

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

**Developing Greek Cypriot Philological Teachers'  
Professionalism in the Light of Existing Contextual  
Realities and Future Educational Reforms**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Educational Policy and Values

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by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the views of a number of educational actors about the impact of a broad range of educational reforms upon philological Greek Cypriot teachers' professionalism. The empirical component of the study gathers evidence from a variety of educational professionals, and presents data from a series of focus group interviews with philological class teachers, deputy heads and head teachers as well as from a number of individual interviews with professionals in more senior positions such as inspectors, implementers and teacher trainers. The main rationale for the use of a variety of accounts to investigate philological teachers' understanding of their professionalism as well as their responses to past and future educational reforms rests within the need of the study for data triangulation.

An extended literature review focuses on the international arena of debate on professionalism, includes a critical discussion of the impact of managerial and neo-liberal educational reforms upon teachers' professional identities. In addition, global as well as economic, political and cultural factors within the Greek Cypriot context are debated in the light of incoming managerial reforms.

The thesis' main argument is that, given the historical, cultural and political tensions facing Greek Cypriot education, as well as future challenges, a managerialist approach would fail to provide the reflective and critical perspective that philological teachers need. Such values are highly important for educating Greek Cypriot citizens about the new European and global realities required for a possible future bi-communal and federal Cypriot state. Hence, this thesis calls for a 'discourse-based' ethics and 'reflexive' approach to professionalism, which is used as an ethical compass for repaying attention to what might be lost from teachers' professional repertoire in the aftermath of such reforms.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This study has originated from an interest in the impact of educational reforms upon Greek Cypriot philological teachers' professionalism. The scope of the study is to refine our understanding of the effects of managerial reforms on philological teachers' professional identity formation and thus provide a new interpretation of their professionalism. One of the impetuses which prompted me to sketch out a framework of philological teachers' professionalism from the prism of professional ethics, resulted from my awareness of an enduring issue discussed in the academic literature. This involves whether a dividing line between professions and non-professions is to be drawn which has opened up the debate concerning the relationship between managerial or business ethics and professional ethics. The business ethics approach does not impose upon the employer and the employee any ethical obligation to negotiate their contract in such a way as to promote the well-being of other groups in society as should be the case with 'professional ethics' (Barker, 1992).

My reason for conducting the current research with philological teachers relies not only on my knowledge and expertise on the field, but also that subjects such as Modern Greek Language and Literature, History (Ancient, Byzantine, Modern, European), Ancient Greek, Latin and Philosophy, all listed under the title of 'Philological Subjects' are undergoing considerable transformation in terms of their content. Disputes around the issue of changing some of the content in History textbooks have been vociferous within the educational and political milieu of Cyprus. The philologist-humanist knowledge tradition is a dominant factor in the state's conception of what is worth knowing and this can be asserted by the fact that over 60 percent of all secondary teachers are philologists. The philologist-humanist ideal



serving to produce the ‘disciplined, cultural and moral Christian-Greek’ may now be challenged by governmental consultations requiring ‘the elimination of the falsification of History’ (MOEC, 2008) in order to promote a spirit of cultivation of peaceful coexistence among the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The issue of changing History textbooks has raised a range of reactions among different political parties, teachers’ unions and philological teachers. Therefore, philological teachers will have to respond professionally to issues other than the ones concerning school-based management and the re-establishment of administrative structures. Their professional responses regarding claims to truth in History teaching are of core value, as these will have an impact on the community at large.

Another impetus for the conduct of the current research has evolved out of a wider concern about professionalism as an emerging debate within the international arena. Many scholars and commentators have offered competing views about teacher professionalism and teacher professional identity within the English-speaking world, such as the USA, UK and Australia. Commentators’ attention to professionalism in these contexts have stemmed largely from the impact that neo-liberal, market driven reforms and associated changes have had upon teachers’ professional conditions and expectations. Furthermore, much research and scholarly literature has evolved around whether or not teaching is a profession and whether or not teachers could be regarded as professionals to the same extent that lawyers and doctors are. In considering the international arena of professionalism, it has come to my attention that there is no empirical information about Greek Cypriot professionalism and professional identity formation, nor about whether the recently introduced educational changes as well as the recently proposed reforms have had any impact upon teacher professionalism. Thus, the chance to undertake ‘insider’ research in the area of philological teachers’ professionalism is both an opportunity and a challenge. Notions such as professionalism and teacher professional identities are under-researched within the Greek Cypriot context, yet there is evidence to

suggest that the recently announced reforms along with other national demands imposed on the Cypriot education, if tackled from an 'ethically discursive professionalism' perspective, could pave the way for the development of a challenging set of professional ethics. The managerialist discourse has only recently penetrated Greek Cypriot education reform proposals and once these become officially enforced within the educational system, it is expected that teachers will witness a variety of policy pressures or opportunities regarding their professional milieu. As yet, neo-liberal and market driven policies have not infiltrated Greek Cypriot educational practice. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that teachers in Cyprus are about to enter a new educational era of different and conflicting demands.

During the past five years, the Greek Cypriot government has pledged to reform education. In doing so, it has assigned responsibility for the design of the educational reform proposals to a number of educational stakeholders, the government named 'committees of experts' (MOEC, 2005). More precisely, the reform proposals announce procedures for the decentralisation of the school units as well as measures and processes for a new teachers' evaluation and promotion system akin to the managerial agendas followed by other countries. Given the consequences for teachers' professionalism brought about by such reforms elsewhere, it is highly likely that this will be the case for Cyprus as well. The existing Greek Cypriot system of teachers' evaluation and promotion has been criticised by a number of commentators as inefficient and unfair, as it is not based on objective and measurable criteria, but only on seniority. For this reason, one can expect that Greek Cypriot teachers are likely to welcome the incoming controlled accountability processes, for they may perceive these as opportunities to upgrade their status and professional image.

In addition to the government's proposals explained above, there is also the government's demand for revising history textbooks as a means for promoting tolerance and a spirit of

reconciliation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, so that education can respond to the new challenges of communal developments amongst them.

The thesis argument then will be that the managerial discourse upon which most of the Greek Cypriot reform plans are based is incompatible with the ultimate aims of Greek Cypriot education, which is to foster a more tolerant and broad-minded youth who will have to live in a neo-Cypriot state under a European umbrella in a global village.

The main rationale for the study rests on the fact that notions of teacher professionalism have not been framed within the Greek Cypriot academic literature. Therefore, the major research question ‘What are the effects of the Greek Cypriot educational reforms upon the professional identity of philological teachers in Cyprus’ guiding the research stems from the highly contested discourses about the effect that performance driven and managerial agendas have had on the teaching profession in the international literature and more specifically the Anglo-Saxon one. Therefore I will structure chapter 2 in terms of what is already known about ‘professionalism’ and ‘professional identities’ as these have been captured by different and contesting accounts. I will then proceed by addressing the following literature review questions:

- What are the forces at macro level which have affected the Greek Cypriot educational reforms?
- What current models of professional identity might be applicable to the Greek Cypriot context?

Such forces will be articulated at macro, meso , and micro levels. In a subsequent section I will draw on professional frameworks that have been developed by several authors as a response to the managerialist impact on teacher professionalism. Thus, chapter 2 will aim to

inform my research questions on the moral and ethical aspects of teacher professionalism. Since the present thesis attempts to sketch out a model of teacher professionalism, chapter 2 will aim to analyse the impact of managerial reforms upon teachers' professionalism from the prism of Giddens' four dilemmas of the self, and later end up by drawing on the work of Habermas' moral theory in order to mark off professionalism along the lines of 'discourse ethics'.

Since the notion of teacher professionalism in the Cypriot academic literature has not gained much ground, chapter 3 deals with issues concerning changes within the Greek Cypriot educational system emanating from a global, European and national level. Thus chapter 3 will aim to locate pieces of academic writing within the Greek Cypriot context which document educational change as a requirement for the Greek Cypriot educational system. Chapter 3 discusses other factors at play, such as historical, political and cultural issues, which may further contribute to the acceptance of managerial values by Greek Cypriot philological teachers, which may impede any moral visions of a reconciliatory education. Therefore, chapter 3 concentrates on the following questions:

- How has the historical context of education in Cyprus impacted on the educational reforms?
- What social, political, and economic factors in Cyprus have affected the context of the educational reforms?

As with chapter 2, chapter 3 will conclude with a call for a reflexive future oriented approach to understanding and interpreting educational reforms in a Giddensian sense, as well as an approach based on a Habermasian form of dialogue in assisting the process of the thesis argument.

An overview of the rationale and methodology of the study will be presented in chapter 4. The primary research design used in this study will be the focus group approach with supplementary individual interviews for data triangulation. A semi-structured interview approach will be used in order to allow the major questions to be asked while it is also expected that questions will be deepened through follow-up questions. Two groups of secondary philological teachers, along with another group consisting of two head teachers and two assistant head teachers will be the participants of these focus groups. In addition, semi-structured individual interviews with senior professionals such as teachers' trainers, inspectors and implementers will be conducted in order to enrich philological teachers' accounts on the issues under concern. By expanding the population of the study in this way, conclusions gained from people in more senior positions will be corroborated and contrasted with those of the focus groups.

The findings of the thesis lead to the proposal of a proactive teachers' professional framework in order to eventually develop a new and challenging set of professional ethics which could inform policy formulation and development of teachers' professional code of ethics.

The data analysis will be structured in terms of three separate chapters. Thus, chapter 5 reports on the findings from the first focus group with philological head teachers and deputy heads, chapter 6 presents the analysis of the views of philological teachers from focus groups two and three, and subsequently chapter 7 draws on the analysis of findings from the issues examined with the senior professionals.

A discussion section will follow where I will 'intrude' more into the study in order to make interpretations and linkages, relating the findings to previous research or commentary, or to developing tentative theories.

A final section on issues and implications will acknowledge the limitations of the study, as well as to frame creatively ideas already developed in the discussion chapter, in order to put forward some recommendations by claiming a new agenda for teachers' professionalism.

## **CHAPTER 2**

**The international orbit of teachers' professionalism and its implications for the Greek Cypriot educational context.**

### **Introduction**

One of the major aims of chapter one was to explain the research objective of the present study in terms of seeking an understanding of the influences that are perceived as having an impact on philological teachers' professionalism. The key rationale driving the study is underpinned by a general awareness of the way 'professionalism' has been contested and debated over the past decades which in turn gave way to discourses of 'teacher professionalism' and 'teacher professional identities'. The present thesis was also triggered by an awareness of the dearth of Greek Cypriot academic literature on modelling teacher professionalism along ethical ideals. During the past decade, attempts by the Greek Cypriot government to reform the educational system in neoliberal directions, aiming to adjust it to the needs of the market, reflect what is often referred to in the literature as 'professionalization'. The latter as it will be explained later in this chapter has been used by some public policy players to mask an agenda other than 'professionalism'. Thus this chapter concludes by arguing that given the disparaging effects that the international neoliberal policies have had on teachers' professionalism, it is highly likely that the Greek Cypriot educational system following these tendencies, will not remain immune from the devastating impact of managerialism. Hence in justifying this argument, this chapter will seek to address the following research questions:

- What are the forces at macro level which have affected the Greek Cypriot educational reforms?

- What current models of professional identity might be applicable to the Greek Cypriot context?

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is twofold, and seeks to address the above aims through the lenses of Giddens' (1991) four dilemmas of the self in order to critically examine the implications of the managerial agendas for teachers' professional identities. Subsequently, this thesis will suggest that a Greek Cypriot educational system based on managerial accountability mechanisms will fail to provide teachers and students with the values required for coping not only with the new European realities but also with the demands for a possible future bi-communal and federal Cypriot state. Hence the call at the end of the chapter for a Habermasian form of dialogue, which is to be used as an ethical compass for paying attention to what might be lost from teachers' professional repertoire in the aftermath of such reforms. The reflexive and discourse based ethics approach to professionalism proposed in this chapter will be further developed as the thesis evolves so as to help the process of the above argument.

### **The changing conditions of teacher professionalism- located at a macro level.**

If there is one point of consonance across the wide-ranging literature on professionalism it is that concepts of professionalism are changing over time denoting different characteristics in different contexts. From the literature it is clearly understood that there is an inherent tension between 'being a professional' and 'behaving professionally'. The former is often referred to as 'professionalization' which implies status, standing and professional reward, whilst the latter is alluded to as 'professionalism' signifying behavioural characteristics such as dedication and commitment marked by an altruistic concern for the client and for society at large (Helsby, 1995;1996; Hargreaves, 2000). Such a divide stemmed from attempts by different groups such as the lay public, academics, teachers, doctors and lawyers to draw a



dividing line between professions and non professions. As a result, two competing versions of professionalism emerged, the one driven by an ideal of 'social service' and the other stemming from considerations of power (Hanlon, 1998). The notion of a 'social service professionalism' which predominated the Fordist era came under attack in the 1970s and 1980s and was challenged by what has been called 'commercialised professionalism' (Hanlon, 1994, 1996). This version of professionalism is an outcome of the Post-Fordist movements and the demand for greater opportunities for differentiation of production and surveillance due to a micro-technological expansion (Amin, 1994). The 'commercialised' professionalism became initially evident in areas of the private sector such as accountancy, law and engineering (Grey, 1994; Hanlon and Shapland, 1997; Causer and Jones, 1996). Along the lines of a 'commercialised professionalism', professionals are required to have managerial and entrepreneurial skills, followed by an ability to manage and satisfy clients (Hanlon, 1998).

A more extensive reference to managerialism will be made later in this chapter in a section exploring its implications for teacher professionalism. A particular concern here is to show the transition from a concept of professions and professionalism wedded to an altruistic notion of social service to one which transforms professionalism into being associated with commerce.

During the past three decades and so, there has developed a critical influential literature which depicts professionalism as being deployed as a strategy by organised occupations to maintain or increase status and financial reward (Larson, 1977; Collins, 1990). A common reference point of these sociological viewpoints on professions is the increasing pressure faced by numerous occupations in order to become professionalised. Many commentators have captured the process of professionalization in derogatory terms. Hoyle and John (1995) define 'professionalization' as the process used by 'semi-professions' in order to meet the alleged

criteria of a 'full profession'. They also distinguish two strands of 'professionalization'. One element is the process of meeting the institutional and status aspects of a profession whilst the other one concerns the improvement of quality of service through improving the skills and practices of practitioners. Nevertheless, they hold that it is doubtful whether such criteria are conducive to increased professionalism. A similar view has been expressed by Hall and Schulz (2003) who stated that 'professionalization' diminishes or even undermines the concept of 'professionalism'. The professionalization thesis reflects attempts to define professionalism in descriptive terms being largely traced to the 'trait' or 'functionalist' approach. This 'criterion' approach was based on an implicit 'structural-functional trait' theory elucidated in the works of Parsons (1954), Goode (1957) and that of Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933). The basis of this approach was to attribute to the professions certain factors which they had to fulfil in order to be legitimately claimed as professions. Such criteria involved occupational licensing, requiring that entrants into the profession have technical expertise and judgement as well as adhere to a set of code of ethics and conduct expressive of an ideal of service to society. Underscored in such theories is the emphasis on expert- client relations for client and social protection.

The contention held in this thesis in defining professionalism will not be one emanating from the 'criteria' approach such as the above, for such 'trait' approaches are narrow in the sense that they approach 'professions' and 'professionalism' as taken for granted constructs immune from the ever changing political, cultural, and global conditions. Elements of professionalism such as 'expertise', 'autonomy' and 'altruism' on which much of the debate has centred, should be debated in the light of professional ethics, and thereby professionalism should be defined and redefined from a provisionalist view of professions rather than descriptive terms. A major premise of a provisionalist account is the critical endorsement of a variety of

viewpoints as well as the recognition that all visions may claim some truth, but no one claims a monopoly on that truth.

Moreover, the old order of the 'welfare professional' has cracked under the pressures emanating from the forces of globalization and has given rise to a form of a 'hybrid professionalism' (Noordegraaf, 2007). By the latter form it is meant that professionals have become forced to adapt to global pressures, such as capitalist demands and consumerist tendencies that resist autonomous, closed-off occupational spheres (Farrell and Morris, 2003). Thus, in the public sector, professionals have become part of large scale organizational systems, with cost control, targets, indicators, quality models, and competition (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000; Clarke and Newman, 1997). This in effect, results in tendencies to professionalise nonprofessional groups such as consultants and managers (Alvesson and Johansson, 2000; Grey, 1997) or to create new professional groups such as 'project managers' working in flatter, less hierarchical structures with their value based on expertise rather than seniority (Bottery, 2002).

This latest process of professionalism is closely linked to global changes. New emerging conditions emanating from economic globalization have steered state governments towards adopting neo-liberal policies in education. The globalisation argument is often linked to the claim that the international capitalist economy is entering a new transnational stage of development leading to an 'era of market regulation' (Standing, 1997). The corollary of this is the surrender of nation-state power to larger economic organizations as well as the accommodation of neo-liberal policies by governments in order to reduce public sector bureaucracies. This in effect, becomes reflected to all aspects of public policy including education on a global scale. The economizing of education in neo-liberal ways reached a peak in the late 1980s first in England under the Conservative government (Gibton, 2004) and later in the rest of the English speaking world as well as elsewhere. Ample evidence for this exists

in studies on the pressures affecting headship in England and China suggesting that although values and practices of Chinese and English headteachers differ on a considerable extent because of the influence of long embedded cultural factors, nevertheless they share commonalities in terms of global factors affecting their practice (Bottery et al, 2008; Bottery, 2006).

Similar to other countries, in Greek Cypriot education elements of neo-liberal policies have achieved prominence on its agenda. Illustrative of the neo-liberal like reform aspects emphasising controlled accountability, flexibility, effectiveness and productivity of the education apparatus are the Greek Cypriot government's efforts to introduce national standards. The emphasis upon the latter was dictated by the need for Cyprus to align its education policy with that of other E.U member states (EURYDICE, 2000). However, these efforts which were geared towards producing measurable objectives for the subjects of Modern Greek studies, Maths and Science had been opposed by the teachers' trade unions. Their main argument for resisting such a development has been that because the system is highly centralised and the curriculum as well as teaching methods are prescribed by the inspectors, teachers cannot be solely held accountable for pupil performance (Kyriakides and Cambell, 2003). Therefore, during the past six years, the government shifted its attention from placing national standards to raising other controlled accountability mechanisms such as the decentralisation of the school units based upon an emphasis of self-evaluation as well as the reformation of new syllabi. The drive towards developing a teachers' evaluation system based on notions of self-assessment, accountability and professional development was mainly instigated by the international academic literature of school improvement. Indicative of these pronouncements are the Greek Cypriot studies pointing to the need for teacher appraisal procedures (Pashiardis, 2002) and development of mechanisms to establish teachers' professional accountability and link it to school improvement (Kyriakides, 2001; Kyriakides

and Campbell, 2003). Arguments for reforming Greek Cypriot education are not only the outcome of an influential academic literature, however. They are also tightly linked to the demands of the E.U Lisbon employment strategy. More accurately, the latter has put forward a framework for life-long learning strategies which all the E.U countries have to fulfil from 2007 until 2013 (MOEC, 2009 a). Thus, the concept of competency management and human resources development has been reflected in the recently announced teachers' evaluation system. Worth mentioning are the binary trade-off divides upon which the newly announced system of evaluation is based and which became extremely pronounced during the empirical phase of this thesis by the policy makers (implementers) as well as the inspectors. Such binary trade-offs can be understood by examining the new system of teachers' evaluation established in April 2009, which was tightly linked to another new development, that of the revision of curricula. A core premise of the new curricula is the reduction in the amount of the prescribed content of textbooks so as to make the educational system more attractive and successful for young learners in the field of those key competencies declared by the E.U (such as equity, efficiency, intercultural dialogue, quality of teachers' education, social competencies and initiatives) (MOEC, 2009 a; Committee of experts, 2008). The main thrust of the proposal within the context of which the Ministry is currently developing plans to overhaul the evaluation system of teachers, centres on creating a two-track system that would allow public school teachers who are up for promotion to choose between two different career paths, or as the policy players interviewed in this thesis have put it, a dual pyramid system from which 'teachers can choose which line of management they want to go down according to their skills, either educational, or managerial' (see chapter 7,p.154). In other words, under the new system, it will be possible for someone to choose between a career in administration or education, and get promoted to a higher pay grade, whilst up until now, all teachers with 12 years of experience would end up holding an administrative job, such as deputy headteacher

(Hazou, 2009). In addition, the evaluation procedures which would be carried out for assessing the performance of the whole school units would be of a summative and formative character (MOEC, 2009 b ). Moreover, teachers' training would be planned so as to combine both initial education and continual training. This new form of training may well be seen as a challenge in achieving the Lisbon employment objectives for investing in human capital as raised by Ammerman (2006). According to the proposal on the incoming teacher evaluations, teachers taking up the managerial or pedagogical role will receive a continuous professional training on those tasks they will be asked to perform (MOEC, 2009). The newly proposed teachers' evaluation scheme, could be said to reflect issues and concepts emanating from the World Banks' policy papers on priorities and strategies for education during the 90s. The World Bank policy documents have been criticized for relying primarily on evidence from the economics literature over the course of more than 30 years, the overarching priority being to assist the World Banks' client countries to reduce poverty (Burnett and Patrinos, 1996). Torres (1996) in developing a critique of the limits of the conventional teacher-education model in both developing and industrialised countries, argues that education policy formation is a reflection of the World Banks' binary trade-offs which involve:

'Quantity versus quality, traditional versus modern, public versus private, formal versus non formal, centralised versus decentralised....face to face versus distance teaching.. pre-service (initial) training versus in-service (on-the-job or continuous) training ' (p.451)

Such binary policy options are stressed with regard to teachers education and are presented as 'promising avenues' for primary education in developing countries by the World Bank and the criterion that leads to the selection of one option over the other is cost-effectiveness (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1992; Burnett and Patrinos, 1996).

The binary options scheme has been criticised by Torres, who claimed that any policy decision should appear as a selection from a broad menu of possibilities and shades and not as

a narrow binary option. One may well argue that such a binary policy scheme is reflected in the Greek Cypriot newly proposed teacher evaluation plan. With regard to the recently announced Greek Cypriot evaluation scheme such binary trade-offs could be identified in terms of : a) summative vs formative assessment, b) managerial coordinating assistant principal vs pedagogical coordinating assistant principal, c) decentralisation vs centralisation, d) self-evaluation vs peer evaluation, e) pre-service vs in-service training, f) intended vs implemented curriculum.

The driving force behind the development of such twin aims, is economic and political globalisation. In recalling what Stiglitz (2006) has pointed out regarding the negative consequences of globalization, one may well understand that economic globalization has been worked out by state policies in order to deliver the imperatives of the market:

...the problem is not with globalization itself but in the way globalization has been managed. Economics has been driving globalization, especially through the lowering of communication and transportation costs. *But politics has shaped it.* The rules of the game have been largely set by the advanced industrial countries- and, not surprisingly, they have shaped globalization to further their own interests. *They have not sought to create a fair set of rules, let alone a set of rules that would promote the well-being of those in the poorest countries of the world* (Stiglitz, 2006, p.4, my italics).

Another force deemed to have direct implication on the influence of educational policies and thus teachers' professionalism, is 'cultural globalization'. Waters (1995) building on his argument that globalization proceeds most rapidly in contexts in which relationships are mediated through symbols, captures cultural globalization as the most symbolic of all other forms for as he put it 'a globalized culture admits a continuous flow of ideas, information, commitment, values and tastes mediated through mobile individuals, symbolic tokens and electronic simulations' (p. 126). The array of access to values, life-styles, consumer choices, all made possible by the global cultural arena, are abundant. Nevertheless, this could generate

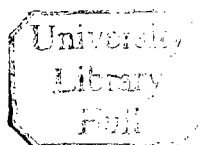
both chaotic and empowering experiences to some. Writers such as Bottery (2004) and Pieterse (2006) explore such a view in binary oppositions. The one pole of the extreme has been cast by Bottery (2004) as 'globalization of cultural variety' and is seen as opening up the roads for familiarizing oneself with what has been thought of as strange or unconceivable. It may well have empowering effects for those wishing to extend their awareness on a number of values and ideas which were not conceivable or accessible before. Such cultural variety, it is suggested, has liberating effects on education for individuals can grow spiritually by challenging taken- for- granted notions and realise that there are multiple paths in pursuing the truth. This positive side of cultural globalization out of which creative cultural realities emerge has been defined by Pieterse as 'cultural hybridization'. For Bottery, the dimension of a 'cultural variety' may well lead people to a chaos of cultural relativity and fragmentation, meaning that because individuals are faced with too many choices they cease to evaluate them critically. A great deal of postmodern thinking is founded on the epistemological stance of this extreme relativism, according to which the very notion of a unified personality is called into question. This stance then has hazardous implications for education and teacher' professionalism, for it is very likely that those who refuse to understand themselves and redefine their role within an ever changing global milieu, will become victims of the market.

The dimension of 'cultural variety' or 'hybridization' has been highly reflected in almost all educational contexts of Europe and has culminated in a European dialogue regarding the urgency for member states to revisit their history curricula (Christou, 2008). Until recently, history teaching in both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot side has emphasised their identification with their respective motherlands by focusing more on the histories of Greece and Turkey and by overlooking any reference to the modern history of the island where both sides had witnessed mutual moments of suffering as well as times when both sides had united to fight alongside each other for a common cause (Malaos, 2008). Within the terrain of



cultural globalisation such monolithic approaches to history have come under question. As it will be explained in the next chapter, supra national organizations such as the United Nations have played a vital role in moving the peace process along for a unified Cyprus. The UN has consistently underlined the importance of an engaged civil society and an informed citizenry in ensuring the sustainability of a future bi-communal coexistence (Zerihoun, 2009). Teachers and particularly philological ones, whose subject areas involve history teaching, are likely to be faced with a great challenge; such as to move away from essentialist conceptions of history, devoid of political expediency. The organization of workshops by the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe with the assistance of the Cyprus-based Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, has faced Greek and Turkish Cypriot educators with an important challenge: how to reconcile the perspectives of the two communities condemned to share a small geographical space but bitterly at odds about their place in that space (because of the traumatic events they both had witnessed before the military partition of the country) and how to move into the future together (Zerihoun, 2009).

Thus, on the one hand, cultural globalisation might mean for some philological teachers that the time has come to re-construct the narrative of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot past and realise that this past should become open to interpretation, negotiation and contestation, so that the perspectives of the two communities can be reconciled. Yet for others this 'cultural variety' may be seen as a threat to their beliefs and may therefore intensify a rigid fundamentalist stance (Bottery, 2004), or it might be the case that philological teachers will accept any educational option from the policy menu offered to them uncritically and therefore overlook the importance of paying attention to other substantial educational values, such as criticality, tolerance and trust. The following two sections shed light on the managerialist paradoxes as well as the effects that these can have on the formation of teachers' professional identities.



## Micro-meso levels of influence

As mentioned in the previous section, a pessimistic relativist stance provided by the ‘globalization of cultural variety’ which Bottery (2004) suggests, could drive individuals to seek solace in value free and overarching systems of authority such as the market. It could be argued that not only are relativist adherents likely to surrender to free market imperatives but fundamentalists as well. Anthony Giddens (1991) in his work of *Modernity and Self-Identity* maps out a series of distinctive tensions with which the individual is faced and has to resolve in order to sustain a coherent sense of self-identity. By referring to each of these tensions in turn, it will be illustrated how managerialism has sought to dominate the management of educational institutions within the English-speaking context and thereby cascaded down to teachers’ sense of professional identities.

Giddens (1991), in seeking to develop an understanding of the interconnections between globalising influences and personal dispositions, adopts the notion of ‘the reflexive project of the self’ to denote an ongoing circular process of self understanding by the individual of the post modern age as a way to deal with continual contingency, uncertainty and risk that can subvert identities and alter biographies in unforeseeable and detrimental ways. In order to refine his view on the reflexive project of the self, Giddens provides a set of binary concepts expressed in terms of four ‘dilemmas of the self’ reflecting the variety of tensions and possibilities engendered by post-modernity. It is a contention of the current thesis that such dilemmas are embodied by the culture of managerialism and this will be examined further as this section evolves.

The first form in which these dilemmas present themselves has been defined by Giddens as *unification versus fragmentation*. The argument for this set of dilemmas is based on the contention that in an increasingly globalised post-modern era, traditional social ties and social

stability in general are increasingly threatened. In the face of the substantial micro and macro changes, movements towards fragmentation compete with those promoting integration. The indefinite range of possibilities by which one can increase one's sense of self-fulfilment can prove both liberating and troubling. The individual in aligning his self to standardised and global patterns ceases to be himself.

The second pair of dilemmas identified by Giddens is that of *powerlessness versus appropriation*. Giddens asserts that a central feature of Modernity is that in some cases it 'expropriates' whilst in some others it 'reappropriates'. Examples of the former case are seen in the way global markets exert control over individual autonomy which in turn have deskilling effects. On the other hand Giddens points to some capacities generated by systems of economic exchange allowing the individual an indeterminate amount of opportunities for financial gain.

Giddens's third dilemma of the self pertains to *authority versus uncertainty*. One of Giddens' persistent statements about late modernity is that 'reflexivity' undermines the certainty of knowledge in that individuals no longer 'trust' expert systems. Notwithstanding the very principle of doubt by which modes of expertise are fuelled in the post modern age, the reorganization of social life through abstract overarching systems creates many routine forms of activity which enhances their predictability. Paradoxically, given the possibility to question expert systems, the authority/doubt divide is resolved through the vesting of trust in a given series of abstract systems, such as the market. The adherence to a dominant authority on the basis of projection has been labelled by Giddens as a 'compromise package'.

A fourth dilemma identified by Giddens is that of *personalised versus commodified experience*. He declares that while 'modernity opens up the project of the self', it nevertheless takes place 'under conditions strongly influenced by standardizing effects of commodity

capitalism'. In other words, what the market and the capitalist enterprise do in the period of high modernity, is that they feed on the gap they produce between human needs and individual desires. The conditions which shape a consumerist society spring from the way conditions of production are monopolised by the market under the guise of individual rights and responsibilities and therefore the designation of individual wants and needs of personal autonomy are all translated into what Giddens calls 'consumption packages'.

### **Managerialism: Boon or bane?**

The paradoxical combination of the dilemmas just described can frame the way by which managerial and performance driven agendas can be conceptualised and criticised. The emergence of Giddens's dilemmas is the outcome of the confluence of larger global forces such as the ones already alluded to in the previous section. The new forms of economic arrangements in line with neo-liberal agendas have steered national governments to control educational processes by subjecting them to the imperatives of multinational and global market demands. A response by governmental policies to such global economic imperatives has been the adoption of managerialist approaches to the reorganization of the public sector including education. The advent of managerialism within the educational policy context and discourse, heralds the end of the concept of management and leadership as a means of enhancing the quality of education where teachers are left to their own devices in searching for the best possible means of attaining the educational key tasks. Put another way, managerialism is leadership and management to excess, for it 'transcends the support role of leadership and management and in its extreme manifestation becomes an end in itself' (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). The very term of managerialism within the educational discourse has economic implications driven from the private sector. An example of this is the manner in which the language of educational policy has been changed and captured by a discourse triggered by the enhanced role of the 'evaluative state' and its new mode of regulation that of

performativity (Neave, 1988). The latter requires teachers and educational practitioners to organize themselves in terms of responses to targets, indicators, standards, outcomes as well as detailed and prescribed set of policies. This in turn entails the monitoring and surveillance of all educational practice by state officials. England has been prominent in accommodating a combination of policies advocating competition, entrepreneurialism and institutional survival with performance driven policies under Conservative and New Labour since the mid 1980s. It is held that such policies are guided from US policies in terms of 'third way' human resource policies aiming to provide an education and training regime designed to produce skilful workforces more capable of dealing with and working within a competitive global market place (Bottery, 2002). Nevertheless, the advanced neo-liberal and managerial character of such policies has had profound effects not only upon organizations but on professionals as well for a number of reasons which will be analysed through the lenses of Giddens's four dilemmas of the self.

The managerialist project embodies Giddens *unification/fragmentation* divide. The unifying form of 'Managerial Globalization' (Bottery, 2000) stems from national governments' recognition that they can no longer afford to leave the national economic prosperity to the hands of the market but rather they need to create strategies for deriving practices from the private sector conducive to the creation of niche-marketed workforces in order to perform multinational and global market demands. Therefore, a majority of national policies have come to endorse an array of strategies described as 'commonalities' (Bottery, 2007) underpinned by principles of a global vision of education such as 'increased partnerships', 'workforce remodelling', 'transformational leadership', 'institutional devolution', 'self-evaluation', 'performativity' and 'decentralisation'. The unifying elements of managerialism are not only to be seen as occurring at the global macro level of policy, but they take place at a meso level as well in terms of the persistent efforts by national governments in creating

within and across schools management alliances for organisational improvement under the guise of a 'networked professionalism' (Furlong, 2005; Hammersley-Fletcher and Adnett, 2009; Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). The analysis of the fragmentation/ unification divide, suggests that the uncritical adoption of practices from the private sector by educators, is likely to harm the very purposes of educational management and hence the very essence of their professionalism.

The notion of fragmentation emanating from the business-like approaches to educational management alluded to above has further implications for the formation of notions of teacher professional identities co-opted in instrumental and entrepreneurial terms. Giddens's dilemma of *powerlessness versus appropriation* could be thought of as a reflection of the 'professionalization' thesis described earlier. Processes towards re-professionalization by means of 'decentralization', 'collaborative cultures' and 'workforce remodelling' which were supposed to empower the teaching profession, have in fact de-professionalised teachers.

Therefore, there is evidence emanating from a critical literature to suggest that policies during the past two decades or so such as the ones under the New Labour government in the UK have had profound consequences for teacher professional identities. Such policies foregrounding 'devolving authority', 'networked collaborative cultures', 'teamwork' and 'transformational leadership', restrict rather than enhance opportunities for teachers' 'extended professionalism'. Several authors point to an emerging view of teacher professionalism referred to as 'managerial professionalism'. Sachs (2001) identifies the 'entrepreneurial' teacher identity as emerging from the managerialist discourse which she connotes with efficient, responsible, accountable teachers who demonstrate compliance to externally imposed policy imperatives with consistently high quality teaching as measured by externally set performance indicators. She further marks this identity as being individualistic, competitive, controlling, regulative and standards-led. Other pieces of literature report on

teachers' recruitment crisis concomitant of teacher dissatisfaction, stress-related illness and early retirements (Chitty and Dunford, 1999; Bottery, 2000; Day et al, 2007). However, this need not imply that all teachers witness a reduced sense of professional autonomy or 'agency'. Giddens's third dilemma of *authority versus uncertainty* could assist in clarifying this argument further.

One of Giddens's basic assumptions regarding the notion of self-identity in the post-traditional order is that the latter occurs in the context of a plethora of choices as filtered through abstract systems. Giddens holds that as modern society becomes more secular, legitimised forms of authority such as religion upon which pre-modern culture relied, now become only an option among a diversity of ideologies and other overarching systems. One such an option is the market and the technologies through which its imperatives are dispatched, the so-called managerialism. As mentioned in the previous section, individuals trapped in their relativist stance, succumb to the inevitable forces of the market as they skip opportunities emanating from the 'globalization of cultural variety' (Bottery, 2000, 2004). While Bottery (2004) argues that fundamentalist adherents view the globalization of cultural variety as threat to their long held beliefs, his argument could be taken in a different direction to suggest that just like relativists, fundamentalists are likely to be seduced by the managerialist imperatives for in this way they become identified with a dominant authority on the basis of projection. Along the same vein as Giddens (2002) argues that fundamentalism is both a child and an instrument of globalization and hence fundamentalists groups have made extensive use of new communications technologies, so could be the case with managerialism. It could be therefore argued that both relativists and fundamentalists may be victims to managerialism which is organized around routine forms of activity. In addition, both at a policy and organizational level, the ideology of managerialism requires that the solution to a specific problem lies within some piece of legislation which has a universal application

(Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). Thus, it follows that fundamentalists although they may be aware of their incapability to know any universal truth, yet it is likely that they view such truth as revealed by managerialist regimes.

An example of how managerial values have been embraced by some practitioners is the work of Sarah Banks (2004) on *Ethics, Accountability and the Social Professions*. On interviewing a number of practitioners employed in the fields of social welfare with regard to the challenges presented by the increased demands for interagency and the 'new accountability' requirements of the modern management agenda, she came up with an array of responses. The responses provided tended to reflect the practitioners' embrace of managerial demands and ranged from a 'new managerial response' to 'reluctant conformity'. In the 'new managerial response', professional values are subservient to overarching corporate goals and targets of a service and no critique of these is sought. The 'new professional response', entails a critical embrace of the new accountability demands, yet takes such new changes as beneficial on the whole, and uses them to improve practice and service delivery. The 'professional entrepreneurial response' regards as advantageous the combination of public and private sector values. As for those individuals who have been less enthusiastic about the new changes, there emerged three other categories, defined as 'reluctant conformity', 'individual challenge' and 'radical challenge'. The former type entails seeing many of the new requirements as harmful, yet no any action is taken, whilst the second type does involve some action but nevertheless on an individual level. A more collective action is involved in the 'radical challenge' category, where managers or policy makers openly challenge the use or the values of a particular way of working on the basis of argumentation.

Paradoxically, the uncertainty factor which drives individuals to compromise themselves with the managerialist mantra has generated a higher degree of uncertainty and instability to teachers. Managerial developments are deeply paradoxical, for on the one hand they are



presented as a shift away from 'low-trust', centralised forms of control to forms of delegated and autonomous initiatives promoting flexibility and a concern towards creating 'strong', 'shared' and 'unified' cultures. In addition, managerialism provides a venue for those who feel disenchanted with the inefficiencies of the old bureaucracy and have been seduced by the 'discourse of change' (Clarke and Newman, 1997). However, the growth of the management imperative does not in fact provide legitimate 'authority' and 'agency'. Change agents and managers have been proselytised to the managerialist view for the reasons already given, regardless of its truth or potential impact on individual teachers' self and professional worth as well as on the unforeseeable consequences these will have for the educational fabric and for society and humanity at large. The corollary of this, is what Sennett (1998) has called 'the corrosion of character' the idea of which is reproduced by Ball (2003) who raises some concerns regarding the ontological insecurity witnessed by teachers as a result of performativity and appraisal systems in the UK:

The contentments of stability are increasingly elusive, purposes are made contradictory, motivations become blurred and self worth is uncertain. We are unsure what aspects of work are valued and how to prioritize efforts. We become uncertain about the reasons for actions. Are we doing this because it is important, because we believe in it, because it is worthwhile? Or is it being done ultimately because it will be measured or compared? It will make us look good! Do we know we are good at what we do, even if performance indicators tell a different story? Do we value who we are able to be, we are becoming in the labyrinth of performativity? (Ball, 2003, p. 220).

According to Ball much of the reflexivity raised in the quotation above, only becomes a matter of self-doubt and personal anxiety rather than a matter of public debate. As for the latter, this should be concerned with those moral and social values of teaching that have been overridden by management objectives as well as with how teachers can understand how professionalism has been reconstructed by the management project (Gunter, 1997).

In order for Giddens' s third dilemma to be resolved, professional teachers should question the moral validity of the managerial values and replace them with a vocabulary pertaining to what Bottery (2000) has mapped out as first order values such as autonomy, criticality, care, tolerance, equality, respect and trust. The realisation of such first order values which have been overridden by managerialism and been reduced to second order values, will occur if teachers adopt a reflexive and reflective stance , as Gunter (1997) suggests, in order to stand back and reflect on how managerialism within the public sector is reshaping and reconstructing what they are doing and why they are doing it. Therefore, teachers need to reflect upon Giddens's fourth dilemma that of *personalised versus commodified experience*.

The commodification of experience to which Giddens's final dilemma pertains, could represent the way second order values or social moral values have been captured by the managerialist project. Commentators such as Gunter (1997) and Wright (2001) have sought to employ the metaphor of *Jurassic Management* and *Bastard Leadership* respectively in order to ring the alarm bells for those delivering and experiencing in-service training and management development for the self-managing school. Their argument could be extended to all teachers governed in an 'advanced liberal' way, being represented and encouraged to think about themselves as what Rose (1989) has called 'enterprising subjects'. Gunter's metaphor of *Jurassic Management* for describing and understanding management for educational professionals, brings an interesting further dimension to earlier critical views of managerialism in that she compares the values and strategies underpinning the fictional entertainment project of Jurassic Park with what is being promoted as effective management in schools and colleges. Her major argument basically builds upon and expands on Stacey's (1993) contention that 'visioning is not only an illusion but a delusion, in that it seduces managers into planning and organizing in order to control the future rather than utilizing strategies to create it' (Stacey, 1993 cited in Gunter, 1997, p.25). Therefore, and as Gunter

asserts, Jurassic Park failed because of the primary slip-up, still evident in management training- to know and control the future. In this way, Gunter came up with the concept of 'Jurassic education management', meaning that governmental texts document fixed solutions to be used for controlling and predicting problems which take on the philosophy of Jurassic Park. In a similar vein Wright (2001) coins the term 'Bastard Leadership' in order to distinguish it from 'leadership' in an analogous way in which the term 'Bastard Feudalism' was coined in the medieval era to differentiate it from 'classical feudalism'. 'Bastard Leadership' as Wright suggests, manifests a capture of the leadership discourse by the 'managerialist' project of the New Labour government in England and Wales during the past decade. His major concern is about the moral and value underpinnings of leadership which have been stripped out of the government's official publications. Thus, while he acknowledges the importance of economic factors, he contends that the main problem is that they appear to be cast as the only issue schools need to deal with, and thus, this stands as an impediment to the moral dimensions of schooling, the purpose of which is to prepare for the unknown.

The challenges of a competitive business market have broken through teacher in-service training as well as on notions of teamwork and collegiality. Training packages have been organized around notions of technicality, practicality and short-termism (Bottery and Wright, 1997; Wright, 2001; Furlong, 2005) whilst notions of culture are accorded an instrumental function. Simply put, culture, collective learning and collaboration become the tools of management and change rather than an end in themselves (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). The notion of a unified and shared culture is a major tenet of the managerialist ambition, for dissent, diversity of opinions and conflicts are perceived by managers as deviation instead of being viewed as the cornerstone of a democratic and inclusive organization. Collaboration in this sense along with the notion of 'strong', 'shared' cultures recall what Hargreaves (2004)

has identified as 'contrived collegiality'. By the latter he means collaborative cultures which 'are hijacked by hierarchical systems of control' and hence become 'forced' or 'artificial', a prison of micromanagement which curtails teachers' room for manoeuvre (p.130).

Having discussed the commodification and marketisation of educational values in the light of Giddens's fourth dilemma, it follows that a moral language which has been closed down and colonised by the policy technologies of the market, needs to be revitalised in order to confer space of an autonomous ethically professional self. It is to this latter issue that the following section now turns.

### **Modelling teacher professionalism along moral values and ethics**

Having discussed the managerialist impact on educational institutions and teacher professionalism through the lenses of Giddens's four dilemmas of the self, this section now shifts the focus on professional frameworks developed by authors drawing from a variety of educational domains, such as leadership, educational management and change as well as the moral and ethical fabric of education. Some authors of these models enter into an active discussion about the moral basis of teaching in order to attack the view of the managerial professionalism and recast the role of the professional teacher to that of a more proactive one in terms of public accountability. However, there is evidence to suggest that some other authors in addressing a future agenda of educational change, intensify managerialist developments and hence strengthen the 'entrepreneurial' professional identity.

The version of professionalism which will be discussed first is 'System thinkers in action' proposed by Fullan (2006) who puts forward a new focus on leadership. Nevertheless, this new leadership agenda will have profound implications not only for educational leaders, but for all educators and professional practitioners. A key factor in Fullan's notion of 'System thinkers in action' is the notion of sustainability in developing a new kind of leadership which

goes beyond the success of increasing student achievement and moves towards improving organization systems. Whilst his approach might sound valuable, yet there is substantial ground to support the claim that it perpetuates the notion of ‘bastard leadership’ alluded to in the previous section and recasts educational practice as a multi-level marketing enterprise. Therefore, it could be argued that the multi-level marketing approach is implicit in Fullan’s definition of his proposed agenda for as he points out:

‘What I call ‘system thinkers in action’... are the leaders who work intensely in their own schools... and at the same time connect with and **participate in the bigger picture**... These leaders in turn **must help develop other leaders with similar characteristics**. In this sense, the main mark of a school principal...is **how many good leaders they leave behind who can go even further**. The question, then, is....**how do we get them in numbers?**’ (Fullan, 2006, p. 114), (my selected text bold).

As for the ‘bigger picture’ which Fullan talks about, this involves the eight elements which Fullan (2005) had mapped out in his previous work in order to define ‘sustainability’. The eight elements which make up Fullan’s notion of sustainability are the following: a) *public service with a moral purpose*, b) *commitment to changing context at all levels*, c) *lateral capacity- building through networks*, d) *new vertical relationships that are co-dependent encompassing both capacity building and accountability*, e) *deep learning*, f) *dual commitments to short-term and long-term results*, g) *cyclical energising*, h) *the long lever of leadership*. A commitment to a moral public good of itself is of no intrinsic value if is not wedded to society and humanity at large. His notion of ‘moral purposes’ then, is only limited to organizational improvement whilst the macro picture of global forces already described in this chapter are left out.

Moreover, one of his perennial concerns is the transformation of organizational cultures towards ‘collaborative cultures of inquiry’. The vocabulary he uses to define the latter, implies a managerialist approach to culture. By drawing on Perkins’s (2003) notion of

collaborative cultures of inquiry, Fullan (2006) points out that the latter 'alter the culture of learning in the organization away from dysfunctional and non-relationships toward the daily development of culture that can solve difficult or adaptive problems' (p.119). Therefore, it could be argued that Fullan's elements of sustainability ranging from element b) to e) seem to adopt what Hoyle and Wallace (2005) have called 'unreflective instrumental approach' to culture for the later in this case is used merely as a slogan to justify a range of directive practices. Thus, the notion of networking across school system cultures could be viewed as a manipulated symbol hijacked by hierarchical symbols of control in that 'culture' is not seen as a property emerging from competing values relating to teachers' daily practices, but rather it is instrumentally manipulated for the creation of a particular type of leadership the values of which do not indicate the pursuit of appropriate educational values.

As far as the sixth element is concerned, whilst Fullan acknowledges the importance for a commitment to long-term results, yet he overrides those for he singles out short-term progress as a corrective action by which severe problems can be predicted and solved. In addition he views short-term results as a means to build trust with the public or shareholders for longer-term investments. It seems to be the case that trust in Fullan's thinking of 'System thinkers in action' is used as a means for financial gain. Such form of trust could be considered as unproductive for educational professionals, for it is used by leadership networks to inculcate their fellow leaders in the values of the technical culture of policy implementation.

As for the seventh element, Fullan has coined the term 'cyclical energizing' to denote the energy levels required for leaders in achieving sustainability. He perceives the performance of the educational leader as that of an athlete whose energy needs to be consistently replenished after a point of overuse. He sees collaborative cultures as conducive to this aim for as he states, the latter push for greater accomplishments and they avoid the debilitating effects of negative cultures. Thus, it is possible to argue that Fullan's proposal for an element of

‘cyclical energizing’ captures educational practitioners as human resources rather than ‘resourceful humans’, to use Bottery’s words (2000, p.58), in that the premises upon which Fullan’s argument is based presume capacity building by means of training teachers in the same systematic way that elite athletes do. Therefore, it could be argued that Fullan’s sustainability strategizing promoted via ‘System thinkers in action’ mirrors the thinking as well as the developmental processes of multi-level marketing. Just as in multi-level marketing the work is done at the bottom of the pyramid, while those at the top reap most of the reward, so could be the case with ‘System thinkers in action’ for ‘networking’ is captured as the main instrument of organizational success. Nevertheless, Fullan’s agenda could turn out to be vital for educational professionals, if focused on wider ‘ecological’ issues by which all educators and all educational leaders of the world are faced. This would require a more outward looking approach in dealing with contextual and local issues within a cultural climate encouraging educational professionals’ synthesis of ideas on the basis of agreement and disagreement. In this way, professionals can become more critical of their practices for they will be cognisant of the unintended consequences that these may have not only for individuals directly concerned, but for society as a whole.

A different view of teachers’ professionalism is the one taken by Sach’s (2000) on arguing for ‘The activist professional’. Drawing on Giddens active trust, she puts forward a model of the ‘activist professional’ consisting of four elements: a) *Active trust*; the central idea of which, is collaboration among various groups, respect, facilitation, reflection and reciprocal exchange of expertise, b) *generative politics*; a fundamental feature of which is the encouragement of individuals to make things happen rather than let things happen to them. The element of generative politics seeks to combat the fundamentalists and essentialist assumptions about social relations and organizations that inform managerialist notions of professionalism, c) *partnerships*; which call for active listening, collective strategy, networking in order to offer

voice to members to sustain their professional identity and interest, *d) practitioner research*; which is founded on shared inquiry into patterns of practice and provides a way for teachers to come to know the epistemological bases of their practice.

A central tenet of the professional framework she sketches out is its collaborative nature for she advocates that:

Recasting teacher professionalism in a more activist form calls for new kinds of social and professional relationships where different parts of the broader educational enterprise work together in strategic ways. Rather than sectional interests working independently and sometimes oppositionally, active trust requires that a shared set of values, principles and strategies is debated and negotiated (Sachs, 2000, p.81).

Her view on collaboration as quoted above is similar to that of Fullan's in that all educational parties who collaborate must share common concerns, interests and values. Although her view somehow differs from that of Fullan's in that she adopts a more critical and reflective stance towards educational practice when she employs action research as a core element in her argument about the activist professional, yet the terrain that her vision of professionalism occupies concerns only the institutional, organizational and classroom levels. Her approach to action research concerns an understanding of the teaching profession by teachers along with the epistemological bases of their practice. However, she does not demonstrate how the moral bases of action research can be activated. Within the context of action research, teachers acting as researchers should not only be critical of and question their practice, but rather they should question the nature of external policies determining those practices. Bottery and Wright (2000) have been quite correct in questioning the nature of action research within the context of market-generated policies. They have warned of the danger that 'action research' in an age of managed schools is likely to take the form of a blind and uncritical compliance by senior management teams with the externally pre-defined management plant. Thus, they distinguish action research from 'critical action research' in that the latter subverts and



challenges the status quo whereas the former perpetuates the technical rationalist nature of policy. Thus, although Sachs acknowledges the importance of action research in moving professional and public discourses about schooling beyond traditional technical notions of professional development, her focus could be deemed narrow in the sense that she does not locate her activist approach within wider political, global and ecological dimensions of schooling and of the teaching profession. A possible outcome of this might be that action research will bring about unexpected consequences not only upon teachers' own practice but upon all those who are directly and indirectly concerned. Professionalism requires more than the creation of collective, collaborative and research cultures. Undoubtedly, Sachs provides a sound professional theoretical framework which might work effectively if wedded to a concern for 'public' as well as 'global' ethics. While she does acknowledge that educational practice involves moral and social purposes, she does not pay much attention to how these can be activated.

Professionalism should anticipate a search for the truth about the profession itself. In order for this to be achieved, teachers should embrace in their professional repertoire the public and civic gloss that Bottery attaches to professionalism, and which came to be suffused in what he called 'five ethics for professions of the third millenium' (Bottery, 1998). The five ethics he has proposed in redefining the professional's practice of the future concern a) *an ethic of provisionality* which admits the existence of different paths to the solution of a problem and at the same time implies the limitation of human understanding in regards to 'truth'. It is an emancipatory perspective for it recognizes the contribution that diverse viewpoints can have for the transformation of a more tolerant society, b) *an ethic of truth searching* which acknowledges the latent uncertainty of professional practice and thus occupational disclosure should take precedence and override personal advantage. In other words, because the professional cannot be certain what is fact and what is still opinion for the time being, he/she

is obliged 'to speak out upon issues which may be politically uncomfortable' (Bottery, 1998, p.167), c) *an ethic of reflective integrity* which draws upon the notion of professional artistry elucidated by Schon (1983) and suggests that the professional should reflect upon the client's opinion about the problem under concern as to reach to a point where both are satisfied with the final framing of the problem. Bottery (1998) adds to the art of problem framing the ecological dimension which transcends technical practice as the professional unfolds to the client 'the multi-layered value laden nature of the reality of such practice and of the society within which it takes place' (p.168). The forth ethic is that of *humility* where the image of the infallible expert is challenged. The professional in adopting the lenses of provisionality, discovers that his expertise and knowledge is not secure enough to define and solve a problem. Thus he has to shift his role and responsibility from being a practitioner and educator to becoming a learner. The fifth ethic is that of *humanistic education* where the task of the professional is to pass on to the client the competency of the reflective practitioner. In this respect, professionals should disclaim the mastering of the situation and develop the technique of contemplating various reference frames by exchanging information with the client rather than 'selling their already decided approach to them' (p.169). The outcome of such an ethic of humility is not only empowering for the client but for the educator as well, for the client is pre-armed as to be able to solve the problem himself in the future and the educator benefits from such an exchange in that he gains into a process of understanding himself and his practice.

Further to the five ethics above, Bottery (2008) in one of his more recent writings, rings the alarm for educational leaders and all educational professionals to concern themselves with the idea of 'global public ethics'. He has raised concerns over the implications that a global depletion of oil is likely to have not only for the planet but for educational practice as well. As a proactive response towards such implications, he forms his agenda for sustainability along

four premises : a) *an awareness of the environmental fragility of the planet* in order to transform the nature of competitive and energy-dependent approaches, b) *an awareness of the need for global cooperation* for a more productive control of the dangers, c) *a reassertion of global public good* meaning that a global public concern needs to override private or lofty national interests, d) *a transcendence of national interests* so that myopic cultural viewpoints are eliminated on the basis that all human beings whilst may seem different, they all nevertheless share the same life problems and concerns.

It follows then that the ‘ethic of sustainability’ which Bottery stands for, differs vastly from Fullan’s ‘sustainability strategizing’ discussed earlier. Bottery (2008) forms an educational agenda to be used by professionals as a response to the foreseeable problems which may be caused by ‘global energy’, whilst Fullan (2006) puts forward an agenda which views ‘human energy’ as the core instrument in sustaining and improving educational change. Therefore, Fullan’s framework of ‘System thinkers in action’ would be a more sufficient approach to educational activity if it embraced Bottery’s four kinds of awareness which make up his notion of an ‘ethic of sustainability’. A sustainable development for the Greek Cypriot education system is largely driven from a school effectiveness and improvement literature with neo-liberal orientations. Thus, the new proposal for Greek Cypriot teachers’ evaluation which is a revised version of previous educational plans to reform the educational system with a school-based and self-evaluation approach, could be seen as a replication of the professionalization agenda witnessed elsewhere. Such processes sit uneasily with the global, E.U and societal demands for educating critical and democratic citizens for a sustainable and more tolerable Cypriot community.

Having discussed the three different versions of professionalism, such as Fullan’s ‘system thinkers in action’, Sachs’ ‘activist professional’ and Bottery’s ‘five ethics’ the focus will now

shift on how educational values of the ‘public’ and ‘global public’ good might be addressed within the new management of education.

### **An ethics educational agenda along Habermas’s theory of communication and discourse ethics**

This section aims to outline the basic principles forming Habermas’s theory of ‘communication’ and ‘discourse ethics’ (1990,1993, 1995) that will be articulated in the construction of a framework for Greek Cypriot Philological teachers’ professionalism in a later chapter of the present thesis. Much of Habermas’s theory draws on ‘critical theory’ which is tied to an ‘emancipatory interest’ in that the latter seeks to free individuals from domination and oppression. The rationale for drawing on Habermas’ s theory rests on its emancipatory character. A contention held by the current thesis is that educational professionals will free themselves from external control as well as from the domination of forces that are humanly created and which they do not understand or control, by becoming ‘ethically discursive’ aware in a Habermasian sense.

The basic assumption underlying Habermas’s (1990) theory is that justifying the validity of moral norms can be done in a manner analogous to the justification of facts. Basic to his assumption is the idea that the validity of a moral norm cannot be justified in the mind of an isolated individual reflecting on the world, rather the validity is justified only intersubjectively in a process of argumentation between individuals , in a dialectic. In other words claims to truth depend upon the mutual understanding achieved by individuals in argument. A communication of this kind came to be called by Habermas as ‘communicative action’ which he contrasts to what he has called ‘strategic action’ for as in the latter case ‘one actor seeks to *influence* the behaviour of another by means of the threat of sanctions or the prospect of gratification in order to *cause* the interaction to continue as the first actor

desires' (p.58). In developing his argument further, Habermas (1993) has coined the principle of 'universalization' which he extracts from the notion of 'ideal role taking' (p.129). The principle of universalization according to Habermas, requires 'a universal exchange of roles' so that none of those affected will be constrained to adopt the perspectives of all others in the exchange of reasons, hence a process of what he calls 'deliberation' is achieved where all actors involved in a dialogue justify the correctness of their decision. In addition to these principles, Habermas employs the concept of 'the moral point of view' as a prerequisite in the process of a cooperative search for truth. The 'moral point of view' as formulated by Habermas (1990), arises out of the multiple perspectives of those affected by a norm under consideration where 'nothing coerces anyone except the force of the better argument' (p.198). The essence of the moral point of view lies in the fact that it is not the individual property of an individual subject but the property of a community of interlocutors seeking to define 'what is equally good for all' (Habermas, 1993, p.151). What underlies his theory is a sense of solidarity inducing participants in argumentation 'to become aware of their membership in an unlimited communication community' (Habermas, 1993, p.154).

Redefining Greek Cypriot educational professionals along Habermasian lines, the present thesis will have a further contribution to the development of a challenging set of professional ethics aiming to cultivate an ethos of critical responsiveness to difference. The latter could open up cultural space through which educational professionals and students come to a shared recognition that living with difference is a necessary condition for realising that all humanity is affected by the same global issues. Therefore, Greek Cypriot philological teachers need not only to be aware of the forces which are likely to impact upon their practice but of the consequences that their practice will have for all members of the Cypriot community and for humanity at large as well. The reasons driving the demand to recast Greek Cypriot philological teachers in this light will be indicated and discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

**The Greek Cypriot socio-political milieu in light of the incoming managerial reforms:**

**The way ahead for a ‘discourse-based ethics’ and ‘reflexive’ professionalism.**

### **Introduction**

The discussion on which this chapter focuses is an extension of the macro level forces which have affected the context of educational reforms and were examined in the previous chapter. Added to these forces, this chapter critically looks at the historical as well as social, political and economic factors at play as key issues currently affecting the Greek Cypriot context of educational reforms. Therefore, while chapter 2 sought to suggest some models of professional identity which might be applicable to the Greek Cypriot context, this chapter develops on these issues further and aims to address the following research objectives:

- How has the historical context of education in Cyprus impacted on the educational reforms?
- What social, political, and economic factors in Cyprus have affected the context of the educational reforms?

More precisely, a delineation of the historical circumstances which in turn resulted to particular cultural patterns and shaped the Greek Cypriot educational system will be vital in addressing the thesis argument which holds that a managerialist approach to the Greek Cypriot educational system would fail to cater for a future oriented approach embracing all Cypriots through a global and European ideal. Therefore, a concluding remark of this chapter includes a call for a proactive discourse of philological teachers’ professionalism based on the Habermasian form of dialogue as well as on the Giddesian notion of reflexivity outlined in the previous chapter.

## **The historical and socio-cultural context of the study**

### *Historical background*

Throughout the centuries education in Cyprus has been demarcated by strong nationalism and a spirit of patriotism, with some aspects of them being permeated until recently. The strategic position of the island has rendered it to be the target of military attacks. Two landmarks of foreign occupation which the island has experienced are the periods of Turkish (1570-1870) and British rule (1878-1960). During a long history of foreign occupation, the Greek population of the island has struggled to maintain its national identity. As it is widely documented, the struggle and protest of the Greek Cypriot youth during the British colonialism were attributable to the 'dehellenizing' measures of the latter (Bryant, 1997; Yavuz, 1991; Koutselini, 1997 b). In doing so, the British transformed the religious differences between Muslims and Orthodox Christians into highly politicized and ethnically divided ones, by fostering a separate Turkish and Greek identity respectively; and allowing, at the same time, the educational division between the two communities (Worsley and Kitromilides, 1979). The power of the Orthodox Church is said to have played a vital role in safeguarding the religious and national identity of the island. It is basically the Orthodox Church leaders who motivated the alignment of the Greek Cypriot education policy to that of mainland Greece (Koutselini and Persianis, 2000). Thus, Greek Cypriot education, according to some academics' views has been largely shaped by two factors: the ecclesiastical origin of the schools, and the politically motivated ambition of the nationalist and Orthodox Church leaders of the Greek Cypriot community to follow the mainland Greece (Persianis, 1978; Koutsellini, 1997 a). In order to understand the structures of consciousness adhering to an epistemological fundamentalism, it is worth noting that teachers were enormously influenced by the Church on educational matters. Thus, teaching at that time was performed in a catechistic style with the teacher being the only central figure who would treat textbooks as

sacred and unquestioned forms of knowledge. Thus, teachers perceived their role in terms of the traditional cultural values of the Orthodox Church (Trimikliniotis, 2004; Koutselini and Persianis, 2000). Therefore, this type of priest-teacher would deem any possible error as a kind of sin, which reflects on the Orthodox Church's epistemology about the absolute truth; and which the priest-teacher must transmit to the pupils as the only means to secular salvation in the same way that Orthodox religious knowledge is necessary for spiritual salvation (Koutselini and Persianis, 2000). The attributes of the priest-teacher were coupled with moral aims wedded to a wider ideal- not just an ideal of justice and freedom, but an ideal of the island's unification with Greece. This moral was identified to 'a moral disciplined of a patriotic life' (Bryant, 1997) and reached its peak in 1955 when the National Organization of Greek Cypriot Fighters unleashed the first wave of anti-British violence demanding union with Greece. The so called 'EOKA' struggle has remained a distinctive landmark within the Greek Cypriot history, and has caused a great deal of controversy regarding history teaching today within Greek Cypriot secondary education; an issue which will be returned to later in this chapter.

The picture delineated so far concerns the period prior to independence, where the Church had established itself as the centre of religious, educational and cultural activities. The second distinguishable educational period concerns the post independence period. In 1959, after the London and Zurich agreements, Cyprus became an independent state, and subsequently a member of the British Commonwealth and of the United Nations (Pashiardis, 2007). In 1960, the constitution of the newly established Republic of Cyprus placed the educational systems of the two communities under two different communal chambers. The division between Greek and Turkish Cypriots was further deepened since education became the separate responsibility of the Greek Cypriot community and the Turkish Cypriot community through their respective Communal Chambers.



The ethnocentric model which characterized education in Cyprus during the British colonial era, was perpetuated after independence. Some commentators have stated, that unlike most post-colonial educational systems, Cyprus education was given a divisive role in both communities, each of which worked separately to build their own nationalities (Koutselini, 2007). Thus, from 1960 to 1974 both Greek and Turkish public schools in Cyprus had ethnic education as their primary objective, in which the citizen was a carrier and dispenser of national ideology and identity; and so the missionary role of the teacher was combined with political activism (Persianis, 2006; Koutselini, 2007).

Following the island's invasion and partial occupation by the Turkish troops in 1974, Greek Cypriot educational matters changed dramatically. At stake was the recovery of the Cypriot state, and thus a pragmatic view of its actual economic needs had begun to emerge, hence the demise of the ideological dream of unification with Greece. The desire to safeguard a unified and independent Cypriot state had become a priority for those who saw themselves as neo-Cypriots. With regard to the latter, this involved an approach sought by the Leftist, who favoured a unified country devoid of its nationalistic and ethnocentric aspects (Christou, 2006; Koutselini, 1997 b). In effect, the role of the teacher as a dispenser of ethnic ideals had not disappeared but coexisted with the type of teacher who would contribute to the survival as well as the economic prosperity of the country. The latter role, the one with economic nuances has generated new realities for education and for the Greek Cypriot society. It is now time to examine cultural patterns and norms emerging as an outcome of this new role during the post invasion era and which are deemed to impact upon education and in effect upon philological teachers' professionalism.

Bearing in mind the recent socio-political history of the country described in the previous section, it could be argued, as Kliebard (1992) pointed out, that education policy is formed by the complex interplay of competing values and traditions as signified by different interest groups whose values mirror the meaning they ascribe to social, political, and economic conditions. The aim of this section is to further expand this argument by highlighting other social patterns which came into play after the invasion period as to recapture these later in the light of global influences.

The consequences of the Turkish invasion of 1974 have impacted upon every part of life in Cyprus, particularly the economy, the education system and the society. The events of the invasion have had profound effects on the economy and later gave way to the emergence of an array of cultural patterns, which in effect have infiltrated organizational and societal values. There is a prominent discourse on materialism coupled with a 'work ethic' which grew after the disaster of 1974, a development termed as 'the Cyprus Miracle' (Christodoulou, 1992; Mavratsas, 1997). The Republic of Cyprus which had witnessed a 14 year period of unstable existence, managed to recover economically in a relatively short time. The recovery of the Cyprus economy is attributed to the hard-working spirit of its people (Christou, 2006; Georgiades, 2006). Mavratsas (1997) draws an interesting socio-cultural analysis of the effects of the invasion events upon Greek Cypriot economic and political culture. He views the 'corporatization' of Greek Cypriot politics brought about by the tragic events of 1974 as an impediment to the 'rationalization and modernization of the political culture and ethos of the Republic of Cyprus' (p. 285). The notion of 'corporatization' can be explained in terms of how internal politics have been carried out in order for Greek Cypriots to cope with the economic uncertainty emanated from the invasion. Thus, the notion of 'corporatism' of Greek Cypriot politics in conjunction with the notion of 'over-politicization' denotes political

practices which are initiated and carried out by organised interest groups who avoid controversies as they aim to build consensus among a wide spectrum of political forces and interests and seek compromise as far as possible. Undoubtedly, the development of corporatism in some respect has proved productive for the Greek Cypriot economy as the institutionalization of procedures for achieving collective agreements in labour and industrial relations, has removed Cyprus from the list of the so-called Third World countries. Nevertheless, the culture of 'corporatism' has been criticized in that it stifles critical independent thinking (Mavratsas, 1997), and became the source of another cultural norm, the so called 'nepotism' or 'favouritism'. The latter arises from a general reluctance by Greek Cypriot people to question accepted dogmas and to express individual opinions, with an implicit acceptance that only social groups and organised interests are legitimate socio-political actors (Mavratsas, 1997; Georgiades, 2006). This in effect, reinforces politicization within society as individuals promote their interests through the established channels. In other words, 'over-politicization' as well as 'favouritism' can be conceived of as cultural trends founded upon the premise that nothing is accomplished unless you know 'somebody' who is a person in power or belongs to an organised political group. This susceptibility of Cypriot culture to unjust practices of favouritism and nepotism, is reflected in all organizational domains within the Greek Cypriot society including education in the form of undeserving appointments, promotions and privileged employment transfers. Consequently, the form of favouritism examined herein is in accordance with a wide range of literature defining favouritism as the inclination to favour and promote the interest of one person, to the neglect of others having equal claims and it is usually reflected in the subjective evaluation of another's performance (Fraser and Kick, 2000; Georgiades, 2006; Skotinou, 1995; Varnava and Koutsoulis, 2006; Zembylas and Papanastasiou, 2006). In the literature it is frequently

captured as an antonym for 'meritocracy' and 'equal opportunity', since the latter is based on the premise that only the most deserving individuals are rewarded (Son Hing et al, 2002).

As mentioned above, the work ethic which characterizes Greek Cypriots is a residue of the catastrophic invasion events. Such an 'economic ethos' is related to a moral concern about the well being of one's family. Economic achievement for the Greek Cypriots was not inevitably linked to merely utilitarian concerns. The economic instability generated by the invasion strengthened Greek Cypriots' self-sacrifice for their families. The settlement of one's children had perhaps become the most important value in the Greek Cypriot ethos. Thus, parents accorded great value to academic studies as the most guaranteed means for their children's financial security. Therefore, since parental choice of public education is relatively unknown within the Greek Cypriot society, one means of achieving academic advantage is the sending of their children to supplementary afternoon classes. As far as the latter is concerned, it could be argued that the post invasion effect is not the only condition for its development. The popularity of private tutoring within the Greek Cypriot society could be attributed to one of the weaknesses facing the current system today and it is an outcome of the strong influence that politics plays in the island today, as already mentioned in this section. Research conducted by Skotinou (1995) on *The procedures for selecting secondary school teachers in Cyprus* found that teachers' level of commitment is strongly influenced by their affiliation to a particular political party. An example of this involves the way that teacher trade union elections are carried out. Characteristically, when it comes to elections for the leaders of trade unions, teachers are divided into groups that correspond to political parties. Skotinou (1995) criticises such developments as unhealthy for they weaken the real aims of trade unions and serve other purposes instead of upgrading the teachers' status. The analysis above suggests that these instances indicate that teaching instead of being the primary focus of the teaching profession may in fact be being downgraded to a secondary status. The ultimate aim of teachers

however, must be not only concerned with financial gains or with matters related to professional status and image, but should be closely bound up with long-term educational concerns, such as the new challenges of communal development, tolerance and sensitivity to global issues.

One of the consequences of the devaluation of teaching is that parents are driven to distrust the educational system and to seek other means in securing their children's academic success. On the other hand, quite a lot of teachers benefit from society's demand for private tutoring for it is an opportunity to increase their income. It should be noted that the development of supplementary afternoon classes was initiated by the Ministry of Education a few years after the invasion, and the first organised tutorial classes were run by the Ministry and were situated in public school buildings. The aim has been to offer assistance to students in order to get prepared for the university entrance examinations. Tuition fees are relatively cheaper in governmental afternoon classes than the ones run by individual teachers. It is however illegal for teachers already working in the public sector to run private classes in the afternoon. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers working for private tuition are experienced teachers, already appointed in the public sector. Despite the fact that the state has established prevention measures against it, the situation remains out of control. In both Greece and Cyprus where this phenomenon is very popular it is defined as *parapaideia*. The prefix 'para' in Greek is used to denote proximity, whereas the term 'paideia' means education. Thus, the concept of 'parapaideia' connotes to something which it is developed outside or near education. While there has been a great deal of dispute concerning the expansion of 'parapaideia' in the media and among education stakeholders of Cyprus, the academic literature on educational matters in Cyprus hardly alludes to this development and the consequences that has on teachers' professionalism and education.

The consequences of private tutoring for philological teachers' professionalism might be twofold. On the one hand, mainstream teachers acting as private tutors are contributing towards the loss of their professional integrity, in that they cover only part of the curriculum during school hours and then require students to attend private classes run by the same teachers, so as to make up for the remainder of the curriculum. In some other cases, those mainstream teachers who do not run afternoon classes, are forced to teach school subjects in a mechanistic and standardised manner so that the approach taken by private tutors does not conflict with theirs. On some other occasions, many mainstream teachers teach school lessons only superficially, for they assume that their students receive private tutoring, and thus there is no need for covering the lessons fully in the class (Popa and Acedo, 2006; Bray, 2005). These can be read as examples where the professional and ethical integrity of teachers' professionalism is undermined, since their primary concerns mentioned earlier are downgraded to second order values, such as to cover only the pre-scribed curriculum in a mechanistic manner.

On the other hand, it might be the case that teachers acting as private tutors interpret this process in terms of 're-professionalization', in that they regain their professional autonomy and competence by taking on extra responsibilities and workload to teach in afternoon classes (Popa and Acedo, 2006). In fact, private tutors could be regarded as nothing more than puppets of a highly controlling and centralised educational system, whose private tutoring practices, if they do not fully comply with the governments' pre-defined and standard based curriculum content, cannot be marketed to students and parents.

As it will be examined in the next section, Greek Cypriot education is currently undergoing educational reform along managerialist and school-based autonomy directions due to global and EU requirements. In the light of these changes it is argued by the present thesis that 'parapaideia' will be rather enhanced than eliminated, in spite of the present governments'

claims that the opposite will be the case .Evidence for supporting this claim, are those provided by Bray (2005) and Russell (2002) in commenting on the U.K example. Both commentators have explained the boost in private tutoring within the English context as the outcome of the increased stratification of the state school system and the government's entire strategy for raising standards, as well as the praise or disapproval of teachers. Although these authors do not speak of the corollaries of the phenomenon on teachers' professionalism, it is possible to suggest that this could be seen as an alarming issue for the Greek Cypriot situation, which may well advance philological teachers' de-professionalization. The possible threats to teachers' professional identities as an outcome of such directions will be returned to later in this chapter.

### **Reforming Greek Cypriot education: the 'wise' men and the elephant.**

During the past six years, the overall Greek Cypriot educational system is in the process of being transformed due to the global and European forces outlined in the previous chapter. Succinctly, those factors pushing for educational reform in Cyprus largely emanate from E.U economic as well as cultural demands. Added to these forces are the current Cypriot communal requirements being at play following the country's accession to the Maastricht agreement on economic and Monetary Union which led to the adoption of the Euro in 2008. Therefore, the reunification of the Cypriot economy has raised considerable interest among sociologists, politicians and economists. Theophanous and Tirkides (2006) stress the challenges as well as the opportunities which the aftermath of a reunification of the island and concurrently the economic integration will present for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Other examples highlighting the need for the two communities to work beyond bi-communalism, if the Cypriot economy is to compete in the global market, are a number of activities carried out by supra national organizations. The 'Civil society dialogue' launched by the UN and other American-based institutions is a supra national effort, aiming to inspire and

re-mobilize peace builders across the borders that will seek to structure dialogue sessions which will envision and design their future worlds. Other efforts of this kind include structured dialogue sessions organized for entrepreneurs who wish to understand how the current political impasse harms both communities on the island in the business domain (Laouris et al, 2008).

The above E.U and contextual realities pose great challenges for the educational system of Cyprus which was only constituted as independent a couple of decades ago. A series of unrelenting educational reform proposals put forward by the state, have become the source of great dispute among politicians, teacher unions and all education stakeholders. The aims of the reform proposals are centred on school improvement and school based autonomy with an emphasis on teachers' promotion system and self-evaluation, and a concomitant orientation towards the creation of peaceful co-existence and rapprochement with the Turkish-Cypriots. In achieving the latter, the government has demanded the revision of History textbooks.

As already noted in the previous chapter, almost all reform efforts proposed by the Greek Cypriot government are heavily couched in neoliberal terms, reflecting what is known as 'professionalization'. This chapter takes this issue a step further by arguing that the government's reform attempts have been the product of discussion among various groups and committees set by the government, without any regard for what is in the best interest of society as a whole.

The 'committee' practice followed by the Greek Cypriot government has been criticised by the Greek Cypriot academic community and the press. A firm example of such criticisms has been documented by *The Cyprus Mail* arguing against the tactics of successive governments to formulate policy by inviting the views of interested parties such as pressure groups and teacher unions:



‘The pursuit of consensus via interminable rounds of discussions at committee and sub-committee levels, at which everyone with some opinion is invited, rarely produces the desired results, giving substance to the memorable saying that “an elephant is a horse designed by committee”. Governments follow the “committee” practice because it allows them to take only partial responsibility for decisions and thus minimise the political cost of unpopular measures. If there is criticism of the measures, it can be argued that they were the product of dialogue among all parties concerned, with the government crediting itself for following a democratic procedure. While this approach may be quite useful for public issues of lesser importance, in most cases it is an excuse for inaction and, in a few cases, a recipe for blunders’ (*The Cyprus Mail*, 2007).

The above quotation as it stands, raises some ethical questions regarding the participation in educational matters of those who will be affected by its implementation. The various committees set by the government in dealing with the new teachers’ evaluation plan discussed earlier are different from those set for dealing with the formation of the new syllabi as well as from those responsible for revising history textbooks. It seems to be the case that individual experts on committees, instead of pooling their professional knowledge and looking at the whole picture, stick to their own point of view and do not reach consensus. As the educational challenges facing Cypriot education get more complicated, given that there are multiple and contradictory forces which are posing educational change, philological teachers run the risk of seeing only one piece of the whole picture, just like the blind men and the elephant. In the following sections where a host of reform proposals are discussed it will be argued that philological teachers’ professionalism will be sustained only if they act proactively and respond reflexively to the various professional dilemmas likely to be brought about by the reforms. Such dilemmas can often, and as argued in the previous chapter, be understood in binary forms (such as formative vs summative, managerial roles vs pedagogic roles). Therefore, philological teachers must reflect upon these in the light of the long-term educational aims, such as the cultivation of a tolerant and informed citizenry.

### *The shift from a subjective-based evaluation system to a more objective one*

The latest reform plan developed by the Greek Cypriot government is the evaluation system for teachers discussed in the previous chapter, an educational effort which builds on previous reform attempts by various committees employed by the government to establish a culture of evaluation for strengthening evidence based policy making (MOEC, 2009 b). Thus, the new evaluation plan is based on the previous government's reform proposal of 2004 which was called 'Democratic and Humanistic Education in Euro-Cypriot Society' (Educational reform committee, 2004). The transformation process of this reform was taken up by a team which became known as the 'seven wise experts' and had been hired by the previous government. The 'seven wise experts' came up with identifying an array of descriptors of the weaknesses of the Greek Cypriot educational system. The report of the Reform Committee focused only briefly on citizenry issues, including the need for an emphasis on rapprochement and reconciliation with Turkish Cypriots. However, the overall focus of the reform was on rather technical, logistical and legal dimensions announcing a wide range of measures to be introduced for a fair way of external evaluation of teachers as well as other mechanisms for evaluating the performance of the school units. Alongside the existence of this reform report, there has developed a critical academic literature citing Greek Cypriot teachers' dissatisfaction with the currently existing promotion and inspection system (Pashiardis and Ribbins, 2003; Thody et al, 2007; Angelides and Leich, 2004; Zembylas and Papanastasiou, 2004, 2006, 2005; Tsiakkios and Pashiardis, 2002; Kyriakides et al, 2006; Menon and Christou, 2002; Menon, 2002; Varnava and Koutsoulis, 2006; Kyriakides, 1999, Drake et al, 1997). All these commentators describe the existing promotion and evaluation system as ineffective, for it is not based on objective and standard-based criteria, but is mainly based on seniority. Other commentators acknowledge that some inspectors look more positively on those teachers who belong to certain trade unions or hold particular political affiliations

(Pavlou, 2008; Skotinou, 1995). In cases where favouritism is absent, then the typical pattern which follows leads to a negative impression of feelings of disempowerment and job dissatisfaction, which inevitably affect teachers' motivation.

Three years after the reform proposal of 2004, another educational plan was announced named '*Strategic Planning for Education: an overhaul of our educational system*' (MOEC, 2007) which extensively focused on the technical and numerical dimensions of school-evaluation as well as on teachers' training and promotion system. This plan was revised and replaced by the new teachers' evaluation plan with a bearing on self-evaluation and peer appraisal through formative and summative processes (MOEC, 2009 b).

Another process introduced by the government has been orientated towards evidence based education, learning outcomes and teachers' skills (European Network of Education Councils, 2009). This is the reform of the curriculum discussed in the previous chapter and a basic principle of which is the reduction in actual teaching time (Committee of experts, 2008). The government has delegated full responsibility for the development of the new curricula to a number of committees mainly consisting of Greek university academics with only a small number of teachers, without requiring the engagement of those who will be directly affected, such as the class teachers or teachers' trainers.

The actual scope of the newly proposed teachers' evaluation scheme as well as the development of new curricula, as the General Director of the Education Ministry said to the press, would be to give students' everything they need from the public school, so that they have no need for supplementary afternoon tutoring (Stylianou, 2009 cited in Hassapi, 2009). Although this scope sounds quite ambitious, it is doubtful whether philological teachers will regain their professional empowerment as to respond to the actual needs of society. Given the materialistic Greek Cypriot culture described earlier as well as the high value society places

on competition and success, it is highly likely that in the aftermath of the adoption of controlled accountability mechanisms in the form of school-autonomy, decentralisation and peer evaluation, society's reliance on private tutoring will be rather increased. Because if the performance of each school unit is to be measured with the use of 'appraisal reports' (MOEC, 2009, b p.17), then education will become an examination machine with teachers and students focusing on what can be measured in the short term rather than forming a vision of what can be achieved in the long run, in a future bi-communal state. Consequently, the professional integrity of teachers referred to earlier will be jeopardised and downgraded to the technical culture of teaching, stripping away all the ethical and moral educational ingredients needed for a viable reunited community.

#### *Ideological disagreements over the revision of History textbooks*

Further to the strategic and managerial part of the reform tackling issues of self-evaluation, there is the issue of revising the Greek-Cypriot history curricula. The political controversy regarding history teaching was revived after a Communist president was elected in 2008 in the Greek part of Cyprus. Upon his election, the new Left-wing president sent a circular to all state schools outlining among other aims of the new academic year, 'the cultivation of a culture of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and co-operation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots (Evripidou, 2008). Basically, the reason why the debate on the revision of History textbooks has become so heated rests on the long embedded ideological divide between Left and Right. The Right-wing party is attached to a liberal conservative ideology with its proponents being strongly affiliated with the Hellenic-Christian ideals and unification with Greece, whilst the Left-wing party represents the working class and is a more 'reformist' party rather than 'nationalistic', emphasizing rapprochement with Turkish Cypriots as well as a federal solution to the Cyprus problem. The ideological gap between the two political parties can be traced back to the late fifties when the anti-British resistance movement of the

aforementioned EOKA fighters was formed. At that time the Left-wing party was opposed to the EOKA struggle, for the EOKA fighters saw them as collaborators of the British. Thus, the whole picture appears to be like a domestic warfare, with several Left-wing members assassinated by EOKA as 'betrayers' (Markides, 1974). Therefore, the EOKA struggle for unification with Greece is documented as the start of the interethnic fighting (Papadakis, 1998) followed by a series of terrorist events which threw the island into complete chaos (Shughart, 2006). Following the country's independence in 1960, the interethnic fighting erupted as the Right-wing members pursued unification with Greece. A coup unleashed by EOKA B in 1974 aimed at unifying Cyprus with the motherland Greece, led to the military occupation of the north-side by Turkey.

The political polarization briefly described above has revived after Cyprus elected its first communist president, who stands out among Greek Cypriot politicians for enjoying good relations with Turkish Cypriots. Following his election, he set among the other goals of the reform established by the previous government, the creation of a peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In addition, he emphasized that any changes that were to take place, would always occur in the context of 'a constructive dialogue with all the involved parties' (Educational news, 2008). Nevertheless, the barrage of criticism against the new governments' declarations on educational matters sharply contradicts the presidents' statement.

On the one hand, there is the new elected Left-wing government's demand that the 'reinstatement of the truth' and the elimination of the falsification of History are key starting points for achieving reconciliation and a termination to the Cyprus conflict (MOEC, 2008). Hence, those affiliated with a Right-wing political ideology hit out at allegations that the new elected government's objectives are tantamount to the 'self-castration of our Hellenic heritage' assuming that the government intends to falsify the EOKA events (Evripidou, 2008).

Therefore, the President, in adopting a defiant stance in order to shake off criticism coming from the Right, he brought the issue of EOKA into the fore, around which the main controversy centres, and declared that the government was not planning to whitewash history and the EOKA's colonial struggle against the British. In addition, in a more defiant mood towards the attack against education reform he contended that:

Changes to the history books are needed if we want to be a modern state and if we want to have a somewhat **objective view** of our modern history..We are destined to live with Turkish Cypriots for centuries unless we decide to live alone...Who said we would tarnish the struggle of EOKA? And if mistakes were made, let's admit them. We will honour the struggles and the heroes who gave their lives, but at the same time mistakes were made, omissions were made, people died unnecessarily. Will we have the power to give these people justice? These are the questions the political leadership has to answer **collectively and responsibly, and history itself**. (Christofias reported by Evripidou in the Cyprus Mail, 2009).

In a similar vein, the Minister of education has stated regarding the matter of 'truth' that history textbooks have remained virtually unchanged for decades, notwithstanding modern history teaching practices being implemented in the rest of Europe. Hence, he went on to declare that all school books would be revised by a committee of experts that had yet to be created, based on historical 'truth' and 'accuracy'. In order to make his argument more sound he expressed the view that 'My personal commitment firstly as a scientist and then as a minister, is that 'there is nothing like the truth', meaning that the previous history curriculum did not represent the truth, as the history of Cyprus from the last 50 years is not included, thus important aspects which blame the Greek Cypriots for the outbreak of the 1974 Turkish military invasion are omitted (Evripidou, 2008).

Given the ideological disagreements regarding 'accuracy' and 'truth' in approaching history, philological teachers are likely to be challenged with taking new approaches to history teaching. Their approach should not entail a stagnant appreciation of the past by means of

artificially putting together bits from each ideological or political point of view to make a more acceptable composite. They should instead subject their own political beliefs to debate and become aware of the provisional base upon which a historical fact is founded. Thus, approaching history from a provisionalist vantage-point, the message for students will be that the past, and by extension the present, is made up of infinite shades of grey, not of blocks of black and white. In other words, historical facts can be interpreted and re-interpreted to produce an amalgam of conflicting and alternative claims to ‘truth’.

Despite all reactions ensuing from the President’s and Minister’s declarations, change seems to be ever present, irrespective of the approach that various political parties support. The Greek Cypriot education system is in the process of a grass-roots reform due to the global and European forces outlined in the previous chapter as well as the contextual realities discussed in this chapter. What cannot be guaranteed is whether change will be sustained or failed. For this reason, philological teachers need not only to take the matter of ‘truth’ in history teaching seriously, but also to reflect upon the consequences of their current and future professional practice inaugurated by the newly proposed evaluation schemes. By reflecting upon their current and future situation they will be able to resolve some of the dilemmas mapped out by Giddens (1991), and were explored in part one, which they are likely to face in the forthcoming years.

**The way ahead: Laying out the foundations for a ‘reflexive’ and ‘ethically discursive’ philological teacher professional.**

*The demand for a ‘reflexive’ ethical self*

Given the global, the E.U as well as the national and bi-communal challenges illustrated so far, Greek Cypriot philological teachers are likely to be faced with new terms of redefining their professional self. The market driven approach to educational reform coupled with the

new approach to history teaching wedded to bi-communal concerns, open up a new chapter for ethical and political realities. Thus, it is argued by the current thesis that philological teachers will be faced with these tensions identified by Giddens (1991), such as *unification vs fragmentation, powerlessness vs appropriation, authority vs uncertainty, personalised vs commodified experience*.

It has already been mentioned in the previous chapter that both relativist and fundamentalist adherents are very likely to surrender to free market imperatives. Therefore, the Greek Cypriot case could be thought of as a continuum, with fundamentalists on the one extreme, strongly advocating the preservation of national and religious ideals and values, with those in the middle of the spectrum favouring a more critical approach to cultural understanding wedded to humanitarian concerns. As for the relativists at the other extreme, they may well consider the market as a good option among all other options such as 'ecological' or 'humanitarian'. As fundamentals give way to managerial regimes, so will Greek Cypriot individuals who strongly aspire to what is called the 'heritage approach' to History. The latter has been coined by Lowenthal (1998) regarding an approach to history teaching according to which exclusive myths of origin and continuity are transmitted premised on a dogma of roots and origins which must be accepted on faith. This approach facilitates the utilitarian and mechanistic role of education in general as it authorizes teachers to fill the student's minds with predetermined sets of values (Massialas and Flouris, 1994; Makriyianni and Psaltis, 2007;). Therefore, unless philological teachers become reflexive enough in order to reflect upon the unforeseeable consequences of the market, then the outcome will be that of Giddens (1991) distinction between *unification versus fragmentation*. In other words, adherents of a fundamental epistemology in aligning themselves to standardised and global market driven patterns, they are likely to accede to the management project. The result for teachers' professional identities will be a passive acceptance and embracement of the binary policy



options described in the previous chapter which were self evaluation vs peer evaluation, summative vs formative assessment, decentralisation vs centralisation, and the final outcome will be that of 'de-professionalization' for the reasons already given.

Given that the Greek Cypriot culture perpetuates a form of unjust favouritism which has already been described, individuals are very much likely to welcome managerialist regimes which might seem to them 'fair', 'objective' and 'predictable'. In addition, teachers may now view the new evaluation schemes structured along horizontal administrative lines, as well as the formation of new managerial posts, as an opportunity to make a success of themselves and as a way of gaining personal prestige by mentoring and inspecting the work of their colleagues. In effect, Greek Cypriot teachers are likely to experience those deskilling effects brought about by managerial structures in other countries. Therefore, they need to reflect upon what already constrains their practice and what the ramifications of the forthcoming neoliberal agendas will be. Thus, they need to reflect upon the *powerlessness versus appropriation divide* and become aware that the emphasis on summative and formative assessment being part of the recent teachers' evaluation plan, forms part of the governments' wider accountability agenda. Therefore, teachers should be quite sceptical about the effectiveness of these twin aims, for a formative developmental self-evaluation is highly likely to end as a summative reporting exercise. Such a danger is reflected in Vanhoof and Petegem's (2007) argument that 'Summative functions and obligation always involve the danger that the justification and account-rendering aspect may predominate at the expense of desire for improvement' (p. 109).

According to Giddens (1991), a feature of post-modernity is the paradox of *authority versus uncertainty*. The uncertainty factor, coupled with other cultural factors such as 'favouritism', may drive Greek Cypriot teachers to compromise themselves with the new panoptic management with all its monitoring systems (appraisal meetings, annual reviews, report

writing, promotion applications, inspections, peer reviews). In addition, the highly centralised educational system of Cyprus has driven many educators, who feel disenchanted with the inefficiencies of the system, to seek shelter under the promises of the new managerial structures. Hence, it will come as no surprise, paradoxically, if teachers experience a sense of insecurity along with a high degree of instability and uncertainty under these regimes, with the whole picture becoming transformed to what Sennett (1998) has called 'the corrosion of character', in that one's sense of self-worth becomes uncertain. Thus, a reflexive stance is required in order for teachers to prevent the corrosion of their ethical selves when facing out this dilemma.

Last but not least, philological teachers need to reflect upon Giddens's dilemma of *personalised versus commodified experience*. Simply put, for Giddens (1991) modernity paradoxically opens up the project of the self by promoting individualism and stressing individual rights on the one hand, but on the other hand the standardised conditions of the market restrict this sphere of personalised experience to a commodified one. Given the popularity of the supplementary afternoon classes, it is the assertion of the current thesis that once Greek Cypriot education is transformed along managerial lines, the prevalence of private tutoring will increase because of the new evaluation procedures demanded of teachers. Hence, as teachers will pursue new managerial posts trying to achieve higher performance standards, this will happen 'under conditions strongly influenced by standardizing effects of commodity capitalism' (Giddens, 1991). Therefore, Greek Cypriot parental demand for private tutoring will increase as well, for there will be a greater need by students and teachers for higher performance. As Giddens has argued,

'The gap between human needs and individual desires is produced by market domination; this gap, is at the same time, a condition of its reproduction. The market feeds on the unhappiness it generates'.  
(p.198).

### *The demand for a 'discursive' ethical self*

Further to the 'reflexivity' component argued above, the ethical self which this thesis stands for, embraces a concern and an awareness of the effects and consequences that Greek Cypriot philological teachers' decisions bring about to all members of society which are likely to be affected. Greek Cypriot philological teachers should expand their professional repertoire so as to embrace both Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, within a larger European setting in a global village. As already pointed out in chapter 2, the Habermasian moral theory of discourse ethics can provide new challenging insights to professional ethics. The communicative approach upon which discourse ethics are founded does not prescribe what is ethical, rather it describes an inter-subjective procedure for discursively testing norms and moral values. According to discourse ethics and the principle of universalization that Habermas employs, claims to validity are inter-subjectively and discursively debated by all those who would be affected by the outcome of the claims. Along these lines the polarization between fundamental adherents and extreme relativist could be reconciled and resolved, so could be the case with the ideological wars over the revision of history textbooks. An approach to history taken from a Habermasian perspective, would safeguard philological teachers' professionalism from the injection of ideas and values imposed by the ever present various committees of 'experts'. However, if teachers become fully involved within the opportunities offered to them by the 'professionalization' agenda, they run the risk of becoming passive deliverers of ideologies and values imposed on them by external actors, be these politicians or members of the so called committees of experts. For, a 'true' and a 'professional' practice should not be about Right or Left, Greeks, Turks, or Cypriots, but about citizenship in a broad-minded democratic society.

It seems that the ever present 'wise experts' comprising the reform committees have failed to bear in mind any unforeseeable consequences for teacher professionalism as well as for all

members of the Cypriot society including both Greek and Turkish Cypriots whose lives will be affected in the future by such transformations. Philological teachers' professionalism should not rely heavily on assessment reports or on the revision of history textbooks, rather it should be founded upon a search for truth in an ethically 'discursive' manner. The unwarranted claims to objectivity in history teaching, corrode rather than enhance the democratic ideals upon which the rapprochement of the two communities will be based. Thus, philological teachers should base their educational praxis in a sphere where communication emerges in a symmetric Habermasian dialogue; where all agents enter into a non-coercive naturally occurring forum, and therefore no 'expert' status is assigned to the agents, but only a space for the force of the better argument.

Moreover, philological teachers by reflecting upon the afore-cited fundamentalist and relativist epistemologies regarding history teaching, should pass their reflections on to students by framing the issue in order to demonstrate that naive realist or fundamentalist students assume that all the documentary sources, and in the present case history sources, are essentially authorless and describe reality in an unmediated manner, whilst naive relativist students think that because accounts conflict in their testimony, understanding an incident is all about whose opinion you believe and one opinion is good as another. In a case of pupils' or teachers' adherence to either one of the two extremes, the possibility of an active and critical citizenship will be hindered. If both teachers and pupils become proponents of the third way between the two extremes then the outcome will be of one that Habermas (1995) has envisaged:

An ideally extended 'we perspective' from which all can test in common whether they wish to make a controversial norm the basis of their shared practice; and this should include mutual criticism of the appropriateness of the languages in terms of which situations and needs are interpreted. In the course of

successfully taken abstractions, the core of generalizable interests can then emerge step by step (p.117-118).

### **Chapters 2 and 3 in the context of Qualitative research**

In this research thesis, chapter 2 had a broad focus which explored international conceptual understandings of teacher 'professionalism' in the light of macro, meso, and micro levels. The most commonly documented influential source on teacher professionalism within the English-speaking context is managerialism. The latter has had implications for teacher identity formation described as the 'managerialist' or 'entrepreneurial' professional. Conversely, there are those accounts depicting 'professionalism' in ethical and moral terms.

Having carefully considered the previous chapter, this chapter has drawn upon some issues regarding the macro level of influence along with the managerialist discourse already explored in chapter 2 and has further expanded the domain of influences by tackling cultural and social patterns. In both chapters the core argument has been that managerialism gives way to economically driven values which are incompatible with other humanitarian, ethical and moral values. As a result, the concluding section of both chapters has been oriented towards the formation of a set of professional ethics. More precisely, both chapters have laid out the foundations for a discourse-based ethics framework of professionalism, as well as the call for a 'reflexive' professional.

With the prospect of devising a new set of professional ethics, the following research questions will aim to address the empirical phase of the study using a combination of the focus group approach with individual semi-structured interviews:

- What do Greek Cypriot philological teachers understand by the term 'professional'?

- What are their attitudes to educational reforms?
- What do they think the effects of educational reforms (such as performativity mechanisms) will be on private tutoring and thus will impact upon their professionalism?
- What are the major constraints and facilitators on professional identity formation?

Therefore, the main research question which seeks to investigate the effects of the Greek Cypriot reforms upon the professional identity of philological teachers will be articulated in terms of qualitative research items organised around concepts already reviewed in chapters 2 and 3.

Participants' will be called upon to respond in terms of past, present and future so that their constructions of retrospective and prospective identities will be analysed for knowledge generation and production on an under-researched topic within Greek Cypriot education. The rationale, as well as the warrants of the research methodology along with the sample, will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

In this phase of the research study, a rationale is given for employing a particular method as a data collection tool. In this instance the focus group approach along with supplementary semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate methodological approaches for conducting the present research project. The objective of this research was to come to a deeper understanding of the effects of educational reforms upon Greek Cypriot philological teachers' professionalism. By briefly delving into the epistemological and philosophical underpinnings of the various research techniques, it is hoped that the reader will be provided with an understanding of the research methodological framework driving the particular research design of the research project.

On recalling how various commentators have come to describe research, two conceptions emerge, the one capturing research in technical terms, and the other pointing to its philosophical underpinnings. An example of the former is a relevant quote from Cohen and Manion (1980) describing the research process as follows :

Research is best conceived as a process of arriving at dependable solutions through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. It is the most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress and for enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes and to resolve his conflicts (p.29).

A different perspective is taken by Carr (1995):

Research...always conveys a commitment to philosophical beliefs even if this is unintended and even though it remains implicit and unacknowledged... [Researchers] cannot evade the responsibility for critically examining and justifying the philosophical ideas that their enquiries incorporate. It follows

that philosophical reflection and argumentation are central features of the methods and procedures of educational research (Carr, 1995, p.1).

Earlier theorists of the philosophical approaches to research used to depict the latter, within the pure paradigm philosophical approach in terms of the quantitative qualitative divide. These involve fundamentally different approaches in terms of epistemology and ontology with the quantitative methodology normally being driven by a positivist agenda and the qualitative methodology a phenomenological life- view. The very term of 'paradigm' has been employed by theoreticians of social research to refer to worldviews and beliefs about the nature of reality which guide research. Vedeler (2000) by describing 'paradigms' as 'theoretical frames', contends that philosophical considerations precede determination of the choice of methods and therefore offer a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative approaches. A different view of paradigm is set forth by Morgan (2007) who eliminates the essential role of epistemology for social inquiry by rejecting the 'epistemological stance' version of paradigms and adopting instead an alternative approach, the so-called 'pragmatism' which is grounded on the notion of 'what works', or in other words, the accordance of fitness to purpose.

From all the attempts to define 'paradigm' it follows that social inquiry involves 'methodology-as- technique' and 'methodology-as- philosophy'. According to Hammersley (2006), the former depicts research as the involvement of particular methods or procedures, those that fall within the category of natural sciences and are distinguished from humanistic disciplines, while the latter concerns fundamental questions about the goal of knowledge of research, the ideal of truth and the possibility of objectivity. Although Hammersley views the role of philosophy as essential to research, he argues that there are important limits to its contribution for it does not enlighten researchers how best to go about investigating particular topics. In contrast, there are those who advocate a top-down approach to research arguing that



ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological ones, which in turn determine the unfolding of methodology which gives rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Guba, 1990).

Before the discussion is pursued to explore and justify the research framework chosen for the present study, two important concepts need to be explained, ontology and epistemology. Guba (1990) refers to ontology as the nature of reality. Bryman (2004) identifies two ontological positions concerning social research, objectivism and constructionism. According to Bryman, objectivism entails that the social entity in question adheres to an external objective reality independent of the researcher's awareness. At the opposite extreme there lies constructionism which implies that social entities can and should be considered social constructions built upon the perceptions and actions of social actors. Another version of constructionism is that of relativism. According to Guba (1990) the relativist position implies that there are multiple interpretations of reality, locally and historically specific and none of these mental constructions can be either false or correct. In addition to the two dominant extremes of the ontological position, Guba (1990) places critical realism in between, drawn from the work of Cook and Campbell (1979) who contend that humans conceive the natural causes of the real world imperfectly. The criticality of critical realism is attributed to the fact that once its practitioners identify the structures or processes which have generated the events of social reality, they seek to reproduce and transform the status quo (Bhaskar, 1975).

Thus, quantitative methodology being underpinned by a realist ontology asserts that reality is driven by immutable natural laws. Thus, quantitative researchers hold that the role of science is to strive for causal relationships by collecting facts and studying the relationship of one set of facts to another (Bell, 1999). In addition, quantitative researchers, in pursuing a highly structured methodology, use techniques that are likely to produce replicable, quantified, and if possible, generalisable conclusions. From a methodological point of view, positivism and

quantitative methodology, have been very much associated with experimentation. Guba and Lincoln (1994) from a top-down pure paradigmatic perspective, acknowledge that the cause-effect ontological position of positivism at the top of the hierarchy constrains research at the methodological level to the use of empirical tests under carefully controlled conditions which Cook and Campell (1979) name as the experimental design.

However, the core of positivism being extremely reliant on direct observations has not allowed it to remain immune from criticism. Many had joined the chorus of dissatisfaction with quantitative methods as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in that positivism disregards human values, informed opinion, moral judgements and beliefs (Habermas, 1974; Horkheimer, 1972; Kvernbeek, 2002; Shadish, 1995).

Notwithstanding the flaws that quantitative methodology may have, some quantitative methods of data collection such as the questionnaire survey are frequently used due to cost and time -effectiveness reasons. Moreover, it is fair to argue that a questionnaire design can be a suitable research instrument when it comes to gathering simple and factual data.

However, the preferred research tool of data collection of the researcher in this study lies within qualitative methodology for a number of reasons. Since the aim of the present research is not just to test an already existing theory, but is much more about generating and producing new knowledge on an under-researched topic, this makes the relationship between theory and research more inductive in nature. That is not, of course, an argument in favour of qualitative research above all other methods, but in this case it is reasonable to suggest that a phenomenological approach would fit better within the focus of the study, which is to gather 'deep' information about the presence of factors and their effects in individual cases. What mainly distinguishes qualitative from quantitative research methodology is that the former is more concerned with understanding individuals' perception of the world, and thus reality is

presented from the perspective of the participants rather than by the statistical analysis of hard factual data as is the case with the latter. Thus, qualitative researchers arguably believe that by compressing data into a series of 'law-like' generalisations, this would undermine the quality of rich insights.

Since there are paradigmatic purists, it would be easy to fall into the trap of considering one research approach as better than the other. Any attempt at drawing a sharp line between the different research approaches would, perhaps, be futile and pointless. Research can hardly fall neatly within either paradigm and this has long been a key issue in debates over the subject of the compatibility thesis. The latter points to a premise held by many writers that both quantitative and qualitative approaches have strengths and therefore their appropriate combination can produce even greater research possibilities (Gorard and Taylor, 2004; Smith and Heshusius, 1986; Bryman, 1988). This technique of combining methods of research is often referred to as 'triangulation'. Notwithstanding the issue of combining the methods, the researcher does accept that a mixed up approach to research might be welcomed, but she does not deem this as a necessary condition for conducting research. She therefore believes that quantitative and qualitative research, do share an epistemological commonality. This is an issue which will be returned to in the next section, where the reasons for choosing the focus group strategy as the main data collection tool of the study are explained and justified.

### **Focus Groups as a data collection tool**

Focus group research is one form of qualitative method that can be used as a research tool in its own right. Its history can be traced back to marketing research methods, but it has also been used in qualitative, ethnographic research (Wilkinson, 1998). The generic term of 'focus groups' is usually used interchangeably with the term 'group interview'. However, the former is distinct from ordinary group discussions in that it concentrates on the role of the group in

producing interaction and the role of the moderator in guiding this interaction (Morgan, 1996; Kitzinger, 1994). In other words, the interaction in the group can be explicitly used as the source of the data, as focus group members comment on each other's point of view, often challenging each other's motives and actions. Engaging in this way themselves in a 'give and take' discussion can influence the nature and content of responses as the group progresses. An overall definition of focus groups upon which the present research stands for is that given by Kitzinger (1995):

The idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview...When group dynamics work well the participants work alongside the researcher, taking the research in new and often unexpected directions (Kitzinger, 1995, p.299).

The view expressed above renders the focus group approach as distinctive from quantitative methods in particular, as well as other qualitative methods in general. Unlike quantitative methods, focus groups emphasize participant's perspectives allowing the researcher to tap into their experiences and attitudes in order to explore the latter's complexities and tendencies. Therefore, it could be argued that the focus group approach is aligned to a phenomenological assumption underlying research. Because phenomenologists view social phenomena as socially constructed, they would distinctly disagree with the use of questionnaires or other quantitative methods of inquiry in this context.

The overall rationale of choosing focus groups as the primary research method of this study rests on the component of 'social interactions', which are an attribute of the focus group design and could very well address the aim of the research which is to uncover already existing notions of philological teachers' professionalism in the light of retrospective and prospective sources of influence on their professionalism.

Notwithstanding the properties of focus groups described above, the researcher of this study is likely to encounter some problems that are likely to emerge during or after the research process. Given the arguments raised at the introduction of this chapter on the weaknesses and strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research, it is arguable that all research tools are flawed, hence focus groups are not without problems and inadequacies. Thus, as with qualitative research, the advantages of focus group research are offset by considerable disadvantages. The limitations for focus groups in this thesis are tackled from two perspectives, with the one raising methodological or technical barriers in conducting focus groups and the other recognizing epistemological difficulties. In terms of the methodological perspective, one possible deficiency concerns the interaction of respondents with one another and with the researcher. The first undesirable effect likely to emerge from these relationships has been viewed by some writers as a threat to the generalizability of findings, for the responses from members of the group are not independent of one another. Yet, because focus group participants are often gathered together through a process of non-probability as it is usually done in surveys, this deprives the research findings from representativeness (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Sim, 1998). Another negative corollary of the participants-researcher relationship may be the production of biased results generated by a very dominant or opinionated talker (Krueger, 1998; Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Moreover, there is a danger of attaching certain trustworthiness to the view of a 'live' talker with the outcome of producing misleading interpretations of findings.

Further to the technical problems pointed above, this thesis raises some other problematic issues of focus groups from an epistemological perspective, which are sought to be resolved. A major criticism of focus group research has been over its validity. Some writers have relegated focus groups to a second order research in that in contrast to experiments and surveys, focus group methods do not control independent variables, nor do they carefully

measure dependent variables which are the basis for causal inference (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996). However, the researcher of this thesis suggests that it is possible to identify cause and effect relationships within the focus group research and thus to identify an alternative way of defining 'construct validity', which is a component of quantitative research. Some relevant writings of qualitative researchers though old, succinctly argue that qualitative research is quite compatible with causation (Harre, 1986; Hart and Honore, 1985). Therefore, it is possible that focus group research could reflect a qualitative view of causation and challenge the positivist assumption that only quantitative research is committed to causation. It is the contention of the researcher of this study that focus group research could very well seek to 'discover regular patterns among our sensations that will enable us to predict future sensations', a view expressed by Salmon (1984) referring to quantitative research.

Another issue which may be problematic for focus groups and which raises epistemological, not methodological, difficulties is the other side of generalisation, often referred to as 'theoretical generalization' (Sim, 1998). Because qualitative researchers rarely make explicit claims about the external generalizability of their accounts by means of representing a wider population or events in a strict probabilistic sense, there has been developed an alternative view of generalisability which shows how the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results (Becker, 1990). Therefore, the concept of 'theoretical generalisation' hinges upon the comparability between the data gained from a particular study and other similar contexts which might produce similar data to the original study. In other words, the researcher identifies parallels, at a conceptual or theoretical level, between the case under question and another situation which may well differ considerably in terms of the attributes or variables that exist. Alongside this form of generalisability, there is what might be termed 'transferability', a preferred alternative to generalisability for this study, for according to Geertz (1973), the criterion of 'transferability' calls for 'thick description' or rich accounts of

a culture. Therefore, this term fits better within the purposes of this study, as one way to justify the validity and trustworthiness of the findings is to delve into those cultural aspects of the Greek Cypriot educational system and society which make the research distinctive as to making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other settings.

Having given due consideration to the pros and cons of focus groups as the most suitable data collecting techniques in the context of this research project, it follows that using focus groups as a stand-alone method will not suffice for gaining a complete picture of philological teachers' views on the impact of the educational reforms upon their professionalism. Therefore, after a careful examination of the specific combinations of focus groups sought by the researcher, it was decided that the most suitable pairing of focus groups in this case is with the use of semi-structured individual interviews with other stakeholders in more senior positions, to whom further reference will be made in a following section. According to Morgan (1996), the combination of focus groups with individual interviews is the most straightforward, since both are qualitative techniques. Furthermore, the strategy of combining focus groups with follow up individual interviews has the advantage of getting reactions from a relatively wide range of participants in a relatively short time, whilst conclusions gained from the one method can corroborate those of the other. Thus, in this complementary fashion, focus groups and individual interviews could compensate for greater breadth and depth respectively.

Moreover, the combination of these two methods was considered suitable for another reason. Since a broader aim of this research project is the proposal of a set of professional ethics build upon the work of already existing models such as the ones developed by Habermas and Giddens already explored in chapter 2 and 3, it was believed that the combination of two qualitative methods would further enrich the conceptualization of 'professionalism', for it was expected that different levels of understandings of the concept would emerge.

## **The interview schedule**

In this research project, the interview schedule developed from a broad agenda regarding teachers' professionalism. The interview guide was designed according to the broad aims and the focus of the project which concentrates on the effects of educational reforms upon Greek Cypriot philological teachers' professionalism. The interview schedule along with the selection of appropriate questions had grown directly from the issues examined in chapters 2 and 3 and was concerned with the following five themes:

- Participants' definitions of professionalism
- Conditions of constraints and facilitators on their professional identity formation
- Participants' attitudes toward educational reforms
- Participants' views on the issue regarding the revision of History textbooks
- Participants' views on the impact of accountability control mechanisms upon private tutoring

The structured interview guide helped to ensure that specific points would be discussed across all focus groups and was identical for all philological teachers including heads and deputy heads. The interviews were semi-structured with the use of some open-ended questions in order to provide both a degree of control for the discussion by the researcher as well as a degree of flexibility to the respondents. The interview guide allowed up to twelve questions to be asked and to be deepened through follow up and probing questions. The same pattern was followed by all individual interviews with teacher trainers, implementers and inspectors as well during which questions were slightly modified and framed in an indirect fashion. The form of 'indirect questions' implies that the answers refer directly to the attitudes of others (Kvale,1996). Since the purpose for conducting individual interviews was to corroborate



views of the senior professionals with philological teachers' views on a number of aspects of their professionalism, the indirect style of questions was thought to fit well with this aim.

### **Population Studied/Sampling**

As already noted in the previous sections of this chapter, the goal of the present study is not to generalise to larger populations by collecting numerically precise data that is so common in surveys. The aim was to gain insight and understanding by listening to the views of people in depth. Thus, like most other qualitative methods, focus groups rely on 'purposive samples' (Morgan, 1998). This study deliberately opts for the use of purposive sampling, for as has been argued by Silverman (2005) and Creswell (1998), purposive sampling allows researchers to select cases and sites that illustrate some feature or process in which researchers deliberately seek out groups and settings where the process being studied is most likely to occur and where individuals in the case are able to reflect aspects of their lives and experiences.

The target population of focus groups in this thesis was Greek Cypriot philological teachers including a small number of philological deputy head-teachers as well as principals. As for the sampling of the individual interviews, this involved teachers' trainers, inspectors and implementers of the educational reforms.

All eight philological class teachers within this sample happened to be females, and had a range of one to eleven years of educational service, with two of them being holders of masters degrees. Almost all experienced and inexperienced teachers including those working on secondments had taught in all three educational sectors (primary, gymnasium, lyceum). As for the sample of head teachers and deputy heads, these were currently working in urban schools. The head teachers had an average total of 30 years of teaching experience as philological teachers and an average three years of which they have been head teachers. The

deputy heads have an average total of 25 years of teaching experience, two years of which they have been deputy heads.

The school district in which participants worked had not been a matter of importance to the researcher due to the systems' high centralization which implies a great homogeneity between school units in terms of school administration and school syllabi, as well as due to the teachers' and head-teachers' frequent rotations across various school units. The frequent rotation of teachers from school to school by the Ministry of Education is thought by the researcher to enhance participants' representativeness. Since teachers in Cyprus are part of the school system as a whole and not part of a single school building or district, this does not allow the class teacher or the head teacher to feel identified with the school unit and therefore create a certain school vision (Varnava and Koutsoulis, 2006).

The selection of the other professional actors was also largely driven by the purpose of the study. The two teacher trainers are mainly responsible for the in-service and pre-service training for philological teachers and they are employed by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute which is a government institution, attached to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Moec), responsible for the in-service training of educators as well as the pre-service programme for prospective teachers. All the training provisions are centrally controlled by the Moec with limited input from either schools or teachers with regard to determining their training needs and priorities (Karagiorgi and Symeou, 2005). Amongst the duties of the two teacher trainers interviewed, is the compulsory training for teachers who get promoted to administrative posts, as well as the provision of a series of optional afternoon courses and seminars orientated towards familiarizing philological teachers with the integration of the new technologies into their class subjects, such as History and Ancient Greek, as well as covering issues concerning multicultural education, citizenship education and the European dimension of education (Pashiardis et al, 2009).

As far as the two implementers interviewed are concerned, these had been officially assigned by the Moec as members of the Education Reform Committee consisting of other educational stakeholders liable for designing and implementing the government's ambitious plans launched in 2004 with a view to transforming the highly centralised education system into one of more decentralised and horizontal administrative structures. More precisely, one of the implementers is responsible for the design of the managerial part of the reform whilst the other is more involved with the revision and reformation of the new curricula and syllabi.

With regard to the inspectors' posts and responsibilities, one of them was involved with the inspection of philological teachers and the position he held was on a higher level than that of an ordinary inspector, as he was entitled the Directorate of Secondary General Education. He was also responsible for the administration of matters concerning education at the secondary level of education, such as the general inspection of schools and staff, the organization, administration, monitoring and control of public secondary schools as well as the supervision and co-ordination of the inspectors' work. As for the other inspector interviewed, he was entitled as a Chief Education Officer. More accurately, he was responsible for the supervision and the co-ordination of inspector's work for a particular district, and in the present case the capital of Cyprus, Nicosia. Furthermore, his duties involved the undertaking of school and staff inspections, as well as the organization and planning of conferences and in-service training seminars for inspectors and teachers.

### **Piloting the Interview guide**

Piloting is a mini scale version of the real project, a try -out of what has been proposed in ensuring that the research instrument as a whole functions well (Bryman, 2004; Robson, 2002). In this research project, piloting was incorporated within the actual study itself. Unlike

general fixed designs such as experiments and surveys, the present study falls within the design of flexible studies and as such, the pilot should not necessarily be carried out on a convenience sample of people who are not members of the sample employed in the full study (Robson, 2002).

Therefore, the interview guide was given to all the participants two weeks before the research was conducted. The interview guide had not been self administered by the researcher as she happened to be in the U.K at that time, instead, all interview guides were given to ten philological teachers including two deputy heads by the principal of the chosen school unit where the actual research was about to take place. Attached to each interview guide was a covering letter written in a friendly and clear lay-out, explaining the purpose and focus of the study, as well as the fashion of the interview method, and the particular aims of that method, (i.e participant interaction, sharing of experiences, divergence and convergence of opinions) (see appendix). As for the two head-teachers, these were contacted by a known person of the researcher.

Accordingly, participants of the individual interviews were given the interview guide by one of the inspectors who was a member of the research participants.

Before the actual interview guide was handed out to the participants, a first draft was given to the ex general manager of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute as well as to the research director who were in some way known to the researcher. The purpose for checking the interview guide with these two people was mainly due to their extensive knowledge on teachers' pedagogical and training needs. Added to this, was the fact that the interview guide had to be written in Greek as all participants spoke the official Greek language and Greek Cypriot as their mother tongue. Given that the researcher was quite familiar with the technical language of the topic under question, which was written in English, it was unsure whether questions written in

Greek would accurately convey the meaning of the original terms. Bearing in mind the comments that these people made about the interview schedule, the first task of the researcher before conducting the interviews was to revise some of the questions and pilot these with the actual participants of the study. Some of the general comments pointed out by these two people from the Pedagogical Institute were that some of the terms such as ‘managerialism’, ‘performativity’, ‘professionalism’, ‘professional identity’ , and ‘decentralization’ should be broken down into more every day words or should be refined by giving examples drawn from other countries which had experienced these phenomena under question long before. Their overall view was that the interview schedule required no alteration in terms of structure or content as they both agreed that the major issues in the professional domain of philological teachers were addressed.

### **Conducting the Focus groups**

The first issues of concern to the researcher before conducting the focus groups were timing and location. Both Individual interviews and focus groups were not conducted in a predetermined sequence as the dates were determined by the participants themselves during the three week period of the research course. Thus, some interviews were conducted prior to focus groups, others took place iteratively with focus groups, and approximately half of the individual interviews were conducted after the focus groups. The group which was conducted first was that consisting of two philological head teachers and two philological deputy heads. The two deputy heads were working in the same school which was an urban lower secondary school unit (gymnasium). The two head teachers were from different school units, the one working in an upper secondary school (lyceum) and the other working in a gymnasium. Since not all the participants of this group shared the same occupational location, it was more practical for them to meet at a private home. Thus, on a Sunday afternoon in early April, 2009 the first focus group interview was held at a private home hosted by the researcher. The initial

job of the researcher, after location and time were set up, was to create a friendly and welcoming environment, one that would promote conversation and communication within the group. Part of the pre-session small talk was the piloting of the interview questions. Thus, before participants were asked to introduce themselves and before ground rules were provided for the discussion, the researcher asked the participants of any queries or problems they had encountered when they first came across the interview guide. As already noted, all participants had had a minimum of two weeks to test and evaluate the interview guide. Their reactions to some of the questions were predictable, as not all teachers had been fully informed about educational innovations and reforms. Thus, the two deputy head teachers asked the researcher to explain more about the content of the various reform proposals. Where the interview questions involved issues regarding the constraints upon teachers' professionalism, the researcher never mentioned any particular constraints to the participants. This allowed participants a degree of flexibility and freedom in framing their insights and at the same time granting to the research findings a degree of objectivity.

An atmosphere of trust and openness was established by the researcher from the beginning of the interview as she tried to assure participants that the aim was not to test their pedagogical knowledge, or to reject or undermine their answers, adding that they were in a more advantageous position than her, as they were 'experts' on the issue since it involved their own internalisation of policies and their own values on 'professionalism' as they experience it every day. Moreover, whatever information was to be shared in the group would stay confidential, and their audio recorded conversations would only be transcribed and heard by the researcher. Furthermore, participants were assured that anonymity would be maintained as an indication of confidentiality and that the allocation of pseudonyms would aim to protect their identities.

The discussion ran for one hour and forty five minutes, and the actual flow of the discussion was satisfactory as the participants covered a variety of issues, some of them already pre-planned whilst some others emerged during the discussion.

Unlike the first group, the other two groups were conducted at the school where participants worked. The eight philological teachers who were allocated to two different groups claimed to have highly demanding family schedules which made their gathering into the researchers' house unfeasible. Nevertheless, most of them were happy to do the interview at their workplace at an agreeable time.

Fortunately, all three focus group sessions were conducted as planned with all the key issues being covered without any further demand to extend sessions into whole afternoons or a series of meetings. After all the interviews were transcribed, the researcher fed back to the interviewees the transcriptions and as well as a summary of her first impression of findings in order to seek confirmation that these have been congruent with the interviewees' views.

At the end of all three sessions it was felt that all data collected had reached a level of 'theoretical saturation', with the exception of an emerging issue which needed further investigation. Thus, the researcher decided that two additional individual interviews with philological teachers of upper secondary education would be required in order to gain deeper insight on the issue regarding the establishment of 'comprehensive lyceum' and its impact on teachers' professionalism. Therefore, the two teachers, one of them being a deputy head, were called upon to answer questions regarding the impact of the comprehensive lyceum upon philological teachers' professionalism. The interview built on issues already discovered from the previous focus groups. Nevertheless, it was never the case that this involved grounded theory, for according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), 'a grounded theory is one that is ....discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and

analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other' (p.23). In other words, data is systematically collected and analysed through the research process. In this research, the interplay between data collection, data analysis theorizing and constant comparison, was not the case due to the relatively limited space of words demanded of an EdD researcher. Therefore, only a 'partial grounded theory' could be assumed to have been adopted in which data is collected and then theorised upon without paying attention to the formal implementation of grounded theory procedures (Burgess et al, 2006). Thus, new unforeseeable issues which emerged from the focus groups were further investigated through the individual semi-structured interviews and vice versa. Thus, in this way it became possible to draw linkages between the respondents' reflection on the new emerging issues with theory. For instance, when the issue of the impact of the comprehensive lyceum was spelled out by some teachers of one of the focus group as a constraint of their professional identity formation, this was later examined with the rest of the respondents who reflected on issues pointing to what is in the black box of reform implementation and hence the researcher sought to frame and discuss these in terms of Habermas' and Giddens' theoretical conceptualisations.

Like all types of research, the kind of analysis required with focus groups and all the other individual interviews of this research rested within the purpose of the research which was an in-depth exploration of philological teachers' professionalism, a topic about which little was known. It was never the case that the researcher considered that a quantified and rigorous analysis of the data was inappropriate for this project, but given that the project required a reflective engagement of the researcher with the data, any routinization of certain analytical tasks offered by the use of a software package might have distorted the underlying context and meaning of remarks. Therefore, it was felt that the use of qualitative methods was more suited in this particular instance. Thus, the data analysis process was obtained in terms of four



levels. On a first level, a narrative was produced that conveyed the researcher's preliminary understandings of how philological class teachers and other executive members define and enact professionalism. During this first level of analysis there were developed some provisional categories based on the most frequent and recurring themes mentioned by the participants on defining teacher professionalism . A second level of analysis aimed at developing coding categories for the issues acting as facilitators and constraints on professional identity formation. Third level analysis emphasised the identification of patterns or themes within the data regarding philological teachers' and professional executive's attitudes toward already implemented reforms as well as proposed reforms being in progress for implementation. For fourth-level analysis, issues already picked up in the first three levels were returned to by the researcher for gaining a better understanding on what is in the 'black box' of philological teachers' conditions of constraints when managing educational changes, as well as how they enact particular professional responses in order to sustain their professional ethical selves. At this final stage, the researcher was able to pin down cause and effect relationships within the data, a property often accorded by many, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, to quantitative research. The aspects of causality identified in this research can be seen in the way participants reflected on what they thought as major constraints upon their professionalism, and in effect how these determined their attitudes towards the incoming managerial reforms.

During the analysis two particular coding procedures were used. These involved open and axial coding processes. The former was used for breaking down the data into distinct units of meaning. Thus, after the text was transcribed, analysis began by identifying key words or phrases which connected the participants' account to the general issues under question regarding how they defined professionalism, what they had felt as the major facilitators and constraints upon their professional identity formation, as well as what their attitudes were

towards the new managerial reforms. Regarding the informants' definitions of professionalism, two codes emerged with the one pointing to the notion of teachers 'being professionals' and the other 'behaving professionally'. As for the other issues under question, the most frequent emerging categories for teachers' constraints were those coded as 'favouritism', 'syndicalism', 'politicization', 'private tutoring', 'pre-determined evaluations', 'high centralization', 'public-private divide', and 'high centralization'. All these codes in turn emerged as distinct categories of larger and broader themes defined as 'cultural', 'institutional' and 'organizational' factors. The most frequent patterns for teachers' facilitators were the 'managerial reforms', and more particularly the 'two-track system of promotion', 'decentralisation', 'school-based autonomy'.

This process of open coding was followed for analyzing the responses of focus groups and individual interviews. A following coding process named as 'axial coding', was used in order to produce dynamic interrelationships between the concepts already developed by open coding. Thus, analysis proceeded by looking at how the aforementioned codes could be linked for meaning and theory generation. The major themes emerging from an overview of the codes, were that teachers' perceived facilitators had come as a natural extension of their perceived constraints, and the general conclusion gained was that their professional discourse was more associated with those patterns pointing to the 'professionalization thesis' examined in the literature review chapters.

Following the emergence of this theme, there developed four professional responses which sought to explain the movement between themes and arguments. The four responses mapped out in chapter 8 ranging from 'the reflexive and challenged' to 'the unreflexive and unchallenged', provide concrete instances about participants' attitudes towards the managerial reforms. These four categories emerged naturally, after all the data were analysed, and could be seen as an attempt to theorise the data in terms of the two sociological theories on which

the thesis builds on; Giddens' 'reflexive project of the self' and Habermas' 'discourse-ethics'. The four professional responses were mainly the outcome not only of what the participants said, but what they should have said regarding the paradoxical outcomes likely to be generated by the future managerial reforms as well as their future responses towards them. All these coding decisions were validated via identifying theoretical parallels between the empirical concepts and those identified in the literature. In addition, a degree of trustworthiness to the findings was gained from the constant examination of the most frequent emerging themes across all the informants, as well as the two individual cases, the two lyceum teachers whose participation was incorporated after an important issue had emerged from the data in order to strengthen the findings.

Overall, the project's claims to trustworthiness and plausibility were legitimated, not by what the research process was meant to measure, but by what it meant to 'reflect'. According to Reed and Payton (1997), what a focus group reflects is the process of developing a group perspective or position among a particular set of people (p.770). In a similar vein, Silverman (1985) reinforces this argument by stating that by viewing the focus groups as 'displays of perspective', and moreover as displays of 'group perspective', attention is drawn to how these perspectives are negotiated and developed between members. Thus, in this research project, because it was possible to explore whether there was some degree of consensus which philological teachers were able to link to their practice, or whether there was a degree of dissent and divorce from experience, the researcher felt confident enough to believe that all these aspects legitimated her claims to knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Analysing focus group one (head teachers and deputy heads)**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the data analysis and reporting of findings for focus group one comprised of two philological head teachers and two deputy heads. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of Greek Cypriot educational reforms upon the professional identity of philological teachers in Cyprus. The data analysis framework was concerned with four issues:

- participants' definitions of professionalism
- conditions of constraint and facilitators on their professional identity formation
- participants' attitudes toward educational reforms
- and summary of findings

These allowed the following four main research questions of the empirical study to be investigated:

- What do Greek Cypriot philological teachers understand by the term 'professional'?
- What are their attitudes to educational reforms?
- What do Greek Cypriot philological teachers think the effects of educational reform (such as performativity mechanisms) will be on private tutoring and thus will impact upon their professionalism?
- What are the major constraints and facilitators on professional identity formation?

## *Defining professionalism*

In questioning the respondents about teacher professionalism the researcher realised that they struggled to talk about the concept in general and abstract ways independent of their own professional practice and experiences. This same problem was encountered by Helsby (1996) when she investigated English secondary teachers' notions of professionalism, as she found that interviewees struggled to talk about professionalism in the abstract, separate from their own occupational experiences, and to uncover the taken-for-granted notions that underpin these everyday words. Thus, it was believed by this writer that by asking participants to draw an analogy between their professionalism and the professionalism of other occupations such as doctors, it would stir up some rich and evocative data regarding teachers' practicum as well as aspects of their professional conduct and ethics.

What came as a surprise was that the respondents of this group made no reference to the wide held notion of teachers 'being professionals', a notion which is usually identified with job rewards and status. Rather, they highlighted issues pointing to the notion of teachers 'behaving as professionals' implying factors such as a strong service of ethic, dedication and an awareness of the long-term impact of their practices on students. An example is provided by Andria:

'Both the teaching profession and the medical profession can be identified as a mission. Just like the doctor could be the cause of damage to the health of the patient, a teacher could cause irreversible damage to somebody, be that a student, or a colleague'. (Head teacher)

Katia picked up another ethical element of professionalism that of 'social responsibility:

'I would define professionalism as having an awareness of your social responsibility, and this does not apply just to teachers' professionalism, but to all professionals'. (Deputy head)

Leda built on the notion of 'social responsibility' by mediating the notion through the lenses of leadership as to implicitly introduce the notion of 'public' and 'managerial' accountability:

‘Our social contribution as professionals is to accomplish the aims that society sets for all educators, and these aims might be the same for all educational institutions. We as principals may have a greater degree of responsibility compared to our subordinates as we have the responsibility towards the whole school unit’. (Head teacher)

Marina said much the same thing and emphasised the caring side of a class teachers’ professionalism as well as the element of subject expertise:

‘The professionalism of the head teacher is different to the professionalism of the classroom teacher in that the latter has a responsibility to teach a specific subject matter, and to activate some of the students’ abilities and also to educate those students’ character’. (Deputy head)

Andria provided a counter discourse to professionalism as she described some negative features associated with those teachers acting as ‘syndicalists’. She also portrayed teachers as autonomous individuals whose practice is driven by intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations:

‘Professionalism should not be identified with syndicalism. By that I mean a professional should not be compliant to what the teachers’ unions say regarding working hours and payment’. (Head teacher)

Marina added to this comment saying,

‘This ‘syndicalist’ trend is more evident in the novice teachers’. (DH)

So far, participants’ understandings of ‘professionalism’ seem to be more in line with the notion of ‘behaving professionally’, for they mainly touched on issues of dedication, a strong service ethic and exceptional standards of behaviour. As for the latter, participants explicitly distinguished the professional role of the classroom teacher from that of themselves as heads and deputy heads. Regarding their reference to the ‘syndicalist’ side of professionalism, this could be linked with factors denoting status, reward and public recognition which make up the notion of ‘being a professional’. The ‘syndicalist’ trend could be thought of as the product of a larger institutional cultural norm of strong ‘unionism’ evidenced in Cypriot education and as

the findings of the present research suggest, teachers' unions reiterate the notion of 'professionalization' rather than 'professionalism'.

The verbatim extracts above do not allow us to make definite conclusions at this early stage about teachers' professionalism accounts, for, and as it was initially expected by the researcher, after the respondents were called upon to talk about issues which facilitate and constrain their practice and thus their professional identity formation, their initial perceptions of professionalism were deepened, challenged, specified and refined. Besides, one of the strengths of the focus group method alluded to in the previous chapter is to give weight to participant interaction. Indeed, teachers of this group were able to delve further into their professional awareness when they were asked questions about what constrained their professional identity formation and thus their professionalism.

### ***The major constraints and facilitators on professional identity formation***

#### **Constraints**

The responses generated from this research question were largely anticipated by the researcher, even though participants were never asked to speak of the issues constraining their professionalism with any specific prior indication or notification of these. They were asked instead to respond spontaneously to the question without any kind of leading questions, which might have enforced or influenced their responses. Allowing the respondents a degree of flexibility in developing and framing their insights, the researcher felt confident that the findings would not be misleading, and thus, biased.

One of the most vociferous and commonly agreed upon factors that the teachers perceived as both a threat and constraint to their professional identities was private tutoring. Leda described private tutoring in quite derogatory terms in that she thought it drives some teachers

to be apathetic and careless in showing commitment towards their instructional practice in the classroom and thus their professional integrity is eroded:

‘The problem with private tutoring is that some teachers see it as supplementary for the students, reducing the workload of teachers. Therefore teachers are more likely to gain the expected results from the students, as they have another teacher working in parallel with them, halving their workload. And herein lies the ethical issue, the teachers gain the benefit from somebody else’s hard work, and take advantage of this fact, and they save time in their own teaching and planning work’. (HT)

Marina validated Leda’s argument by citing a critical incident she had once heard from another colleague:

‘When a philological teacher entered the class and told the students that they would cover a poem in a one hour class, even though it needed four hours to be studied properly, and the students told her that it would not work out, she responded with surprise asking: ‘‘But, have you not already covered this in your afternoon classes?’’ (DH)

Katia voiced her agreement, adding that:

‘That is so true for some teachers who feel a great relief that somebody else is filling the gaps of their work!’(DH)

At this point, it should be noted that there was an awareness by the researcher of the evolutionary flow to the discussion, which could be well attributed to the nature of the participant interaction. Some respondents were keen to recall other similar patterns which undermine teachers’ professional identity and which strengthen the ‘technical’ and ‘instrumental’ components of the professional self. In this respect, teachers’ understandings of their self-image, self-esteem and task perception shifted from the ethical idea of ‘behaving professionally’ to a notion akin to ‘proletarianization’. The latter is an evidence of perceived loss of control by teachers’ over their work since they assume that students receive private



tutoring, and in turn, teachers neglect their class teaching and thus, their self-image as 'educators' is reduced, whilst their function as mere 'processors' of knowledge stressed.

Moreover, some participants, building on comments and points of view already raised about private tutoring, introduced the 'syndicalist' side of professionalism, which like private tutoring, they thought undermines and threatens to a large extent professional identity formation, as teachers' conceptions of themselves as 'educators' becomes eroded for the sake of other occupational benefits often confined to extrinsic rather than intrinsic elements of their professional role.

Marina described teachers as 'syndicalists' by juxtaposing explicit claims about a narrow and constricted image of teachers whose professional practice is confined to the working and payment conditions:

'I think that is what we call the negative aspect of professionalism, to cover my teaching work in this amount of teaching hours, not even being able to go over by a minute, and I see a lot of novice teachers adopt this negative aspect. When it comes to our teachers' meetings within the school, they would always ask if they were going to get any reduction in their teaching hours, and whether they could have their free periods protected from doing cover lessons over and above the obligatory 7 hours a year'. (DH)

Katia agreed and spoke of her personal experience about an incident:

'We had this novice teacher coming to work on a secondment in our school, and she came to me and asked if it was required of her to attend the teachers meetings during her free periods, whether she was required to stay in the school, and if it was obligatory for her to cover for an absent teacher'. (DH)

Moreover, the 'syndicalist' identity claim implies that 'teacher unions' are central to teacher identity formation, which according to a widely held belief, forces teachers in Cyprus to demand status recognition, as well as fight for better payment conditions to the detriment of

their 'extended' professional responsibilities. Such acknowledgements were echoed by all respondents. Marina made the following claim that :

'They may be effective in the classroom, but they do not regard themselves as having an ethical duty to devote extra personal time to fulfil their professional duties'. (DH)

In the main, all teachers were critical of this aspect of professional identity and sought to elucidate a professional response. In doing so, they advocated the development of more decentralised mechanisms which would oblige the class teacher to be involved in a wider understanding of the school unit. Katia, talked of the opportunities of decentralization envisioned by the reform documents and brought into the fore the issue of a 'collegial accountability' in that not only the head ship of the school should be held accountable and responsible for the function of the whole school unit but teachers as well:

'We think the text of the document of educational reform announces the development of such mechanisms of decentralisation, which will demand of the teacher to care about the whole school unit. In the currently existing system, it is just the head teacher and deputy head that have this responsibility'. (DH)

The rest of the teachers picked on that issue, to explain what is occurring in the current situation, with the absence of such decentralisation. They gave some examples of the current issues, with Marina saying:

'During collapsed curriculum days where a teacher is supposed to have some time off, tension is created by many teachers who dispute whether they should have to attend these days during their free periods'. (DH)

Andria expanded on the issue of 'collegial accountability' and brought in to the discussion what could be implied as 'ethical accountability' by touching on aspects of reciprocal trust between middle managers and their subordinates through a give-and-take communication. Thus, she drew on her experience to denote that a 'syndicalist' staff culture corrodes the possibility of such communication:

‘ I remember being hurt once, by a teacher working on a secondment who I asked to help me with another teacher who could not manage the class. She came to me and told me that I should have asked someone else to help me, as she was not being paid for this extra work. I told her kindly to “go away, I will handle this situation as you are not paid for it” and in the end she stayed. It is good to be aware of your rights on the one hand, but on the other hand, perhaps sometimes your professional conscience should prevail’. (HT)

Katia took the above point in another direction and underlined the notion of ‘professional agency’ and ‘ownership’ of educational decision making, and how these sometimes might be hindered by teachers behaving as ‘syndicalists’, for as she put it:

‘Even when teachers refuse to attend such teacher meetings and seminars since they believe they are not paid for it, they will often then complain about a decision made when they were not there. Herein lies the issue of responsibility, as then we will have to be accountable for decisions that were taken without our input’. (DH)

Leda associated teacher refusal to take on extra responsibilities with the ‘self serving’ norms that are widespread in Cypriot society:

‘Our society has become more and more selfish, and this becomes evident not only at student level, but also at teacher level. This undermines the development of the spirit of working as a team’. (HT)

Andria developed this argument and identified an array of causes for such a cultural norm, which in turn become the cause for teacher frustration and dissatisfaction about the way they are being evaluated:

‘The self service issues, are the outcome of the lack of right motives and fairness in the teaching profession. I have seen a lot of teachers who were promoted to head teacher without even having attended educational seminars and these teachers were promoted faster than those who took a pro-active role in their own educational development. I know teachers who spent most of their free time in the canteen, and they were about to be promoted. I remember the lady working in the canteen asking me how they were going to be able to run the school from the lunch tables! All the other teachers would have seen this happening, and asked why they should struggle and put effort into this school. That is why there should be a fairer system of evaluation and promotion developed’. (HT)

In the same vein, Leda picked on the issue of ‘lack of meritocracy’ and attributed its genesis to the culturally embedded form of ‘favouritism’ as she pointed out that:

‘The community of Cyprus is quite small, so some of the inspectors may be more favourable towards some teachers who they know to be of the same political ideology as themselves. In our country there is a lack of meritocracy, and this is evident between teachers, especially the novice teachers, they take their future promotion for granted, and this makes them apathetic towards their job’. (HT)

Katia pointed to the effects that ‘pre-defined’ teacher evaluations have upon their day to day teaching instruction:

‘The teachers know the day before that an inspector is coming, and so the day of the inspection is not objective, the lesson is somewhat staged and not a true representation of their normal teaching methods. (DH)

Andria saw ‘political activism’ as a major constraint on teacher professional identity formation when it comes to teachers’ promotion. Moreover, she regarded promotions being based on seniority as ineffective in sustaining good leadership:

‘The major constraints are the fact that systems of promotion are based on age, and the party political influences can sometimes either help you gain a post, or inhibit you from getting the same post’. (HT)

These data, reveal the following important recurring themes:

- a) that teachers conceive private tutoring as a threat to teachers’ professional integrity
- b) that ‘syndicalism’ was seen as the major constraint on teachers’ professional identity.
- c) that ‘syndicalism’ was strongly associated with cultural and institutional conditions which are in play, and culminate in the creation of feelings of ‘unfairness’ and ‘lack of meritocracy’ which in turn suggest waves of teachers’ de-professionalization.

d) that the interwovenness of 'favouritism', 'partisan promotions', 'pre-determined evaluations which are largely based on seniority' and 'high politicization', were the main cause of professional responses along the lines of more 'decentralised procedures'.

### **Facilitators**

All participants saw as facilitators what was on the other side of the coin of what they had thought of as major constraints. Thus, they pointed to a fairer and more objective system of promotion and teacher evaluation. Moreover, they spoke once again about the necessity of self-autonomous and decentralised school units which would transform teachers from being 'restricted' professionals to more 'extended' professionals. Facilitators were only mentioned in the light of forthcoming educational reforms. However, nothing was mentioned as a facilitator, which concerned their current practice. Nonetheless, Marina made a vociferous statement about what she perceived as the major facilitator of a teachers' professional identity:

'The fact that some students that you face outside the school still remember something you taught them in a class, even if sometimes it is some years later, gives me a feeling of professionalism, and it is a reward which is often not available in other professions'. (DH)

### ***Attitudes towards forthcoming educational reforms***

#### **i) Pressures from accountability mechanisms**

All the teachers recognised that any attempts to decentralize the educational system of Cyprus as well as any attempts to introduce controlled accountability mechanisms are very largely the result of the necessity to harmonize Greek Cypriot educational policy with the E.U:

'There is trend towards raising the economy, at a European level, and this European economic pattern triggers this kind of competition which is reflected in educational systems and forces them to raise their standards of performance and this is reflected in the pressure on teachers'. (Andria, HT)

‘there is economic pressure from the treaty of Lisbon as well’ (Marina, DH ).

Leda was keen to stress that the pressure is from a wider global majority, besides the E.U, for as she said:

‘It is not just the pressures from the Lisbon Treaty, but there is a general trend from all countries on a global scale to raise standards of education. Cyprus has not followed these European Thatcherite models in education yet, but soon these models will be developed in our country’. (HT)

However, teachers were sceptical of the effectiveness of such reform movements upon the Cypriot educational system and sought to mediate those in terms of some local peculiarities by drawing on educational examples from other E.U countries:

‘Such reforms have worked for Finland and Sweden due to the cultural homogeneity between the citizens’. (Andria, HT)

‘Raising performance standards in Cyprus in a similar way will not work, as it is more culturally hybrid’ (Katia, DH )

‘Our educational system will reduce in quality if all the multicultural students are included in performance driven procedures’ (Marina, DH).

Andria drew from her experience, giving an example that the Cyprus education system is already very exam orientated, to conclude that a competitive environment with these accountability standards would be welcomed in Cyprus:

‘I have some experiences from the school I used to work at as a teacher, where the head teacher of the time was putting a lot of pressure on teachers to raise student marks even if the students did not deserve it, so that the school would become one of the educational elite, and improve their reputation to compete with other outstanding schools in Cyprus’. (HT)

She then quoted her former head teacher, saying that he said:

‘Why are the other schools getting such good marks? Are they marking generously too? Or are they more clever than us?’

Commenting on his remarks, she said:

‘This head teacher prompted us to mark up students who did not deserve A’s, because other teachers in other schools were doing the same’.

Further to the statements above, some teachers expressed quite contradictory viewpoints to their initial opposing stance towards the implementation of controlled accountability mechanisms. This might be reflective of the teachers’ previously expressed dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of Cypriot educational system referred to previously as the ‘lack of meritocracy’, ‘favouritism’ and ‘pre-determined’ teacher evaluation:

‘Because we are a small community, our educational system should become more pressing and controlling so that there will be a more objective and fair evaluation’ (Leda, HT)

Katia and Andria adopted a moderate stance and stated that teachers should be evaluated according to their teaching processes as well as their approach towards the students, and that the student results should be secondary. Marina expressed an opposite view, saying:

‘The teaching process cannot be controlled in the same way that the performance of the students can’ (DH)

Andria, who held some reservations about teacher evaluation in terms of students’ performance, modified her former moderate stance by strongly asserting that:

‘Increased control is in demand as it could put the ills of our education system off’. (HT)

Findings of this section suggest that while teachers do acknowledge the wider global picture which forces educational policies to be aligned with procedures of controlled accountability mechanisms, they seem to be ignorant of the consequences likely to be brought about by such directions upon their professionalism. On the contrary, they seem to welcome such processes,

for they see the outcome of these, more as opportunities for upgrading their professional status, rather than as a threat to their professional autonomy.

## **ii) The impact of accountability mechanisms upon private tutoring**

All teachers saw the impact of accountability mechanisms upon private tutoring as a ‘domino effect’ in that if demands upon student and teacher performance are to be increased, there will be a greater teacher, student and parental demand for private tutoring:

‘This sounds like a domino, as it will bring a lot of pressure on both educators and students’. (Andria, HT)

‘In most foreign countries, private tutoring is not the norm, in our society it is a social institution, and for this reason things will become worse for our society’. (Leda, HT)

Katia expanded on the issue by arguing that further to the problems caused by an already highly controlling bureaucratic educational system, a thriving private tutoring emerging as a consequence of more accountability measures is likely to produce additional pressures on teachers:

‘This will be an impediment to the professionalism of teachers, as the system is already highly centralised and it doesn’t allow you much space for freedom and manoeuvre. We have rules set from above about our free curricular activities, which are not even free as they are prescribed and defined by the various governmental circulars, which are like to-do lists. There is an illusion of freedom for us as individuals, and we are called upon to nurture and develop ‘free and democratic citizens’. The government are asking us to perform conflicting ideals’. (DH)

The phrase of ‘free and democratic citizens’ cited in the fragment above echoes the governmental slogan which is documented in all educational reforms. Thus, Katia painted a paradoxical professional portrait of teachers, who are not treated as professionals, in that they are called to perform contradictory ideals such as to nurture ‘free and democratic citizens’ while at the same time teachers experience an ‘illusionary freedom’.



### **iii) The establishment of mentoring roles**

Andria and Marina were positively disposed to the development of mentors and pedagogical assistants within the school units. They reflected upon how, throughout their career, some colleagues had performed as mentors on a voluntary basis. Moreover, they constructed an implicit professional identity, by arguing that personal and professional qualities should not be seen as mutually exclusive and that the professional should coexist with the personal self:

‘The institution of mentoring has always existed in our schools unofficially. I have met teachers who are behaving like mentors in a moral sense, without having a reduction in their teaching hours they will devote time from their personal life to provide support and assistance to their colleagues. That is what we call a professional, to have an awareness of their ethical and moral mission, which is not imposed from above’. (Andria, HB)

‘These people are the backbone of the whole school, and they contribute to the school’s wellbeing by sacrificing their free time without complaint, and do not wait for acknowledgement’. (Marina, DH)

However, when the same teachers later spoke of the forthcoming legislated establishment of the mentoring duties, their views changed significantly and suggested that they held some doubts over the effectiveness of this institution:

‘This will work only if the duties of the mentor do not interfere with the duties of other future established managerial posts’ (Marina, DH)

‘The role of the pedagogical assistant should be advisory, but in practice this could be quite the opposite, as it can be somewhat controlling and oppressive. To me, it seems quite hard to evaluate the work of a peer or a colleague and at the same time maintain an everyday working relationship with them’. (Andria, HT)

#### **iv) Pressures from the revision of History textbooks**

Findings from this research question suggest that teachers are more likely to provide professional responses couched in ethical terms when areas of their subject interests are under threat. Therefore, teachers of this group provided a range of professional responses as a counterbalance to the forthcoming history textbook amendments. Some teachers reported that they were experiencing a big conflict between externally defined policies, which are to a large extent 'politicised', and their personal and professional conscience:

'If the revision of textbooks does not occur in the right way, and the government insert content which threatens our national identity, they will then be forcing us to teach things that are against our values, and therefore we will become constricted'. (Andria, HT)

'Our position would definitely be hard, and we will be faced with a dilemma because on one side, we have to comply with the ministry's rules, and on the other side we must listen to our conscience'. (Marina, DH)

Most of the times, teachers would sketch out oppositional portraits in order to construct what they perceived as 'unprofessional' history teaching in light of the forthcoming textbook amendments. Therefore, 'subjectivity', 'propagation', 'indoctrination' and 'political activism' were central features of their view:

'We should never approach history in a subjective manner; we should make the students seek the truth on their own, through the use of a variety of sources. I think we should never reveal to the student what our own subjective values are, as whether these values are right or wrong, the students are easily influenced'. (Marina, DH)

'Teaching history should not take the form of propagation, but should instead be validated in a more scientific, and objective manner'. (Leda, HT)

'We should not indoctrinate the students with our political values, that is quite unprofessional'. (Leda, HT)

Andria drew on a critical incident she was faced with once in her class, and reflected upon pupils being influenced by their parents' political affiliations to conclude that a teacher should always be cognisant of the consequences of her practice as these can influence a student for life:

'This is a difficult issue to deal with, particularly if you have to deal with students of a younger age. For example, when I taught in a primary school, I was faced with some critical incidents, which indicated that students had been quite influenced by their parent's political views, and they would associate my values in history teaching with my political leanings'. (HT)

Leda picked up on this issue and argued that:

'If you impose anyone, be it a student or a teacher, to do something that is against their values, you should instead try to help them internalise the historical fact themselves, and act as a more autonomous individual in terms of critical thinking'. (HT)

Both deputy head teachers agreed with this, and Katia expanded her argument by saying that:

'The teacher could influence the student to a far greater extent than the textbook will ever be able to do. The teacher could do as little as throw a hint to the student, and this could have a consequence on the students thinking. The student will then have this viewpoint imprinted in their minds, even if they do not often think of it' (DH)

'Yes, the students pick up these issues easily, and they are the best judges'. (Marina, DH)

The most recurring issues considered by teachers as unprofessional were specified as 'propagation', 'indoctrination', 'politicization', and 'subjectivity'. Unlike in the previous section on the establishment of mentoring roles where teachers saw that professional and personal values should coexist, in this case the opposite seems to be true for teachers. Through all their responses they stressed that personal values whether political, or national should not impinge upon their professional approach to history teaching.

## Summary of findings

What is striking about the findings of this focus group was that even though participants at the end acknowledged a unified and socially constructed understanding of the effects of the reforms upon their professional identities, there were times during the interview where respondents expressed inconsistent and perhaps incompatible dispositions towards the forthcoming reforms. On the one hand, they thought of decentralization and school autonomy as opportunities for establishing fairer and more objective systems of teacher evaluation and promotion, on the other hand they seem to reject the introduction of controlled accountability mechanisms as they believed that this might constrict their practice. The fragmentary character of teachers' identities in this case could be attributed to the fact that the major conditions of constraint upon philological teachers' professionalism are located through socio-cultural influences like favouritism, political activism, private tutoring, self-serving norms, and in organizational settings through the lack of meritocracy, pre-determined evaluations, professional apathy, strong syndicalism, partisan promotions. Nevertheless, in many cases where they felt their identities were under threat, they sought to provide their own ethical interpretation by proposing a number of professional responses defined in ethical terms.

The overall feeling produced by the findings of this group, is that teachers have felt entrapped by the weaknesses and the ills of the Greek Cypriot educational system and for this reason their immediate responses to these problems have been much aligned with the 'corrective' nature of the neo-liberal policies and the promises of a school-based autonomy. Nevertheless, in some cases as in the one regarding the establishment of new mentoring roles, they provided some more critical prospective accounts and sketched out a binary role claim for mentors, ranging from 'adversary' to 'advisory' and 'collaborative'.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Analysing focus groups two and three (philological teachers)**

#### **Introduction**

The framework of data analysis followed in this chapter is structured in much the same way as in the previous chapter, with two added sub-sections under the heading of teachers' attitudes towards educational reforms, in particular the development of the comprehensive lyceum and pressures from the reduction in the amount of pre-scribed content of textbooks. As for the latter, this emerged as an issue of importance for one of the implementers who was interviewed prior to these two focus groups. As for the former, this was raised by focus group three. Therefore, two additional individual interviews with lyceum teachers were conducted and analysed so as to elaborate further on the pressures of this development.

The general findings for this chapter confirm and expand on the issues examined in the previous chapter with heads and deputy heads. The analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter suggests that the respondents' ethical notions of professionalism predominated in cases where they had to respond to the challenges of the newly revised history textbooks as well as when they had to consider the impact of private tutoring on their professional identities. Nevertheless, their responses to the incoming reforms of controlled accountability mechanisms revealed a unified response which corresponds to those responses examined in chapter 2, namely the 'new managerial response' (Banks, 2004) denoting those individuals who have internalised managerialism in language and practice and could be labelled as 'true believers' (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). In some other occasions respondents in the previous chapter would approach the new developments with some reluctance, yet they would never seek to take any action, and they would carry on with the new demands of self-

evaluation and decentralisation. In a much similar vein were the responses expressed by all the philological teachers of this chapter. Given the social, political, cultural and institutional factors which have affected the context of educational reforms in Cyprus and were examined in chapter 3, the empirical data so far suggest that the major patterns seen as constraints on philological teachers' professionalism are located within socio-cultural and institutional contexts and undermine the teachers' sense of 'being professionals' examined in chapter 2. Thus, it has come as no surprise that all philological teachers implicitly espoused the 'professionalization' thesis being put forward by the managerial agendas. Therefore, by analysing some of the factors which have undermined teachers' professional agency of managing past educational reforms, this chapter is a step forward in justifying the argument of this current thesis; that a 'managerialist' approach would fail to provide the reflective and critical perspective that philological teachers need in order to embrace in their professional practice those global and ethical ideals demanded for nurturing 'critical and democratic citizens', and enable them to co-exist and interact with the Turkish Cypriots. Hence throughout the analysis in this chapter there will often be pointers made, and indications to Giddens' four dilemmas (unification vs fragmentation, powerlessness vs appropriation, authority vs uncertainty, personalised vs commodified experience) as well as to Habermas' discourse-based form of dialogue, already examined and discussed in chapters 2 and 3, in order to help the process of the thesis argument along.

### ***Defining professionalism***

As in focus group one, the teachers of these two focus groups were called upon to indicate their understanding of the word 'professional' with specific connections to teachers' and doctors' professionalism. Almost all of the teachers' comments alluded to the notion of 'behaving professionally'. A number of characteristics mentioned with some frequency by

both focus groups were references to the 'long-term' effect that both a teacher's and a doctor's practice has on students and patients respectively:

'A similarity between doctors and teachers is the long lasting impact of their work on the people who are affected by it, such as patients and students'. (Aliko FG2)

Afrodite agreed with Aliko and pointed to a slight difference between the two professions:

'Teachers see students on a day to day basis, and the results may not be immediately obvious, but may become more apparent in the long-term, whilst a doctor's practice may bring about more immediate results in a patient'.

In addition, the ethical contribution to society tied to altruistic concern was stressed:

'I would disagree that teaching and medicine are professions, I would regard them more as missions'. (Manti FG3)

'What teachers and doctors have in common is their ethical contribution to society'. (Eva FG3)

Near the element of the long term effect, the teachers of focus group two placed the notion of life-long learning:

'Both doctors and teachers must pool their resources and knowledge with their colleagues in order to get the best results and be perceived as professionals. Not only this but doctors and teachers alike must attend seminars and training to keep their subject knowledge current and updated'. (Erato FG 2)

Alongside the ethical dimensions of teachers' professionalism, participants of both groups acknowledged the caring side, in terms of 'a commitment for students' pastoral needs' as well as 'a good relationship with colleagues:

'The role of the professional teacher should not be limited to the mere delivery of knowledge, but should be more conducive to educating students' character' (Cleo FG3)

'I would call somebody a professional whose occupational concerns are majorly tied to altruistic concerns, by that I mean a professional should not only cater for pupils' well being, but also to make sure that he sustains a good relationship with his colleagues'.

So far, the teachers of this group only spoke of the ‘behaving professionally’ dimension of professionalism. The frequent references to elements such as ‘mission’, ‘long-term effect’, ‘social contribution’, and ‘life-long learning’ are not indications of status, reward, or public recognition, but rather references to dedication, and ethical conduct.

### *The major constraints and facilitators on professional identity formation*

#### **Constraints**

One of the major constraints identified by the teachers of focus group one, was the ‘strong syndicalist culture’ which prompts teachers to fight for better status and seek out for the instrumental conducts of their professional practice. Findings for focus group two and three expanded and developed this issue further, and it is important to note that participants were never asked by any probing question to talk about this matter, as the researcher thought that this was likely to emerge directly from the data, thus enhancing the validity of the respondents’ accounts. Teachers of focus group two emphasized the ‘partisan’ and ‘highly politicized’ character of teachers’ unions as well as the unions’ lack of interest in dealing with teachers’ problems. Some teachers felt a keen sense of resentment and powerlessness about the teachers’ unions:

‘They are trying to support teacher’s rights, but they are often too entrenched in, and influenced by, party political matters’. (Alik FG2)

‘Teachers unions should be there for teachers, and be representatives of the whole educational community, putting problems of teachers in the limelight, and helping them be solved, and not to adhere to the ever changing views of the political party in government’. (Afrodite FG2)

Athena provided an example to support the arguments raised above, remembering:

‘When we went on a strike about school violence, we gave the union some time to deal with the issue, yet still we see no positive outcome’. (FG2)



Feelings of frustration coupled with sentiments of 'low morale' were witnessed by teachers in cases where teachers' unions attitudes run counter to teachers' professional judgment, and even worse when such attitudes resulted in teachers' reduction of salaries:

'The whole national teaching community went on a two hour strike for such a crucial issue (school violence), and we lost the two hours of pay from our salaries for nothing, we were ignored. So what does this all mean? Somewhere there is a huge problem'. (Afrodite FG2)

As the teachers of focus group three went to talk about what constrains their professional identity formation, they tackled issues regarding their professional development, and the role of teachers' unions was cited as one among the other factors which restricted their professional growth. An example pointed out by Manti and which echoed the voice of all the respondents of the group suggests that teachers' unions do not encourage the development of teacher 'informed professional judgement', for the level of contact they seek with teachers when it comes to discussing educational changes is only superficial:

'On the rare occasion that a representative from OELMEK comes to talk to us, they are here for only a relatively small amount of time during our breaks, in order to discuss with us our evaluations, and the new educational changes'.

As in focus group two, feelings of resentment were evident in focus group three, and these feelings were more associated with teachers' distrust of their associations' members:

'When it comes to union elections, I know a lot of teachers who abstain, and so do I, because the unions' members dig out their political differences'. (Cleo FG3)

'It 's not just that the unions are politicised, I personally ignore them, because I don't see any good coming out of them'. (Eva FG3)

The teachers' responses seem to suggest that there is a gap of communication between themselves and their representative unions who are highly politicised and ignore the

consequences of their attitudes for teachers' sense of professional growth, judgment and discretion. It follows that the act of 'deliberation' which is the cornerstone of Habermas' form of dialogue, is absent between teachers and their unions, thus breaking down the possibilities for mutual understanding and trust.

Other issues mentioned with some frequency by both groups, and described conditions of constraint upon professional identity formation were those issues emanating from the wider socio-cultural milieu, such as 'favouritism' and 'party politics' which were seen as infiltrating institutional settings, creating environments where 'lack of meritocracy' and 'partisan promotions' thrive. Two factors were especially relevant to the 'unfairness' of teacher evaluation system. The first was the 'pre-determined' character of the evaluation system:

'The current system of evaluation is something of a routine, each teacher knows long before the inspection what mark they will achieve'. (Erato FG2)

The second was the strong culture of favouritism coupled with political affiliations:

'Nothing can function effectively, as everyone knows someone who will show favouritism towards them, and the inspections are affected by political affiliations and this can be seen by the way the teachers recruitment agency functions, as it is made up by people who have been placed there by politicians'. ( Afrodite FG2)

'The lack of meritocracy in our system is seen in the way that some assistant principals have been promoted. Some teachers have not been promoted into the assistant principals post as they did not belong to the same political party as the teachers recruitment agency'. (Aliki FG2)

The teachers of focus group three cited the currently existing systems of inspection and teacher evaluation as undermining their professional development and growth. Cleo made an implicit argument for 'reflective practice' so as to maintain that the latter is not evident during classroom inspections:

‘Every time an inspector leaves my classroom, I am none the wiser about how to improve my teaching practice. I have a relationship with my students where they can tell me their thoughts, feelings and doubts about my lessons and teaching, and we can discuss these issues and try to overcome them, but an inspector does not understand this, as that is not the way they practice, there is no feedback’.

Manti expressed the same feelings of doubt, and abandonment, when she said that:

‘The results of the inspection often seem pre-determined, but the thoughts of a student never are’.

Since the discussion had gone far into the institutional conditions of constraint, a follow up question sought to examine whether private tutoring was seen as a constraint on the professional identities of teachers. A striking surprise for the researcher was that private tutoring was seen more as a facilitator for the teachers of group two, and evidence which backs up this finding will be illustrated in the next section. Surprisingly, the teachers of focus group three held a quite different view of private tutoring. They saw supplementary private tutoring mainly as a threat to the mainstream teachers’ subject expertise, for sometimes the approach taken by private tutors may come into conflict with that taken by mainstream teachers. Eva cited an example showing that private tutoring sometimes creates dissonance with lessons in mainstream classes, and this sometimes has de-skilling effects for mainstream teachers:

‘Some students take the marked tests from mainstream school to their afternoon classes with the private tutor, and show it to them, and they come back to the mainstream teacher and say the tutor has said the mark is unfair, and the test is marked wrongly’.

Her example led other participants to make the claim that private tutoring curbs teacher’s role to matters mainly associated with the technical elements of ‘professionanism’. They argued that private tutors, mainstream teachers, as well as teachers taking up both roles, act more like ‘entrepreneurs’ in that what they teach is a mere replication of what is already been prescribed

by the national curriculum and both mainstream and supplementary tutoring are targeted mainly at high achievers who want to achieve even more:

‘What worries us most is not the fact that high performing students want to become even better, but what the outcome looks like at the end of it, in that it takes the form of a mass production’ (Cleo)

Thus, the participants’ responses implied that private tutoring is a threat to, and a constraint on teachers’ notions of ‘being’ and ‘behaving’ professionally as well as on their subject expertise and knowledge.

Overall, participants’ responses for what they consider as the major conditions of constraint on their professionalism, suggest quite the same patterns seen with head teachers’ and deputy heads’ responses as well. Focus groups one and two talked of the socio-cultural and institutional conditions of constraint such as the strong unionism and pointed to those areas of teachers’ professionalism which are constricted most by the unions, such as teachers’ professional development, autonomy and professional judgement. In addition to these, references to the culture of favouritism and partisan promotions were frequently made with particular reference to the pre-determined character of teacher evaluations which were depicted by some teachers as restricting teachers’ reflective practice. As for private tutoring, this was perceived by focus group three as a threat to teachers’ professional identities in a similar way as it was seen by heads and deputy heads. Moreover, focus group three spoke of the unethical implications of supplementary tutoring for education and accomplished an oppositional professional portrait, that of the ‘entrepreneur’, whose function is merely oriented towards the delivery as well as the reproduction of a mass knowledge production. Unlike the teachers of focus group three, the teachers of focus group two held quite an opposing view, as they saw private tutoring more as a facilitator for teachers’ professionalism, a point to which the following section now turns.

## Facilitators

With regard to the effects of private tutoring, the teachers' comments of focus group two were noticeably more positive than negative:

'Parents are right to place a high value on private tutoring, because if our educational system was efficient, and would not accept or would remove from schools teachers who are incompetent, there would be no need to use the private tutors.' (Athena FG2)

'I believe that it is necessary because the national curriculum is too wide for classroom teachers to cover, and it is always expanding, with new subjects such as technology and environmental issues, which cannot be fully covered in the mainstream schools due to time constraints, and teachers not being competently trained in the new subjects'. (Afrodite FG2)

It is quite apparent that these teachers accept the social institution of private tutoring which they deem as a *sine qua non* for students' academic achievement. The quotations cited above suggest that teachers attribute its evolution as well as its expansion to the educational system's 'inefficiencies' such as inefficient teacher recruitment and promotion procedures. Thus, beneath the participants' explicit statements regarding the lack of staff recruitment mechanisms based on controlled entry criteria, there lies an implicit meaning, which could be well associated with the very notion of the 're-professionalization' of teaching. The latter may well imply power and autonomy earned by teachers by acting as private tutors, for their professional status in the public sector is being undermined by unfair promotion procedures. Moreover, the demand for teacher professional competence in equipping students with the most up to date issues such as racism, technology, environment and other interdisciplinary subject areas, increases significantly, hence it is not possible in the public sector. It follows then that the practices of private tutoring signal the ills of public education which in turn drive mainstream teachers to regain their lost professional competence and status by growing a parallel system of education.

An issue of common concern raised by focus groups two and three regarding what facilitates their professionalism, centred around the public and private schooling divide. Teachers from focus group two were adamant that the rules set by the ministry of education regarding pupil misbehaviour are not there to be accurately applied by the teachers, as teachers are later called upon by the ministry to become more flexible and tolerant with failing students. They therefore argued that this is not the case for private schools for as they pointed out:

‘In private schools both failing and misbehaving students are being expelled from the system, whilst in public schools, rules are more loosely applied, and often not taken into account. The ministry of education sets the behavioural rules, but then refutes them by giving instructions to teachers to let all students pass to the next grade, regardless of their behaviour and their academic performance’. (Alik FG 2)

Athena voiced her agreement with feelings of powerlessness and resignation, and in reference to the ministry she said:

‘You are the one who sets these rules, and then you come and you bind my hands telling me that I should pass everyone, how can the students take us seriously?’. (FG 2)

The teachers from focus three delineated other conditions acting upon as facilitators in comparing public and private schooling. They referred to school autonomy and decentralization of private schools and assumed that by bringing these kinds of practices to public schools, student discipline as well as student performance will no longer be a problem and as a result, teachers’ professional status will be enhanced:

‘A major advantage of the private schools is that there is a lot of discipline, and because the school units are autonomous, students and teachers who are not achieving well are told to leave the school. On the contrary, in our public schools we are obliged to work with any kind of student or teacher we are given’ (Eva FG 3)

Teachers from both groups brought up the issue of ‘stability in the job situation’ which is a distinguishing feature of public schooling and advocated a culture of ‘name-blame-and-shame politics’, for they thought that this might ameliorate the image of public schools and thus the

image of their professional status. They expressed a unified managerial response which corresponds to Banks' (2004) 'new managerial response' and 'professional entrepreneurial response' advocating a private sector approach to the public education system which controls occupational entry and can maintain both high performing teachers and high performing students. They reflected upon the current system of teacher appointment and argued that job permanence within the Cypriot educational system generates feelings of job security which in turn result in 'passive' and 'complacent' teacher identities:

'Once a teacher is appointed in Cyprus, they are in the job for life, and this has a negative impact upon their professionalism, as once someone is appointed for a lifetime, they can become complacent, and often do not do the job as they should'. (Aliko FG2)

'In our educational system, teachers are employed in the wrong way. There is not a very good selection criteria, and the profession attracts people due to the job security, the extensive holidays, and the high salary'. (Cleo FBG 3).

The prevalent feeling which was generated by participants' comments from both groups regarding conditions of facilitators on their professional identity formation, suggests that teachers have begun to witness signs of de-professionalization regarding their professional status. The warning signs of de-professionalization become more evident in their talk, as they recurrently employed in their discourses the public-private sector divide. It seems as if teachers are trying to rewrite the teaching 'profession' in more private and business like contours. They are therefore more inclined towards favouring a performative educational culture which controls the quality of both teachers and students, restoring in this way the image of public education and thus the professional status of teachers. Thus, it is highly likely that teachers will accept the promising managerial reforms with enthusiasm and perhaps they will be entrapped into the ironies being latent in the managerial discourse. The next section amplifies these issues further.

## *Attitudes towards forthcoming educational reforms*

### **i) Pressures from accountability mechanisms**

When the teachers of focus group two were asked to talk about any pressures which they thought might follow in the aftermath of the proposed educational reforms regarding decentralisation and an enhanced emphasis placed upon performance and public accountability, they did not seem to have a sufficient understanding of these new developments to comment, and therefore most of them remained silent. This however, need not imply a lack of opinion. Their reluctance to comment on these particular issues may itself be an indication of what Hoyle (1975,p.318) has called 'restricted' professionalism to refer to those who are quite dissatisfied with bureaucratic and centralised regulations but see no option other than to struggle on in silence. In addition, their lack of awareness of such issues may spring from a lack of awareness of the wider economic and political global factors, examined in chapter 3, which push the need for educational reform in Cyprus. Their ignorance may suggest another thing; that of the absence of a 'communicative' and 'ethically discursive dialogue' when it comes to the actual planning of educational decisions. It follows that those in power who decide upon the educational reforms do so without inviting the knowledge and wisdom of those responsible for implementing them and who will be directly affected.

The teachers of focus group three picked on different elements of the forthcoming managerial reforms, such as the future developments of new managerial posts and controlled accountability mechanisms and evoked a wide assortment of responses, suggesting an arbitrary variety of personal subjective understandings.



With regard to decentralisation, school autonomy and self evaluation, several participants strongly felt that the inspection of teachers should take into account the most immediate supervisor of the teachers such as the principal:

‘The principal should have more say in our evaluation scheme, because of his every day contact with us’.  
(Synthia FG 3)

‘A principal’s judgement about a teachers’ performance can be more objective than the inspector’s. The role of the inspector should be more consolatory and not evaluative’. (Manti FG 3)

With regard to the issue of increased accountability mechanisms some teachers saw it more as an opportunity for their professional advancement and status:

‘As we see in other countries, if a teacher manages to gain high standards of student performance, they get rewards for it’. (Manti FG3)

‘There should be competition, because there should be something to drive us towards success. A weakness of our educational system is that we do not help high achievers, but focus on the lower achievers, and the high achievers are lost in the system without being distinguished’. (Cleo FG3)

Eva picked the notion of competition and said much the same thing by pointing to the weakness of the current system of teacher evaluation:

‘The way that the administrative system functions today is inefficient, because you cannot distinguish who the best teacher is, as promotions are based solely on seniority, and not talent, there is no financial difference between the worst teacher, and the best’. (FG3)

Manti picked up on the issue of the inefficient evaluation scheme and added that :

‘It is good to know that you won’t be just a simple teacher throughout your teaching career, and you do not need to start to develop white hair just to get promoted!’. (FG3)

It could be argued that the teachers' responses in this case reflect Giddens' dilemma of *unification versus fragmentation*, as discussed in the earlier chapters, which will be returned to again in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

## **ii) The establishment of new mentoring roles**

Regarding the creation of a hierarchy of responsibility, all of the teachers from both groups spoke of the development of the dual pyramid system, described in earlier chapters.

Aliki, suggested that there should be two directions of management hierarchy, one being purely managerial and the other being pedagogical:

'There should be two pyramids through which a teacher can be promoted, one pedagogical, and one managerial. Being a good educator does not mean you will be a good manager of a school, and vice versa'.  
(Aliki, FG2)

Athena, with regard to the establishment of new mentoring roles as pedagogical assistants, raised the following concern:

'I will only agree with this development if the managerial role, and the educational role are distinguished, as with the pyramid system'. (FG2)

Cleo was a bit worried that some cultural norms might inhibit the success of such developments. She therefore sketched out an opposite portrait of 'professionalism' which she associated with the 'overuse of authority and power':

'Yes, I agree with that, but they have to be professionals and not to turn their noses up to those in a more junior position, and look down on them. In Cyprus we have a negative cultural norm of swift or unexpected promotions giving those who gain them a superiority complex, and they can be prone to abuse their authority'.  
(FG3)

Eva picked on this issue and perceived the outcome to be one of eroding 'collegial professionalism' and introduced an oppositional portrait of professionalism to which she attached the notion of 'behaving as an expert':

'You notice that when somebody is promoted to a new post, they change, and see things differently. Someone who used to be by your side as your colleague, whom you could communicate well with, becomes a completely different person. It is the same with inspectors, when a peer is promoted to inspector, they come into your classroom and behave like an expert, and ignores your thoughts and feelings'. (FG3)

The balance of responses regarding teachers' attitudes towards forthcoming reforms suggests that in cases where they believed that the Greek Cypriot educational system is of inferior quality compared to other countries in general, and to the private sector in particular, they tended to regard competition and accountability controlled mechanisms as the most viable option. The findings also tend to suggest that where teachers raised issues of concern regarding the establishment of new mentoring roles, they tended to be strongly associated with socio-cultural norms such as the 'over-use of power' which is frequently manifested in the behaviour of those who are promoted into a new post. However, none of the participants talked of the irony involved in the governments' creation of a dual pyramid system of responsibilities. The notion of a dual pyramid system could be viewed as a manipulated symbol of control in that it reflects what several authors, already cited in chapter 3, have called an 'unreflective instrumental approach' to implementing a range of directive practices.

### **iii) The impact of accountability mechanisms upon private tutoring**

As findings regarding the implications of private tutoring for teachers' professionalism were twofold, so are the findings for this research question. As for the issue of private tutoring, findings already suggest a division in teachers' responses as these were expressed in the light of two different standpoints: one regarding private tutoring as a breach of teachers' professional integrity, legitimacy and competency, and the other implying a view of private

tutoring as a form of 're-professionalization' in that teachers being outraged by the current educational system, seek shelter in running independent afternoon classes to regain their competence and autonomy.

Therefore, the teachers of focus group two who had previously interpreted the process of private tutoring in a positive rather than negative fashion held that it is unlikely that private tutoring will be increased, nor will it be eliminated either:

'I don't think that private tutoring will be increased, because as controlled accountability mechanisms are introduced, school teachers will be forced to work harder for their students' performance, and this will help parents to trust teachers more, and recover the corroded trust'. (Aliko FG2)

'Private tutoring can never be eliminated, as it is a social institution, and even a lot of students who attend private schools still attend afternoon classes in order to improve their knowledge on some subjects'. (Athena FG 2)

'Private tutoring will not be increased, because with controlled accountability mechanisms teachers will work harder, as is the case with private schools where the teacher is forced by competition to work hard' (Erato FG2).

The teachers of focus group three expressed a rather different view. There was a strong consensus of opinion among all teachers that private tutoring would increase in the aftermath of the reforms. Like the teachers of focus group one in the previous chapter, participants of this group identified the impact of accountability mechanisms on private tutoring as the 'domino effect'. As Cleo said:

'The social norm that the one who does not attend a private tutor will fail, will be increased further. The mainstream teachers will be comfortable with this, as the more tutoring a child receives, the better results they will get, and the better our performance as teachers will be. It is a domino effect'.

In considering participant responses to the hypothetical challenges presented by controlled accountability mechanisms for private tutoring, some of Giddens' dilemmas of the self could

be discerned, such as *powerlessness versus appropriation*, and *personalised versus commodified experience*. A further discussion of these will be made in chapter 8.

Further to what Cleo said as cited above, Manti held some doubts over the success of the implementation of reforms of accountability, and recalled other reforms that had recently taken place to shed light into the black box of educational reforms implementation in Cyprus. One such reform was the establishment of the comprehensive lyceum, often referred to as ‘unified lyceum’ (UL). The development of the new system of lyceum emanated largely from the weaknesses of the educational system to respond to labour market needs in a flexible way (Dalli et al, 2007). This resulted in the abandonment of the former type of the ‘selected studies lyceum’ where students chose between set study streams such as ‘classical studies’ (more conventionally referred to as philological studies), mathematics and sciences, economics and mathematics, commercial and language studies. Within the context of the UL, the pre-existing subject streams were ‘loosened up’ and curricula were reformed to improve both general and subject-specific learning as well as personal electives, and offered a more learner-centred basis of education. In addition to the pedagogical changes, a series of changes were made in the management of the UL such as the enhancement of the position of Head of Studies and the creation of the coordinating assistant principal A and B.

#### **iv) Pressures from the development of the comprehensive lyceum**

The issues that were picked up by teachers regarding the failure of this institution were mainly concerned with a number of factors, which if taken from a Habermasian and Gidensian approach, could shed light into the black box of reform implementation and its implications for philological teachers’ professional identities. Thus, the failure of the comprehensive lyceum, partly if not entirely, lies in a number of factors associated with infractions to morality:

- a) The innovation was enforced by a small number of 'experts' neglecting the wisdom of those who would be directly affected.
- b) No reasons were offered up by the actors who enforced the innovation so as to justify its necessity.
- c) Since no shared understanding was achieved through a 'reflective form of communicative action', those liable for implementing the innovation (teachers) refused to take responsibility for their actions, hence their hesitation in making intelligent judgements about the problems they encountered.
- d) The outcome for teachers was the creation of feelings of powerlessness, and resignation, for they felt that they were not being trusted.
- e) The designers or the experts of the innovation went on to make 'premature propositions of corrective actions' to the problem in a 'coercive' manner, without considering the interests of those who would be affected (students, teachers and parents).

Indicative of the above factors were the complaints made by teachers:

'The comprehensive lyceum failed and out of the blue they decided that we abandon this institution, and change it to something else, without letting anybody get involved in the assessment of the efficiency of the comprehensive lyceum.' (Manti FG3)

'The ministry of education decides for us, not with us'. (Eva FG3)

Manti picked on Eva's words, visibly frustrated, pounded the table and said:

'Who is going to take the blame for this failure? The problems derived from the comprehensive lyceum are still apparent, but nobody dares to take the responsibility'.

At this point there was a probe question by the researcher, asking participants to justify their feelings of frustration caused by these preceding reforms.

Some teachers attributed their feelings of powerlessness to the lack of trust placed upon their professional judgement as well as to the fact that they are never given the chance to experiment with and test the new innovations before they are officially implemented.

Participants' feelings emerging from this issue can be seen as emotions of anxiety, anger, guilt and shame. Yet, it was felt by the researcher that by relying only on these participants' accounts, conclusions could not be held as leading to a complete picture of how teachers' identities are being affected by the comprehensive lyceum. Therefore, two more individual interviews which were conducted with lyceum teachers at the very end of the research, shed more light on those issues which challenged how teachers viewed their role and identity as a teacher in general, and as a philological teacher in particular.

The first problem picked up by lyceum teachers was the erosion of the character of their subjects. They noted that both the content and the humanistic character of philological subjects have been undermined for the sake of other labour market oriented subjects which were being selected by students as their major subjects for getting better marks:

'The comprehensive lyceum has brought to us an entire array of problems. Our subject matters have been undermined, for example, in the old system based on subject selection streams, the student who used to belong to the classics stream would be taught ancient Greek from the first grade of the lyceum, and by the third grade he would be quite competent in the subject. However today within the context of the comprehensive lyceum, ancient Greek is taught quite superficially in the first grade and then the student has the option to quit, and pick up another subject as his main subject, from another subject stream, even those subjects that used to be free electives can now be taken as a main subject'. (Katerina, assistant principal A)

'The students find the new system easier, as they can pick their best subjects to get good marks, such as ICT, home economics, physical education, typewriting and graphic design, have been upgraded to the detriment of more humanistic subjects.' (Elena, philological class teacher)

Moreover, both teachers spoke of the increase in bureaucratic tasks associated with the new methods of students' and teachers' evaluations as well as to the reorganization of each classroom composition:

'The role of the head of studies has shifted into quite a bureaucratic one. His role within the comprehensive lyceum was supposed to be improved, as he had two more hours off timetable to develop interpersonal relationships with his students, but in fact he has been consumed by paperwork. His actual duty now is to report students' absence on record, to prepare the paperwork about the reasons for absence, to chase the students for this paperwork'. (Elena)

Katerina the coordinating assistant principal also argued that the reform of the unified lyceum is an example of a shallow and superficial educational development which lacks informed professional judgement, for all the teaching force and its leaders were never called upon to engage creatively to gain a sense of ownership:

'We could not have predicted the consequences which would follow because the comprehensive lyceum had worked on an experimental basis in one or two schools in Nicosia, and we just rushed into it. Suddenly, we started school from September and the only thing we know was that the comprehensive lyceum was about to begin. Not even the head teachers knew how this would function, what the idiosyncrasies were; we were going down an unknown road'.

Katerina expressed a more optimistic view of the longevity of the unified lyceum when she saw the issue in the light of the introduction of controlled accountability mechanisms:

'Some of the weaknesses of the comprehensive lyceum will be solved, because a low performing student will not be allowed to pick up difficult subjects such as ancient Greek, whilst at the moment, if you have three or five low performing students in a class of ancient Greek, the level of the whole class is lowered'.

Therefore, alongside the factors contributing to the failure of the comprehensive lyceum reported by the teachers of focus group three, the lyceum teachers identified another array of problems at the root of the failures. The first of these was the erosion of the character of



philological subjects and the increase in bureaucratic tasks within the assistant principals' role. All these problems were seen by both teachers as largely emerging from an organisationally 'uninformed professional judgement'. Nevertheless, they failed to reflect upon the wider global economic forces which led to the development of the unified lyceum in order to get a better understanding of its implications for their identity formation as philological teachers. The 'fragmentary' nature of the 'unified' lyceum could have been better understood by the teachers had they engaged themselves in an act of 'reflexivity' so as to understand the concomitant effects of consumerism and commodification upon their identities. This is a point which demands attention to Giddens' dilemmas of *unification versus fragmentation* as well as *personalised versus commodified experience* and will be developed in chapter 8.

In a similar way, feelings of powerlessness and disenchantment were reported by teachers about other past and future innovations relating to the publication of new text books.

#### **v) Pressures from the reducing of the amount of prescribed content of textbooks**

This was an issue which was not explored in the previous focus group with the head teachers, as this issue emerged during the interview with implementer one who expressed the view that the new consolidated textbooks would enhance philological teachers' professionalism in that they would be thinner, more attractive and responsive to all students' learning styles. Basic to its assumption was that misbehaving students would start paying attention to the class as these books would require of the teachers to change their teaching instructions.

Focus groups two and three were asked to respond to this issue. The teachers from focus group two were harshly critical of the development of the forthcoming syllabi and expressed a rather contradictory account compared to the implementer's view:

‘I do not think that by reducing the amount of pre-scribed content of textbooks that bad behaviour will be reduced, because as we have already seen with the newly introduced books we imported from Greece, a lot of pressure has been put on teachers, and we feel like pawns on a chessboard, always having to follow what is imposed from above’. (Afrodite FG 2)

Aliki expressed a slightly different view:

‘I wouldn’t agree with the concept underpinning the reformation of the textbooks, as I don’t believe that pupil misbehaviour, is merely the outcome of teacher or student workload. Nonetheless, It is up to the professionalism of the teacher how she will tinker with the new textbooks’. (FG2)

The Teachers from focus group three took a retrospective account and based their arguments on the experiences they already had with other books that were recently introduced from Greece. As a result, they became sceptical of the longevity of the forthcoming textbooks. Most of the teachers explicitly stated that the introduction of new textbooks from Greece had been the cause of a lot of pressure on them and the way they managed their teaching was essentially based on trial and error:

‘They called us one summer day to inform us about the introduction of these books, and that from September onwards we had to work with totally new books, and they didn’t even give us time to experiment with the books, and see if they were appropriate. How on earth can I, as a philological teacher, having to teach a variety of subjects, pick up the idea of new books during one summer?’ (Eva FG3)

Some other teachers questioned the quality of the textbooks in that it deprives students of critical thinking:

‘The new books from Greece have made our work even harder, because the content requires a very simplistic, shallow approach to the content, and we do not have the opportunity to go into the subject with more depth on historical facts, for example’ (Synthia FG3)

A probe question then called teachers to respond to the issue of the development of new textbooks which will not be imported this time from Greece.

All teachers were adamant that the forthcoming textbooks would not reduce teacher overload. They pointed out that the examples they gained from failed experiences they have had with the current books will be just as much with the forthcoming ones. Their arguments in justifying the failure of the forthcoming innovation were framed by the teachers in much the same way as was the case with the comprehensive lyceum. A comment from one of the teachers of focus group three serves to summarize the feelings expressed by all teachers about the ‘lack of teacher involvement in decision making’:

‘Teachers do not participate in decision imposed upon us from above, as is the case with the new coming textbooks, which I think is doomed to failure, as the majority of the teachers who will be affected by the new syllabi have not been involved in the changes. We get it served up to us on a plate, and we have to experiment with it and see what the outcome is’. (Manti)

Another teacher pointed to the question of ‘expertise’ of those who were being established as the creators of the new syllabi:

‘Those who create the new syllabi may not have any teaching experience in schools at all, so how can these people, without ever sitting behind the desk or in front of a class, now be the experts who formulate the new syllabi’. (Eva FG3)

#### **vi) Pressures from the revision of history textbooks**

The teachers of focus group two, seemed to be quite overwhelmed by the fact that History textbooks will be rewritten and considered this issue as a threat to their national identities and thus to their professional identities as philological teachers:

‘ I will always teach students what my own conscience tells me to teach, which is a history that I have grown up with and learnt from. We cannot change history by accepting that there were mistakes made by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots so as to avoid offence to Turkish Cypriots’. (Alik FG2)

Another teacher saw the devastating outcomes of the revision of history textbooks on teachers as the corollary of the governments' piecemeal, fragmentary, disjointed and highly polarised political opinions on educational decisions:

'We see that every time the government changes, they pursue their own educational agenda as far as reforms are concerned, and we start from scratch each time, as the political parties themselves have a discordance of opinion'. (Erato FG2)

Teachers were then prompted by the researcher to speak of their professional responses to students who will be posing questions to them regarding the 'truth' latent not only in the textbooks but also in politicians' discourses. Alike revised her initial thinking and shifted from her initial 'parochial' approach to a more 'open' and 'receptive' one. She mentioned the approach of multi-perspectivity as a pre-requisite for instilling students' critical thinking:

'We have to make students approach things objectively and acknowledge a critical approach to history by letting them examine a wide variety of sources. For example, let us take the war between the Arabs and the Byzantines, an Arab source would dispute the invasion, but the Byzantine source would present the invasion as fact. In a case such as this, you must present to a student both points of view without influencing his or her opinion on the matter'.

Athena and Afrodite picked on the issue of multi-perspectivity and highlighted the provisional character of knowledge when it comes to history teaching. In reference to their subject identities as philological teachers, they spoke of the need to be flexible in revising and questioning their initial political assumptions when studying history:

'What will matter is the professional teacher who seeks for knowledge and who is flexible enough to reconsider his viewpoints. Especially in history teaching, he could revise his viewpoints by reading a variety of different sources, each one written to a different political perspective'. (Athena FG2)

‘I think that philological teachers are morally obliged to query this variety of contrasting and different viewpoints, and it does not mean you necessarily have to change your own viewpoint, but simply enhance what you already know’. (Afrodite FG2)

Like the teachers of focus group one, examined in the previous chapter, the teachers of focus group three framed their constructions of professionalism in terms of what they conceive as ‘unprofessional’ behaviour when it comes to history teaching. Therefore, ‘indoctrination’ was frequently cited as the opposite to professionalism:

‘We need to detach professionalism from our own personal beliefs and values regarding History. If I get in the class and my aim is to indoctrinate the students with my own views, then I am not going to be regarded as professional’. (Eva FG3)

Alongside the issue of ‘political rivalries’ in history teaching, teachers identified another aspect which they believe undermines ‘objectivity’ in the study of history and therefore renders the professional legitimacy of teachers under question. Thus, they pointed to the issue of ‘myth’ and the ‘fairy tale’ approach to teaching history and how the challenge of such long established national narratives (in the form of myths and stories) can harm young peoples’ sense of identity. Some teachers took a retrospective account and talked about students’ emotional reactions consequent upon the de-mystification of some historical long-established cultural facts that used to be documented in history textbooks, and treated by the general educational community and the Greek nation state as unquestionable facts. Manti was harshly critical of the fact that governments and nation states produce false images of the national past by brainwashing students’ minds, only to come later and dismantle and question their validity. She referred to a national legend according to which during the occupation of Greece by the Turkish in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, education was prohibited by the Turks, and so the students were taught by the priests in the so called ‘secret schools’:

‘Do you want to know what our students reactions were when they found out there was no such thing as the ‘secret schools’ taught by the Greeks in the Greek-Turkish war in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? They asked why we lied to them for so long’

She then made more explicit statements regarding the implications of such actions for students’ minds, and explained that:

‘By changing the syllabus to say that the secret schools are legend, not fact, we have uprooted and destroyed the beliefs of many students, who had been taught from an early age that this story was true’.

Eva then led the discussion to the revision of Greek Cypriot history textbooks, saying that the same ‘myths’ that we have seen within the context of the Greek textbooks, is also relevant in the Greek Cypriot history textbooks which are awaiting revision, which discuss the Greek and Turkish Cypriot events in the 1950’ s. As she poignantly put it:

‘The existing Greek Cypriot history textbooks only briefly mention the events of 1955-59. If the books are rewritten and the facts are presented in a politically charged manner, rather than in a more objective account by presenting a huge variety of sources, then the students will be misled’. (FG3)

Overall, it could be argued that the participants’ responses reflect Habermas’s principle of ‘universalization’ where participants in a process of dialogue adopt the perspective of all others, be that a certain political perspective of those belonging to a different political camp or a culture, so as to test the ‘generalizability’ of the argument under question. Thus, the idea of multi-perspectivity which featured strongly in all participants’ responses seems to mirror elements of a Habermasian discourse-based approach, a basic premise of which is the ‘moral point of view’. The latter according to Habermas (1990), arises out of the multiple perspectives of those affected by a norm under consideration where ‘nothing coerces anyone except the force of the better argument’. A communication of this kind is at odds with the kind of communication enforced by managerial agendas. As has been the case with the failure of the UL, and insofar as the data suggest, the character of the managerial agendas pursued in

this country, are akin to what Habermas's defines as 'strategic action', where 'one actor seeks to influence the behaviour of another by means of the threat of sanctions or the prospect of gratification in order to cause the interaction to continue as the first actor desires' (p.58). It follows therefore, that the version of professionalism enacted by participants' responses with regard to the revision of history textbooks is in sharp contrast with the version of 'professionalization' they aspire to.

### **Summary of findings**

This chapter has sought to present the data analysis on a number of issues regarding philological teachers' understandings of professionalism and how their professional identities are shaped and reshaped within the context of current educational reforms. Teachers' replies to the question aimed at tapping into teachers' notion of professionalism, were generally formulated in terms of the ethical components of their professional practice and pointed to the long-term effect, as well as the ethical contribution to society which they saw as key elements for the teaching profession. Interestingly, as the questions proceeded to discuss the conditions of constraints on their professionalism, their replies included notions of professionalism related to the idea of 'being a professional', possibly because they conceive as the biggest limitations to their professionalism those conditions which threaten their professional status and image. Thus, the major conditions of constraints on philological teachers' professional identities were largely those originating from socio-cultural and political structures such as 'favouritism', 'political activism' and which in turn influence the institutional and administrative levels helping generate highly 'politicized teachers' unions', partisan promotions, unfair systems of evaluation as well as 'lack of meritocracy'. Teachers' unions were mainly seen as posing restrictions to the exercise of teachers' professional judgement.

The teachers of focus group three saw private tutoring as a threat and a limit to their professional integrity and subject expertise, in that the role of the teacher as an entrepreneur is emphasized and the role of the student as a consumer of knowledge is stressed. Conversely, the teachers of focus group two saw private tutoring as a facilitator on the professional identity of philological teachers, and founded their arguments on the belief that public education represses the quality of teaching personnel, as well as depriving them from catching up with the ever-changing subject requirements of philological curricula. From this, it could therefore be implied that some teachers perceive private tutoring as a response to the de-professionalising effects of public education. With regard to the impact of accountability mechanisms on private tutoring, there was a division of responses with the teachers of focus group two seeing no impact at all and the teachers of focus group three identifying the impact as a domino effect, meaning that the more the educational system will be aligned with performativity process, the more the pressure will be on both teachers and students, and so the demand for more private tutoring increases.

Given the vociferous complaints made by teachers from both focus groups about the social, cultural, political and institutional influences which undermine their professional status, and in effect stifle their sense of 'being' and 'behaving' as professionals, a strong finding that came out of teachers' responses to the forthcoming managerial reforms was unsurprisingly that teachers seem to welcome school self-evaluations, performativity mechanisms and promotions based on reward without questioning their ultimate effects. In addition, they advocated a dual direction of management, one being purely managerial confined only to administrative tasks and the other purely pedagogical concerned only with the curriculum and instructional methods at the classroom level. In some other occasions they would approach the coming developments with some reluctance, yet they would never seek to take any action, and they would carry on with the new demands of self-evaluation and decentralisation



Nevertheless, there were instances where teachers held some doubts over the longevity and sustainability of the reforms regarding accountability mechanisms as well as those concerning the development of new syllabi and textbooks. By engaging in a retrospective account of past reforms such as the introduction of textbooks from Greece as well as the development of the unified lyceum, they sought to dismantle a variety of institutional sources which have impinged upon their professional agency to manage educational change. The findings for the teachers' responses regarding the impact of these reforms upon their professional identities seem to suggest two things. Firstly, that several moral principles comprising Habermas theory of discourse ethics such as 'intersubjectivity', 'universalisation' and 'deliberation' have been violated by the way reforms have been enforced and implemented. Secondly, part of this reform failure lies in teachers' ignorance or failure to critically reflect upon the wider economic forces as well as how the possible dilemmas the ethical self is faced with could be resolved.

With regard to the revision of history textbooks, all of the teachers took a more reflective approach upon their teaching practice and sketched out some ethical dimensions of professionalism from what they already considered as 'unprofessional behaviour' in studying and teaching history. In this respect, they opposed 'professionalism' to 'indoctrination', 'propagation' and 'truth manipulation' and stressed the epistemological realizations a professional philological teacher should have in mind when studying and teaching history. They introduced the notion of multi-perspectivity as their basic epistemological approach to history, with some subtle nuances of epistemological provisionality of knowledge implying that a professional philological teacher should always be open to criticism and question what might have been considered as unchallengeable and traditionally unquestionable fact. Thus, the discourse of professionalism they enacted in this instance is very much in line with the Habermasian notion of the 'moral point of view' embraced by his broader notion of

‘communicative action’. Nevertheless, it is the contention of the current thesis that the forthcoming managerial -like approaches are likely to create a dissonance between the ethical and reflective professionalism required for philological teachers so as to claim a unified Cypriot identity under European and global ideals, and the ‘professionalization’ agendas they are more inclined to be seduced by.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Analysing individual interviews with government professionals: The views of three professional categories.**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to present the major response patterns from six individual interviews with teacher trainers, implementers (consisting of one government professional responsible for designing the managerial part of the reform and one dealing with curriculum planning) and inspectors on the issues already examined with philological teachers. The main rationale for the use of a variety of accounts to the investigation of the issues under question rests within the need of the study for data triangulation. It was thus believed that by gaining access to the viewpoints of people in more senior positions, the truth about philological teachers' assumptions and constructions of the issues under question could be contrasted with those of the other professionals interviewed. The presentation of findings will be structured along the same lines as in the previous chapter on focus groups with philological teachers. So far, the findings for the three preceding focus groups suggest a unified understanding of teachers' professionalism. Their comments showed a strong concern for the ethical elements of professionalism, signifying behavioural characteristics such as dedication and commitment marked by an ethic of the long-term effect of their practice. As for the factors they identified as constraints on their professional identity formation, these were majorly socio-cultural (favouritism, self serving norms, overuse of authority, private tutoring), administrative (pre-determined teacher evaluations, lack of controlled entry criteria, job permanence) as well as institutional (lack of meritocracy, unfair promotions, partisan promotions and staff recruitments, strong syndicalist culture). An interesting finding was that teachers saw as facilitators of their professional identity formation the forthcoming reforms of controlled

accountability and school-autonomy. Head teachers and deputy heads were slightly critical of such reforms and sought to evaluate to some extent how these have worked for other countries. Nevertheless, they never reflected upon the consequences likely to be followed in the aftermath of such reforms so as to resolve some of the future possible dilemmas they are likely to be faced with. The overall feeling emerging from all teachers' responses seems to suggest that teachers' understandings of their professional identities have begun to be co-opted in managerial and entrepreneurial lines and they are far more inclined to be seduced by the new accountability mechanisms rather than the ethical form of accountability and responsibility wedded to the Habermasian form of dialogue.

### ***Defining professionalism***

Notwithstanding the assortment of different subjective understandings generated by this question, respondents' views of professionalism suggest two different camps. The teacher trainers stressed the importance of 'professionalism' and its core elements of autonomy, but not the kind of autonomy required for enhanced status, as is the case with the notion of 'professionalization' alluded to earlier in this work. On the other hand, the rest of the respondents, while recognising the ethical dimensions of teaching, seemed to adhere more to the notion of 'being a professional'. The version of an 'extended professionalism' they so persistently stuck on for the entire duration of their talk was very much associated with the new accountability demands and the thrust towards self-evaluation, school-autonomy and decentralization. Thus, It would be possible to argue that their alleged professional discourse is much influenced by the managerial discourse, or simply put, a 'commercialised professionalism', as seen and examined in earlier chapters.

The core elements which featured strongly in teacher trainers' replies were those of 'responsibility' followed by a fair degree of 'freedom' and 'autonomy'. A strong conviction

of one of the teacher trainers was that the Greek Cypriot educational system downgrades these three elements to the level of technicality. To reinforce her argument she mentioned the development of the comprehensive lyceum as an example:

‘In my view, the aim of the comprehensive lyceum was meant to create an environment of not only responsibilities, but freedom as well, and autonomy to the teachers. The head of studies had the opportunity to gather all the students’ data, and focus on it, and to make proposals about this and discuss it with their colleagues, and move towards an action plan. However this has not been the case, all these developments remained at the level of technicality. They just write down the students’ problem, and nothing goes beyond that, which means they do not operate as professionals’. (Niki)

The pressures from the comprehensive lyceum could be understood better if captured from the point of view of Giddens’ dilemmas of *unification vs fragmentation* as well as *powerlessness vs appropriation*. While the idea of the comprehensive lyceum presented teacher autonomy as a promising avenue, the emphasis put on the technical tasks of teachers’ work led to the development of fragmentary teacher professional identities, eroding effective teacher autonomy. More extensive linkages to Giddens’ binary dilemmas of the self will be made in the following chapter.

Added to the issue of autonomy, Antigoni stressed the importance of ‘collegial professionalism’ and pointed that a professional teachers’ practice needs take the form of an ‘action plan’:

‘The teacher needs the involvement of other colleagues, they cannot move alone to an action plan, they cannot stand alone in the class and teach in a conventional, traditional way, and this means that the professional identity of all teachers should have the same foundation, in some respects, so they can co-exist’.

A different view of professionalism was taken by the implementers. George, who has been involved with the reformation of new syllabi, saw as a core element of professionalism the equipment of teachers with the necessary skills to navigate in the new work settings:

‘To me a professional is somebody who adjusts their training and professional competence to the ever changing demands of society’.

For Nikolas, who has long been involved in the formation of the currently announced strategic planning as well as for the development of other reform documents related to the evaluation procedures of school units, defined professionalism from a managerial perspective:

I would define professionalism as something taken purely from a management perspective, as anyone who has to fulfil the external duties set from above. Today there are other definitions of professionalism, such as “extended professionalism”, which means that an educator should be responsible for doing things beyond what he used to do before, beyond conventional duties that have been set in the past. This is because today, school units have complicated and varied tasks, which go far beyond the occupational demands of an educator’.

Different elements of professionalism were pinned down by the inspectors. Both inspectors referred to the element of subject and knowledge expertise compounded with a concern for life-long learning. Moreover, they attached these two elements to an altruistic concern for their students:

‘To be a true professional, you need to be competent with your subject knowledge, you need to have continuous professional development, and above all you need to be fully committed to your profession’.  
(Yiannis)

‘To me a professional is somebody who always keeps up with the contemporary changes of teaching methods, and is competent in their subject knowledge, and uses both of these things to educate students with character and ethos, and contribute towards their academic success’. (Kostas)

Added to the elements above, both commented on what they viewed as ‘unprofessional’, which in turn defined it as ‘unethical’:

‘To me, it is unethical, for example, to teach history in the third grade of lyceum, and to be comfortable with the fact that my students attend private tutorials. I would argue that in this case the professional teacher should give to the student a sense of security that the public education system is sufficient, and that the aim is not only

to teach them history content knowledge, but also to nourish them with values, attitudes, and critical thinking.’  
(Yiannis)

For Kostas, the limits to the ethical side of a teachers’ professionalism stemmed mainly from teachers’ unions demands of teachers. Namely, he criticised the unions for making teachers behave as ‘syndicalists’:

‘The mistakes that the unions make are harmful to the reputation of teachers, as they influence teachers to demand things such as better pay or working conditions when they wouldn’t normally. If professionalism is taken along these demanding lines, it becomes somewhat sterile’.

The findings for the interviewees accounts of professionalism so far suggests a random assortment of personal subjective understandings including references to factors such as ‘responsibility’, ‘freedom’, ‘autonomy’, ‘life-long learning’, ‘a fulfilment of pre-defined tasks denoting to an extended responsabilization’ as well as an ethic of altruistic concerns connoted to the notion of ‘behaving professionally’.

### ***The major constraints and facilitators on professional identity formation***

#### **Constraints**

Both teacher trainers identified as a major constraint on teachers’ professional identity formation the currently existing teacher training schemes. They characterised the existing training scheme as inadequate, for it does not provide rich and sufficient opportunities for continuous professional development. They insisted that teachers’ promotions should be combined with training. Niki gave an example of a training seminar concerned with the inclusion of multicultural students within schools in Cyprus to conclude that the head teachers who attended that seminar lacked the professional background necessary for responding to the issue with much tolerance and receptivity:

‘We had some principals within that training course who held racist views, who thought the students should be taught in separate schools. This is because the question of who gets a principals job is a matter of seniority, and they do not get proper training, and they cannot keep up with the ever changing conditions’.

Antigoni referred to the same example presented above, but the emphasis shifted to another direction, that of ‘evidence-based-practice’:

‘For example, we have these sorts of teachers who believe that multi lingual students should not be included in mainstream classes. How are you going to change these teachers? You cannot close your eyes and pretend that they do not exist, so you have to figure out a way to help these teachers function differently. With a bottom up approach and an evidence based practice, those people could be convinced, and take a different approach to things’.

Niki highlighted another issue of constraint and pointed to the ‘corrective’ character of some training seminars, which are orientated towards highlighting teachers’ mistakes and weaknesses rather than at stimulating and reinforcing strengths:

‘A teacher’s fallacy is something which could drive the teacher a step further and improve their practice, and a teacher trainer should not interfere and try to ignore what already exists, but start from there. You should not view the teacher as being a *tabula rasa*, and impose upon them new things’. (Niki)

Antigoni complained about teachers’ training provision being isolated and detached from the overall development of new reforms in education, and stressed the importance of CPD:

‘Teachers training should have an ongoing effect, and be articulated to all the other new developments that are happening in education, and not to be detached and disjoined from the wider picture, as has been the case so far’.

Implementers’ reporting of constraints revealed both a degree of consonance and some variation of opinions which might be reflective of the fact that these two government professionals are mainly dealing with different aspects of the forthcoming reforms. The lack of self-critique which is a feature of the Greek Cypriot culture and transferred to the institutional context of education, appeared to be a consistent concern for both implementers:



‘One factor which might work as a counter to the successful development of school based development and self autonomy will be the lack of self critique which is a cultural norm in Cyprus. The lack of self critique at the beginning of these new developments may work as a threat towards teachers’ professionalism. On the other hand however, since we will offer a continuous training scheme, teachers will feel more confident and thus professionalism will prevail, not emotion’. (Nikolas)

‘In the Cypriot culture, we lack self critique in terms of criticism towards our work, ourselves, and the function of our school units. There is no transparency in terms of what goes wrong within the school unit, as we are always trying to conceal any problems from the public, and this mirrors how inspection occurs in Cyprus’. (George)

Both of the implementers’ views imply that they are quite favourably disposed towards a panoptic and evaluative state surveillance, which will force teachers to become more evaluative towards their work and more critical towards the work of their peers, thus becoming what Ball (2003) has called ‘enterprising subjects’ by adding value to themselves and living an ‘existence of calculation’ (p. 217). The Greek Cypriot cultural norm of a strong ‘work ethic’ associated with the materialistic and instrumental aspects of a profession discussed in chapter 3, could drive individuals to succumb to the commands of the market and hence become the victims of an unlimited culture of performativity.

Private tutoring emerged as another commonality of concern between the two implementers and one of the inspectors. Nikolas reported on the negative impact of public and media portrayal on the perceived effectiveness of teachers and thus on the image of their professional status:

‘The impact is quite negative; it spoils the good image and professional status of teachers. It actually gives the idea to the public that “you teachers do not do your job well, and despite this you are still very well paid, and because you do not generate good results, you are not acting as good professionals”.

A similar view of private tutoring was reported by one of the inspectors :

‘The fact that private tutoring exists shows that our education system is warped, and this spoils the image of teachers. We can see this by the complaints made by parents about the professionalism and competency of teachers’. (Yiannis)

A factor depicted as a constraint by one of the implementers was the role of teachers’ unions. Similar to how many philological teachers had seen a negative impact from teachers’ unions’ actions on their sense as committed professionals, a comment made by Nikolas exemplifies how the lack of a professional code of ethics reinforces the image of a teacher as ‘syndicalist’ and thus ‘restricted’:

‘Sometimes we hear teachers that refuse to do something beyond their sphere of professional duty, and that they ask for time off to do these extra things, or more payment. This is not extended professionalism....On the other hand, teachers’ unions are considered as quite powerful in the sense that they could refuse educational decisions coming from above. One thing that they have not considered, which I believe they should pay more attention to, is to form a professional code of ethics in which they should explain exactly what kind of professional ideal they are pursuing ’.

In a probe question which asked one of the inspectors to explain why teacher unions do not take any action in setting out a professional code of ethics, he responded:

‘Because they are complacent, and satisfied with the status quo. However, sometimes their role is quite powerful in blockading changes if they do not seem to promote teachers’ occupational interests. Some of them however have been relaxed with the status quo, and they do not want to get involved with issues concerning private tutoring. When the ministry of education took some measures to eliminate private tutoring, instead of gaining the support of teachers’ unions, they were blaming us for offending the prestige of teachers as some had been arrested’. (Yiannis)

His response could suggest two things: that teacher unions cater only for teachers’ occupational status and prestige rather than the unethical consequences of teachers’ practice on education, and that teacher unions like some of the philological teachers interviewed in this study, consider private tutoring as a way of re-professionalising the teaching profession.

Another factor depicted as a constraint by both inspectors was the high centralization of the educational system which they saw as diminishing both teachers' and head teachers' discretion of handling administrative tasks:

'Today, how does the educational system work? We send dozens of government circulars to the head teachers, which prescribe to them what to do, and not to do. We are spoon feeding them. I believe that the head teacher should have discretion to undertake decisions for the whole school unit, particularly for those everyday problems with which the school unit are faced, such as the transfer of a student from one school to another'.  
(Yiannis)

Kostas spoke of the erosion of teachers' sense of responsibility:

'Because the system is highly centralised, teachers cannot be held responsible for their actions, as they are used to taking orders from above, not developing their own initiatives'.

Yiannos identified another constraint, that of pre-determined promotions which are based on seniority. His views represent the widespread dissatisfaction of teachers about the way they are evaluated and promoted:

'The major weakness of our system of evaluation is that it is pre-determined and based on a system of seniority, and this needs to change, as it does not have to be based on how grey your hair is, because in this case, deputy heads and principals often lack educational vision, as they are too old, and do not undertake any further training according the needs of their post'.

Overall, the major patterns seen as constraints are located within socio-cultural and institutional contexts and can be summarised as ineffective teachers' training schemes, private tutoring, lack of self-critique, pre-determined evaluation procedures, increased workload, lack of meritocracy, counterproductive and restrictive teacher unions, inefficient workforce, lack of a code of professional ethics and high centralisation. Prominent in implementers and inspectors talk were references to teachers' status, image and prestige, whilst teacher trainers persisted more in talking about 'autonomy' wedded to more general concerns such as

criticality, care, equality and active trust, all elements discussed in chapter 2 and features of this version of professionalism upon which this thesis stands for. Contrary to the version of professionalism which is modelled along moral values and ethics, is the one supported by implementers and inspectors, which can be seen as an attempt to claim a monopoly and power over its use.

## **Facilitators**

In view of what all the respondents considered as constraints on philological teachers' professional identity formation, there emerged issues of what they considered as facilitators.

Teacher trainers' responses appeared to be inclined towards the development of CPD which encourages an 'evidence-based-approach' to teaching and which does not reject teachers' previous knowledge and experience, but rather starts from there and builds on it. Beyond what they considered as facilitators regarding teachers' training, Antigoni spoke of the importance of teachers' 'agency' and 'ownership' of educational decisions. She brought up the issue of revising history textbooks and sought to give reasons for philological teachers' reaction to it:

'The revision of history textbooks should have been taken as an extension of a wider issue which was set in the previous year in a European dialogue. If this aim had been promoted within the European dialogue, which was set up involving teachers, then teachers would feel ownership of this aim and that they had had input in it, and it would be as if they had put part of themselves forward'.

Both implementers saw as a major facilitator on philological teachers' identity formation, the improvement of students' performance and the elimination of private tutoring. However, the means by which this could become possible was perceived differently by each implementer. George believed that:

‘League tables and comparison indicators could not stand alone in Cyprus, bringing in mind the consequences that these mechanisms had in other countries. Our present government is moving forward instead towards developing and revising new syllabi, which it is thought will improve student performance’.

He was thus much inclined towards the idea of creating new syllabi by means of reducing the amount of prescribed content of textbooks as he believed that :

‘The new revised syllabi will not steal students’ precious time from their youth, and at the same time they will release teachers from an excessive amount of stress’.

Nikolas views were very much aligned to the neo-liberal philosophy of the forthcoming reforms and pointed out that:

‘The new forthcoming educational reforms will have a positive impact on teachers’ professionalism, as we will be able to control who is appointed, and it will secure that the most competent teachers will get the job’.

What the inspectors saw as facilitators were the forthcoming reforms of decentralisation with the new systems of self-evaluation based on increased accountability, for they thought that these measures will devolve responsibility from the centre to teachers and so they will become ‘extended’, ‘responsible’ and thus empowered. Moreover they saw as a concomitant outcome the creation of a fairer and objective educational system based on meritocracy:

‘We believe that these changes secure meritocracy, and I believe that by putting forward a system according to which the best teachers are appointed based on selection criteria, we can then talk about meritocracy within our system’. (Yiannis)

The data obtained from this section revealed that teacher trainers hold different views from all the other professionals interviewed of what they regard as facilitators on teachers’ professional identity formation. It seems that they are more inclined towards an evidence based approach to teachers’ practice in the context of CPD, the character of which is not corrective and does not result in a culture of shame and blame for teachers. Their emphasis on

teacher agency and ownership of educational decisions has Habermasian leanings and could be seen in the light of the premises of ‘inter-subjectivity’, ‘universalization’, ‘moral point of view’ and ‘deliberation’, discussed in the previous chapter. In contrast, implementers and inspectors gave much weight to increased accountability via the development of a hierarchy of responsibility within the context of school-autonomy and decentralisation, which they saw as contributing to teachers’ empowerment. One of the implementers added more weight to the argument for reducing the amount of prescribed content of textbooks, which he saw as a diminishing factor of teacher stress. The version of professionalism they seem to envision in this case is a monopolistic one, which controls the process of the Habermasian ‘communicative action’ advocated by this thesis.

### *Attitudes towards forthcoming educational reforms*

#### **i) Pressures from accountability mechanisms**

On recalling Banks’ (2004) and Hoyle and Wallace’s (2005) professional responses to managerialism, the interviewees’ responses could be placed along the two extremes of a spectrum with those being on the one end as ‘true believers’ and thus provide a managerial or ‘professional entrepreneurial response’, and those being at the other end as ‘ironists’ responding with individual or radical challenge. Unlike all philological teachers (including heads and deputy heads), whose responses ranged from ‘the new managerial’ to ‘reluctant conformity’, teacher trainers appeared to hold a more critical stance towards the introduction of accountability mechanisms and were more sceptical about the promises of school-based educational procedures in the name of ‘decentralisation’, self-evaluation and autonomy. Antigoni warned of the future danger which is likely to come out from decentralised procedures in that favouritism will thrive, if the principal was to have the most decisive role for teachers’ evaluations and promotions:

‘Since out here, everyone knows everyone, I doubt whether a head teacher could evaluate another teacher objectively. A head teachers’ role in evaluation should not be a critical factor’.

Kostas, one of the inspectors, was positively oriented towards the development of such mechanisms, yet his comments below suggest that he shares the same dilemma with Antigoni:

‘The fact that evaluation will not be externally based, this may cause some competition between colleagues as there will be an emphasis on self and peer evaluation. If the head teacher is the major player for teachers’ evaluation, then we may see favouritism again. My major fear for a small community such as ours in Cyprus is that we will move towards a new problem where people will not be promoted on merit, but on closeness to the head teacher’. (Kostas)

Niki saw these future developments as being reduced to the level of technicality:

‘The concept of self evaluation will become superficial, and we will be lead to ‘impression management’, instead of actually doing the self-evaluation, the impression that we have done so, and trained teachers, and completed the appraisal reports’.

Moreover, she was highly critical of the fact that the Ministry of Education neglects teacher trainers’ input on the formation of these future developments:

‘I see that the Ministry of Education moves in an erratic way, without the co-ordination with the pedagogical institute, and this is probably one of the reasons the teachers speak of inconsistencies and contradictions coming from the ministry’.

One of the implementers defined the forthcoming evaluation in terms of a blend of formative and summative assessment and believed that the mixture of both these forms will transform teachers into ‘extended’ professionals:

‘The new evaluation mechanisms will be oriented towards both formative and summative assessment. In this way, teachers will become more accountable to their employers, and to society, and hence they need to behave as professionals. I take this kind of professionalism to mean ‘extended professionalism’. (Nikolas)

George, the other implementer, agreed with the whole idea of evaluation but insisted that these processes should follow and not precede the development of new syllabi:

‘I think that the whole proposed package will work out things better in each school unit, but first of all the new syllabi shall be regarded as the priority and completed first. Otherwise, all of these changes regarding self evaluation and decentralisation will not mean a thing without changing what happens in the classroom first’.

Moreover, he saw the delegation and autonomy of the school units as well as the reducing of the prescribed amount of textbooks more as opportunities for teachers to take on new responsibilities compounded with flexibility and freedom. Nevertheless, his comments imply an irony, that this freedom is oriented towards releasing centralised administration from paperwork and bureaucratic tasks as these will be devolved to teachers:

‘This new plan will shift responsibility from the centre to the level of the school. This meant that teachers no longer need to wait for decisions to come from the centre, and teachers can take on these decisions themselves. All of these, in conjunction with the formation of the new syllabi, will give teachers greater flexibility and autonomy’

Further to his call for greater responsibility and freedom for teachers, he expressed the following concern that teachers might experience fears over the name of flexibility and freedom emanating from the new textbooks:

‘My concern is that if teachers are given too much freedom and flexibility in terms of curricular and instructional approaches they might face some fears, as they will need to find out themselves about how to tackle the modified curriculum, far more than they used to do before, but since we are planning to train them, they will feel more confident in dealing with the new curriculum’.

Like George, Nikolas held a positive stance towards the development of accountability procedures coupled with the empowerment of the school units. However, he had a different perception from George on placing national standards in education. While George was not much in favour of placing performance indicators, Nikolas believed that:



‘National standards would be a good indicator of the level of our performance, and of where we are, but whilst the present government has not moved yet to this direction, I would rather suggest introducing national progress standards, or quality indicators, not performance indicators’.

Responses to the issue of accountability mechanisms yielded contradictory accounts. Teacher trainers identified those mechanisms more as dilemmas in that they would reduce the role of the teacher to the level of technicality, and feared that such developments may fail because the ministry had moved into these without their consent and input. However, implementers and inspectors saw these reforms more as opportunities in that a lot of the weaknesses of the educational system would be resolved such as the high centralisation as well as the low performance of students and teachers.

## **ii) The establishment of new mentoring roles**

Both teacher trainers stressed that the role of the mentor should be re-defined and that it should not be identical with the role of those persons who are currently detached from the school units and working in the Ministry of Education as school advisors whose role is technical :

‘The role of mentoring should not be confused with the role of those educators who are working as detached advisors in the Ministry.’ (Niki)

‘I personally think that a mentor and a teacher should function in such a close way that they are like twins, and develop a give and take relationship. In other words, I think that the twin mentor and teacher should contribute to the school culture, and bring a change within the school, but in reality this is not what happens’.

(Antigoni)

This new establishment was seen by both implementers as an extension of the governments wider reform efforts to keep the most competent and efficient teachers in the classroom. Their comments strongly suggest that both implementers advocate the plan of the ‘dual pyramid

system' of promotions which is currently in progress, for according to their strong conviction, this plan will re-professionalise teachers:

'The new system means that those who do not wish to become involved in management tasks can either remain as class teachers, or they can be promoted as educational consultants. This means that teachers can choose which line of management they want to go down according to their skills, either educational, or managerial'. (Nikolas)

'This kind of distinction between the two pyramids of management will be more efficient, because teachers will be trained for the post prior to them working in it, not after or during it, and **the training will be focused on the activities that they will be asked to do. Thus, I think that they will become more professional, as they will be knowledgeable about the tasks and activates that they will have to perform**'. (George) [emphasis added]

The bold comments displayed above may inaugurate a version of the managerial professionalism which entails that the professional teacher moves up the career ladder of hierarchical rewards by having a clear, pre-defined and imposed vision of the tasks he has to accomplish. Training, in the same sense, becomes a tool for persuading and implementing a definite policy.

Nikolas' comments as cited below seem to suggest the development of a culture of peer inspection and appraisal featured in the neo-liberal educational agendas of the English speaking context examined in the early chapters of this thesis:

'I think that by getting teachers to pick up which path they want to follow, be it managerial or educational and by offering them competence and continuous professional development, they will be able to draw a line between what is involved in their job, and what is an appropriate interpersonal, friendly relationship. In this way, teachers will become more critical towards the job their colleague is doing, and teaching staff will have a more critical approach towards their subordinates'.

As for the inspectors, they were both favourably disposed to this development:

‘I consider this development as effective, and I think that will enhance teachers’ professionalism, because those who are not willing to take on the managerial post can be kept in the classroom’. (Kostas)

The statement made by Yiannis was interesting, for it has market and private sector leanings and this could be an indication of the influence of a human resource management thought into education:

‘If I ran a business, and I proclaim that there are jobs available, what I would do is choose the best person available so that my business would have the greatest possible results. Why should we not do this in education? We have ended up like a charity, accepting any teachers who reach the age requirements, despite their skills’.

Again, it is apparent that there are emerging two contradictory viewpoints. Teacher trainers defined the role of the mentor along more humanistic and moral lines, whilst implementers and inspectors defined the role of all the future hierarchical posts in rather more technical and competence driven terms. Overall, implementers’ and inspectors’ views of the new accountability developments manifest a policy discourse which is bleached of the moral dimensions of schooling, and embraces instead a view of leadership and management akin to Wrights’ (2001) notion of ‘Bastard leadership’. Thus, the new accountability systems are seen by implementers and inspectors as offering solutions to the institutional and socio-cultural ills of the educational system. Hence, they failed to reflect upon the consequences of such developments so as to envision a version of an ethics based professionalism the purpose of which is to prepare and equip students for the unknown.

### **iii) The impact of accountability mechanisms upon private tutoring**

Both teacher trainers rejected the government’s assumption that private tutoring will be eliminated by implementing school-based autonomy procedures and accountability mechanisms:

'Private tutoring will be unavoidable in case educational competition increases. Private tutoring is a threat to how students learn, because students have this illusion that afternoon classes offer solutions and answers to all of their subject questions, and that is a detriment to their own critical thinking'. (Niki)

Antigoni mapped out a professional response to some of the problems which are likely to emerge as paradoxes for teachers who will be coping at the crossroads of accountability developments and private tutoring:

'The aim of the humanistic education is to produce students capable of critical thinking; a student who is free to judge, to make decisions, and to justify his decisions. Subsequently a teacher should show the student that by using those critical thinking skills, he could live in a highly competitive society. Here we have two statements that sound contradictory, but they are not. Teachers should know how to balance the economic, the creative, and the humanistic aspects of education. This message has not yet arrived at the teacher, who feels that he is under pressure to cover the whole subject quickly'.

Unlike teacher trainers, implementers saw the impact of accountability developments as a counterbalance for private tutoring. Since a strong assumption by both was that the newly proposed reforms will re-professionalise teaching, it is not a surprise that they discard the positive correlation of enhanced accountability mechanisms and increased demand for private tutoring:

'The aim of the new educational reform is to reduce private tutoring, and one of the reasons that forces parents to send their children to private tutors is the overloaded curriculum. We expect that by introducing new syllabi, private tutoring will be eliminated and teachers will become more professional'. (George)

The demand for educational reform is largely underpinned by the degenerative direction of our public schools and the pejorative image it receives from private tutoring. It is hoped that by introducing the new systems of promotions which are founded on the premise that we need to maximize our competency of dealing with human resources, the quality of our teaching personnel will improve and thus the need for private tutoring lessened. (Nikolas)

A similar viewpoint was expressed by one of the inspectors who believed that private tutoring will only be eliminated if teacher systems of appointment and evaluation change:

‘Private tutoring will not decrease unless the system of appointing teachers changes, and becomes based on a strict selection of the candidates, or if their professional training and development improves so that the public opinion is convinced that students do not need private tutoring anymore’. (Kostas)

Here again two lines of argument clashed. Teacher trainers rejected the notion that private tutoring will be decreased as the result of the imposition of accountability mechanisms, whilst the other interviewees thought the opposite would be the case. The existence of two different points of view could be attributable to the fact that unlike teacher trainers’ value for an ethically defined professionalism, implementers’ and inspectors’ discourse of professionalism is used to mask a quite different agenda, that of ‘professionalization’, hence their dogged pursuit of ‘extended professional’ identities. Thus, it would have come as a surprise if they believed that the new accountability mechanisms would enhance the demand for private tutoring and so de-professionalise teachers, for such developments are supposed to re-professionalise teaching.

#### **iv) Pressures from the development of the comprehensive lyceum**

This was not an issue examined with George, one of the implementers, as the issue emerged after he had been interviewed. Like philological teachers, Nikolas, one of the implementers as well as teacher trainers and inspectors, referred to the huge amount of paperwork brought about by this development and acknowledged the shift in the role of the head of studies and the form tutor’s from a ‘pedagogical’ to a more ‘technical’ and ‘administrative’ one:

‘One problem which emerged from the development of the comprehensive lyceum was the role of the form tutor, in that this role was reduced from a pedagogical one to a more technical one’. (Nikolas)

‘With the development of this institution there arrived a huge pile of governmental circulars, in the formation of which teachers were not involved. These circulars should be completed in a bureaucratic manner, and the aim was not to do something beyond this paperwork. The role of the form tutor to support students and have a more humanistic contact with those students, shifted to a more bureaucratic role’. (Niki)

Both inspectors pointed to the fragmentary character of this new institution in that students can no longer be identified with a clearly defined path of studies and this rambling situation upsets teachers’ identification with their subject specialties as well:

The worst thing is that students have now lost their sense of identity, as they do not belong to just one class, and they rotate between different classes and subject areas. A huge disadvantage is that they have a variety of options to choose the subjects they would like to study, and the decisions they make are not clearly explained and they just pick up subjects because they are easier to gain a high mark in, and they do not have a clear path to follow for after they finish school. (Yiannis)

‘It has fragmented the idea of classes, and the student is not identified with a straightforward career path. All of this dissolution infiltrates the teachers’ sense of professionalism as they feel that their major subjects are undermined, and that they do not have students in front of them who are really interested in the subject they have to offer’. (Kostas)

Additionally, Antigoni saw this development as having been enforced by governmental people who form the parts of an educational innovation in disjointed, episodic and fragmented ways without considering the paradoxes which may spring from it and the subsequent outcomes these will bring on individuals:

‘The comprehensive lyceums demands another way of class teaching, which means that teaching takes the form of problem solving, and the lesson takes the form of an inquiry. I think that the Ministry of Education has introduced some innovative processes, without considering whether they will be fragmented and disjointed with each other, and the implications this will have on those directly involved and affected. On the one hand, the ministry gives flexibility and freedom to teachers in the sense of choosing and developing their own materials, yet on the other hand the ministry maintains a highly centralised structure, by which it prescribes to teachers word by word how to practice teaching’.

A more extensive discussion of the pressures of this development will follow in the next chapter through the lenses of Giddens' four dilemmas of the self, already pinned down earlier.

#### **v) Pressures from the revision of history textbooks**

Looking back to all the data which this thesis has yielded so far, the issue with revising history textbooks has generated quite similar if not fully identical responses. The approaches taken so far with regard to this issue amount to Habermas' core dimensions of discourse-based ethics theory which sounds promising for the base of social professions. Thus, the overall feeling emerging from all participants' responses is very much aligned with the Habermasian principles of 'inter-subjectivity', 'universalisation', 'deliberation' and 'moral point of view'. Teacher trainers' approach was slightly different in that they attached to their approach a global gloss.

Both teacher trainers firmly criticised the government for having generated a conflict between politicians and the whole educational community and they said that teachers' reactions could be thought of as inevitable, for the government does not provide teachers with good evidence and reasons for backing up its claims for a spirit of reconciliation via revising history textbooks. For these reasons both teacher trainers took an outward looking response to this issue, and stressed the importance of a global perspective when teaching history:

'A professional teacher should approach history teaching, on both a global and a local level, by means of going back and forth from the local to global perspective, and vice versa. This issue with promoting tolerance, coexistence, and respect between Turkish and Greek Cypriots was handled badly by the government. If teachers had been made by the ministry to approach these three values from a global/local perspective, they would not have reacted as they did'. (Niki)

'A professional response by a teacher in this matter is to be able to move critically between the local and the global, and to be tolerant of the position between one and the other, and the opinions of the teachers, students, and other political parties'. (Antigoni)

The belief that the government had not dealt with the matter effectively was echoed by all professional categories. With regard to the inconvenience caused with the promotion of bi-communal values, both implementers shouldered a part of the blame themselves and admitted that:

‘We didn’t explain to teachers properly what the underpinning of this revision of history textbooks was, which is not to distort history; the aim is simply to approach history with more contemporary teaching methods, which are drawn from a wider European educational demand based on notions of multi-perspectivity, the idea of which is to approach historical facts through different kinds of perspectives’. (Nikolas)

‘we should have approached the promotion of the values of co-existence as a natural outcome and extension of last year’s intercultural European dialogue, so that teachers’ professionalism would not be threatened, so that teachers would never feel confined to the opinions and beliefs of the government’. (George)

A similar belief was voiced by one of the inspectors:

‘I think that what created the fuss surrounding this issue can be attributed to the fact that it was promoted in the wrong way, by which I mean that this message could have passed to the teachers within the wider context of a multicultural European dialogue, which was one of last year’s aims, to promote multiculturalism’. (Kostas)

Like philological teachers, all participants examined in this chapter advocated ‘multi-perspectivity’ and the use of mutually contrasting sources tied to an ethic of truthfulness:

‘Professionalism requires that the teacher will tell the truth by showing the students both sides of the coin, and letting the students reach their own conclusions. You cannot take a position yourself, saying for example that certain historical figures are heroes, and others are betrayers’ (Yiannos, inspector)

Like some philological teachers, one of the inspectors identified as a key negative aspect of a philological teacher’s professionalism the misleading of students in the name of ideology, as well as the distortion of facts via ‘myths’ and ‘fairytales’ :

‘I consider us unethical and unprofessional, the fairytale, where we mislead students and hide from them the truth, and nurture nationalistic sentiments. The teachers should take this in mind seriously, because their words will not just stay in the classroom, they will have effects and consequences on wider society, if we are to survive alongside the Turkish –Cypriots’. (Kostas)



Teacher trainers' notion of 'multi-perspectivity' differed to some degree from that of the other individuals interviewed. More precisely, for teacher trainers, the word would often take to mean a global perspective which carries within emancipatory outcomes:

'A global approach to history presupposes that you approach a historical fact from the viewpoint of the other. Nation states have not lost their power, but at the same time they are approached as a part of wider international organisations, communities, and groups. This means that there have been readjustments in the view of the world, and I believe that the major source of teacher stress in this issue rests in the demand to give an answer, and not the interpretation of the variety of answers that they will give'. (Antigoni)

Further to her calling for a global perspective, Antigoni emphasised the need for teachers to embrace in their teaching an element of 'reflexive-action' in the sense that teachers make constant indications to themselves about their choices of having acted in a certain manner in the light of a retrospective account. Antigoni cited a critical incident concerning herself in order to justify her argument:

'I have been once to the Acropolis with a German person, and I hesitated to say that that was the place where the English lowered the flag of the Reich. Why did I resist doing this? It was probably because the German man with me was not a representative of Hitler, although my conscience would not allow me to say anything. Bringing this discussion to the students is a way to see how your own conscience fragments, and the impact that might have on the other'.

### **Summary of findings**

All the interviewees identified and explored the major areas of the impact of the educational reforms on philological teachers' professionalism, in the sense that they felt it was closer to their field of expertise, as well as to the degree of their proximity with the working lives of teachers.

Pertinent to the teacher trainers' discourse of professionalism were the issues of autonomy and freedom and these were seen as contingent on an evidence-based practice. More tellingly,

they saw responsibility as the outcome of an evidence-based practice where teachers are called upon to exercise their professional judgement on testing their practices and hence making up educational policy. Another base to their definitions of professionalism, was the idea of a 'collegial professionalism' a core feature of which was the coexistence of teachers' professional identities when setting out an action plan.

The implementers had a rather different view of professionalism. Their conceptualisations of the term were quite entrenched in those aspects of the reforms they were working on. The most frequent trends identified by their responses pointed to the notion of 'professionalization' rather than 'professionalism'. Their recurring call for an 'extended' professionalism was most of the time framed along those dimensions which inaugurate a 'managerial' discourse of professionalism. Thus, their persistent emphasis on accountability and effectiveness followed by words such as formative and summative assessments, peer appraisals and the development of dual pyramid management systems vindicate the claim for 'managerial professionalism' succinctly.

More varied were the inspectors' statements about teachers' professionalism. They started off by pointing to the altruistic elements of the term and ended up by pertaining to a very different version of professionalism. They advocated a managerial professional whose role is restricted in handling out bureaucratic tasks with the assistance of competence driven training.

As for what the interviewees perceived as constraints, findings provided a wide array of patterns which can be located at socio-cultural and institutional levels. Teacher trainers expressed an apparent dissatisfaction with the current existing training scheme and thought many aspects of it posed major constraints on the development of teachers' professional judgement.

The implementers saw more as constraints the lack of self-critique, teachers' workload, the lack of a set of professional ethics as well as private tutoring. They saw the latter as a threat for teachers' professional status, a belief shared by the inspectors as well. Another factor of constraint depicted by both implementers and inspectors was the teachers' union role which they regarded as restrictive for the professional development of teachers, and conducive to the image of teachers as 'restricted' professionals. A similar pattern had appeared with philological teachers and was defined as 'syndicalism'.

An element of constraint identified only by the inspectors was that of high centralisation which they saw as a limit to teachers' responsibility in taking up administrative initiatives.

The most frequent patterns of facilitators were an extension of those issues regarded as constraints. Teacher trainers were consistently inclined towards the development of CPD tied to an evidence-based approach of teachers' practice which they thought would secure teachers' ownership of educational decision making.

Unlike teacher trainers, implementers and inspectors saw as major facilitators the improvement of students' performance and the elimination of private tutoring. For one of the implementers, the latter was contingent upon the reducing of the amount of prescribed content of textbooks, whilst the rest saw it more as an outcome of the introduction of accountability mechanisms in that the image of public education will be upgraded, hence the professional status of teachers. Moreover, implementers and inspectors were much more favourably disposed to the idea of placing more hierarchical levels of responsibility within the school units.

Findings for the impact of accountability mechanisms upon private tutoring suggest a discordance of opinion between the teacher trainers and the other two professional categories. Teacher trainers stated that private tutoring will be further increased as an outcome of the

introduction of such developments, whilst the others were rather more ambitious and felt that the outcome would be the other way round.

A greater consensus of opinion among all the interviewees was reported when they responded to issues regarding the failure of the comprehensive lyceum as well as the pressures from revising history textbooks. All interviewees pointed to the 'fragmentary' nature of the 'Unified Lyceum' and to the array of problems it has caused for individuals. As for the revision of history textbooks, all interviewees' comments implied aspects of an 'ethical accountability' and this appeared with the way implementers and inspectors had thrown part of the blame to themselves for not having considered the consequences of their actions in that teachers had been ill-informed by the government. Interesting were the teacher trainers' conceptualisations of multi-perspectivity, who unlike the other respondents, attached the notion nuances of self-reflexivity with elements of global awareness.

## **Discussion**

'We are, not what we are, but what we make of ourselves' (Giddens, 1991)

Implicit in Giddens's statement of 'the reflexive project of the self' is that late modern identity is bound up with both challenge and conformity. For Giddens, what the postmodern individual becomes is dependent on the reconstructive endeavours in which he or she engages. In other words, the individual has to put a lot of effort into the person that he becomes. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) in examining how identity is established through the forms of different discourses, concede that what distinguishes Giddens' s reflexive project of the self from past efforts to define identity is 'the recent form of reflexivity which entails that

the self becomes critical or sceptical about his degree of agency and this process takes the form of a 'critical reflection'- incorporating an 'awareness of the contingent, constrained nature of subjectivity, shaped by the forces of consumerism and enjoying what Giddens makes clear is a fragile kind of certitude dependent upon evasion and denial'' (p. 23-24).

The diverse range of participants interviewed in this study had very varied attitudes towards the forthcoming managerial reforms, with the teacher trainers being more critical and sceptical about the presumed freedom, flexibility and autonomy being espoused by such developments. This might be reflective of the fact that those who sought to put into practice the managerial reforms have disregarded the collective involvement, participation and consent of those who will be affected and those who have the power to flesh out the educational changes, more precisely the teacher trainers.

Nevertheless, a more unified and identical response was provided by all the respondents to the revision of history textbooks. The fact that both of the implementers and both of the inspectors interviewed believed that the imposition of these was wrong, could be seen as an example of an ethically discursive dialogue based on the aim to achieve wide consensus without eschewing the agency of those who will be affected.

In considering their responses to the challenges presented by the increased demands for accountability, decentralisation and school-autonomy, as well as the impact of these on private tutoring, the following professional responses were discerned and will be developed and explained further in the next chapter:

- *The reflexive and challenged.* This category entails that individuals are fully aware of the wider (economic, political, cultural) forces which drive the demand for modernizing and reforming education along market and private sector criteria and at the same time become very critical of the consequences of such developments. This kind of response was expressed

only by the teacher trainers who integrated information deriving from past mediated experiences of innovations such as the UL and sought to connect these devastating experiences with future projects such as the new accountability mechanisms of self-evaluation. Thus, they concluded that these future developments would be reduced to the level of technicality as was the case with the UL. Thus, they consistently provided an array of possibilities through which teachers could sustain their ownership, agency and thus become empowered in a 'behaving professionally' manner.

- *The unreflexive and challenged.* This response applies to those who may to some extent see the outcomes of the new accountability mechanisms as detrimental, yet they hesitate to take any action and become compromised, and complacent with the new status quo. For example, the heads and deputy heads recognised the global and European forces which pose great demands upon schools to raise standards, and sought to mediate these in terms of the cultural peculiarities of the Cypriot system. They contended that by introducing national standards into the Greek Cypriot educational system which is in the process of becoming more and more culturally hybrid, the outcomes will be deleterious for both students and teachers and the gap between social differences will widen. Nevertheless, they would carry on with embracing the demands of decentralisation and controlled accountability and would never critically reflect upon any future dilemmas they are likely to be faced with.
- *The reflexive and unchallenged.* This form of response embraces a recognition of the dilemmas of the self, yet seeks to resolve these by providing managerial solutions. This type of response tended to be more common amongst the implementers. For example Nikolas depicted the dilemma of 'authority versus uncertainty' likely to emerge from the flexibility and freedom provided to teachers with reducing the prescribed content of textbooks, yet he thought that teachers' fear of freedom would be reduced once they attend a competence

driven training session equipping them with the technical needs required for using the textbooks efficiently.

- *The unreflexive and unchallenged.* This type of response was uncommon for teacher trainers and quite common amongst all the other professional categories including a vast majority of philological teachers. It involves the belief that individuals embrace uncritically and with much enthusiasm the new managerial strategies without reflecting on the consequences that these will have for themselves and for humanity at large. The managerial developments are therefore seen as a counterbalance to the ills of the old bureaucracy as well as to the system's institutional inefficiencies. They are depicted more as opportunities for the empowerment of professional image, status and prestige and the most viable way to pursue this, is to follow and implement processes and strategies from the private sector. This form of response could be said to correspond to Banks' 'new managerial response' and 'professional entrepreneurial' response, or Hoyle and Wallace's category of 'true believers'.

A more general discussion on the issues analysed in chapters 5, 6 and 7 will seek to bear further reflections of the responses cited above in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Discussion of the Analysis and the Call for a Reflexive and Discourse-based Ethics**

#### **Professionalism.**

One of the aims of this chapter is to discuss the related themes that came up in the interviews with the five professional categories examined in the previous chapters and cluster these in terms of professional responses. In doing so, this chapter will be structured along the four research questions designed to shed light on the major research question: ‘what are the effects of the Greek Cypriot educational reforms upon the professional identity of philological teachers?’. This chapter concludes by throwing light on the way ahead for the development of a set of professional ethics founded on the Giddesian reflexive approach coupled with the Habermasian form of dialogue.

#### **What do Greek Cypriot philological teachers understand by the term ‘professional’?**

The findings from this research question suggest a number of things which resonate with previous attempts in the literature to document teachers’ construction of professionalism. What seems to be in line with the results of other studies such as the one conducted by Helsby (1996) is the fact that almost all the philological teachers of this research struggled to talk about professionalism in abstract ways without referring to their every day routine tasks and practicum. Consistent with this finding is the statement made by Loughran and his colleagues:

In the teaching profession itself it seems rare for teachers to generally consider what they know about teaching in ways that might be documented and portrayed through text. Rather, their understanding- hence the professional knowledge base- continues to be dominated by the sharing of teaching



experiences, critical incidents, and specific incidents, within which knowledge of practice is implicitly embedded. (2003, p. 868)

Therefore, all teachers' were prompted to compare their practice with that of a doctor. The most frequent patterns emerging from their responses related to the notion of 'behaving professionally' rather than 'being a professional', a distinction made often in the literature, sometimes being related to a binary pair of 'professionalism' and 'professionalization', respectively (Lindblad, 1993; Hoyle and John, 1995; Helsby, 1995). According to Helsby (1995, 1996) the former notion relates broadly to issues of dedication and a strong service ethic, while the latter is more concerned with issues of status, reward and public recognition. All philological teachers from focus groups two and three cited as key aspects of a teachers' professionalism their long-term altruistic concerns for both students and colleagues. Similarly, head teachers and deputy heads acknowledged the ethical conduct of a teachers' professionalism, and went beyond this to refer to the role-specific elements which distinguished a class teacher's professionalism from that of the headship. Thus, the notion of a 'public' and 'managerial' accountability measured up quite well to their notion of 'being a professional' and were seen as processes by which the appropriate standards of their practice set from above are met. Another trait of professionalism which featured strongly in their discourse was that of 'syndicalism' which they identified as the opposite to 'professionalism' in that it restricts teachers' sense of 'responsibility'. In other words, they believed that the 'syndicalist' culture, which steers teachers into caring only about matters of payment and working conditions, prevents them from taking a remit to think about their practice and performance as a 'voluntaristic commitment to a set of principles governing good practice' (Hoyle and John, 1995, p.104).

In view of the findings emerging from the other three professional categories, constructions of professionalism and professional identities were largely wedded to the distinctiveness of

the different professional roles they performed. A piece of evidence in support of this finding is the work of Banks (2004) where the interviewees, from inter-professional and interagency partnerships working for the youth offending and community safety service, claimed notions of professional identities contingent upon 'who they had been in their work roles' (p.140). A recurring feature in the teacher trainers' discourse of professionalism was that of an evidence-based practice with nuances of a reflective practice, a theme which will be returned to in the next section. A persistent claim for professionalism made by the inspectors and implementers was that of an 'extended professionalism' with traits of a 'managerial professionalism' in some cases, which will be explored in the section below. Therefore it follows that the concept of professionalism is subject to different, and sometimes competing interpretations, and entails what Hargreaves (2000) and Helsby (2000) have argued, different 'voices', or 'perspectives' which are rooted in different political, professional and institutional endeavours. This particular argument will be developed further as this chapter now turns to the major constraints and facilitators on philological teachers' professional identity formation.

### **What are the major constraints and facilitators on professional identity formation?**

As the analysis proceeded to identify the most frequent themes underlined in the respondents' views of constraints and facilitators on teacher identity formation, two complicating factors loomed particularly large, with the one being related to the notion of 'professionalism' and the other to 'professionalization'. The former denotes improving quality and standards of practice whilst the latter has been much associated with the recent governmental agendas of many countries to improve the status and standing of teaching. Hargreaves (2000), has argued that in teaching, stronger professionalization does not always mean greater professionalism. However, for all the respondents of this study with the teacher trainers being the only exception, insofar as the data suggest, the reverse seems to apply. Most of the philological teachers interviewed felt that the major factors that constrain their professional identity

formation, and hence impact upon their self-image as teachers, are largely those factors which are the effects of the widespread cultural norms of favouritism, political activism, as well as self-serving norms and which in turn become the cause of conditions for unfair systems of evaluation, and the creation for a disparaging version of professionalism, so called by the Greek Cypriot teachers as 'syndicalism'. All these conditions of constraint were cited by almost all of the teachers as a diminution of their professional standing in that the criteria according to which most teachers are promoted into a post are not fair and objective. Another factor depicted by most of the teachers as a constraint and as a threat to their professionalism was the social institution of private tutoring which was seen by teachers as a breach of their professional integrity by means of preventing them from 'behaving professionally'. In addition, they perceived the effects of private tutoring as the perils of their professional status and image, hence an impediment to their notions of 'being professionals'. In effect, the interweaving of all these socio-cultural and institutional factors, prompted the vast majority of all the individuals interviewed to regard the incoming accountability requirements as facilitators on their professional identity formation. Therefore, the professional responses they provided in order to defend their professional identities from the de-professionalising effects of the aforementioned socio-cultural and institutional conditions were much co-opted in a managerialist discourse based upon the pillars of decentralisation, school-autonomy and greater accountability, as they thought these would force teachers to raise the quality of their standards of practice and hence their professional status and standing. They seldom approached the corollary effects of such managerial processes in a critical way, but even when they sought to do so, they adopted a quite narrow looking approach and argued that these effects will only take place within the institutional and organisational contexts in which they work, without considering the long term effects that these agendas are likely to bring to society as a whole. The core contention of this thesis developed in the initial chapters

is that given the historic cultural and political tensions facing Greek Cypriot education, as well as the future political and global challenges of embracing all Cypriots through a European ideal, a 'managerialist' approach would fail to drive this process along, and provide the reflective and critical perspective that philological teachers need. Much of the debate on which chapter 2 has centred around was the de-skilling and deprofessionalization of teachers consequent upon the growing performance management policies. A recurring contention held by several commentators is that first order values such as criticality, professional judgement, care, tolerance and a commitment to preparing students for the 'unknown', have been overridden by managerialism and have cast teacher professional identities in 'entrepreneurial' and 'instrumental' terms (Sachs, 2003; Bottery, 2000; Gunter, 1997, Wright, 2001; Ball, 2003). Despite the fact that the teachers of this study seemed to be conscious of the conditions which capture their professional identities in economic and instrumental terms (such as the role of teachers' unions and private tutoring), they failed to foresee and reflect upon the de-humanising nature of the coming managerial regimes. They rather seemed to welcome them and insofar as their responses suggest, it is implied as if they are trying to 're-write' profession and professionalism in private sector contours believing that the private- like decentralised and self-autonomous strategies will counteract the ills of the controlling and restrictive bureaucratic practices as well as the unjust form of favouritism. This finding is in line with the arguments developed by some authors referring to those who have been seduced by the 'discourse of change', one of the key promises in the managerial mantra. Clarke and Newman (1997) have employed the word 'change agents' to refer to those who have been converted to the managerialist view of how to deal with the ills of the old welfare state, hence advocates of decentralisation and of greater choice have found themselves co-opted to the managerialist discourse. In a similar vein, the respondents of the present study, including all philological teachers, inspectors and implementers, have seen change as a point of attraction,

for they feel disenchanted with the inefficiencies of the old bureaucracy and the other factors of the system which engender unmeritocratic teacher promotion systems and thus jeopardize the efficiency and performance of public education and hence the professional image of teachers.

Conversely, findings for teacher trainers suggest different perceptions of conditions of constraint and facilitators on philological teachers' professional identity formations. They spoke of the 'corrective' character of some training seminars offered by the Pedagogical Institute, which are orientated towards highlighting teachers' weaknesses rather than at stimulating strengths, and hence, discourage the development of a critical professional judgement. As was already indicated in chapter 2, one of the assaults on teachers' professionalism is the corrective and competence based nature of in-service training developed within the context of self-managing schools. One of the key issues stressed in Gunter's work on *Jurassic Management* and Wright's statement of *Bastard Leadership* was the short-term and instrumental function accorded to teachers' training packages by central governments. In a similar way, once managerial procedures take place within the Greek Cypriot context, training will inevitably take a competence driven and managerial -like form, diverting in this way philological teachers' attention from the humanistic aspects of education, such as the nurturing of a more tolerant and receptive society, under the umbrella of global and European ideals.

With respect to what teacher trainers regarded as facilitators for teachers' professionalism, the call for an evidence-based practice was spelled out by both of them in the sense that the term has been cited and defined in the academic literature. David Hargreaves (2007) captured and defined the essence of the evidence based medicine so as to contrast and compare it with teaching as a research based profession. His basic assumptions were that in the teaching profession there is a gap between the one who sets the agenda for educational research and

those who practice this agenda. For this reason he expressed a critical view of the teaching profession in that it lacks an evidence based corpus of knowledge:

‘Whereas doctors are demanding and getting more evidence-based research, teachers are not even seeing their severe lack of evidence –based research as a problem in urgent need of remedy’. (Hargreaves, D. 2007, p.7)

The teacher trainers drew some of the same analogies in comparing the practice of teachers and doctors alike. Core to their beliefs was the fact that teachers experience a relatively limited amount of autonomy compared to a doctor. They were keen to argue that by letting teachers experiment with and test their practices so as to provide an input to policy formation, they will become more professional. Nevertheless, the call for an evidence based approach to the teaching profession will not suffice for the realisation of the ethical elements of teaching unless teachers adopt both a reflexive and reflective stance in order to reflect upon the different kinds of dilemmas which are likely to emanate from the incoming accountability regimes. Discussion of the findings for the next research question will aim to tap into the participants’ attitudes and responses towards the already existing and incoming reforms in the light of the major themes explored in chapter 2 regarding managerialism as well as the relevant political, institutional and cultural factors cited in chapter 3 which drive educational reform in Cyprus along managerial lines.

### **What are Greek Cypriot philological teachers’ attitudes to educational reforms?**

This section aims to discuss participants’ responses with regard to their views on a number of issues regarding educational reforms in the light of Giddens’ four dilemmas of the self as well as Habermas theory of discourse ethics along with other relevant references to issues and themes discussed in chapters 2 and 3, which could help explain the general patterns of the participants’ responses to educational reforms.

The findings for the research questions discussed above so far suggest that the most important constraints depicted by philological teachers upon their professionalism spring primarily from socio-cultural, political and institutional contexts and constitute the foremost assaults on their notion of 'being professionals', simply put, their professional image, status and standing. Given the teachers' great dissatisfaction with the highly politicised trade unions, the unjust form of favouritism which infiltrates the way they are being evaluated and promoted, it is not a surprise that most view with enthusiasm the forthcoming accountability reforms. As mentioned in chapter 2, one of the reasons that individuals succumb to market imperatives is attributable to their relativist stance as they overlook opportunities emanating from the 'globalisation of cultural variety' (Bottery, 2004). Further to this assumption it was also argued that not only relativists are likely to be victims of the market but also fundamentalists. Given the views of some critical commentators on 'favouritism' (Pavlou, 2008; Mavratsas, 1998; Fraser and Kick, 2000; Georgiades, 2006 ) cited in chapter 3, one has to conclude that 'favouritism' or 'nepotism' in Cyprus, was the outcome of a fundamentalist epistemology. In other words, Greek Cypriot people would be reluctant to question accepted dogmas and to express individual opinions, and would accept instead that only social groups and organised interests are legitimate socio-political actors. Now that the norm of 'favouritism' is under criticism, insofar as the data suggest, individuals are likely to search for other overarching and abstract systems and thus they are more likely to be seduced by the managerialist developments for in this way they will become identified with a 'dominant authority on the basis of projection' (Giddens, 1991, p.196). This driving factor if mingled with the Greek Cypriot 'work ethic' which is linked to merely utilitarian concerns, is likely to lead to the uncritical acceptance by teachers of the market and the technologies through which its imperatives are dispatched, the so called decentralisation, school autonomy and self-evaluation. Indicative of this argument are the four professional responses mapped out in the

previous chapter and which are discerned along the lines of a spectrum, ranging from 'reflexive and challenged' to 'unreflexive and unchallenged'. Such responses mirror the degree to which the respondents of this study reflected on the ethical dilemmas they were faced with as a consequence of past reforms or those dilemmas likely to be engendered in the aftermath of the new accountability developments. These four professional responses will be cited again in this chapter with the aim to provide more examples and discuss these in light of Giddens' dilemmas of the self and Habermas discourse-ethics form of dialogue.

### *The reflexive and challenged response*

As stated earlier in this thesis, one way by which teachers can sustain their professionalism is to reflect upon and understand those forces which seek to redefine the teaching profession along managerial lines. Teacher trainers in evaluating the effects of the Unified Lyceum upon teachers' professionalism implicitly touched on the 'authority vs uncertainty' divide. Their critical views of the UL development suggest that they were aware of the paradoxes emanating from the educational market -like developments. As already noted the establishment of the UL was largely driven by the need to line up public educational demands with those of the market. The supposed teachers' authority, freedom and flexibility of this development ended up being an illusion for the uncertainty factor, emanating from the freedom could not be controlled, and so teachers' activities were suppressed by excessive paperwork and their role was reduced in unquestioningly filling governmental requirements. Therefore, teacher trainers sought to connect these devastating experiences with the future projects of new accountability and concluded that just as was the case with the UL, the forthcoming developments will also be reduced to the level of technicality. Thus, the outcome of such developments for teachers can be read in Giddens' dilemma divide of 'authority vs uncertainty'. In this case teachers are caught up in a situation where freedom and authority seem more of a burden, and so they seek solace in more overarching systems of authority.



Thus, they do so by giving up faculties of critical judgement in exchange for the convictions supplied by an authority taken to be all-knowing (Giddens, 1991).

Therefore, teacher trainers thought that many of the new requirements are harmful and sought to provide some ethical professional responses. Therefore, they consistently embraced in their repertoire moral values such as criticality, care, equality and active trust, elements which were discussed in chapter 2 and are features of an ethics based professionalism. Their ethical responses correspond to Sachs' (2000) version of 'activist professional' and move beyond it. Like Sachs, teacher trainers saw collaboration among various groups, reflection and reciprocal exchange of expertise as key elements for sustaining an ethical professional self. Their claim of an 'evidence-based' practice was expressed in the same lines as Sachs' call for 'practitioner research' providing a way for teachers to come to know the epistemological bases of their practice. Their professional response however can be said to be more 'activist' than that of Sachs for they exemplified how the moral and social purposes of teaching could be activated. This can be seen in the way one of the teacher trainers, Antigoni, responded with regard to the issue of the impact of accountability mechanisms on private tutoring. She sketched out a professional version of the teacher as the one who uses his professional content and technical knowledge in order to achieve an end of humanistic character. Her call for a notion of the teacher who knows how to balance the 'economic', the 'creative' and the 'humanistic', echoes Bottery's fifth ethic, that of 'humanistic education', where the task of the professional is to pre-arm his client as to be able to solve the problem under question in the future.

The reflexive and challenged response taken by teacher trainers corresponds to Banks' notion of 'individual' challenge alluded to earlier, and was less evident in the rest of the respondents of this study.

On only one occasion, one teacher from focus group three was very critical of the way the UL was imposed and implemented. She attributed the failure of the UL to the fact that teachers had not been entrusted by the government and hence they hesitated to take on responsibility for its implementation, and thus they were reluctant to make an intelligent judgement for its effectiveness. Her view can be read in a Habermasian sense in that it is implied that many of the ethical elements which should form the communication between the actors concerned with designing and implementing the reforms are being violated by the way these are enforced by the Ministry.

All participants' responses with regard to the revision of history textbooks were couched in a critical and reflective sense implying the Habermasian approach of a 'communicative, discourse-based ethics dialogue'. An indication of this approach were their frequent references of 'multi-perspectivity' as well as their critical approach to 'propaganda', 'indoctrination' and 'national myths', all connoting the Habermasian premises of the 'moral point of view', 'deliberation', 'universalisation' and 'inter-subjectivity' explained and analysed in earlier chapters. Notwithstanding these occasions of critical reflection, their overall responses to the forthcoming developments showed a high degree of compromise and conformity, and these will be further discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

### ***The unreflexive and challenged response***

This trend was more evident in almost all philological teachers, including heads and deputy heads. All teachers except those from focus group two, saw the impact of controlled accountability mechanisms upon private tutoring as negative, in that the demand for private tutoring will increase and therefore the pressure put on both students and teachers will be enhanced. However, they never went beyond this in order to take any personal action in providing a professional response in how teachers could sustain their ethical professional

selves. Their doggedness in, and passion of following processes from the private sector, made them overlook the seeds of 'fragmentation', and 'powerlessness', as well as the 'commodified experiences' they are likely to encounter.

Therefore, teachers would have understood the impact of accountability mechanisms on private tutoring and on their professionalism had they been aware of the paradoxical effects of managerialism and controlled accountability on their ethical selves. Such an understanding demands a reflection upon the 'powerlessness vs appropriation' as well as 'personalised vs commodified experience' divides coined by Giddens. The teachers of this study have been much influenced by the professionalization agenda and its promises for self-evaluation, school autonomy and decentralisation. As already argued in chapter 2 and as this thesis contends, the 'professionalization' agenda is a form of 'appropriation' used by the governments under the guise of power, flexibility and freedom as a means to professionalise or re-professionalise teaching. The inspectors interviewed in this study believed that teachers will be 'empowered' by such reforms, and so will become more efficient and more responsive to the needs of public education, therefore private tutoring will no longer be a threat to their professionalism, for it will be eliminated. A similar belief was expressed by the implementers, in that the new forms of an 'extended' responsibility via the establishment of a dual pyramid system and the forms of summative and formative assessments, coupled with the reduction in the amount of the prescribed content of textbooks, will empower teachers to improve the image of public school, and hence eliminate the demand for private tutoring. However, all of the teachers researched seem to ignore that they may not be in control of the influences shaping their working lives. They seem to totally ignore that the performative character of their future roles is the outcome of economic forces. Pavlou (2008) in his recent work on *Public Schooling: a critique of the Cypriot educational system* has made some harsh criticisms

about the forthcoming reforms and warned Greek Cypriot educators of the ironies latent in governments' demand for self-evaluation and school-autonomy:

'One of the main reasons why one needs to be careful about school autonomy is the possible 'queues' engendered by school -autonomy; managers delegate authorities, when they cannot use them themselves, or in some occasions the cost is both literally and metaphorically speaking, unprofitable to them. In this particular case, the Ministry of Education, fails even further to solve the various problems erupting within the public school. The price for this responsibility increases vertically. That is the reason why it is flirting with the idea of partial school autonomy, in order not to share but rather slowly push the weight of this responsibility on the educationalists' shoulders. With this in mind, how can the "educator - receiver of commands" and the "principal - controller, sender of commands" turn into creative self managed entities?' (p.101 )

Thus, it is the assertion of this thesis that the accountability mechanisms will in fact expropriate rather than empower teachers. Teachers will become de-professionalised and they will feel 'shorn of all their autonomy' (Giddens, 1991, p.192). Given that the 'consumption packages' which will be offered to them via the training schemes which are merely orientated to the dual pyramid roles they will have to perform, they will end up doing what Wright (2001) has called 'Bastard Leadership'. Paradoxically, the 'pedagogical role' which is offered as an option could end up being quite 'uneducational', for the focus will be on teachers' competencies in teaching those new textbooks and not on teachers' creativity in utilising those textbooks for the promotion of 'tolerance', 'critical thinking' and 'cultural understanding' needed for the Cypriot youths of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Therefore teachers should be conscious of the promised avenues for flexibility and freedom espoused by both school autonomy and reformed textbooks. The fact that the Ministry of Education is flirting with the idea of the reduction in the prescribed content of textbooks as to make it more attractive and more enjoyable for the students, could be a reflection of Giddens 'personalised vs commodified experience'. The new textbooks are likely to generate nothing

but a paradoxical space for the agency of teachers. On the one hand, they might feel a relief as an outcome of the less overloaded curriculum, as well as experience possibilities for self-creativity, but on the other hand they might find themselves subjected to the laws of the market, for these new books will be nothing but another ready-made ‘packed curriculum’ developed and produced centrally without the consent of those who will be affected by its implementation. It is to these seeds of professional dilemmas that teachers should reflect upon so that they do not end up being deliverers of a ‘packed curriculum’ and receivers of a ‘consumption packaged training’.

### ***The reflexive and unchallenged response***

This trend was common only for the implementers and one of the lyceum teachers. The lyceum teachers’ responses with regard to the impact of the UL upon philological teachers’ professional identities reflected Giddens dilemma of ‘unification versus fragmentation’ and ‘authority versus uncertainty’. They both recognised that the rationale of the development of the UL had sprung from and was related directly to the needs of the economy, in that the competitiveness of the economy presupposes flexibility in the educational structure. They also acknowledged that the ‘unified’ character of the subject matters within the context of the UL largely stemmed from European directives with the aim to create flexible and critical citizens capable of managing information whilst at the same time being capable of exercising the right to choose. They have been also aware that the choice of freedom accorded to students created disturbing effects upon student and teacher identities, in that the choices that the students were making did not reflect their actual preferences and needs, and this in effect added to teachers’ sense of insecurity and uncertainty. Moreover, they both recognised that the supposed pedagogical function of the new management roles ended being quite bureaucratic and consumed by paper work. Nonetheless, Katerina, the lyceum deputy head, provided a managerial solution to these problems, for she believed that by introducing controlled

accountability mechanisms, low performing students would no longer be allowed to choose difficult subjects, and in this way the performance level of the philological studies classes would be kept up to a standard, and thus their subject identities as philological teachers would be sustained.

Identical to the lyceum teacher's response were the responses of the implementers. While George recognised that the flexibility of the new 'attractive' textbooks normally implies freedom for teachers, he was also aware that this freedom might produce instability, in that teachers might feel overwhelmed and not make the best use of this freedom. Nonetheless, he believed that by offering teachers a competence based training scheme, they would cease to feel powerless.

In the same vein, Nikolas held some doubt over the success of school-based autonomy and self-evaluation in that the authority given to the head teacher might act as a countervailing factor for exercising self-critique. Simply put, he meant that were the principal of the school to become the major actor for teachers' evaluation, then 'favouritism' would thrive again. He thought that the case would be the same for peer evaluation, in that due to the strong interpersonal relationships characterizing the Greek Cypriot culture, individuals taking up new management roles, would not be as critical towards their peers work. Nevertheless, he saw the new coming competence driven training schemes as the solution to such problems for as he said 'teachers will feel more confident and thus professionalism will prevail, not emotion' (see chapter 7, p. 145).

In considering the 'reflexive' but 'unchallenged' responses provided by these individuals the impression one gets reflects the claims made by some writers of criticism on managerialism. Hoyle and Wallace (2005) have pointed out that :

‘Underpinning the hyperactivity of managerialism, the constant creation of new tools for organizing work, is an ideology which holds that not only *can* all aspects of organizational life be controlled but that they *should* be controlled’ (p. 68, emphasis original).

The quotation above seems to be the case for the implementers, for they believe that a managerial and competence based training can control human behaviour as this will enable them to use their freedom in compliance with central government requirements. In a similar way in which Hargreaves defined ‘contrived collegialities’ to criticise the hijacking by hierarchical systems of control collaborative cultures, implementers views of training can be read and defined along these lines; a contrived and corrective training package which is organised around notions of ‘technicality’ and ‘short-termism’ (Furlong, 2005; Wright, 2001).

The lyceum deputy head’s response is a confirmation and a proof of Hoyle and Wallace’s (2005) argument:

‘When a fresh problem is encountered the first resort is to a leadership and management solution, notwithstanding the probability that the ‘problem’ is the result of the unintended consequences of an earlier managerial decision ’(p.68).

It therefore seems to suggest that individuals of this kind of response are only partially aware of the paradoxical dilemmas of such reforms, for they seem not to be taking any responsibility to manage ‘the project of themselves’ but rather, they fully accede themselves to the management project.

### ***The unreflexive and unchallenged response***

This kind of response entails that individuals adhere to the management project relatively uncritically and they are much seduced by the governments’ ‘professionalization’ agenda. A discernible trend in almost all philological teachers’ and inspectors’ responses was their disenchantment with the inefficiencies of the highly centralised and bureaucratic educational

system as well as the poor quality of the teaching personnel. The uncritical embrace of the managerial values by philological teachers seems to rest in the fact that they fail to discern the reasons behind policy makers' claims for 'freedom' and 'empowerment'. As Politt (1993) has argued, managerialism is founded on the idea that managers must be given the 'right to manage', the freedom and empowerment to make decisions about the use of organizational resources to achieve desired outcomes. The 'right to manage' in conjunction with the recurring discourse of managerialism within the Cypriot educational system founded on the premises of 'quality indicators', 'appraisal reports', 'partial school autonomy and decentralisation', and 'competence based training', make up a disguised freedom, as these discourses point to compliance in ensuring that the 'right' things are being done in the 'right' way. According to Clark and Newman (1994), those who have been proselytised to the managerialist view are those who are dissatisfied in coping with the ills of the old welfare state and hence find the logic of the managerialist language and skills attractive, for as they point out:

'Management has been identified as a transformational force counterposed to each of the old modes of power. By contrast with the professional, the manager is driven by the search for efficiency rather than abstract 'professional standards'. Compared to the bureaucrat, the manager is flexible and outward looking.' (p.23)

Gunter (1997) who has been aware of this, has made the interesting point for the educational context, seeming to echo Clark and Newman, saying that 'The growth of the management imperative is so often presented as an optimistic and positive development in schools and colleges that it almost seems strange to raise questions about it' (p.1).

With regard to the teachers' responses from focus group 2, not only did they seem to be uncritical of the incoming reforms, but they also had an insufficient understanding of the content, the form and the process of such reforms. Teachers from the other two focus groups,



who seemed to have a fair understanding of the content and the structure of the new developments, were nevertheless, like the other teachers, quite uncritical. As noted in chapter 5, one of the major constraints on teacher professional identity felt by most of the teachers was the public-private divide where in private schools staff selection is based on controlled entry criteria, and promotions are based on the performance of teachers, whilst in the public sector there are no such standard -led processes so that the most efficient teachers can be rewarded. In addition, they argued that student discipline rules are not loosely applied in private schools, whereas in public schools pupil misbehaviour is not taken as seriously. They also complain that when it comes to dealing with a student's behaviour problem, they have to go through a whole bureaucratic process. All these factors rendered teachers to be more inclined in accepting the new accountability mechanisms uncritically and without reflecting on any of the aforesaid dilemmas.

A noteworthy example of a naive and uncritical approach towards the impact of the accountability mechanisms upon teacher professionalism, was the teachers' views of private tutoring from focus group two, who unlike the rest of the teachers, saw private tutoring as a facilitator for teachers' professionalism in that teachers acting as private tutors are equipped with the most up to date educational issues, something which is not possible within the mainstream. The evidence tends to suggest that private tutoring transforms even the most up to date educational issues such as multiculturalism, globalisation, cultural understanding and the like into a mass knowledge standard based production stifling students' critical thinking, hence the possibilities for 'personalised experiences' are downgraded to 'commodified experiences'. Pavlou (2008) has heavily criticised private tutors for their strong reaction against any decision taken by the government officials to reform curricula, for as he contends:

'The damage that private tutors do, is huge and does not only affect teachers' status and image: it is them we find in front of us every time there is a debate for restructuring the curricula. They protest, in order to

stop anything from changing, thus they will not be forced to change the prepacked material with which they have been feeding the students' minds daily'. (p.111 )

Had the teachers of focus group two been critical of the accountability reforms, then they would have been able to evaluate the impact of accountability mechanisms upon private tutoring more critically.

Overall, almost all of the teachers examined in this study along with the two inspectors, seem to envision a future agenda of educational change along the lines of the kind of 'workforce remodelling' being promoted by the NPM agendas discussed and criticised in chapter 2. With particular reference to the inspectors' views, the kind of educational sustainability they advocate, is the one which is achieved through a consistent concern on the performance level and efficiency of its human resources. The persistent emphasis on educators as human resources has been couched in Fullan's (2006, p.114) notion of 'system thinkers in action' and a strong critique of it was sought in chapter 2 by the author of this thesis, for it mirrors this side of managerialism which pursues systems of extrinsic rewards, as well as chains of command and lines of responsibility, all recasting educational practice as a multi-level marketing enterprise. It is doubtful whether these agendas could sit easily with a vision of a reconciliatory education. The former is likely to render teachers as passive receivers of externally imposed demands, whilst the latter requires critical and reflexive professionals in action in order to equip their students with the moral ingredients needed for an ethical and moral communication amongst all the future citizens of Cyprus.

## CHAPTER 9

### **Redefining the role of the philological professional teacher: Concluding reflections and future perspectives.**

This thesis has examined the views of a number of educational professional actors about the impact of a broad range of educational reforms upon philological teachers' professionalism. The empirical direction of the thesis was steered by an array of issues debated and examined in chapters 2 and 3. More specifically the focus of chapter 2 was on the orbits of professionalism alongside the international arena and on the forces at macro level which have affected both foreign educational reforms and Greek Cypriot reforms. As concluded in chapter 2, just as teachers from the English-speaking countries and elsewhere have experienced aspects of de-professionalization as the outcome of neo-liberal and market-driven educational agendas, Greek Cypriot philological teachers' professionalism has not remained immune from the impact of the incoming managerial reforms. A core argument of chapter 2 was that the principal motives behind the 'professionalization thesis' had in fact distracted teachers' attention from the ethical aspects and ideals of their profession, and thus their professional identities became less about education, stripped of any commitment to global, societal values deemed as substantial by the current author for educating critical and morally equipped citizens. Succinctly, one of the issues of chapter 2 was the exploration of a critical academic literature which has recurrently criticised the 'professionalization' thesis for permitting a broad managerial discretion over the educators' professional discretion. Subsequently, much of the debate cited in chapter 3 focused on the social, political, economic and cultural factors in Cyprus which have affected the context of the educational reforms. More precisely, the examination of the historical context of education in Cyprus, along with the socio-political, cultural and economic factors which interact with a variety of global

influences (cultural, economic and political), has led to the argument of this thesis that the current governmental demand for enlarged accountability mechanisms via an emphasis on school-autonomy and self-evaluation fits inappropriately with the broader educational aims for instilling the young citizens' minds with the sense of social and global responsibility needed for coping with the uncertain and unknown conditions in a future Greek and Turkish federal state. Hence there has been a persistent call in chapters 2, 3 and elsewhere, for a 'reflexive' and 'discourse based ethics' professionalism, as the most applicable model of philological teachers' professional identities which will not jeopardise the aforementioned substantial educational aims.

The data produced in this research confirmed and expanded on what was discussed in chapters 2 and 3. As already noted in chapter 3, the major concern of the whole Greek Cypriot community, after the island's partition in 1974, was to boost their economy. This resulted in a strong materialistic and utilitarian ethos, which in effect rendered quite a competitive educational system. Thus, the consequences of the broader Greek Cypriot 'work ethic' for education have been damaging, as on the one hand there emerged a widespread demand for private tutoring and on the other hand the cultural norm of favouritism blossomed into its most malignant form. Concerning the latter, the author of this thesis has consistently argued that because favouritism is the outcome of a fundamentalist epistemology, most of its adherents are now more likely to fall into the trap of other overarching systems of projection such as managerialism. As far as the empirical data suggests, this is very likely to be the case. An indication of this argument is the participants' responses mapped out along the ends of a spectrum in the previous chapter. Thus, the identification of the four types of responses, varying from 'the reflexive and challenged response' to 'the reflexive and unchallenged response', provides a confirmation of trends identified through a close examination of the literature. The most dominant factors of constraint on teachers' professional identity

formation (such as favouritism, strong syndicalism, high politicization, pre-determined evaluations, and high centralisation) have had a determinant bearing on their notions of professionalism. Overall, all philological teachers as well as most of the educational policy players interviewed, aspired to a version of professionalism painted on the same canvas as the 'professionalization' thesis. In contrast, teacher trainers' vision of professionalism was more akin to the ethical ideals of the philological profession coupled with some seeds of a reflexive awareness, hence their foremost response to the incoming accountability developments was a 'reflexive and challenged response'. To view the managerial-like developments as corrective and remedial for the ills of the Greek Cypriot educational system and thus for enhancing the image of public education, philological teachers run the risk of losing the ethical narrative of themselves and of their profession's realities and ideals. Looking back to the data, one has to say that all of the professional actors interviewed during the course of this project acknowledge the ethical values of teaching, and so too are aware of the dangers of infractions of morality when it comes to implementing a reform. The very idea of professionalism which this thesis seeks to develop is one founded on Habermas' realms of discourse-ethics and Giddens' reflexive awareness. Both theories have implications for self identity formation and could be used in influencing the discourse of, and action for, formulating and interpreting educational policy. It is believed that a version of professionalism based on Habermas' premises of 'deliberation' and 'inter-subjectivity' along with Giddens' 'intra-subjectivity of the self-monitoring social agent' (Beck et al, 1994), opens up the road for philological teachers to enjoy a better vantage-point from which to sustain their ethical professional selves against the intended and unintended consequences of restrictive policies.

## **The call for a ‘reflexive’ and ‘discourse-based ethics’ philological professional teacher**

### ***a) The call for a reflexive internalisation and re-interpretation of educational policy***

‘Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits possessed by the individual...but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual....It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography’. (Giddens, 1991, p. 52-53)

The quotation above implies that the identity of the self presumes a ‘reflexive awareness’, an understanding of one’s self identity in a sphere of an increasing plurality of different life style choices mediated in both global and local contexts. This would require that the professional philological teacher of the future should become more aware about the dangers of ‘commodified experiences’ as well as the seeds of ‘fragmentation’, ‘powerlessness’ and ‘uncertainty’ likely to arise from the espoused autonomy of the incoming managerial reforms, as well as the promises of freedom and flexibility of the revised syllabi. One way to understand the contradictory ways with which modernist institutions operate is to critically understand policy formulation in terms of what Torres (1996) has called ‘binary trade-offs’ (p.451), already discussed in chapters 2 and 3 . With regard to the managerial and pedagogical assistant roles divide, known as the dual pyramid system, this should be approached by teachers with much caution. The fact that the establishment of such roles will be wedded to the development of a skills-based and short term practical training should be seen by teachers as an impediment for exercising professional judgement, as their practices will have to be confined to tasks such as the allocation, management, auditing and assessment of the work of other teachers (Gunter and Fitzgerald, 2007).

Moreover, teachers should become reflexively aware that the new coming revised ‘flexible’ curricula may on the one hand widen opportunities for self development and self fulfilment, but on the other hand, may be used as another means for achieving the aims of the self-

autonomous school. Thus, they are likely to experience a high degree of oppression in practice, for a highly competitive and performative culture is likely to transform even those dimensions of the curriculum aiming towards tolerance and criticality into a ready-made-package. This is very important for philological teachers, whose subjects are exam oriented and demand more private tutoring.

All these arguments could be read as possible scenarios warning philological teachers of the future dangers likely to follow from their inability to reflexively understand the realities of their profession. Such individual reflexivity demanded of teachers will not suffice unless it takes a collective character by means of bringing such dilemmas and concerns into a collective debate involving all the actors concerned with the effects of educational decisions. This leads directly to the other core dimension of the proposed version of professionalism, founded on Habermasian discourse-based ethics.

***a) The call for a discourse-based ethics professional practice***

‘Just as an individual can reflect on himself and his life as a whole with the goal of clarifying who he is and who he would like to be, so too the members of a collectivity can engage in public deliberation in a spirit of mutual trust, with the goal of coming to an understanding concerning their shared form of life and their identity solely through the unforced force of the better argument’. (Habermas, 1993, p.23)

The quotation cited here could be thought of as an extension of Giddens’ statement about the reflexive project of the self. Habermas’ argument implies that the act of self-knowing, or the processes of self-understanding require a collective endeavour, ‘an intersubjectively form of life within which participants can critically appropriate their past with a view to existing possibilities of action’ (1993, p.23). It is these remarks on discourse ethics on which philological teachers should base their professional practice. A key future challenge for philological teachers will be their ability to sustain an ethically discursive course of action at classroom level against the directive and performative culture of the enforced reforms.

According to the findings of this research, when the educators from all professional categories were asked to give professional responses on the matter regarding the revision of history textbooks, they elaborated on a range of issues echoing the basic premises of a Habermasian discourse. Suffice to say that their responses reflected the principle of the 'moral point of view', framed and expressed as the idea of 'multi-perspectivity'. The latter was viewed by all of the respondents as the most appropriate approach to teaching the revised history textbooks in that it minimises the risk of ideological indoctrination and perpetuation of national myths. The author of this thesis suggests that 'the moral point of view' which can be realised in the act of 'deliberation' discussed earlier, apart from being a very important part of philological teachers' approach to history teaching, may well be adopted by all educational policy players when it comes to policy decision making. It is particularly urgent that the incoming plans for the new accountability mechanisms involve teacher trainers as well as all teacher trade unions, not only government officials. Only within an 'intersubjective' process of argumentation in which all those who are potentially affected could the moral dimensions of teaching be safeguarded. Hence all Greek Cypriot educators, irrespective of their political affiliations, would feel members of an 'inclusive' and 'noncoercive' discourse among free and equal partners, projecting themselves into the perspectives of others (such as teacher trainers, inspectors, implementers, teacher unions' representatives). The act of 'deliberation' which according to Habermas compels each participant to take the perspective of all the others may well have another liberating effect for educators; the question of expertise. Writers on post-modernism such as Giddens (1991) and Beck et al (1994), have raised an awareness on the need to question the infallibility of 'expertise'. For Giddens (1991) one of the basic characteristics of high modernity is that individuals no longer 'trust' expert systems:



'The reflexivity of modernity actually undermines the certainty of knowledge, even in the core domains of natural science. Science depends, not on the inductive accumulation of proofs, but on the methodological principle of doubt' (p.21)

Similarly Beck (1994) claims that:

'Expertise has to be 'demonopolised'. 'Social standards of relevance' should be, and are becoming, more prominent than decision-making within closed circles of experts. Norms of discussion and debate relative to change in the domain of 'sub-politics' should be established and guaranteed' (Beck cited in Beck et al, 1994, p.193)

It is doubtful whether the incoming managerial reforms will leave any space for educators to question expert solutions, as their roles, be that mentoring, pedagogical or managerial, will be preset to function in accordance with the governmental demands for self-evaluation and school accountability. Nevertheless, and insofar as the data produced by teacher trainers suggests, there is a leap of hope that teacher educators will shape teacher education in a way which ensures that teachers' professional development may embrace the virtue of 'fallibilism'. The latter of course, does not assume an epistemology of moral relativism where any viewpoint is equally as true as any other, nor does it stand for an external and ultimate objective reality. In other words teachers' CPD as envisioned and sketched out by the teacher trainers, imply a discourse-based ethics accountability where the infallible expertise of mentors is questioned, and hence both teachers and mentors equally examine each other's positions by becoming accountable in seeking to question and be questioned. Such a discourse based ethics form of accountability secures teachers' professional judgement and wisdom, as their sense of ownership of the proposed changes enhances, so too the chances of accepting responsibility for their actions. This thesis then concludes by suggesting that philological teachers' professional training should be planned along this direction. A discourse based ethics form of accountability will become more possible if teachers in their pre and in-service

training courses are systematically engaged in educational debates concerning on the one hand the paradoxical dilemmas they are being or likely to be faced with by the incoming managerial reforms and by the need to cultivate themselves and pass on to their students an outlook of a European identity embracing all Cypriots, possibly in a bizonal, bicomunal federal state. Nevertheless, philological teachers should realise that the shape of their CPD along these directions is not the sole responsibility of teacher trainers. It is of foremost importance that they themselves become critical and reflexive interpreters of the educational policy texts. Given that much of philological teachers' bachelors degree requirements include modules involved with the interpretation of a variety of texts, such as poems, novels and other pieces of writing traced back to the antiquity until late modernity, it is the belief of the current author that they may well make use of such background professional knowledge in interpreting educational policy texts as well. Such a conviction would require that philological teachers living in a post modern age could adopt some approaches to analysing and interpreting policy texts from those pieces of writings sought by literary critics of meta-modernity. One such an approach could be drawn upon the work of Roland Barthes (1977) *Image Music Text*, where a statement is made about the readers' interpretative role. In speaking about 'the death of the author' he made the following interesting claim:

'A text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash... To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text..to close the writing..when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained'- victory to the critic...The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination ' (p.146-148).

Thus, with the above quotation in mind, it may follow that philological teachers by making a step towards assuming an interpretive role, could form part of an interpretive community liable for explaining and re-interpreting policy texts, and deciding upon the destination of

those texts. Then a new negotiated discourse is likely to emerge between the ‘authors’ of those texts (policy implementers, government officials) and the ‘readers’ (teachers, teacher trainers, unions). Only then can we witness a shift from a coercive course of policy discourse into an unforced, ‘professional’, education community discourse.

### *The way forward*

This thesis began with the argument that, because of a confluence of global, European and contextual realities posing educational change within Greek Cypriot education, a managerial approach would be a hindrance in fostering a long-term perspective on wider societal issues. The findings of this study suggests that educational stakeholders’ attention will be devoted exclusively to the premises of the new accountability and the promises of the ‘professionalisation’ thesis. Although this study involved only a small sample in support of this argument, the accounts produced by the respondents could be said to have produced valid and authentic data, for in all cases, their responses to the incoming accountability mechanisms were a natural outcome of what they had considered as constraints on their professional identity formation. Therefore, the four responses outlined in the previous chapter ranging from ‘the reflexive and challenged response’ to ‘the reflexive and unchallenged response’, have largely emerged from the fact that all of the respondents located their perceived conditions of constraints at cultural and institutional levels. These patterns of responses were consistent during the data analysis, and for this reason one could claim that because this study has sought to unveil some cultural and contextual factors as determinants of peoples’ behaviour, the conclusions of this study could be transferred to other contexts which might have these cultural commonalities.

Some possible limitations of this study may be concerned with research methodology and sampling. Had the present thesis been given more space regarding wordage, the research

would have involved a grounded theory approach. Given that on several occasions, there emerged new themes raised by the participants, this research could have used emerging categories more systematically to drive further data collection, a process normally hindered by the limited amount of space required of an EdD thesis. Further to this limitation, the kind of population chosen for this study, could have been expanded so as to involve more interested parties, such as Greek Cypriot teacher union representatives, as well as Turkish Cypriot teachers from the north side of the country.

If the professional teacher of the future is to have Habermasian leanings, any future research may well include the voices of all parties concerned. Therefore, in terms of future research, perhaps the most important thing which should be taken into consideration is the population residing in the north. This is not to say that their views should be examined only on the matters regarding the revision of history textbooks. Educational reform plays a fundamental role in Cyprus' approach to global realities, and perhaps a more decisive role in the relationship between the two communities on the island. Education in a possible reunited country requires a meaningful story from the perspective of more than one protagonist. Thus, a more thoughtful research should be set to examine all the matters regarding educational change, so that by consolidating the different pieces of the forces which shape educational transformation within Cyprus, educational professionals would co-construct the 'elephant'. What is now needed is a cross-communal study involving the lives of those who are likely to be affected in the aftermath of the new educational realities. A more ideally informed and thoughtful citizenry could only be the product of a non-coercive and ethically communicative professional discourse.

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## Appendix

15<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Dear colleagues,

I am currently conducting my doctoral research, which seeks to investigate the impact of recently announced as well as past educational reforms upon philological teachers' professionalism with a further aim to develop a framework of professional ethics for philological teachers. Thus, your involvement in the current research would be vital in that you will contribute to our understanding of the impact of the incoming developments of school-based autonomy upon your professional identity formation.

Before you go round the interview schedule, I consider as important to provide you with a brief definition of what is meant by 'professional identity', so that if you have any inconvenience with the term, we could discuss these before the interviews.

Professional identity occurs at two levels a) externally: in terms of the requirements of the specific career role and policy requirements or defined duties, and b) internally: in terms of the subjective self conceptualization associated with that role. A sense of 'professionalism' is the outcome of the relationship between these two levels. The greater the gap between the two levels the more likely is to come to an identity crisis.

The object of the thesis is to collect evidence of a qualitative nature in support of the argument that the revision of History textbooks as well as the decentralisation of the educational system are likely to have an impact on your understanding of professional



identities as philological teachers. Therefore, the focus group approach opted for conducting my study, presupposes that participants can share their thoughts and viewpoints in a reflective and constructive dialogue, meaning that any conflicting views that might emerge during the discussion route, would not be considered as a pitfall for the study but as a virtue, with the aim to reach a common frame of reference.

All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Once an interview transcript is produced, this will be sent back to you for data confirmation. In case you feel that a particular quote need not be included in my thesis, please feel free to say so. All responses will be treated with complete confidentiality with the use of pseudonyms.

If you are willing to help with this project, I should be grateful if you would conduct the person who has administered this interview schedule, so as to arrange a convenient time during April.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Irene Dieronitou