecheril and Vorrink (2012) suggest a reflexive diversity practice by teachers and educators that

- reflects on the status positions, opportunities and resources of the actors (participants and educators) with regard to chances to shape their future life;
- asks for conditions under which an affirmative diversity approach can serve to decrease distorted power relations; and
- constantly asks questions about the effects of fixing individuals to certain differences, about differences that are not spoken about and about who benefits from the applied readings of diversity.

Hormel and Scherr (2005) argue that diversity education approaches should target comprehensive engagements with classifications that contain messages of inferiority, or can be used to justify discrimination. In this context, diversity education needs to

- make transparent, structures and processes that lead to the construction of socially unequal groups;
- enable criticism on illegitimate generalisations, stereotypes and prejudice – and sensitise that people are individuals;
- clarify that group affiliations do not establish borders between different types of people but that there are commonalities, which put the differences into perspective; and
- facilitate exposure to communication and cooperation in which group differences can be experienced as irrelevant (Hormel & Scherr 2005; Walgenbach 2017).

In interpreting these key elements of a diversity-conscious education practice in a critical pedagogy framework, the focus will be on the power relations and social mechanisms that produce categorisations, and their effects on (re)producing social hierarchies. Some authors use a combination of affirmative and power critical diversity approaches to provide suggestions in terms of competencies that teachers require in order to deal with diversity in a positive way (Rosken 2009; Schröer 2012). These include the ability to change perspectives, deal with ambivalences, analyse differences and commonalities, deal with feelings of foreignness as well as reflexivity of one's own values, biases and practices (Rosken 2009).

Looking at diversity in terms of institutional practices, Leiprecht (2009) highlights that diversity approaches enable a change of perspective whereby, for example, it is not learners who do not speak the language of instruction well who are the problem; the problem is institutions (schools) that do not meet the needs of those learners (Leiprecht 2009). Hormel and Scherr (2005) point to the following institutional learning challenges emanating from the diversity perspective:

- Schools as organisations are to ask if and how the learners' and teachers' experiences enable or constrain the handling of diversity.
- Processes of classroom interaction and cooperation need to be put in place to see who interacts with whom and where demarcations take place.
- Schools need to include diversity in the curriculum.
- The attitudes, self-image and convictions of educators, and the requirements to enable a reflected and nondiscriminatory professional practice with respect to diversity, need to be promoted.

Although theoretical deliberations and empirical studies have produced knowledge about how schools and teacher education do, and ought to, respond to growing diversities, education

policy, curricula and institutional frameworks have not embraced these ideas. Diversity is rarely considered in the institutional frameworks of schools – nor are diversity perspectives in teacher education (Riegel 2016).

Implications for researching diversity in schools

For most teachers around the world, a thorough exposure to issues, skills and practices concerning diversity is largely missing, particularly those approaches that go beyond celebrating different cultural backgrounds. This does not imply, however, that policies and – in some contexts – institutional guidelines pertaining to diversity and nondiscrimination are non-existent. Nevertheless, in contexts where binding diversity policies and stringent implementation are missing and neither institutional frameworks, nor curricula and teacher education have thoroughly included diversity in their concern, teachers are left to embark on various practices, including 'blind-eye' or assimilationist strategies. This raises the question: 'In what way would research into teachers' professional practices concerning diversity in the Kenyan context be useful, given that relevant benchmarks (national, regional, institutional) are largely lacking?'

For the purpose of the present study, I have chosen to include the teachers' biographical experiences and perceptions as a resource that all teachers bring to the classroom. Parker Palmer formulated the concept of good teaching arising from the identity and integrity of the teacher, where techniques merely offer support:

> Face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate command: my identity, my selfhood, my sense of the 'I' who teaches. (Palmer 1997: 10)

Palmer (1997) defines identity as a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make the individual who they are. Individual traits and features, as well as social and cultural positioning and lived experiences, constitute a particular identity, which is not to

be separated from the professional identity of the teacher. When researching diversity in school contexts (which is largely about identity and socially constructed categorisations that make a difference in the particular context – see above), it seems useful to take into account the identities of the teachers that are brought to the classroom. In past decades, a number of qualitative studies have taken an approach that looks into teachers' biographies and identities to research diversity and multiculturalism in the context of teaching (Everington et al. 2011; Herrera 2016; Osler 1997; Skerrett 2008a, 2008b; Vavrus 2006). These studies identified a relationship between individual teachers' biographies, and how the teachers perceived and responded to various aspects of diversity in the classroom.

These insights seem significant and they suggest that if we want to understand diversity in Kenyan schools from the teachers' perspective, we need to consider the teachers' own identities, with their lived experiences and perceptions concerning diversity. These biographical experiences offer insights to configurations, representations and encounters of diversity, and the teachers' perceptions will help understand the meaning constructed from these experiences in terms of the beliefs and mental images the teachers hold regarding diversity, which, in turn, influence their professional practice.

The methodological implications for embarking on this research in a critical interpretivist paradigm using the theoretical avenues presented above as a lens, will be explained in more detail after looking at the Kenyan education context and identifying the research gap.

Conceptual framework

Instead of proposing a fixed conceptual framework, the inquiry for this study draws on sensitising concepts related to the power relations and social mechanisms that construct differences for the purpose of legitimising and manifesting discrimination and social inequalities. Educational theories and concepts developed

in the past acknowledge that schools and education are not neutral players, but actively participate in the reproduction and manifestation of social differences leading to social inequalities. How schools as institutions, their curricula, instruction and education policies need to change in order to embrace social diversity and create conditions where diverse social groups and identities have equal chances to succeed, has been the concern of (critical) diversity studies in the field of education. Many authors have also argued that diversity education is tasked to raise critical consciousness of the social mechanisms and normalising and essentialising discourses that position certain identities in the centre and others in the margins of society. However, studying diversity holds dilemmas and ambivalences arising from the multiplicity of social differences intersecting in each individual on one hand (deconstructionist/system-centred approaches), and the danger of reproducing social categorisations, naturalising and essentialising differences when studying particular social groups on the other (group-centred approaches). Recognising that national school systems privilege some social groups – in their dynamic spaces and with their intersecting lines of differences within individuals – over others, requires a combination of both approaches. The sensitising concepts of intersectionality and postcolonialism were introduced to put diversity in the Kenyan school context into a perspective that looks critically at simultaneous inequalities and takes into account the more general power relations and discourses that produce these inequalities. This seems necessary because, generally, diversity continues to be examined in fragmented ways by looking at issues separately (cf. Valentíin 2006).

As a framework for studying diversity in Kenyan school contexts that brings together the relevant sensitising concepts, I introduced critical pedagogy with its vision of social and educational justice through recognition and redistribution.

Intersectionality provides a sensitising perspective in that it enables an understanding of different social categories that interrelate and intersect to create meaning in a particular context. On one hand, it sensitises us to the variety of different categorisations

that go beyond the race-class-gender triad. On the other hand, it promotes conscious reflection on the interconnectedness and fluidity of the different social categories that intersect to create meanings for individuals. The central dimension in understanding diversity through intersectionality and critical pedagogy is the power relations in specific sociopolitical and cultural contexts, which simultaneously generate different inequalities. Since the geographic location of the study is Kenya, the sensitising concept of postcolonialism promotes interpretive angles that take into account its history of oppression and its struggle against it. Critical diversity becomes part of a larger effort to dismantle and change social and value hierarchies rooted in colonial structures and continuities of oppressive global power relations and hierarchies. This also speaks to the distinction between intention, method and outcome when researching diversity in postcolonial contexts that Varela (2010) suggests. The intention sets the goal of social justice and decolonisation, the method looks at different forms of discrimination and includes criticism of essentialising identities, the outcomes include strategies and practices – in this case of the teachers and schools – towards social justice.

This lens allows the teachers to be viewed as actors in the conflicting space of reproducing difference and inequity, and deconstructing and/or transforming difference towards more equity. To attain an understanding of the configurations, representations and encounters of diversity in the Kenyan school context, I will include the biographical experiences and identities of teachers. I view these experiences and identities as a resource at the teachers' command to respond to diversity in their professional practice – independently of whether teacher education programmes and institutional frameworks address diversity issues in a particular context.

CHAPTER THREE

Education and Diversity in Kenya

3

In order to focus on the background and setting of the case study, the following section sketches the developments of education and diversity in Kenya in a chronological order, from precolonial to contemporary issues. Existing categories and patterns shaping diversity are in the focus particularly from a perspective of disparities and social inequality. Hence, special attention is paid to those aspects of legislature, educational planning and organisation that frame different features of diversity. This includes empirical findings from previous research into diversity in Kenyan education and schooling.

Based on the theoretical and contextual framings, the chapter concludes with the research gap that this study aims to address and the methodological approach taken.

Indigenous African education until the mid-19th century

The present-day Kenyan nation state emerged from British colonisation at the end of the 19th century and encompasses, culturally as well as in terms of language and religion, heterogeneous groups of people who maintained trade and other relations during the precolonial time (Ndege 2009). Evidence

of human life in Kenya can be traced back more than several million years. Hunter-gatherer groups were joined by population movements into Kenya from around 2 000 years BCE, and that brought their Southern Cushitic, Nilotic and Bantu languages with them (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014). Along the coast, Swahili states flourished through trade with the Arab states and with Indian, Persian, Arab, Indonesian, Malaysian, African and Chinese merchants, starting 2 000 years ago. A distinct Swahili culture developed mainly through the introduction of Islam and Arabic influences of Kiswahili, a Bantu language with many loan Arabic words (Ochieng & Maxon 1992; Spear 2000). During the 16th century, the Swahili city-states lost their independence as the Portuguese and Arabs consolidated their power in East Africa. In 1895 the East Africa Protectorate was set up by the British and, under colonial rule, parts of the Rift Valley area were reserved for whites (Kanyinga 2009). In the following decades, British colonialists established a detailed administrative system, including various infrastructures and educational institutions, on the territory that was named Kenya in 1920.

Like the other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya was not of particular interest to Western historians until the beginning of the 20th century, when a variety of colonial accounts were produced (Eckert et al. 2010). After independence, African historians and scholars began to study the precolonial histories of particular ethno-linguistic groups that comprise the Kenyan nation state. Because, traditionally, no written form of the languages spoken in the region existed, research had to rely on oral history supplemented by sociolinguistic and archaeological findings (Ogot 1976). Hence, insights and evidence concerning the nature, structure and contents of education in precolonial Kenya are limited and, in most cases, not specific to a particular region, but relate to precolonial African societies in general. Therefore, I will refer to authors who have written about general features of African indigenous education, and I will avoid the term 'traditional education' because, often, its connotation is that it was outdated and underdeveloped.

Before the widespread dominance of formal education through missionary and colonial influence in Kenya, indigenous education aimed to promote the morals and practices of daily life and to transmit indigenous knowledge of humans and their relationship with their environment from one generation to the next (Mungai 2002). According to Fafunwa (1974), common features of indigenous education and training in Africa included the promotion of creativity, interregional economic relations, political development, socialisation and self-reliance. Mabawonku (2003) points out that education in precolonial Africa has often been characterised as unscientific and outdated; he seeks to show that through colonisation and forced modernisation of African societies, existing culturally integrated knowledge and information systems were destroyed and the newly introduced ones did not make sense. Some evidence shows, for instance, that technological development in the areas of textile production and metal work 2 000 years ago was at least as advanced as comparable technologies found in Europe at the time (cf. O'Hern & Nozaki 2014; Teng-Zeng 2006). Precolonial education in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, was a non-school education that was solidly anchored in the cultures and everyday experiences of African societies. 'This education was African in ideology, content and methodology' (Bunyi 1999: 340); it was rooted in the local context and indigenous languages were the vehicle through which education was conducted. African religion was included in education as the basis of morality; learning methods included active discovery, field experience and close observation. Other features of indigenous education in Africa have been described as practical, relevant to the needs of society and focused on social responsibility, political participation, morality and work orientation (cf. Fafunwa & Aisiku 1982; Woolman 2001). Moumouni (1968) identifies four stages of indigenous education in Africa for the first 16 years of growing up, each stage characterised by changes in the child's physical and cognitive abilities. He identifies games, story-telling, participation in traditional courts and ceremonies and lastly, initiation around the age of 16 as common educational institutions (Moumouni

1968). Seukwa (2015) points out that this kind of learning was highly differentiated and prepared children in all dimensions of life to become the adults of tomorrow.

Colonial education 1895–1963

Colonial education and formal schooling practices were introduced by Muslim and Christian missionaries during the 19th century. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, implementation of these extraneous formal school systems was justified by the claim that there were no such institutions in precolonial Africa and that Africans were not able to create them on their own (Seukwa 2015). Ideologically, the implementation of formal schooling in Africa was justified by the aspiration of the colonisers to bring civilisation and culture to Africa. For the colonial powers, education served to educate Africans to an extent that they were able to take up lower-ranked positions in the colonial administration and in their private businesses (Seukwa 2015). Basically, colonial Kenyan society was organised in three social groups based on race: Africans, Asians and Europeans – with Europeans at the top, Asians occupying a privileged position below the Europeans, and Africans (who comprised about 97% of the population in the 1940s) positioned at the bottom of the ladder (Mwiria 1991). All societal arrangements, including the labour market and the school system, were structured according to this racial division so that, in fact, three school systems were set up.

Mwiria (1991) distinguishes three phases of formal education development in Kenya: the first phase before the British occupation (1846–1890), the second phase until the setting up of the Education Department (1891–1911) and the third, after the formation of the Education Department (1911–1963) when the colonial government became interested in African education. During the first phase, Christian missionaries were the only educational actors in Kenya. However, British colonial powers were instrumental in firmly installing formal Western education in Kenya after 1885. This process included the establishment of

governmental, social and economic institutions that were similar to those found in Britain at the time (cf. O'Hern & Nozaki 2014). The first formal schools were established for white European groups around the economic and social centres of Mombasa, Nairobi and Nakuru (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014). Village schools for Kenyans were established close to these centres to train the mainly male workforce for tasks required by white landowners, business- or craftsmen. Colonial education in Kenya, as in many other places in Africa, was Eurocentric and ignored contributions of indigenous populations to education and curriculum development (Dei 1994). In her paper, 'Education for Subordination in Colonial Kenya', Mwiria highlights these components of the differentiated system of subordination:

> Unequal allocation of education revenue to the different racial groups residing in Kenya, selective and punitive public examinations and a school curriculum that underlined the superiority of the European over the African. (Mwiria 1991: 261)

All three aspects contributed to a specific design of education for African children that was exclusive, kept to a minimum and served the colonial purpose of exploitation and oppressive ideology. Virtues to be instilled in the Africans through this technical education to serve the white man included discipline, punctuality, respect and an appreciation of manual labour, among others (Mwiria 1991; Koster et al. 2016).

In the Department of Education Annual Report of 1924, the racist ideology including its pseudo-scientific foundations, which structured education in Kenya under the colonial rule is blunt:

> The department holds that education through industry is the only right kind of education for the African of Kenya in his present state of development. It is scientifically correct and in accordance with the dictates of psychology. The mentality of the African is undeveloped and it is universally admitted that handicrafts and manual training are especially valuable in developing the

> motor centres of the brain and for this reason figure largely in kindergartens and in schools for defective children ... The psychological order of development is sensation, perception, concept. In his primitive state the African deals mainly with sensations and perceptions. Thought is not highly developed: education must proceed by the training of the eye, ear and hand, and thought must evolve by means of oral or written composition and the expression of form and number out of the work created by his own effort. (Department of Education Annual Report of 1924, quoted in Mwiria 1991: 269)

As imperial Britain pursued a separatist colonialism policy, teaching in the indigenous language of the respective local population was common and encouraged. The indigenous languages were meant for the indigenous majority and English became the language of power. Speaking the language of the political and economic colonial elite was a power in itself compared to the indigenous languages, which were delegitimised and disempowered in that process. Until Kenya's independence from the British colonial rule, educational access for the African population remained largely restricted, with only 95 secondary schools nationwide for a population of over 8 million people (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014).

Education and school policies after independence

The Kenyatta era 1963–1978

After independence in 1963, the Kenyan government and its first president, Jomo Kenyatta, prioritised the growth of the school system in order to enable access to education for its population (Buchmann 1999; Mwiria 1990).

But due to the limited availability of financial and human resources, transitioning from colonial education – which aimed to keep native Kenyans out – to an inclusive and open system was a tremendous task. However, in the first seven years of independence, the numbers passing through schools increased by

45% for primary, and fourfold for secondary schools, which was an expensive endeavour (Hornsby 2013). The ruling party, Kenya African National Union (KANU), promised seven years of free primary schooling for all, but it could barely keep up with the growth of the population (Ojiambo 2009). In order to propel the efforts of initiating positive change and community development, Kenyatta called for *Harambee*, a Kiswahili word meaning 'let us pull together'. The concept embodies ideas of assistance, responsibility, joint effort and community self-reliance and is often described as a traditional custom or way of life in Kenya (Chieni 2011). Since the main concern for the majority of people was to educate their children, communities raised funds and built secondary schools – the Harambee schools (Buchmann 1999; Mwiria 1990). In the next decades, the Harambee movement supplemented the government's provision of secondary schools substantially.

In 1964 the government established an Education Commission to review how the education system could contribute to nation building and unity. The Ominde Report that resulted from the commission, recommended a unified education system for all races including a common curriculum, and also identified six national goals for Kenyan education. These were (1) to foster nationalism, patriotism and promote national unity, (2) to promote social, economic, technological and industrial needs for national development, (3) to promote individual development and self-fulfilment, (4) to promote sound moral and religious values, (5) to promote social equality and responsibility and (6) to promote respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures (Ominde 1964). From these recommendations, the government set out the following broad goals for education: national unity, national development, individual development and self-fulfilment, social equality, respect and development of cultural heritage and international consciousness. Owuor highlights that, from the beginning of independent Kenya, the education system has been 'expected to play a mediating role in the relationship between the diverse cultures, the national culture, and the global

needs of the nation' (2007: 26). The report also recommended English as primary language of instruction with Kiswahili to support it as the second national language. This resonated with the Kenyan government, which regarded a common language of instruction and literacy as an important means to foster national unity (Mungai 2002). After independence, it had become a status symbol to speak and teach through the language that had been denied to the majority of the people (cf. Bunyi 1999). However, the decision to give two foreign languages (English and Kiswahili) the privilege of becoming Kenya's national languages, and to not consider local languages for that status, has been widely contested – especially by academics and linguists (Bunyi 2005). 'In Kenya, the preferential treatment of English produced, in turn, an elite government which shunned the indigenous languages' (Mbithi 2014: 3). It can be considered an enduring legacy of colonialism that English has remained the main language of education in postcolonial Kenya and, from Grade 4, the only medium of instruction (Bunyi 2005).

Besides standardisation of the curricula and the increase in school enrolment, the reconstruction of education in the first years after independence included the increase of state control, especially with the 1968 Education Act, which converted most colonial-era church schools into state institutions (Hornsby 2013). Even though the changes in the education system were significant during the Kenyatta era, access to primary and secondary education remained uneven with regard to regions and gender and, financially, it was very difficult for Harambee schools to maintain the buildings, pay the teachers and keep a high standard of education. In 1974 a presidential decree abolished all primary school fees for the first four years, which left huge holes in the government school budgets. By the end of the 1970s, secondary schools were preserved for a few – with large inequalities concerning the provision of secondary schools between the regions; for 70% of learners, education was over after primary school (Hornsby 2013). Only 35% of secondary school learners were girls (Chege & Sifuna 2006).

The Moi era 1978–2002

The growth of schools and increase in enrolment figures continued until the mid-1980s. The colonial-era institutions kept their elite status as national schools, while the local and poorer, community-funded and -run Harambee schools of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were incorporated into the public school system as provincial and district schools (Mwiria 1991; O'Hern & Nozaki 2014). The second Kenyan president, Daniel Arap Moi, was a teacher by profession and made education a cornerstone of his presidency. He extended free primary education to Standards 5, 6 and 7 and, in 1980, the government declared that it had achieved universal free primary education. Figures published showed that approximately 92% of primary school-age children were in school at that time. Until the mid-1980s, educational achievement increased, which is evident not only from looking at enrolment at primary school level but also by the adult literacy rate which was 20% at independence in 1963 and had risen to 64% in 1989 (Hornsby 2013).

But dissatisfaction with the school system and its outdated curriculum increased. Enrolments decreased, and the low completion rate of approximately 50% at primary school level gave expression to that dissatisfaction. Bradshaw and Fuller (1996) explain the decline in enrolments and school attendance as being the result of the poor quality of schools and instruction and diminished local demand for the schooling that was offered. According to O'Hern and Nozaki, the reforms that responded to that trend in the 1980s:

> Included a complete restructuring programme whereby the inherited 7-4-2-3 ('O' and 'A' level) system was replaced with an 8-4-4 format from primary, secondary and post-secondary education. (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014: 48)

The new system was based on the American model and it increased primary school from seven to eight years. The four years

of secondary school now ended with the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, after which university education comprised four instead of three years. The revised curriculum was informed by the promotion of *education for self-reliance*, which included more vocational subjects and practical education in order to increase the (self-)employability of graduates. The costs of the reform involved the recruitment of new teachers and the construction of classrooms. The government enforced a cost-sharing model for education,

> limiting its contributions to teachers' salaries only, and requiring that parents pay for building and all other costs in state schools. Levies and charges rose and enrolments dropped amongst poorer families. (Hornsby 2013: 448)

This also left the school administrations with greater power to collect school fees, and to determine the amount parents had to pay, which led to the development of exclusive and expensive schools on one hand, and low-cost and low-quality schools on the other. During the 1980s, universities expanded in Kenya because the University of Kenya, the only national university, could not meet the demand of rising student numbers. Moi University opened in 1984, and others followed in the course of the 1980s. At the same time, the increasing unemployment rate of secondary school and university graduates became a matter of growing concern to the public, and mirrored the economic stagnation of the country. The government was left with a massive debt, and financial dependence on donors like the World Bank to enable the necessary growth and restructuring of the education system resulted in unfavourable decisions and policies for poor families and already marginalised groups (Buchmann 1999; Mazrui 1997; Sifuna 2007). Political turmoil in the 1980s, often connected to tribalism as the political instrumentalisation of ethnicity, severely impacted the universities – riots and fighting left Nairobi University closed for several months, several times (Hornsby 2013). In his District Focus strategy beginning in 1983, Moi

introduced the quarter system in secondary school selections of students:

> The system gave more opportunities to students from around the school locally and allowed admission of only a quarter of students who hailed from outside the province. As a consequence, young people who previously qualified and got admitted to good schools outside their provinces were, under Moi's era, constrained to learn mainly within their provinces. (Wanyonyi 2010: 43)

During the 1990s, unconducive political and economic conditions led to the deterioration of education with increasing numbers of children not receiving formal education or dropping out of primary school (Kinuthia 2009). At the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, and at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, Kenya underlined its commitment to free primary education and that

> all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [Unesco] 2000: 8)

Yet, despite a reduction in tuition fees, education costs and school fees remain a main obstacle for disadvantaged families to access education (Glennerster et al. 2011). 'As something that began during colonization, education costs and fees remain political issues that continue today' (Yakaboski & Nolan 2011: 2).

The Kibaki era 2002–2013

Mwai Kibaki's election campaigns in 2002 and 2007 included the political promise to provide primary education for all. The government continued to invest heavily in formal education, as can be seen in the numbers: public spending as a proportion

of gross domestic product increased from 5.1% in 1980/1981 to 15% in 2008/2009 (Ojiambo 2009). Education was still regarded as the key to socio-economic development and scientific and technological advancement. But, despite many efforts and investments, including increased enrolment numbers and improvements to provide universal primary education in Kenya, key challenges in maintaining educational quality and equality remained after the change in government in 2002 (Sifuna 2007). With regard to equality, O'Hern and Nozaki (2014) view the continuation and strengthening of educational disparities as being connected to the numerous and complex domestic and international shifts in economic, social and cultural factors (globalisation). They see Kenya's uneven development between urban and rural regions, and the disparities in earnings of skilled and less-skilled workforce, linked to its struggle to participate in the global economy. Education is regarded by many families as the key to participate in the economy and for upward social mobility. This can be concluded from the 2005 Kenya Integrated Household budget, which shows that families spent the bulk of their household income on secondary school education (cf. Koster et al. 2016). This leads to the question of quality, namely, whether education in Kenya can fulfil this promise and whether the family investment in education pays off. Hence, researchers have looked increasingly into the question of the quality of education. The Uwezo (2010) annual learning assessment report asked whether Kenyan children are better off as a result of the expansion of schooling in the country. The researchers' conclusion, after carrying out a learning assessment with 68 945 children aged 3–16 years in 2009, was that the state of literacy and numeracy skills of children in Kenya was grim with, for example, two out of three Class 2 children lacking basic reading and mathematics skills.

Peter Ojiambo summarised the state of education in Kenya as follows:

> The initial post-colonial euphoric confidence in education has to a considerable extent been replaced by a mood of disillusionment.

> The education system has been accused of being egocentric and materialistic at the expense of collective effort and responsibility, for adopting irrelevant and rigid curricula, for embracing antiquated teaching and learning techniques, for dampening initiative and curiosity, for producing docile and dependent-minded graduates, and for widening the gap between the rich and the poor. (Ojiambo 2009: 135)

An evaluation report by the Kenyan Institute of Education on the 8-4-4 system published in 2008 found that it was very academic and examination oriented, focusing on written assessment results only, and providing little flexibility with regards to education pathways (Sifuna 2016).

To understand the developments in Kenya with regard to diversity and education in past decades, it is necessary to also look at the broader social and political context. For many years, Kenya was regarded as a comparatively peaceful island in a sea of turmoil. But in the wake of Kibaki's re-election bid in 2007, widespread allegations of electoral fraud led to protests. Violence broke out and tribalism was blamed for it (Kamau 2014; Wanyonyi 2010). Ethnic animosity, which had already been noticed in the Rift Valley in April 2007, reached a crescendo during the election and the months afterwards (Gona & wa-Mungai 2014). The magnitude of trauma and violence that took place during the two months after the general elections was shocking and left more than 1 300 people dead, 300 000 internally displaced and many injured and traumatised (Roberts 2009). Eventually, a political compromise was reached and a National Peace Accord was signed in February 2008. But the question remained as to how Kenya had arrived at that destination of intolerance, ethnic hate, political greed and violent disregard for women and children (wa-Mungai & Gona 2010). A breeding ground for inter-ethnic resentment has certainly been the widespread perception of unfair treatment among ethnic communities, and the belief that political power provides the group of the president and others in high positions with exclusive advantages (Muhula 2009). This highlights the

overwhelming focus on ethnicity when it comes to politics and resource distribution in Kenya.

As discussed earlier, schools and education in general are not neutral when it comes to the production and reproduction of differences and of (seemingly homogeneous) social groups that are positioned in various settings of power dynamics. For an understanding of ethnic identity issues in the Kenyan postcolonial context, it is necessary to look at the social and political debates around group affiliation and difference in Kenya in terms of how categories of difference have been constructed, socially reproduced and utilised.

Excursus: Tribe and ethnicity

Trying to understand why ethnic rivalry played such a central role in (or, at least, was blamed for) much of the post-election violence of 2007/2008, Kakai Wanyonyi (2010) looked into the historical origins of tribe and ethnicity in Kenya. He identifies two positions in the literature that focus on the generic perception of the term 'tribe', which stems from the Latin words *tribus* (a political entity in the old Roman Empire) and *trubutus* ('a group of individuals with a common blood heritage eking out a living at a very low level of socio-economic formation' [Wanyonyi 2010: 33]). Tribe, in this second meaning was used by Western European conquerors who classified indigenous people as tribes and the languages they spoke as vernaculars. Since tribe, and its derivative tribalism, are pejorative and offending terms, Wanyonyi (2010) wonders why colleagues still use these terms when referring to various Kenyan communities. 'Ethnicity', derived from the Greek *ethnikos*, which referred to non-Christian and pagan people, is the other term commonly used in the Kenyan context. But as Wanyonyi points out, the originally pejorative implications of ethnic or ethnicity have vanished, and the term has been acknowledged to be more respectful and less offensive in social science discourse than tribe or tribalism, which are still very much connected to Africa and the Eurocentric perspectives on Africa (Wanyonyi 2010).

Notwithstanding the different terms used to refer to categories or groups of people living in Kenya, Wanyonyi deconstructs the notion that ethnic groups in Kenya are 'pure', and refers to evidence that people living in precolonial centuries in the area of present-day Kenya have mingled, intermarried, assimilated, migrated and mixed socially, culturally and linguistically and that membership was fluid:

> Upon establishing authority over their subjects, however, colonial administrators radically transformed the inter-ethnic relations including the nature of intermingling. (Wanyonyi 2010: 36)

From 1915 onwards, all Africans in Kenya had to wear an identification card around their neck, which rigidified ethnicity; and the colonialists physically separated the settlements of different African groups and assigned certain jobs to certain groups. The same tool was used in parts of Kenya by perpetrators of the post-election violence of 2007/2008 to identify individuals' ethnicity. Many Africans defied the separating strategy of the colonialists and formed trans-ethnic political parties like the Kenya African Union, which was later banned by the colonial administration (Wanyonyi 2010). As in the colonial era, group affiliations and ethnic identities were used in many instances to build and consolidate political power in the young independent Kenyan nation state. Under the Moi government, for instance, disputes over land were coined 'land clashes' between so-called indigenous and non-indigenous people in 1992, and were instrumentalised by the government to control the vote in the populous Rift Valley (Nyairo 2015). Moi's shifting focus towards districts as units for development from 1983 onwards has also been blamed for having reinforced ethnicism because the districts are formed around certain (sub-)ethnic communities.

> Politically instigated and state-sponsored killing dominated the 1992 and 1997 multi-party elections and bequeathed us a new category of citizens: internally displaced persons (IDPs).

> 'Land clashes' were now known as 'tribal clashes' … The tides of resentment and othering had been cultivated through a shifting lexicon. (Nyairo 2015: 46)

The general elections in 1992 and 1997 revealed that every major party in the multi-party democratic system that Kenya had adopted, received greatest support from the ethnic community of the party leader (Muriuki 1995). This led again to initiatives by parties to merge or cooperate and a new alliance, the National Rainbow Coalition headed by Mwai Kibaki, emerged to win the 2002 general elections. For his first cabinet, Kibaki appointed members from all eight provinces of Kenya. But he abandoned this power sharing approach just two years later. Today, politicisation and instrumentalisation of ethnicity by the political elite remains apparent in Kenya:

> Ample evidence suggests that ethnic difference and conflict – land grabbing, displacement, assault, rape, murder – are almost always politically engineered … Politicians promote ethnic difference and animosity to advance their careers, to win state power or achieve senior office, all for personal material gain – the reward of power or influence. Political ethnicity therefore comes not, as in some countries, from below, but from above. (Hiroyuki et al. 2012: 159)

In summary, the conflict that has characterised Kenyan politics with regard to ethnicity extends from ethnicising political parties, re-alliances, voters' ethnic alignment to political leaders, favouritism in the civic service and resource allocations, reinforcement of the inherited divide-and-rule strategy, ethnic-based practices in government, power sharing arrangements and attempts to re-energise the nation building process (Wanyonyi 2010).

In an attempt to show the extent to which peace has been built and restored in Kenya after the 2007/2008 post-election violence, Gona and wa-Mungai assert that:

> If any, little has happened in terms of peace building, whether this is understood as the search for social justice, reconciling Kenyans after the conflict, efforts at changing erstwhile perceptions about different ethnic communities or forging new relationships (conflict transformation). (Gona & wa-Mungai 2014: 209)

Furthermore, they argue that peace in Kenya after the post-election violence has been bought at the expense of justice because most perpetrators of the violence have not been held accountable (Gona & wa-Mungai 2014). Hence, distributive justice as one of the core elements for sustainable peace building in Kenya is yet to be realised:

> Studies have shown that group inequalities within a particular society create a fertile ground for grievances that can be manipulated by leaders to foment war on the ostensible basis of a group's ethnic, religious or other identity. (Gona & wa-Mungai 2014: 215)

The struggle for peace includes commemoration of the atrocities and listening to survivors' narratives. Education is one avenue to redress the past and acknowledge experiences otherwise excluded from public memory, as are some cultural or traditional mechanisms. A call by Kenyans to rewrite history textbooks and thereby change the school curriculum to allow the inclusion of common histories of national struggle and the struggles against poverty and inequality is one tangible starting point in that regard. A move made by the Kenyan government in 2008 was to establish the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, and the Directorate of National Cohesion and Values for the 'promotion of national unity, ethnic diversity, national values and social justice' (Republic of Kenya 2008: para. 2). Their task is to spearhead the promotion of national cohesion and values and to train persons in ministries, departments and agencies (as well as those from non-governmental and civil society organisations, educational

institutions and county governments, among others) and equip them with relevant skills, strategies and knowledge (Republic of Kenya 2008). Under the coordination of the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs, a training manual on National Cohesion and Integration was produced in 2011 in order to professionalise trainings, sensitisation activities and presentations on national cohesion and integration across the country, and to ensure that the content delivered is uniform and provides the same information (Nyambu et al. 2011).

Political analysts have regarded the weak national constitution of Kenya as one of the foundations of the post-election violence in 2007/2008. The balance between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government was gradually eroded in favour of strengthening the presidential powers (Roberts 2009). As part of the conflict resolution after 2007, the Kenyan government worked on a new constitution that Kenyans voted to adopt in August 2010 (Kramon & Posner 2011). Besides reducing executive power, the new constitution also guaranteed rights to women, minorities and marginalised communities – trying to bring equality concerning education and jobs to groups at the margins of Kenyan society. However, Joyce Nyairo (2015) criticises the simplified assumption underlying the 2010 Constitution of Kenya – that all of Kenya is comprised of mono-ethnic spaces and that there is no space for cosmopolitan, mixed or hybrid identities. Besides the fact that individuals are assigned a location and sub-location as their place of origin in their identification card (even when they have lived in various places in Kenya), Nyairo (2015) points out that what is excluded in the state's practice of assigning ethnic identities is how a person identifies herself or himself. By trying to spread the national cake between all ethnic groups, individuals are reduced to representatives of one ethnic bloc:

> By negating the reality of our cosmopolitan heritage, the constitution fragments rather than builds on the idea of one nation. (Nyairo 2015: 277)

She concludes that obviously the colonial time and Western anthropology, with their practices of ascribing static characteristics and geographies to assigned peoples and categorising them into strictly defined tribes with their own places in the economy and politics of the colonial order, still inform the notion of ethnic identity and logic of 'fixed identities' in Kenya today (Nyairo 2015).

Education in contemporary Kenya

Kenya has a young population of approximately 47 million people (in 2017) of whom more than 50% are under the age of 25 years. The majority of Kenyans are Christian (approximately 83%). Along the coastal regions, Muslims (approximately 11%) comprise about 50% of the population. Even though primary education is free nowadays, students from poor families still struggle to afford items such as uniforms and books. Over recent decades, Kenya's education system has seen a tremendous increase in enrolment, a decrease in resources and severe access issues – especially for learners from poor families (Yakaboski & Nolan 2011). Statistics confirm this trend: primary school, secondary school and university enrolment increased substantially between 2014 and 2018, which correlates with growing numbers of educational institutions, as (Table 1) indicates (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS] 2019). Private institutions offering education from pre-primary to teacher and university education have increased immensely in recent years as well.

In the majority of public primary schools, facilities are dilapidated and teachers poorly paid compared to other public servants.[9] The teacher–learner ratio in public schools is approximately 1:52 at primary and 1:32 at secondary level (Uwezo Kenya 2016). Under-resourced and overcrowded classrooms with up to 80 learners pose huge challenges to teachers, principals and learners. Frequent teachers' strikes for salary increases (with related closings of schools just before the examination period) have affected learners badly in past years. Statistics suggest that

Table 1: Kenya Economic Survey 2019: Educational institutions by category 2014–2018

Category	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
Schools					
Pre-Primary:					
Public	24 768	24 862	25 175	25 381	25 589
Private	15 451	15 913	16 073	16 398	16 728
Sub-total	40 219	40 775	41 248	41 779	42 317
Primary:					
Public	21 718	22 414	22 939	23 584	24 241
Private	7 742	8 919	10 263	11 858	13 669
Sub-total	29 460	31 333	33 202	35 442	37 910
Secondary:					
Public	7 680	8 297	8 592	9 111	9 643
Private	1 067	1 143	1 350	1 544	1 756
Sub-total	8 747	9 440	9 942	10 655	11 399
Teacher Training Colleges					
Pre-primary:					
Public	25	25	26	41	41
Private	115	118	121	235	240
Sub-total	140	143	147	276	281
Primary:					
Public	24	24	27	27	27
Private	101	101	105	108	110
Sub-total	125	125	132	135	137
Secondary#	2	3	3	3	3
Total	267	271	282	414	421
TVET Institutions					
Public Vocational Training Centres	701	816	816	1 186	1 502
Private Vocational Training Centres	..	..	29	47	47
Public Technical and Vocational Colleges	51	55	62	91	101
Private Technical and Vocational Colleges	..	..	382	627	628
National Polytechnics	3	3	11	11	11
Sub-total	755	874	1 300	1 962	2 289
Universities					
Public	22	23	30	31	31
Private+	31	30	30	30	32
Sub-total	53	53	60	61	63
GRAND TOTAL	**79 501**	**82 746**	**86 034**	**90 313**	**94 399**

Notes: * Provisional # Public diploma teacher training colleges .. Data not available + Revised
(Source: KNBS 2019: 225)

between 30% and 40% of the adult population have low literacy rates with large disparities between the provinces (Bunyi 2006; Uwezo Kenya 2016). Efforts to eliminate gender[10] disparities in education have been successful in many regions in Kenya during the past decades (see Figure 3).

While the Kenyan government struggles with an increasing demand for education on all levels – from primary to university education – private schools and universities have mushroomed all over the country. Private primary schools promise quality education at low cost, especially in slum areas where government schools are regarded with suspicion by ordinary Kenyans. Because these low-cost private schools are usually not registered with the Ministry of Education (MoE), poor families miss out on the government subsidies for free primary education. Learners who leave these schools with their Primary School Leaving Certificate compete for access to the public secondary schools with learners from upmarket and well-equipped primary schools where parents can afford high school fees.[11] Life for private schools became more difficult when the MoE scrapped examination fees only for public primary and secondary schools. At secondary level, public schools are viewed more favourably than their primary counterparts, and the demand for access to a national, provincial or district secondary school is much higher than the government has been able to provide for.

The guiding principles for the provision of education in Kenya specify the right to access education for all with special emphasis on children, persons with disabilities, minorities, marginalised groups and youth (Republic of Kenya 2013). These principles include the following aspects that are particularly relevant for the context of this study:

- equitable access for the youth to basic education and equal access to education or institutions (Principle b);
- protection of every child against discrimination within or by an education department or education or institution on any ground whatsoever (Principle e);

- promotion of peace, integration, cohesion, tolerance and inclusion as an objective in the provision of basic education (Principle i);
- elimination of hate speech and tribalism through instructions that promote the proper appreciation of ethnic diversity and culture in society (Principle j);
- elimination of gender discrimination … (Principle p);
- non-discrimination, encouragement and protection of the marginalised, persons with disabilities and those with special needs. (Principle s) (Republic of Kenya 2013: 225–226)

The strong focus on nondiscrimination, equity and inclusion, as well as appreciation of ethnic diversity and the diversity of cultures, in the educational guidelines for Kenya provide a background to this study's question about how teachers experience, interpret and deal with diversity in schools in Kenya.

The school system

From 1985 until 2018, the Kenyan school system included eight years of primary schooling and four years at secondary level, and at least four more years to earn a degree at a university. The secondary tier contained the following three legs:

- the common class of local – primarily day scholar – secondary schools for local populations (district schools);
- a broad middle class of secondary schools with different admission requirements and varying academic performance (provincial schools); these may be girls- or boys-only schools and they may also be full-boarding, mixed-boarding (some learners full-boarding, others day scholars) or day-scholar schools;
- the small number of about 20 elite-class secondary schools ('national schools'), which are full-boarding and admit learners from all provinces; the national schools are regarded as the highest quality public secondary institutions in Kenya. (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014: 49)

A summative evaluation of the 8-4-4 system carried out by the Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development (KICD) in 2009 found, inter alia, that it was too academic and examination orientated, overloaded and that learners did not acquire adequate social and practical skills (Jwan 2019; KICD 2019). Drawing on this evaluation and on a 2012 report by the Kenyan MoE, the Kenyan government developed a plan to reform the education and training sector; it moves from a focus on examination results and aims to develop the learner's intellectual, emotional and physical potential in a holistic and integrated manner. The proposed new system, which was introduced in 2019, is underpinned by a competency-based curriculum to develop concrete skills like critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and communication competencies rather than using an abstract academic approach. Furthermore, it puts emphasis on national values of cohesion and integration into the curriculum in order to promote common and nondiscriminatory values in Kenyan society (KICD 2019). However, education researcher Laban Ayiro (2019) highlights that, since independence, Kenya has constituted six commissions and several task forces to look into the education system and initiate reforms, and that this focus on skills and competencies is not new. He sees the main obstacle to implementing necessary curriculum changes as the lack of resources provided to schools and the education system (Ayiro 2019). The new curriculum provoked heated political debates and a dispute between the Kenyan government and the Kenya National Teachers Union (KNUT). The union's opposition to the new curriculum was based on the fact that, overall, schools and teachers perceived the new curriculum to be more work on their shoulders while not solving any of the day-to-day problems of overburdened and underpaid teachers in overcrowded classrooms and under-resourced schools (KNUT 2019). A multi-stakeholder dialogue held in Nairobi in August 2019 highlighted the need for professional teaching standards and support for teachers as systemic response to teacher education and professional development (Samuel 2019).

Institutions in the formal education sector

All responsibilities for the formal education sector from pre-primary to university education lie with the Kenyan MoE and its subsidiary bodies. The education system is highly standardised despite the variety of educational settings, experiences and opportunities for rural and urban populations. Most relevant for the development of the education system in Kenya are the following subsidiary bodies of the MoE:

- Kenya Teachers Service Commission (TSC): The Kenya TSC is responsible for the training and posting of all public school teachers. Novice teachers, especially, can be deployed to regions far away from their own families. Because remuneration of teachers in Kenya is very low, teachers' strikes for better pay cause schools to close down frequently. According to the TSC, there is a shortage of approximately 37 643 primary, and 49 750 secondary school teachers in Kenya to meet the increased demand for education (Wanzala 2019).
- The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE): The KIE is the central body that decides on the national syllabus for each subject field and grade, as well as the textbooks to be used by all public schools for every subject field and grade. The teachers can choose from between two and six different textbooks from the KIE's annual list for each subject field. Criticism has been raised that the KIE's exclusive jurisdiction over the contents, time frames and methods of instruction does not address the concerns of various educational stakeholders or local contexts, including marked disparities of resources and staffing, such that disconnects have emerged between the KIE and local schools (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014).
- The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC): The KNEC sets, conducts and posts all nationally administered primary and secondary tests, including the secondary exit examination (KCSE) for all public schools in Kenya. In recent years, it has attracted negative attention because of repeated

> scandals. These involved cheating, score fixing, examination errors, the sale of KSCE exam papers to parents and other leakages of exam papers (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014).

The centrally directed and administered Kenyan school system, including the employment of high-stakes tests and exams, has experienced various problems and has been subject to criticism from teachers and educationists. One of the main disadvantages of this system is that it leaves little room for decentralised, creative and participatory teaching styles. Instead, learners remain passive recipients of knowledge, and underpaid teachers are measured by how efficiently they transmit the knowledge and content to the learners that has been selected for them. For the learners, the teacher-centred instruction means repetition and memorisation of the overloaded curriculum, which is synchronised in public schools all over the country (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014). As in other African countries with similar organisational modes of formal education including high state control over school syllabi and examinations and under-resourced school environments, opportunities for the development of democratic skills, human rights awareness, critical thinking and analysis in schools have been practically nonexistent for a long time (Sifuna 2000). The newly introduced competence-based curriculum sets out to address some of this lack.

Education and diversity

Historical developments and contemporary issues affecting and concerning education in Kenya have been outlined in the above sections. Explicit reference has been made to some diversity aspects of the national education goals. This section looks at the empirical body of knowledge about diversity in Kenyan schools, and how diversity was defined and researched in recent studies.

Qualitative studies have investigated diversity in Kenyan education mainly from linguistic perspectives (e.g. Bunyi 1999; Mbithi 2014; Ogechi 2003); from the debate around inclusion of

learners with special needs (Kiarie 2014; Muuya 2002; Mwangi 2009; Mweri 2014); on the education of girls and women (Chege & Sifuna 2006; Chege & Arnot 2012); on ethnic and religious diversity (Svensson 2010) and also on the diversity of knowledges and the question of indigenous knowledge in the curriculum (O'Hern & Nozaki 2014; Owuor 2007; Ronoh 2017). Statistics and quantitative data on the provision of, and access to, education as well as learning outcomes have been generated by the Kenyan Bureau of Statistics, Unesco's Global Monitoring Report on Education and Uwezo's National Annual Learning Assessment Report. In the next section, diversity will be the lens used to look at postcolonial Kenya and, particularly, at education in Kenya. To contextualise educational debates and empirical studies on diversity issues, I have reviewed the literature on marginalisation and inequality in Kenya as embedded in the social, economic and political settings (as well as power relations) of society. Hence, the aim of this section is to provide context for how difference is perceived, constructed and utilised in Kenya and particularly how it affects Kenyan education. This will serve to better locate teachers' experiences, interpretations and professional practices in that field.

Diversity, social inequality and marginalisation

The Constitution of Kenya (Republic of Kenya 2010) provides a firm legal and institutional framework for the recognition and protection of the rights of minorities and marginalised groups. Distinction is made between 'marginalised groups' and 'marginalised communities':

> 'Marginalised group' means a group of people who, because of laws or practices before, on, or after the effective date, were or are disadvantaged by discrimination on one or more of the grounds in Article 27(4). (Republic of Kenya 2010: 163)

And article 27(4) reads:

> The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth. (Republic of Kenya 2010: 24)

A marginalised community is defined as:

> (a) a community that, because of its relatively small population or for any other reason, has been unable to fully participate in the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole;
> (b) a traditional community that, out of a need or desire to preserve its unique culture and identity from assimilation, has remained outside the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole;
> (c) an indigenous community that has retained and maintained a traditional lifestyle and livelihood based on a hunter or gatherer economy; or
> (d) pastoral persons and communities, whether they are—
> (i) nomadic; or
> (ii) a settled community that, because of its relative geographic isolation, has experienced only marginal participation in the integrated social and economic life of Kenya as a whole.
>
> (Republic of Kenya 2010: 162)

While 'marginalised group' refers to all (constructed) large social groups, 'marginalised communities' are more closely defined by their (traditional) lifestyle, (isolated) geographic position and non-integration in social and economic life. The constitution recognises the disparities that exist between certain groups and communities in the society and promotes an equitable development by making special provisions for people and groups that have been marginalised. It also makes a clear statement against discrimination and for the promotion and protection of

minorities. Article 21(3) of the Implementation of rights and fundamental freedoms reads:

> (3) All State organs and all public officers have the duty to address the needs of vulnerable groups within society, including women, older members of society, persons with disabilities, children, youth, members of minority or marginalised communities, and members of particular ethnic, religious or cultural communities. (Republic of Kenya 2010: 20)

Hence, the constitution of Kenya clearly guides the way in which public officers or those employed by state organs – like the Teachers Service Commission – should be aware of, and address the needs of, marginalised groups and communities. The following quote by Atsango Chesoni, former executive director of the Kenya Human Rights Commission, illustrates how certain factors combine to create a specific, contextualised situation of inequality and marginalisation:

> In Kenya, the patterns of racial and ethnic inequality combine with the phenomena of political patronage and sexism to exclude women from decision-making and policy-making. The country's patriarchal cultural traditions form a base that underlies these factors. For example, if one is from a geographically marginalized part of the country, such as the North Eastern Province, and female, the chances that one is illiterate and will die young are many times more than that happening to an able-bodied man from the Central Province of Kenya. (Chesoni 2006: 205)

The quote from Chesoni and further literature intimate that aside from ethnicity, one has to look at other powerful axes of difference like gender, age, health and disability, socio-economic status, knowledge systems, language and culture, religion and sexual orientation in order to understand how they combine to create situations of inequality.

The competition for the quality formal education that is

closely connected to upward social mobility is high in present-day Kenya, especially because educational opportunities are very limited. Kenyan families spend a large portion of their household income on education in the hope that this will lead to more opportunity and prosperity in future (Otieno & Colclough 2009). In the competitive process, some people are more likely to be excluded or marginalised than others, depending on various circumstances. To measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, Unesco works with partners to develop new indicators, statistical approaches and monitoring tools and brings together statistics for example, from demographic and health surveys, multiple indicator cluster surveys, other national household surveys and learning assessments from over 160 countries in the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE). WIDE provides a useful overview because it

> highlights the powerful influence of circumstances, such as wealth, gender, ethnicity and location, over which people have little control but which play an important role in shaping their opportunities for education and life.[12]

Based on the categories of gender, location (urban/rural), region, wealth, ethnicity and religion, the WIDE illustrates disparities with regard to various indicators of formal education between the years 1993 and 2014. In principle, the database allows for adding various categories to differentiate the figures, provided that data are available.

It depicts, for instance, that in 2014, 80% of girls and 78% of boys in Kenya completed lower secondary school so, on average, there is gender equality. But if one adds the category 'ethnicity' for girls, the girls' lower secondary school completion rate differs between the different ethnic groups (as defined by the Kenyan government) between 16% and 100% (see Figure 1).

Disparities also become evident when looking at the tertiary education completion rate of the 25- to 30-year-olds in Kenya (in 2014): while there is almost gender parity (males 17% and

females 14%) in general, it is only 7% of rural but 22% of urban women who complete tertiary education. By adding the category, 'wealth', the figures reveal that only 1% of poorest rural women and 2% of the poorest rural men had completed their tertiary education compared to 29% of the richest rural women and 39% of richest rural men (Figure 2).

The WIDE also shows regional differences concerning girls between 9 and 12 years (in 2014) who never went to school: the average number of girls who stated they had never been to school was 6% – of these, 49% of girls were in the North-Eastern Region and 0% in the Central Region (see Figure 3).

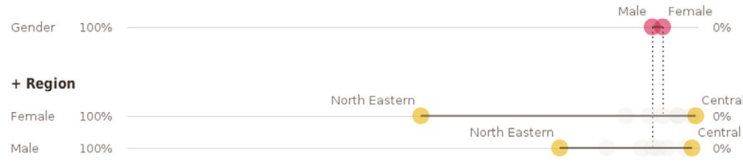
Figure 1: Global Education Monitoring Report 2017: Lower secondary completion rate – gender disparities

Source: http://www.education-inequalities.org/

Figure 2: Global Education Monitoring Report 2017: Tertiary completion rate – gender disparities

Source: http://www.education-inequalities.org/

Figure 3: Global Education Monitoring Report 2017: Never been to school – gender disparities



Source: http://www.education-inequalities.org/

Looking at the figures provided by the Global Education Monitoring Report for Kenya, ethnicity and regional imbalances, as well as wealth and religion, appear to be powerful categories concerning educational inequality. While the data are useful for identifying tendencies and developments over time concerning educational inequalities between different (socially constructed) groups in Kenya through the statistics provided per category, the categories themselves, their adequacy and the notion of fixed boxes can be questioned. In particular, they only capture quantifiable and statistically recorded categories of differences and inequality. Individual perceptions and the felt qualities of inequalities cannot be fully grasped by this rather general data.

More detailed data about the quality and outcome of schooling in Kenya have been provided by Uwezo's learning assessment reports 2010–2015. Assessments were carried out in 157 districts in Kenya and data from 69 183 households, 130 653 children and 4 529 schools were included in 2015 (Uwezo Kenya 2016). It measured the ability of children to read and comprehend English and Kiswahili and complete basic numeracy tasks. It concludes:

> The evidence is rich, but unpleasant. Learning outcomes are low and extremely inequitably distributed across geographic areas, socio-economic strata and types of schools. (Uwezo Kenya 2016: III)

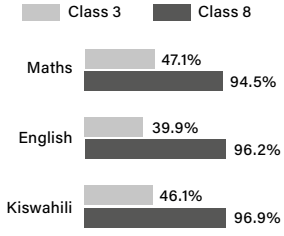
In greater detail, the facts of the 2015 report (Uwezo Kenya 2016) include the following:

1. Learning levels are low with only three out of 10 Class 3 learners being able to do Class 2 work, and eight out of 100 Class 8 learners not being able to do Class 2 work nationally.
2. There is a close connection between the distribution of teachers and learning outcomes, meaning that learners show better learning outcomes in schools with more teachers.
3. Learning outcomes are lower in rural areas, arid areas and poorer households with only 25 out of 100 Class 3 learners being able to do Class 2 work in rural areas but 41 out of 100 in urban areas.
4. Only 4 out of 10 pre-school teachers are trained.

While the report states that gender parity has been reached in most regions (except for poor, arid and semi-arid places where more boys went to school), it also states that 'geographic, socioeconomic and locational inequalities persist, in favour of urban and non-arid areas as well as non-poor households' (Uwezo Kenya 2016: 3).

To go beyond the figures and get a better understanding of the ways in which categories of difference create their meaning, I will now put specific focus on those categories discussed in the Kenyan education context. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the categories described below intersect with other categories of difference. Nonetheless, it seems useful to look for generalised attributes that help make meaning of the context and provide a general background.

Figure 4: Pupils who can do Class 2 work



Source: Uwezo Kenya (2016: 11)

Gender

Gender has been a much debated issue when talking about marginalisation and discrimination in Kenyan education. Gender can be understood as a socially constructed way of distinguishing between females and males (including culturally attributed behavioural patterns) and, lately, a third category: diverse (including people not identifying as either female or male). What people learn and perceive to be woman or man can differ in time and place because it is socially constructed (Kamau 2014). Thinking about women and their (changing) status in the Kenyan society, Akinyi Margareta Ocholla writes:

> Culturally, unmarried women, childless women, and divorced women have not had it easy in the society … Girls and women have almost always been seen and treated as second-class citizens, a burden to their families, or chattel at best. This has led to the situation of young girls, in certain cultures, being pushed into early marriages and getting an education only if it does not interfere with other duties that affect households. (Ocholla 2010: 128)

Hence, many girls and women have accepted, or have been forced to undergo, genital mutilation in order to not be ostracised from their communities (that would otherwise define them as unmarriageable). Kenya's constitution of 2010 seeks to raise the profile and worth of girls and women by according them similar privileges as men, for example, the right to own or inherit property, to be given equal consideration for education and jobs and allowed justice for cases of violence and abuse (Ocholla 2010).

Chesoni looks at the history of gender inequality in Kenya as a part of a wider system of inequality and writes:

> Given its genesis in racially segregationist settler colonialism, the Kenyan state is inherently exclusivist. The misogyny, sexism, racism, ethnic chauvinism, ageism, classicism or exclusion that is

> based on disability are natural outcomes of an exclusivist state. (Chesoni 2006: 195)

Rural women are – generally speaking – affected more strongly by traditionally gendered divisions of labour and dependency on men, for example, when it comes to land entitlements (Freidenberg 2013). Another remainder of male privileges is that most of Kenya's communities are patrilineal, meaning that children belong to their father's ethnic group or one of the father's ethnic groups. This ignores the fact that, in many cases, mothers do much of the socialisation at home. Joyce Nyairo (2015) criticises the fact that one has to have only one ethnic affiliation, and also asks why a mother's ethnic extraction should be subordinate to that of the father's.

Chege and Sifuna (2006) investigated girls' and women's education in Kenya on all levels and found that Kenya still has a long way to go to achieve gender parity in access to, and participation in, education:

> Obstacles to female education that are often region-specific seem to hinge on various factors that include perceived irrelevance and opportunity costs linked to educating girls and cultural beliefs and practices that portray girls' education as an unwelcome challenge to male hegemony. Others are school cultures whose hidden curriculum serves to alienate girls, disempower them and eventually push them out of the system. Also, formal curriculum perpetuates traditional gender boundaries and employment opportunities that do not favour female labour. Moreover, there are socio-cultural attitudes, expectations and definitions that characterise successful womanhood in terms of feminine qualities of subservience and domestic roles. (Chege & Sifuna 2006: XIII)

Interestingly, a later study carried out in 2014 on boys' education – in the context of programmes and projects supporting girls in education in Nairobi (urban primary schools) and Kirinyaga (rural primary schools) – found high awareness among teachers and principals to encourage girls to complete school and that,

in more than half of the sample schools, the girls outperformed the boys. While female teachers were aware that girls need to be encouraged and empowered in order to successfully complete school, and served as role models for the girls, most male teachers in the study did not show any ambition to encourage boys or serve as role models. Hence, Chege et al. conclude:

> For boys and girls to succeed equally within school and through the outcomes of their schooling, teachers need to consciously portray equal enthusiasm in a gender equitable schooling that is devoid of discrimination against either gender. (2013: 15)

An interesting intersectional study that tries to unravel gender and HIV/Aids education in the multicultural context of a refugee camp in a Kenyan host community found that Muslim girls and boys from Kenya's neighbouring countries behaved differently from their Christian classmates of various nationalities. The Christian teachers tried to make sense of this behaviour and interpreted it, on the basis of their own religious background, as disobedient. Subsequently, these learners were excluded from teaching in many ways (Ochieng 2010). Ochieng and Chege (2014) argue that teachers need to be much better prepared and sensitised to understand how their own and the learners' religious beliefs influenced their teaching and learning in order to enhance inclusive learning and prevent conflict.

> Arguably, curriculum materials, subject content, school rules and customs, student services, school calendar decisions, scheduling of student activities, school diet, holiday celebrations, teaching materials and school financing could jointly or singly conflict with a community's religious beliefs and practices. (Ochieng & Chege 2014: 12)

As has been observed, religious teachings may conflict with specific tenets of health education (Ochieng & Chege 2014) so specific subject fields can be regarded as more sensitive than others.

Another intersectional study looking at education in Kenya analysed the education-gender-poverty relationship among young females and males from poor households and the 'complex interactive combinations and bonds in which education outcomes are shaped by, and shape, both poverty and gender' (Chege & Arnot 2012: 195). They found gender differences in terms of the lives females and males hoped to build and, also, that their research participants were aware of changes in gendered identities and roles. While recent figures suggest that gender parity in education enrolment and learning outcomes has been achieved in Kenyan education, traditional gender roles seem to persist in other areas of life.

Ethnicity, culture, religion

Given that ethnicity, culture and religion are overlapping and often interchangeably used categories of identity, it is difficult to single out and interrogate only one of them. Yet, the focus of analysis can be on one or two of the aspects when looking at discriminatory or marginalising societal structures and circumstances. However, for the purpose of merely providing a background, they are not treated as independent singular categories.

As described above, ethnicity plays an important role when talking about identity in Kenya. However, according to Afrobarometer findings for Kenya (Institute for Development Studies [IDS] 2017), only a minority of respondents felt more strongly to belong to their own ethnic group; the majority felt equally or more to be Kenyan (Table 2).

On being asked about differential treatment and discrimination, more than half of the respondents stated that their own ethnic group has been treated unfairly by the government (Table 3).

On being asked about personal experiences of discrimination, approximately 30% of respondents stated they had been discriminated against or harassed during the previous year, based on their ethnicity (Table 4).

Table 2: Identification with ethnic group in Kenya

Q85B. Suppose that you had to choose between being a Kenyan and being a [R's ethnic group]. Which of the following statements best expresses your feelings?

	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Total
Missing		1	1	0	**0**
I feel only (ethnicgroup)	4	6	5	6	**5**
I feel more (ethnicgroup) than Kenyan	3	4	4	3	**3**
I feel equally Kenyan and (ethnicgroup)	36	36	33	39	**36**
I feel more Kenyan than (ethnicgroup)	13	10	12	11	**11**
I feel only Kenyan	42	42	44	40	**42**
Not applicable	1	1	1	0	**1**
Refused		0		0	**0**
Don't know	1	1	0	1	**1**

Source: Afrobarometer in IDS (2017: 68)

Table 3: Unfair treatment according to ethnic group

Q85A. How often, if ever, are [R's ethnic group] treated unfairly by the government?

	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Total
Missing	0	1	1	1	**1**
Never	39	44	39	45	**42**
Sometimes	32	27	32	26	**29**
Often	13	13	15	11	**13**
Always	11	9	10	10	**10**
Not Applicable	1	1	1	0	**1**
Refused	0		0		**0**
Don't know	4	5	3	6	**5**

Source: Afrobarometer in IDS (2017: 69)

Table 4: Experiences of discrimination based on ethnicity

Q86AD. In the past year, how oftern, if at all, have you personally been discriminated against or harassed based on any of the following: Your ethnicity?

	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Total
Missing	0	2	2	1	**1**
Never	73	77	71	81	**76**
Once or twice	12	11	13	9	**11**
Several times	11	7	11	7	**9**
Many times	4	2	3	2	**3**
Don't know	0	1	0	1	**0**

Source: Afrobarometer in IDS (2017: 69)

The role of religion in the secular state of Kenya has recently been debated in the context of integration of Islamic laws and institutions into the legislature of the Kenyan state because Kenyan Muslims have expressed the wish to establish and live in a society guided by Islamic religious practices. During several centuries before colonisation, Muslims along the coastline were governed by Sharia law. Under colonial rule, British authorities partially allowed the coastal people to continue, but also started interfering with the Kadhis courts and eventually weakened the position enjoyed by Sharia in the region. The first constitution of independent Kenya of 1963 provided for the establishment of Islamic Khadis courts for certain legal aspects but they were controlled and administered under the secular legal system of Kenya (Mwakimako 2014). In politics, adherents of Islam have been underrepresented. For instance, during Kenyatta's 15-year rule, not a single Muslim minister, permanent secretary or provincial commissioner was appointed (Hornsby 2013). However, institutionalisation of the Kadhis courts appeased the Muslim community because their religious beliefs and practices were being recognised to a certain degree (Mwakimako 2014). But debates and protests continued and intensified with every reform in the last decades that touched on Sharia law and on African customary law, with the government being accused of 'Westernising' Kenya and driving the assimilation and homogenisation of Kenyan communities (Mwakimako 2014).

Christian, Muslim and Hindu representatives participated in a review process on the Kenyan constitution at the end of the 1990s until 2010, but they differed on fundamental issues and the integration of religion in the political discourse proved to be highly divisive:

> It gave rise to a situation in which members of each religious group increasingly came to perceive members of other groups as 'them' while seeing their own religious group as 'us'. (Mwakimako 2014: 82)

The contestations continued with strong opposition to the proposal to integrate Islam law in the constitution, especially from Christians who argued that Islam would be treated unjustifiably preferentially if that proposal was accepted. Hence, 'in defence of Christian Kenya', church leaders vehemently objected to the inclusion of Kadhi courts for Muslim people in the new constitution. A High Court ruling eventually declared the inclusion of Kadhi courts illegal because they were counter to principles of nondiscrimination and separation of religion and the state.

In the formal Kenyan school system religious education focuses on teaching children about the religion of their own denomination. Due to historical reasons and proportions, Christianity and Bible knowledge are taught in most primary and secondary schools (Alles 2010). Other options for minorities often do not exist (KAICIID 2017). However, the school and university curricula have been looked at during past years in terms of how to emphasise life skills for social cohesion and include a wider range of interreligious and multi-faith approaches.

Age

In his essay 'Gerontocracy and Generational Competition in Kenya Today', Tom Odhiambo (2010) writes about gerontocracy (rule by the old) to describe a state of generational differentiation characterised by gate-keeping and isolationism that is based on the institution of patriarchy in many Kenyan communities. He identifies the increasing youth restlessness and disposition to violence on one hand, and gate-keeping by the older generation on the other – for example, it is impossible to attain political power or a professorship in a Kenyan university below a certain age, irrespective of the person's (academic) qualifications – as a central feature of the crisis in modern Kenya. According to Odhiambo, the notion that old age is an automatic qualification for leadership and authority can be partly attributed to residual indigenous cultural practices, and partly to the colonial system

that naturalised hierarchies and demanded that Africans be 'experienced' before they qualified for stepping up in the colonial hierarchy:

> Unless Africa is able to transcend the socio-cultural hierarchies that place the youth at the bottom of the social scale, we are stuck with the reality of inter-generational competition and conflict. (Odhiambo 2010: 100)

Even though age as a category does not seem particularly relevant to education and schools, it is important when thinking about the status of children and youth in society and their opportunities to use education for their own and society's advancement.

Language

Kenya is a multilingual country – as are all African countries. To foster national unity, English and Kiswahili have been chosen as national languages for use in public and official contexts. Hence, it is necessary to speak English and Kiswahili in order to participate in the formal economy and engage with public institutions. The high regard for the two national languages is accompanied by a devaluation of the many other African languages spoken in Kenya. It consigns the mother tongues of most people to their homes and villages and leaves many less-fluent English and Kiswahili speakers marginalised.

Bunyi (1999) investigated how the delegitimisation of indigenous languages and the use of English in Kenyan education contributed to a differential treatment of learners, leading to the perpetuation of social inequalities. She argues that for education to liberate itself from colonial heritage and play a positive role in social and economic development in Kenya, indigenous languages must be given a more central role in education (Bunyi 1999). From observations and interview data with teachers and principals, she found that learners who entered school in a rural and disadvantaged area were not able to speak English and were

consequently characterised as problematic. They learned very slowly and the teachers' way to handle the 'language handicap' was to repeat every word and sentence over and over again. This case was contrasted with a class in a socio-economically advantaged urban school where the learners had no problems with English and had an interesting, intellectually challenging lesson. Arguments put forward against the use of indigenous languages in education include that it is too expensive to print textbooks, train teachers in their respective languages, and so forth, and that it would divide people along ethnic lines. In opposition to this, Bunyi argues that it was more expensive to lose so many learners on the way (dropouts) and that the use of indigenous languages in education may divide people along ethnic lines but English divides them along class lines: 'I believe we should adopt a positive attitude towards linguistic and cultural diversity in Kenya and in Africa', she concludes (1999: 349).

Only in 1999, after campaigns in favour of African languages by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and other influential intellectuals, did the Kenyan government recognise African languages in the formal education sector (Mbithi 2014). The current language policy for Grades 1–3 reads that in linguistically homogeneous school environments, the indigenous language may be used in school and as a medium of instruction, while in linguistically heterogeneous environments English or Kiswahili are to be used (Athiemoolam & Kibui 2013; Bunyi 1999). According to Grace Bunyi (2005), Birgit Brock-Utne (Brock-Utne & Hopson 2005), Neville Alexander (1999) and many other influential educationists, the language question in multilingual postcolonial African education needs to be a focal point when talking about nondiscrimination, social equality and decolonisation. The social division created by colonial education among Africans based on the mastery of the English language has affected education policy and practice (Brock-Utne & Hopson 2005). In summary:

> The retention of European languages as the dominant media of instruction has had a serious negative impact on African

> education and on the academic performance of African learners. (Brock-Utne & Hopson 2005: 2)

Ogechi focuses on language rights in the Kenyan education context and identifies a gap between policies concerning mother tongue education and reality:

> Many parents, guardians and even head teachers insist that English be used not only from primary one but also even in kindergarten largely because it has a higher sociolinguistic market. (Ogechi 2003: 284)

He also doubts that enough teachers are able to teach in the vernaculars, and refers to the fact that Kenyan publishers have not been able to publish in all Kenyan languages (Ogechi 2003). Ogechi (2003) and Mweri (2014) also identify severe obstacles and disadvantages for learners from hearing and visually impaired communities given that no learning materials exist in their mother tongue, and too few teacher training programmes for special needs schools exist. Hence, language needs to be considered when thinking about diversity in education in postcolonial Kenya.

Knowledge systems

Another aspect relevant to diversity in Kenyan education refers to different epistemologies, teaching contents and diversity of knowledge systems. In particular, the role of indigenous knowledge is a current topic of discussion:

> Indigenous knowledge reflects the dynamic way in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relationship to their natural environment and how they organise that folk knowledge of flora and fauna, cultural beliefs, and history to enhance their lives. (Semali & Kincheloe 2002: 3)

Indigenous knowledge has received increased attention, especially

where Western knowledge systems have failed to solve problems related to poverty, certain illnesses or sustainable development (Horsthemke 2004; Odora Hoppers 2002). One of the central questions around indigenous knowledge and education that has been discussed during past years deals with the integration of indigenous knowledge in the school curriculum, and which common values, practices and perceptions are shared by communities and hence, should be integrated in formal (local) education (Ronoh 2017).

In Kenya, the discussion on indigenous knowledge in education began right after independence. A broad reconstruction of syllabi in the 1960s aimed to reflect diverse indigenous ways of knowing and practice in order to decolonise the Western dominated education in Kenya. This was seen as a means to reclaim cultural identities and indigenous traditions as well as to make education more practical to Kenyans (Owuor 2007). Yet, Owuor (2007) argues that the commitment to indigenisation was superficial and that it failed to de-centre the educational elites who were themselves products of Western education and schooling. 'Indigenous knowledge' refers to contextualised, situated or experience-informed knowledge which is held by Kenyan people locally. Integration of this form of indigenous knowledge in the Kenyan school curriculum has also been a matter of discussion in past decades as a means to achieve decolonisation, nondiscrimination and social equality in formal education.

Questions still remain as to how indigenous knowledges can be integrated into the curriculum, for example, in the field of sustainable development (Owuor 2007). Owuor (2007) asserts a lack of empirical studies – due to (amongst others) resource deficiencies – to enable informed policy-making and development of learning materials.

Socio-economic status

Another dimension that touches on diversity issues in education is the question of socio-economic status and poverty. Besides very different climatic conditions and natural resource occurrence

in the different regions in Kenya, access to public services like education and health have played a vital role in perpetuating disparities (or equalising) living standards. Particularly in the arid and semi-arid areas, children and especially girls are often not sent to school because families struggle to survive in very difficult and poverty-stricken circumstances.

Ali and Orodho (2014) investigated whether subsidies and financial support for poor families have a positive impact on access to, and participation in, education for the children of such families. They refer to the 2009 Economic Survey, which revealed that almost 47% of Kenya's population live below the poverty line (Ali & Orodho 2014). Targeting Mandera county as a region with high rates of poverty[13] as well as a notable gender gap in education with girls and women being disadvantaged, they found that as poverty levels rise, child labour increases. Families often rely, especially on the girls, to work as domestic helpers in the urban areas.

Other reasons found for the high dropout rate in that region included negative attitudes towards education among parents and children as well as sociocultural and religious factors connected to initiation and traditional gender socialisation. They concluded that policies by the Kenyan government to support marginalised groups, and empower girls and women have begun to make a positive impact but that many other factors contributed to the high dropout rates especially of girls in that region (Ali & Orodho 2014).

Another study carried out by Edith Mukudi (2003) focused on the nutrition status of children and its impact on the children's achievement in school. Through the association between nutritional stress, school attendance and educational achievement, the prevalence of nutritional stress as an expression of poverty was identified as an educational problem (Mukudi 2003).

Disability

In the context of Kenyan communities, persons may be considered disabled if they have to depend on others for assistance and cannot

fulfil the role expected of them within that community or in society. Given that the role of children is also to support their parents when they grow old, parents who have a child with a disability perceive themselves as having an insecure future (Mwangi 2013). Before independence, mission schools, religious and non-governmental organisations provided education for children with special needs, almost exclusively. In 1986 the Kenyan state established the Kenya Institute of Special Needs Education to take the lead in training teachers in that area (Ndinda 2005).

Article 54 of the constitution of Kenya (Republic of Kenya 2010) gives a number of entitlements to persons with disabilities, including access to education and facilities integrated in society. Since the adoption of Universal Primary Education in 2003, when fees in primary schools were abolished in Kenya, efforts have been undertaken to provide better access to education for children with special needs and, if possible, to include them in mainstream schools. However, the sudden influx of pupils after 2003 led to overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of teachers and learning materials. Consequently, children with special needs have not received adequate attention, nor has teacher training for different special needs requirements. Reliable figures and statistics on children with special needs and their integration in schools do not exist (and/or are lacking) for Kenya (Mwangi 2013). Mwangi clarifies that the term 'children with special needs' generally does not include children with learning difficulties but refers to children with physical and sensory impairments. The provision of adequate educational facilities, equipment, trained teachers and professional support staff to address the special needs of the children has not been sufficiently implemented to provide equal access and educational opportunities. Hence, teachers tend to feel unprepared to respond effectively to children who have behavioural and intellectual difficulties; and often, there are no support structures like a referral system, intervention from professionals, collaboration with parents or effective school management strategies in place (Mwangi 2013).

Sexual orientation

Sexual minorities in Kenya are subjected to homophobic violence, hostility and discrimination. In a 2013 survey, 90% of people in Kenya were found to be against homosexuality and to judge homosexuality as unacceptable (Finerty 2012). Religious and political leaders publicly speak against same sex relationships. While same sex relations are protected under Article 31 of the constitution of Kenya (Republic of Kenya 2010), the law criminalises same sex sexual conduct and consenting adults can face up to 14 years of prison for same sex sexual conduct (Gona & wa-Mungai 2014). Ignorance and prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people is widespread and often backed-up by religion. According to the Afrobarometer findings (IDS 2017), the interviewed Kenyans are very tolerant about having neighbours who have a different ethnic background, religion or with an immigrant background, but the majority of the respondents would not like to have homosexuals as their neighbours (Table 5).

Table 5: Preference of specific social groups as neighbours

Q87C: For each of the following types of people, please tell me whether you would like having people from this group as neighbors, dislike it, or not care: Homosexuals

	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Total
Missing	0	1	2	1	1
Strongly dislike	77	81	81	78	80
Somewhat dislike	7	6	6	6	6
Would not care	10	5	7	6	6
Somewhat like	2	1	1	1	1
Strongly like	2	2	2	2	2
Refused	1	0	0	0	0
Don't know	3	4	2	6	4

Source: Afrobarometer in IDS (2017: 71)

Margareta Ocholla (2010: 123) concludes that 'there is ignorance of sexuality and sexual orientation, compounded by inherited colonial criminal law, dogmatic religious belief, and the rigidity of social and sexual hierarchies'.

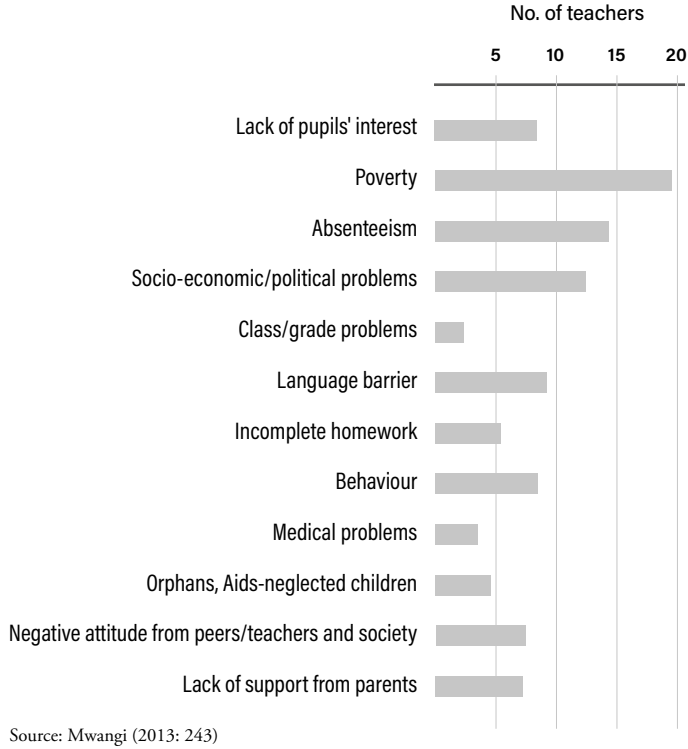
The research gap and research questions

In the above sections developments in the education system in Kenya, with its disparities, have been outlined. Rooted in these configurations and institutional framings, teachers in Kenyan public and private schools have to cope with a number of challenges such as lack of facilities and learning materials, overcrowded and heterogeneous classrooms and meagre payment. Barriers to learning for the children are manifold. In many cases, effective school management is extremely difficult given the overall socio-economic conditions. Opportunities for teachers to participate in in-service courses are rare, even though these have been increased and encouraged over past years. Few teachers have capacity for, or take the initiative to, find out about the background of learners who show learning difficulties and do not develop like other children. Having to teach 70 to 80 learners in one class does not allow the teacher to pay much attention to individual learners (Mwangi 2013).

Public primary teacher training colleges and diploma teacher training colleges run 2-year residential courses for primary teachers and 3-year in-service upgrading programmes. Diplomas and certificate courses can be added for the purpose of specialisation, for example, in the fields of counselling or special needs education. The Diploma in Special Needs Education run by the Kenya Institute for Special Needs Education covers, for example, hearing, visual, physical and intellectual impairment; another diploma course in audiology is offered by the University of Nairobi. Besides primary school teachers who complete the basic 2-year diploma, untrained teachers who have completed secondary school work in primary schools and wait for the opportunity to study. Other categories of primary school teachers include those with an approved teacher status – they have qualifications in other disciplines (e.g. a Bachelor of Arts) – and teachers with a bachelor's or master's degree. Some primary school teachers do not participate in training courses after doing the pre-service teacher training, others do short courses, seminars and trainings on various issues like science, HIV/Aids or

guidance and counselling. Mwangi (2013) asked approximately 100 primary school teachers about challenges experienced in their classrooms, and found that poverty was the major driver of these challenges (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Teachers' challenges in the classroom



Source: Mwangi (2013: 243)

Although courses for professional development, continuous education, in-service training and part-time or refresher courses are increasingly available for primary and secondary school teachers, they fall far short of the demand for further education.

When looking at diversity issues in teacher education or, more particularly, diversity education concepts, there is little to be found

in the curricula. One course that includes an active reflection on diversity issues is the guidance and counselling course that teachers can choose to be trained in. Every school has a guidance and counselling teacher to whom learners are referred in situations of conflict or behavioural and other problems. Although the majority of counselling theories focus on individual clients, and not on classes or types of people, 'it is important to learn which diversity factors make a difference in the problem situation of the client' (Wango 2006: 206). Even though guidance and counselling are partly included in the teacher education curriculum, the course as a subject field is only offered to teachers who plan to specialise in that field. Social categorisations like gender, health status and ableism play a role in various subject fields of teacher training – but not as different dimensions of the common phenomenon of social boundary-making, which leads to discrimination and exclusion.

The sections above outlined the development of education and schools in postcolonial Kenya as case for this study. Given the highlighted disparities and social inequalities affecting education in Kenya, as well as discriminatory and exclusionist structures and practices, this study wants to look at how teachers perceive, experience and deal with diversity in their professional practice. Such investigations into diversity, discrimination and social exclusion in the education sector, and especially how problems are experienced, interpreted and responded to by Kenyan teachers, are largely missing. Hence, little evidence has been produced as to the kind of problems Kenyan teachers experience concerning social diversity and inequality – and how they deal with them. By interrogating the configurations, representations and encounters of diversity in the Kenyan school context, and from the teachers' angle, this study aims to offer perspectives for teachers, schools and teacher education to address issues of discrimination and exclusion – and for disrupting the cycle of reproducing social inequalities. To that end, the study is guided by the following three questions:

1. How is diversity experienced and interpreted by teachers in their professional practice in postcolonial Kenya?
2. What are the drivers, strategies and consequences of experienced diversity in Kenyan schools?
3. Which strategies for schools and teachers can be recommended that help reduce the reproduction of social inequalities in schools?

Methodological implications

The theoretical lens, including the study's critical interpretivist paradigmatic stance, call for a qualitative, inductive methodological approach to investigate these main questions. Placing the research in a critical paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017; O'Donoghue 2006; Charmaz 2013; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Kincheloe 2008; Willis et al. 2007) intends to develop insights that help to transform socially unjust structures, policies and practices regarding diversity in Kenyan schools. Besides the envisaged theoretical contribution to understanding diversity in postcolonial school contexts, the third research question therefore refers to practical recommendations as a product of this inquiry. These intentions and orientations hold consequences for the research design, for the methodological approach including the sampling, data generation and analysis techniques as well as for ethical considerations when investigating diversity in Kenyan school contexts.

In order to demarcate the case under investigation, the interpretive approach of a qualitative case study design offers a way to generate a detailed analysis and intensive examination of the Kenyan case (Bryman 2008). Given the dearth of relevant and broadly supported theories and conceptualisations of the research phenomenon, the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) with its inductive approach of building a grounded and contextualised theory, offered the most promising tool for this study. A grounded theory approach neither suggests a system of a priori defined social categorisations of diversity, nor a group-centred approach

of selecting particular social groups of interest. Rather, it suits the purpose of mapping different inequalities in the Kenyan school context, investigating their significance, and exploring how teachers deal with these differentiations and social categorisations.

From the various directions that Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) has taken since its 'discovery' in the 1960s (Glaser & Strauss 1967), the constructivist GTM (Charmaz 2006) blends well with the critical interpretivist paradigm of this study. According to Charmaz, GTM provides

> a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development. (Charmaz 2005: 507)

However, Charmaz (2014b) also reminds us that it is important to consider research methods as being embedded in the locations and conditions where they are developed, and that there is no natural way of doing research. This not only indicates the need of adopting and adapting grounded theory methodologies under the specific conditions of inquiry, but also refers to a more general concern, namely the researcher's positionality, including the need to reflect on the power asymmetries, norms, values and interpretation frameworks that the researcher brings to the field (cf. Barongo-Muweke 2016).

For centuries, research carried out in a North/South context was framed by imperialism and colonisation, and characterised by exploitation, knowledge extraction and misrepresentation. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) shows how research methods can reproduce colonialist forms of knowledge and also colonial relationships between researchers and the research participants. Even though global North–South relations have changed formally, ethical concerns driven by the need for decolonisation and for producing contextualised and locally relevant knowledge under fair conditions remain valid. Hence, the ethical considerations for

this study had to go beyond having filled in informed consent forms and the acquisition of ethical clearance from the authorities.

Through my involvement in academic cooperation projects with East and South African universities in the field of education research and teacher education, I was able to share and validate the study, its findings and my interpretations with my East and South African colleagues and some of the research participants at all stages. For instance, memo-writing during the coding of the data offered a way of including question marks and ambiguities where various possibilities of interpretation could be tried, refused and retried – based on discussions and interactions with my Kenyan colleagues. A careful initial coding of the spoken words, line by line and sentence by sentence, aimed for careful handling and capture of the research participants' perspectives.

Nevertheless, my outsider position certainly held limitations, particularly with regard to the data interpretation and construction of theory. But during the data generation process, the outside position also sparked positive effects, as it inspired my research participants to explain issues that might have been taken for granted if I had been a Kenyan myself – for example, their perceptions of ethnic affiliation, identity and belonging or common issues of discrimination caused by hegemonic discourses.

Furthermore, an open discussion between the research participants and an insider researcher – meaning a Kenyan with their own (ethnic, gender, class, regional etc.) identity – might have been flawed by distorted, internal Kenyan power relations between different social categories that affect the interaction and dialogue between various positionalities. This point was stressed by various Kenyan colleagues who confirmed that it would have been impossible for them to gather data as rich as I had.

The data for this project consist of 16 interviews of 60–95 minutes each. They were carried out between 2016 and 2018 and from these in-depth interviews, I selected eight to comprise the body of my research. The selection was based on the richness of the data per interview on one hand, and on contrasting types of

diversity experiences and professional practices on the other – in order to include a wide range of experiences.

It seemed important not to restrict the sample to one type of teacher, or one type of school, or one region in Kenya. There was no empirical basis for such a selection. Hence, I decided to capture data on diversity-related aspects of both primary and secondary, public and private schools. Given that questions of representation, and the speaker's social position play a central role when interrogating discrimination and diversity, gender and ethnic background, as two central categories in all intersectional studies, were considered when choosing the research participants. Due to the vast disparities between the living conditions in urban and rural areas, as well as in different regions, it seemed advisable to include experiences from schools and participants in various contexts. Hence, my sample included:

- female and male teachers;
- teachers from different ethnic backgrounds; and
- teachers with at least three years of working experience
    - in primary and secondary public and private schools,
    - in different regions of the country, and
    - in urban and rural areas.

The interview guide consisted of two main parts in order to generate both (a) narrative data referring to the biographies of the teachers including instances where they felt *othered*, excluded or discriminated against, based on their identity; and (b) data that focused specifically on the issue of diversity in education and on the teachers' professional practices in schools.

Unlike many grounded theory works, this study relied on interview data only in an attempt to establish teachers' perspectives on issues of diversity in education. As depicted in the first chapters of this book, the biographical diversity experiences of the research participants not only promised insights into the representations and encounters of diversity in Kenya, but they

also provide an understanding of the teachers' identities as foundation of their teaching practice. To include this important aspect in data generation, the interview guide borrowed its initial question from the narrative interview technique (Küsters 2019; Schütze 2016), prompting research participants to tell the story of their upbringing and going to school and ways in which they experienced diversity in their biography.

The second part of the interview guide followed the problem-centred interview method (Witzel 2000). It consisted of a set of guiding questions based on the research interest, my previous knowledge and sensitising concepts of diversity (education), intersectionality and nondiscrimination. At the same time, the guide included open-ended questions that left space for the research participants to focus on specific issues that seemed relevant to them. It comprised several questions for each of these items:

- the diversity interpretations and experiences in the research participants' lives;
- their diversity interpretations in the Kenyan context;
- their professional experiences, challenges and practices concerning diversity in schools and
- recommendations they had for improving the situation with regard to diversity in Kenyan schools.

In linking biographical and professional encounters and representations of diversity to the literature on diversity studies, the interrogation into the teachers' biographical diversity experiences took a deconstructionist approach by looking at the individual and their emerging intersecting identity factors as significant to their social positioning and chances concerning education. In contrast, the teachers' experiences and practices as professional teachers in schools primarily looked at group-related explanations concerning diversity in the Kenyan school context. However, both approaches in the context of this research revolve

around issues of power and query the ways in which hegemonic discourses and social practices drive discriminatory, exclusionist and othering conditions that reproduce social inequality.

The level of trust showed by the research participants, particularly in the first part of the interview, was remarkable and hence, the data generated through interviews combining narrative and problem-centred interviewing techniques proved to be very rich.

The tools that GTM provided for organising and analysing the data, developing higher levels of analytical categories on the way, proved feasible with the generated data.

Conclusion

The government of independent Kenya has attempted to move from the exclusionist colonial provision of education to providing access to primary and secondary schooling to everyone. However, disparities remain concerning access, participation and success in education – as shown by education statistics that include various indicators and factors mirroring prevalent social inequalities. Furthermore, tribalism, sexism, ableism and other oppressive systems depicted in empirical studies and the literature emerged as significant for reproducing social boundaries, discrimination and inequality. The Kenyan government has highlighted the role of education and schools to foster unity in diversity, social cohesion and nondiscrimination. Aside from promoting guidance and counselling at schools in order to promote diversity and fight discrimination, strategies for diversity in teacher education and institutional frameworks of schools are largely missing. Against this backdrop, the research gap for this study has been identified as the need to interrogate the teachers' perspective (their experience of, and professional practice regarding, diversity in the schools) in order to generate approaches in (teacher) education that circumvent the use of diversity for reproducing or manifesting exclusion and inequality. Finally, the methodological implications

for approaching the research problem were discussed in order to explain how the data were generated and analysed. A constructivist and social justice-orientated GTM enabled focus on teachers' strategies and professional practices in trying to develop theory on diversity in education in a Kenyan context.

CHAPTER FOUR

Diversity Experiences and Interpretations: Biographical Perspectives

During the initial coding and memo-writing process, various diversity categories (e.g. gender, ethnicity, disability, etc.) emerged from the data and became the structuring order for the personal and professional diversity experiences and interpretations of the interview participants. A substantial portion of the information on the properties and dimensions of the different categories of diversity emerged in the participants' narrative accounts about their own lived experiences. Consequently, these narratives also offer insights to the symbolic and social borders of the categories, the regimes of difference as well as the speakers' positions and perspectives. Furthermore, they open a way to an embedded understanding of relevant social concepts, normative schemes and narratives that reflect the power relations in the society in which they grew up. Looking at the individuals and their experiences growing up as Kalenjins, Luyhas or Gikuyus, girls or boys, in rural or urban settings, wealthy or poor, aims to explain specific circumstances and diversity categories that have unfolded a meaning for the individuals, particularly regarding their own education.

However, while looking at one category, other dimensions of diversity appeared as relevant intersecting categories and therefore will be considered in these presentations. For each main category, a graph illustrates the most important aspects that emerged from the data. To account for the intersectional perspective, other lines of difference that refer to factors that seem to impact on the type of experience had are mentioned in the text below each graph.

However, the methodological approach and the sample did not allow for general deductions in terms of intersectional correlations. For example: if you are female and poor in Kenya, you are more likely to encounter gender discrimination than if you are female and rich. The limitation also refers to non-binary gender constructions or multiple discrimination experiences that the LGBTIQ community experiences in present-day Kenya (cf. Mwachiro 2013). While individual research participants stated that there was something like 'total discrimination' regarding sexual identities and orientations that do not fit the dominant binary, cisgender and heteronormativity categorisations, these experiences were not part of my research participants' own identities.

The main and subcategories that emerged from the data provide the structure for this chapter. Three diversity categories emerged as the main ones, each of them holding several subcategories: (i) ethnicity, (ii) gender and (iii) socio-economic status.

In terms of developing grounded theory on diversity in Kenyan school contexts, this step interprets and systematises data that were fractured into separate pieces in the initial coding process by linking subcategories to categories and finding relationships between them. Axial coding and its organising scheme served as guideline for this and the next chapter.

All names of ethnic communities were replaced randomly by African girls' names, to protect the identity of the research participants and their affiliation to a particular group.

Ethnicity: 'People live as and appreciate one another as tribes'

The first category that emerged from the interviews refers to various aspects of ethnicity (see Figure 12). As a recurrent theme in most of the interviews, the participants' experiences as members of a certain ethnic community or their interaction and experiences with members of other ethnic communities appeared as a meaningful category of difference for most interview participants through various stages of their biography. It also became obvious that other intersecting categories like gender, geography and wealth influenced the ways in which ethnicity unfolded its meanings for the teachers. However, my role as an outsider researcher certainly provoked some detailed explanations concerning ethnic categorisation in Kenya – which would probably not have happened had I been part of the ethnic categorisation system myself. The terms that the participants used to refer to this category included 'ethnic communities', 'ethnic groups', 'tribes' or simply 'communities'. When presenting the different types of experiences that emerged from the data, I will adhere to the terms the interview participants used. 'Community' in this sense always refers to something that is connected to ethnicity – unlike in other contexts, where it could simply refer to the village, neighbourhood or district. In the analysed data, community is the most common term used to address questions of ethnic groups and differences, especially when referring to one's own group ('my community').

The first subcategory – community, identity and belonging – that emerged encompasses those aspects of experiences regarding ethnicity that essentially serve as pillars for individual (ethnic) identities and refer to membership, home(land), the sharing of social activities and language.

The second subcategory (mixing) relates to what the research participants described as being together with members of different ethnic groups and experiencing their own ethnic identity in

contrast or comparison with other ethnic identities. Growing up, these experiences emerged as mostly positive and advantageous interactions in the interpretation of the research participants. These included the opportunity to learn seeing things from different perspectives, to overcome narrow traditional role models and the awareness of different lifestyles.

The third and fourth subcategories (tribalism and stereotyping) refer to those experiences where affiliation to a certain ethnic community was a reason for stereotyping, exclusion, discrimination. These were partly identified in the context of ethnic group-related rivalries in the sphere of political power constellations and were mainly experienced in mixed secondary schools and at university, particularly during times where the political situation was tense.

The fifth and last subcategory (language diversity) refers to the cultural aspect of the main category, ethnicity. Although the different local languages (often called 'vernaculars') spoken in Kenya don't necessarily match ethnic categories (one ethnic group = one common local language), home languages and dialects emerged as a relevant dividing or uniting force in some instances. These include experiences where language was used as a tool or strategy for bonding between group members who shared the same local language and feelings of exclusion – and mistrust in mixed language groups.

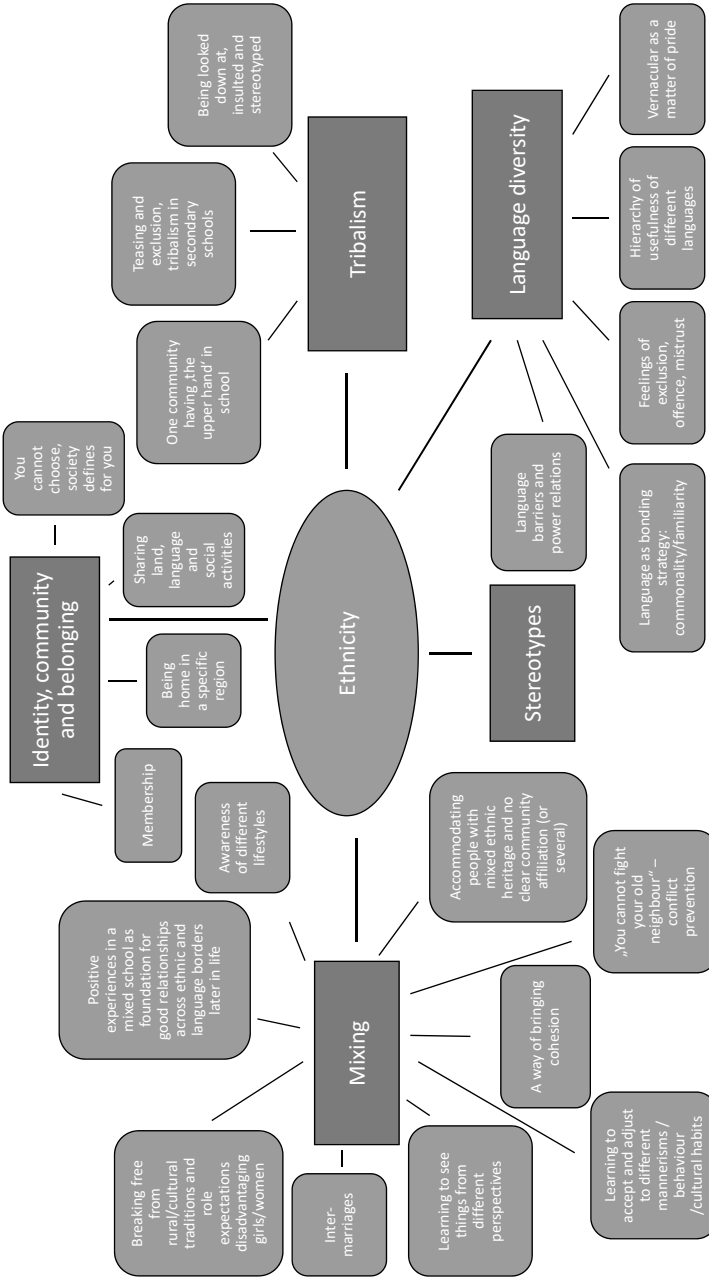
Further background factors that emerged from the empirical material concerning experiences related to ethnicity include whether the setting was a rural or urban one, and participants' socio-economic background.

Figure 6 visualises the first main category (ethnicity) with its subcategories and characteristics belonging to each of the subcategories.

Community, identity and belonging

In the introductory section of the interviews, participants generally included geographical information of the household in

Figure 6: Visualising ethnicity: Types of biographical experiences



which they grew up and explanations about their families, and also a statement regarding the ethnic community to which they belonged. This was commonly referred to as 'my community' or 'I come from the X community'. In the course of the interviews it became apparent that community was a significant self-identification marker for most but not all of the interviewed teachers. For some, identification with one of the ethnic groups in Kenya seemed a straightforward matter, like Elsa, who stated:

> Myself, I come from a community in the central part of Kenya that is N county and the community that is found there is the Bahati community (5:6).[14]

The self-identification does not only include the specific ethnic community but also the geographical location, the particular region within Kenya, where her community is.

Distinguishing between rural and urban settings to explain her situation, Ana said:

> I come from the Chipo community … where I was brought up is not within town. You know, town is … cosmopolitan where you find people of various tribes. But I come from a rural area within the county, where the region is really homogeneous and actually, who lives there are Chipos. (1:25)

Hence, Ana and Elsa identify with their community (including the specific region within Kenya that they come from) rather strongly. On a more general note, Ana explained:

> People live as, appreciate one another as tribes. We come from the Kalenjin, Luhya, the Gikuyu, you know, that is in matters to do with social activities … Of course there is towns which are cosmopolitan; … you can still see the alignment to your community members. (1:44)

In contrast to these two teachers, for whom ethnic identity seems

a rather clear matter, some of the explanations of other interview participants pointed to a more complicated situation and system of ethnic grouping:

> I come from the Arjana community. In Arjana we have so many sub-groups. I am from a smaller sub-group called the Chibuzo, eh? Related to the Adede, almost, but then we are Arjana. (7:27)

In Gerald's case above, ethnic community does not seem to offer a clear and straightforward identification because the place of his sub-group seems ambiguous – as if not fitting exactly into the existing system. Chris also pointed to this in-between feeling:

> I come from the minority group among the Bamidele and we live in an area that we can say it is to the border of other communities so we are more of adjacent to other cultures. (3:8)

Chris's statement refers to the fact that he identifies with a sub-group of his ethnic community, which is a minority and also that, in his experience, living close to different communities meant interaction with other cultures as well. In another statement, Chris explained the experience of his sub-group more closely:

> There are nine major communities [as sub-groups of his ethnic group], then ours is always rated as other … Typically, our experience amongst the Esi is that we are always viewed as not Esi. (3:35)

This ambivalent experience – on one hand being categorised as a member of one community but, within that community, not being accepted as a full-fledged member – confronted Chris with the question of his own ethnic identity in relation to others. It also refers to questions of belonging and exclusion. In his experience, he does not belong to the Esi ethnic community as such – only to the specific sub-group. According to stories told about his sub-group:

> they are the offspring of an Esi with a Dayo woman. So the Esi would see them as belonging to the Dayo and the Dayo would see them as belonging to the Esi … so we find ourselves in between. (3:35)

His ambiguous position with regards to ethnic identity illustrates the influence exerted by large group constructions: it was decided that Chris' ethnic group belongs to the Esi community while it could have been a group of its own or belong to the Dayo group instead. His example also points to the fact that he cannot choose or decide which ethnic identity he himself would prefer; it is the other ethnic groups that he interacts with who ascribe an ethnic identity to him or deny him one.

The sense of belonging to a certain community and its region within Kenya was distinct in the case of some interview participants, but it was rather hidden with others. In a general sense, Ana explained about ethnic communities in Kenya:

> I can say that people live as communities – of course there's the towns which are cosmopolitan – so those are the areas where people have land to survive with one another though you can still see the alignment to your community members. So that people live as, appreciate one another as tribes. We come from the Kagiso, Bohlale, the Chiemeka [community], you know, that is in matters to do with social activities. (1:44)

She centralises the positive aspects of membership and belonging – common activities, sharing and appreciation. She also pointed out that it is not only in a rural setting where community members live together and share land 'to survive with one another', but also in urban areas where the population is composed of various communities ('you can still see the alignment').

It became obvious that in various instances, belonging to a certain ethnic community had an influence on what people experienced and on their specific positions and relations to other communities in Kenya.

Mixing

While ethnic identity emerged as a relevant category in most of the personal experiences of the interview participants, Gerald and Harald represent a type expressing a distanced relationship to their ethnic group. Explaining that, for him, ethnic identity never played a big role, Gerald said:

> I've grown up not knowing I am an Rudo, no, I have always grown up knowing that I am a Kenyan because we have, there are a lot of intermarriages in that place even in my own family there is a lot of intermarriages. (7:16)

He further explained:

> In Kenya it's called, we call it 'skim', meaning many people come from their ancestral homes to come and buy land to settle in that place. So what happened because there are many people coming from other ancestral homes, other places, where they were originally born, coming to settle in this area so you find almost, literally all the tribes were there … That is the good thing, we learned to embrace each other. (7:16)

The reasons Gerald provided to explain why, in his personal experience, ethnic group identity was less important than the national identity related to the environment of his neighbourhood or community, and the many intermarriages and mingling of people with different ethnic backgrounds where he grew up. He emphasised that this place was not the ancestral home of any of the people living there – they had all moved from various places within Kenya to live there. Bringing his own experience into a wider picture and adding a general sociopolitical angle, he pointed out that, while in other places not far from his home, violent attacks took place between members of different ethnic groups after the 2007 elections:

> L. was not affected. It was not affected because this one area carries almost all the tribes of Kenya. So you'll find literally you cannot fight your old neighbour, you have been together for so many years. (7:18)

He concluded that the immediate social relationships with members of different ethnic communities in his region prevented an outbreak of conflict at a time when the politically motivated ethnic tension along ethnic lines was very high. He framed this mixed living situation as 'learning to embrace each other'.

Another example of equivocal ethnic belonging and a rather distanced relationship from his own ethnic identity is Harald, who originated from a place where 'the Kenyan communities just live there' (8:10). He added:

> my parents, my mother comes from a different community called the Shani. My father comes from a different community called the Mirembe. They came together [laughing] and here am I, yes. So there they came from those different backgrounds. (8:8)

Belonging and identity in this case cannot be regarded as closely linked to an ethnic community but, rather, to a region and family with its own – cosmopolitan – identity and history as well as a town that is made up of various backgrounds and ethnic communities.

Another kind of ethnic mixing experience refers to the environment of learners[15] and teachers in school. Dora pointed to the learning experience in her primary school where learners came from all over Kenya because their parents worked on the same tea estate:

> So, actually they came from different communities in Kenya and that was my first experience of interacting with different people from different communities. So actually I learnt that, OK, people vary, yes, people vary depending on actually the community that they come from, their culture. People have different things depending on their communities. Also in my high school level,

> I went to a – it's now called a county school. The people there also came from different communities, people had different behavioural, OK, different mannerisms. So actually it also shaped me to realise that, OK, we have to adjust to different mannerisms, how people interact. (4:13)

The learning Dora described focuses on adjustment to the different behaviour or habits and ways of interaction that she found with people from different communities. She emphasised that her overall experience in the mixed primary and secondary school she went to was a positive one.

In contrast to the ethnically mixed neighbourhood and primary school experiences above, the case for those who grew up in a rural setting looked different. For instance, Ana described her rural home as homogeneous, including the primary school she attended. She stressed that she is very appreciative of her experience in secondary school where she met learners and teachers from varying backgrounds. She spoke about her eye-opening experience when changing from primary school to a mixed national secondary school:

> It made me realise that it's not all about a tribe because when I was in primary school, I was from the village where all of us were from the same tribe but when I went to the national school … I saw things in a different perspective. (1:98)

She underlined her positive attitude towards the interaction with different ethnic identities by saying:

> If I was to think along that cocoon of the Chipo woman who is just supposed to cook for a man and stay, I would have not gone to school. I was the first girl to go to secondary school in my family. (1:74)

Ana's ethnic identity dictated that, as a girl/woman, she would not go to secondary school. Nevertheless, she aimed for a different

path and carried on with her schooling, which opened up the opportunity for her to meet and interact with people from different ethnic backgrounds who shared her view that girls and women should have choices concerning their education and gender roles. Ana drew a very positive summary of her experience in an ethnically mixed secondary school, which influenced her life in various ways:

> All along, I have appreciated interaction, yeah, and in secondary school my friends were from different languages and when I went to university I still have friends up to date from various other communities. (1:74)

It seems that her interaction with members of other ethnic groups in school helped her make friends across ethnic communities and across language barriers later in life at university, too. Ana pointed to the impact this interaction had on her life and substantiated her conviction that schools should consist of a mix of different ethnic groups by concluding: 'I saw things in a different perspective so I believe it is one of the advantages, it is a way of bringing cohesion' (1:98).

As illustrated by the different cases above, the region and the environment of the places where interview participants grew up and received their schooling determined the way they experienced their own identity as members of a particular ethnic community, and in relation to other groups. The positive experiences from an ethnically mixed environment included learning about diversity – namely that things can be seen from various perspectives and done in different ways, that gender roles are not the same everywhere, that people speak different languages and that there are people with varying habits and manners. The participants also described their learning to adapt to and deal with these differences, to learn to see things from other perspectives and to build emotional relationships.

In contrast to these cases in which positive experiences and learning are highlighted, another group described their mainly negative experiences with mixing when growing up.

Tribalism

The research participants highlighted tribalism as one of the negative experiences prevalent in ethnically mixed school environments. For Elsa, the change from primary to secondary school meant that she, being an excellent student, was admitted to a national school where students from various backgrounds mixed. Elsa was critical of the tribalism she experienced in that school (and, more generally, in society) that stems from the strong focus on different ethnic communities:

> Another thing you find that still in those (national) high schools – we have tribes. And you find that tribalism in Kenya is a major issue … You find that for that case I had the upper hand because I am from the Kagiso community and you find that that national school is located within the Kagiso community so we had some other students who were not of the same tribe, so those ones, they had a hard time … For example, I remember we had a girl by the name of Joyce she was a Rudo and she was the only one in that class because the others were the Kagiso and she had a hard time because they backbit her in Kagiso [language] and so on. So you find that if at all you come from a community or you school in a community whereby the people there, they are of different tribe, you are going to have a hard time. (5:6)

In the situation she described, it was not she herself who was a victim of tribalism – in this case, she belonged to the majority who 'had the upper hand'. However, she observed how one student, who did not belong to the same community as the majority in the class, was teased and excluded by her classmates. The problem, which she identified as tribalism, emerged when the learners picked on the topic of ethnic communities in a situation where there was an imbalance between members of two different ethnic communities in the class. While the incident happened when she went to school herself, she identified tribalism in schools as still being a problem in national schools.

The phenomenon that Elsa referred to as tribalism, where students are socially excluded on the basis of their ethnic affiliation, might relate to the specific social and political position of the ethnic groups involved.

Like Ana and Dora, Elsa belongs to an ethnic group that is strong in numbers and powerful in political terms in Kenya. The experiences Elsa described refer particularly to strong ethnic groups that have a history of rivalries and political power struggle, which seems to impact on the students in school. It also points to the fact that it could make a difference whether your ethnic affiliation seems to be straightforward (as opposed to mixed) and thus easy to view in an essentialist way.

In Dora's interpretation, opportunities for specific ethnic groups in Kenya are directly linked to the people in power on the national level:

> It is all a matter of where you come from because at the moment it is all about the Bohlale community, even in the previous regime, because … the president came from the same community but back then, when we had a Chipo president, most of the Chipos benefited, they had the top positions in government. (4:41)

> But now like, the Rudos are a little bit side-lined because they do not vote in the president. So we have such differences. (4:42)

While she did not underline her statement with concrete examples, her interpretation directly connects to common public narratives.

Ethnicity being used as a political tool to create awareness about and divisions between ethnic communities is also in the focus of Chris' interpretation, based on his experience at university.

> Ethnicity is something that has been cultivated into Kenyans by the politicians for their own benefit. Kenyans were more of the united community and then the separation has been political. And it's known! Bad luck now that it is infiltrating into the university system. (3:61)

From his experience, university politics are strongly influenced by tribalism such that student representatives are voted for along ethnic lines and, while there is a leader from one ethnic community in a position of power, the other ethnic communities would not expect that leader to do anything for them or their group.

> When I was in college, when we used to vote for a chairman that is what happened to me because I was an Udo (sub-group of Mirembe). The Mirembe community could not accept that I could be voted in so while in first year, I was the class representative. I worked very well among everyone and the fact that I came from an area whereby we are at the border of the Kagiso, the Rudo and the Mirembe, I had known how they were. (3:61)

He described how he was able to make friends and get (political) support from members of other ethnic communities while, at the same time, being not accepted by members of the ethnic community of which he is considered part of a sub-group. What is interesting is that he referred to his experience of being raised in an area neighbouring other ethnic communities where he gained knowledge about their ways of doing things and evidently acquired social skills to get along well with members of other ethnic communities. He emphasised that he regards this kind of tribalism in matters to do with university politics as very negative.

Other university experiences also suggest that tribalism plays a role in various ways. Gerald pointed out that you only have a chance to get benefits like scholarships or promotions at university, if you belong to the 'right' ethnic community. From his experience, benefits were not given based on merit, but on ethnic lines and within your ethnic community or clan. Elsa's experience at university supported this point:

> So you find that even at university level tribalism is still, it is there, it is. You know, you expect that these people are educated, so if I told you, it is matters to do with tribe you don't expect in

> higher education levels. But you find that in Kenya tribalism is so deep rooted, yeah it doesn't matter whether it is the primary school level, wherever. So you find that people, yeah, everything in Kenya is just based on matters to do with tribe even the job opportunities … When we had the student elections, there is a candidate who is a Chiemeka and another candidate who is a Bohlale, all the Chiemekas will vote for their, for the person from their community and the Bohlales will vote for the person from their community. (5:6)

Elsa also experienced tribalism at university as a member of a minority group while doing her degree in the heated environment of the 2007 elections:

> Again you find that the Chiemeka community and the Bohlale community by then they were rivals so you find that … they had said that all the Bohlales who are in university, we could not get out alive … I remember there was a time students were being killed in the university. (5:6)

These personal experiences of violence based on tribalism show that ethnicity used in political power struggles in national politics also affects education institutions where students and staff from various ethnic communities teach and learn. It is interesting to note that Elsa pointed out that 'you would not expect' tribalism among educated people. We can conclude that, in her perception, education should be a tool to prevent tribalism.

From these varied accounts, it seems that a number of factors play a role in determining how schools and universities experience the diversity of ethnically mixed populations, and whether and where tribalism occurs. Chris was very clear that, in his opinion, tribalism only comes up in the context of opportunities and political power. When asked about a situation where tribalism did not play a role, he remembered former US President Barrack Obama's visit to Kenya:

> Let me tell you, all Kenyans were united for him … Nobody ever thought about like: I am an Kagiso. You will find everyone talking about the same issue. But when it comes to other issues, especially when it comes to jobs, then you'll find now that diversity working in it. Then people would start considering people from their community, all that, it is an issue when it comes to opportunities, actually. (3:44)

In this statement, tribalism or, more generally, diversity is contrasted with what Chris understands the opposite to be: being united, everyone talking about the same issue, no thoughts about which ethnic group one belongs to but, instead, an awareness that all are Kenyans. From what he experienced in that situation, ethnic identity was replaced by national identity – and unity among Kenyans replaced the focus on divisions based on ethnic grouping.

Stereotypes

Stereotyping emerged as another relevant subcategory. In the peri-urban setting Florence grew up in, she felt stereotyped by other learners and the teachers in her school, based on a mix of ethnic group affiliation and her socio-economic status. As a local community member, she went to a school that consisted of a mix of learners and teachers from different communities. Most had moved there to work in the college as lecturers but her social status was low, being a local girl raised by a single mother who worked as a secretary in the college.

> So you really feel: OK, now, in life we are not the same … I come from the Rudo community and you realise that the majority of the tutors around there were from different backgrounds so, at the end of the day, they could see you as people who are not hard working. We really came from the catchment area where people still own at least farms … So they can look at you – like

> in my community people like eating Ugali and Mursiki; Mursiki is fermented sour milk, you know, milk that has to stay in a cup for some days for it to ferment, so in some other words the milk has gone bad – so they could look at you and tell you: 'Continue staying like the milk fermented in the cup'. You see, that is life and you see that kind there. (6:82)

The stereotyping she described, and being assigned a certain low-ranked position in her school, was not only conveyed by the learners but also by some of the teachers who treated her differently and embarrassed her in class.

Stereotyping based on ethnicity can be regarded as a very common phenomenon, according to Dora. In her discussion, public discourse on stereotypes of different ethnic groups is drawn on, and her own stereotyping becomes apparent:

> The ones who have the best chances in Central Kenya are the Chiemeke, because apparently our president comes from that community … Like, I also realised that back in E [town] the stalls in the market, OK, the Chiemekes own most of the stalls in town, yet it is our town, you see. And because the president is actually giving them the access to that. So it's like … these are the ones who are coming to overtake them [Kagiso] in their own land. (4:41)

The rhetoric she used to describe the Kagiso people as successful merchants and business people who take over the markets and businesses of other local communities seems to connect directly to public discourse and stereotypes promoted in past decades for that specific powerful ethnic group. The way she argued and explained reveals her thinking in categories of 'we' and 'they' ('their land', 'our own land', 'our town') and the feeling that one ethnic group has become too powerful – through the help of political leaders. Explaining some common stereotypes regarding specific ethnic groups she reiterated what seems to be general knowledge:

> We always perceive the Kagisos as having so much pride and it is actually something that it has made them be segregated. Because even people are like: OK, if we give them a chance to have a president from their community, actually they will step on us. So, you see, we'll not have space, so they have been – actually based on that category that actually these people cannot go places. Actually, they are so much proud and there is nothing to produce to show that should be proud of that, you see. (4:48)

The segregated or side-lined position of the Kagisos in Kenyan society is explained by their pride – which is considered unjustified – and the fear by other ethnic groups that they would not treat them fairly if in power. Dora continued and explained (to me as an outsider):

> We have another community called the Udos, they always feel they are blamed and they always fight. It is like they are venting out so they fight a lot. They are still engaging in cattle wrestling, because it's like they are venting out their strike with the government is not listening to them. So they just feel, they have always been low and as much as the government tries to re-settle them but they are a little bit rigid. They don't want to be helped and at the same time, they are violent. Because you see, they fight most of the time. They are so hostile, because you cannot even go to their community anyhow. They live in a place called S. Because even people in that place are still living in grass thatched houses. There is a challenge so much people are not educated really and the few who access educated are so bright by the way, so I think it is actually lack of exposure and actually that feel of intimidation. (4:48)

The group she described is constructed as homogeneous, living in one specific area in old-fashioned houses, having certain characteristics and being in a low position because they do not accept the help the government wants to provide and they fight

frequently. In other accounts, the research participants spoke about marginalised areas of Kenya and the people living there who have been neglected by central government; the stereotypes emerging from Dora's account build on the pictures of homelands and the construction of homogenised and essentialised separate groups.

Chris remembered a situation where he was confronted with prejudice based on certain ethnic stereotypes:

> 'You are a Kagiso?' 'Yes.' 'You are the people who voted for him!' [the president, you are to be blamed]. So it was like: you are put in one basket. So it's something that has to do with psychology, the understanding of people and I think it's within the minds of people that it was there long so it is still there. (3:45)

The incident he recalled – which, again, happened in the context of national politics – points to the consequences of ethnic stereotyping and homogenising social groups as in Dora's account.

Language diversity

In various accounts, the different languages spoken in Kenya emerged as an important aspect to create a sense of belonging and commonality among members of the same community or sub-group – or rifts between members of different communities. The term mostly used to describe the language spoken at home and, usually, also identify the ethnic community, is 'mother tongue'. In a multilingual society like Kenya, where people normally speak various languages fluently, mother tongue is used to describe the language that is closest to the heart and mainly spoken at home.

The first type of experience referred to feelings of exclusion, offence or being othered on the basis of a different mother tongue. Not only were different mother tongues mentioned in the accounts, but also dialects as variations of a language. The dialect that Chris speaks, for instance, sounds funny to most members of the ethnic community that he is supposed to belong to, so he feels marginalised within his own community:

> As much as we almost speak the same words but how we speak it is quite different. So each time they put us aside. (3:35)

> Even when I was in college, it's rarely I used to talk in my language because if you are talking then the other people will laugh at you and say: you don't know how to speak. They don't see that that is your language they feel like you are learning to speak Kagiso [language] which is quite difficult. (3:37)

To avoid stereotyping or being laughed at, he confines his mother tongue to his family and people at home, and uses English or Kiswahili outside that realm. While Chris' example refers mainly to a conflict that underlines the position of his sub-group in the larger community, Florence's account refers to the more general issue of language being a uniting and dividing force:

> Now the problem that we will have, even me, I am not an exception. You will find that we could be having an Udo, a Rudo and a Chiemeka. Since we are many, we end up talking in mother tongue, you see, it just happens. And the others really feel offended … Maybe I want to say something about you, you see. I now switch and talk in Swahili or say it in my mother tongue, you see, so that you don't … sometimes we, you see, we just find ourselves we have been discussing and discussing until I even, we switch to mother tongue you see. At the end of the day, this person would feel, would … now say okay, they must be saying something bad about me because if it were good they could have talked something that I can hear, so that is a great, a great thing. And in most occasions, really, when you want to switch, you really want to say something bad, in most occasions, because what is it that has made you to switch? (6:38)

Florence identified this switching to mother tongue when in a group where not all people speak the same mother tongue as a common 'bad habit' that happens frequently. The problem that she saw, and which she has often experienced herself, is that people

who do not understand that mother tongue feel offended and excluded, and suspect the users of the mother tongue of saying something bad about them. She pointed out that there is no other good reason to switch to the mother tongue than wanting to say something that only the members of your own community can understand and, in most instances, it would be something negative.

In a similar way, Elsa pointed out:

> That is the trend in Kenya. If at all you meet with people from your community, you use vernacular it doesn't matter whether there are still others who don't understand. (5:6)

She added:

> Even someone who is very good in English or Kiswahili but because of the trend that is there, it has been there in Kenya that we are fond of using our vernacular language every time we meet two people of the same community. (5:48)

Besides wanting to say something that others should not understand, using the common language seems to be an expression of closeness and unity or familiarity and does not necessarily intend to exclude other people who do not speak that language.

These experiences indicate that, generally, people enjoy speaking their local language with members of their own ethnic-language community, which creates feelings of commonality and familiarity. People changing to the mother tongue when meeting members of the same language group even if the group is linguistically mixed, was a common experience among the interview participants and some admitted to being insensitive in that respect. Despite being aware that it creates feelings of exclusion and mistrust in those who do not understand that language, they still practise language switching.

Elsa's experience at university adds the aspect of power relations and status to the use of the mother tongue in a context

of language diversity. Being at a university that predominantly speaks a different mother tongue to hers, she said:

> They are proud of that, even the lecturers when you are coming sometimes they speak in their vernacular. Yeah, so they are used to that, sometimes you just have to understand. (5:42)

Elsa's way of interpreting and dealing with the situation is to try to understand that it is also a matter of pride to speak the mother tongue. However, for her there were few options other than trying to accept that this language is the dominant one and that there was nothing she could do if the lecturers spoke in their mother tongue and were proud about it. Since she was in the minority, she felt she had to accept the situation.

Another type of experience refers to schools and the problem of multilingual settings in teaching and learning institutions. Remembering her own school days, Beth said:

> In primary school, during our time, there used to be a subject for mother tongue. Yes, during our time … We learned it, the local language, but now, you see it was a challenge, because maybe you come from another language, and then maybe you come to learn another local language and Swahili, which is a national language and English, which is an official language. So you have to learn so many languages. Others are not even useful. (2:58)

In this interpretation, mother tongue as a subject field in school is useful as long as the learners have a homogenous language background, meaning that there is no diversity of mother tongues spoken. Beth pointed out that it has become a challenge to accommodate all the different languages spoken in schools due to the language diversity in many schools. Furthermore, her judgement: 'Others are not even useful', indicates that she considered learning mother tongues other than her own as not beneficial; this judgement seems to refer to formal education. The hierarchy of usefulness of different languages and the diversity

of languages spoken as mother tongues in the schools seemed to compel her to conclude that mother tongue teaching may not have a place in the schools.

Another type of experience concerning languages spoken and taught in school arose from the situation that some of the interview participants went to primary schools that were linguistically homogeneous. Chris reported, for instance, that his mother tongue was accommodated even when the official language of instruction was English. Because all learners and teachers spoke the same mother tongue, teachers were able to explain concepts, switching between the two languages. However, after primary school, the situation changed for him and he barely used his mother tongue anymore:

> The primary schools around were mainly our communities and they used to work with our kids but outside that, college and all that at the university, rarely would I speak my language at all. I'd either do it with somebody who comes from there or just speak English. (3:41)

Hence, it can be summarised that up to Grade 8, Chris' mother tongue was accommodated in school even though the language of instruction was English. Since teachers and learners shared the same mother tongue, and English was a foreign language, to them all, code-switching between the languages was common practice.

Some of the teachers' experiences concerning language diversity in Kenya as a visible manifestation of ethnic diversity offer a glimpse into the challenges that educational institutions are faced with in a multilingual society like Kenya. However, when looking at the overall significance of language diversity for the interview participants, it became obvious that it is merely one of the diversity factors within the broader topic of different (ethnic) communities with a potential role in creating rifts between or unity among members of different groups. At the same time, language diversity resulting from Kenya's ethnic diversity was identified as the most obvious challenge for schools.

Gender: 'But to invest in a girl – really?'

The second category that emerged from the interviews refers to issues of gender. To a certain extent, these gender issues need to be seen as intertwined with cultural and socio-economic aspects that, again, refer to specific ethnic communities and their economic activities. The focus of this study, however, is not to study gender in specific ethnic and cultural or economic constellations. Rather, I will look at the experiences individuals had growing up and going to school in Kenya to see in what ways they experienced their sex/gender as a matter of privilege or discrimination or of difference in terms of being othered. These experiences were coded into the following categories illustrated in Figure 7.

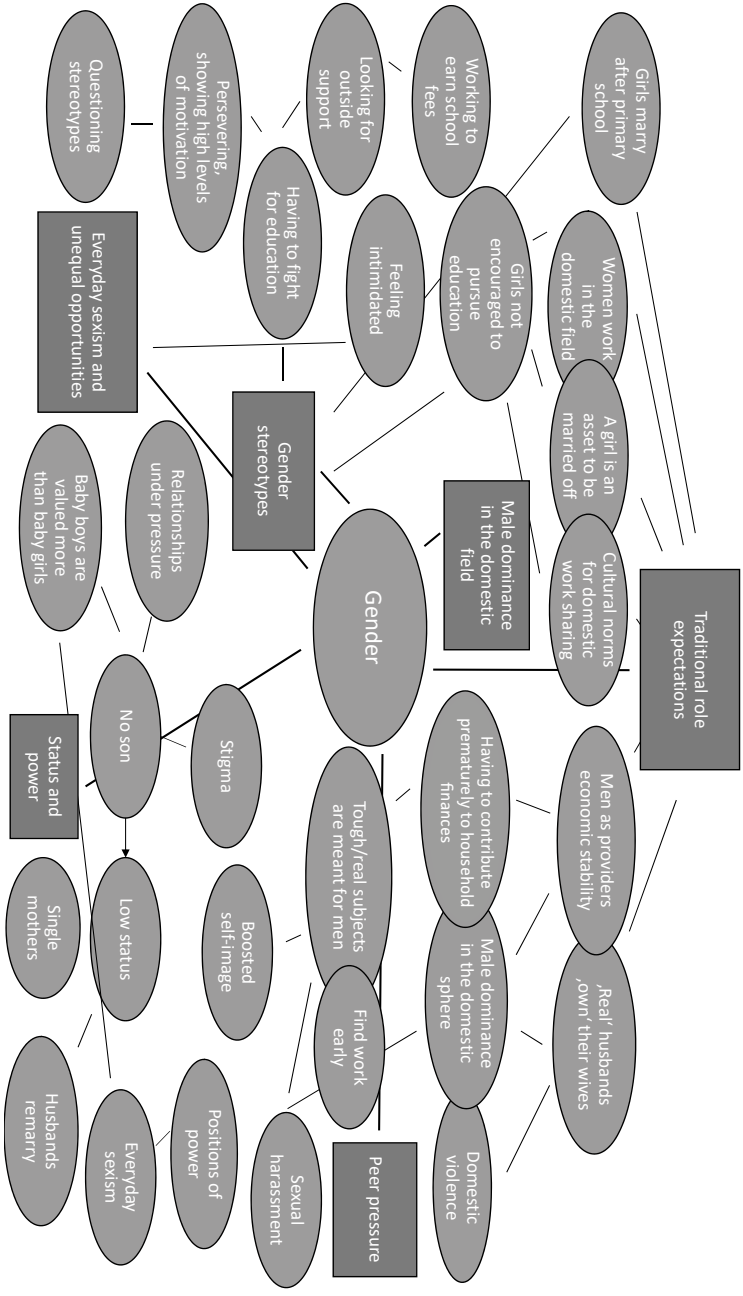
Further background factors emerging from the empirical material concerning experiences related to gender were socio-economic background, whether it was an urban or rural setting, and body size.

Traditional role expectations and limited choices for girls and women

The first group of experiences with regard to gender referred to traditional role expectations that assign girls and boys different places in society and at home. The examples below illustrate how role expectations have affected the interview participants. Yet, they all emphasised that, in many parts of Kenyan society, the situation has changed over the last 25 years towards less specified role expectations for girls and boys – with more opportunities for girls. Harald summarised this trend:

> Initially, some time back when I was young in the 1990s, what I would just observe in the community was that mostly the boys were taken to school and the girls were not. But as of now, I think the trend has changed, the trend has changed by my own experience by what I see. That at least the boys and girls all of them are taken to school, to primary school all of them are taken to secondary school. (8:54)

Figure 7: Visualising gender: Types of biographical experiences



Interview participants also pointed out that the dynamics of past years have resulted in equal access to education for girls but that, traditionally, formal education was valued higher for boys than for girls. This correlates with changing role expectations and traditional ways of dividing responsibilities and labour between the sexes. The most highlighted change in terms of gender and education, was that it has brought new opportunities for girls and women.

However, as much as things have changed recently, Ana's experience stands exemplary for several interview participants when she explained how girls and boys were treated differently when she was young (early 1990s):

> When I was supposed to go to the secondary school and I had passed, and my parents were like: 'There's no school fees' and yet, when my brother was going to Form 1, a cow was sold. And during my time, there were cows, there was land to be sold, I felt I was not treated equally as boys. (1:35)

Ana went to school in the 8-4-4 system and, after passing her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Grade 8, she was admitted to secondary school. But since her parents had difficulty raising funds for her school fees, she had to repeat the grade and the expectation was that she would marry and not continue her education. But, after completing Grade 8 a second time,

> I passed and I really passed excellently that, I mean, my parents could not hold me back not to go to Form 1 because my marks were so high even the chief would ask: where has that child gone to? And I was the first girl to go to secondary school in my family in a family of eight girls and three boys, so being the seventh born there was only one boy that is the first born, the rest are girls and I was the first girl to go to secondary school. That is because maybe, the rest of the family, the girls they were being told to repeat and repeat and they give up and get married. (1:13)

Unlike her sisters, Ana insisted on going to secondary school and somehow found a way to carry on with her education – showing a high level of motivation and initiative. After Form 1 (the first year of secondary school), her father said he was unable to pay the fees for her to continue. Ana did not give up, but looked for support elsewhere:

> So when I was told that, I don't remember who gave me the advice but I walked to the District Commissioners (DC) Office. I booked an appointment and told the DC that 'my father is telling me I need to get married, he wants to marry me off. And I want to be in the school'. I think he [my father] was summoned and he was given a letter to go and prove to the DC's place, to prove the wealth that he had. Somehow, I think something touched his mind and he said he'll sell the land now. But, God gave me grace, the DC just did one, two, three, called the school and I got the bursary to finish my secondary school. (1:33)

Ana's account touches on various factors relating to her sex/gender and her family's role expectations for her. Their initial position was that education – especially secondary education – was only available at a high cost. Her parents had a farm to live on but not enough money to send all their 11 children to school. The money they had was for the education of the three sons who would be responsible for the family's future well-being. Living in a rural environment and being largely dependent on farming, her parents were not convinced that an investment in a daughter's formal education would pay off. Ana described her parents' lack of encouragement and support for her education; they did not take her schooling seriously at all. This was largely because she was a girl who – traditionally – would be married off to another family and the return on investment would go to that family instead of her birth family. However, Ana emphasised that this type of gendered role definition and expectation for girls and boys had begun to change at that time in her rural area:

> When I look at the seriousness that most of the parents were putting on the girl child, was somehow reluctant, as compared to the efforts which were put to the boy child by the majority of those people who live there. Simply because the notion of – I mean, a girl is an asset to be married off, you know, and you just get wealth, you don't struggle with the liability of educating and then you lose to another family – was slowly dying, but it affected us. So at that particular time when I was in school around until 1998, that was the time people were still wondering: but, to invest in a girl, really? (1:26)

Ana said that favouring boys with regard to education ended in her rural community by the time of our interview. She attributed this mainly to economic reasons: farms became too small for all family members to live on, and divide and pass land from one generation to another. Hence, education was a way for the next generation to become independent of the land.

In a more general sense regarding traditional role expectations, the interviewed female teachers were expected to get married after school, support their husband with however he tried to earn an income, and have children; young men were expected to earn money and fend for themselves. For example, the context of poverty that both Gerald and Beth lived in had severe consequences for their dreams to become teachers. Beth had several children and supported her husband to earn money with brick making, postponing her wish to study further; Gerald moved around the country searching for odd jobs that would barely earn a living. Both had to overcome steep hurdles before continuing their education and becoming teachers.

Gender stereotypes at school and university

The traditional role expectations described above manifested as gender stereotypes at school and university, and were described by the female teachers as discouraging. Ana, a mathematics and

geography teacher, reflected on her experiences as a learner in school and at university with respect to subject fields:

> I remember instances in classrooms where we were at primary school, there was a notion that mathematics as a subject is for boys, you know, it is a tough subject and meant for men, the engineering courses are for boys. I felt like somebody has a notion that girls' abilities are below [those of men]; the mental abilities. And I remember when … I went to second year [at university] there was a course that we were being introduced to and one of the lecturers came in and said: 'Now, this is a course for men'. And I was like: 'What do men have in terms of cognitive that women don't have?' And eventually we did the course. In fact, we shouted at the lecturer and said: 'No, that is unfair and we will prove you wrong'. And when we even did the exam at the end of it all, we realised it was just a course like any other. (1:37)

Such openly discriminatory and exclusionary remarks from teachers and lecturers, based on gendered notions of abilities in certain subject fields, are remarkable. Surprisingly, this sort of attempted intimidation, which appears as a recurrent theme in Ana's education, had a counter effect on her. She felt challenged to prove there was no difference between the cognitive abilities and capabilities of girls and boys – of this she was convinced. She succeeded at school and also at university with her critical, independent thinking and proved those (male) teachers and lecturers wrong. Ana's questioning attitude, criticism of discrimination against girls in the classroom and lecture hall and her fight for equal treatment were provoked by the strong gender stereotypes that she as a girl was confronted with throughout her education.

Status and power

Another type of experience concerning gender focuses on discrimination, unequal power relations, status and gender-based violence. Even if some of these are not directly connected

to education, they are valuable in understanding the context and social constructions of differences between the sexes.

Ana and Harald both saw changes in general attitudes towards equal value being placed on girls and boys, however, Elsa, who also grew up in a community that in many ways favoured boys over girls, noticed these patterns even today:

> When you get a male child, the men are so proud, the community, your mom, the in-laws, they are so happy … but if you get a daughter they are happy but even those gemi ["aririririiiiii"– shouts to announce that a baby is born]: you get five for a male child and three for a female child. So it means a lot. If you are born male it means a lot, there is a lot of difference, yeah, whereby a male child is considered better than a female child. (5:22)

When Elsa was small, their father became violent and abused his wife and five daughters because his wife had only given birth to girls, which resulted in his social status being very low:

> So my dad used to insult us, there is a very vulgar word that is used against women … and it's like he was accusing my mom of not being able to give birth to a male child. (5:24)

Elsa described traumatic experiences of her father's abuse because they were 'only' five girls and no boy in the family. This strongly discriminatory attitude is still to be found. Chris confirmed this attitude in his community and social environment:

> Even the educated ones, you still find – even the ladies themselves when she has not had a boy, they will never be happy. (3:10)

He also mentioned some of the negative consequences of giving birth to a girl in many communities:

> In some communities, dowry will be paid to parents only when you have given birth to a boy and to some extent it still exists,

> not majorly but still it exists. And there is that preferences and I can say very few Kenyans would feel happy if they only have girls. Very few, very very few, even the educated ones. So when … especially when it comes to maybe political leaders: when he doesn't have a boy it is a problem. (3:55)

The economic and social consequences and, specifically, the low social status that Chris and Elsa described for couples who don't give birth to a boy are severe and put a lot of pressure on the relationships. As Chris pointed out, this phenomenon can be observed even among educated people. It is evident that he expects education to be a tool to get rid of the discriminatory and abusive practices and attitudes that he finds still exist in his community and, more generally, in Kenya.

Florence explained from her own experience, why giving birth to a boy is so important:

> So we still believe, our men still believe: you have not had a child until you give birth to a boy. Like, for my case now when I had my first child it was a baby boy. My husband was really excited, he was really happy, I now have a man you see? … The reception, how he felt was so good, I was even taken home, they slaughtered a goat and I was really taken care of so well. Now, when I gave birth to this second child it was a bit different, it was not the same as it was. Generally, our men in our community really want to have the boy, at least a boy in the, yeah, give birth to a boy. It reaches to a point where a woman could give birth to a girl, it is the first child, they don't mind. They try a second time, a girl, the third time a girl. This man can go and experiment outside [marriage] with another woman. It has really happened to a close friend of mine … So the lady kept on looking for the boy, until the children were nine, nine, but it kept on being girls – nine. So that love, that relationship, that togetherness … They look at you [the mother] as if you are the one who decided the child to be a girl, you see, and even, it's like you are not fully married. And the moment the woman will give birth to a boy, there is a difference

> in that home. A man can even go ahead to marry another woman and say I better marry another woman to come and help me get a child who is a boy. (6:24)

Florence's account reveals that giving birth to a boy changes the social status of the mother and of the father and the relationship between them. It also highlights the power relations between the wife and the husband – the husband can take another woman if his wife, who is blamed for the situation, does not deliver a boy.

These examples illustrate that in some communities in Kenya, gender matters markedly in that boys are valued more than girls – with severe consequences. However, it is likely that other axes of difference such as socio-economic status and milieu also play a role. Both Elsa and Florence come from low-income socio-economic backgrounds, as does Gerald, who saw similar occurrences in his own community in the past:

> Now, in this community … if a girl was married then it was like: you give birth, the first child is a girl, you are considered as an outcast. You know, girls were not really, were not really of value. You are supposed to give birth to a boy, you know boys so that you could be considered as a woman. But then, I am glad, with time these things are going out and with us going to school they are literally not being embraced today. (7:27)

Unlike Chris, who observed these attitudes 'even among educated people' today, Gerald attributed the trend of increasing equality in valuing girls and boys in his community to rising levels of education and regards school as the place where these attitudes are eradicated.

Pointing out power inequalities between the sexes embedded in institutional positions of power, Beth recalled her experience as a female student at university and gave an example. When she needed her transcript of records to apply for a job, the examination officer refused to issue the transcript unless she slept with him. He also offered to make the transcript look better to

improve her chances of getting the job. When she refused, the examination officer explained that that was a very common practice and that she would be stupid to refuse. At institutional level, this practice of upgrading examination results (termed 'STG' – sexually transmitted grades) is obviously not met with efficient countermeasures.

The narrations above indicate that discriminatory attitudes and practices against girls and women, together with gender power imbalances, are part of many girls' and women's experiences when growing up and living in Kenya.

Everyday sexism and unequal opportunities

Some research participants emphasised the trend towards gender equity, particularly with respect to education; others shared their experiences of commonplace sexism and unequal opportunities for men and women – gender inequality issues they continue to observe in society. Elsa, for instance, narrated various examples of insulting sexist terms that she and other women are called by men, especially in her own community, in everyday life. She condemned the fact that sexism is promoted by local radio stations through popular music songs in the mother tongue, which popularise and normalise sexist terms and violent behaviour against women. As a young woman at university, Elsa found that gender mattered significantly in competition for representative posts:

> And then again, you have that sometimes at university, there is still that aspect whereby they view women like lesser beings. So even posts, if it is a club, maybe it is a youth club, an environmental club or society, the post is very hard for you as a lady to be elected or given that chance as a lady at all, if we have men who want that post, it is very hard for you to get that post. (5:6)

She concluded:

> You find that there is still that notion that men feel that they have

> power over women and as a woman there is nothing much you can say to a man. They feel that they have the dominance. (5:6)

It is remarkable that these experiences emerged not only in the streets, for example, insulting behaviour by motorcycle taxi drivers, but also in education contexts like the university.

Male dominance in the domestic sphere

Some narrated experiences exposed similar cases of male dominance in private contexts. Harald emphasised that, in the home, there is still no equality in many communities in Kenya:

> The woman remains a woman, that's what they say and I'm just using their words that: if I marry you, you are my woman and even if you have your job, you still have to do all that I say and work for me … Women are meant to work under men, yes. So that has never changed, nothing at all, nothing so far as such. (8:56)

This statement expresses the strong domestic hierarchy that Harald identified in the communities he lives and works in. In this construct, the wife belongs to her husband and has to obey his demands. Elsa experienced the male dominance of her father who was violent towards his wife and children at home:

> He could beat us, he could kick the food so that all of it is spilled down. And sometimes we could be beaten, my mom could be beaten, we could sleep out sometimes … yeah brutally, so we had a hard time. (6:6)

She and her sisters were often denied food and suffered from the domestic violence perpetrated by their father. If their mother had not sacrificed everything to become a teacher and, with her salary, support her daughters' education, they would not have been able to get their school leaving certificates. Florence also described

male dominance in the domestic sphere by saying that even if the woman is a professional, like a principal, and her husband teaches in a primary school, the moment she leaves the office 'you are married to this man and now you become a wife' (6:18). Even if the husband has multiple partners, Florence asserted that, as a wife, you are not allowed to talk about it and you have no right to leave your husband on those grounds:

> You undergo oppression, you cry every night until you say enough is enough. Then it's like you want to accept the state that you are in and now you see I have to forge ahead (6:32).

Peer pressure

Although the interviewed female teachers shared experiences at home, school, university and in social life of being discriminated against and not treated equally with their male counterparts, gender did not play a prominent role for the male interview participants. Referring to his time in primary and secondary school, Chris mentioned that he was badly affected by peer pressure from other male learners, especially because he was very small for his age. Particularly during primary school, he suffered due to being tiny and unable to defend himself against bigger boys, some of whom had repeated several classes and were therefore much older and taller. Chris pointed out that many boys experience peer pressure in school to conform to certain behaviour and participate in dangerous or criminal activities. For him, this resulted in low marks and decreased motivation to complete his primary education after Grade 8:

> Then I said no, I have to change school. So I shared it with my mum and I went myself to a new school asked the head teacher if I could join the school. Nobody talked to me there. I just went myself to the head teacher and said we have to do an interview and we did the interview and I passed. (3:10)

With less peer pressure in the new school, Chris was able to produce better marks. But in secondary school and even after school, he experienced peer pressure and had to resist being drawn into gang activities.

Socio-economic status: 'We couldn't be the same'

Socio-economic status generally encompasses the axis between poverty and wealth. However, social factors that influenced the experiences of the research participants in terms of social positions and status based on their economic condition were also considered. Hence, the third important category of difference in the experiences of the research participants' childhood and adolescence is summarised as 'socio-economic situation'. In the sections above, some experiences that connect ethnicity or gender with a certain socio-economic background surfaced. Based on the research of participants' experiences with discrimination, exclusion or being othered due to their socio-economic background, I will try to form poverty and wealth as an axis of difference, privilege and under-privilege experienced in educational contexts in Kenya.

Not all interview participants mentioned experiences of being othered, excluded or discriminated against because of their socio-economic situation. It became obvious during the interviews that some teachers grew up in families that were relatively well-off economically, with professionally successful parents; yet they never mentioned their economic situation as an influential factor or that it put them in an advantaged position during their schooling. It did not play any role during the interviews. However, for one participant it evidenced as an undercurrent when she expressed fear of losing her social status and explained her need to upgrade her qualifications.

Again, other factors like gender or ethnicity also play a role in questions around poverty and wealth. However, I have tried to look at those experiences where the axis of economic difference and the resulting social status is central. This suggests that the experiences described could be similar even if the gender or the

ethnicity were different – with other factors channelling the experience in a certain direction as well. Figure 8 highlights the main outcomes for the axis of difference called 'socio-economic background' and surrounding it are the different axes of difference that appeared in the data as additionally relevant.

Further background factors that emerged from the material concerning experiences related to the socio-economic background include the location (urban or rural), gender, ethnic community and the immediate family background, for example, whether the participant grew up with their parents or was orphaned, and whether parents or guardians valued education.

Poverty threatening access to education

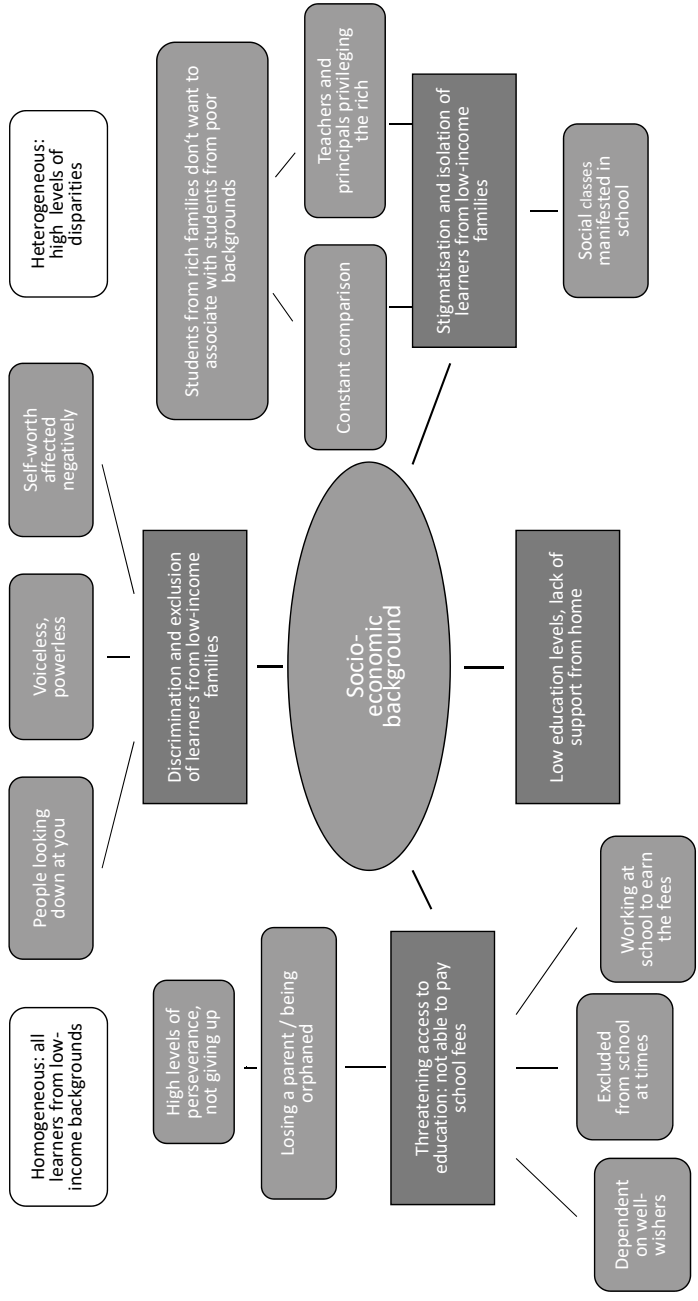
Socio-economic background emerged as an important factor of difference for those who came from poor families. Poverty not only threatened their school attendance but, in some cases, was also the basis for discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion.

The first type of experiences relating to poverty can be summarised as the constant threat of being denied access to formal education. Although Ana was highly motivated to go to school and learn, she was frequently sent home from secondary school because her parents had difficulty in raising the money for her school fees:

> So when I went to secondary school I found challenges because of the school fees that were not paid and at times I could be sent home several times to fetch the school fees. I come, there are no fees again. (1:32)

Despite these disheartening experiences, she did not capitulate but kept on pursuing her wish to go to school. Gerald also missed school regularly after primary school because there was no money to pay school or examination fees:

Figure 8: Visualising socio-economic background: Types of experiences



> I lost my dad when I was in Form 2, and I come from a kind of a complicated situation because my real mom was not there; so life was not easy. I was in and out of school most of the time, managing to sit for the exams just from a well-wisher who was paying my examination fee. (7:4)

He was lucky that somebody helped him complete his secondary school when his parents could not support him financially.

Having to fight for access to formal education is an experience that Beth shares with Gerald and Ana. Due to her family's economic poverty, she had to struggle to go to school:

> The way I understand Africa: community is actually, life is hard. So, okay, I am the fifth born out of twelve. Twelve kids, one mother, one dad. And you see now, the dad was just a peasant farmer, so life was not that easy. When I sat for my Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, for Class 8 – OK, I was the first girl in our district. And you see, I was the fifth born and those who were in front of me, only one had gone to the secondary school, others – there was no school fees. (2:4)

When her father wanted to take her out of school like the others because he did not know how to pay the fees, Beth rebelled:

> I told my dad: 'I'll kill myself! I'll go and throw myself in the river'. So, he sacrificed. What he did, he took me to secondary school and he paid the first school fees and left me there. He never again paid any other amount. So, what I did, I went to the principal and told my principal: 'Just give me work, so that I work for this school and you pay for my school fees.' (2:4)

Beth found a way to earn her own school fees at the boarding school, which allowed her to complete her secondary education.

The determination and perseverance to complete secondary education against all odds, and in seemingly desperate economic

situations, emerged as a common theme in the narratives of Ana, Beth and Gerald. However, closely linked to the economic situation, family background emerged as a relevant factor influencing socio-economic status. While Ana and Beth pointed out that they lived with their mother and father in stable relationships, which seemed to strengthen their position in their communities, Gerald was less lucky in this regard.

Stigmatisation and isolation on the basis of family situation

Gerald's narrative speaks of his difficult and dependent situation while in school, due to poverty. He also stresses that – particularly after his father died – he suffered low social status because his parents were absent.

> Life wasn't easy. Both at home and at school because sometimes you could play with the other, you are playing with the other children and it is like, they are calling you names like 'somebody who doesn't have a mother – what are you going to tell us?' So I was growing up, you are being told 'aah, someone who doesn't have a dad. You don't – you have no business to play with us!' Sometimes I could be isolated. (7:14)

The stigmatisation Gerald described refers to his family situation and the fact that he was practically orphaned when he was attending secondary school. During our interview, he often repeated that his life had not been easy then, and that he suffered a lot due to his low socio-economic status in school and at home. It is interesting to note that he did not mention the poverty of his family as a reason for peers or teachers to stigmatise him, but that stigmatisation and feelings of isolation resulted from his unstable family situation and having no parents to support him all the way through school. Similarly, Elsa suffered from the low social status of her family due to her parents having no son and her father not seeing any sense in paying for the education of his daughters.

Low levels of education

Linking socio-economic background to the education levels of parents, Chris observed that when he went to school, learners from poor backgrounds generally had parents with little or no formal education, which often led to poor academic performances by those learners:

> If you came from a family where none of your parents went to school then probably [it was] not going well. In fact, that is what happened to most of my peers … Yeah, and I remember guys who were good, clever, they were OK but then because they just couldn't get somebody to tell them do this, do that, here is where I want you to go and then maybe control them a little bit … [they were] not making it or moving to the next level. (3:11)

He saw that his classmates did not get enough orientation, guidance and support from the school to succeed in school – even though they had the potential to do so. However, lack of support from home could not be compensated for by a school with large numbers of learners in the classes, and no capacity for guidance and counselling sessions.

Bagged in social classes: Discrimination and exclusion at school

Poverty obviously was a very common phenomenon, affecting many other children around Ana, Beth and Gerald, although none of them mentioned their economic poverty as a reason for being discriminated against or excluded by other learners or teachers at school. However, the situation was different for Elsa and Florence. For both of them, poverty and low socio-economic status served as basis for their stigmatisation, exclusion and discrimination in school, as Florence explained:

> My mother was a secretary and we were staying with children whose parents were lecturers, you see? So we couldn't be the same

> … They could have good uniforms, good shoes, good what, and you, now that you come from where you come from, now you couldn't get, you couldn't be in the same [social] class, yes. Maybe even in terms of, at school, back at school the teachers could look at you as that one who comes from that background that do not have anything so at times you could feel really demoralised. (6:13)

Florence learned from a young age that she was different from the other learners in her class, and that she did not have the same status as her well-placed classmates whose parents were lecturers at a college. She remembered the stigmatisation and that even the teachers looked down on her and treated her as unimportant. But she did not conceptualise her situation as emerging from poverty:

> You cannot know that when you are young. The little you have been provided food – it is really, you have to conceptualise: oh, we are the poor. It doesn't come at that time, so you still have that fear because even the houses they lived in were built by whites, yeah, that place, the houses they built. Now, we could wonder, look at them: they have houses that have toilets inside. Now we are like: Look, they are having showers inside, big rooms, dining – but with us, we could only fix everything in a single room, you see that kind. (6:13)

The school environment, in which she felt stigmatised and discriminated against, was largely because she went to the same school as children who lived in big houses, had well-educated parents and did not have to worry about money, food, clothes or school fees – as she did. Although she did not fully understand her situation at the time, she described her memories of being discriminated against by teachers and learners and her feelings of anxiety, strangeness and finding herself an outsider to the life-worlds of her classmates very clearly.

A similar case of poverty as the reason for experiences of discrimination and exclusion is Elsa's time in secondary school.

Due to her good marks in primary school, she was admitted to a national school where the majority of the other learners came from well-off families and stable backgrounds with parents who could afford good education for their children.

> If you go to a national school, you find that in Kenya we have those social classes in high schools and they exist up to date whereby you find people of the same level. Most of the people in national schools you find they come from Nairobi and those places that are meant for the rich. So when these people come to high school, they form their own social classes. They have the money, they have everything and for us, who come from a poor background or from within the country remote areas, you find that you are isolated, you are discriminated they don't want to associate with you. You don't have a voice because they are there, they say everything, when they are discussing the movies you don't know anything because you don't have a TV and for them they have the DSTV they have the ZUKUs [digital high-speed internet] at home, yeah. So about the movies, the soap operas, the latest fashion, the dress code and everything you don't know, so you don't have anything to say. (5:6)

Various aspects of Elsa's experiences as someone from a poor background, at school with learners mostly from well-off families, are touched on in her account above. She experienced the national school she attended as a school for the upper class and meant for the rich. She conceptualised the difference she saw between herself and the other learners as a social class difference, which resulted in feelings of isolation, exclusion and not belonging. She felt that she did not have a voice in those circumstances. She felt voiceless because she did not share the same expensive lifestyle and was not exposed to the things the other learners talked about; she also felt that, coming from a low social class meant she did not count. In her analysis of her experiences, the process of social categorisation and discrimination is an active forming of social classes executed by rich people – in this case the learners in secondary school.

Learners in that social class did not want to associate with her and conveyed to her that she had less worth, was not important and had nothing to say. In Elsa's experience, the teachers were complicit in this process:

> So the major experience, negative experience [in secondary school] was pertaining to those social classes whereby you are discriminated by these people because they have everything and for you, you just come from a poor background. And still, you find the teachers, there is that tendency whereby the teachers tend to favour these students who … know how to make their hairs, they have the money to put on, we call it the chemicals to the hair so they look smart, the shoes, the socks. So you find that, sometimes most of the teachers, for example our principal, she loved those students from the same social status as herself so you find that she could call them maybe after parade, talk to them, give them sausage or other things in the office. So you find that as part of, I just told you I come from a poor background and you find that still you can't afford those high-class things or items, you find there is no one who cares about you. The teachers are favouring these students who come from those social classes. You don't have money, you don't have good shoes and everything, you don't even have a high self esteem, so you are just there. (5:6)

According to Elsa, the teachers openly preferred learners with high socio-economic status, rather than mediating the situation and fighting against discrimination based on poverty. Her self-esteem suffered through being different from the high-society learners and being excluded from their group. She was treated differently than her richer classmates on a daily basis. She also recalled days when the parents came to visit their children in the boarding school:

> We had visiting days, there were those parents who used to come with posh cars and you are there, your mom has come from the village. (5:6)

This constant confrontation with socio-economic disparities, and feeling the different treatment based on status difference, was also expressed by Florence:

> So at times even the teachers can really look at you depending on your, on your background. This one that comes from a poor family; hers, she is a teacher who is able to do something. Now those children who came from a well-off family they didn't have so much problems because their parents were learned. They were tutors or lecturers at the college, so most of occasions, the teachers could fear them. But these others like now, the likes of me now we really felt we are not there. You couldn't express yourself you couldn't do things the way you want because of, you feel you are not the standard, you see that kind of thing. (6:13)

Again, the discrimination and exclusion did not emanate only from the learners; it was also conveyed by the teachers.

When Florence was invited to stay with a classmate who was the only daughter of rich parents living in a big house and driving government cars, she again felt the difference:

> But still, you cannot feel comfortable because you know you don't belong there. Yeah, that is not where you are supposed to be. So this lady kind-of was good to me, but it also could reach a time that you could look at yourself from another angle, you know, like where you come from. Then the vehicles they drive us even up to today we have never driven, we have never driven a car, you see. But yeah, so they could help me pay the fees so while at secondary level, at least they could sometimes say, 'we are taking you to school'. They have the government car … so reaching there now people will discriminate you mostly when they see that you don't have a voice. You just come from … Whether we do anything to you, who will come up and speak up? (6:13)

Living a comfortable life in a big house with another family did not feel right for Florence. She saw how people in that new home

looked at her and where she came from – and this made her uncomfortable; she felt she did not belong in that new place. As for her experience in school, she mentioned that she felt threatened and unprotected because of her low status; others presumed she would not be heard if reporting what bad things others did to her.

The divisions based on economic situation cut across other categories like ethnic community: 'So you find this kind of discrimination even with our own people when they know that you are, you are living that, you are in a low social class' (6:14). As much as the ethnic community would offer a projection screen for identification and belonging, ('our own people'), division into social classes created rifts in these communities, according to Florence.

Despite these attacks on the self-worth of the two research participants, and the constant discrimination and social exclusion, Elsa and Florence performed very well in school, academically. However, their experiences suggest that little if anything was done by the teachers or principal to counteract the discriminatory behaviour.

Conclusion

This first set of experiences relating to the biography of the research participants provides insights about the regimes of difference and power relations that operated in the teachers' personal lives. Ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background were the main categories that emerged from the data and hence, were specified above.

The experiences and interpretations concerning ethnicity suggest that various factors influence whether and how the axis of difference based on ethnic lines plays itself out in various situations in schools or universities. Learning and teaching in an ethnically mixed environment in the Kenyan context can provide positive and negative experiences and learning opportunities, as illustrated in the examples above. They also indicate that general political environments of tribalised national politics can have an impact on

educational institutions, the distribution of institutional political power and the social relations among students and staff.

Without looking into the details of what it means to be born into a certain ethnic or cultural setting – and which traditions, role expectations or cultural norms these generally entail – the above examples indicate that the matter of ethnic diversity did not emerge as equally relevant for all interview participants. Although they all positioned themselves in the course of the interviews in terms of their own (ethnic) community, various factors influenced how strongly the interview participants identified themselves as (or were confronted with being) a member of a particular community. And, belonging to a certain ethnic community emerged as a relevant category in social arenas like school or university. A common mother tongue often manifested existing power relations and created feelings of unity on one hand, and exclusion and mistrust on the other. Hence, in terms of diversity experiences, the interviewed teachers regarded '(ethnic) community' as a relevant axis of difference in their own schooling and/or during their university studies.

Neighbourhoods and schools with learners from different ethnic communities provided positive learning experiences as illustrated in the examples above. These included social skills like adjusting and adapting to different behaviours, ways of interaction, acceptance of cultural differences and awareness that there is a variety of different lifestyles – which can help one in making one's own choices instead of thinking only in traditional (gendered) role expectations.

In summary, the insights provided by the teachers' experiences in school and at university show that ethnic diversity, especially when it is connected to large group constructions such as a community or tribe, is a relevant category to consider when thinking about diversity and education in Kenya.

What can be concluded from the research participants' biographical experiences concerning gender relations is that inequalities and discrimination against women appear in various forms and structures, and have affected the lives of the interview

participants in several ways. Some of the narrations tell a story of change that connects the past (with gender inequality that privileged boys and men over girls and women) and the present (with equality and power sharing); other experiences reveal high levels of inequality between the sexes, and male domination even today. These manifest themselves in concrete competitive situations like running for election or in the job market, and also in symbolic actions when a baby boy or a baby girl is born. From the various accounts, it appears that other aspects (like socio-economic, cultural, regional and educational factors) play a major role in enabling and shaping very different contexts and structures of gender relations and inequality within Kenya.

Participants' narrations often referred to the socio-economic situation of their families, particularly in cases where they struggled to provide for basic and educational needs – which emerged as a strong factor impacting on their daily life experiences at school. The differences were mainly felt by those whose families struggled to cater for their basic needs. Depending on the general socio-economic surrounding, a disparity between those who grew up and went to school in economically homogenous, poor environments and those who went to school with children from rich families with higher education levels became evident. Even though the former group struggled to pay school fees and experienced exclusion from school due to their parents not being able to provide money for the fees, they did not report discriminatory behaviour by their classmates based on their families' poverty, itself. While the obstacles that had to be overcome in order to access education dominate the former group's experiences, the latter suffered mainly from discrimination, othering and exclusion experienced in school from their classmates and even teachers and principals. Hence, the focus of this group's narrative is not on the struggle to buy school books and uniforms, but on the consequences of not being in the position to afford similar provisions to the others around them – and of not having the backing of powerful parents from a certain social class and who had completed school themselves. The intersection of gender and

poverty became obvious in both groups with some girls having to fight for their secondary education and, in some cases, having to find or earn money for school fees themselves.

The biographical narratives about diversity experiences and their interpretations are the subjective experiences of the research participants, which are closely linked to their own ethnic, social and economic backgrounds. If they had been physically impaired, homosexual, not a Kenyan citizen or otherwise not fitted well into hegemonic and normalised categories, one would expect the narratives to include even more severe experiences of exclusion, physical punishment and discrimination. The description and grouping of various experiences and interpretations of difference and diversity constitute the first step in the contextualised theory-building process. They highlight the conditions that enable or disable certain positionalities, discrimination, marginalisation or privilege.

CHAPTER FIVE

Diversity Experiences and Practices as Professional Teachers

5

The findings portrayed in the following rely on (a) what the teachers identified as diversity issues they have encountered in their classrooms and among learners in their schools; and (b) the teachers' explanations of how they deal with these diversity issues as professionals in the classroom, and how the institutions they work in respond to diversity challenges. The aim is, therefore, to

- look specifically at classroom and school situations;
- connect the conditions and circumstances (why, where and when?) with the actions and interactions (by whom, how?); and
- interrogate the consequences of these actions and interactions (what happens because of these actions/interactions?).

By clustering phenomena into large diversity categories like 'ethnicity', and subsuming various experiences under them, awareness can be directed towards the conditions, actions and consequences of those phenomena, which could be, for example, an aspect of ethnicity or religion intersecting with gender or socio-economic status. So, the diversity of knowledge (different concepts

and attitudes towards formal education) that emerged as relevant to a number of teachers can be understood as influenced by regional, cultural and religious aspects as well as socio-economic status and gendered role conceptions. At this stage, focus is on understanding the diversity phenomena the teachers described by grouping similar professional experiences together and looking at the responses (actions/interactions and their consequences) of the teachers and schools. As in Chapter 4, all names of ethnic communities, languages and towns have been replaced randomly by African girls' names to protect the identities of research participants and their affiliations to particular groups.

Diversity in the schools

The various group affiliations, identities and divisions observable in Kenyan society affect the professional lives of teachers as members of schools, and in their roles as classroom teachers and educators. The conditions that structure diversity for any particular school (as a public institution located in a specific community with its own history) are diverse in themselves. The following is a collection of the teachers' experiences of diversity in their schools and classrooms – on structural, institutional and individual levels. The focus is on how they, as professional teachers in primary or secondary schools in Kenya, made sense of phenomena they perceived as rooted in or related to diversity, and how they dealt with them.

'You go and teach in the schools where you come from': Tribalism

Schools located in areas with a history of ethnic conflict, and which were severely affected by the post-election violence of 2007/2008, still see some of the effects today. Ana remembered that time and the traumatic experience it was for learners and teachers:

> After 2007, in fact I think my school was worst hit. This was a provincial school then and the students were coming from all

> over Kenya. Because this post-election violence was along tribal lines, it really affected it because the school that I teach is not very far from town. And I told you in town it is cosmopolitan and that is where the fighting was worst so you find a student coming to school in January he has lost both parents, another has lost one parent in the violence. It was bad, it was bad. The people were really affected even to have witnessed, they were traumatised. (1:106)

Similarly, Harald spoke about what he experienced, working in a semi-rural area not far from Ana:

> The nearby school now was completely destroyed. That is my neighbouring school, the immediate neighbouring school, destroyed. And people say: 'We no longer need this school'. Now, that is the Chipo community who came against the Arjana community now. Because ideally, the land belongs to the Chipo but the Arjana are many there, so it was like: 'You people have come and you have taken our resources. So can you go back to your area?' So later on the school was rebuilt. (8:16)

Both narrations describe the hostility that teachers and learners as members of a particular ethnic group experienced during that time in that region. Aggression was based on the notion that a traditional homeland or area belonged to a particular ethnic group because it had previously been allocated to them – and, consequently, members of other ethnic groups did not belong and were a threat to the local community.

After the political tensions had eased, schools had to cope with the trauma, anxiety and mistrust between members of different ethnic groups. Politically, it was decided to strengthen the guidance and counselling departments in schools to raise awareness of ethnic diversity and to prevent conflict. Teachers were prepared in workshops to counsel traumatised learners; the guidance and counselling departments organised peace activities, motivational talks and capacity building in psychological matters

for the teachers. Harald described the measures taken by his school management:

> At least they started now trying to bring in some kind of cohesion and one of the most important things even that is done up to today is at least when you enter the school, there should be some peace messages – everywhere peace messages. So even when you enter you have a big board written: 'This is a peace zone', you see? So that that idea of you have this community, I am this is like at least tried to be watered down. But I can say that it has not completely stopped, at least, there is still that kind of 'you are that and I am this'. (8:16)

Aiming to foster a peaceful space without tribal conflicts in the school compound, the intervention of the school management used visible signs and statements calling for peace in the school buildings. Apparently, these are not combined with remembering the victims of the post-election violence and how tribalism escalated earlier but, rather, as a motto for the present and the future.

While activities aimed at peace and reconciliation were promoted right after the post-election violence, they soon lost momentum in many schools, according to Chris. His experience of measures taken by the government and NGOs in schools was ambivalent in terms of implementation:

> There was every peace initiative to do that [reconcile] but then the problem was rolling it out. In schools, the minister has really tried to ensure that every problem is addressed but you must have a teacher who is concerned about guidance and counselling and you must have a teacher who is involved … that can bring social activities like clubs. You have to go to clubs but then little is done and in fact you go to most public schools, those things are not there. Maybe the head teacher does not support it or maybe it's because the people who are concerned about that in the district don't give financial support. (3:76)

The ministry's peace initiatives required teachers to show commitment and become involved with extracurricular activities like peace clubs. As Chris pointed out, the scope and success of these activities depended on the level of commitment of the school principals and school management boards as well as individual teachers. In some instances, schools relied on private or corporate donors to support their peace initiatives, which meant the projects were compromised when support was discontinued. Perceiving the teacher to be central to changing learners' attitudes and fostering acceptance of diversity, Ana said:

> The most powerful tool is the teacher, as an instrument to manipulate the mind of the student to accept one another and promote diversity, I mean promote unity in diversity. But that is an extra mile for the teacher because when you are being trained as a teacher you are being trained with your two teaching subjects, educational courses, psychology but many teachers are there and they are like: I'm employed to teach mathematics and geography, that's all, so who pays me for the extra job? (1:124)

The fact that teachers are only paid for teaching the subject fields they are trained to teach lowers commitment and undermines initiatives such as peace clubs aimed at instilling values in learners and building social coherence. According to Ana, teachers are overloaded with work, without extra activities like clubs, and are often unwilling to get involved in voluntary initiatives. Many only do their 40 minutes of teaching and then move to the next class without taking time to get to know the learners as children with their own stories and problems, and without trying to support them in coping with such. In schools that exhibit strong tendencies towards tribalism because of the area the learners are drawn from, and its specific set-up concerning ethnic communities, this extra mile can easily become a heavy burden on the backs of teachers.

Installing guidance and counselling departments and teachers in charge of these units, particularly after the post-election violence, can be regarded as an attempt to extend the professional

role of teachers to include psychosocial support and to initiate measures to prevent tribalism and conflict. However, as pointed out by Chris and Ana, it depends on the individual teacher and general situation in the school whether this unit truly provides support to the learners – and what kind of initiatives develop from it.

In some cases, teachers reported that the principals in the region would regularly meet and organise seminars on topics the teachers had raised as matters of concern. Harald reported:

> We go out whenever there is a seminar on integration we go, whenever there is a seminar on issues of diversity we go. Now when we come back to school we bring the experiences we are able to handle these issues of, in fact, like in my school now once every month with my colleagues who we are in this department we bring together we talk to them about issues of diversity, we tell them the words they must be careful about and the language they must use. (8:28)

Sensitising learners about the language they use, and teaching them to avoid offending terms in order to combat tribalism was seen as a useful tool and strategy by this teacher. He pointed out that the seminars they participate in as teachers are very beneficial. However, Harald was the only teacher who reported the opportunity to participate in this type of professional development workshop driven by the school principals of the region.

Generally, the situation in the schools had mostly settled with respect to conflicts based on ethnic diversity. However, in some schools, the hostility against teachers and learners of certain communities continued after 2008 with 'locals' trying to chase the 'foreigners' out – albeit in a more covert way, as Ana experienced:

> Though they were saying it silently but it was loud psychologically. It was like: 'Why are you coming here to head our schools? We are here, go to your communities'. But slowly it has died but there are areas still. (1:114)

Ana still saw traces of the phenomenon in some schools, particularly related to the employment of teachers: applicants not considered 'local' in terms of their ethnic identity could be rejected. However, she emphasised that it has now become difficult for schools to reject teachers on the basis of ethnic group affiliation because the Teacher Service Commission (TSC), as employing body of most teachers, will not accept that. On the contrary, the TSC deliberately deploys teachers to regions that they do not come from. In Ana's view, this is a positive move and strategy to create social cohesion among members of different ethnic groups. Yet, she and several other research participants confirmed that teachers prefer to work in the area they consider to be home and find ways to, for example, 'bribe their way out' (1:60) if the region to which they are deployed is unsafe for them as outsiders. Although the interviewed teachers welcomed the TSC's deployment policy as a strategy to combat tribalism and foster social coherence, they personally chose to work in their home regions where their own ethnic group was the majority and their mother tongue, the dominant language.

From the measures against tribalism in schools described by these teachers, the following aims can be identified:

- to 'water down' ethnic group consciousness;
- to provide psychosocial support to victims of tribalism such as ostracism and stereotyping based on ethnic group affiliation;
- to sensitise learners about offending terms and how to use respectful language;
- to be attentive and alert towards tribalism to be able to intervene quickly;
- to create a space where tribalism does not occur; and
- to prevent conflicts between learners, in general, because conflicts between individuals easily develop into tribalised clashes through other learners taking sides along ethnic lines.

Research participants who worked in areas that had experienced tribalism in the past expressed concerns about another breakout

of tribal conflict. But tribalism was not perceived as a problem by those research participants who worked in schools in other areas. This suggests that not all schools are similarly prone to general sociopolitical developments and that schools in certain areas are more susceptible to spontaneous tribalism. Ana highlighted that there was a lot of mistrust after the post-election violence so that 'you never know your friend' (1:110) and that, since then, people are still afraid that tribalism will break out and impact the schools again. Similarly, Elsa concluded that, from her perspective and in the school where she teaches, 'things are changing when it comes to empowerment of women. To do with tribes I don't see any changes' (5:71).

'You will always try to assist them more': Learners from 'own' and 'other' communities

One strategy to combat tribalism in schools was described as the attempt to diminish levels of ethnic group identity and awareness; yet certain phenomena and teachers' practices suggest that them/us thinking is still present in some school contexts.

> When you are teaching you'll find that a parent he or she knows that you are a K and I am a K, she would feel better to come and tell me: 'Can you assist my child in this?' than tell that to somebody from a different community. (3:46)

Teaching an ethnically mixed group of learners, Chris found that parents from his community entrusted him with their children in a specific way – hoping he would particularly support them because they shared the same ethnic background. Chris confirmed that he did indeed pay more attention to these learners, especially

> if you are in a group where you find maybe very few of your community, are there then you will always try to assist them more – it's there, it is somehow there … Just give them more attention that is what I have found out especially if you're in an area whereby

> – because of the stereotyping thing, then you'll always give more attention to them because you know they come from the community. … Maybe they come – they are the minority there then you always feel your rights are more like not taken care of. (3:46)

In his explanation of the phenomenon, Chris referred to the shared experience of his group, which held a weak position because they are small in numbers and, consequently, felt marginalised and neglected in school. In response to the stereotyping and marginalisation that the learners of his own ethnic group or sub-group experience (and that he also experienced as a student), he empathised with them and saw the need to 'assist them more'.

The special support and attention paid to members of one's own community that Chris described as common practice among teachers (especially in certain situations of power imbalances), reveals high awareness of ethnic group affiliation, as well as trust and bonding among members of the same group. However, he does not explain the reasons for the stereotyping and marginalisation apart from disparities in numbers, nor does he mention strategies to overcome thinking along tribal lines.

The cases outlined above on tribalism do not centre on specific differences along ethnic lines; they describe politically motivated demarcations. The next sections focus on language, cultural and religious diversity as a more visible or noticeable experience of difference experienced by some of the teachers.

'We end up talking in mother tongue': Language diversity

Grouping together along ethnic or, rather, language lines by learners and teachers is a phenomenon Elsa observed in her school, which is situated far from where Harald and Ana teach. She went back to teach in the region where she grew up and where the majority of people belong to the same ethnic or language group.

> We have students that are Chiemeka and Bohlale and Adede, they are isolated. They have a hard time coping in that school due

> to tribalism, yeah, because they'll [learners of the majority ethnic group] attack you in Dayo [dominant language]. They'd say all sorts of things behind your back when you are still there, they are talking about you, saying very bad things about you. So that one I can still observe in the school where I am teaching. (5:30)

As a class teacher, she regularly encourages students to anonymously write about whatever bothered them. If a problem affects them severely and needs to be resolved, she calls on the guidance and counselling department to organise a whole-class discussion as well as sessions with the perpetrators.

Florence also identified among her colleagues the problem of drawing lines between ethnic groups by using language to exclude others in school:

> I have not worked far away from my community. The furthest I have gone is Bamidele [town]. Bamidele is still dominated by the Adele community. You will realise that the majority of the people who will get jobs there will be these Ks because of the surroundings. They are the majority. Now the problem that we will have, even me, I am not an exception. You will find that we could be having an Adele, a Chipo, a Bohlale. Since we are many, we end up talking in mother tongue, you see, it just happens. And the others really feel offended … it happens with human beings, you see. (6:38)

Although some schools have a strict policy of no mother tongue speaking on school premises, in Florence's primary and Elsa's secondary school, speaking in the mother tongue is evidently common among colleagues and in class. Florence was aware that the practice excludes members of other ethnic/language groups. However, in her view, it is a human wish to use the mother tongue and she admitted that sometimes they would deliberately want to say something that the others did not understand. Although Florence identified this practice as exclusive and potentially offensive, neither she as a teacher nor the school as an institution

make an effort to stop it. Although the language of instruction policy requests schools to only use English and Kiswahili, these experiences show that, outside lessons, language diversity is practised in some schools.

The policy of languages of instruction being English and Kiswahili aims to provide everyone with the same chances to learn, and to prevent divisions based on different mother tongues in schools; yet it very much depends on the area where the school is located whether learning in English or Kiswahili provides or limits opportunities. In secondary school, some learners struggle to understand and express themselves in English, which Dora regularly experienced in her school.

> However much you use the basic English, others do not even get it because I think they are not so much exposed to the language because you realise that we still have those teachers back in primary school who still use the native languages to explain things to the students. (4:56)

Ana's explanation was that speaking English is easier for the speakers of some mother tongues than for others. In their professional practice, teachers try to meet that challenge by using very simple English to ensure that all learners understand. Elsa referred to disparities emerging between secondary school learners who come from rural or urban areas:

> It is difficult because you find that, if you come from the rural areas you just speak vernacular and those people who come from the urban centres they are used to speaking either Kiswahili and even English from a young age. So you find that they have an easier time because they speak fluently English and Kiswahili. (5:66)

In two cases, research participants had to work in areas far away from their homes because that was the only job offered to them at the time. In that remote area, Beth found that the learners struggled with English right through school:

> But even they can't write a sentence [in English]. You get a Form 4 [final year] student who is completing secondary school cannot write a composition, cannot construct a sentence. And now, you see, that one has led to stealing exams in those areas. (2:62)

What she referred to as a common practice in that region is the stealing of exam papers so students can prepare themselves to write the national exams. Beth partly blamed this on the fact that students in remote communities (who have little chance to achieve a good command of English) have to write the same exams as everyone in else Kenya – in English. Even though Beth was very reluctant, she had to help her students by preparing them to pass the exam and cheat the system.

'They are never given an opportunity': Cultural and religious diversity

Similar to the case above, teachers' professional experiences and practices concerning language diversity were sometimes accompanied by cultural and religious diversity. These are captured below to expand on the dimension of language.

The first example relates to a teacher employed in a remote part of Kenya. Beth, who took her first teaching post in the far north of Kenya, was the only person not originating from that community. Since this was the only opportunity for her to work as a teacher after finishing university, she accepted the deployment to a marginalised area. She explained that teachers often avoided employment in that remote, and in many ways hostile, area – often waiting some years for employment in a region they preferred. In that remote community, the language of instruction was a hurdle:

> In the school where I was teaching in North Eastern, actually they don't know how to speak Swahili, they just speak one word in English. Most of the language used, they used the mother tongue. Sometimes as you are in the class teaching, they talk about you as a teacher and you can't even understand them. (2:58)

Beth was trained to use English or Kiswahili as languages of instruction but found herself in a community that rejected these languages and, hence, learners were not able to understand or speak them.

> They have their own rules … in fact, they were telling us: 'You are telling us to learn English. God doesn't know English. Allah doesn't know English. Allah knows Arabic'. And we could laugh, yes. (2:60)

To force the learners to speak English, Beth used a practice she had learned in her training: punishing the speaker of mother tongue by branding or stigmatising to embarrass them. She organised an ugly brown sack for that learner to wear with the words 'I'm stupid' written on it. But

> Now, again another challenge came. If a boy has spoken mother tongue and he has been given that sack. Next, if a girl speaks mother tongue in that same class, a girl cannot put on that sack because she cannot put on what a man has put on. Now it became a challenge because girls are a few in class, maybe there are two. How will you make a sack for boys and a sack for girls? (2:74)

The practice she had learned to meet this language challenge did not work out as it might have in other communities where boys and girls can wear the same clothes. The general community reluctance to speak English contributed to the fact that her efforts to promote English among the learners largely failed.

Although most learners in that school were struggling with speaking English or Kiswahili, one of the few girls in the class had moved to the region from a town where Beth had lived before:

> So at least she could talk Swahili. And for them, anybody who talks Swahili is immoral. So this girl was discriminated. So she could sit alone. (2:78)

What Beth did was talk to the girl and encourage her:

> I just called her. I told her: 'Saadya, I want you to pass the exam. Despite the fact that these people say that you are immoral because you talk to us blacks, I want you to pass the exams. Just shock them by passing the exam better than them'. When they sat down, she started performing well. (2:78)

By providing the learner with a different perception of Kiswahili, and view of her knowledge of the language as an advantage instead of an immoral and unwanted skill, Beth's intervention of individual encouragement was successful and the learner performed well in the final exams. The community attitude of rejecting the national language of Kiswahili originated, according to Beth, from the view that Kiswahili is only needed for mixing and communicating with black people who do not speak Arabic. Such mixing is considered immoral and undesirable and, therefore, Kiswahili is rejected. She found herself in a situation where she was made aware in her daily work that she did not belong to that area and did not share certain norms or values.

> OK, we usually say that they [the people living in that area] are a crossbreed of the Arabs, because it [the school] was on the border of Somalia and Kenya. So there are those ones with that Muslim culture, the traditional culture, they are radical. (2:14)

Her words express great distance from the people living in that area. Beth was raised in a Muslim family herself but baptised as a Christian when a teenager. However, the way her family practised Islam was very different from what she encountered in the community where she worked as a teacher.

> And there are morals. Those people simply they don't have laws to govern them. They don't even know to knock at the door, you know, their houses are these round houses without a door, so they are used to entering like that. Even now if they come, and

> they carry it to the school, teachers were in class, they just enter. They don't even knock. Even in the staff room, they just entered. OK, now, I saw that their culture is the one that allows them to do that. When it is time for their prayers, if you delay your class, they are leaving the class and they'll go. (2:58)

The discipline and the respect she expected as a teacher was not shown by the learners of that community, hence, her impression that 'they don't have laws to govern them' – at least, not the laws that she knew. Working in that community brought experiences of alienation that caused Beth to struggle with her professional identity as a teacher. Her concepts of knowledge, learning and education, and her professional self-image, did not match what she found in the school she taught at and what the learners, parents and other teachers expected from her.

Teaching in a more central region in Kenya, Gerald identified the phenomenon of different religious denominations and sub-groups as a dividing factor affecting schools:

> Because in Kenya, the major religion is Christianity, then we have Islam but within Christianity, we have small denominations. Catholics, protestants and under the protestants and there are many others. So you realise, there are lots of issues there, in terms of people totally differing even sometimes to extreme ends, more than even the [ethnic] community issues, that I belong to this denomination, you belong to that and this is what I say and that is what you say. So apart from the issues of what is in the church they come and separate themselves even in community and it is like, if I have something to be done, I work with people of my denomination. Those ones, you are there, you work with your people there. Even these institutes – there are denominations that have come up with schools. (7:42)

Different religious denominations emerging and separating themselves from each other does not only affect life in the local communities, it is also visible in separate schools funded by

the denominations, often with support from the USA or other countries.

Gerald pointed to the divisions created by these denominations and he also found that, in many cases, they override ethnic distinctions. Identification with a particular church unites people from different ethnic groups and creates a community in which ethnicity and different mother tongues are not constructed as meaningful differences. However, Gerald perceived these new distinctions, demarcations and separations of particular denominations as problematic, particularly if they run their own schools.

> We have the Adventists they go to church on Saturday to worship. So what happens in Kenya is if the school is an Adventist school and there are some students who have been admitted who are not Adventists, the condition is: 'You people will not worship on Sunday. Because this school is an Adventist and we are supposed to worship on Saturday so you must worship on Saturday, you will not have your opportunity on Sunday'. While other schools now which are now not Adventists, some Protestants who actually worship on Sunday, if there are students in that school who are Adventists and wish to worship on Saturday they are never given an opportunity. (8:88)

Schools run by a specific religious denomination often only admit learners who belong to it, and find ways to only employ teachers who are also a member of that church. Gerald found this problematic because not all these schools are private schools. If the TSC allocates them teachers who do not belong to the denomination, such schools find ways to have them replaced by their 'own' teachers. Discrimination and separation arising from these schools is, according to Gerald, not conducive to the government's attempt to create social coherence. He found that nondenominational public schools, including the boarding school where he teaches, usually accommodate different denominations and religions, giving members time to attend their service or

praying sessions as required. Chris also experienced in the schools where he taught, that Christians and Muslims had opportunity to participate in the services and praying as their religion demanded. This liberal practice is, in his view, appropriate to deal with religious diversity in schools.

A cultural practice that leads to conflicts and discrimination among male students, especially in Grade 9, is the circumcision of boys. Gerald, a teacher in a secondary boarding school, pointed out that boys admitted to the school in Grade 9 come from various ethnic backgrounds with different cultural traditions concerning circumcision. Some communities circumcise their boys at the age of 12 years, others at the age of 17 and yet others do not circumcise at all.

> So we have had a lot of problems here that students who come to Form 1 [Grade 9] … We have these boys from this community who are circumcised – at least now there are so many communities that circumcise their boys in Kenya – then there are a few who don't circumcise their boys. When these reach the school now, there is that kind of total discrimination that: 'You people are not circumcised'. So these other communities, who are circumcised, turn up against those who are not circumcised … When the students come to school especially in Form 1, there are those who are in Form 2, Form 3 and Form 4 who are the senior students, so they will always tell them: 'Remove your clothes we want to see if you are circumcised or not'. You see now? Such kind of terrible things. (8:74)

Boys who are not (yet) circumcised are stigmatised and socially excluded by those who have been circumcised.

> And remember, these are the students, very young, but they already perceive, have concepts of: 'What is wrong with you?' So sometimes we have students getting traumatised, totally traumatised … Some boys, they were only there [at the school] for one month and when the students broke up for the half term,

> they told their parents: 'We are not going back there. If you want us to go back there, circumcise us now'. (8:74)

This seemingly thin line of cultural difference became a severe problem in that boarding school. In response to the problem, the teachers and school management prohibited talk about circumcision altogether, including the humiliating practice of senior boys telling younger ones to prove their circumcision when admitted to the school. Gerald explained that the school's student records of every boy's cultural and religious background helps in this regard too, particularly when problems of social exclusion and stigmatisation between students occur.

'You keep forgetting us!': Refugee learners

Accommodation of students' different backgrounds and experiences when teaching them also arose in connection with learners whose families had fled war-stricken Sudan. Dora reflected on her classroom experience of when some of these students communicated how they were trying to cope with the images of war, what they had experienced at home and why they felt excluded in class.

> At times they divert and start switching to: 'You know, at night in our country, this is what is happening' … And that is when they realise that: 'You are not actually integrating us into the learning, it's like you are forgetting us!' And they become so, they are so sensitive. (4:68)

In this case, traumatised students living as refugees in Kenya demanded their history and background be acknowledged. One very articulate girl in Dora's school grouped the other students from Sudan together and led them into a strike, saying the teachers did not listen to them, and were biased. To resolve the conflict, Dora and her colleague teachers organised a meeting to question the girl leading the others.

> She told us: 'The plain scholars never let me because I don't come from here. The Principal believes that I am rude!' (4:68)

The student felt excluded, misinterpreted and misunderstood as acting rudely by her classmates and the principal, and she blamed the teachers for being biased against her. Dora empathised with her, and resumed:

> Being exposed to war back in their country, she has learnt to be brave and defensive all the time so actually I think the approach that we use on these girls is quite different than for the ones from Kenya, because they are very sensitive to matters. They are always ready to fight anytime because of the hostility that they are exposed to in their country. (4:68)

In Dora's interpretation, the conflict arose from the teachers' handling of the refugee students – treating them like everyone else and disregarding their specific background of having fled civil war and being foreigners in Kenya. Their response was to listen to the student's perspective and attempt to understand her background and viewpoint better. Dora also realised she needed a different educational approach for the traumatised students because, within the approach she used for Kenyan students, the students from Sudan appeared 'very sensitive' and became aggressive easily. However, she had never learned how to deal with students who are refugees and traumatised from war, or which alternative educational approaches would be appropriate. Thus, her practice in response to the conflict was to try to empathise with the students from Sudan to inform the way forward. Although she and her fellow teachers seemed concerned about the situation, she did not mention whether they included the 'plain learners' from Kenya in looking for better integration of the students from Sudan, or whether they helped them to understand their background. However, it became clear that teaching the 'normal' way as foreseen by the curriculum was not adequate to accommodate all students.

'They portray a different picture of who they are': Knowledge, learning, formal education

The teachers reported on a number of incidents in which they were asked to respond to different concepts of knowledge, attitudes towards formal education or access to learning. These did not relate to any single aspect of difference and, rather, can be considered as expressions of regional, ethnic, cultural, political, religious and socio-economic variations in Kenya.

In teaching content-specific knowledge, Ana's experience was that the way students learn, and how they connect new information with their own concepts and morals, differs according to the ethnic community they grow up in, with those specific mother tongues, religious beliefs and morals.

> But you know, when you come from this community it does not only affect language as a subject it also affects other subjects such as Christian religious education because morals in the Chiemeka community may not be necessarily be morals in the Rudo community. (1:54)

She thinks the school curriculum should reflect the different sociocultural backgrounds of the students and include aspects that connect to these backgrounds.

> I think it matters, because … what is taught in the curriculum, coming from this community or that community, influences how you take in information, it influences the instruction … I mean mother tongue influence in the learning and in the instructional language. (1:46)

She suggested – and this is what she tries to do – that teachers be responsive to students' sociocultural backgrounds in their teaching and instruction techniques. She also sees the need for the curriculum developers to integrate various indigenous concepts

and knowledge systems in order to explain specific content and root the new knowledge in the experiences and perceptions of the learners.

Feelings of alienation concerning perceptions of knowledge and attitudes towards formal education occurred in cases where the trained professional teachers were deployed to remote rural or disadvantaged areas. Beth reported her struggle to be recognised as a professional at the school where she first taught after training to be a secondary school teacher in one of Kenya's urban centres. She felt unprepared to deal with the negative attitude towards school education, and rejection of what was perceived as foreign knowledge that she represented. The professional role of a teacher in that school was different than in schools that Beth had known before:

> People there do not value education. So, there was not that pressure that you must teach a child and it must pass. Ours was just to go to school. If you don't go to class, in fact, the students will love you. If you go to class frequently, they will hate you. Our time for going to class was at 8:00; it ends at 4:00 p.m. And there was no extra work. And you see, if we give assignments to students, they don't do. And even when they don't do, we don't bother. Because if you call a student and beat that child you will not sleep at night. The whole community will come. So we were living freestyle, so long as you just go to class and come back. (2:34)

While it is common in many Kenyan schools to discipline students using corporal punishment, the community where her school was located did not allow it and would collectively punish her if she did so. The parents and community did not care whether their children learned in school or not because they generally rejected formal education. With no pressure to achieve a certain performance by students, Beth spent time in the school during the day trying to adapt to this different professional role.

Assignments given to students were either not done at all, or one student completed them and the others copied the work. Beth did not only attribute this phenomenon to the general rejection of school education; she explained that the concept of individual ownership or achievement did not exist in that region. Instead, every achievement was considered as rooted in, and emerging from, the whole community and hence, was a public good. With no means to assess or discipline the students, her role was essentially reduced to being at school and spending time with the students.

When it came to the final year, however, the learners still requested their school-leaving certificates.

> Now what they usually do, when the exams are about to be done, they usually call, in Kenya we say, harambee, togetherness, they call people to come and contribute money. They say: 'Contribute!' After contributing they get somebody in that community who is educated, who will go up to the National Examination Office, get a big person there and give him money, saying: 'Here is money, what we want is the examination'. And after that he is given exams, he brings, we teach the students the exams! But when the day for exams comes, they copy one another, they copy even the name of another person, they just copy, copy, copy. Now, you see, that is a culture, which is not in other communities. (2:60)

Beth struggled to accept that she was expected to be complicit in cheating and prepare the students for their exams against her conscience.

> And now you know it is wrong … But what will you do? If you refuse, they say you don't want to help them. If you refuse, they come to beat you. And even the principal comes in and says: 'Go and teach them because in other parts of Kenya they are also stealing exams'. (2:60)

Resistance to this practice was literally impossible; her colleagues, principal and the community would not accept it when she

explained that in other parts of Kenya exams were not stolen but that the students studied hard to pass them. Hence, Beth found herself limited in her professional practice. She had to adapt to hegemonic attitudes and practices of rejecting school education and cheating the system.

Looking for explanations for this community's alienation of the central government's policies, curricula and institutions, she referred to the culture and traditional – Muslim conservative – values that govern the community and provoke negative attitudes towards formal education and learning. According to Beth, the only possible strategy was to adapt and play the role the community wanted her to play during the years that she taught in that school. The power structure between the teacher and the learners/community was upside down with the learners and parents determining how and what they learned. Hostility against teachers, especially those from outside, increased and became life threatening:

> Now, that time they slaughtered teachers … I had just left the previous day. And then the next day they slaughtered teachers. (2:16)

Beth saved her life at the last minute by getting on the bus to Nairobi just before the killing of teachers started.

This case shows that knowledge and the formal education system with its curricula and language of instruction are not accepted by all people living in the diverse regions of Kenya. There is a strong perception of formal education being foreign and colonising and something that does not belong to the people and their culture.

Another professional experience and practice points to the need for a variety of educational approaches, teaching strategies, arts-based and practical subjects in school education for the purpose of including all learners and nourishing their talents. Florence had a group of students in her primary school class who were not from the same ethnic community as most of the others who were from the local neighbourhood. This group always had difficulty keeping up with regard to literacy and numeracy and

Florence wondered how she could support them given that they were obviously disadvantaged by lack of support from home and their low position at school.

She observed that these students were stigmatised and marginalised in her class and had difficulty in studying and learning in the way expected of them. However, when they had the chance to participate in drama, music and singing activities, she remembered:

> Those children who could do really very well are those that don't come from the neighbouring community, you see. Now, we had children who could really memorise choral verses so fast, they could express themselves so quickly, they could also act out something. They came from this other community. So we don't have to use only the classroom situation, the pen and the paper thing, but you see, these children have an inner thing and they can really show it out. And tell the others that: 'Look at us, we are here, we can do better things', you see. So they are good when it comes to stories, narratives, good when it comes to drama, good when it comes to public speaking. Tell them: 'Come forward and greet the assembly, address the assembly today. Wow, you will like it'. You see. So there are these situations where sometimes it is the way these ones are being favoured a lot. At times now, they come out and portray a different picture of who they are. (6:46)

Florence found different approaches to teaching and learning to support learners who were lagging behind the others in the examination and academic-orientated pen-and-paper teaching strategy. She discovered the learners' talents in music, drama and public speaking and made sure to integrate these educational approaches into her teaching by assigning leading roles to those who were otherwise marginalised.

Similarly, Harald pointed at the importance of going beyond educational approaches that aim at knowledge acquisition at the expense of practical skills and values.

> In the past we used to have technical subjects being embraced, we used to have music at primary level, home science, arts and crafts – those creative subjects that are there. But when you look at it currently, they are not there. (7:25)

Harald and Florence pointed out that for education to be inclusive and not discriminatory or favouring only some learners, schools need to embrace a diversity of teaching and learning approaches instead of focusing only on cognitive knowledge acquisition and examinations. They both try to integrate creative, arts-based and practical elements in their professional practice but see limits due to the curricula where this is not accommodated.

'You don't have a word against the men': Female teachers in school leadership positions

Gender emerged as a relevant diversity category in a number of instances, particularly for some of the female teachers. For example, when some female teachers were responsible for certain aspects of school management or particular school activities – and consequently faced discrimination in various ways. Elsa saw her authority undermined by her male colleagues:

> My experience … if you are a female teacher, you don't have a word against the men. If you have a position in the school and you have to lead men, they don't adhere to your deadlines, they don't adhere to anything, you don't have a word, they are just rude to you. (5:6)

The disrespect for Elsa's leadership position (being in charge of examinations at her school) conveyed by her male colleagues made it impossible for her to do her job properly.

> They don't adhere to the date because you are a lady and if I told you, if you push them, they are going to talk and sometimes they

> use very bad terms because you are a woman and you don't have power over them. So sometimes they are very rude to you they can use any word, they insult you. (5:6)

Not having authority over her male colleagues and being insulted as a woman, Elsa felt demoralised in her role as a professional teacher. She interpreted the disrespectful behaviour of male colleagues towards her as embedded in the culture and tradition of her ethnic group, which follows gender constructions that allocate women a dependent and powerless low social position. These constructions remain strong in the school and region where Elsa teaches. She expects there is still a long way to go to reach gender equality because she has identified a general pattern of patriarchal thinking and doing.

> The same thing even where I am teaching right now, you find that we have certain posts in the school for example being a deputy, a senior teacher, a discipline master: all those posts are meant for men because they don't see woman as someone who is capable of having discipline. (5:6)

As someone who feels discrimination based on her being female on a daily basis, Elsa is ready to fight for equal treatment and rights. The practice she follows (and which she regards as important in order to not let the male teachers get away with such discriminatory and disrespectful behaviour towards female teachers) is to challenge their behaviour, speak to the principal and try to get his support.

From Elsa's experience, much depends on the principal and whether he (in most cases the principal would be male) follows the same pattern of unequal gender constructions. Where a principal is willing to support female teachers in their struggle for equality between the sexes, Elsa sees a chance that gender disparities in schools can be changed – which would not only have an impact on the professionals but also on the learners who observe and learn from gender relations around them.

Other female teachers reported similar experiences of discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace, based on gender. Beth remembered an instance where she was not treated the same as her male colleague and was deprived of an opportunity she was entitled to. After writing a theatre play and training her students to perform it well, her principal did not allow her to go to the different competitions with her students, but chose a male teacher to go with them. When they succeeded at national level, she did not give in any longer, even though her principal explained:

> 'You are not supposed to move with boys. You will not be able to control them.' Then I told him: 'If I've been controlling them in class, why not outside?' Then I told him: 'I must go.' Then I went. So while I was there, OK, the performance took three days, he kept on calling me. Where are you? Where are the boys? Where are they? Until I was so bitter, very much bitter. (2:70)

Although Beth had done all the work behind the scenes, the principal considered the responsibility beyond her when her chance came.

The lack of recognition and the discriminatory behaviour of Beth's superior throughout the process caused her frustration and resentfulness because she had led the students to perform so well. Although she initially gave in to the principal's decision, she later fought for her recognition and place when her class was selected to perform the play at the national level. And she accompanied her students even though the principal was against it. His explanation that she – a female teacher – was not supposed to travel and look after boys while away, and that she would not be able to control them because she is female, reveals patriarchal argument patterns. The fact that he kept on calling to check if everything was all right indicates that he was truly convinced that a female teacher could not measure up to the given task. Although this experience is not about the formal leadership position of a female teacher, Beth, in her capacity as author and director of the play, had taken on the responsibility of leading the students to success in their

performance. She had to fight for her position as director of the play without any solidarity from her male or female colleagues.

In another instance, Beth felt discriminated against by her male colleagues who cheated her of an opportunity she had been anticipating – to become a leader in digital literacy at her school.

> When they were introducing the laptops for the children, they say … teachers who had knowledge in computer should apply so that they go and teach the primary school teachers. Now, I know computers, so we collected our certificates, and I was the only female. So I collected it and some other teachers, male teachers, also collected. But only to realise that my certificate didn't reach the office. Asking why, I think they feared because they knew, I'm a woman, and I'm the only one, automatically, they'd pick on me and then they would be left out. So I was bitter about it. I was so bitter. (2:50)

As the only female teacher in this situation, her male colleagues deliberately left her out and did not forward her application. It was too late for her to do anything about it once she realised what had happened, and she felt betrayed by her male colleagues.

'I am very sure people would resist': Gender equality and sexual orientation

Depending on the community and region in which a particular school is situated, discrimination and inequality based on gender, as well as the limits of teaching gender equality, varied substantially in the accounts of the teachers. The first group of experiences demonstrates the strong influence that the community (social life outside the school and where the learners originate from) exerts on schools. This resulted in teachers feeling that certain issues are not negotiable, the parents and churches do not accept them and schools would be in trouble if they taught the issues differently. Gender equality emerged as one such topic that the teachers felt was only possible to teach to a certain degree because, in the homes, the men are the heads. Harald put it like this:

> In fact, there it is still Africanised: 'The woman remains a woman', that is what they say – and I'm just using their words – that if I marry you, you are my woman and even if you have your job, you still have to do all that I say and work for me. If, for example, you are my wife, as in terms of what I see in the community now, still these women are meant to work under men, yes. So that has never changed, nothing at all, nothing so far as such. (8:58)

Teaching about gender equality in all areas of life would be unacceptable to many community members and parents, according to Harald. He felt they would resist it and that he would be in trouble if he crossed the line of what was perceived as acceptable. As a woman,

> you will look after the children, you cook, you do all that, the man is just to sit there; then serve the man and do what the man says. Your opinion as a woman is not the opinion of the family but my opinion as a man is the family opinion, yes. So that one still stands, no change so far. (8:56–58)

Harald ascribed these patriarchal structures to the tradition that says when a man marries a woman, he owns her and she has to obey what the husband says. Harald is sure that it would cause trouble if he as a teacher interfered by instilling values of gender equality in the children. The violence in some homes results, according to Harald, from women demanding equal say in decision-making and equal distribution of labour in the home. He would not give much chance of success in his school to programmes that try to teach the learners gender equality and instil values of equal power sharing between the sexes.

Harald also described the impossibility of teaching about the diversity of sexuality and sexual orientation in the context of human rights because this would be a taboo. Not only do the vast majority of politicians, churches and denominations condemn homosexuality and declare it inhuman, schools would also not accept it in any way. In this hostile environment,

> homosexuals will always hide themselves unless you use another way to get them. Because the community perceives them extremely wrong and they don't want to see them, yes. Even, it goes all the way from the grassroots to the government level even to the top there, the government would never wish to hear that … even in institutions, not only in schools but also institutions of higher learning, the issue of lesbians, homosexuals, if there are students participating in that they will always hide themselves, totally hide themselves. (8:66)

The dominant negative sentiments and attitude towards sexualities other than heterosexuality in the Kenyan society are mirrored in the institutional school practices of negating the diversity of sexuality and sexual orientation completely. The extent to which schools do not accept homosexuality is highlighted in the following statement:

> I've heard of some secondary schools for girls and some are suspected to have involved themselves in lesbians. What the school would do is just to chase them out, yes, just chase them out, 'You don't belong here. We don't do this here. It is not acceptable', yes. And that is actually what they do, yes. Even to the boys in boys' schools, if anything is heard that there was something like homosexuality, it is not negotiable, there is no debate about it, you just go. You are just chased out, you don't belong here. (8:68)

Diversity education that includes comprehensive sexuality education and sexual orientation is scarcely imaginable in this environment, especially since sodomy is a felony under the Kenyan Penal Code. Unsurprisingly, none of the interviewed teachers spoke about approaches to diversity education or practices that embraced gender and sexual orientation issues in an accepting way, or in a human rights context.

'Girls are not supposed to be involved in anything': Gender inequality in the classroom

As the only female teacher in the school at the northern border of Kenya, Beth had to deal with the fact that girls were discriminated against in almost all instances and institutional practices. Girls were not allowed to be in a boarding school nor were they allowed eat lunch with the boys or participate in any extracurricular activities including sports lessons. As a female teacher, Beth was also not allowed to go to the sports field. In this conservative Muslim area, she only had very few girls in her class.

> Because they believe that when a girl goes to school, she gets destroyed, so they cannot get men to marry them. So girls mostly they don't go to school, they remain at home. When they try so much to learn, after Class 8, when the child completes Class 8, already the man is there, yes: complete and get married. (2:62)

As a teacher, she felt powerless against the overwhelming traditional, cultural and religious rules and values that seemed to govern the community and which she had to understand.

> I was against early marriages where you find a child just today, the child is in school, tomorrow, when you go there to class, she is not there. When you ask: 'Where is she?' They answer: 'Madame, you didn't hear yesterday when we were celebrating her wedding at night?' (2:68)

After teaching in that school for a while, Beth felt the need to do something about the discrimination against girls and the profound inequality between girls and boys, men and women. She started questioning the patriarchal structures, particularly early marriages, female genital mutilation and polygamy. In a first attempt to empower girls, she began to discuss with the girls and boys about the ways in which things were done.

> One day I asked them: 'Why do you marry when it is still early? Why don't you go to school?' One of them told me: 'Madame, you are going to school, yes, we accept you have read all the books. But we, we leave school and we marry very rich men. We just sit in the house and they bring everything. And you, you are here, struggling with books, you have left your children far away … even if I marry as the fourth wife, or the fifth wife, this man will be bringing everything in the house'. (2:68)

Beth had to defend her lifestyle – she could not take her family to that hostile area, the only place where she got a teacher's post. She did not give in:

> And then another thing that I was fighting against was this female circumcision. Also they do circumcise their girls … And then I asked – I was just trying to argue with them – I asked the boys: 'Why do you marry so many women?' … You see now, they used to see me as somebody who has run away from their religion. 'Even when God created Adam and Eve, I don't see any other woman around there. Why are you marrying other women?' Then some of them told me: 'Mohammed married many women, and that was the culture of Mohammed, and we can still follow that culture'. There is the religion part and there is the cultural part. And also another one told me it was because they want to taste every girl. (2:68)

The longer Beth worked as a teacher in that faraway region, the more she felt the urge to change something and empower the girls.

> That's why I was feeling in my heart that, supposed I'm given an opportunity, I can talk to these people. And I made friendship with them! In fact, they didn't allow their girls to go in any other … there is a name they used to call us, so they could not allow their children to mix with us [people from outside]. But for me it reached the time they could come in my house! They came so many in my house, I talked to them, I gave them small things …

> So when I came this side, I bought for them pants … When I reach there, in my house: 'What have you brought for us'? I gave them. So they frequently came in my house. I talked to them, we laughed and then they went. (2:78)

Beth's strategy was to first build trust and a personal relationship between herself and the girls to create a basis for exchange and discussions about different lifestyles, about gender issues and to open their thinking to other ways of doing things. She was successful to a certain degree, as the parents would allow their children to mix with her and visit her at home. Beth felt helpless in that almost-closed community of people with their patriarchal and discriminatory structures, most of whom had not travelled or seen a city or different environment in their lives. Her role became that of a window to the world outside, which allowed a glimpse of the life and diversity out there. Being confronted with vast gender inequality and being the only teacher wishing to empower the girls, she was aware that her influence was very limited and that there was nothing much she could do, for instance, against the exclusion of herself and the girls from the sports lessons.

Beth's professional experience of discrimination against women and girls in schools and communities is in stark contrast to Harald's perspective of gender relations in formal education:

> The country needs to understand that the boy child has been neglected. A lot and more concern was given to the girls. So educational wise I think it is okay. (8:55)

Noticing that the girls have done better in their final exams in the school where he teaches in the past few years, Harald was convinced that gender equality with regards to education had been achieved. After the international community, government and schools ran many programmes focusing on the education of the girl-child over the past 20 years, he is concerned about the boys and that they are completely out of the focus. To gain further evidence of his impression, Harald started following up to see

where his former students went after finishing secondary school. He found that the majority of the girls were going to college or university after secondary school, but most boys started work and very few went to college or university. 'I think there is somehow a neglect of the boy as the new trend now for education.' (8:54) Despite the fact that Harald sees the women in homes and communities occupy a lower social position than the men, he is convinced that the recent educational success of girls shows that they have been sufficiently empowered in terms of education. In his view, this empowerment was at the expense of the boys whose education was neglected in past years. Discrimination against girls in schools was only highlighted by few teachers as one of the diversity issues they had to deal with. This suggests that some success can be seen from the girl-child education programmes of the past – at least in some regions and settings of Kenya as also seen in the statistics. However, these contrasting experiences and perceptions about gender (in)equality in education point at huge disparities between different schools and regions with their own sociocultural characteristics in Kenya.

Another type of differentiation emerging from the interviews relates to health, and the challenge for teachers to consider not only those children who are regarded healthy or 'normal', but also those living with a chronic disease, or mental and physical impairments.

'Talking about HIV and Aids victims openly? No!':[16] *Health and stigma*

HIV and Aids emerged as a special topic among the health-related issues that the teachers talked about, due to the stigma and myths surrounding the disease in Kenyan society. Particularly in boarding schools, teachers need to take care of the health of children and often find themselves tasked with applying for medication, negotiating with health officials and lobbying for proper medication and treatment for infected learners. Teaching in a boarding school, Florence described the need to be aware of learners who are HIV-positive:

> These children, we really need to take good care of them, but there is that fear: 'This one has HIV', you see. Both from the teachers and also – they look at you from another angle, and these children never did any mistake to get the disease. In fact, most they were born with the disease, like in my school we have a number of them who are HIV-positive. In most occasions we, that have understood, we have undergone training, we really even give them extra meals because of the drugs they take, the ARVs. But the other children now, we really try to keep it a secret so that the children cannot look at them as those who are sick. (6:42)

The situation of HIV-positive learners in her boarding school is complicated because the teachers try to keep their status secret for fear of stigmatisation. At the same time, affected learners need to be given proper meals and their medication regularly – a special treatment that is sometimes difficult to hide from the other learners.

Florence also pointed out that she struggles with the right of the children to be treated the same as everyone else during lessons where she as a teacher may use corporal punishment to discipline the children when they misbehave. In order not to weaken HIV-positive learners, she sometimes spares them from punishment but without any good reason she can give to the class. Similarly, during physical activities in sports lessons, she asks herself if she should spare HIV-positive children from exhausting exercises – and sometimes does so. However, she observed affected learners to be unhappy and feel discriminated against by such preferential treatment. They want to be treated like normal children, like everyone else; they want to receive punishment for misbehaviour and engage in the same physical activities as their classmates. Even though Florence has participated in courses on HIV and Aids and learned that HIV-positive learners should get special attention and treatment, she felt that she was discriminating by treating them differently from everyone else and observed that the learners themselves experience these situations as 'psychological torture'.

> So we discriminate them still on some things in school … We need to see how we are going to tackle them in a way that they feel okay, despite the fact that I have the disease: I am also a normal person, you see, I am also a normal person. (6:44)

As Florence described, where schools feel they need to protect HIV-positive learners by not revealing their status, it becomes a balancing act for the teachers to deal confidentially with the health-related information on one hand, and making sure that the respective learners get the attention and treatment they need on the other.

The workshops and training about HIV and Aids in schools that Florence participated in have made her confident and equipped her with tools to deal with HIV-positive learners. She works closely with the guidance and counselling department of her school to treat learners with HIV-related symptoms in a confidential way. Similar approaches to dealing with HIV in the schools were reported by other teachers as well. All schools tried to keep the HIV status of their learners and staff confidential in order to protect them from stigmatisation and exclusion often based on ignorance and fear. Ana also confirmed that

> Most of the cases that have known like students with HIV, actually, the schools have gone through guiding and counselling and most of them keep it very confidential … so that the student is not exposed. (1:144)

The infected children are taught to hide their status, which is sometimes difficult for young learners in primary schools. According to Ana, guidance and counselling is needed not only for the HIV-infected learners but for all learners so they are taught to respect and not discriminate against one another. However, the general approach is to hide the status, suggesting to the infected learners that they have a blemish that no one should know about in order to not be isolated. Some of the teachers perceived no alternative to this approach and confirmed that openness about

an HIV-positive status would be untenable in the contexts they teach and work in.

Aside from the challenge of keeping the HIV-positive status of learners confidential and not treating them differently (even though infected learners need more attention and care), the teachers also described uneasiness when teaching about reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases. Florence pointed out that teaching about HIV and Aids in the Kenyan context commonly goes along with sexuality education that paints a horrific picture of what can happen through having unprotected sex. This includes the danger of contracting HIV and the opportunistic diseases that go along with infection, eventually causing death.

> In our syllabuses, these children still feel discriminated by the way we will, the method that you are going to use to pass the information to them, you see. What is it? You know you will die, if you have Aids, you will die. So the child will look at herself and see now – you know we all fear death – even if I am told today: 'You are going to die'. Surely, you see? What about a child who is less than 12 years old? So they really feel: 'Now I am the one with HIV, now I am the one who is to die, I am the one who is not like the rest. So I am only waiting for death'. (6:62)

The uneasiness Florence described when teaching about HIV and Aids – and empathising with HIV-positive learners in her class, and feeling that the content and methods are not adequate, but putting blame and fear on the infected learners – points to the fact that the moral discourse about sexuality and HIV and Aids prevalent in Kenyan society affects school lessons and teachers.

'Teacher, excuse me, I have not understood!': Learners with special needs

Other health-related diversities that the teachers mentioned regarded slow learners and learners with intellectual or learning disabilities. While slow learners were difficult to integrate in

lessons because of the large classes of up to 80 learners, children with severe intellectual and learning disabilities had barely any chance to participate in the lessons without assistance. The teachers confirmed that they tried to give everyone a chance and also taught their classes to be patient with learners who needed more time to understand what was being taught; but they also expressed a lack of knowledge about different forms of disabilities and how to assess or deal with them.

> Now, the challenges that we are really face, we have some children, I don't know how to call them, that need assistance. I don't know how to put this type of children who come to school and what you expect them to do at a certain level they don't do. (1:48)

Ana expressed what emerged to be a common experience among the interviewed teachers who felt ill-equipped to assess or deal with learners with special needs. Similarly, Florence described a situation and her lack of expertise to diagnose or handle certain learners:

> They are even beyond a slow learner. Because a slow learner will come to class when you are able to write number 1, number 2, number 3, maybe up to a certain … but you know, there is a child who keeps on drawing but cannot – I don't know how to put it. Something like mental. Now these children – there is also one who comes to school and the saliva is just falling down. (6:50)

Gerald pointed at the structural situation of lacking resources:

> Many of our schools I can tell you teachers are strained; we need more teachers on the ground. We need to employ more teachers. You get to a school and there are classes over 100 students: how do you get, how do you reach the slow learner? (7:45)

Florence also confirmed that she was not able to include everyone in a lesson with the limited time and resources she has, and that some learners are simply left behind. Although learners who are

not capable of grasping what is being taught usually drop out of school sooner or later, some initiatives are trying to prevent school dropouts and to create adequate schooling by setting up special needs schools and going into regular schools to identify learners with impairments. Florence described the new developments:

> They have organised special schools, they have trained teachers, they have set up programmes for assessment so that if a child, if a child has a problem undergoes assessment and put in the right school. Even in our neighbouring school we have a special unit, a special unit for special children for those who have done special needs education. Yeah, it is there, the problem is, some teachers still neglect them, still. If a child cannot manage to do something and you have a group of fast learners, I will always work with this one. In fact, three left our schools because I would always work with these ones, I teach, I do the work, I mark the work in the class, these ones were always left. (6:50)

Handling health-related diversities and paying attention to children with special needs, is, according to Florence, not possible under the conditions of a normal school where teachers are overburdened with work. She felt that slow learners or learners with disabilities are let down by teachers like herself who prefer to work with the fast learners. In under-resourced schools, teachers ignore children with disabilities and give up on them. Parents then take their children from school because they are left out of the lessons.

However, some schools do get assistance from outside organisations and interventions, which helps the schools and principals to find a way of dealing with health-related diversities. Florence pointed out that at her school, things are changing as procedures are put in place for learners with special needs:

> So with our school we have a new principal. Our principal calls the parents, advices the parents and then they organise in the sub-county and the county for the child to be assessed and then taken to that special school. (6:50)

The emerging school practice of referring children with special needs to outside school actors, however, confirms that the schools and teachers are not equipped to include learners with disabilities. Both Ana and Florence referred to inadequate policies and measures in place to deal with fast and slow learners:

> There are those who are exceptional, who have a very high IQ and they perceive things very fast and they're so fast to understand things. Others are slow learners and they take time to understand. You have the same teacher, you have 40 minutes for all of them, they have an exam it is out of 100 [points], they have to finish it in two hours and the evaluation measures are the same, although they are different, very different. (1:84)

The practice of assessing and evaluating all learners in the same way – even though some would be considered slow learners or learners with intellectual or learning impairments, and others as intellectually gifted – was of great concern to the teachers as being discriminatory and unfair. Another type of experience touches on the requirement of teachers to protect learners with special needs from discrimination in the classroom. Elsa described her role as passive observer of the situation:

> I have a student in Form 4 now, he is disabled and you find that that student is isolated, the other students don't want this student to talk they don't want to be associated with him. They don't want him to be part of their anything, yeah, maybe if they are playing in the field or they are forming group discussions in class, they don't want him to be part of them so that one I have observed among the students. (5:30)

Ana tried to create empathy and respect for different abilities to learn among her students for a girl with a learning impairment:

> And every time she kept asking a question: 'Teacher, I have not understood!' Sometimes I could teach and teach and when

> I reached the end she said: 'Teacher, excuse me, I have not understood!' And when I asked: 'From where my dear?' Then she says: 'Everything.' And you know, the rest of the students were: 'Mmmh'. They just got bored and with the time, as she was asking such questions, the whole class gets irritated. (1:150)

> But from time to time I realised that she was being discriminated because I kept on encouraging the class: 'Let's give her a chance to ask her questions and also give you a chance to ask yours and I answer, let us give her a chance.' So with time I came to realise she was left alone without a friend, she wasn't working with anybody. She just slept and nobody wanted to talk to her. (1:151)

Ana's tactic of talking to the class and appealing to them to be considerate and patient, to give everyone a fair chance, worked in the classroom to a certain extent. Outside the classroom, however, Ana observed that the relevant learner was excluded and discriminated against based on her impairment. Similarly, Dora pointed at two challenges she was facing concerning a learner with albinism in her class. The first challenge she reported was when the learner approached her as class teacher:

> She began crying and I had to intervene because I was asking her what the problem was. And I called her after the lesson because I told her during the lesson: 'Maybe we can talk after the lesson'. And after that she was telling me the rest are actually so keen with her skin, she is feeling she is not part of the group. I actually had to talk to her and tell her that actually, it is not all about her sight, it's about God who created her like that and she should actually accept it and not get depressed. Yes, because she is just like the rest it is only the skin that is different. So I was telling her that actually, she is intelligent and she should take advantage of that and leave the rest aside. Then I had to come and talk to the rest in her absence and tell them that they should not actually be segregating this girl and they should accept her the way she is. And I was also giving them an example that as humans anything

> happens and you find yourself handicapped – whom will you blame? So it is actually all a matter of accepting people the way they are. (4:82)

Dora's practice of counselling the learner and talking separately to her class to create empathy and understanding for human diversity, and appeal to them to accept the learner with albinism, resembles Ana's strategy to deal with health-related discrimination in her class. The second challenge Dora highlighted about the same learner concerns her uneasiness and insecurity concerning teaching contents in biology that deal with albinism.

> It is all about this topic in Form 1 on the variation of genes and all that, what actually causes albinism. So, you know, I actually had to skip the topic because of this girl. It's still a challenge because we have not actually strategised on how to go about it. But now, well, for a teacher you always have to be very sensitive when handling that class because you know there is a different child from the rest. (4:80)

Based on this experience, Dora identified the need for her school to have a strategy in place for teachers to follow in similar cases. Her way of handling the situation by skipping the particular lessons and, in that way, circumventing the topic completely, can't be a solution in the long term. Like Florence, who saw the situation in class change when HIV-positive learners were present, Dora felt that the teaching content – in this case, human genetics – and the way the topic is transmitted is not adequate if a learner in the class is affected by it in one way or another. Hence, Dora identified the need for a professional teacher to be sensitive to learners who are 'different' and who would be affected by the teaching of specific topics.

Another circumstance regarding learners with special needs relates to the fact that many parents do not want their handicapped children to be seen in public and hence, do not send them to school at all.

> I can talk as a teacher. I have seen it happen because you go to a home and to realise there are some children there but they don't go to school, why? Because they have some disability, they are locked behind in the rooms. (7:31)

To change this situation, parents need a lot of encouragement, as Gerald pointed out:

> Where I come from, the schools are embracing that [learners with special needs]. In fact, teachers are coming out and saying: 'Bring the children to us so that we can be able to assist them'. Yeah, of course, there are other challenges whereby we have some communities whereby our children with disability, they will face some discrimination and all that but then, at school level from where I come from I can say we are really embracing. Like the school where I teach, we have a special school inside our school, we have children with disabilities those with hearing impairments, sight, maybe broken limbs or they are born without limbs. We have many of them, we have many of them and we do encourage our parents to bring those children to school. (7:33)

Gerald was proud to report that his school serves as a role model for embracing disability and trying to create an inclusive learning environment. Going to the homes of the children is, in his perception, part of the professional role and responsibility of a teacher. In talking to parents, he tries to break the stigma around disability that makes parents of handicapped children feel ashamed, so that they can lose the impulse to hide their child and be encouraged by the prospect of getting assistance.

While in some districts, certain support mechanisms for the families and the schools concerning children with special needs have taken effect, in other districts, teachers described frustration due to corruption and the incapacity of officials to act.

> You find that somebody who has a problem, will also be put with the rest [in school] because either the special schools would be

> expensive or because there's no information to, maybe somebody could tell them that your child has a special problem, please take him or her to the that school. So you find the child will be wasted along with the others – the others are doing well. But when it comes to being taken care of everybody has a concern for them but the government has done very little to ensure that these people are taken care of. There are people who are appointed even at the district level to be concerned for them but then they don't care. (3:63)

Chris also pointed out that, due to the stigma related to disability in the society, district officials or leaders would, in some cases, not dare go to families to inform them of ways of getting assistance. In these situations, the schools are left alone with the affected children without the expertise to diagnose or assist them.

'In Kenya we have two tribes – the rich and the poor': Poverty and schooling

An issue cutting across, and relating to, almost all other diversity aspects concerns the difference between learners from poor and those from rich backgrounds:

> We have the rich and the poor … There is a lot of disparity … the gap between the rich and the poor is big, is big, literally, big. (7:22)

At a structural level, Beth pointed to the education system that does no justice to this economic inequality and hence, creates structural discrimination:

> We have those who have and the don't haves. So you find that the haves, they are in their world and the don't haves are in their world. The don't haves are in low schools where there are no resources, there is nothing, they have to struggle for themselves, and those haves they are in big schools where there is everything.

> And you see, now, what we have been arguing, you find that the students from the local community and those ones from the other schools, they do the same exams. And you know, they are rated equally! You see now there is some discrimination! Because this one is using this kerosene lamp to read and even that kerosene smell is there. And those ones have electricity and everything. How can you rate those people equally? It's a kind of discrimination. (2:88)

The economic inequality that Beth highlights does not only refer to the background of the learners and their families but also, and more so, to the economic disparity between the schools as institutions. Learners from rich families have better conditions in schools (being in a learning conducive space) and the schools themselves have created a differentiated system with high-cost schools catering for learners from rich families. These extremely different teaching and learning environments exacerbate the unequal conditions for the learners' achievements.

The extent of difference between the very rich schools and the very poor schools was described as massive by the teachers. While the affluent schools offered every possible support for learning and extra-mural activities, in other schools parents struggled to pay for a school uniform for their children, and teachers tried to maintain an environment for basic learning to take place in overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms. These structurally unequal economic conditions for the schools to operate in and facilitate learning (while, at the same time, learners are all assessed and rated in the the same way in their exams) emerged as a great concern of the interviewed teachers.

Gerald pointed out that the government has tried to relieve poverty-stricken areas with school feeding programmes that provide one meal a day for learners who would otherwise have difficulty concentrating and learning on an empty stomach. However, these programmes have not reached all schools and areas where support is needed:

> Even in our – these other areas, there is rampant poverty, there is poverty at the highest level if you can call it that and people are suffering, the truth is, people are suffering a lot. (7:39)

Only some of the areas classified as 'arid and semi-arid lands' (ASAL) are eligible for specific support to schools, which Gerald pointed out as not being sufficient.

Chris also confirmed that there are a number of programmes targeting poor families and trying to create conditions where their children can go to school. However, people who should benefit from these programmes often do not get access due to corruption at all levels.

> I have seen people in the community who they can pay for their kids but because they are the ones who manage that then they give it to their people. So the person at the bottom is left there. Forms come for filling in and then they hide the forms and give them to their friends. You come there and they say there is only one, so one person is given or two. Then most of the forms they take them – it happens in most areas but I can say most of the things are there but it is only about how it is done. (3:69)

> So the biggest problem is with leadership and corruption … when it comes to catering for all the people in the community. (3:80)

The corruption surrounding issues of poverty relief and support programmes was mentioned as a cause of frustration by the teachers who observed funds not reaching the families who were in need. Engaged teachers reported supporting their learners by going with them to local government offices to ensure that the learners got the form to apply for support.

Depending on the location and status of the school, the teachers described different challenges related to economic discrepancies that they as teachers and their schools as institutions faced. Gerald described the devastating poverty of the majority of families in his area and emphasised that this had an impact on all aspects of

his school. Although he did not identify discrimination based on social status among the learners as a problem, he pointed to the tremendous work that he did outside class to support, motivate, help and counsel his learners.

> Because as a teacher, we deal with many issues at school level. More than half of my school children are orphaned. There are children who live with their relatives, and they are mistreated and the first confidant is the teacher. So when you are close to your children, definitely they will always open up to you and they will tell you what is happening in their lives and you realise: some of them are going through hell. Some come to school without any food they have not eaten anything. You see them, they cannot even play, concentrating in class is a problem. (7:37)

From Gerald's narrative, it becomes obvious how learners' social and economic problems interlink and reinforce each other, and how this affects their learning in school. As an engaged and caring teacher, Gerald has started various initiatives to support learners faced with socio-economic problems.

> I've been in charge of so many activities in my school, including 'zamus', meaning 'teachers' turns', including guiding and counselling and we always fight all this. I have always given my own personal experience when I am sharing … Sometimes I sit with students and you share and when they tell you where they come from you feel pity. You think of your story and well, you had an advantage, you had somebody to put some food on the table for you. But there are children who are literally staying in – I can't even talk about that … Every Thursday we have a guiding and counselling group, we talk to our students … I always tell them: 'There is hope'. I have always believed: the past cannot dictate my future … I have literally gone to members of parliament in my area with my own delegation and I can tell you: they [the children in need of support] are in school … When the parents come, I talk to them, I tell them: 'You have the right. You

> need to be served by the members of the parliament, you need to go, go to their offices'. (7:41)

In Gerald's school, tremendous efforts have to be made by the teachers to create a situation where the basic needs of the children are catered for so that learning can take place. These include group counselling, fundraising among teachers to pay for uniforms of children who cannot afford to buy them, filling in forms to apply for support, initiating feeding programmes, lobbying for support at local governments, informing parents, home visits, giving guidance and motivational talks for the learners.

Besides the struggle to meet learners' basic needs in terms of food, health and a safe place to stay, Ana, who works in an economically better-off environment, particularly pointed to the psychological aspects of living in economically desperate situations. As a teacher, she tries to identify and mentally lift up affected learners in order to prevent their early dropout from school.

> The ones coming from poor families find it a challenge to cope and therefore, as a teacher there's a lot that you need to do in order to identify those kind of differences amongst the students. Then emphasis can be put in order to lift the spirit and self-esteem of that child that comes from a poor family to the level of that one that comes from the rich family. So that they can have a platform to start. Otherwise, that difference in the background of students affect the self-esteem of the child, which in turn affects the performance. (1:82)

When teaching classes of up to 100 learners, it seems hardly possible for the teachers to know about and respond to individual learners' worries and backgrounds related to economic poverty.

Institutional responses to the psycho-social aspect of living in socio-economically disadvantaged situations mainly relate to the support provided through the guidance and counselling department.

> The major strategy that we use in my school is guidance and counselling, and we have a lot of motivational speakers and also we have bursaries that are meant for poor students. (5:54)

Besides the psychological impact, Ana also described how poverty hinders access to schooling.

> So again, the issue of difference in economic background affects their stay in school as well because it affects the school fees. You find that some of them come from families who do not afford to pay the school fees in time and most of the time the child is away and the child is back, away is back. (1:86)

Despite the fact that schooling should be free, schools are dependent on school fees to operate – even on small amounts. Learners whose parents struggle to pay the fees are sent home until they can pay, marking the affected learners as 'poor' and making their economic situation visible to everyone. Another inequality arising from socio-economic disparities relates to corruption and cheating at exams. According to Gerald and Ana, rich parents sometimes assist their children to cheat and illegally buy the exam questions in advance to provide their own children with the best opportunity to attain high scores and better chances of admission to a good university.

Further examples of how economic disparities become visible in schools and how this becomes a challenge to the teachers were reported. Elsa observed incidents of exclusion and discrimination among the learners based on their economic situation and social status:

> Amongst our learners you find that there are those who come from rich families, others are very poor. Then you find that there are those social classes so you find that they form groups, so there is that group for the rich and those who come from poor backgrounds are isolated. (5:30)

Similar group dynamics were also described by other teachers, especially those working in more affluent schools. Chris observed an intersection of social status with the urban/rural divide in affluent schools:

> The school in Arjana town, there was some kind of discrimination. Children who come from the town, as much as they were from almost the same social status, but then the ones who are in town would go to a club but these ones in the villages could not go so they were 'These are the children of the club'. I noticed it and I even raised it in the in our [teachers'] meetings and said okay, there is this issue we need to address, but then you find that some teachers – because maybe they have alienated themselves from others – they will say: 'No problem there! We'll try and address it'. And then it was taken down under the carpet and stayed there. But it only happens in high-cost schools but normal schools everybody is everybody, nobody cares. (3:74)

According to Chris, discrimination based on social status is an issue mainly in urban middle-class and high-cost schools. His attempt to alert his colleagues that action should be taken against discrimination among learners based on their socio-economic (and, in part, intersecting with their rural) background, did not lead to any action. He explained this as lack of interest and empathy on the part of his colleagues. In contrast, Elsa reported her practice after observing discrimination against learners from poor backgrounds, which follows her school's policy for dealing with problems in class.

> Every class has a class teacher and a class teacher will hold a class meeting with his/her students to discuss issues that are affecting them in their class. Sometimes they are not free to tell you because they don't want the others to hear them speaking out. So you tell them to write something: you don't write your name but write all the problems that you are experiencing in class … When we realised that that [discrimination based on social class] was a

> major problem, whereby there are those girls, for example in my class, there is that group of girls that used to call themselves the 'Five Stars'. So when we realised that, we called them for guidance and counselling. Not just the five girls but all of them, so we tried guiding them on the side effects of having those social classes or seeing other students as lesser things. And I think after that guidance, the teacher in charge of guidance and counselling she had a chance to call those five students and they admitted that they had formed a group for those five girls who come from rich communities … So after the guidance and counselling session, I think, yeah, I can see, I think after two terms there were not those social classes so that gap had reduced. (5:32)

The guidance and counselling intervention (including whole-class discussions, anonymous written submissions, individual counselling and more general inputs focusing on discrimination and its consequences) led to a positive outcome, according to Elsa. The individual counselling of learners also included showing the five girls, who had discriminated against the others, ways of friendship and close relationships that are not based on excluding, discriminating and exerting power over others.

According to Dora, status differentiations are on the increase in Kenyan society and the schools reflect this development. On a more general note, she stated:

> People are socialising based on their status. Maybe on Fridays, after work, you realise that people just meet, have fun. So if you are not working or if you don't have money, of course you won't suit in that class. So we have such divisions. (4:46)

Similarly, Florence pointed at the intersection of the socio-economic status and ethnic group affiliation, explaining:

> You find this kind of discrimination even with our own people when they know that you are living like that, you are in a low social class. (6:14)

According to Florence, social class formations create new demarcations between members of the same ethnic group and thereby interrupt lines of difference that were constructed as a more relevant group identity ('even with our own people'). Hence, it can be concluded on the other hand that social class potentially dilutes or even replaces ethnic group demarcations and constructs them as irrelevant. The demarcations of haves and have-nots in school also manifest as tangible differences, a challenge that Chris experienced regularly in his job as a teacher.

> It will always be easy if you find like the same social status but when you have two, one of high and one of low status – then it becomes difficult because they need textbooks and the one can't get. The others have textbooks – then what do you do? Especially in private schools: these ones have all the textbooks, you have to give homework and then there [for the others] is nothing you can do at home – that becomes some of a challenge. (3:72)

The problem that Chris described arises when textbooks needed in school are not provided by the schools or government so that access depends on whether the parents or guardians can provide the books for their children. As a teacher, he felt he had no means of mitigating the disadvantage of learners who did not have the textbooks. However, the actions some teachers took to assist learners from poor economic and social backgrounds are impressive. One school collected donations to open a children's home for their learners who lived on the streets.

The teachers also reported assisting learners from poor backgrounds who had potential and were hardworking by providing scholarships, helping them to find a safe place to stay and thus enabling them to successfully complete their school education and apply for government bursaries. As Chris said:

> Thank God of my experience when I was poor, at least I try … Many teachers do that in fact, the young generation of teachers are really helping a lot in terms of making the child learn. (3:71)

Other teachers also mentioned that their own situation (coming from poor economic backgrounds) helped them to empathise with the affected learners and to find ways of assisting them.

Conclusion

What is striking when looking at the diversity phenomena experienced by teachers is the variety of situations they referred to – curriculum, teaching strategies and contents, the marginalisation and stigmatisation of specific learners and the need to adjust their professional role and practice as a teacher – depending on the specific context of the school.

Tribalism as politically motivated hostility and violence (that does not arise from specific cultural or religious differences but relies on large group constructions of political and economic power and opportunities in Kenyan society at large) also impacts on the schools. Installing guidance and counselling departments, especially for traumatised learners, was the main approach of the government after the 2007/2008 post-election violence. In particular, teachers who work at schools with a history of tribalism and violence between ethnic groups, or whose ethnic set-up is insecure due to national politics, are highly sensitised and aware that conflict can break out again at any time. Hence, awareness and record keeping of learners' backgrounds was identified as a necessary precondition in these schools in order for the teachers to be able to properly understand conflict situations and the problems of certain learners.

However, this practice also raises the question whether this ethnicised way of interpreting conflicts reinforces tribalism to some extent given that it views the students primarily as members of a certain ethnic group (with its specific position in that school and in society). Teachers' interventions to respond to and prevent tribalism (which usually manifests as stigmatisation, offending speech and fighting along tribal lines in schools) mainly include sensitising sessions about non-offensive speech and reconciliation in the classrooms and whole-school assemblies – as well as

counselling sessions with individuals affected by tribalism. Some of the teachers reported that they have opportunities to take part in seminars and training workshops on topics identified by teachers and school principals as problem areas to be addressed in the schools. Tribalism as described by the teachers does not necessarily include violence and conflict. High levels of awareness about ethnic group affiliation reportedly leads to parents entrusting 'their own' teachers with their children and teachers assisting learners from their own group more – particularly if they are in the minority. However, not all teachers experienced tribalism or high levels of awareness concerning ethnic group affiliation in the schools where they teach. The region, the mix of different ethnic groups and their construction as essential and pure, general and specific power relations and other factors seem to influence bonding along ethnic lines and politically motivated ethnic hostilities.

From the teachers' accounts, different mother tongues (as an indicator of ethnic diversity in the schools and the classrooms) can be viewed as a problem because it has potential for stigmatisation and exclusion as well as being a barrier to teaching and learning. In schools with one dominant mother tongue, teachers and learners (particularly in primary school) use their mother tongue and the teachers practise code-switching to explain learning contents in the language of the students. This practice, however, excludes the speakers of other mother tongues and is therefore questionable in the experience of the teachers. That the languages of instruction are English and Kiswahili puts some groups of learners at a disadvantage. The particular region where a school is situated, and the rural-urban divide, emerged as relevant lines of difference related to the language of instruction policy. This policy leaves rural, marginalised and remote areas of the country at a structural disadvantage because students from these areas have little to no exposure to these languages in their daily lives. The practice of exam-paper theft promoted by some teachers and principals in remote areas as a response to this disadvantage can be interpreted as a strategy to reach a certain level of inclusion,

and to counteract the structural disadvantage. However, it also indicates that some communities at the margins of the society might perceive the benefits of formal school education as reduced to the school-leaving certificate.

The need for teachers and schools to respond to religious or cultural diversities and sociocultural backgrounds (e.g. to rethink their teaching practices in order to become responsive to the background of the learners, to overcome barriers to learning and teaching or to solve arising conflicts) emerged as a central theme. Evidence for this can be found, for example, in refugee learners feeling excluded and ignored if treated the same as the other learners. Examples of teachers' and schools' responses included the collection and confidential handling of student data concerning cultural, religious and other background information in order to be better able to classify and understand behaviours or conflicts. This also included awareness of religious requirements so that schools can arrange for boarding students to participate in the religious activities of their particular religious organisation.

However, it again raises the question of whether these classifications (relating to culture, religion, ethnic (sub-)group etc.) promote stigmatisation and prejudice and, possibly, reinforce certain stigmatising patterns in the teaching and learning process.

Ethnic and other large group constructions can lose importance and even become insignificant – as exemplified by Christian denominations that create strong identification with their church and a sense of belonging and membership. This inclusive effect on the one hand provokes exclusive effects on the other hand by drawing a sharp line between members and non-members and thus, replacing other lines of difference. Denominational schools therefore annul some of the diversity phenomena found in public schools in Kenya – but at the expense of being exclusive for their own members. The reports about students and teachers of different religious backgrounds, particularly in boarding schools, suggest that religious diversity could be accommodated in many schools (e.g. allowing the students and staff to participate in

church services during the required times). However, the extent to which religious diversity is accommodated in schools differs, and cannot be taken for granted.

The need for teachers to be responsive to specific cultural, religious and socio-economic settings within Kenya also became apparent with respect to knowledge, learning and formal education. Connecting the teaching content of the curriculum with the specific lived experiences and concepts of knowledge found in the, often culturally diverse, classrooms was highlighted as a challenge. In a more radical community where formal education in general is rejected (including the languages of instruction), and which regards knowledge as a common community good (that cannot be owned and produced by an individual), teachers' professionalism is questioned fundamentally. Bridging the gap between the requests of national government and the requests of the local community seemed barely possible in some instances.

To a less extreme extent, teachers in other regions identified the need to include a variety of teaching strategies, subject fields and skills and, at the same time, to de-emphasise the focus on examinations and drumming abstract knowledge into learners in order to not marginalise and exclude particular learners. Some teachers developed their own inclusive approaches by applying arts-based, creative and performative teaching strategies that advantaged learners who had difficulty taking in and reproducing abstract knowledge as emphasised in the curriculum. The teachers also identified the need to include more subject fields like music, arts, crafts, drama, technical skills and sports education in the curriculum in order to be responsive to the various sociocultural and socio-economic backgrounds of the learners, and to not advantage specific groups at the expense of others.

The perceptions of knowledge and learning expressed by some teachers, based on their experience, are rooted in the assumption that learning not only takes place in and through the head but also through engagement in creative and physical activities. Diverse forms of teaching and learning would help learners with different

sociocultural and socio-economic backgrounds to succeed in the formal education system and not put a small group of learners at an advantage.

The examples of how the teachers experienced gender inequality and the discrimination against girls and female teachers in their schools reveal the strong influence of the immediate sociocultural and economic context (with its traditions and values) in which the school is situated. While some teachers did not experience gender as a relevant diversity category and basis for discrimination of any kind in their schools, it surfaced as the most challenging category for other teachers. The discrepancy between the teachers' experiences of a school where girls are excluded and discriminated against on various levels and of another school where the teacher felt the boys were being neglected, is tremendous.

The teachers' strategies to change towards gender equality included the attempt to make a male principal aware of the discriminatory behaviour of male teachers and convince him to support the female staff members in their leadership positions. One difficulty encountered with the strategy of using the principal's authority was that he would first have to be convinced of the value of gender equality and of how this equality was being undermined in his school. The limitations that strong local influence had on the teachers' practices (in terms of teaching diversity and change towards gender equality in the school) became obvious in some instances. The values and norms shared by the community limited the teachers' abilities to teach gender education (empowerment of women at home, in families and communities and improvement of their social position) because it was not accepted. The values that impacted on what the teachers perceived as teachable or taboo were not always widely accepted social norms, but sometimes rooted in regional sociocultural, religious and traditional values. The situation in one remote area with girls and female teachers being discriminated against and excluded on various levels exemplifies the disparities between the regions – and the extent to which local sociocultural values and traditions can govern schools.

While in this case the values and norms shared by the local community were different from the majority of people living in Kenya (and as stated in the constitution), the case of sexuality and sexual orientation is an example of a widely shared social norm that is also anchored in state criminal law that forbids homosexual practices. As part of the strong heteronormative discourse and the criminalisation of diverse sexual orientations and practices, speaking, for example, about homosexuality is a taboo. Teaching comprehensively about sexuality and sexual orientation with a diversity focus therefore appears to be a no-go area.

HIV and Aids was singled out by a number of teachers as a health-related diversity issue that is not always easy to deal with. Due to the stigma attached to HIV and Aids, it is common that schools and teachers try to keep an HIV-positive status secret and not disclose it to other learners. While HIV infection is common among learners and teachers, teachers feel the need to protect infected learners by hiding their status. In that context, teachers spoke about the difficulty of meeting the health-related needs of these learners and, at the same time, avoiding different treatment and discrimination of learners who would suffer from any treatment that indicated that they were or are not part of the 'normal' group of learners. Handling HIV-infected learners in an inclusive way in the context of concealment was brought up as a challenge by the teachers. Another aspect of dealing with HIV, mental or physical health including ableism in school, concerned the challenge of teaching subjects that touch on sensitive topics, including reproductive health or genetics. In order not to make affected learners feel bad, discriminated against or stigmatised, teachers reflected on the contents, methods and ways of transmitting the subjects in class.

Teaching inclusive classes (with slow learners and learners with mental disorders together with everyone else) poses a challenge in overcrowded classes with only one teacher. While special attention and efforts are necessary to assist the relevant learners, the teachers should also speak to the class, develop empathy in

the other learners and prevent discriminatory and stigmatising behaviour. The problem of discrimination and stigmatisation was described as a problem of the society as a whole, such that parents would try to hide children with disabilities and not send them to school, and such that many people and officials try to avoid contact with people with disabilities. Schools' and teachers' responses to this situation differed widely. While some schools have created space for children with special needs, and teachers go to the homes of such children to encourage parents to send their children to school, other schools try to teach the children with special needs in the regular classes without specific arrangements for these learners. Teachers expressed feelings of excessive pressure in fulfilling of catering for learners with special needs in their large classes, together with their lack of expertise to diagnose specific (dis)abilities and cater for particular needs. They also felt the need to be sensitive towards learners with various health problems. Since not all schools had a strategy to deal with health-related diversities and (dis)abilities, the approaches to dealing with such challenges included getting help from an outside NGO, leaving out topics in subjects that could disturb affected learners, counselling individual learners, sensitising classes about discriminatory language and trying to develop empathy through talking to the whole class.

The disparity between learners from rich and poor backgrounds (with unequal conditions for learning and succeeding in the education system) emerged as a great concern to the teachers. They referred to the structural level which sees schools in marginalised areas working under extremely difficult situations compared to the middle-class urban schools and, on the institutional level, working with learners from very poor backgrounds – or with a mix of learners from different socio-economic backgrounds.

The day-to-day challenges arising from working with learners who live in economically desperate situations or who have to fend for themselves at a very young age are manifold. The teacher's job resembles that of a social worker who tries to create conditions

for the learners to sit in school and participate in the lessons. Hence, schools in disadvantaged areas are confronted with many obstacles before formal learning can take place. The basic needs of the children (including food, shelter and psychosocial support) have to be met before formal learning can take place – which in many cases cannot be ensured by the school or the teachers alone. Apart from financial support to individuals, school social work (or other resources to support the schools and the teachers who work in poverty-stricken areas) was not mentioned in the teachers' accounts. Instead, the teachers expressed their anger about corruption and nepotism channelling funds provided by the government to support families living in economic poverty to other places. Engaged teachers described the great need for listening, counselling, comforting and lifting up the spirit of learners from socio-economically unstable and marginalised positions. Practices meeting these needs included regular group counselling sessions with affected learners, fundraising activities, the initiation of feeding programmes, lobbying for the learners and supporting them outside school (e.g. by finding a shelter or a children's home) if they had no place to stay.

When looking at the category of socio-economic background in the context of diversity, it became obvious that the type of school and its location had a major impact on how this category plays itself out for the teachers. While in the common local schools, the set-up of learners was described as rather homogenous with regard to their families' economic situation (many families having problems providing the necessary school books, uniforms, etc. to the children), more affluent urban schools that cater for a variety of learners are confronted with challenges arising from their learners' different socio-economic backgrounds. The formation of groups among the learners according to social classes, mobbing, discriminatory language and exclusion based on affluence were reported as causing rifts in these schools and leading to demoralised individual or groups of learners. The teachers' responses to this kind of discrimination among learners

ranged from complete disregard to sensitising learners about the language they used, trying to develop empathy and prohibiting the use of certain terms. If the challenge of discrimination based on economic status was approached by a school, it was mainly done through group or individual counselling and motivational talks. In boarding schools, prefects are also used to report on any discrimination or conflict among the learners.

In summary, the experience of diversity in the context of education in Kenya emerging from the interviews were evident on the structural, institutional and individual levels. In the context of one national Kenyan education system with national exams and English and Kiswahili as languages of instruction, tremendous differences in the base conditions for educational success have become visible through the accounts of the teachers. Urban middle-class children are exposed to English in their daily lives, before it becomes the medium of instruction in school but children in rural areas have to learn in a language of which neither they nor their community have adequate command. Similarly, schools and teachers in middle-class settings can provide a conducive learning environment but schools in marginalised and poverty-stricken areas struggle to meet the children's basic needs in order to create the primary conditions for them to learn at all. Yet, all compete in the same system for educational success and career paths.

On an institutional level, the ethnic, health-related, cultural or socio-economic diversities that schools experience and are expected to address differ widely. The schools' task to fight discrimination and to foster national unity and cohesion is mostly approached through guidance and counselling and through external or internal motivational speakers who appeal to the learners to act morally and embrace one another. While some schools have worked out a strategy on how to deal with certain categories of diversity, most issues and challenges seem to be resolved ad hoc or be ignored. A comprehensive approach to diversity could not be found in any of the schools the research participants worked at. A register of voluntary revelations regarding any specifics about

the learners' identities in order to better understand potential instances of discrimination, exclusion or other challenges, was the only approach at the institutional level attempting to incorporate different diversity categories in one strategy.

On the level of individual teachers, approaches and practices to deal with social diversity and discrimination in the classroom were mainly influenced by the specific conditions in which their particular school operates. In very few instances did the teachers refer to a policy or strategy that the school provided to deal with the diversities (health-related, cultural, ethnic, religious, etc.) or discriminatory behaviour of learners (offending speech, exclusionary practices etc.). Hence, teachers are asked to find a way of dealing with diversity when it emerges as an issue that requires a response.

Teachers reported they had been prepared in workshops or during their studies to deal with some specific challenges, like HIV-positive learners, but that they lacked competence in other fields completely – like diagnosing the special needs of children, for instance.

The teachers' practices can hardly be considered as pro-actively sensitising about diversity or general pedagogical concepts to embrace diversity in the school yet they all faced challenges with regard to various diversity-related issues and reacted to the specific cases in their capacity as teachers. What stands out as remarkable on the individual level in all the teachers' reports is first, that the research participants – despite some extremely difficult and desperate school contexts and learners' situations – maintain a very high work ethic and take on tasks and responsibilities that reach far beyond the role of a conventional teacher in order to meet the needs of their diverse learners as best as possible.

Second, in face of these challenges, it is noteworthy that the research participants demonstrated a reflexive, partly critical, attitude and consciousness with regard to various aspects of diversity. They all went through the Kenyan education system themselves and experienced discrimination and violence as consequences of socially constructed differentiations. Regardless

of these experiences, they uphold an unflinching belief in humanity, in the common ground humans share despite their differences and in the possibility of change – which struck me as extraordinary. This not only reveals their strong (teacher) personalities, but also reveals perspectives that do not buy into (or, at least doubt) the logic of globalised and exploitative capitalistic notions of competition and progress.

CHAPTER SIX

A Grounded Theory of Diversity in Kenyan School Contexts

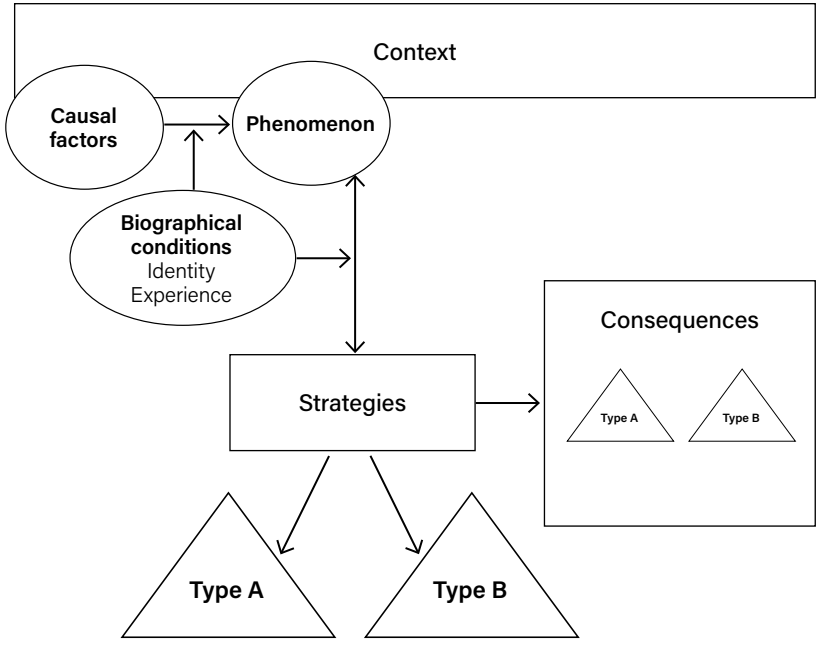
6

Based on the diversity categories that emerged from the teachers' biographies and professional experiences, the next level of analysis and theory development includes the integration and discussion of these findings following the coding paradigm as an organising scheme (see Figure 9) suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998). It distinguishes between the (a) general context, (b) causal factors, (c) intervening conditions, (d) action/interactional strategies and (e) the consequences (Babchuk 1996; Charmaz 2006; Mey & Mruck 2011: 40; Strauss & Corbin 1998).

Referring to Vertovec's (2014) conceptual distinction between configurations, representations and encounters of diversity, the *context* in this organising scheme refers to the configurations of diversity and hence, its structural conditions. For this case, the context includes the regional setting (i.e. Kenya with its history of colonialism and struggle against oppression and domination) and Kenyan formal schools as sites of the study.

The *causal factors* delineate the representations of diversity (i.e. the social concepts and categories, hegemonic narratives and discourses that stem from the power relations in society); they

Figure 9: Organising scheme for the study of diversity in education in Kenyan school contexts (adapted from Strauss & Corbin 1998)



explain the phenomenon in the given context. They are derived from the data as the most relevant categories that contributed to the way in which diversity in Kenyan school contexts was experienced and perceived by the teachers. They also provide an understanding of the demarcations and boundaries of the teachers' strategies and practices to deal with the phenomenon.

The most relevant *intervening conditions* that affected the strategies of the teachers when responding to the phenomenon were conceptualised as the identities of the teachers in terms of their own biographies and experiences with diversity. Together with the teachers' professional practices and strategies, the lived experiences of the teachers draw attention to the third component, the *encounters* of diversity (i.e. human interactions and relationships).

Looking through the lens of critical pedagogy and its vision of social justice, I distinguish between two types of strategies or professional practices that respond to the phenomenon: Type A comprises strategies that perpetuate the status quo or manifest differences and inequality, and Type B comprises strategies that lead to social justice and are more inclusive. These feed into the *consequences*. Thus, this study aims to contribute knowledge about strategies (teachers' professional practices regarding diversity in education in the Kenyan context) that can address the causal factors (the drivers of social inequality).

The *consequences* refer to the anticipated or actual outcomes of the actions/interactions; they highlight the teachers' practices concerning the phenomenon, including communications, conflicts and relations resulting from them.

The chapter is laid out as follows: first, the central phenomenon of imposed hierarchisation catalysed from the teachers' accounts is explained and discussed. Then, the specific context, followed by discussion of the causal factors and the ways in which they contribute to the phenomenon are in focus. After that, the intervening conditions (i.e. the teachers' biographical experiences and identities and the ways in which these affect the phenomenon) are discussed. Last, strategies to deal with diversity are interrogated in context of the consequences – in particular, which might contribute to hierarchisation and inequalities, and which could lead to de-hierarchisation, more inclusive structures and equality.

By dividing the strategies and practices into those leading to more hierarchisation (or sustaining the status quo) and those leading to less hierarchisation, I aim to extract diversity education approaches that could attenuate hierarchies and lead to more social cohesion, nondiscrimination and equality, as envisaged by the Kenyan Basic Education Act (Republic of Kenya 2013, see Chapter 3).

An overview of the new knowledge gained and theoretical contribution of this study concludes the chapter.

Diversity as imposed hierarchisation

Diversity in the Kenyan school context can be described as a matter of imposed hierarchisation. Social hierarchies are not experienced as distinct and effective through the teachers themselves, but through a larger social order and categorisation system that the teachers experience as imposed on them by society and the way in which schooling is organised. Diversity in the context of hierarchisation therefore, implies practices of discrimination, stereotyping, exclusion, taboos and stigma along these vertically organised lines of difference.

The teachers revealed high levels of consciousness of the fact that particular features of identities would generally delimit or extend the opportunities awarded to individuals in the Kenyan nation state and consequently confer positionalities in the social hierarchy. Hence, the hierarchisation connected to social diversity was generally perceived and experienced as a problem, while diversity itself and the fact that Kenyan society is constitutionally intended to be pluralistic (with regard to ethnicity, culture, religion, etc.) raised questions (e.g. concerning teaching and institutional policies) but was not perceived as problematic per se.

It is remarkable that the teachers' perceptions were grounded in what Melissa Steyn (2014) calls 'critical diversity literacy' – recognising the unequal symbolic and material value of different social positions, and the role of power in constructing differences that make a difference in a particular society. The un-essentialising notion of diversity revealed by the teachers opened a critical perspective into the ways in which differences are used to create boundaries and assign positions in the hierarchical society.

This largely confirms Faist's (2014) conceptualisation of hierarchisation: the social mechanisms that link an initial condition (in this case, social diversity) to the (re)production of social inequalities (see Chapter 2). Faist refers to the symbolic borders and social differentiations that serve as basis for legitimising unequal treatment and distribution of power in the face of

multiple differences (i.e. diversity). In this sense, hierarchisation is immensely problematic with regard to social justice and human rights concerns.

More generally, hierarchies can be regarded as systems – especially in a society or organisation in which people, ideas, or values are organised into different levels of importance from highest to lowest.[17] These ordering systems can be based on formal categorisations (e.g. citizenship status) that regulate access to specific state services like employment, health, education and housing and thereby exclude some categories of people from particular services (and prefer others). In a society marked by severe social inequalities, as in Kenya, defining groups in need of special state support and protection can be a tool to foster social equality and justice – although such formal differentiation and definition of groups can still have problematic effects and create new injustices. Despite the dismantling of old hierarchies and the strong move for equality and equal rights in many contemporary societies, hierarchies have not disappeared (Angle et al. 2017). Stephen Angle et al. (2017) argue that clear thinking about hierarchies and equality is needed in order to distinguish between hierarchies that serve democracy and equality (e.g. certain bureaucratic hierarchies in constitutional institutions, and the power of elected decision-makers or professionals based on domain-specific expertise) and those that are reduced to domination and power over others. In this argument, inequalities and status differences can be acceptable provided they allow for change over time (e.g. do not lead to unjustified accumulation and passing on of power) and are embedded in relationships of mutual concern and reciprocity (Angle et al. 2017).

This uncritical notion of social hierarchies (based on formal categorisations by state law and the belief in expertism and meritocracy) veils and manifests the interests of the powerful and thus, is not in the centre of interest of a critical paradigm. Rather, processes of hierarchisation based on socially constructed differences need to be questioned with regard to the underlying values that define the centres and margins of a society. Therefore, the

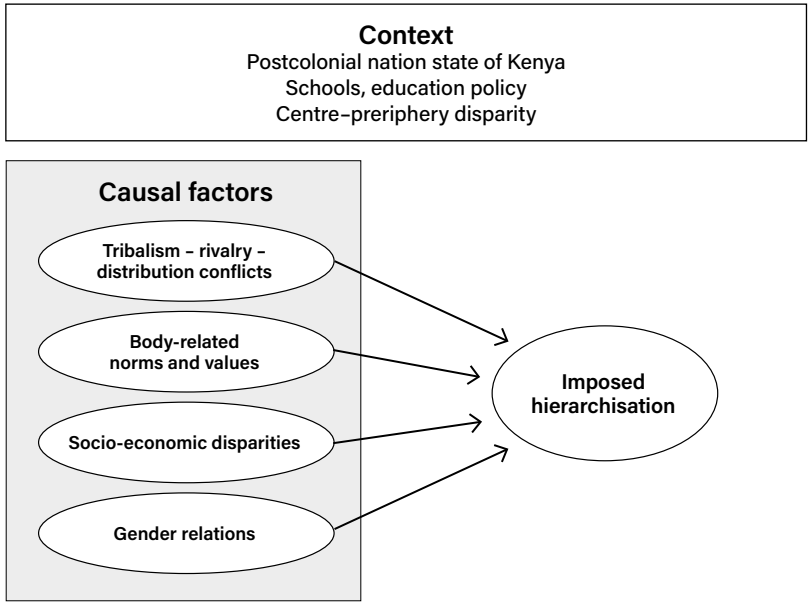
discussion in this section will not focus on philosophical questions about legitimate hierarchies and their usefulness in democratic societies to foster equality. The phenomenon of hierarchisation to be explained for the Kenyan school context looks at the symbolic borders and diversities that hold consequences for individuals and groups with regard to their educational success and the (re) production of social inequality. In order to reflect on the critical constructivist framing of this study and focus on spaces for action (teaching practices) and change, the central phenomenon of hierarchisation (as opposed to hierarchies) directs attention to the social mechanisms of constructing, reproducing, minimising and equalising hierarchised ordering systems. At school level, hierarchies grade specific abilities, languages and sociocultural backgrounds, subject fields, ways of thinking, knowing, teaching and testing as useful and therefore high – and others as useless and therefore low. In the next section, the observed phenomenon of this study is explained in its specificity by looking at the causal factors identified as drivers of experienced imposed hierarchisation.

Devaluation of local knowledges and resources

The specific site and context for this study, namely schools in postcolonial Kenya with their structural and geographical conditions, are central to this section. Figure 10 illustrates the configurations (context) and representations (causal factors) of the phenomenon of imposed hierarchisation.

The major structural factor affecting the Kenyan schools in terms of the configurations of diversity is the centre-periphery disparity. This disparity comprises the different localities and positionalities of schools in urban (centre) and rural (periphery) areas. The centre-periphery model, which was originally used as a metaphor in the fields of political geography and development theory (Galtung 1972; Selwyn 1979), has been applied to other disciplines to describe the structural relationship between the advanced or industrialised centre and the less developed periphery. The disparity between schools in urban and rural settings,

Figure 10: Imposed hierarchisation: Context and causal factors



central or marginalised regions, emerged from the data as a key factor in creating various hierarchies that influence educational opportunities in the centralised Kenyan education system. As also indicated by, for example, Unesco's World Inequality Database on Education[18] (see Chapter 3), vast disparities exist between rural and urban areas concerning access to, and success in, education in Kenya. The teachers' perspective on schooling in rural or peripheral regions highlighted that the discrepancy between local resources (in terms of languages, beliefs and knowledges) and the official curriculum and languages of instruction led to a situation where the learners – and partly the teachers themselves – could barely connect to the teaching content and often rejected it completely. When excluding the resources and values that people possessed and that were grounded in their specific contexts, the teachers experienced strong feelings of nonacceptance – they performed the role of 'the centre', declaring the values, knowledge and practices of the 'periphery' worthless and replacing them

with other languages, content and teaching methods considered valuable and useful. Thus, the hierarchisation of different types of knowledge and education became a diversity issue that the teachers experienced as a conflict – particularly because they did not agree with some of the cultural and religious practices of the communities in which they were working; but at the same time, they realised that the centres of knowledge and education they represented would serve little useful purpose for those learners and local people. This speaks to what Catherine Odora Hoppers (2000) explored with regard to knowledge production and scholarship in global North–South contexts, and Brigit Brock-Utne (2002) with regard to education and languages of instruction, asking: Whose knowledge? Whose education? In a broader sense, these issues are linked to questions of power concerning the struggle for recognition of multiple epistemologies and knowledges, and for decolonising education (Hall & Tandon 2017; Odora Hoppers & Richards 2012). From the data produced in this study, the predefined hierarchisation of knowledge, languages, cultural values, and so forth, became obvious in the discrepancy between the centre (where the knowledge, languages of instruction and the cultural values transmitted through formal education seemed appropriate) and the periphery (where, in many ways, this was not the case). This is why the teachers working in peripheral regions of Kenya experienced the structural relationship between the standard model of formal education they represented and the local knowledge and sociocultural practices as an imposed social hierarchisation. One of the main factors the teachers highlighted to account for the exclusion of learners in marginalised areas from equal opportunities to compete in the formal education system was the language of instruction used in formal education and assessment.

The teachers' accounts indicate the ways in which colonial continuities still exist. The inherited models of othering and 'civilising' people are being perpetuated by constructing language and knowledge as universal and standard to people whose lived experiences, languages, beliefs and practices appear as culturally or

racially inferior (Alexander 2000). In current literature on diversity in education or diversity education concepts, this centre-periphery aspect has not been in focus. One reason might be that in Kenya (as in many African states), geographic conditions including the provision of infrastructure are disparate and, consequently, living conditions differ widely; this is not the case to such extremes in Europe. Another reason could be that this structural dimension of power relations can't be counteracted or substantially transformed by individual schools or the teachers themselves. Rather, it calls for policymakers to change educational frameworks towards decentralised, multiple systems in terms of curricula, languages of instruction and schooling. However, the data analysed in this study reveal a number of structures and practices that render the centre-periphery disparity influential on education in the Kenyan nation state, on teachers' professional practices and on the need to manage a vast disparity in the conditions under which formal education takes place.

The drivers of fragmentation and inequality

The following specific drivers or causal factors that explain how hierarchisation is enacted, perpetuated and reproduced, explain the representations of diversity in the Kenyan school context:

- tribalism as political exploitation and instrumentalisation of ethnicity connected to rivalries and conflicts centred on the distribution of power (political, economic, cultural) and resources;
- body-related norms and values (including a binary gender concept and heteronormativity as social and institutionalised drivers of discrimination with regard to diverse sexual orientations and gender identities) as well as health-related issues (including ableism and HIV/Aids);
- socio-economic disparities including extreme ends of affluence and poverty; and
- gender relations that include specific sociocultural roles, divisions of labour and stereotypes.

These aspects were identified as factors that explain why diversity in Kenyan schools was experienced as an imposed social hierarchisation that teachers are confronted with, and have to respond to, in their professional practice. In the following sub-sections, anchoring examples from the data are discussed in relation to the literature in order to explain the phenomenon further.

Tribalism

The prevalence of tribalism as the political instrumentalisation of ethnic diversity in Kenya's sociopolitical context was portrayed in Chapter 3. Since colonial times, divide-and-rule practices with their separating, essentialising and othering strategies have been geared towards creating rivalries and establishing fixed social hierarchies in former colonies. Teachers, particularly in mixed schools, referred to these boundaries, rivalries and hierarchies based on ethnic group affiliation as infusing social relations into schools – leading to perception and experience of ethnic diversity as an imposed hierarchisation. The post-election violence of 2007/2008 (when conflict broke out openly along ethnic lines) left many teachers traumatised and conscious of the danger that this could happen again, even a decade later. The teachers referred to some positive effects of ethnic diversity, and also highlighted the fact that ethnic diversity in Kenya couldn't be separated from tribalism and its inherent social hierarchisation. With reference to studying diversity from the angles of redistribution on one hand and recognition on the other (Fraser 2009), tribalism shows both variations. The open conflict between powerful ethnic groups that are large in number tends to focus on distributional and political power issues; the smaller ethnic groups tend to struggle for recognition of their identity. The teachers highlighted their positionality within experienced boundaries in the ethnicised social hierarchy that they felt were imposed on them by the country's elite.

Ethnicity and race play a major role in the international literature on diversity (in) education because racism and ethnocentrism are powerful ideological systems, reproduced by dominant discourses

around the world (Hauenschild et al. 2013; Ladson-Billings 2014; Leiprecht & Lutz 2015; Nderitu 2018a; Phoenix 2008). To understand tribalism as a specific peculiarity of the social category, race, and as a major causal factor in social hierarchisation in the Kenyan context, the postcolonial lens is appropriate to interrogate the roots of these harmful and discriminatory practices. For the teachers, tribalism emerged as a powerful causal factor for experiencing ethnic diversity as an imposed social hierarchisation in schools. In the light of the continuing threat of new violent conflicts along ethnic lines, tribalism and ethnic diversity are of major concern in the current educational debate with regard to diversity and social cohesion in Kenya (Nderitu 2018a).

Body-related norms and values

Another causal factor explaining how diversity in Kenyan schools is perceived and experienced by teachers as imposed social hierarchisation, concerns body-related norms and values. Examples include ability-disability, heterosexuality-homosexuality as well as HIV and Aids (as a chronic disease with specific sexual connotations). The teachers reflected on the implicit and underlying norms and values of the curriculum and the teaching methods, which neither sufficiently differentiate between fast and slow learners, nor cater for learners with disabilities. In often overcrowded classrooms, teachers cater for those who fit the perceived norm while observing the failure of those who do not. This socially imposed hierarchisation is transmitted mainly through the curriculum, non-accommodating institutional frameworks and inadequate teaching resources and methods. Since teachers' resources to provide extra support to learners with special needs are extremely limited, their ability to push towards inclusive teaching is too (Chege & Nekesa 2018; Rushahu 2017). This means that even if their individual pedagogical practice as teachers is not discriminatory, the organisational structures are and the teachers – often consciously yet unwillingly – end up reproducing these structures (Hormel & Scherr 2005). Another dimension

that relates to learners with special needs concerns cultural beliefs and stigma, which the teachers experienced as a main obstacle for equal participation in school. Physically disabled children are often hidden in the home so teachers experience challenges in finding ways to accommodate learners with disabilities in the schools and overcoming stigma in the communities.

Social stigma and related taboos were similarly identified as major causal factors leading to experiences of imposed hierarchisation concerning HIV and Aids and homosexuality. Much has been written and researched with regard to the stigma attached to HIV and Aids, particularly in many African societies (Holzemer et al. 2007; Mbonu et al. 2009). The strong social taboo surrounding homosexuality in Kenya, which reveals the powerful hegemonic discourse that produces heteronormativity, was discussed in Chapter 2. From the teachers' perceptions and experiences, the status of HIV-positive learners and teachers needs to be hidden and not talked about in order to protect infected persons from stigmatisation, exclusion and even aggression and violence. Similarly, teaching comprehensive sexuality education in a critical pedagogy framework that foregrounds social justice and human rights would, in the teachers' views, literally be dangerous due to the powerful cultural and religious beliefs in the communities. The socioculturally grounded value hierarchy concerning the body and sexuality norms revealed strict boundaries for the teachers to embrace diversity. Taboos (as the most powerful tool to protect these hegemonic discourses and thus, the hierarchy) prohibit any speaking about sexual orientation outside heterosexuality (Douglas 2002). However, some examples in the data show that, in some instances, schools have started accommodating learners with special needs and have found ways to be open about HIV and Aids, even under difficult conditions.

In the literature on diversity (in) education in non-African contexts, health and disability-related factors play a central role – mainly with a focus on the question of including learners with special needs. Social stigma as experience of prejudice also plays a role with regard to various diversity phenomena. Yet, the strong

cultural beliefs and norms expressed by the teachers in this study require special attention to the powerful discourses and taboos that mark the boundaries of speakable and non-speakable diversity matters in the Kenyan contexts – as in other African contexts – when thinking about diversity in education (Kalichman & Simbayi 2004; Rushahu 2017).

Socio-economic disparities

The causal factor of socio-economic disparities links to the aforementioned centre-periphery aspect, and also reveals some distinct features that explain the phenomenon of imposed hierarchisation further. Depending on the setting of the school, the teachers experienced poverty and related social factors as a huge challenge – in some cases, as the dominant challenge with regard to diversity or disparities when teaching. In socio-economically heterogeneous schools, hierarchisation between those learners whose families were able to meet school-related costs and those who were not was reflected by, for example, attendance, the availability of school books and other resources and the ability to concentrate on learning. Based on the inability of the schools – through the government or other means – to cater for the basic needs of learners from poor backgrounds, orphans or homeless children, the social hierarchy becomes apparent in almost every aspect of school life.

In a homogeneously marginalised and disadvantaged set-up, the teachers reported that poverty and the often-desperate living conditions of the learners and their families almost completely dominated other social categories of difference. In this sense, the data produced in the study confirm what is highlighted by intersectional analysts – that not all categories of social inequality are activated in every context. Rather, structural, institutional and situational factors affect the strengths and the impact of each category of difference (Gross et al. 2016). Further, other intersecting lines of difference like gender or disability lead to further differentiation in the social hierarchy at its bottom end.

From a critical pedagogy perspective, it becomes obvious that teachers in socio-economically heterogeneous or poor settings are particularly confronted with the problem of being inescapably involved in the reproduction of social inequalities. In that way, they become unwilling agents of what they experience as imposed social hierarchy.

Existing literature on socio-economic diversity and discrimination in education in European states with social welfare systems often focuses on the reproduction of class and status differences (Amoroso et al. 2010; Haan & Elbers 2004). But the severe socio-economic disparities and profoundness of marginalisation in the Kenyan context (and other postcolonial African states) seems to require a different perspective on socio-economic disparities. On one hand, social support or social security structures are largely lacking – which deepens the impact on reproduction and enforcement of social inequality. On the other hand, the geographical and structural side of socio-economic disparities has to be taken into account in terms of the history of colonisation with its devastating regime of social categorisations, land entitlements, invention of the nation state and divide-and-rule practices.

Gender relations

Unequal gender relations between male and female teachers, and discriminatory treatment of girls, emerged as another causal factor in schools explaining the phenomenon of imposed hierarchisation.[19] In diversity and intersectional analysis, gender – often together with additional lines of difference – is a central category for the analysis of differentiation practices that lead to discrimination and inequality (Chege & Arnot 2012; Crenshaw 1994; Walgenbach 2017). In the Kenyan school context, the gender dimension of diversity was surpassed in significance by ethnic and socio-economic diversity for many of the teachers who affirmed that the strong focus on girl-children in education over past decades had improved the general situation towards gender

equality. However, the teachers' experiences of hierarchy based on gender relations could be either of the strong or the hidden variety, depending on the particular institutional cultures of the schools in which they were employed. The female teachers' experiences included instances where they felt voiceless and with no authority over men in situations where they were superior (e.g. as heads of departments but ignored by male colleagues). They also experienced discrimination by men casting aspersions on them openly, based on their being female.

In schools located in remote areas where the categories of gender, religion and cultural beliefs intersected to discriminate girls in and out of school, the hierarchisation was apparent in every aspect of school life. The strong patriarchal organisation of life outside the schools affected teaching in many ways because girls were not allowed to participate in many school activities like physical education. Teachers who tried to change some of these practices and empower the girls in small ways were physically threatened and, ultimately, had to accept the preferential treatment given to the boys in every aspect of schooling that the community required of them. In a less severe way, male teachers shared that in their (middle-class, urban) schools, gender relations were equal between the male and the female teachers. However, they confirmed that at home, things had not changed and that women have to serve their husbands, even if they hold better positions in their professional lives.

Some of these examples are extreme and can certainly not be generalised for the whole of Kenya. However, the purpose of giving examples from the data is to provide insights into the ways in which patriarchy remains dominant as an oppressive system in parts of Kenyan society – and how teachers are affected by it. This is confirmed by Unesco's/WIDE statistical results,[20] which highlight that gender equality with regard to education has been almost achieved when looking at the general situation in Kenya. But, when adding other social categories like religion and region, the outcomes are completely different – showing vast gender

inequalities in some regions (see Chapter 2). The data produced in this study confirm these disparities and highlight the usefulness of intersectional analyses, which show that the significance of the gender category depended on other lines of difference like religion, culture, socio-economic status and region.

Conclusion

In an attempt to reduce complexity concerning the drivers or causal factors that explain the phenomenon of imposed hierarchisation, only the most prominent factors affecting the teachers in various realms of their profession and roles as teachers were included. While the centre-periphery disparity mainly looks at structural inequalities that relate to the unequal starting conditions for formal schooling (resulting mainly from education policy and curriculum), gender relations including the non-acceptance of inter- and transgender identities are largely effective through the immediate social setting around the school with cultural, religious, socio-economic and other aspects factoring in. The teaching of learners with disabilities or HIV and Aids mainly affects the teachers' classroom experience and the school organisation; the challenge of social stigma and taboos comes from the wider society. Depending on the location of the school, tribalism and socio-economic disparities (as part of the wider struggle for recognition and redistribution in Kenya) dominated some teachers' experience concerning diversity in schools.

Generally, the insights from this study confirm the need voiced by critical pedagogy and critical diversity, to interrogate schools in their relation to the wider social dynamics (Kincheloe 2004). Before the consequences of teachers' actions and interactions with regard to the phenomenon are discussed, the next section first highlights the intervening conditions that influence the ways in which diversity is perceived and experienced, and in which the strategies and professional practices are developed.

The teachers' own experiences with stigmatisation, othering and discrimination as intervening conditions

Thank God of my experience when I was poor, at least I try. (3:71)

Speaking about some of his learners from very poor backgrounds, this teacher referred to his own experience of being raised in a poor family – always dependent on support from various sources to continue with school. As a teacher now, he is empathetic with learners who struggle to keep up with their schoolwork because of their difficult living conditions, and he helps them where he can.

What this teacher expresses (and similarly, how other research participants referred to their own biographies) links to what Palmer (2017) conceptualises as the biography and the profession coming together in the teacher's identity. With reference to the coding paradigm suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2014), the intervening conditions impacted on the ways in which interviewees made meaning of the phenomenon and how they responded to it in their actions/interactions – as well as on how the drivers affect the phenomenon itself. Hence, the data produced in this study include substantial information about the teachers' lives and their experiences of diversity while growing up and becoming teachers. From these experiences, three major lines of difference or social categories emerged as significant in shaping the research participants' identities: ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background (see Chapter 4). However, specific intersections of these three main categories made for a wide range of different experiences. It must be considered that this particular group of research participants had been especially successful when pursuing their education, showing high levels of resilience, determination and persistence in order to reach the point of postgraduate education where they were during the time of the interviews.

The narratives include various instances where research participants managed to extend the boundaries of their social identities, and challenged the roles and social positionalities attributed to them. This became apparent in the female research

participants' fight for secondary education, questioning the tradition of endowing the boys preference over the girls. Their individual resistance to symbolic boundaries and allocated gendered identities defined by oppressive patriarchal structures came at a time of general social and political movements towards gender equality in Kenya. However, the individual narratives of the female teachers across different ethnic communities and contexts revealed numerous sociocultural practices and everyday interactions that manifested their low social position and the strong hierarchisation within the category gender that they had encountered in their immediate family context from a very young age. These included experiences of gender-based violence, stereotyping, exclusion, intimidation and subordination. Of the various factors that led to questioning and challenging of stereotypes and discrimination that the female research participants were faced with, and which affected their education, two aspects need to be highlighted. First, their intrinsic zeal for education (including their good and sometimes outstanding academic performance in school), which encouraged them to stand up against their families' expectation of early marriage after primary school – even leaving parents to fend for themselves and fight for their schooling on their own. Second, the exposure to learners and teachers from various sociocultural and ethnic backgrounds in secondary school, which opened up perspectives of other gendered identities and hierarchies and raised questions about what had previously appeared as normal. These learning aspects of multi-perspectivity and self-reflexivity refer to what is discussed in the literature as intercultural or diversity competencies (Barrett 2011; Walgenbach 2017).

Ethnic identity emerged as a relevant factor in all the teachers' biographies, holding a range of different positive and negative experiences. The positive ones included the sense of belonging, the ability to foster good relationships with people from different ethnic communities and the solidarity among the members of one's own ethnic community. The personal advantage of being exposed to ethnically mixed environments was highlighted in all of the interviews. This included learning to adapt to different

habits and to develop empathy, the discovery of commonalities and development of friendships, a better understanding of others' points of view, experiencing new and reflecting on own ways of doing things. The positive experiences and benefits that emerged from the data resonate with concepts of learning particular attitudes, cognitive and behavioural skills that are commonly referred to as intercultural or diversity competence (e.g. Barrett 2011; Walgenbach 2017).

The positive experiences were accompanied by various negative experiences including discrimination, stereotyping, exclusion, stigmatisation, violence and other mechanisms to assign ethnic identities particular positionalities and create or perpetuate hierarchies between different ethnic groups. The relational positionalities and othering practices manifested clearly in the ways in which some teachers explained their social positions. One teacher, who belonged to an ethnic group commonly understood to be one of the most powerful in the Kenyan national context, explained that he belongs to a sub-group of that group, as defined by region, cultural habits, accent and so forth. As a member of this lower sub-group, the discrimination and exclusion he experienced growing up and in going to university emanated mainly from members of his own main group who belonged to higher ranked or more powerful sub-groups. These hierarchical ordering systems that can be grasped with the theoretical concept of othering (which has served to interrogate colonial relations in today's postcolonial societies) serve to create differences that legitimise and perpetuate oppressive systems of power (Riegel 2016: 52). This also links to what Steyn (2014: 382) calls the 'unequal symbolic and material value of different locations' and the recognition that social spaces include great disparities, inconsistencies and contradictions. Not all people who are regarded as holding a particular social position, such as belonging to a powerful ethnic group, benefit the same from the privileges awarded to that group (Steyn 2014). Particularly so, given that the socially constructed and ascribed ethnic identity does not necessarily match with the one that an individual would choose themselves (Nyairo 2015). In all the

narrations, common or different language appeared as a powerful tool to sow divisions, exclusion and mistrust between ethnic groups – or to foster closeness and bonding between members of the own group.

The third relevant factor with regard to experiences of discrimination, othering, stigmatisation and social hierarchisation refers to socio-economic background, more specifically to poverty and low social status. Especially in socio-economically mixed environments and schools, research participants who grew up in poor families or rural areas had a range of experiences where they were stigmatised, discriminated against and excluded, even by their teachers. Besides the family income and poor living conditions, growing up as an orphan or being raised by a single mother were reasons to be severely stigmatised and looked down upon by peers.

In summary, all the biographical narrations included experiences of discrimination, exclusion, stigmatisation or stereotyping based on gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background to greater or lesser extents. These negative experiences and the suffering they caused link to the teachers' professional biographies. Explicitly or implicitly, the teachers explained how these experiences sensitised them to recognise issues of discrimination and the construction of hierarchies in their professional teaching practice, and how they became their main sources of motivation for intervening and supporting similarly affected learners. Despite discriminatory practices and stereotypes intended to discourage individuals because of their gendered or ethnicised identities, the research participants did not give up. The evidence that proved the social hierarchisation wrong has its roots in the biographies and lived experiences of the research participants. The findings suggest that the experience helped facilitate an understanding of the social dimension and mechanisms of boundary-making and hierarchisation in general. On the other hand, all interview participants reported on their positive diversity experiences when growing up and the benefits in terms of social skills, widening their perspectives and ability to adapt.

The research participants' perceptions of diversity revealed a mainly positive, non-essentialising and power critical notion that presumably developed from their own experiences of discrimination and social hierarchisation that they had successfully challenged. They also reflected critically on the ways in which lines of difference are used in Kenyan society to create divisions and social hierarchies that manifest as social inequality and marginalisation for specific groups. Returning to Palmer (2017), who points to the importance of biographical experiences and identities of teachers, this section highlighted those diversity-related experiences that the teachers described as significant in their own lives. Hence, the research participants' experiences with regard to diversity are found to be intervening conditions that affect the way in which professional teachers in schools perceive and experience diversity and the consequent professional practices and strategies they develop.

Teachers' strategies and their consequences

The professional practices and strategies the teachers employed to respond to the imposed hierarchisation that they experienced relating to various diversity aspects in their schools (as described in Chapter 5) were limited by structural, institutional and sociocultural factors. On a structural level, the national school and examination system (that is not responsive to the vast centre-periphery disparity or socio-economic differences) sets boundaries for teachers' strategies because all learners compete in the same education system despite their different preconditions for success. On an institutional level, boundaries arise mainly from the fact that most schools are under-resourced and there are few if any provisions made for, for example, learners from poor families or learners with disabilities. Sociocultural boundaries, which are more prevalent in some regions and schools than in others, derive from norms and taboos that guard changes and power shifts in specific areas. These general delimitations affect the schools and teachers in different ways depending on the location and configuration of

the school. However, since they define the space for the teachers' strategies and professional practices towards diversity issues in a more general sense, they need to be taken into consideration in this section when looking at the teachers' strategies and presumed consequences thereof.

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, I distinguish between strategies presumably leading to more hierarchisation and social inequality and maintaining the status quo (Type A strategies) and those presumably leading to de-hierarchisation and social justice (Type B strategies). To do this, both types of strategy will be discussed in the context of critical pedagogy, postcolonialism and critical diversity. Hence, Type A strategies take place within the abovementioned boundaries of imposed hierarchisation with its causal factors on the different levels, and Type B strategies challenge the status quo and push boundaries towards change and social equality. However, what became apparent in all the interviews was that the teachers' responses to challenges connected to diversity were often ad hoc remedial measures for learners who experienced severe distress. Although these short-term and ad hoc responses surfaced as the main category of professional diversity practice for some teachers (see Chapter 5), they are not part of the discussion at this point. This is because the presumed long-term social effects of these practices are regarded as marginal and not strategic in the sense of the teachers making decisions between a range of different possible actions. Yet, the attitude to help and feel responsible for the well-being of the learners outside the 40-minute lesson, which became apparent in all the teachers' accounts to a greater or lesser degree, is remarkable in itself, given the – sometimes extreme – challenges the teachers experience in their professional practice on a daily basis. The following discussion on the teachers' strategies and the perceived consequences thereof focuses on practices responding to diversity in terms of hierarchisation, discrimination, othering and exclusion in the schools and classrooms.

The purpose of distinguishing between Type A and Type B strategies is not to judge the teachers' competencies to handle

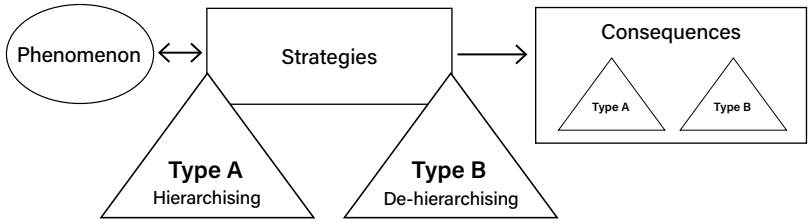
diversity. It has become obvious that there is a huge disparity between the different schools concerning opportunities for pushing boundaries towards social equality, rooted in the different configurations and settings of the particular school. The data also revealed that the teachers who participated in the study are overburdened with requirements that go far beyond the classical role of a teacher. Hence, the space for developing strategies and professional practices that potentially push for social justice is very limited for individual teachers. Often, one teacher would practise Type A and Type B strategies concurrently by responding to specific aspects of diversity in different ways. Yet, by differentiating between Type A and Type B strategies, I aim to find a specific angle for interrogating the encounters of diversity (Vertovec 2014) in Kenyan schools and to highlight the conflicting space for teachers' professional practices. In doing so, I aim to extract some theoretically grounded recommendations as to how teacher education in Kenya can prepare teachers to respond to diversity and deal with the phenomenon of imposed hierarchisation they are likely to experience in their professional practice.

Figure 11 visualises the main strategies that emerged from the teachers' interviews, and which will be discussed using examples from the data in the section below.

Ignoring/considering different backgrounds

The teachers' awareness of the socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, religious, and so forth, backgrounds of the learners transpired as the starting point for interventions and professional practices with regard to diversity that they experienced as imposed hierarchisation. An example of the Type A strategy to ignore the backgrounds of learners was shared by Dora, who taught learners who had fled from war-ridden Sudan. These students' at times tumultuous and, from the teachers' perspectives, insubordinate and seemingly unsocial behaviour would occasionally disrupt lessons until the learners themselves requested to be heard. The

Figure 11: Teachers' strategies responding to diversity as imposed hierarchisation



1. Ignoring the backgrounds of the learners.
2. Stigmatising and punishing learners e.g. for speaking their home language in school.
3. Working with fast learners only, ignoring the rest; leaving out specific curriculum topics altogether.
4. Treating learners differently based on specific group constructions; speaking mother tongue to learners in mixed settings.
5. Resignation: accept taboos; exclude girls from various activities if requested by community.
6. Avoid responding to conflicts and their causes.

1. Considering and actively accommodating different backgrounds.
2. Taking other perspectives into account, avoiding stigmatisation.
3. Trying inclusive practices (language, abilites, teaching strategies).
4. Sensitising learners and colleagues about discriminatory practices.
5. Agency/advocacy: utilising the teacher's position to voice injustices and lobby for the marginalised.
6. Addressing conflicts and problems; provoking discussions with the learners to develop their critical thinking skills.

teacher then allowed them to talk in class about their traumatising experiences, which was when she realised the causes of some of their behaviour. Ignoring that background had marginalised the learners in the lessons, which were designed for middle-class Kenyan learners.

Examples of Type B strategies, namely actively accommodating and welcoming learners with different backgrounds, emerged, for instance, in the context of socio-economic and ethnic diversity as well as disability. To understand the background of the learners in his class, Gerald established weekly group counselling sessions, open to all learners in the class, in order to foster exchange on issues bothering the learners outside school. In doing so, he learnt about what they went through and, to encourage them, he shared his own story of the hardship he had to go through before he

became a teacher. These counselling sessions helped build close relationships with the learners and among the learners, and made everyone feel welcome, whatever their background. This humanising approach came at a cost, though, as the sad stories Gerald heard made him realise how little he could do to support the learners beyond listening to them. As a caring person, he also went to families' homes when he heard a child with disabilities had been hidden due to the stigma attached. He persuaded such parents to send the child to school where they had established classes for learners with special needs. Embracing learners with their different backgrounds and identities, and accommodating them in the school emerged as the most important prerequisite for this school, where the learners mostly suffered from poverty and its social ills. This teacher's attitude and de-hierarchising strategies changed the focus from academic achievement to accommodating learners from diverse backgrounds in the school and providing support to disadvantaged learners wherever possible. It can be presumed that this caring attitude – which was supported by an accommodating school culture in general – also helped to prevent discrimination and stigmatisation among the learners, which was not a significant issue in that school, according to the teacher.

As a more technical and institutional Type B approach, Harald's school established student records in which they encouraged each learner who entered the boarding school to detail their background in terms of ethnicity, religion, health and other specificities relevant to their identity and that might be used to stigmatise, discriminate or stereotype the learner. This record was available to the teachers and Harald confirmed that it helped them, especially in terms of preventing and identifying the causes of conflicts, exclusion and discrimination among the learners, as these would often break out along ethnic alignments, health-related stigma and different cultural practices. At the same time, the school's and teachers' strategies towards the learners aimed to decrease ethnic group consciousness and to create physical spaces for peace messages and dialogue. This included events

where motivational speakers were invited to talk about the value of embracing differences, about commonalities and humanness as opposed to tribalism, discrimination and exclusion.

This two-tier approach – registering the learners' identities in terms of different social categories on the one hand, and teaching commonalities and unity on the other – illustrates the area of conflict with which strategies addressing diversity issues are faced, that is, between reproducing and deconstructing social categorisations. It recalls the discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of group-centred versus deconstructionist perspectives on diversity (Cooper 2004; Riegel 2016). Record-keeping of each learner's identity promotes an essentialising view of social categories and symbolic boundaries together with specific prejudices, stereotypes and assignment of positionalities. With regard to the teachers, this is problematic as research has shown that teachers' expectations concerning academic success can be linked to specific social categories (e.g. Harlin et al. 2009). Moreover, this practice promotes a view of diversity that takes social categories as fixed constants and hence, perpetuates hierarchies and promotes othering (Riegel 2016). The rationale to introduce such a register emerged from the violent ethnic conflicts of 2007/2008 by which the school was badly affected, and it has proven to be a tool to prevent further conflict. The teachers' strategy to make social categorisations as irrelevant as possible for the learners can be read as an attempt to disrupt the cycle of constant reproduction of social categorisations. While the strategy of student record keeping cannot be regarded as a straightforward tool for de-hierarchisation and social justice, it can be regarded as a temporary means to raise awareness of powerful lines of difference among the teachers in order to recognise discriminatory, stigmatising or exclusionary practices among the learners as a basis for intervention. However, in times of rivalry and distorted power relations between different ethnic groups, the danger of misuse of information about social categorisations (e.g. ethnic group affiliation) by fellow students or by teachers, is real.

Stigmatising/changing perspectives

As discussed above, schools in the periphery are put under pressure by having to conform to national standards and curricula that ignore regional differences concerning language, culture, religion and socio-economic configurations. The diversity that teachers are confronted with emerges from the disparity between the policies and design of formal education and the communities in which these policies and designs do not fit. The language of instruction serves as an example of teachers' strategies responding to this type of experienced diversity.

To promote English in a remote school and stop the learners from speaking their local language during break-time, Beth practised what she had learned in other schools: a child caught speaking mother tongue on the school ground has to wear a sack labelled 'I am stupid' for the rest of the day. This Type A practice of stigmatising and othering learners for speaking their home language (and, in the process, devaluing that language while elevating English and Kiswahili as languages of education) is in line with national policies of postcolonial Kenya. However, Neville Alexander, who wrote extensively about language in education in postcolonial Africa, summarises the position of the former colonial languages as follows:

> Let us make it explicit … that it is an indisputable fact that in the post-colonial situation, the linguistic hierarchy built into the colonial system led to knowledge of the conquerors' language becoming a vital component of the 'cultural capital' of the neo-colonial elite. (2000: 11)

Disadvantage for many learners in rural and peripheral areas in Kenya arises from the fact that English and Kiswahili are the languages of instruction and assessment – yet those languages play hardly any role in the daily lives of these communities, unlike for people living in urban areas where the languages are commonplace. As much as it can be understood why the postcolonial Kenyan

government determined English and Kiswahili as official languages in formal education, it puts teachers and learners in peripheral regions at a disadvantage. Consequently, this contributes to social inequality and hierarchisation – not to mention the loss of social diversity, multiple epistemologies and philosophies that are excluded from formal education.

Beth's practice to make the learners speak English to help them succeed in school can be regarded as standing in the tradition of othering and 'civilising' (even though her intention was to support the learners), and follows the hegemonic discourse on successful education. From a general critical pedagogy point of view, alienating learners from their own environments by excluding their language and cultural resources promotes a positivist 'mind as memory chips' approach, instead of viewing learning as a process of constructing new relationships in the interaction of cultural understandings, new information, familiar stories, and so forth (Kincheloe 2004: 115).

The current language policy in education, therefore, puts teachers in peripheral regions under pressure because they have to respond to the contradictions that arise from the fact that the communities in which they teach do not speak the language of formal education. Yet, Beth saw no way to help the learners succeed in their schooling other than to accept and perpetuate (or, in this case reinforce) the imposed hierarchisation of languages.

Beth's example of a Type A strategy occurred because she had to teach in a language that the learners could barely speak, and which some openly rejected. To keep up with what is required in formal education, the learners and the community developed strategies to undermine the system, which made it impossible for Beth to fulfil her assigned role. In the end, she was forced to help learners cheat in the national exams, which she abhorred but felt she was not able to oppose or resist because it would have been life threatening.

The conflict arising from the national school curriculum and policy and the configuration of that remote school for the teacher was immense and not resolvable. While the othering strategy using

stigmatisation can serve as an example of more hierarchisation, the presumed consequences of undermining the system and helping learners to cheat to pass the exam is not that distinct. Since the system itself is not just, it is undermined in order to attain social justice and give learners in the remote area a chance to carry on with their formal education. In this case, the teacher's strategy to help the learners cheat did not happen voluntarily or by plan – on the contrary, it was against the teacher's professional ethos.

A more distinct example of a Type B strategy to avoid stigmatisation, and to actively consider different perspectives, concerns diversity in the classroom when teaching about HIV and Aids. Florence empathised with her HIV-positive learners in class and realised that the approach taken in the curriculum to teach HIV and Aids was based on fear and stigma, and would demoralise learners who were born HIV-positive. Hence, she changed her teaching strategy and the curriculum content in a way that was sensitive towards HIV-positive learners and consciously considered their perspective. By doing so, this teacher found a way to intentionally avoid further stigmatisation, which emerged from her ability to empathise with this vulnerable group of learners.

In order to fight stigmatisation, othering and discrimination among learners, Harald reported that he worked in a commission with other teachers to invite motivational speakers on a regular basis. This raised awareness about the functions of hierarchising practices and supported an accepting attitude and respectful behaviour regarding differences. The strategy to invite motivational speakers who would address the learners of a school and appeal to them to behave morally and ethically – often with a Christian religious background – was mentioned by a number of teachers as a tool to influence learners' behaviour with regard to diversity. This diversity affirming approach to influencing the attitude and behaviour of learners to prevent conflict based on experienced differences can have hierarchising or de-hierarchising effects, depending on the focus and paradigmatic stance. If a perspective criticising power structures and social inequality is adopted, it can

have de-hierarchising effects. If it merely serves to appeal to the learners to accept and respect differences without questioning the mechanisms and functions of prejudice, stereotypes and hierarchies, it can have essentialising, homogenising and hierarchising effects – even if the behaviour and attitudes of the learners become more accepting. Without closer investigation into the underlying values and individual focus of the motivational speakers, it is not possible to predict whether the strategy would produce less or more hierarchisation. However, it does speak to the conflicting field of power critical versus affirmative diversity approaches, and indicates that both approaches might be necessary when looking at diversity competencies. While power critical diversity approaches stress the competence to deconstruct, reflect on and critically analyse social structures and power relations, affirmative diversity approaches focus on the ability of individuals to manage diversity successfully (Walgenbach 2017).

Exclusion/inclusion

One of the Type A strategies that teachers reported in terms of learners with diverse abilities and preconditions for academic learning emerged from situations of overcrowded classrooms. Feeling under pressure to manage the subject matter in a 40-minute lesson, some teachers admitted that they used the common strategy to only work with the fast learners and ignore those who did not understand easily. In under-resourced schools with huge classes and little if any provision for learners with special needs, teachers' strategies to respond to diversity are limited and hence, experienced as imposed hierarchisation. The teachers realised the exclusionist strategy that they practise by meeting the requirements of the curriculum and only working with the 'ideal learner' but felt that they do not have a choice if they want at least some learners to succeed.

In an attempt to apply a Type B strategy in that situation, Ana made sure to give space to learners who didn't understand the

subject matter easily and encouraged them to ask their questions. When she noticed that some slower-learning children in her class were mobbed and bullied by their classmates, she talked to the class and counselled the affected learners separately. She made it clear to her class that people are different and that those who do not conform to what is expected in the school are also welcome, need support and that discrimination and mobbing is a serious offence. In Ana's view, the task of the teacher is to be a role model and to support learners to develop empathy, respect and consideration for others who do not fit the perceived norm. Ana's professional practice in the classroom promoted a de-hierarchising perspective because her strategy to include slow learners and encourage them to participate in class complies with teaching all learners; it is not the fault of the individual who does not fit into the system – it is the system that does not fit all learners.

Similarly, Florence experienced the strong focus on academic and examination-orientated teaching as not suitable for many learners, especially those from rural areas. Instead of looking at these learners from a deficit perspective, she observed that their strengths were oral presentations and performative arts. Therefore, she included teaching strategies where the non-pen-and-paper learners could excel, which brought them from the margins of the class to the centre, at least for these teaching units.

Using a variety of teaching strategies and methods of instruction (as well as simple language for learners with less exposure to English) supports a de-hierarchising dynamic, and includes learners with different abilities and preconditions for learning. It presumes that the teacher is competent at recognising differences and is sensitive to their needs – as discussed as a diversity learning area in the literature (see Chapter 2). However, the exam-oriented system and the fact that learners are all assessed in the same way (whether they can buy school books or not, have electricity at home or not, speak the language of instruction well or not) was of concern to Florence and some other interview participants facing their professional limits in terms of including all learners.

Harnessing/reproducing: Disrupting social categories

As discussed in the literature (Chapter 2), using social categories to identify disadvantaged groups in certain settings (in order to take affirmative action measures that specifically support these groups) aims at social justice and de-hierarchisation. The problem of conflicting spaces that emerge through the reproduction of these social categories, while at the same time trying to dissolve them or make them irrelevant, is a dilemma that has been highlighted as a matter of concern in the field of diversity in education (Leiprecht 2009; Walgenbach 2017). Nonetheless, in specific situations, the strategy of utilising or harnessing existing social categorisations might be necessary and conducive to de-hierarchisation. However, the examples from the data highlight the problematic consequences of the teachers differentiating between certain groups.

The strategies that promote the reproduction of social categories in schools included instances where the teachers consciously considered specific social categories in order to treat one group of learners differently from others. One such example is provided by Florence, who was constantly torn between treating the HIV-positive learners in her class differently and treating them the same as the others. She felt responsible to shield them from harmful effects that would weaken them, like disciplinary measures involving corporal punishment or physical activities. The conflict was particularly sensitive because she was trying to hide their HIV-positive status (and hence, the criteria for the construction of the category and the reason for the different treatment) from the other learners in the class. She realised that the HIV-positive learners wanted to be treated the same as the other learners, and felt discriminated against if a teacher was considerate and spared them from, for example, punishment. From the affected learners' perspective, well-intended different treatment manifests as a discriminatory and hierarchising practice because they want to be considered 'normal' learners. This is particularly due to the

stigma surrounding HIV and Aids (and the reason the teacher hid the status of HIV-positive learners). Together, the hiding of the status – and hence, the missed chance to create awareness, sensitivity and empathy among the learners – and the different treatment, even if for good reason, can therefore be considered a Type A strategy.

Other examples of Type A strategy that emerged from the interviews in terms of reproducing or harnessing specific lines of difference relate to ethnic group affiliation and mother tongue speaking. Some teachers reported that they would fall back on speaking mother tongue to the learners in class or during break time as this would come naturally to them, even though they were aware that not all learners could understand them. Chris admitted that he – as other teachers did too – paid more attention to learners who shared his ethnic background. Coming from a marginalised sub-group of one of the bigger ethnic groups, he felt the experience of being othered and not taken seriously created solidarity among the members of his sub-group such that parents would particularly approach him and entrust him with their children. His strategy as a teacher was to assist learners from his own ethnic background more than the others, especially in a class setting where they were in the minority.

Evidently, this strategy, which he described as common practice among teachers, is grounded in his own identity and experience. While it can be argued that the marginalisation of his sub-group is the problem in the first place, and that learners from that group need to be particularly supported in order to be empowered, falling back on or enforcing powerful social boundaries perpetuates and reproduces hierarchisation grounded in tribalism. The distinction between 'we' and 'the others' is problematic, as is the likelihood that other lines of difference or social categories are less recognised and acknowledged as reasons for marginalisation and discrimination for learners in the school. Similarly, the speaking of mother tongue to learners of one's own ethnic background created closeness between the teacher and the particular group of learners from which the other learners are

excluded. In the Kenyan context, where tribalism and hierarchies concerning ethnic groups pervade the social and political arena, the consequence of this ethnic bonding strategy in schools needs to be interpreted as the reproduction of the social boundaries that enforce such hierarchisation.

On the other hand, Type B strategies emerged that disrupt social boundary-making and can be regarded as de-hierarchising professional practices (e.g. with regard to ethnic groups, disability and gender). As shown in Chapter 5, these strategies were mainly developed as ad hoc professional practices responding to cases of discrimination and exclusion that the teachers experienced in their schools and classrooms. The teachers used these incidents to speak about issues of social diversity, discrimination and marginalisation to their class and sensitise the learners about offending language and terms they must avoid. One teacher, who observed major discrimination based on socio-economic background among the learners in her class, introduced anonymous letters about incidents of discrimination to the guidance and counselling teacher who then came to speak to the class. The aim of this intervention was to create empathy with the offended learners, raise awareness about human rights issues, develop an understanding of the functions of discrimination and prohibit offensive and discriminatory terms. In that way, it connects to facets of Steyn's (2014) critical diversity literacy, namely, the facilitation of a vocabulary to unpack discrimination and different systems of power and understand how they function. They also aim to develop empathy, multi-perspectivity and communicative skills and behaviours in the learners and to show them alternative ways of resolving conflicts – which connects to what has been identified as intercultural or diversity competences (see Chapter 2).

Similarly, Harald reported that in his school, the teachers actively tried to create spaces where tribalism is not tolerated because this was the main reason for discrimination among the learners. This points to what Hormel and Scherr (2005) highlight as a necessary component of diversity education – to facilitate experiences where group differences are irrelevant.

Acceptance/advocacy

Acceptance describes another Type A strategy practised by the teachers to deal with hierarchised social categories of diversity that are guarded by potent taboos. The teachers accepted that certain topics (like different sexualities and full gender equality in terms of the organisation of peoples' private lives) were not negotiable because the communities, the parents and churches would not accept any teaching about, for example, homosexuality or questioning prevalent inequalities between men and women (e.g. in the domestic arena). Harald, for instance, has no doubt that he would be in trouble and meet severe resistance if he crossed the line of what was perceived as acceptable in the society and local community. Learners in boarding schools suspected of or found to be involved in homosexual acts are excluded from school with no chance that the behaviour would be tolerated in any way. Harald sees no way to change this negating practice and therefore accepts the consequence of learners being excluded from school because of dominant discourses. Other teachers also confirmed that it was unthinkable to teach comprehensive sexuality education because this was a taboo and would be a dangerous practice for the teachers.

Another example where taboos governed most of the teachers' strategies towards diversity refers to learners infected with HIV. As a rule, the teachers accepted that the status of such learners needs to be hidden in order to protect them from stigmatisation and violence. Abandoning any response that would question the taboos and the social hierarchy in these respects can be regarded as a strategy that supports the status quo and reproduces existing hierarchisation.

While examples for Type B strategies concerning diverse sexualities and HIV and Aids are missing from the data, a teacher's strategy that emerged to deal with strongly guarded power relations and extremely marginalised positionalities refers to advocacy – understood as acting on behalf of disempowered learners or positions. Based on the perception of the teachers being role

models who need to find ways of utilising their position to start changing dominant attitudes and practices, some of the teachers developed strategies to try and disrupt hegemonic patterns (e.g. concerning gender relations and poverty). As the only female teacher who was given a leadership position in her school, Elsa did not accept the discrimination and disrespect her male colleagues exhibited towards her. She voiced the discrimination and concern to the teachers and approached the male school principal to educate him about what needed to change to achieve gender equality. Her strategy to win over the most powerful person in the school to support her cause of de-hierarchisation, and to act on behalf of a female teacher who felt silenced, initiated change in that school.

Observing the devastating poverty of some learners' families, and the corruption preventing social support grants from reaching them, Gerald physically went to local politicians and officials to voice such grievances. He also accompanied the families to help them fill in necessary documents, making sure that they were not left out and got the support they needed to send their children to school. This approach consciously considers different positionalities in terms of power to shape one's life. In a context without proper social work infrastructure, the teacher felt the need to use his position to support his destitute learners' families. Although this can be considered a diversity competence (see Chapter 2), the strategy is likely to promote feelings of excessive demand and burnout in teachers at schools situated in poverty-stricken areas.

Avoiding/addressing conflicts

A general distinction that can be drawn between Type A and Type B strategies refers to the teachers' attitude and liability to avoid or address and challenge conflicts or problems arising from the imposed hierarchisation they experienced regarding diversity issues. What became apparent in the data was that the school's culture and hence, the institutional framing had an impact on

the question of whether conflicts, inequalities or discrimination would be addressed or not.

Observing instances of discrimination and exclusion (e.g. based on social class demarcations among the learners), Chris raised the issue in teachers' meetings. However, nothing happened to follow up and address the issue, which frustrated him. As a teacher, he thought avoiding such conflicts was not right – particularly since it reminded him of how he suffered under similar conitions when he was at school. However, he was not sure about strategies to address the discrimination and exclusion he observed, since, from his point of view, it was an institutional problem and not a problem of the learners in his class alone.

A contrasting Type B strategy that Elsa chose was to involve the guidance and counselling department and initiate regular discussions in class to address conflicts and problems concerning discrimination and exclusion that learners experienced. Beth developed a strategy to challenge some of the patriarchal ways of doing things in the remote rural school where she was the only female teacher. She attempted to influence individuals – in this case girls who were negatively affected by the community's practices of female genital mutilation, early marriage and discrimination against women and girls, in general. She encouraged them to complete their education and especially supported the gifted ones who were marginalised due to their educational success. When she had established good relationships with the learners, she began whole-class discussions to challenge the boys on hierarchising and discriminating practices in humorous ways. As the only person from outside the community, she could not accept the status quo but felt responsible to present the learners with different perspectives and initiate learners' critical thinking, even though the dominance of patriarchal practices was overwhelming. The basis for initiating dialogue between herself as an outsider and the learners from the remote community as a de-hierarchising strategy was a trusting relationship that took time to establish. Even though this strategy of initiating critical thinking and making the learners question their own ways of doing things might have had only minor effects

in terms of de-hierarchisation, it pushed the boundaries towards gender equality and the empowerment of girls.

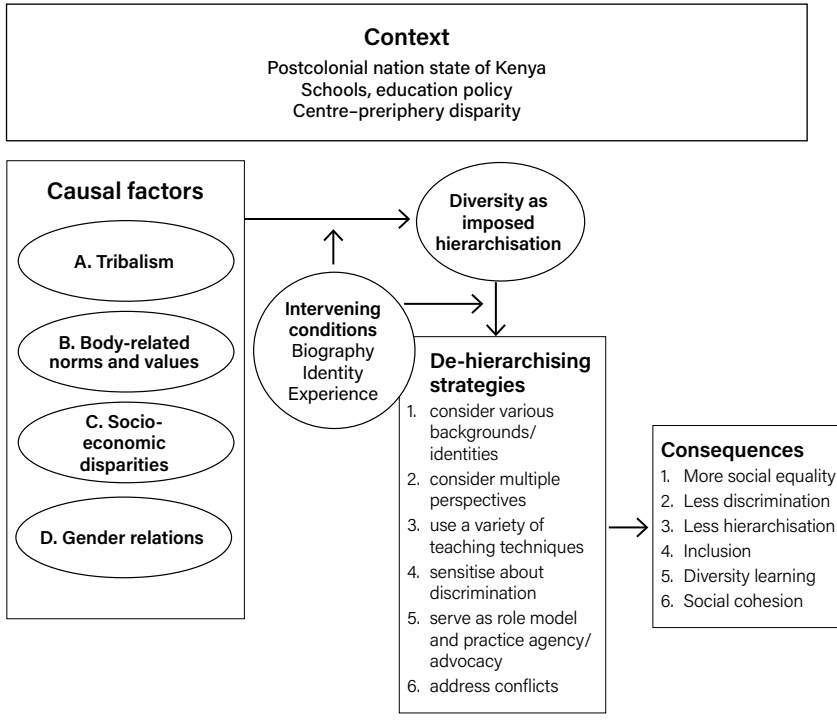
What has become apparent in this study is that the teachers usually analysed the conflicts arising due to diversity as being imposed hierarchisation in the schools, and they tried to develop strategies to address these conflicts wherever possible. This confirms existing views in the literature on intercultural and diversity competence, that teachers and educators require conflict resolution skills (Barrett 2011).

Conclusion

To clarify the relationship between the general context, the causal factors or drivers of the phenomenon, the intervening conditions and the teachers' professional practices with their presumed consequences, the coding paradigm suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) for developing a grounded theory was applied to structure the data. This put the configurations, representations and encounters of diversity (Vertovec 2014) in Kenyan school contexts as perceived, experienced and practised by the teachers into focus. To conclude these main findings, Figure 12 illustrates the central theoretical model developed for the teachers' perceptions, experiences and practices concerning diversity in education in Kenya. Whereas Figure 12 highlights both Type A (hierarchising) and Type B (de-hierarchising) strategies, Figure 13 portrays the Type B strategies that guide the way forward with regard to diversity practices that foster de-hierarchisation and social equality.

The postcolonial nation state of Kenya with its centralised education system, language policy and geography (as sketched in Chapter 3) provides the general context or case for this study, delineating the configurations of diversity for Kenyan schools. From these contextual factors, I identified the centre-periphery disparity as the major configuration influencing the question of how teachers in Kenyan schools perceive and experience diversity. The discrepancy between the centre (the perceived normal urban,

Figure 12: Analytical model: Diversity in education in Kenyan school contexts



middle-class, multilingual Kenyan school, for which education policies, laws and curricula are designed) and the periphery (schools in remote or rural areas that do not fit this norm) generates a wide range of different positionalities and conditions for the schools. These conditions determine how the learners in a school are perceived as different or other, and pose the question of how the school deals with that structural discrimination. Even though no fully-fledged intersectional analysis of different positionalities and the mechanisms producing them was done, the intersectional perspective provided a general lens for developing the theory – acknowledging that social positionalities are not fixed and that social categories interrelate.

Imposed hierarchisation was identified as the central phenomenon from the data to depict the teachers' experiences and

perceptions of diversity in the schools that offered insights into the representations of diversity in the Kenyan education context. Due to social categorisations and dominant discourses framed by the centre-periphery context, diversity appears as a hierarchising phenomenon that is imposed by, and effective through, these social structures and discourses. The social hierarchy in the context of diversity in education produces an ordering system that defines an individual learner's positionality in terms of access to educational resources and recognition of their identity in the schools' institutional frameworks, curricula and teaching practice. The main causal factors explaining the phenomenon of imposed hierarchisation – (a) tribalism, (b) body-related norms and values, (c) socio-economic disparities and (d) gender relations in their specificities – were carved out from the data and discussed using the lens of critical pedagogy and critical diversity. These representations of diversity in the schools, which stem from and reflect the power relations in the society, manifest through taboos, stigma and discriminatory practices that marginalise and silence specific identities and hence, reproduce social inequality.

With regard to the encounters of diversity, insights have been provided by interrogating the intervening conditions (conceptualised as the teachers' biographical experiences and identities as well as the teachers' professional practices) or strategies teachers apply to deal with phenomena related to diversity as an imposed hierarchisation in the schools. With reference to Palmer (2017), the research participants' biographies (with their experiences of discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion based on gender, socio-economic or ethnic background) became the point of reference and the basis for their acting on and responding to diversity factors emerging in their professional practice. Despite painful experiences of being discriminated against, othered, stereotyped and excluded when growing up, the research participants became successful teachers and postgraduate students due to their perseverance and struggle against the mechanisms trying to consign them to lower positions in the social hierarchy. Grounded in these experiences, the teachers demonstrated great

sensitivity towards diversity issues – and their close and problematic relationship to power and dominance – they encountered in the schools. Hence, in their professional practice they developed various strategies to respond to and counteract discrimination, stigmatisation and othering in the schools.

Using the lens of critical pedagogy and its focus on social justice and de-hierarchisation, I divided the teachers' strategies into those effectively (and not intentionally) perpetuating the status quo or enforcing hierarchisation (Type A) and those strategies pushing the boundaries and effectively leading to de-hierarchisation and social equality (Type B). These different strategies offer insights into the opportunities and limitations for developing strategies that can lead to social justice, de-hierarchisation and equality in the given school contexts. The six principles, from which the Type B strategies developed, encompass (1) consideration of various backgrounds/identities of learners, (2) consideration of multiple perspectives, (3) utilisation of a variety of teaching techniques, (4) sensitisation of learners and colleagues about discrimination, (5) provision of a role model and practising agency/advocacy and (6) the general ability and willingness to address conflicts. The results of this study suggest that these types of strategies are potential tools and approaches for teachers to engage with diversity issues in Kenyan schools in a way that leads to less discrimination and hierarchisation and hence, to more social cohesion – a value and guiding principle of education in Kenya. However, the teachers' strategies are very likely insufficient to fully counter the effects of the identified causal factors regarding the emergence of imposed hierarchisation. They, thus, need to be complemented by general political and societal responses to counteract tribalism, body-related discriminatory norms and values, socio-economic disparities and problematic gender relations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Final thoughts and prospects

7

This book set out to investigate the position of diversity in the Kenyan education and school context. Education is considered key for societies to achieve more social cohesion and justice, as pointed out, for example, in the African Union's *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. But how are schools and teachers affected by and implicated in the (re-)construction of social differentiations and groups along ethnic, gender, cultural, religious and other lines of difference and in resulting inequalities between them? Kenya is faced with vast disparities in terms of educational access and success – rendering some social groups marginalised and others favoured. In order to identify the specific configurations, representations and encounters of diversity in Kenyan school contexts, the main question to be answered was, therefore, how teachers perceive, experience and deal with diversity in their professional practice.

Using a grounded theory approach, the study found that teachers in Kenyan primary and secondary schools experience diversity as inherently connected to social hierarchies and that their professional practices dealing with diversity include de-hierarchising as well as hierarchising strategies.

The implications for diversity in education in postcolonial contexts include both theoretical and practical conclusions.

Starting with no predefined social categories to look at in particular, the findings highlight the theoretical-conceptual notion of diversity including the social categorisations that affect schools and teachers in Kenya.

The particular configurations of diversity in the Kenyan school context constitute the centre-periphery disparity as a pivotal structural condition of diversity in Kenya. This refers to the geographic and historically developed inequality between urban centres and the rural periphery, the middle-class districts and marginalised and poverty-stricken suburbs. The extremely different living conditions resulting from the spatial diversity affect the schools fundamentally. There are vast inequalities in the availability of resources and infrastructure, and in terms of the ability of families and communities to provide for the basic needs of the learners as a precondition for schooling. In combination with the national standardised education and examination system and school policies, the postcolonial centre-periphery disparity constitutes a decisive structural diversity factor that reproduces colonial othering processes and positions schools and learners in an unequal competition for educational success.

The most significant representations of diversity in the Kenyan school context include: ethnicity, gender, class and normativity related to body and sexuality. The categorising, essentialising and hierarchising discourses and norms follow ethnic lines. A binary gender concept is framed and shaped by patriarchy. The globalised competitive market economy marginalises the majority of the society. Hegemonic religious and cultural belief systems, including heteronormativity and able-bodiedness, create the conditions for the ways in which diversity is perceived and experienced in the schools. Some of the origins of these categorisations date back long into colonial history, yet they are utilised in today's society to protect distorted power relations by means of tribalism and identity politics, taboos and corruption. Consequently, they also affect schools.

The encounters of diversity in the postcolonial Kenyan school context, meaning the human interactions, relations and professional practices of teachers, are framed by these representations and

configurations of diversity. They enable conditions in which stereotyping, discrimination, othering, prejudice, stigmatisation, exclusion and even violence occur as an expression of conflicts related to redistribution and recognition. At the same time, diversity also frames opportunities for the development of competencies like multi-perspectivity, self-reflexivity, empathy, solidarity and adaptivity. However, based on the multiplicity of settings in which Kenyan schools operate in terms of their positionality in the centre-periphery scenario and in the specific ethno-linguistic and socio-economic environment, the diversity issues emerging as significant for schools and teachers vary widely. Hence, the teachers' professional practices and schools' strategies also vary in the way they respond to and accommodate diversity and how they prevent diversity-related conflicts. However, in considering social justice and decolonisation as a perspective for understanding diversity in education in Kenya, the limits of teachers' and schools' strategies have become apparent, too. In the often under-resourced and overcrowded schools and classrooms, diversity strategies are mainly developed, ad hoc. Teachers regularly use short-term remedial interventions to support individual learners whose participation in school is threatened altogether, particularly due to poverty, early marriages or special needs. By contrast, some long-term and coordinated strategies actively include diversity issues in the schools' institutional frameworks, curricula and teaching practices. They refer to the more practical implications for teachers, teacher educators and policymakers.

Based on the conceptual and theoretical findings, the following practical solutions and recommendations aim to strengthen the potential for diversity as a concept in education that helps to transform schooling in Kenya towards nondiscrimination, decolonisation, equality and social cohesion. They are grounded in (i) the analytical model, (ii) the teachers' and schools' strategies and (iii) the research participants' recommendations. It is their objective to change what is experienced as socially imposed hierarchisation and as a vertical ordering system. They thus work towards de-hierarchisation and a more horizontal ordering system of diverse groups.

What has become evident in the developed theory, are the limitations and social boundaries for diversity in education, and the fact that schools and teachers cannot solve larger societal problems per se – even if more resources are provided. While schools and teachers can deal with and attenuate problems of hierarchisation and discrimination, other social and political actors need to actively engage in the agenda to transform systems towards social equality and less hierarchisation. This refers particularly to the identified contextual and causal factors as drivers of hierarchisation in the analytical model. As long as the structural discrimination of learners and schools grounded in the centre-periphery disparity and national education policies (context) continues to frame and reproduce diversity as social inequality, the schools' and teachers' scope of action is clearly delimited. Similarly, if tribalism, gender inequality, poverty and sociocultural hegemonic discourses (causal factors) that leave many Kenyan identities marginalised, stereotyped and discriminated against continue to be politically and socially accepted and normalised, the schools' and teachers' spheres of influence will remain small. Hence, the recommendations below tackle the contextual and causal factors of the analytical model that need to be abandoned, ameliorated or altered in the medium or long term. The identified de-hierarchising strategies of teachers and schools can therefore be regarded as contributing to the required changes but not as the sole solution to the social problems at hand.

Hence, the recommendations below address not only (a) teachers and principals as target groups, but also (b) teacher education designers and (c) policymakers as well as curriculum developers. In doing so, the drivers and contextual factors affecting diversity in the Kenyan schools are included as well. Yet, they will not be able to be transformed in the short term but, rather, in the medium or long term. These practical conclusions and recommendations are extracted from the teachers' and schools' de-hierarchising strategies drawn from the data and presented in the analytical model. However, given the strained and overburdened situation of teachers (including their meagre salaries) the

recommendations targeting teachers and schools should not be misconstrued. In the current under-resourced Kenyan education system, teachers are already placed under numerous pressures and often faced with demands they can barely meet. Keeping this in mind when thinking about recommendations for teachers on how to deal with diversity in their schools means that an implementation of de-hierarchising diversity strategies needs be accompanied by other measures supporting the conditions for change. These recommendations are set out in what follows.

Considering various backgrounds/identities and creating differentiated learning paths: The need to acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of learners refers to the innate biological identity determinants and socially constructed or ascribed characteristics and categorisations as well as their lived experiences. These background factors constitute the need for schools and teachers to acknowledge and be generally sensitive towards the diversity of learners and the characteristics and social categories positioning them in relation to schooling and formal education. However, examples from the data point to a general diversity dilemma between affirming and reproducing social categories on one hand and trying to ignore and deconstruct social categorisations on the other. The latter strives to prevent stereotyping and the manifestation of social hierarchies. The ways in which the teachers and schools in this study dealt with the different backgrounds of the learners showcase this problem of categorisations that focus on differences. It might be temporarily necessary in specific schools to keep records of each learner for the purpose of taking background and identity factors into account that could lead to discrimination or stereotyping among the learners. However, this documentation brings with it a somewhat strict and static categorisation strategy that includes the danger of essentialising and reinforcing boundaries.

Teachers also expressed the need for more classifications concerning learners with special needs. Being able to categorise learners with regard to their special needs would be a prerequisite for creating differentiated learning paths and hence, for becoming

inclusive. As shown in this study, disregarding the learners' backgrounds, including their special needs, tends to exclude learners who do not fit the perceived norm or who do not feel that their particular histories and identities are recognised and appreciated.

Designing diversity-embracing schools and learning environments: Including the backgrounds and diversity of characteristics and identities of the learners when designing curricula and teaching resonates with what critical pedagogy regards learning to be. Kincheloe regards learning as a process of constructing new relationships in the interaction of cultural understandings, the influences of the information environment, familiar stories, idiosyncratic ways of making meaning, and schooling (2004: 115).

In this notion of learning as an expanding process and relationship between different knowledges, formal schooling needs knowledge and resource counterparts that are rooted in the lived experiences of the learners. Considering the variety of lived experiences in the nation state of Kenya (including cultural, ethnolinguistic, religious, geographic and health-related factors), schools need to embrace diversity rather than devalue these resources by using curricula and teaching methods that are abstracted from the lived experiences of the learners, to a large extent. This study suggests that knowledges and resources from local contexts and learners need to be actively included and engaged in schools and curricula in order to make learning more meaningful. This will counteract hierarchising and othering processes. How learners' different backgrounds (e.g. different home languages) can be used as a resource without focusing on the differences and hence, reproducing social categorisations, is a subject for further inquiry (cf. Brock-Utne 2007).

This study also confirmed the perception that heterogeneous school set-ups are conducive for diversity learning and fostering unity, particularly with regard to ethnicity in Kenya. Consistently, the teachers supported the government's efforts to mix learners and teachers of different ethnic backgrounds in the schools. As one teacher put it, 'when the students mingle together and they

exchange, somehow unity comes in' (1:102). In some areas in Kenya, this policy faces difficulties. Here, the teachers confirmed their preference to teach in their own areas. It therefore suggests further research into the question of how social cohesion and unity can be promoted, and stereotypes and discrimination based on ethnicity be eliminated, in schools characterised by diversity as opposed to schools characterised by rather homogeneous set-ups in Kenya. This would include an assessment of the curricula and school books used – with regard to the values and stereotypes transmitted to the learners, as well as narratives that serve as a foundation for fostering a national identity as opposed to different ethnic identities. Because of Kenya's multi-ethnic and multi-religious context and its history of ethnic violence and discrimination, Alice Nderitu (2018a) has provided a most useful training manual on ethnic diversity and discrimination particularly for Kenyan teachers and educators. Based on the findings of the present study, this comprehensive and human rights-orientated training manual is strongly recommended to be included in teacher education and professional development programmes.

Sensitising about discrimination and empathising with learners: The teachers developed ad hoc strategies to avoid stigmatisation and discrimination against specific learners by means of empathising with them:

> So we as teachers, first of all, should wear the shoes of those who are being discriminated, try to empathise and feel for them. Then once you have put on that shoe and know how painful it is, you see, now ensure that we get out of that. (6:54)

Apart from ad hoc strategies that depend on individual teachers and their ability to empathise and solve issues of discrimination in their classrooms, schools need institutional strategies to combat discrimination. One such strategy that the teachers reported to be effective was to sensitise learners about discrimination and its consequences and prohibit pejorative and discriminatory terms

and language. In doing so, they mainly relied on support from the guidance and counselling departments of their schools, and invited external resource people, together with the school management, to address the learners. However, teachers were frustrated about the lack of support and willingness of colleagues and school principals to address problems regarding discrimination based on various categorisations as constituting a problem for the whole institution rather than only their classroom.

Strengthening guidance and counselling services and institutionalising opportunities to file complaints: A related recommendation resulting from the findings is to strengthen the guidance and counselling departments in terms of resources as well as pedagogically and psychologically skilled staff members. Based on the needs of the specific school, teachers and staff need to be qualified to deal with extra-curricular problems such as discrimination because the teachers are not able to sufficiently engage with these aspects in addition to teaching.

Cases of discrimination, othering and exclusion referred not only to problems among the learners. Female teachers reported severe experiences of discrimination from their male colleagues, which they tried to confront by seeking support from the principal. This left the female teachers dependent on the understanding and goodwill of the principal. A conclusion from this study is that institutionalised opportunities for teachers and learners to file complaints and claim their rights in cases of discrimination must be facilitated.

Considering diversity in the curriculum: Further practical recommendations relate to curriculum development as a means to avoid hierarchisation. Teachers identified discrimination in the curriculum in terms of the way specific topics were supposed to be taught (e.g. with regard to HIV-positive learners or learners with albinism). They felt the need to change the contents and ways of teaching in order to not discriminate against, stigmatise or in any way trouble specific learners. This calls on education policymakers and curriculum designers to consider human diversity and

those learners specifically affected when teaching sensitive topics relating to the body, health or sexual orientation. Taboos and stigmatisation were identified as obstacles for embracing a human rights or social justice-based diversity strategy concerning sensitive topics in education like sexuality/sexual orientation, disability, and HIV and Aids education (cf. Karanja 2017; Khau 2012; Khau et al. 2008; Yego 2017). However, commendable initial steps to overcome stigmatisation and taboos through a humanising pedagogy were identified in some of the schools. In addition, further research will be needed to better understand which factors enable or disable talking about tabooed topics in specific school contexts besides the curriculum, as a first step to transform schools towards embracing diversity.

Devising multiple diversity-cognisant teaching and learning methods: The findings furthermore suggest that using various learner-centred teaching methods and approaches like creative, arts-based, visual and drama-based methods (cf. Athiemoolam 2018; De Lange et al. 2013; Fichten et al. 2008; Wafula 2017) support inclusion and provide equal chances for learners to participate in lessons. Hence, they should be firmly integrated and applied in schools and other learning environments. Therefore, teachers need to be qualified to use tools to cater for, include and support learners such as those with barely any background in academic pen-and-paper work. Arts-based and creative methods in teaching also help to break silences and taboos around sexuality and disability and hence, need to be explored further as to their potential to change existing oppressive relations. Equipping teachers and principals with practitioner- and action-research methods to identify and develop best practices in their local contexts would provide evidence of what teaching methods work.

Addressing conflicts: Teachers need to be able to address conflicts and solve problems around diversity arising in their areas of influence, and to deconstruct boundary-making and underlying issues of power. The teachers in this study drew on their own experiences of being othered and discriminated against growing

up, which made them aware of the ways in which discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping work and how social inequality is reproduced, based on various diversity categories used to legitimise different treatment. These experiences became a useful resource at their command in the classroom. However, teachers need to be willing and able to solve diversity problems and conflicts in the schools – a competency needed for dealing with diversity successfully (see Recommendation 8).

Qualifying teachers to deal with diversity: This recommendation emerges from the findings concerning the teacher's role and the competencies required to deal with diversity in a de-hierarchising manner. It cannot be taken for granted that all teachers bring the same resources and competencies with regard to diversity – such as recognising discrimination and constructively dealing with it to the classroom. These competencies include, among others, multi-perspectivity and the vocabulary to facilitate a discussion about privilege and oppression and oppressive systems (Steyn 2014) and the ability to address and mediate conflicts in a constructive manner. Professional development should address general competencies for dealing with human diversity and difference in nondiscriminatory ways.

Teachers serving as role models and practising agency/advocacy: The findings suggest that teachers' professional identities and the resources they bring to the classrooms and the schools as well as questions of school culture strongly influence the way in which diversity is dealt with. Most of the research participants in this study were highly skilled in self-reflexivity, multi-perspectivity, empathy and communicative competencies – and served as role models for the learners. Therefore, it is essential to see teachers as possessing agency regarding the ability to shape and control their own lives (Kincheloe 2004). In doing so, it is the teachers' task to advocate for weaker members of society, in this case the learners, when they need support. This brings us back to the introductory statement of this study made by one of the research participants: 'I always say this: a teacher can change a society' (7:49).

Recommendations per target group

In summary, the recommendations for the three main actor groups targeted by this study include the following:

- Teachers and school principals should try to seek non-stigmatising ways of including the different backgrounds of learners and their lived experiences when teaching. For instance, ways of including the home language and knowledges of learners in enriching, rather than separating, ways of learning and knowing in classroom activities should be explored. Attention should be paid to learners whose background and identity emerges as an obstacle to learning and schooling – not with a deficit perspective on the learner but by asking how the school can accommodate these learners in the best possible way. Applying a variety of learner-centred and creative teaching methods instead of focusing on academic and abstract teacher-centred methods helps to accommodate the learners' diversity. Problems arising related to diversity in the schools need to be addressed and not ignored. The school leadership is responsible for creating an open and supportive school culture where conflict can be addressed, and solutions found cooperatively.
- Recommendations for teacher education refer first to the need to acknowledge and sensitise teachers about diversity in the context of social inequality in Kenya. At the same time, pre- and in-service teachers need to be made aware of social categorisations and boundary-making as mechanisms to legitimise and justify different treatment based on various oppressive systems, for example, by using Nderitu's (2018a) training manual *Beyond Ethnicism*, and similar material (cf. Steyn 2014) in all teacher education programmes. Furthermore, various teaching and learning techniques and approaches like creative, arts-based, visual and drama-based methods need to be included in teacher education programmes. For teachers to

understand and be able to assess learners with special needs, diagnostic competencies are needed in teacher education programmes – including strategies to provide differentiated learning paths.

- A detailed strategy for the development of diversity-related competencies of teachers, including professional identity development, should be based on a proper assessment of existing approaches and needs for teacher education. However, strengthening the development of teacher professional identities and personalities beyond training them to teach subject-specific content is recommended. How far this is already happening with regard to teachers and schools dealing with diversity in Kenya, and how successful programmes can be installed, are subjects for further research.
- Recommendations for policymakers and curriculum developers refer to the need to include diversity issues on all levels of teacher education, and create opportunities for teachers in terms of professional development (e.g. based on human rights approaches or critical diversity literacy; Steyn 2014). Furthermore, it is recommended to re-integrate more technical, vocational and arts-based subjects into the school curriculum to unlock the potential of all learners. The existing strategy of creating school environments that are characterised by diversity in terms of mixing learners of various identities and backgrounds is recommended by the teachers to foster social cohesion and unity. School books should be scrutinised to eliminate harmful stereotypes and prejudice transmitted through the content. This also includes identities that are marginalised and othered or silenced through the curricula (based on, for example, gender or sexual orientation). Such a critical project would need to be backed up by laws – in this case, to protect LGBTIQ persons from discrimination. Furthermore, the school curricula should centre on the lived experiences of the learners and leave schools with opportunities to adapt and change curricula and assessments according to their local contexts. Here,

a balance must be struck between common, nationwide narratives and stories for identity development based on the acknowledgement of commonalities, and specific localised stories and narratives rooted in particular group experiences. A discussion on more autonomy concerning school curricula and examination for the counties is advisable so that regional specificities are included and structural othering tendencies attenuated. To include learners with special needs in regular schools, differentiated learning paths need to be created. A strong recommendation that emerged from the data is that the guidance and counselling departments need to be strengthened and better equipped in order to meet the high demand for sociopsychological counselling and support. This would relieve the teachers so that they can concentrate on teaching. Given that discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and health-related issues, among others, is prevalent in many schools, institutionalised opportunities for teachers and learners to file complaints are needed.

What can be learnt from the Kenyan case?

The findings from the Kenyan case might also be relevant to other contexts with similar configurations and representations of diversity formed by colonial history and comparable centre-periphery disparities. Nonetheless, distinctions will need to be made regarding conditions where identity politics and education policies differ as well as representations and encounters of diversity in the school contexts of various postcolonial national states. Similarities also refer to the intention of a diversity-reflexive education that needs to take decolonisation as connected to social justice and equality into account.

Concerning the theoretical debate of group-centred versus system-centred approaches to researching diversity, the implications depicted above suggest that choosing only one approach would not do justice to the complexities of the education context. A strong system-centred focus and its concern with power

relations would neglect the need for societies to recognise and find constructive ways of dealing with actual forms of diversity, inequality and self-ascribed identity. Focusing on social groups and their particular position in the society would not only help reproduce essentialising notions of collective identities, but also neglect the ways in which differences are used to legitimise social inequality. Hence, the findings of this study support an integration of both approaches of researching and dealing with diversity.

In summary, it can be concluded that diversity in the Kenyan school context comes along with hierarchies that confront teachers with a range of different challenges. Diversity in a critical understanding can be a useful concept for analysing the ways in which education participates in the reproduction of social inequalities and re-colonisation, and for identifying strategies and practices that lead to social justice, de-hierarchisation and decolonisation. By contributing to this body of knowledge and providing a contextualised understanding of diversity in education, the book hopes to spark further research, discussions and policy changes towards recognition of diversity and equal chances for all – not only in Kenyan schools.

Notes

1 https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4
2 www.education-inequalities.org
3 https://en.unesco.org/news/global-education-monitoring-gem-report-2020
4 http://www.uwezo.net/
5 https://theconversation.com/kenyas-history-of-election-violence-is-threatening-to-repeat-itself-76220
https://theconversation.com/how-the-rise-in-ethnic-tensions-at-kenyas-universities-is-hurting-the-academy-50730
https://theconversation.com/a-burning-question-why-are-kenyan-students-setting-fire-to-their-schools-69153
6 Rok Ajulu (2002) distinguishes between the rather neutral term, 'ethnicity' and the politicised term, 'tribalism' used for ethnic mobilisation in order to achieve certain economic or political goals.
7 This does not include the debate arising from the discourse on assimilation (as compared to multiculturalism), which is grounded in the domination of one national language and hegemonic sociocultural formation in countries like Germany (Esser 2000, 2006), and which does not relate well to the postcolonial Kenyan context.
8 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversity
9 https://theconversation.com/for-profit-education-has-a-bright-future-in-kenya-31448
10 The data related to gender that I rely on only distinguishes between male and female. This problematic binary construction of gender excludes various identities that do not identify with being either male or female and therefore, poses a limitation, particularly when thinking about diversity.
11 https://theconversation.com/kenyas-free-education-policy-could-actually-be-deepening-inequality-48355
12 http://www.education-inequalities.org/
13 Mandera County is located in the North East of Kenya bordering Ethiopia and Somalia.
14 The first number refers to the research participant, the second number to the transcript.
15 The terms 'learners' and 'students' are used interchangeably in the following chapters and refer to both primary and secondary school learners.
16 Quoted from one of the research participants (1:146).

17 https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/hierarchy
18 https://www.education-inequalities.org/countries/kenya#?dimension=region&group=all&year=latest
19 As explained earlier, the generated data refers only to binary gender constructions, as in male and female, which is common in the Kenyan context (as in many other contexts around the world). The exclusion of queer, inter- and transgender experiences from the accounts should be kept in mind as a completely excluded diversity factor.
20 https://www.education-inequalities.org/countries/kenya#?dimension=sex&group=all&year=latest

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