A district level study on the deployment, allocation and utilisation of teachers between and within Malawi's primary schools: an accountability and political settlements approach

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Munawar Islam Zubairi and my mother Nasim Fatima Zubairi. Without you I could not have done this PhD as you both placed such importance on education from when I was very young and allowed me to embark on a journey which would not have been possible without the many sacrifices you had to make, together with your unwavering support and love for me.

Daddy, I wish you had been around so I could reflect with you my ups and downs of this PhD journey. I missed your humour and optimism, and the encouragement you had always unwaveringly given to me in everything I did while you were still alive.

Mummy, thank you for always believing in me. You often said daddy would be proud if he were still alive, and this helped to keep me committed to finishing what I started. But it was also your love and belief in me that kept me going.

Declaration

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Education Degree Committee.

I hereby declare that the sources of which I have availed myself have been stated in the body of the report and in the bibliography and the rest of the work is my own.

Abstract

A district level study on the deployment, allocation and utilisation of teachers between and within Malawi's primary schools: an accountability and political settlement approach

By Asma Zubairi

Despite Malawian government policies being aimed at reforming the persistent unequal distribution of teachers, teachers continue to be concentrated in urban areas and in later standards of primary schools. Why these policies have failed remain underexplored in empirical research. The aim of this thesis is to identify what contributes to this persistent inequitable distribution of teachers between and within schools in Malawi. The thesis highlights the need to understand relationships of accountability related to teacher management and the effect of power and politics on these relationships. In doing so, this thesis contributes to an emerging field in international education that explores the influence of politics on service delivery.

The study utilised the Levy-Walton framework which seeks an understanding of the impact of politics on service delivery. Additionally it focuses on the the multiple levels of governance within a sector such as education, starting at the top level where policies are made through to the bottom level of front-line service delivery.

Guided by this framework, the thesis adopted an explanatory mixed methods design to explore the patterns relating to the deployment, allocation and utilisation of teachers. The focus of study was Zomba Rural district, one of the worst performing districts in Malawi with respect to unequal distribution of teachers between schools. Within this district, purposive sampling utilising a deviant approach was adopted in order to select two primary education zones and four primary schools. This enabled comparability across different cases of schools/ zones which were experiencing either a shortage or surplus of teachers.

I collected administrative quantitative data from government sources for all primary schools in the country. These data were used to illustrate trends concerning the equitability of teacher distribution between schools. I also administered a school survey in the 26 primary schools falling under the two primary education zones selected for study. The purpose of this survey was to quantify how teachers were being allocated between different classes in

each school, and the time each teacher utilised for teaching. Lastly, I collected qualitative data from semi-structured interviews conducted with central, district and zonal government officials, together with headteachers and teachers in the four schools I chose. The interview data were intended to gain different stakeholder perspectives on the main reasons for the persistence of the inequitable and inefficient teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation.

Through analysis of the administrative data, I found that approximately half of Zomba Rural district's teachers were deployed to schools for reasons other than enrolment. This appears to be partly related to political interference resulting in a skew in teachers towards certain constituencies. During the Presidency of Joyce Banda (2012-14), whose home area is within Zomba Rural district, I found that the total number of teachers working in the district rose significantly. In addition with respect to the distribution of teachers within schools, my analysis of the survey data revealed a clear preference by headteachers to allocate teachers to Standard 8 – the last and only standard of the primary school cycle where national examinations take place. Moreover the practice of "team-teaching" – where two or more teachers share teaching responsibilities for a class officially meant to be taught by one teacher – resulted in actual time spent by teachers teaching being well below that officially mandated.

From the semi-structured interviews, I found evidence of interference from the national and local political elite in matters pertaining to teacher deployment and utilisation. Additionally, several factors contributing to the perceived lack of hierarchy between headteachers, local/ district government officials and teachers led to the poor enforcement of official government policy. Poor inspection and monitoring by government officials was also found to be a contributory factor in the weak implementation of policies relating to effective teacher management. Lastly, absent, poorly defined or contradictory policies led to greater discretionary decision-making powers at the district and local levels of government.

The findings illustrate ways in which formal accountability relationships between teachers and education officials responsible for managing them were weakened through the informal relationships supplanting them. While previous studies relating to teacher management in Malawi have broadly quantified the inequity and inefficiency of teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation, this thesis makes an important contribution in redressing what has overwhelmingly been an apolitical approach to understanding this long-standing problem

affecting Malawi's education system. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a richer interrogation of the influence of politics and power in allowing the problem to persist. Additionally, through my engagement with multiple stakeholders from different levels of the education sector, the thesis brought together the distinct perspectives on how politics and power affected different actors in fulfilling their responsibilities.

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Table of contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

ADC	Area Development Committee
AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CERT	Centre for Education Research Training
DC	District Commissioner
DEM	District Education Manager
DEMIS	District Education Management Information System
DEO	District Education Office
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
DTED	Department for Teacher Education and Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
FPTP	First Past the Post
GOM	Government of Malawi
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Training
LDF	Local Development Fund
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MESIP	Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project
MIITEP	Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme
MK	Malawi Kwacha
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MP	Member of Parliament
MRSP	Malawi Public Service Regulations
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate Examination
NESP	National Education Sector Plan

NSTED	National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development
ODL	Open Distance Learning
PCR	Pupil Classroom Ratio
PEA	Primary Education Adviser
PIF	Policy and Investment Framework
PP	People's Party
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SDF	School Development Fund
SEST	Secretary for Education, Science and Training
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SMC	School Management Committee
TC	Trading Centre
TDC	Teacher Development Centre
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TTC	Teacher Training College
UDF	United Democratic Front
UTM	United Transformation Movement
WDR	World Development Report
ZEMIS	Zonal Education Management Information System

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Teachers are widely recognised as the most important investment into any education system. Where teachers are well-trained, the evidence shows that the quality of schooling improves with pupils more likely to achieve the necessary learning benchmarks (UNESCO, 2014). Teachers also comprise the largest cost for most education systems. Across all developing countries, an estimated 63 percent of public expenditure on education is spent on teachers' salaries (Crawfurd & Pugatch, 2020). Given their significance to the quality of schooling and its cost, the way teachers are distributed to schools and, within schools, to classes is important in influencing educational equity. As this thesis will show, this distribution of teachers is not only driven by technical decisions associated with education plans, but also very much influenced by political factors.

1.1 Aim and research questions of this thesis

1.1.1 Aim of this thesis

The principal aim of this thesis is to explain why policy aspirations relating to certain aspects of teacher management have failed in their execution at the district, local and school-level in Malawi. It is primarily interested in investigating this through the ways in which formal relationships between different education stakeholders responsible for teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation are affected. These relationships are examined through the lens of politics and the distribution of power, and the extent to which these hinder set objectives. Through this approach, the thesis contributes to an emerging field in international education which explores the influence of politics on service delivery.

1.1.2 Research questions this thesis will answer

The research intends to address the over-arching theme encapsulated in the title of this thesis which is "*A district level study on the deployment, allocation and utilisation of teachers between and within Malawi's primary schools: an accountability and political settlement approach."* Malawi is a particularly interesting context for the topic of this thesis given there has been a chronic long-standing problem of teachers being distributed unequally between and within primary schools. The overall objective of this study is not only to assess the extent of the problem but, importantly, to explain what causes these trends.

As such, it adopts a mixed methods approach. Quantitative tools are used to measure the extent of the problem concerning teacher deployment and teacher allocation. The tools utilised to do this are government administrative data and school surveys I administered within the 26 primary schools sitting under the two education zones I conducted my fieldwork in. Qualitative data tools were used to explain the reasons for the emergent patterns identified in the quantitative data. This was through semi-structured interviews with officials at the central, district and zonal level of government together with headteachers and teachers in the four primary schools I selected for study.

The thesis begins by responding to Research questions 1a and 1b, which address the overarching theme with respect to the deployment of teachers between schools. As the thesis will show, in Malawi, teachers are unevenly distributed between schools between different regions of the country, and seeks to understand why this is the case. The study considers the reasons for the uneven deployment of teachers between schools through an accountability and political settlement lens. Specifically, the questions seek to answer the following:

Research question 1a: To what extent is the deployment of primary school teachers between schools equitable?

Research question 1b: What are the reasons for the uneven deployment of primary school teachers between schools?

Research questions 2a and 2b seek to explore the theme relating to the within-school allocation of teachers to the different classes with primary schools. There are eight different levels that pupils must progress through in order to complete a full cycle of primary education in Malawi. These levels are traditionally referred to as "standards."[1] A longstanding problem characterising Malawi's primary school system is the dramatic difference in class sizes between infant and senior standards. The following questions seek to firstly measure the extent to which teacher allocation between classes is inequitable. Secondly, the purpose is to consider the reasons for the trends emerging by utilising an accountability and political settlement approach:

[1] Standard 1 and Standard 2 are traditionally referred to as infant classes. Standard 3 and Standard 4 are referred to as junior classes. Standards 5 to 8 are senior classes.

Research question 2a: To what extent are teachers allocated equitably to different classes within schools, and what are the consequences of this on the utilisation of teaching time?

Research question 2b: What are the reasons for the uneven allocation of teachers within schools?

1.2 Setting out the research problem

A number of studies investigating what matters in facilitating more effective learning find that the number of pupils taught by a single teacher can affect this. According to Majgaard & Mingat (2012) the negative effects of class size on learning outcomes become evident once there are more than 60 students per class/teacher. This is supported by what Fehrler et al. (2009) found in relation to 14 African countries where a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) higher than 60 to 1 was found to have detrimental effects on student learning. Other empirical studies, however, point to a weak or non-existent relationship between class size and improved learning when the PTR range is between 30 to 60 (Michaelowa 2003; Verspoor 2003).[2]

Following the introduction of fee-free primary education in 1994, the Government of Malawi set a PTR target of 60 to 1 which was in line with the studies discussed above.[3] The latest sector plan targeted the 60 to 1 PTR to be achieved by 2017/18. However, in reality the actual PTR has been in excess of this with the most recent data available for this study estimating that for the 2017/18 school year the national PTR was 71 to 1. One reason for this long-standing shortage in teachers was the way in which fee-free primary education was introduced in 1994/95. Within the space of one school year enrolment had increased by 51 percent.

While the high PTR in Malawi can be attributed to teacher shortages, it is not the only factor contributing to the shortfall. The extremely uneven deployment of teachers to schools and how they are allocated within specific standards within schools has also contributed to the teacher shortages. In the school year 2017/18, the national PTR of 71 to 1 disguised the wide variation of the PTR between schools which was reportedly as low as 5 to 1 in some schools to as high as 860 to 1 in others. Similarly, the average PTR was above 100 to 1 for

[2] While class sizes with a PTR of 30 or less do show improved learning outcomes, these are *"financially unsustainable"* in most resource poor settings like Malawi (Majgaard & Mingat, 2012; p. 135).
[3] Both the Policy Investment Framework (1995-2006) and the National Education Sector Plan (2008-2017) set a PTR target of 60 to 1.

Standard 1 while the equivalent for Standard 8 was 40 to 1 (Ravishankar et al., 2016). With teachers making up 84 percent of public expenditure on primary education (ibid.), this variation in the PTR has potentially serious equity implications in how public education resources are being distributed.

While variations in PTR between schools and classes is not an unusual phenomenon for many countries in the Global South, in the case of Malawi they are extreme. Over the last decade a number of government strategies have been introduced to try and ameliorate this variation. However, in spite of their implementation high variation continues to exist. A number of studies indicate that issues of teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation are those the *"Ministry of Education actually has control over"* (DeStefano, 2013; p. 5). As was set out in Section 1.1.1 the purpose of this thesis is to unpack this assumption of "control" by investigating the extent to which power and politics negatively affect this.

1.3 The interest and significance of this thesis

1.3.1 Interest around thesis

My own interest in pursuing this study stemmed from my experience of working in the field of international education prior to commencing the PhD. This involved working both at the national level for the Government of Malawi and the international level as part of the Education for All-Global Monitoring Report team at UNESCO. These institutions have emphasised the importance of equitably distributing public education resources in their policy recommendations to ensure that those who are the most disadvantaged are not left behind. However, despite this emphasis on equity little progress towards meeting these targets has been made. This deserves closer attention to determine what role, if any, politics has to do with directly affecting progress. For example, the politicisation over mechanisms which were working towards greater equity in distributing resources were evident when I worked at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in Malawi. Between 2005 and 2009 I was employed here first as a budget officer and then as a policy and planning officer within the Department of Planning. It was here that I witnessed first-hand the blurred lines between the bureaucratic and political involvement in the

budget process.[4] As described by one study, the budget process was *"a theatre mask[ing] the real distribution and spending"* (Rakner et al., 2004; p. 4).

Another reason for my interest in choosing to further interrogate this thesis' theme was a wider understanding of the relationship between policy and practice. My personal experience of the formulation process during the drafting of the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) was the poor representation from sub-national government officials or school actors. I was motivated to better understand the challenges faced by education stakeholders required to implement government policies whose design they had largely been excluded from. This includes those aspects of teacher management that are of interest to this thesis which sub-national or school-level officials are responsible for implementing.

1.3.2 Significance of thesis

In recent years research in the field of comparative international education has begun to engage more critically with what impact the characteristics of different political states can have on educational quality (Kingdon et al., 2014; Hickey & Hossain, 2019). In 2018 the World Bank released its flagship World Development Report which focused on the "learning crisis" (World Bank, 2017). The removal of technical and political barriers to make education systems fit for learning came out strongly in its recommendations. Specifically relevant to this study is the emphasis on this emerging literature on teachers' *"bargaining power [which] stems from their ability to influence electoral outcomes"* (Kingdon et al., 2014; p. 1). This ties in directly with the focus of thesis on the impact of power and politics on teacher management.

The influence that different types of political states have on educational quality is still an emerging and relatively under-explored field globally. Comparatively more research however has been done on this in the South Asian context compared to the sub-Saharan African perspective (with extremely limited work in the Malawian context). Extensive research has been done on the characteristics which define Malawi's political system and what this means for development (Booth et al., 2006; Cammack, 2011; Cammack & Kelsall, 2010). However, few studies have linked this back to what the implications are for

[4] An example of this related to attempts to gain approval for a formula which would ensure the more equitable distribution of the recurrent budget between Community Day Secondary Schools and Conventional Secondary Schools. This was strongly resisted.

educational quality and more specifically teacher management. This thesis goes some way towards addressing this gap and adding to the scholarly literature in this emerging field.

1.4 Structure of this thesis

Including this chapter, this thesis is comprised of 11 chapters. Chapter 2 gives a background to Malawi's political history, education system and policies relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation. Chapter 3 discusses the current literature which problematises the issues relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation in the Global South and Malawi more specifically. Chapter 4 presents the conceptual framework which helps guide this study. Chapter 5 discusses the methodology and research methods utilised for this study, and includes reflections on my own positionality as a researcher from the Global North working in Malawi. Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 present the key findings by answering each of the four research questions listed in Section 1.1.2. Chapter 10 discusses the main research findings in relation to the current literature and conceptual framework utilised for the study. Finally, Chapter 11 concludes this thesis by discussing its contribution and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: The research context

Chapter purpose and structure

In Chapter 1 I introduced the purpose of the thesis together with a brief overview of what motivated this study. Chapter 2 introduces the context of this research, with a particular focus on Malawi's political and education system. This is important both for giving readers unfamiliar with Malawi a brief overview of these aspects, and in helping to inform the discussion in subsequent chapters.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2.1 gives a background to Malawi's political history, focusing on the period from 1994, when Malawi transitioned to a multi-party democracy, to the present day. Section 2.2 focuses on the primary education sector and discusses some of the policy interventions concerning the teacher management issues of interest in this work.

2.1 Malawi's political history

2.1.1 Background to Malawi's multi-party system

Following its independence from British colonial rule in 1964, Malawi was administered under the autocratic leadership of Hastings Kamuzu Banda for the next 30 years. Subsequent to a referendum held in 1993, Malawi voted to become a multi-party democracy. The following year it held its first multi-party national elections. Since the introduction of the multi-party political system in 1994 there have been seven national elections in Malawi, with each political cycle lasting five years. The three parties dominating Malawi's political space have been the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Presidential and parliamentary candidates for the national assembly are selected on a First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system.[5] In the re-run of the 2019 Presidential election in June 2020,[6] a Presidential nominee was required – for the first time – to secure an absolute majority of 50 percent or more of the electoral vote to be declared the winner. Since multi-

[5] This means that a candidate is voted into power on the basis of receiving the *most* votes compared to his/her rivals, even if this is not necessarily the *majority* of total votes, i.e. 50 percent or more.
[6] In February 2020, Malawi courts annulled the 2019 Presidential election result due to voting irregularities and called for a new ballot to be held. The new Presidential election was held in June 2020.

party democracy was introduced, all but one of Malawi's Presidents have come from the Southern region.[7] That is, Lazurus Chakwera, the winner of the 2020 Presidential election, has been the only Presidential winner who does not come from that region. Lazurus Chakwera comes from the Central region and ran on an MCP ticket. He won the largest share of votes amongst all nominees in districts in the Northern and Central region, while Peter Wa Mutharika retained majority of support in all districts in the Southern region.

2.1.2 Patronage and clientelism within Malawi's political system

Political parties in Malawi appear not to be *"strongly grounded in ideology"*, with it being unclear what each of the parties *"stand for and how they differ from each other"* (Chinsinga, 2013; p. 40). The low threshold for the formation of parties, a lack of clear ideological orientation among political parties and the highly personalised nature of the political system have all led to an increasingly fragmentary and unstable political system (Svåsand, 2014). Patronage, clientelism, ethnicity and tribalism have all been identified as reasons why political parties are formed (Tenthani & Chinsinga, 2016). This is further entrenched by the overlap between the major ethnic groups in the country, and their distribution across Malawi's three geographic regions[8] (Chirwa, 1998) (Figure. 2.1).

Support for political parties along regional lines appears to be guided by the logic that the state is the major source of wealth, so any *"chance of rapid wealth accumulation is enhanced, if ethnic groups or regions elect one of their own into State House"* (Chinsinga, 2012; p. 10). Regional identity is deeply rooted in Malawi's colonial and authoritarian past, *"when the administrative regions were played out against one another politically, economically, culturally and socially"* (Gloppen et al., 2006; p. 5). The Central region was favoured under Hastings Kamuzu Banda, at the expense of the Northern and Southern regions. Since the introduction of the multi-party system, the MCP (the old party of Kamuzu Hastings Banda) has continued to enjoy support in the Central region in all national elections apart from that in 2009. The traditional strongholds for the UDF and Alliance for

[7] Bakili Muluzi's (1994-2004) home village is in Machinga district, Bingu Wa Mutharika 's (2004-2012) home village was in Thyolo district, Joyce Banda's (2012-2014) home village is in Zomba district and Peter Wa Mutharika's (2014-2020) home village is in Thyolo district.

[8] The population of Malawi is of Bantu origin and is made up many different ethnic groups. The most populous ethnic groups are the Chewa, Lomwe, Yao, Ngoni and Tumbuka tribes. The Chewa tribe, who make up just over a third of the population, are predominantly situated in the Central region of the country. The Lomwe and Yao tribes are mainly situated in the Southern region. The Tumbuka tribe is concentrated in the Northern region (GoM, 2019).

Democracy (AFORD) have been in the Southern and Northern region, respectively. However, these parties have lost support to emerging parties or independent candidates (Gloppen et al., 2006).

Only in 2009 did the national election results defy the ethno-regional patterns of voting that were so entrenched in previous national elections (Chinsinga, 2012). Buoyed by the positive economic performance of the first term of his presidency, the universal fertiliser subsidy and the regional inclusivity of his cabinet, Bingu Wa Mutharika received over 50 percent of the votes in all three regions (Ferree & Horowitz, 2010) (Figure 2.2). However, Chinsinga illustrates how post-election there was a *"dramatic regression to the politics as usual mode….with a great deal of intensity that has never been seen before"* (2012; p. 19). In respect to the subsidy fertiliser programme, for instance, most of the contracts for procurement were awarded to the President's tribal grouping (ibid.).

Figure 2.1: Administrative map of Malawi

Source: Google Maps (https://www.google.com/maps/@-13.4920966,31.2841899,1587050m/data=!3m1!1e3)

2.1.3 Malawi's fragmented political landscape since multi-party democracy

In the 1994 Parliamentary election the overwhelming majority of nominees appearing on the electoral ballot came from just three political parties (MCP, UDF and AFORD). By the time of the 2004 national elections there were a total of 29 registered parties (Gloppen, 2006). The 2004 national election was a watershed moment in Malawi's multi-party political system in that it initiated the fragmentation that is very much a characteristic of Malawi's political system today. The number of political parties officially registered rose from seven in 1994 to 55 at the most recent count (Tenthani & Chinsinga, 2016). The majority are those that have splintered from the initial seven parties taking part in the 1994 national elections. This proliferation has been *"shaped by competition for political office"* (Gloppen, 2006; p. 14) and occurs when a *"new 'big man' contests for power….when (s)he is shoved aside"* (Chinsinga, 2012; p. 10).[9] The political elite have sometimes been referred to as "chameleons" due to their readiness to change their allegiances (Euglund, 2002).

As a consequence of this fragmentation, the share of the vote in support of the Presidential winner has never exceeded 40 percent (apart from in 2009) in the 2004, 2014 and 2019 national elections (Figure 2.2). The number of Presidential candidates running as potential candidates increased from four in 1994 to ten in 2019. During the 2020 Presidential election, the constitutional decree requiring the Presidential winner to secure more than 50 percent of the electoral vote meant that just three candidates ran.[10]

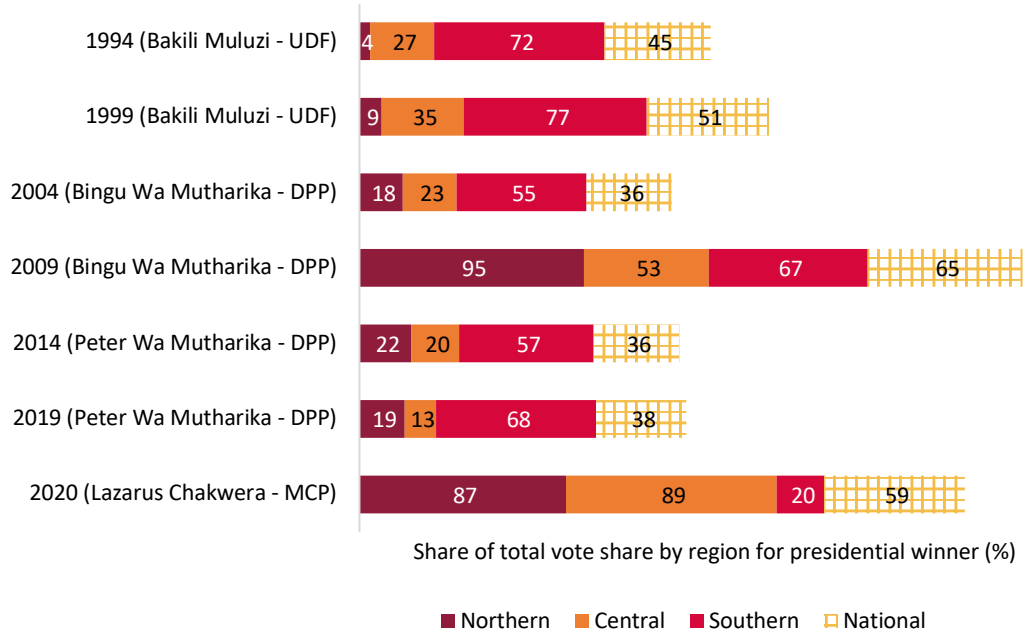
Similarly, Parliamentary election results suggest that the share of MPs who have won 50 percent or more of the vote in their constituency has been declining. In 1994, 95 percent of MPs won their seat with 50 percent or more of the vote, whereas by 2019 the equivalent was 35 percent (Figure 2.3). Chapter 4 discusses the importance of this increased fragmentation in vote share in the context of nepotistic and clientelist tendencies, in particular, in terms of how this influences the way resources are used and distributed.

[9] During the 2004 national election Bingu Wa Mutharika ran on a UDF ticket. However, shortly after coming into power he split from the party by creating the DPP. Similarly, Joyce Banda, after she was expelled from the ruling DPP in 2011, created the People's Party (PP) and ran on this ticket as President between 2012 and 2014. In the 2019 elections, Saulos Chilima, who had been the Vice-President between 2014 and 2019 under a DPP-led government, launched his own political party called the United Transformation Movement (UTM) during the 2019 national elections.

[10] Due to the court ruling requiring any Presidential winner of the 2020 Presidential election to attain 50 percent of the vote the "Tonse Alliance" was formed. This was an alliance of nine political parties forming a political block, with the sole aim of removing the DPP and Peter Wa Mutharika from power.

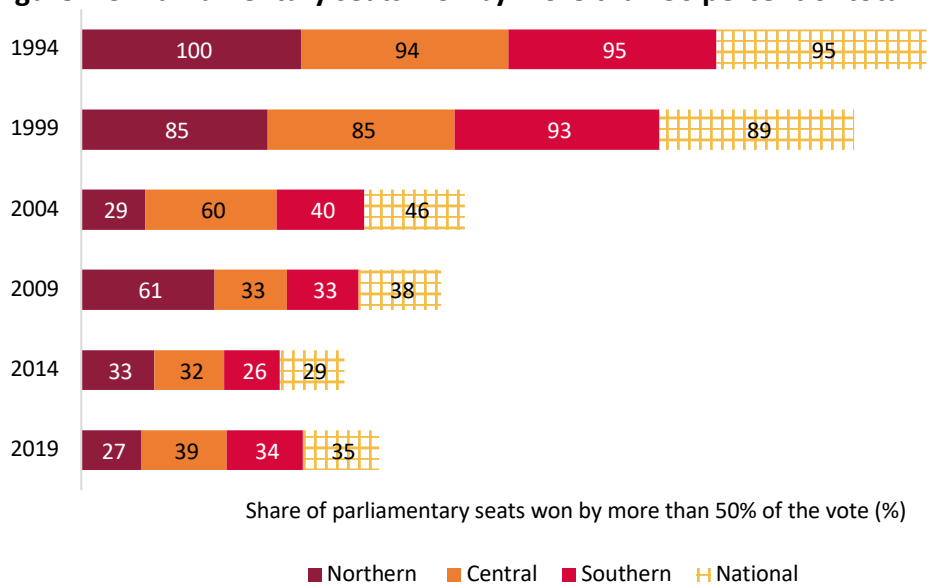
In Zomba Rural district, which is the geographical focus of this study, the share of MPs who won their seats coming from the same political party as the Presidential winner fell from 100 percent in 1994 to 44 percent in 2019 (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.2: Total vote share for presidential winner by election by region



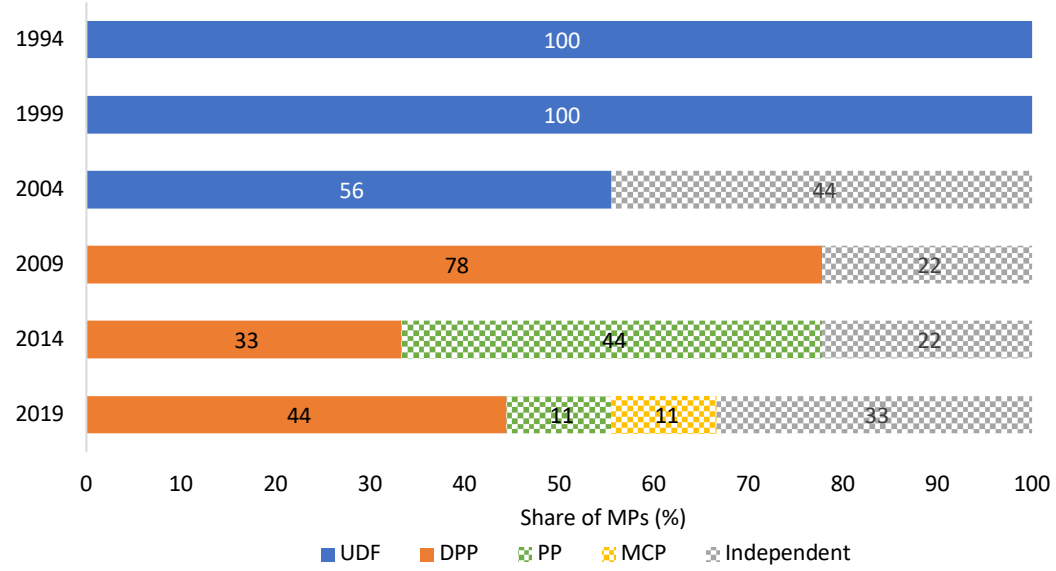
Source: Researcher's calculations based on data from Malawi's Electoral Commission for various years.

Figure 2.3: Parliamentary seats won by more than 50 percent of total votes cast



Source: Researcher's calculations based on data from Malawi's Electoral Commission for various years.

Figure 2.4: Zomba Rural district parliamentary seats, by different political party



Source: Researcher's calculations based on data from Malawi's Electoral Commission for various years.

2.2 Malawi's education system

2.2.1 Background to Malawi's education system

Education has featured as a high-profile electoral strategy in several of Malawi's national elections. In the run-up to the first multi-party election, in 1994, the abolition of primary school fees featured as a dominant electoral strategy touted by both the MCP and UDF (Evans & Rose, 2006). More recently, in the months leading up to the 2019 national elections, the incumbent political party in power announced the abolition of secondary school tuition fees (Zubairi & Rose, 2019). Prior to the 2014 and 2019 national elections, the government announced that a large number of primary school teachers would be promoted (Dzimbiri, 2016).

The formal education system in Malawi follows an 8-4-4 structure, comprising eight years of primary education (Standard 1 to Standard 8), four years of secondary education (Form 1 to Form 4) and four years of university education. The official starting age of formal primary schooling is six-years-old. The Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE), taken at the end of Standard 8, determines pupils' eligibility to progress onto secondary education. The Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE), taken at the end of Form 4, similarly establishes whether a student can transition on to higher education (World Bank, 2010).

Following the first multi-party national election in 1994, the Government of Malawi fulfilled its manifesto pledge to abolish primary school fees for all eight standards.[11] Almost overnight primary enrolment increased from 1.9 million in 1993/94 to 2.9 million the following year. The teacher shortage that ensued was met through recruiting 18,000 untrained teachers in 1994, who were trained through the Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP), which ran from 1997 to 2003 (Kunje & Chimombo, 1999). A further 3,000 untrained teachers were recruited annually between 1996 and 2000, meaning an additional 15,000 untrained teachers were introduced into the system (Kunje & Chimombo, 1999). MIITEP was discontinued in 2003 due to concerns over the low quality of teachers it was producing. In 2006**,** MoEST introduced the two-year Initial Primary Teachers Education Programme (IPTE). This involves teacher trainees spending the first year of the programme in-residence at one of Malawi's Teacher Training Colleges (TTC's), followed by one year of supervised teaching in one of Malawi's primary schools (World Bank, 2010).

Under MIITEP, teachers were recruited by the District Education Manager (DEM) and sent to TTCs for a short induction before returning to work in the same district or school from which they had been recruited. IPTE teacher trainees, on the other hand, are recruited centrally by the Department for Teacher Education and Development (DTED). Once teachers graduate from the IPTE programme, the Basic Education Directorate decides which district to deploy them to (Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010). It is then the responsibility of the DEM to decide which schools in their district these teachers will be sent to go and teach in. This is relevant in the context of what is later discussed in Chapter 7, where the decisions district officials make when deploying teachers are considered.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) maintains overall responsibility for the formal sectors of education (primary, secondary and higher) as well as complementary basic education for out-of-school-youth. Following the 1998 Decentralisation Act, a number of responsibilities concerning the implementation of primary education policies were officially transferred to local councils. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, decentralisation, whilst being promoted in policy documents, has not fully

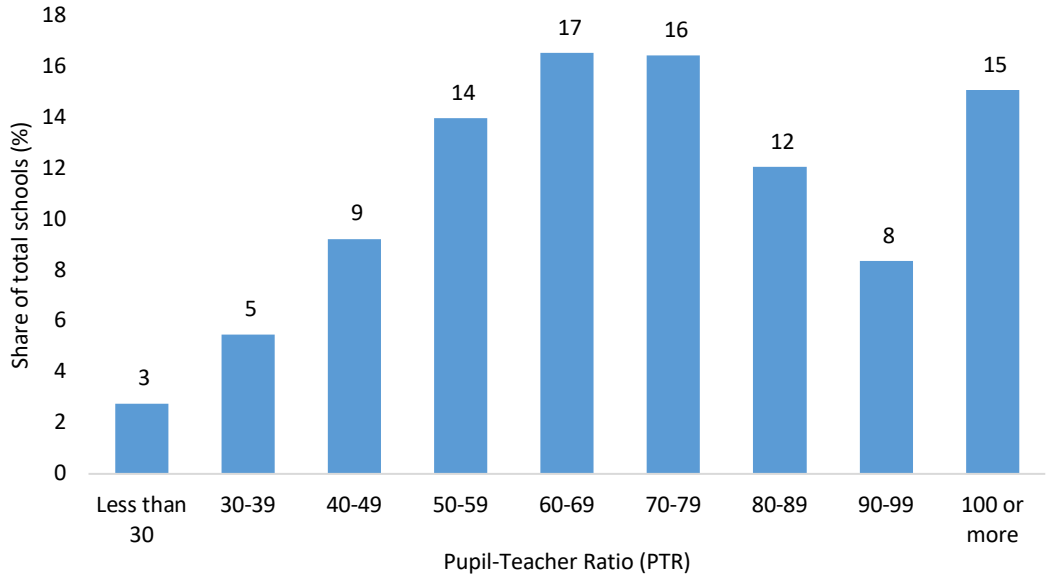
[11] Primary school fees were waived for new Standard 1 entrants in 1991/92. In 1992/93 this was extended to girls who did not repeat the school year. In 1993/94, students in the first three standards did not pay any fees (Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007; Kadzamira & Rose, 2001).

translated into practice, with the centre retaining control of a number of teacher management functions

2.2.2 Challenges relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation

A number of diagnostic studies of the education sector reveal that Malawi fares badly in the areas of teacher management that this thesis focuses on. For example, the extreme variation in the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) between primary schools characterises a system where schools experiencing teacher shortages exist side-by-side with those with surpluses (Figure 2.5). This suggests structural problems concerning how teachers are deployed. A government report calculated that, in 2017, 27 percent of Malawi's primary school teachers had been allocated for reasons other than enrolment[12] and when disaggregated by district this figure is much higher (GoM, 2017). Chapter 6 looks more at this variation by district and compares how this has changed over time, specifically for Zomba Rural district.

Figure 2.5: Distribution of schools by PTR, 2017/18 school year



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS data.

Similarly, Malawi's primary school system is embodied by extreme variation in the PTR between infant (Standard 1 and Standard 2) and senior (Standard 7 and Standard 8) classes. The responsibility of allocating teachers to different classes is assumed by the headteacher of the school. Subject specialisation at senior grades has meant that *"[t]eachers of*

[12] This is referred to as the "degree of randomness" coefficient, which is defined as the unexplained variation between school size and the number of teachers.

Standards 1 and 2 are generally overburdened with one teacher per over-crowded section; while subject teachers in upper primary grades have work schedules integrating considerable periods of spare time" (Ravishankar et al., 2016; p. 41). Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 discuss this at length, including the reasons behind what drives teacher allocation decisions.

2.2.3 The National Education Sector Plan (2008-2017)

A ten-year sector plan setting out the vision for the education sector was embodied in the National Sector Education Plan (NESP), which covered the period 2008 to 2017 (GoM, 2008*a*). The NESP was a response to the domestic development vision set out by the Malawian government (Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and Vision 2002), together with commitment to international education goals it pledged to achieve (Education For All Plan of Action and Millennium Development Goals).

The NESP followed a series of long-term education plans. The first formal education plan (1973-1980) provided guidelines for primary, secondary and teacher education. Amongst the four objectives stated was a focus on equitably distributing education facilities and resources. The second education sector plan (1985-1995) considered all levels of formal education and listed as one of its four aims the *"utiliz[ation] of the limited resources to the education sector"* (GoM, 2008a; p. 2). This was followed by the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), which ran between 1995 and 2006. The PIF sought to ensure that *"Malawi's education system [did not] intensify existing inequalities across social groups and regions"* (ibid.; p. 3).

Equity and inefficiency of resources were clearly identified in the priorities guiding pre-NESP sector priorities. The NESP covered all sub-sectors of the education system, reviewing both formal and non-formal schooling under three over-arching themes:

1. Quality and relevance
2. Access and equity
3. Governance and management

The NESP identified high PTR as one the most pressing challenges facing the primary education sector and committed to:

> *"Reduc[ing] class sizes to facilitate more effective learning through progressively recruiting: (a) increased numbers of trained teachers as they become available, and (b) teacher trainees recruited through an urgent programme, who will work as teachers while studying through distance learning. Particular efforts will be made to reduce class size for Standards 1 and 2"* (GoM, 2008a; p. 10).

The guiding principle to class sizes was *"progressing to a 1:60 ratio by 2013/14 and below 1:60 ratio by 2017/18"* (GoM, 2008a; p. 11). Strategies drafted to achieve this target included policies to increase the number of teachers in the system. Given the focus of this thesis, in Subsection 2.2.4 those policies prioritising the more effective use of existing teachers to reach this target are discussed.

2.2.4 Policies relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation

The NESP was operationalised through two interim implementation plans called Education Sector Implementation Plans (ESIPs). These detailed the activities and annual benchmarks needed to achieve the overall targets set out in the NESP. ESIP I covered the period 2009/10 to 2012/13, while ESIP II covered the period 2013/14 to 2017/18. The following section looks at some of the main policies the ESIP I & II set targets for in relation to the teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation.

Teacher deployment

NESP policies on teacher deployment focused specifically on improving the PTR in rural schools. It set specific interim targets for rural areas such that the qualified teacher pupil ratio would be no more than *"1:70 by 2012 and thereafter 1:60"* (GoM, 2008a; p. 24). The main policies contained in the NESP to achieve this target are discussed below.

Rural hardship allowance

The NESP set the target that the *"percentage of teachers eligible for hardship fund increas[ed] from 15% in 2008/09 to 30% by 2014/15 and staying at 30% thereafter"* (GoM, 2008a; p. 11). In 2010, the Ministry of Education introduced the rural hardship allowance to help attract and retain teachers to work in "poor" and "remote" schools.[13] Teachers were to receive a hardship allowance of MK10,000 (US$13.7) per month. This was a flat rate and did not differentiate between different types of rural primary schools. In 2015, it was estimated

[13] In the original proposal, government officials planned for 15,000 primary and secondary school teachers to be compensated through the rural hardship allowance. However, at the level of implementation, i.e. the district, the list prepared by the District Education Managers applied a looser standard as to which teachers were eligible. Consequently 42,000 teachers were identified as eligible for the scheme (Asim et al., 2017; p. 11-12).

that some 80 percent of the primary teacher workforce were receiving the allowance (Asim et al., 2017; p. 11-12).

The ESIP I document (GoM, 2009) does not provide any targets or a budget for the primary rural hardship allowance. However, ESIP II does refer to the hardship allowance and provides an annual breakdown of the budget required (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Budget for rural hardship allowance for primary teachers (ESIP II)

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Rural teaching allowance for primary teachers	MK 2.9 billion	MK 4.3 billion	MK 4.9 billion	MK 5.7 billion	MK 6.7 billion

Source: GoM (2013; p. 136).

Teacher redeployment

A cost-effective strategy in education systems characterised by both a shortage and inefficient distribution of teachers, is to compel them to relocate to rural areas (Göttelmann-Duret & Hogan, 1998). Mulkeen & Chen (2008) write about how forced deployment has been a strategy utilised in Malawi only in circumstances where the teacher has been "punished" for misbehaving. However, as a strategy it can also be extended to move teachers from surplus teacher schools to those with a shortage.

While there was nothing specific set out in relation to redeployment in the NESP, it was included as a strategy in both ESIP I and ESIP II. Under ESIP I, a budget, together with accompanying targets for how many teachers would be redeployed was included (Table 2.2a). While no targets were set out in ESIP II, assumptions around the unit cost and the total budget for the redeployment of teachers were detailed (Table 2.2b). The cost for redeploying teachers to a school outside of the district was MK80,000 (US$109.3), whilst the equivalent for within a district was MK15,000 (US$20.5). GoM (2015) indicated that this would be readjusted upward by 15 percent annually.

Table 2.2a: Targets and budget for the redeployment of teachers (ESIP I)

	2009-10	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Redeploy and transport teachers to understaffed schools	1,700 teachers	1,700 teachers	1,700 teachers	1,700 teachers
	MK30 million	MK30 million	MK30 million	MK30 million

Source: GoM (2009; p. 53).

Table 2.2b: Budget for redeployment of teachers (ESIP II)

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Redeploy and transport teachers to understaffed schools	MK2.0 million	MK2.1 million	MK115.8 million	MK133.2 million	MK153.2 million

Source: GoM (2013; p. 134).

Teacher allocation and utilisation

During the ESIP II implementation period there was a notable shift towards prioritising learning in the early years. The main strategy to achieve this was increasing the number of hours pupils in the lower standards were taught from three to four hours (GoM, 2013). A further aspect was setting specific PTR targets for lower Standards, given these classes were significantly off-track towards achieving the NESP target of 60 to 1 (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Pupil-teacher ratio targets for Standards 1, 2 and 3 (ESIP II)

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Ensure teachers are deployed in sufficient numbers in the early standards	Std 1: 153:1 Std 2: 114:1 Std 3: 89:1	Std 1: 110:1 Std 2: 95:1 Std 3: 70:1	Std 1: 95:1 Std 2: 85:1 Std 3: 65:1	Std 1: 75:1 Std 2: 65:1 Std 3: 60: 1

Source: GoM (2013; p. 91).

Double-shift system of teaching

In resource-poor countries that experience a shortage of classroom infrastructures, "double-shift" teaching is a strategy designed to reduce pupil-classroom sizes. This is traditionally done by making more efficient use of limited classroom space by teaching separate classes in the morning and afternoon (Bray, 2000). As part of its strategy to reduce classroom sizes, the NESP proposed *"increasing the number of classrooms operating as double shift from 15.2% of the total in 2007/08, peaking at 20% in 2012/13 and ending with 15% in 2017/18"* (GoM, 2008a; p. 11).

Under the ESIP I Action Plan, a budget together with accompanying targets for how many teachers would undertake double-shift teaching was included (Table 2.4a). While there were no targets in ESIP II, assumptions around the unit cost (MK10,000 or US$13.7 per month per teacher) and the total budget were set out (Table 2.4b).

Table 2.4a: Targets and budget for a double-shift system (ESIP I)

	2009-10	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-20113
Use budget allowance to provide incentives to 1,200 teachers with Standards 1-3 classes with a PTR larger than 120	1,200 teachers	2,400 teachers	2,400 teachers	4,800 teachers
	MK72 Million	MK148 million	MK237 million	MK316 million

Source: GoM (2009; p. 52).

Table 2.4b: Budget for double-shift system (ESIP II)

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Reduce class size with double-shifting allowance	MK247.1 million	MK52.5 million	MK60.4 million	MK69.4 million	MK79.8 million

Source: GoM (2013; p. 139).

Multi-grade teaching

Multi-grade strategies are recommended by global policy-makers to *"address the uneven grade distribution often found in primary schools in low-income countries"* (Mulkeen & Higgins, 2009; p. 2). A core component of a multi-grade teaching strategy would be combining two or more classes where enrolment is low (typically in senior classes), thereby releasing teachers and infrastructure to become available for over-crowded infant classes (ibid.). As part of improving efficiency in the system, ESIP I promoted the idea of multi-grade teaching, specifically targeting Standards 5 to 8 (Table 2.5). However, nowhere in the NESP or ESIP II was there any mention of multi-grade teaching as a strategy.

Table 2.5: Targets for multi-grade teaching (ESIP I)

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Implement multi-grade teaching	Multi-grade implemented in 100 schools	Multi-grade implemented in 100 schools	Multi-grade implemented in 100 schools	Multi-grade implemented in 100 schools

Source: GoM (2009; p. 59).

Conclusion

Since the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1994, a political system once dominated by a handful of parties has become increasingly fragmented, with multiple political parties vying for power. Within the context of a multi-party political system, fee-free primary education was rolled out nation-wide. This led to a surge in enrolment numbers and, consequently, large class sizes. In addition to the overall teacher shortage, the way teachers are distributed has contributed to the shortfall. NESP policies that have been presented in this chapter have been about promoting strategies to make the use of teachers more efficient.

I next turn to Chapter 3, which contains a review of the current literature in the Global South problematising the aspects of teacher management prioritised in this thesis.

Chapter 3: Review of the evidence

Chapter purpose and structure

Chapter 2 presented a brief overview of Malawi's political system, and its primary education system in relation to the distribution of teachers between and within schools. Policy directives contained in successive government education sector plans have detailed how teachers should be deployed and utilised. However, despite this the inequitable distribution of teachers persists.

Globally, the majority of public government spending on education continues to be on teachers' salaries, which has consequences for both equity and efficiency. Across all developing countries, it is estimated that 63 percent of public education expenditure is spent on teachers' salaries (Crawfurd & Pugatch, 2020). The equivalent for sub-Saharan Africa is 80 to 90 percent (Majgaard & Mingat, 2012). In Malawi, one recent study estimated that 84 percent of spending on primary education was on teachers' salaries and when including teachers' allowances the figure jumped to 92 percent (Ravishankar et al., 2016).

The high inequitable distribution of teachers between and within schools combined with the majority of public spending being on teachers' salaries, means expenditure per primary pupil is highly inequitable. One study calculated that the weak relationship between teacher distribution and school enrolment meant that for 80 percent of primary schools in Malawi per pupil spending could be anywhere between US$5 to US$20 per pupil per annum (Majgaard & Mingat, 2012). A number of studies have concluded that Malawi's spending on primary education is pro-poor (Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007; Ilie & Rose, 2018). However, past research found that the unequal distribution of teachers in favour of upper primary levels meant resources were not being directed to the poorest children, who were least likely to progress to these levels from infant and junior levels (Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007; Croft, 2002).

The above discussion on the unequal distribution of teachers in Malawi's primary education system needs to be positioned within the global literature focusing on this phenomenon. Research on countries in the Global South that has found unequal patterns of teacher distribution considers the reasons why national policies on distributing teachers more

equitably have failed in their execution. These have largely been considered through political economy and governance discourses. This chapter focuses on this literature given the interest in understanding and explaining the phenomenon specifically in the context of Malawi.

This chapter is arranged as follows. In Section 3.1, I summarise the approach I have utilised to identify and synthesise the extant literature. Section 3.2 presents an overview of the literature relating to the first part of my research inquiry, which pertains to the deployment and transfer of teachers between schools. Section 3.3 is concerned with synthesising literature on the second part of this thesis inquiry, which is the within-school allocation of teachers to classes and their utilisation.

3.1 Methodology to conduct a review of existing literature

Before moving on to a discussion around the literature sourced for this review, I discuss what a literature review is, its purpose and the methodology I employed for teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation.

3.1.1 What is a literature review, and what is its purpose

A literature review can be defined as *"the selection of available documents on the topic, which contains information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint….and how it is to be investigated"* (Hart, 1998; p. 13). A systematic approach is utilised to collect and synthesise the qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods research that is already in the public domain. Some of the key features of a literature review are briefly worth mentioning.

It can be either part of a study or a standalone piece of research: It can either serve as a background for an empirical study or as a standalone piece, which can provide a valuable contribution to the topic of study in its own right (Jesson et al., 2011; Okoli & Schabram, 2010). The purpose of this review is to serve as an introduction to the background to the issues that existing research relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation in the Global South has documented.

Explicit and transparent methods are used: Any review should be reproduceable, meaning that any researcher conducting one should leave an 'audit trail', which details what steps were taken from the start of the review to the end (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). Subsection

3.1.2 outlines the particular parameters I have chosen in order to research, write and complete this particular review.

The purpose is to provide the foundation of existing knowledge to the research area under investigation, which is an integral part in the development of a particular field or discipline. While individual studies incrementally contribute to the understanding of a phenomenon of interest, building scientific knowledge requires cooperation and interdependent research work, which is through a literature review of prior work (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016).

3.1.2 Methodology for planning this literature review

The methodology for selecting the literature for this chapter was an iterative process, which began prior to my fieldwork in Malawi commencing.[14] During the fieldwork phase, the focus was narrowed from one that was concerned with public education resources more broadly to being primarily concerned with teachers. This, together with the number of relevant studies published after my fieldwork, led to the literature review being repurposed to reflect this narrower focus. Over the course of drafting this chapter, this was refined to include more specific themes that were emerging in the literature I was selecting.

Given the thesis' overall interest specified in Chapter 1, it is focused around a 'problem-driven' approach. Such an approach diagnoses a specific development challenge. In the case of this thesis, the interest lies in the persistent inequitable distribution of teachers within Malawi's primary education system, both between and within schools. Therefore, the first parameter involved delineating between the two problems that my research questions address (*deployment of teachers between schools* and the *allocation and utilisation of teachers within schools*).

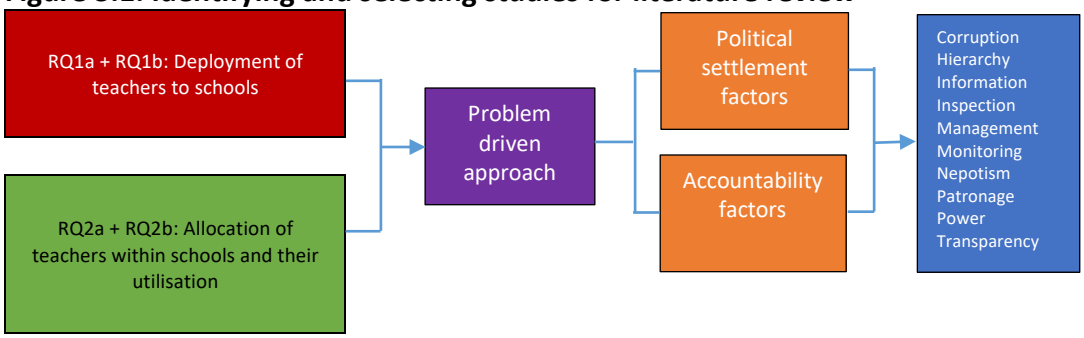
The second parameter that guided my literature selection was to seek an understanding as to what the main drivers were for these dysfunctional patterns to have occurred (Fritz & Levy, 2014). These dimensions were influenced by my conceptual framework, which contains a hybrid of themes relating to accountability and political settlement factors (see Chapter 4). The conceptual framework was important for the purposes of the literature review, given that, as stated by Lester, it provides "*the concepts chosen for investigation*

[14] This was literature collated for my first year upgrade report submitted in October 2017.

and….will be appropriate and useful given the research problem under investigation" (2005; p. 460).

Thirdly, I linked the themes emanating from the conceptual framework (political settlement and accountability) more generally and merged them with those I was expecting to identify in my data (prior to fieldwork). This allowed me to identify a core list of concepts that determined how I would search for, and select, existing research. These steps, which are set out in Figure 3.1, acted as an over-arching guide as to what search terms I utilised when collecting literature through various search engines.[15]

Figure 3.1: Identifying and selecting studies for literature review



While I tried to follow the steps traditionally used when conducting a literature review,[16] in practice, the search for literature proved to be a fluid and iterative process. As proposed by Bates, my literature search began with a broad topic allowing me to go through a number of sources and *"[e]ach new piece of information encounter[ed] [gave me] new ideas and directions to follow"* (1989; p. 23). At the preliminary stages of structuring this chapter I utilised the approach described above. This helped me identify an initial list of search terms I deemed suitable for this study. Following this, I identified a small number of studies prominent in the context of the focus of this thesis. This is in line with a recommendation by Guest et al. who, in their study on interview scripts, found that a close reading of six documents was *"sufficient to enable development of meaningful themes and useful interpretation"* (2006; p. 78). Having read the selected sample of literature carefully, I was

[15] These were Science Direct, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Google Scholar.
[16] Onwuegbuzie & Frels (2016), in their definition of a systematic review, indicate that this should be exhaustive, detached, address a wide population, relatively linear, have explicit inclusion/ exclusion criteria as well as being deductive, objective and aggregative.

able to review the suitability of the search terms I had initially identified, and amended this list as was deemed necessary.

Reflexive thinking relating to any differences between what I was finding in the literature and what I was finding in my own data chapters also led to the search terms being amended. The process of collecting, selecting, reviewing and synthesising the literature for this review accords with what Bates recommends which is that it *"begin[s] with just one feature of a broader topic…[and] at each stage, with each different conception of query the user may identify useful information and references"* (1989; p. 23). Beyond the search terms, the research for this literature review also drew heavily upon the 'snow-balling' approach through which I was able to find existing research suitable for this study that had not come up immediately when using the search terms I employed.

Once studies were identified, there were inclusion/ exclusion criteria that I utilised as follows.

- **Geographic location:** Research relating to teacher deployment issues in the Global North is overwhelmingly focused on what accounts for teacher preferences on where they choose to work. This differs from the Global South context, where it is government actors who are officially in charge regarding decisions about placing teachers in schools. Given these differences and the nature of the study, the review of literature was limited to Global South studies.
- **Language**: Understanding the issues contained within past research is often an important criteria for researchers' choice in their selection of studies. With this in mind, the challenges relating to fluency or understanding in languages meant I was restricted to studies written in English.
- **Setting:** The interest of this thesis is in comparing government policies with the problems relating to their implementation in government-managed schools. For this reason, the literature search is limited to teacher management issues, specifically in relation to public education systems.

3.1.3 How the literature is reviewed and structured

The following subsections are ordered using the approach identified in Figure 3.1. Firstly, the literature is arranged according to the research themes. These relate to the deployment

of teachers between schools (Section 3.2) and their allocation and utilisation within them (Section 3.3). Secondly, within each of these themes the subsection begins by reviewing the literature that problematises the issues of interest (Subsection 3.2.2 and Subsection 3.3.2). Thirdly, the subsections consider why the problems relating to these issues continue to persist from the perspective of accountability and political settlement factors (Subsection 3.2.3 and Subsection 3.3.3). Within each of these subsections, the issues are discussed in relation to the Global South, in general, before moving on to specific consideration of the Malawian context. A focus on the Global South is justified on the grounds that a rich body of teacher distribution research exists in these contexts, which is currently absent from studies undertaken in Malawi.

The studies that were eventually selected to be incorporated into this review were those primarily interested in why inequitable deployment and poor utilisation of teachers was occurring. While my search criteria did lead to the identification of studies that were oriented towards the sorts of policies that could be considered "problem-solving", these were largely excluded from the literature review due to the focus of the research questions.

3.2 Teacher deployment and transfers to and between schools

3.2.1 Introduction

Section 3.2 frames the first part of the problem this thesis seeks to explore, namely the inequitable deployment of teachers between schools. It is organised around two issues. In Subsection 3.2.2 the discussion considers the evidence in relation to the different demand-side preferences regarding where teachers in the Global South wish to be deployed. This subsection is important in that it contextualises the main reasons why the problem exists (using the 'problem driven' approach illustrated in Figure 3.1). However, while this subsection provides an important overview in describing the inequity in teacher distribution, it does not inform why these problems continue to persist. Subsection 3.2.3 strikes at the heart of this discussion by identifying common themes that emerged in the literature through the prism of accountability and political settlement factors.

3.2.2 Demand-side issues affecting equitable teacher allocation

Teacher preferences for schools they teach in

Several studies on teacher mobility in the Global South reveal teachers' preferences as to where they wish to be deployed. The predisposition to want to live and work close to large

urban settlements with better amenities often means that the understaffing of rural hard-to-reach schools is a prevalent feature of many education systems in the Global South (Asim et al., 2017; Mulkeen, 2010; Mukeredzi & Mandrona, 2013; Pennefeather, 2011). The sparse population and harsh topography of rural areas is found to be an additional factor affecting teachers' decision-making as to where they would prefer to teach (Tao, 2014).

In the case of Ghana, teachers' preference as to where they are deployed was found to be skewed in favour of the country's most urban regions (Hedges, 2002). Akyeampong et al. (2000) concluded this was unsurprising given that most teachers come from urban backgrounds. In Nigeria, teachers resisted deployment to teach in rural and remote areas, because of the sparse population and harsh topography (Tao, 2014). In addition to geographical factors, studies reviewed also found teacher preferences to be influenced by the students they would be teaching. In Ghana and India, teachers' resistance to being deployed to teach in a particular school or in rural areas stemmed from the background of the children attending the school. This background could relate to poorer socioeconomic status, or otherwise what teachers conceive of as "undesirable" communities (Hedges, 2002; Ramachandran et al., 2005).

In the context of Malawi, in a 2014 QSD Survey, 60 percent of teachers reported not being satisfied with their school placement (cited in Ravishankar et al., 2016). Of these teachers, 50 percent indicated that this was due to long distances between their homes and place of work, whilst 26 percent cited that their place of work was far from tarmac roads or trading centres and 18 percent were dissatisfied due to an absence of available teacher housing (ibid.). Other studies cited the unavailability of suitable teacher housing with facilities, such as running water and electricity, as strong predictors for teachers' unwillingness to be deployed to schools in rural areas (Kadzamira, 2006; Mulkeen, 2010). Asim et al. (2017) found that the facilities available at the school, the distance of a school from the nearest town centre and the level of amenities available were key variables affecting a teacher's preferred school choice in Malawi. A longitudinal study by the World Bank concluded that schools with the fewest teachers per pupil tended to be located in the least developed areas of the country. This was where there was limited access to electricity, drinking water supply, roads and health facilities (World Bank, 2016).

Consequences of the variation in demand as to where teachers are deployed

One consequence of teacher preferences as to where they teach has been the poor progress in the deployment and retention of teachers sent to work in remote schools, which often serve the most impoverished communities. In 19 out of 26 sub-Saharan African countries, 20 percent or more of teachers were being allocated to schools for reasons other than the school enrolment figures (UNICEF, 2016). This often led to wide variations between schools in relation to the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR). In Zambia, while the top 10 percent of schools had a PTR under 30:1, for the bottom 10 percent of schools it was above 101:1 (Walter, 2018). In Indonesia, PTR ranged from less than 10:1 in some districts to more than 30:1 in others (Chang et al., 2014).

In Malawi, the average PTR was below 40:1 in 25 percent of schools, between 40:1 and 70:1 in 40 percent of schools and above 70:1 in 35 percent of schools (Ravishankar et al., 2016). Teacher movement between schools after their initial assignment was also found to be significant. Those transferring to different schools were estimated to make up approximately 10 percent of the teaching force each year within any given district, with the majority of these transfers being initiated by the teachers themselves (Kadzamira, 2006; Mulkeen, 2010; Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010).

Not only are schools in rural and remote areas likely to have a shortage of teachers, but also, those allocated there are likely to be teachers with lower levels of formal education, experience, and subject knowledge compared to urban schools (McEwan, 1999; Mulkeen, 2010; Shibeshi, 2009). In studies reviewed that focused on Chile (Meckes & Bascopé, 2012), Mexico (Luschei, 2012) and Uruguay (Luschei & Carnoy, 2010), it was concluded that novice teachers with higher test scores or teachers with a greater number of years teaching experience were more likely to be placed in municipalities with lower levels of poverty and/or schools with higher socio-educational and achievement levels. The dynamics of teacher distribution in India, Mexico, Pakistan and Turkey reveals that after their first teaching assignment, teachers accumulated points based on experience and length of service. The greater the number of points, the higher the chance being transferred to a school located in a desirable location (Bari et al., 2016; Luschei & Chudagi, 2017; Özoğlu, 2015).

In Malawi, studies looking at teacher preferences reveal that poor and remote communities struggled to attract and retain teachers (Asim et al., 2017). Moreover, schools in urban areas had a higher proportion of teachers, who were either qualified or who had higher academic qualifications compared to their rural counterparts (World Bank, 2010). These findings reflect similar findings to studies carried out in a number of Global South countries, including India (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2008), Mexico (Luschei, 2012) and Tanzania (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

3.2.3 Factors contributing to sustained inequity in how teachers are deployed between schools

Introduction

Within an ideal system of teacher deployment, formal policies relating to teacher postings are made along Weberian lines to reach the objective of equity (Hedges, 2000). This means that tasks involving the allocation and management of resources or the assignment of personnel is bureaucratic, rather than political in nature (Levy et al., 2018).[17, 18] While formal institutions may be the basis for determining the objective needs-based criteria for how teacher deployment and transfers should occur, "*it is the interplay with informal mechanisms which ultimately governs the effectiveness of these rules and procedures"* (Béteille, 2009; p. 32).

The following subsections synthesise studies reviewed that problematise what it is that allows for the rules set by formal institutions on teacher deployment and transfers to be negated.[19]

Cultural-normative versus formal policies

A number of studies highlight the disjuncture between policy formulation and the subsequent implementation of these policies[20] (see Booth et al., 2006; Bridges & Woolcock, 2017; Kadzamira & Rose, 2001). In the context of many low-income countries in the Global

[17] An underlying feature of Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy differentiates between what the main role of a politician should be and that of a civil servant, administrator or bureaucrat. The foremost makes policies, while the remainder undertake technocratic duties involving policy implementation (Rosenbloom, 2008).
[18] Afrobarometer data, for instance, found that the majority of Malawians (76 percent) expect their MPs to fulfil delivering goods and services to their community. This role would be what Weber attributes to that of the apolitical technocrat. Just 4.4 percent understood the role of the MP to be that of introducing legislature for the good of the country (Chiweza, 2016).
[19] Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion on formal versus informal institutions.
[20] Tostensen (2017) writes that between independence in July 1964 and February 2015, there were 80 attempts at public sector reform, many of them donor led.

South, policy implementation is often heavily influenced by donors involved in the sector. Pritchett et al. (2014) considered this in the context of *isomorphic mimicry.* This refers to where attempts are made to transplant institutional reforms that have been successful elsewhere into a different context, where their success has been limited. Specifically in relation to teacher deployment or transfers, the literature reviewed discussed the importance of cultural factors which can often override formal criteria and this was found to be especially the case in the context of marriage customs.

In Ghana, there was no official policy in place differentiating between how male and female teachers should be deployed. Despite this, female teachers tended not to be posted to rural areas, because of the prevailing cultural realities. These included losing their marriage value, being put in vulnerable situations or else meeting reluctance from their husbands, if placed in a rural area (Hedges, 2002). Similarly, in Niger, female teachers often had their transfer requests approved even though this was at odds with official policy, which is because Nigerien culture makes it obligatory for a woman to live where her husband does (Cummings & Tahirou, 2016).

In the context of Malawi, the existence of traditional indigenous structures alongside western structures has meant that *"[n]ew regulatory structures now sit on top of a difficult-to-change set of norms and cultural-cognitive scripts"* (Andrews, 2013; p. 56). Western imposed structures are often found to involve the transfer of structures and laws with very different contexts to that of Malawi (ibid.). Bridges & Woolcock (2017) found that there is a bias within externally influenced reforms, whereby they tend to focus on regulative institutions, with only a tiny percentage addressing informal institutions, i.e. normative or cultural-cognitive. Formal rules, for instance, do not permit teacher movement between schools on account of marriage. The 1991 Malawi Public Service Regulations stipulates that *"a female civil servant, who is married must bear in mind that should domestic affairs arising out of her marriage conflict or interfere with her official duties, such as posting or transfer, the Minister reserves the right to terminate her appointment"* (cited in Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010; p. 17). However, local customs dictate that the deployment or transfers of teachers should be permissible for this reason (Asim et al., 2017; Kadzamira, 2006; Moleni & Ndalama, 2004; Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010). A by-product of this has been forged marriage certificates as getting wed is seen as a successful mechanism through which

to get a placement to teach in a more desirable school (Asim et al., 2017; Kadzamira, 2006; Mulkeen, 2010).

Absent or weak teacher deployment and transfer policies

Another reason for discretionary teacher transfer practices relates to absent, broad or contradictory policies. The literature review identified ambiguity around the *"declared rules of the game"* in relation to teacher movement (Sharma, 2009; p. 143). In such contexts, the discretion available to government officials as to how they can proceed with any teacher requests concerning deployment or transfers has been a contributory factor in their unequal distribution.

In India, for instance, there is an absence of teacher transfer policies in most states and where they do exist, their introduction has been relatively recent (Ramachandran et. al., 2018; Sharma, 2009). In South Africa, the national norms governing teacher distribution at the provincial level were inconsistent, whereby different variations of post allocation policy were being applied across the country's provinces (Kota et al., 2018). Prior to a 2013, regarding the transfer policy being implemented in Pakistan, Bari et al. (2016) found that incomplete and subjective policies afforded government clerks an inflated role in administering teacher transfers, which gave way to corrupt practices.

In the case of Malawi, the teacher deployment system is reliant upon broad binary concepts (Asim et al., 2017). One of these is deploying teachers to work in schools according to whether they are *overstaffed* or *understaffed.* The Department for Basic Education instructs District Education Managers to deploy teachers to schools that are understaffed. However, with up to three quarters of all schools sitting in this category, District Education Managers have a great deal of discretion as to where teachers can be deployed (ibid.). In addition, since 2005, newly graduated teachers have been required to work in rural districts for a minimum of five years. However, with up to 90 percent of teachers working in what is defined as a rural district, there is a failure to account adequately for intra-district teacher allocation inequities, which dwarf inter-district allocation ones (ibid.).

Political patronage and the teaching work-force

An emerging literature on the issue of teacher deployment has discussed this in the context of the cultivation of patronage networks between politicians and the teaching force. Patronage networks can be defined as those where political leaders use public resources as

a mechanism through which support for them can be sustained (Kingdon et al., 2014; Levy, 2018). An extension of patronage networks is clientelism, which refers to where political leaders provide personal favours (jobs, contracts, welfare support, money) in exchange for electoral support (Berenschot, 2018). Often, this may mean a drive towards the expansion of employing public sector workers (and thereby increasing the patronage networks) without necessarily demanding that these employees fulfil what is required of their role (Kingdon et al., 2014).

In studies reviewed for this chapter, it was found that in Bangladesh (Hossain et al., 2017), India (Béteille, 2009; Fagernas & Pelkonen, 2016; Kingdon & Muzammil, 2009; Sharma, 2009), Indonesia (Chang et al., 2014; Heyward et al., 2017; Rosser & Fahmi, 2016) and Pakistan (Bari et al., 2016) patronaged-based hiring of teachers has long been prevalent. In such systems, the state ends up employing too many unqualified teachers, *"because they belong to politically powerful networks that capture rents through job creation"* (Khan, 2017; p. 651-652). When discussing the difference in the composition of spending between public and private schools,[21] Corrales (2005) argues that this is in part fuelled by patronage networks.[22]

In the cases of India (Béteille, 2009), Indonesia (Rosser & Fahmi, 2016) and Pakistan (Bari et al., 2016) there was widespread evidence of teachers being used as political agents during local and national elections. Teachers in these contexts were often looked up to as respected and knowledgeable figure-heads within their local communities. They were, therefore, considered instrumental in influencing members of their communities who to vote for, and were able to mobilise considerable political support for politicians, who supported their transfer to more desirable locations. In India, Béteille (2009) found that teachers with political connections successfully obtained a transfer within 3 months of applying for one versus the 2.3 years it normally took. Fagernas & Pelkonen (2016) corroborated these findings, concluding that the electoral cycle perpetuated the use of excessive transfers of primary school teachers in India's government school system post-

[21] While public schools typically spend more on wages and procurement, private schools invest a greater share in non-salary expenditure, such as instructional materials.

[22] For instance, Kingdon & Muzammil (2009) noted that in India there is almost no public expenditure on non-salary items. While teachers have been able to negotiate for increased salary allocations through a number of different lobbies, the same is not true for parents regarding non-salary expenditure items.

election. Conversely, unfavourable reassignment was used by politicians in India to threaten uncooperative teachers (Sharma, 2009; Ramachandran et al., 2005). Teachers too, used the strength in their numbers to threaten electoral sabotage for politicians pushing for greater teacher accountability (Béteille, 2009; Béteille, 2015).

Bennell & Akyeampong concluded that, whilst the South and South-East Asian countries' examples above point to the politicisation of the teaching profession, this is less of a systemic problem in the sub-Saharan African region, as *"teachers have not been heavily involved in party politics and patron-client relations are not as endemic"* (2007; p. 31). That said, however, a number of studies looking at teacher deployment and transfers in the sub-Saharan Africa systems found cronyism or nepotism was successful in securing favourable school placements. In Niger (Cummings & Tahirou, 2016) and Zambia (Walter, 2018), there was evidence to support that the approval of a political party in power or having personal relations with influential members of the elite, meant teachers wielded great influence over which school they were placed in or transferred to.

Specifically in relation to Malawi, the literature points to political interference in the transfer of public servants (Dzimbiri, 2016). Insofar as teachers are concerned, there appears to be political interference at the national and local level affecting deployment (Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010). However, Asim et al. (2017) concluded that, rather than teacher deployment or discretionary transfers being due to clientelist vote-buying, they are instead owing to the personal connections a teacher may have to influential figures. Other types of resource allocation, on the other hand, appear to be guided by clientelism due to their capture by local politicians who wish to be seen to be visible (Chasukwa & Chinsinga, 2013; Chiweza, 2010; Chiweza, 2016; OPM, 2013). For instance, guidelines on how teacher housing should be allocated stipulate that "*it is expected that each Council will use the same criteria in allocating the projects within the district by computation of education zone data"* (Chiweza, 2016; p. 107). While teachers themselves lack the *"formal power in the system, [they] exercise considerable de facto influence through informal networks"* (Asim et al., 2017; p. 19). Other studies do consider how currying favour with the teaching force for political gain has impacted upon certain decisions traditionally left to government bureaucrats. Under Joyce Banda's presidency, for instance, technocrats based at Ministry of

Education were instructed to promote 20,000 teachers at PT4 grade.[23] Not only did this create huge burdens on the budget, but it also left newly promoted teachers without their new salary for over two years (Dzimbiri, 2016).

Absent or weak monitoring of where teachers are in the system

Several studies have identified weak and fragmentary data systems as empowering discretionary decision-making around teacher deployment in that it weakens the teacher management system. The granularity of such information would typically be included in Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) or in budget data (Pritchett, 2014; Shah, 2013). The EMIS, for instance, may offer *"data on the allocation of resources, curbing effects of bad decisions, and highlight areas in which resources are poorly applied"* (Amin & Chaudhury, 2008; p. 76). One perspective of the literature reviewed did critically evaluate whether an increase in information necessarily improves accountability in education systems (Fox, 2007; Honig & Pritchett, 2019). Such information is "thin", only providing a surface-level perspective into how resources are distributed. The effectiveness of education systems it is argued also depends on "thick" information, which is more contextual (Pritchett, 2014). This could be the day-to-day invisible pressures influencing decision-making and the way these manifest themselves (Kelsall & Wales, 2017).

Studies sourced for this study document the importance of information systems in ensuring that formal rules concerning teacher deployment are adhered to. In the Gambia, for instance, the EMIS system was able to track teachers according to a number of variables.[24] It was credited with helping assign teachers to schools according to need and not through discretionary decision-making (Patrinos & Kagia, 2007). Similarly, in the Philippines, the Department of Education colour-coded areas by region according to their PTRs, thereby providing better information as to where teachers should be sent to work (Albert, 2012). Conversely, the poor state of the EMIS in being able to monitor where teachers are in the system was raised in studies focusing on Liberia (Ginsburg et al., 2015) and Tanzania (Luena, 2012). While not directly mentioning the EMIS data, Hedges (2002) study on Ghana found that poor record-keeping within the system was a contributory factor to allowing teachers to change the region they were being posted to through the falsification of paperwork.

[23] The salary pay-scale of a newly recruited teacher.
[24] Seniority, language abilities and subject specialisation.

In the case of Malawi, discretionary decision-making surrounding teacher allocation was found to be aided partly due to the fragmentary and weak state of administrative data that documents where teachers are actually teaching in the system (Asim et al., 2017; Forinash et al., 2016). EMIS data from 2016 showed 16 percent of teachers were missing in the administrative data collected (Asim et al., 2017). Insofar as the budget process in Malawi goes, one study found that due to informal incentives circumventing formal rules, it was *"theatre"*, which failed to align with the objectives contained in its national policy commitments and *"mask[ed] real distribution and spending"* (Rakner, 2004; p. 4). Cammack & Kelsall for instance discuss how, in the political economy climate of Malawi's multi-party system, President Muluzi made promises that had *"no relationship to the budget"* and that if the technocracy objected, he would become *"enraged"*, thus meaning that budget chaos ensued (2010; p. 30).

Opportunities for corruption/ bribery in the teacher transfer system

Another emerging theme that the literature found negatively affected the deployment of teachers related to rent-seeking and corrupt practices amongst government officials. Rent-seeking is defined as an attempt to gain economic rent through the influence of policies or their implementation (Kingdon et al., 2014).

In the context of teacher transfers, studies conducted in China (Han, 2012), India (Sharma, 2009; Béteille, 2009; Béteille, 2015), Nigeria (Tao, 2014) and Pakistan (Bari et al., 2016) illustrate how teachers may use the means of a monetary bribe to secure a favourable placement. In India, teachers reported that having a powerful connection alone was not enough, and that payment of a bribe was a necessary guarantee to secure a favourable transfer. The amount was contingent upon the speed and type of placement (Béteille, 2015).[25] In Nigeria, bribery involving officials within the education system – known as "godfathers" or "godmothers" – was commonplace, and helped facilitate a favourable school transfer (Tao, 2014). Clerks working at education district offices in Pakistan were found to be the *"most important gateways to….personal influence"* (Bari et al., 2016; p. 90). Teachers could facilitate a favourable transfer or promotion through offering these officials

[25] One-third or more teachers in the Indian states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan agreed with the statement that even if a teacher had a contact, they would still have to pay some monetary bribe to get the posting they desired (Béteille, 2009).

bribes (ibid.). Almost all the studies sourced discussed teachers bribing officials to seek out a transfer. However, Kayunze et al. (2011), in their study on Tanzania, found that it was, in fact, headteachers bribing District Education Officers to allocate new government teachers to their school using funds from compulsory parental contributions pupils.

Existing research in Malawi has not looked at the extent to which the system of teacher deployment and transfers involves corruptive practices and rent-seeking behaviour. However, extensive work has been carried out on Malawi's political landscape, as it transitioned from a one-party state under Hastings Kamuzu Banda to a multi-party political system under President Bakili Muluzi. Under the latter, corrupt practices – largely through rent creation and distribution – *"spread through the civil service as ministers were seen to be largely exempt from prosecution and rules were broken with impunity"* (Cammack & Kelsall, 2010; p. 25). Corruption under Banda, where it existed, was highly centralised and those accused of it were imprisoned. Under Muluzi, however, corruption *"with impunity….start[ed] at the top and reach[ed] down to the lowliest public servant"* (Booth et al., 2006; p. 12). In this context, civil servants saw their position as a means of self-enrichment and *"succeeded in appropriating a significant share of [the state's] resources and in redistributing part of [them through] their networks"* (Anders, 2001; p. 48). Said & Singini's (2017) study estimated the different parts of the system that captured rents in this way in Malawi in 2013.

The role of teacher unions in resisting equitable teacher movement

Education officials, it is argued, must have the authority to *"strategically transfer teachers to different schools – even if the teacher does not wish to move – to achieve a mix of personnel across schools"* (Grissom et al., 2013; p. 1). In the course of my literature search, the role of teacher unions and their potential to shape and implement education policies was a theme that regularly came up in a number of the studies (Grindle, 2004; Hoxby, 1996; Kingdon et al., 2014).

While research on teacher unions and their influence in affecting equitable teacher distribution has been a lesser explored theme, it did emerge in some case studies. The contestation by the South African Democratic Teachers Union in regard to the redeployment of teachers from over-staffed schools to under-staffed schools in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, for instance, was a critical factor as to why the transfer of

teachers from schools with a surplus to those schools with a shortage was unsuccessful (Kota et al., 2018; Zengele, 2013). Similarly in Indonesia, the Indonesian Teachers Union was an important vehicle obstructing the redeployment of teachers (Rosser & Fahmi, 2016). In India, a wealth of literature documents the role teachers' unions have had in influencing education policies and their implementation, including that of deployment (Kingdon & Muzammil, 2003; Kingdon & Teal, 2010; Moe, 2006). Unions, according to Moe, can provide politicians with an *"army of activists who make phone calls, ring doorbells, and otherwise campaign to see friends elected and enemies defeated"* (Moe, 2006; p. 8).

The role of the Teacher Union of Malawi [TUM] appears to be dormant as far as teacher transfers go.[26] Unlike in India and Indonesia, the TUM does not appear to be an institution teachers would go to in order to seek help to move schools (Asim et al., 2017). Instead the TUM focuses on pressuring the government around teacher pay issues, particularly pay increases and reducing salary delays (Watkins & Ashforth, 2019). Additionally, Mulkeen & Chen (2008) found that rarely has the Ministry of Education initiated the redeployment of teachers. This is because there is a strong disincentive to do so owing to the District Education Office being required to compensate the teacher for travel costs in the event of a reallocation. Instead, where involuntary transfers do take place, it is often under circumstances where a teacher has seriously misbehaved and therefore, is forced to relocate to rural schools (VSO, 2002; Watkins & Ashforth, 2019).

Ruling elite and the 'distribution of spoils' to supportive constituencies

Subsection 3.2.3 has synthesised how the social and organisational capital of teachers influences their inequitable allocation, according to geographic preferences. Another strand of literature sourced for this review more explicitly emphasises how the "powerlessness" of remote regions stems *"from their incorporation into such structures on terms that potentially underpin their poverty"* (Abdulai, 2014; p. 2). Rothchild found that state resources in many African countries were skewed in favour of advantaged regions, because *"certain dominant elites….have taken advantage of their positions of power….to skew distributive patterns in favour of a relatively advantaged subregion"* (1984; p. 167). The ruling political elite exhibits considerable influence over how public resources are allocated

[26] However, Watkins & Kaler (2016) found that the strength of the union means that it is difficult to terminate the contracts of under-performing teachers.

(Therkildsen, 2008). Within neo-patrimonial systems, patterns of resource allocation can emerge, which are implemented in ways that aim to attract greater voter support, rather than employing a needs-based approach (Abdulai & Hickey, 2014).

Evidence from a number of studies has revealed how resources have been disproportionately targeted towards areas most loyal to dominant political parties.[27] One study focusing on Southern India found that politicians used their power to allocate more resources to their own villages (Besley et al., 2011). In Kenya, resource distribution appeared to show that, since the country's independence, those ethnic sub-groups who have most strongly supported the patron group in power have benefitted the most from additional resources (Hassan, 2020). In Ghana, while budgetary allocations for the education budget were found to be closely aligned with equity considerations, actual expenditure illustrated considerable deviations in favour of the Greater Accra, Ashanti and Eastern regions at the expense of the Volta and Northern regions (Abdulai & Hickey, 2014). The regions to benefit over others corresponded to those with the largest distribution of politicians relative to population share size (ibid.).

In other studies reviewed, it was found that political representation alone was not sufficient. In India, for instance, villages represented by politically dominant castes were able to capture additional government resources unlike those represented by politicians from the historically disadvantaged scheduled castes (Palaniswamy & Krishnan, 2008). In Ghana, political representation of the historically disadvantaged Northern region was not found, by itself, to increase their influence over resource allocation decisions owing to politicians from this region being *"assigned relatively 'light weight' portfolios in government"* (Abdulai, 2014; p. 16). While most studies emphasised the elites' role in affecting resource distribution, Kjær & Muwanga (2016) found that schools in Uganda better connected to local council and district education officials were more successful in lobbying for additional teachers to be posted to their school.

In the context of Malawi, there is comparatively less literature on whether resource distribution is contingent on allegiances to the political elite. Asim et al. (2017), in their

[27] Conversely, other studies have argued that politicians may favour targeting public resources towards areas that are opposition strongholds to increase their vote share in areas that are traditionally not supportive of them (see Banful, 2011; Briggs, 2012).

study, found that if a school's local MP was from the ruling party at the time – the Democratic People's Party (DPP) – then this was negatively associated with a high PTR at the district level.[28] However, *within* the district the relationship was not significant, thus suggesting that when limited to a smaller geographic area, there is little relation between an MP's affiliation and the PTR.

3.2.4 Summary on teacher deployment and transfers to and between schools

Much of what has been discussed in Section 3.2 relates to the different mechanisms by which formal policies regarding equitable teacher deployment between schools have been superseded. Specifically in relation to the thesis objectives, the literature pinpoints some areas upon which to build on. These include the importance of formal institutions and how these operate alongside informal structures, the influence that strong patronage networks can have and how (in)effective monitoring systems can affect teacher deployment. Many of these issues are subsumed within concepts relating to both accountability and political settlement factors (see Chapter 4). These shed light on why the enforceability of formal policies relating to teacher distribution has been challenging in Malawi (Chapter 7).

3.3 Organisation and utilisation of teachers within schools

3.3.1 Introduction

Section 3.3 focuses on the second part of the problem that this thesis seeks to explore, namely the inequitable allocation of teachers within schools and their poor utilisation. It is organised in a similar way to Section 3.2. In Subsection 3.3.2, the discussion gives an overview of what the evidence says in relation to the allocation of teachers within schools, and the time they spend teaching. This subsection is important in that it sets out the main problem (using the 'problem driven' approach illustrated in Figure 3.1). However, while this section synthesises the literature that describes the problem, it fails to explain why it exists. Through a framework considering accountability and political factors, Subsection 3.3.3 discusses the literature that identifies why the problem exists.

3.3.2 Problems relating to teacher allocation and utilisation within schools

Teaching workload

Smyth (1985), through a multi-faceted model, delineates what official instructional time is against the time teachers and pupils are actually in the classroom together. In terms of the

[28] On average each of the 34 districts in Malawi is divided into three to four political constituencies.

latter, absences of children and teachers, school closures and other factors that prevent teaching from taking place are removed from official instructional time (Niang, 2017). Ndalama & Chidalengwa (2010) define a teacher's workload as being instructional time set by the government together with the extra-curricular activities they are expected to undertake in addition to their teaching load. Between 2000 and 2010, instruction time in primary and lower secondary school decreased (UNESCO, 2015). On the other hand, supplementary responsibilities outside of the time teachers spent teaching was found to have increased in a number of countries (UNESCO, 2017).

When specifically focusing on the teaching workload, official working hours for teachers averages 27 hours a week in low-income countries. This compares to 30 hours in lower-middle income countries and 36 hours in upper-middle income ones (Crawfurd & Pugatch, 2020). In their study of 12 countries, Bennell & Akyeampong (2007) found that teachers in rural schools teachers were required to work harder than their urban counterparts due to the former being more likely to experience teacher shortages. In South Africa the opposite was found to be true, with teachers in urban areas working a greater number of hours compared to their rural counterparts (Chisolm et al., 2005). Another factor affecting teacher workload is the rate of absenteeism. In Uganda, for instance, the official amount of teaching time per day was seven hours, yet absenteeism meant that actual teaching time was reduced to three hours (Bold et al., 2017). On average, across seven sub-Saharan African countries, 44 percent of teachers were absent from class, while 23 percent were absent from school (ibid.). Several studies have also found evidence where teacher absenteeism is higher in situations where there are more teachers or the PTR is lower (Duflo et al., 2011; Muralidharan et al., 2016).

In Malawi, the official work hours are considerably lower than in neighbouring sub-Saharan African countries and well below the number of hours civil servants are expected to work. This is especially the case when considering the hours taught for infant standards (Mulkeen, 2010; DeStefano, 2013) and the teaching workload across all standards is further diminished as a consequences of the inequitable teacher deployment in Malawi. Teachers in hard-to-reach schools were found to have higher teaching load responsibilities compared to their counterparts in urban schools (Kadzamira, 2006; Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010). Ndalama & Chidalengwa (2010), on the other hand, also consider reasons why the hours taught by

teachers in rural schools may be less compared to urban schools. These include distances being greater to rural schools, meaning teachers arrive late or finish early, and the fact that school inspectors visit isolated schools less frequently. In less remote schools, team-teaching was found to take place, where more than one teacher was allocated responsibility for the class (DeStefano, 2013; Mulkeen, 2010; Steiner-Khamsi & Kunje, 2011; Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010).[29] Other studies have elicited that the under-utilisation of the teaching workload was further exacerbated by the low up-take of double-shift systems and implementation of multi-grade teaching at the higher standards (DeStefano, 2013; Steiner-Khamsi & Kunje, 2011). "Teacher effort" – measured according to teacher presence in schools and time spent on tasks and activities during the average working day (Ravishankar et al., 2016) – is further affected by teacher absenteeism. A 2014 QSD survey found that, on average, 15-20 days of instruction per teacher per year were lost through teacher absenteeism (cited in Ravishankar et al., 2016).[30]

Teacher allocation within schools

Section 3.2 discussed teacher deployment across schools, while the section above briefly discussed teacher workload. Both of these issues are interlinked with how teachers are allocated within schools. Much of the literature on within school allocation focuses on high-income countries, particularly the United States. In these contexts, it was found that more qualified and better experienced teachers are less likely to teach in classrooms with a large number of students from low-income backgrounds or those with special needs (Luschei & Jeong, 2018). Within many Global South contexts, the PTR appears to improve with each successive level of education, including between lower and upper basic education. One study found that in all 23 sub-Saharan African countries with data, the PTR was higher in the first standard of primary school compared with the last (UNICEF, 2016). This is further supported by evidence from diagnostic reports carried out on country education systems in the Gambia (World Bank, 2011*a*), Lesotho (World Bank, 2005) and Rwanda (World Bank, 2011*b*). In Rwanda, the least qualified and experienced teachers were allocated to the lower primary classes (ibid.) and despite ministry guidance instructing that the most experienced

[29] Croft (2002) argues that it is necessary to make the distinction between team-teaching under these circumstances and those where team-teaching may be the best strategy to deal with very large classes.
[30] This is relatively low, because only 58 percent of schools observed in the 2014 QSD survey kept records on teacher absenteeism (cited in Ravishankar et al., 2016).

teachers should be assigned to the lower standards in Lesotho, these guidelines were not adhered to (Mulkeen & Chen, 2008).

In Malawi, there is a prevalence of upper standards being taught by more than one teacher, each of whom specialises in a particular part of the curriculum (Croft, 2002; DeStefano, 2013; Mulkeen & Chen, 2008; Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010; Ravishankar et al., 2016). In more than 70 percent of primary schools, for instance, the PTR is over 100 to 1 for Standard 1, while in 75 percent of schools it is below 60 to 1 for Standard 8 (DeStefano, 2013). It should be noted that this is also influenced by the poor progression of students to the senior standards. As well as numbers, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is often either the most experienced or qualified teachers who are being allocated to the higher standards. One study found that Standard 8 pupils were almost always likely to be taught by a qualified teacher compared to Standard 1, where just 60 percent of teachers were qualified (Croft, 2002). Croft (2002) and Kunje & Chimombo (1999) found this pattern to be repeated in the case of other resources, including classrooms, classroom furniture and other teaching and learning materials.

3.3.3 Factors contributing to the under-utilisation and mis-allocation of teachers within schools

Introduction

Issues relating to how teachers are allocated and their utilisation within schools are largely subsumed within the literature on accountability. This, in turn, is framed through the prism of teacher absenteeism and its effect on service delivery (Bold et al., 2017). The following subsections synthesise those studies that problematise the relationships of accountability between school actors in the system, and what effect this may have on how teachers are allocated and utilised within schools. Each subsection focuses on a particular issue that specifically creates inequity and inefficiency in the allocation and utilisation of teachers.

Poor inspection systems[31]

School inspection is a means through which to evaluate schools in the context of greater calls for the sort of accountability mechanisms needed to improve the quality of education (De Grauwe & Naidoo, 2004). Inspectors' responsibilities cover monitoring the efficiency in

[31] Much of the framing of this section was influenced by Eddy-Spicer et al. (2016).

the management and use of school resources, including that of teachers (Opoku-Asare, 2006). Until quite recently, the role of inspection and its impact on student achievement results has been an under-researched area in the context of the Global South (Eddy-Spicer, 2016). A number of studies, however, point to the positive impact inspector visits can have. In India, Indonesia and Peru teachers working in schools that were frequently supervised or inspected were less likely to be absent (ACDP, 2014; Alcázar et al., 2006; Kremer et al., 2005). For this review, however, I synthesised the issues regarding inspection of interest in this thesis: teacher utilisation and distribution.

A theme relating to several studies reviewed was the extent to which a lack of resources contributed to inspection visits to schools being infrequent and limited (De Grauwe, 2001; Herselman & Hay, 2002; Hossain, 2017; MacPherson, 2011, Mazibuko, 2007; Uwazi, 2009; Wanzare, 2002). In Tanzania, inadequate personnel, the lack of transport, office space and equipment were cited as reasons for why whole-school inspections could not be carried out annually as stipulated (Uwazi, 2009). Infrequent inspections were found to be more likely for schools in remote regions. In Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe the further the school was from the district office, the more infrequently it was inspected due to transportation costs (De Grauwe, 2001). In Indonesia, schools in remote rural areas had been inspected/ supervised 120 days before the study visit. In comparison, non-remote rural schools and urban schools had been supervised 68 and 83 days, respectively, prior to being visited (ACDP, 2014) Studies in Indonesia, India, Peru and sub-Saharan African countries found that remote schools had higher rates of teacher absenteeism compared to their urban counterparts (ACDP, 2014; Alcázar et al., 2006; Kremer et al., 2005; Rogers & Vegas, 2009).

Another issue emerging from the literature was the lack of consequences emanating from inspectorate visits. Firstly, this was attributed to the lack of authority that inspectors have amongst headteachers and teachers. In Pakistan, for instance, the inspectors' status, their lack of seniority, credibility and authority, the absence of training and the fact that inspectors' positions were the equivalent to that of a high school teacher all compounded the ineffective authority of the inspectorate (Jaffer, 2010). Secondly, the poor co-ordination between the inspectorate of education and other national education stakeholders was found to limit the impact of school inspections. Supervisors' recommendations were found

to be rarely acted upon by higher authorities, meaning that nothing came out of the reports (ibid.).

Lastly, evidence from the studies reviewed pointed to schools being informed of inspectorate visits in advance of when they were scheduled for. In Pakistan, ambiguity around the inspectors' effectiveness was found to be due to their being friends and confidants of teachers in schools (Jaffer, 2010). In Ghana, teachers interviewed for one study indicated that they were normally given advance warning of an inspector's visit by informants at the District Education Office, thus allowing them to alter their behaviour (Opoku-Asare, 2006).

While little has been written on inspection services within Malawi's education sector, of that which exists, the infrequent interaction between the inspectorate, the schools and the surrounding community have been cited (Watkins & Ashforth, 2019). Explanatory reasons for why this was the case was the poor funding for transport being available to visit schools as frequently as was required (ibid.).

Accountability pressures emanating from high-stakes testing

International and national testing programmes are common accountability mechanisms through which to judge the performance of schools, teachers and education systems (Ashadi & Rice, 2016). High-stakes testing is defined as that which has consequences for student graduation, teacher accountability, the reputation of the school, or the funding of the teacher or the school (Johnson et al., 2008). Alternatively, Au (2008) defines high-stakes testing as being linked to teachers or schools being either rewarded or punished. Many citizens judge educational quality on the basis of how well a school does in the national examinations, which determines admission to the next level of the education system (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010). Given the stakes, this subsection explores the link between high-stakes testing and the distribution of resources – particularly that of teachers.

While numerous studies have considered the impact of high-stakes testing on resource allocation policy, comparatively less is known about what its impact has been on teacher allocation decisions within schools in the Global South.[32] Of the literature sourced, only one study investigated what impact high-stakes testing had had on decisions relating to teacher allocation to classes within schools. Ashadi & Rice's (2016) study on Indonesia found that performing well in the national examinations directly impacted on teacher allocation decisions. This took the form of a disproportionate allocation of experienced and/ or qualified teachers to those classes with examinable content. In South Africa, following the publication of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results, an increase in the allocation of resources to mathematics and sciences was made at the school level (Reddy, 2010). Linked to high-stakes assessment is performance-related pay, which according to some advocates, can strengthen the relationships of accountability between the state and schools and between schools and parents (Bruns et al., 2011). While this review could not find any studies in the Global South linking performance-related pay to teacher allocation, the financial incentives created for schools and teachers to perform well in national assessment is evident. In Chile, for instance, additional resources to schools and teachers were found to be dependent on their performance in the national learning outcome assessment system (Meckes & Carrasco, 2010).

Like many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, national examinations in Malawi act as the primary way through which education systems are currently assessed (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2004). The Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) taken at the end of primary school, is used to assess both the learning that is taking place at school and who is eligible to enrol in secondary schools (Chulu, 2013; Sayed & Kanjee, 2013). With limited places available at secondary schools, how well pupils perform determines whether they are given a place at secondary level, and which type of secondary school they will transition to. The top performers will be selected for conventional secondary schools, which tend to be better resourced, but where places are few. All others selected are given places in the less desirable community day secondary schools (De Hoop, 2010). No study to date has

[32] While there has been little work done on this globally, there is extensive literature relating to how teachers are distributed in the context of the No Child Left Behind initiative in the United States. Within this, a body of literature has considered the effects upon the distribution of teachers amongst standards in the same school (Boyd et al., 2008; Fuller & Ladd, 2013; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010).

documented what effect, if any, the PSLCE has on teacher allocation within schools. However, at the community level it has been reported that the high regard given to the PSLCE is due it to being the minimum qualification required for employment opportunities guaranteeing a regular salary (Watkins & Ashforth, 2019). Similarly, Croft (2002) found that the community judged the reputation of a school to be contingent on the school's performance in the national PSLCE.

Micropolitics between education actors at the local level

In the context of decentralised education systems, "school-based management" or "school-self management" describes systems where the responsibility and decision-making for school operations is transferred from central government to the schools themselves (Bruns et al., 2011; De Grauwe & Naidoo, 2004). These can extend to matters relating to policies, the curriculum, standards, and accountability (Caldwell, 2005). Studies reviewed for this chapter reveal how micropolitics at the local level can negatively affect school-based management and teacher accountability to their clients (parents) and their managers (headteachers or district-level officials) (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Micropolitics can be defined as organisational politics within a small organisation (Scherer, 2007). Alternatively, it can be considered in the context of formal and informal power in organisations in terms of how these interact and are utilised by individuals (Blase, 1991). It is also seen as influencing decisions around the allocation of scarce resources within the organisation (Johnson, 2001). Actors within the same organisation may have a *"different view of who has the formal power (authority), who has informal power (influence), or who should have the power to make organizational decisions"* (Brosky, 2011; p. 2).

The importance of micro-politics and corresponding power dynamics in affecting relationships of accountability is useful to discuss in the context of how power is conceived of. VeneKlasen & Miller (2002) distinguish between four types of power that can either be empowering or disempowering (power 'over', 'with', 'to' or 'within). Similarly, "power distance" is a useful construct to consider, especially regarding its importance in the literature in relation to accountability in the education sector. Hofstede's (2001) high power distance refers to where there is a *"deference to figures of authority and general accept[ance] [of] an unequal distribution of power"* (Grimsby, 2016). The opposite pertains

to low power distance, where a subordinate would *"question authority and expect to participate in decisions that affect them"* (ibid.).

A large strand of the literature focusing on the effect of micropolitics at the local level does so in regard to parent/ community relations with the school. Barquedano- López et al. (2013) found that parental participation was contingent on the perceptions that teachers and school administrators had regarding their background. Essuman & Akyeampong's (2011) study of poor rural districts in Ghana found that local decision-making power was overwhelmingly concentrated in the hands of the local elite and better educated community members. Schools were found to exhibit greater accountability to these structures of local power, rather than to parents. Moreover, poor rural communities did not demand higher standards from teachers for fear they would quit to go and teach elsewhere (ibid.). In India, teachers' salaries were found to be many times greater than the income levels of members of school committees, which created an unequal balance of power such that school development committees were often unable to hold teachers to account (Rawal & Kingdon, 2010).

The headteacher is a pivotal figure in managing how teachers are allocated and ensuring their time is effectively utilised. However, a major problem identified in countries in the Global South is that they do not have effective authority over teachers (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Some of the reviewed studies revealed how the "power distance" between teachers and headteachers affected issues relating to teacher utilisation and where they were allocated to work within the school. In India, for instance, Kremer et al. (2005) found that teacher absenteeism was likely to be higher among powerful teachers, which included those who were older and more educated. In Zimbabwe, teachers who had been in the system longer were more able to resist which class they were allocated to by the headteacher compared to newly qualified ones. The consequence was that newly qualified teachers were more likely to be allocated to difficult classes, either in terms of undisciplined pupils or where pupil performance was poor (Magudu & Gumbo, 2017). In Ghana, headteachers – often promoted without the relevant training needed for their roles – indicated that teachers in urban schools were more difficult to manage compared to those in rural schools (Akyeampong & Asante, 2006). The same study found that most primary

headteachers were unable to initiate disciplinary proceedings against teachers as they lacked the authority to do so (ibid.).

In Malawi, several studies have reported how social relationships are characterised by inequality and a large power distance (Booth et al., 2006). Within the education sector, Watkins & Kaler discuss how educational credentials or evidence of schooling is an important mechanism by which to mark social distinction in terms of deciding who has *"the right to speak first or to speak authoritatively, and who do[es] not"* (2016; p. 5). In the case of one school, the headteacher's academic qualifications were considered sub-standard compared to the other teachers working there. According to one parent whose child attended the school, this *"ma[de] the other teachers not to work hard at school"* and *"end[ed] up affecting the performance of pupils"* (ibid.). While Malawi's community participation strategy aimed for communities to be more involved in school management (GoM, 2004), Watkins & Kaler (2016) found the asymmetric power dynamics between teachers and the surrounding communities meant an absence of accountability pressures upon the school from these actors. Conversely, a recent government administered report points to the low power distance within the civil service, which has resulted in a proliferation of unregulated absenteeism among junior staff. The Public Commission Service report found that *"there is fear by Senior Government officials of their juniors as well as lack of respect by junior staff of their superiors"* (cited in Dzimbiri, 2016; p. 89).

3.3.4 Summary on the organisation and utilisation of teachers within schools

Section 3.3 has identified some of the ways in which teacher utilisation, and their allocation, are negatively affected by drawing on pre-existing research from the Global South and Malawi. The main theme to emerge is the ineffectiveness of the principal-agent relationships of accountability between different stakeholders in the education system insofar as teacher management is concerned. The ineffectiveness is often due to the effects of hierarchical power differentials between teachers and those actors holding them accountable as well as the lack of resources and training available to these actors to monitor teachers. Like with Section 3.2, the concepts discussed relate to both accountability and political settlement factors as well as how the latter influence how accountability frameworks operate.

Conclusion

This literature review has revealed problematic issues regarding teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation in the context of countries in the Global South. I have considered a large part of this literature through the lens of accountability and political settlement factors. Accountability issues have been around in the field of education for a comparatively longer period than that of political settlement factors. Whilst the latter have come to the fore in recent years to explain how education systems are operating, it remains the case that *"the literature on the political economy of education is under-developed in geographic scope, robustness of methods utilized, and theoretical richness"* (Kingdon et al., 2014; p. 46).

In the context of Malawi, there has been a wealth of research concerning the inequitable distribution of teachers between and within schools. However, these have overwhelmingly been technical and apolitical in nature. Similarly, in recent years more literature has become available discussing Malawi's political settlement and its implications or reasoning, more widely, for (in)effective governance. However, there is a dearth of literature considering the two issues in tandem.[33, 34] Given this current knowledge gap the focus of my thesis is to address these two aspects together.

In the following chapter (Chapter 4), the conceptual framework selected to guide this research is discussed. It builds on the review of a number of studies and, in particular, Hickey & Hossain (2019) and Levy & Walton (2013) to consider specifically the problems of teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation within Malawi's primary schooling system.

[33] An exception to this is Asim et al. (2017). This study was published at the beginning of my fieldwork in Malawi in November 2017 and does address the two issues together and summarises some of the main issues arising.

[34] This is unlike in the context of a county like India where there is a rich literature on the political economy of teacher distribution.

Chapter 4: Conceptual Framework

Chapter purpose and structure

Chapter 3 presented a review of the literature, which raised the problematic issue of management relating to teacher deployment between schools, and their allocation and utilisation within schools. The literature review was guided by my conceptual framework, which contains a hybrid of themes relating to accountability and political settlement factors. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to consider the core features of the conceptual framework used for this study, its relevance to Malawi and its applicability to the aspects of teacher management that are of interest in this thesis

This chapter is arranged as follows. In Section 4.1, I discuss the 2004 World Development Report (WDR) Accountability Framework and its relevance to this research. The section reflects on how it, alone, cannot provide sufficient explanatory power regarding the issues this study seeks to explore. Section 4.2 focuses on the Political Settlements Framework, which addresses many of the criticisms levelled at the 2004 WDR Accountability Framework. Section 4.3 concludes with the hybrid framework that I will be utilising for my study, for which both the Accountability and Political Settlements Framework are drawn upon (Levy & Walton, 2013).

4.1 Accountability Framework

4.1.1 The centrality of principal-agent relations

The concept of accountability has a long tradition in the field of political science. It is premised on the idea that mechanisms are in place holding the agent to account for decisions made when decision-making is transferred from the principal (e.g. the citizen) to the agent (e.g. the state) (Lindberg, 2009). A central premise of accountability pertains to relationships between individuals and/or organisations. Paul defines accountability as *"holding individuals and organisations responsible for performance measured as objectively as possible"* (1992; p. 1047). Accountability may be interpreted in many different ways. It can relate to either "responsibility" or "answerability", where individuals and/or organisations have to explain themselves (Bovens, 1998; Paul, 1992; UNESCO, 2017). This answerability may be in relation to the sort of behaviour or results that an individual and/or organisation is expected to meet based on certain set standards. Linked to this is where

individuals may be sanctioned (or rewarded), if they fall below (or exceed) set expectations. It is useful to differentiate between the definitions ascribed to horizontal and vertical forms of accountability. Horizontal accountability relates to formal relationships within the state, where *"one state actor has the formal authority to demand explanations or impose penalties on another"* (Transparency International, 2017). Vertical accountability, on the other hand, is where citizens can hold the powerful to account, i.e. through elections (ibid.).

While there are different approaches as to what is meant by "accountability", for this thesis I focus on the 2004 WDR *Making Services Work for the Poor* (World Bank, 2003). A central theme of the report's framework – hereafter referred to as the "Accountability Framework" – advocates for a shift away from a "long route" to a "short route" of accountability. The latter simplifies relationships of accountability by removing multiple principal-agent relationships. For the purposes of this thesis I am interested in the principal-agent relationships of accountability between different individuals or organisations within the system (Figure 4.1). A principal is an individual or organisation with set objectives, who appoints an agent to perform a set task (Ferris, 1992). For this thesis, agents refer to teachers or sub-national government officials, while principals refer to the education actors officially mandated to manage them.

A large focus of this thesis is understanding the *principal-agent problem.* This can occur when an agent shares the principal's objectives to a degree, but possibly, *"also ha[s] other (usually self-regarding) interests"* (Bossert, 1998; p. 1516).[35] It can also happen when there is information asymmetry, and where monitoring systems designed by principals to ensure agent compliancy are ineffective (Booth & Cammack, 2013). A further principal-agent challenge relates to the multiplicity of principals, which is relevant in the context of decentralised education systems (Besley & Ghatak, 2003). A specific example of this would appear to relate to how teachers are allocated. A principal (Ministry of Education official) may emphasise the importance of foundational skills, which requires teachers to be distributed across classes within a school more equitably. However, the agent (the

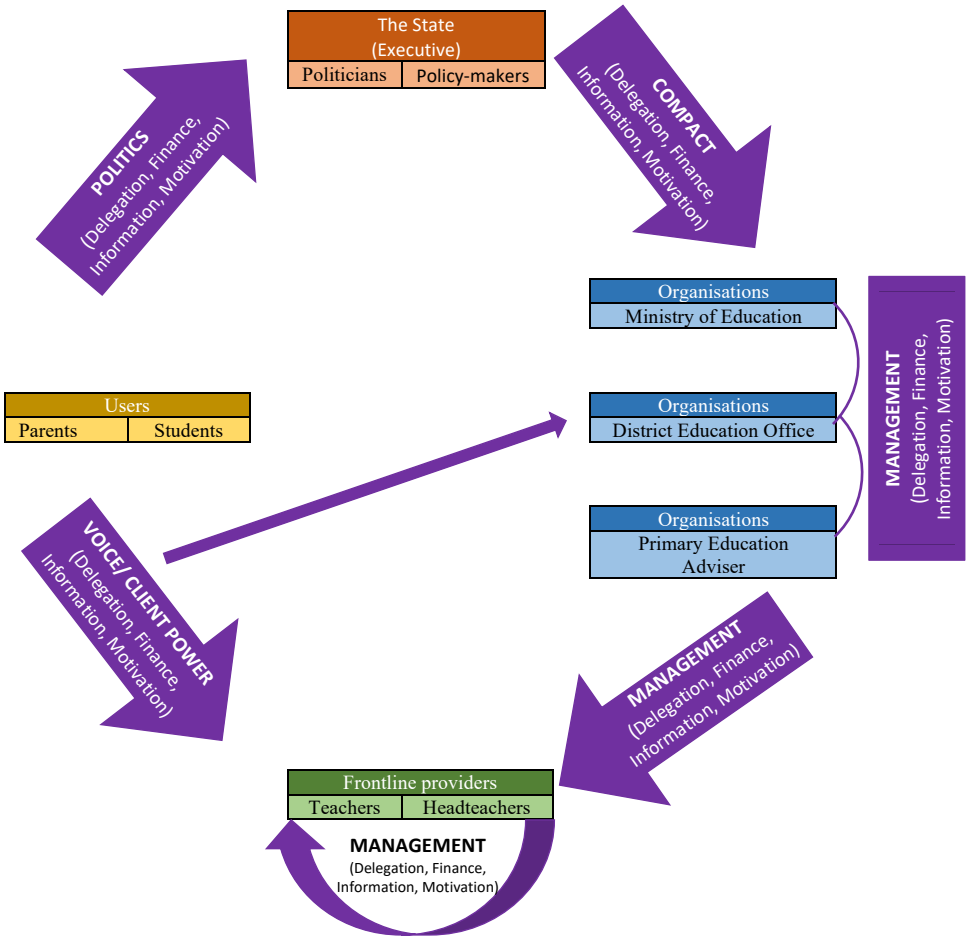
[35] Principal-agent relations may differ by sector, with principals in certain sectors having more control over agents based on whether the service is oriented towards production or consumption (Mcloughlin, 2012). Within the education sector principal-agent relationships traditionally exist between clients (parents, communities), the executive apparatus of the state, organisational providers of schooling and front-line providers (World Bank, 2003; Pritchett, 2015).

headteacher) may be incentivised to allocate more and/or experienced teachers in classes that are examinable in order to perform well in public examinations. This may be due to other principals in the system (e.g. the District Education Manager or parents) judging the headteacher's performance on the basis of these results.

Pritchett expanded upon the Accountability Framework[36] by proposing that in high-quality education systems coherence must exist between and within relationships of accountability. The author defines coherence as *"the pieces of the system [which] fit together towards a common purpose"* (2018; p. 25). For instance, *"'the state' declares a large number of very lofty and desirable goals that it wants its education system to achieve but then makes insufficient resources available to the Ministry"* (Pritchett, 2015; p. 22). As an example, Malawi's Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESIP) proposed district officials redeploy teachers to schools with a shortage (see Chapter 2); however, the cost involved made this difficult to execute (Mulkeen & Chen, 2008).

[36] Lant Pritchett was also one of the co-authors of the Accountability Framework.

Figure 4.1: Accountability Framework relating to Malawi's primary education system[37]



Source: Adapted from World Bank (2003) and Pritchett (2015).

[37] The Accountability Framework has been slightly adapted to take into account the different levels of governance within Malawi's education sector and hence, departs from the traditional and more well-known accountability "triangle".

4.1.2 The accountability framework and its applicability to Malawi

The discussion above has focused largely on the Accountability Framework in the context of the principal-agent problem. As part of the "short route" to accountability, decentralisation was core to what was proposed for improving the delivery of public services (World Bank, 2003). In Malawi, decentralisation to local districts became cabinet policy in 1996 (Chikoko, 2009), being seen as *"a logical conclusion to the democratisation process"* (Chiweza, 2016; p. 95). Global discussion on educational reform at this time was centred around decentralisation going hand-in-hand with the principles of good governance (Davies, 2003; McGinn & Welsh, 1999; World Bank, 2003). In 1998, the Decentralization Policy and Local Government Act was passed through Malawi's parliament, with the first elections for District Assemblies being held in 2000 (Davies et al., 2003). However, Bakili Muluzi (President of Malawi between 1994 and 2004) delayed holding local elections until he could be sure his party had *"gained a strong foothold in the villages"* (Cammack et al., 2007; pg.13). After 2000, no local elections were held until 2014 (O'Neil & Cammack, 2014). This meant an absence of councillors until 2014, who are defined as *"representatives of specific communities who are ideally placed to be the link between the people and the local government"* (Chasukwa & Chinsinga, 2013; p. 354). As a consequence, district councils were left without a legitimate mandate and decentralisation processes were vulnerable to political interference at local levels of governance (Tostensen, 2017). Additionally, a number of studies found high bureaucratic resistance to fully devolving sectoral functions to the district level (Chinsinga, 2008; Cammack et al., 2009; Tambulasi, 2010). All of this was coupled with the inadequacy of the financial, technical and human capacities at district levels of governance (Chinsinga, 2008; Chiweza, 2010; Kutengule et al., 2014).

This "pseudo" implementation is, according to Fullan (1993), partly due to normative and cultural-cognitive institutions failing to align with the changes demanded of formal structures in becoming more inclusionary. Consequently, stakeholders excluded in decision-making processes prior to decentralisation continue to remain so. Several studies have indicated that the "pseudo" implementation of decentralisation in Malawi has allowed local elites to control a number of district government functions (Cammack et al., 2009; Chasukwa & Chinsinga, 2013; Chiweza, 2016; Forinash et al., 2016; O'Neil & Cammack, 2014). Political interference has been cited as one reason for why district and local-level

government institutions have struggled to achieve sector targets set out under national frameworks (Chasukwa & Chinsinga, 2013; Chiweza, 2016).

4.1.3 The relevance of the Accountability Framework for this thesis

Of interest to this research is an understanding of the principal-agent *problem* (Subsection 4.1.1) and how this has affected teacher management. One of these problems is the different interests driving principals and agents. Chapter 3 documented some of the ways this has manifested itself in terms of the equity/ efficiency concerns of principals versus the personal interests of where teachers are deployed to work.

The literature on the decentralisation of the primary education system in Malawi also points to the principal-agent problem being exacerbated by multiple principals being responsible for teacher management (Chiweza, 2010; Kufaine, 2008; Thomas, 2017). Several crucial teacher management functions continue to remain centralised despite a commitment to decentralise these. For example, the 2001 Policy Investment Framework pledged to decentralise teacher recruitment functions (GoM, 2001). However, to date, this remains centralised. This has meant District Education Managers (DEM) lack control over teachers, thereby weakening relationships of accountability between the two parties (Chimombo, 2008). Moreover, as well as appointing staff, the Local Government Act No. 42 of 1998 mandates District Councils to promote and discipline staff (Davies et al., 2003). However, while district officials are able to issue a written warning to teachers for misconduct, more serious disciplinary measures – together with promoting staff – remain centralised (GoM, n.d.).

Another principal-agent problem identified of relevance to this thesis relates to asymmetric information concerning where teachers are in the system. Chapter 3 discussed how effective education systems are dependent on both “thick” and “thin” information (Pritchett, 2014). Data-driven information monitoring teacher movement is an example of “thin” information. “Thick” information, on the other hand, is more contextual and involves the way day-to-day invisible pressures manifest themselves to influence decision-making (Kelsall & Wales, 2017). However, even the most rudimentary “thin” information relating to teachers in Malawi is absent (Asim et al., 2017).

4.1.4 Criticisms of the Accountability framework

The discussion contained in the review of the literature in Chapter 3 illustrates how the Accountability Framework alone is insufficient in explaining teacher deployment or allocation and utilisation issues. A major criticism levelled at it is its lack of focus on what influences drivers of change, and how politics actually works in practice to affect service delivery (Devarajan et al., 2011; Levy & Walton, 2013). Additionally the Accountability Framework's emphasis is on the top echelons of government where policy-making occurs, and the bottom where service provision takes place, i.e. the school.[38] Missing, however, are the *"in-between spaces as the place where much of the politics of service provision plays out"* (Levy & Walton, 2013; p. 2) and where governance often falls short (ibid.). It is these in-between spaces where normative or cultural-cognitive institutions are more likely to take hold, and dominate over regulative institutions (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006). Mulkeen & Chen, for instance, discuss how district level administrators within decentralised education systems are more at risk of being *"exposed to the pressure of influential personalities in local communities, and it is not unusual to see their decisions being biased"* (2008; p. 21). These spaces remain poorly researched, with insufficient disaggregation of local government, local communities and schools and their inter-connections (Dunne et al., 2007). In the context of Malawi, district and local government officials, together with headteachers, are important insofar as formal responsibilities relating specifically to the deployment, allocation and utilisation of teachers are concerned (Figure 4.2).

[38] The accountability framework focuses on public service provision in terms of two polar opposites. The first is a top-down hierarchy, with goals shaped by the political process, whilst the second, is participatory approaches linking clients and providers (Levy & Walton, 2013).

Figure 4.2: Official principals' responsibilities concerning primary teacher education

	Principals managing teacher functions				
Teachers as agents	**Central level**	**District level**	**Zonal level (PEA)**	**School level (Headteacher)**	**Community level**
	Policy formulation relating to teachers	Deployment of teachers to schools	Advise teachers on curriculum issues	Administer in-service training of teachers	Monitor teacher attendance
	Setting establishment per school	Transfer of teachers between schools	Advise headteachers on managing teachers	Allocate teachers to standards (classes)	
	Selection of teacher trainees	Inspect teachers to national standards	Supervise teachers	Monitor teacher attendance	
	Hiring of teachers	Collect data on teachers for EMIS			
	Deployment of teachers to districts	Payroll management			
	Transfer of teachers between districts				
	Firing of teachers				
	Promotion/ demotion of teachers				

Source: Based on researcher's interviews and government documents.

A further criticism of the Accountability Framework is that it generally conceives of relationships of accountability being between formal institutions, which is to the detriment of informal institutions (Banik & Chinsinga, 2016). This Accountability Framework, for instance, leaves little room for discussing the role of principals who are "unofficial" but who act as principals nonetheless and affect service delivery. Institutions are those that *"consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)"* (North, 1991; p. 9). Informal institutions are those that benefit certain individuals or organisations more compared to others due to rules not being formalised and being highly personalised (Khan, 2010). Scott (2013) discusses how institutions can be further broken down into those that are regulative (formal) or normative and cultural-cognitive (informal).

Specifically in relation to Malawi, key policy reforms relating to issues of teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation, in the main, relate to formal institutions (see Chapter 2). Yet, the failure of progress in these areas suggests an emphasis on formal institutions alone is insufficient. For instance, formal rules do not permit teacher movement between schools on account of marriage. However, Chapter 3 highlighted how local customs permit the deployment or transfer of teachers in Malawi for this reason. Previous research has also documented the greater effectiveness/ visibility of informal institutions compared to formal institutions in improving school effectiveness (Eggen, 2011; O'Neil & Cammack, 2014; Rose, 2003; Watkins & Ashforth, 2019). For instance, the village chief is an important part of village life, but is conspicuously absent in any of the formal frameworks regarding the

education sector at the district or national level. Watkins & Ashforth (2019) point to the power that chiefs can wield in two crucial ways. The first is settling disputes between school and community actors and/or parents, whilst the second, is helping the school attract resources.

A final criticism regarding the Accountability Framework is its lack of critical dialogue over how relationships of accountability are vulnerable to issues relating to power. In recent years there has been an extensive focus on social accountability mechanisms and how these can help strengthen relationships of accountability (Fox, 2015).[39] One criticism of social accountability mechanisms is their weakness in incorporating the power dynamics between principals and agents (Fowler & Biekart, 2012). The importance of micro-politics and the corresponding power dynamics in adversely affecting relationships of accountability was discussed in Chapter 3. The discussion there on high and low power distance is useful for this thesis, when considering the strength of various principal-agent relationships in relation to teacher management. These gaps in the Accountability Framework lead me to discuss the Political Settlements Framework and its relevance for this research in the next section.

4.2 Political Settlements Framework

4.2.1 Bringing politics 'back in' for understanding the quality of service provision

More recently, there has been a growing body of research calling for *"a shift from the preoccupation with good governance to 'political settlement' as the basis for understanding contemporary challenges in developing countries"* (Banik & Chinsinga, 2016; p. 2). The emerging interest in political settlement stems from its more critical stance towards the good governance literature, which assumes a positive correlation between democracy and good developmental outcomes (Banik & Chinsinga, 2016; Levy, 2014). To those championing a political settlement approach, this discourse provides a better understanding of the *"negotiation and conflict in the use, production and distribution of resources through the interaction of formal and informal institutions and through the distribution of private and public power"* (Leftwich, 2006; p. 3). Its advocates argue that the type of political settlement

[39] The literature in this field of accountability has considered the effectiveness of citizen monitoring, user-centric public information access and citizen-participation in matters relating to decision-making (Fox, 2015).

can help to explain policy processes, together with what gets prioritised (Banik & Chinsinga, 2016).

A political settlement has been described as a type of social order, which is the "*combination of power and institutions that [are] mutually compatible and also sustainable in terms of economic and political viability"* (Khan, 2010; p. 4); the *"distribution of power between contending social groups and social classes"* (Di John & Putzel, 2009; p. 4); and a *"common understanding, usually forged between elites, about how power is organised and exercised"* (DfID, 2010; p. 22). At a more complex level, a political settlement implies an institutional structure that *"creates benefits for different classes and groups in line with their relative power"* (Khan, 2010; p. 20).

Political settlements are characterised by three broad variables:

1. The extent to which there is elite cohesion. Where cohesion is high, institutional arrangements are organised around hierarchical relations between principals and agents. Where cohesion is low, horizontal principal-agent negotiated arrangements emerge.
2. The strength of institutional arrangements and how capable they are of enforcing 'impersonal' rules that apply to everyone versus 'personalised' rules, which only apply to specific individuals/ groups.
3. The way non-elites are incorporated into the political settlement, which affects whether service provision is "programmatic" or "clientelist" (Levy et al., 2014).

There have also been attempts to set out the different typologies of country-level political settlements by distinguishing between the alternating characteristics attributed to them (Khan, 2010; Levy, 2014; Wales et al., 2016). Figure 4.3 sets out the framework upon which that of Levy-Walton is premised.

Figure 4.3: Typology of different types of political settlements

	Personalised	Impersonal
Dominant	**Predatory** *Where institutions are personal and political control remains monopolised* 1. Power is concentrated in the hands of a dominant party or political leader 2. Public bureaucracy is governed by personalised norms such as nepotism, clientelism and patronage 3. Discretionary allocation of rents (e.g. access to natural resources, access to public jobs and procurement contracts)	**Developmental** *Where institutions are more impersonal but political control remains monopolised* 1. Power is concentrated in the hands of a dominant party or political leader 2. Public bureaucracy is ruled by impersonalised norms, rules and meritocratic recruitment 3. Rents are accessed on the basis of initiative and talent
Competitive	**Clientelist** *Where politics is competitive, but the rules of the game governing both the polity and the economy remain personalised* 1. Competition between multiple strong political factions/ parties 2. Public bureaucracy is governed by personalised norms such as nepotism, clientelism and patronage 3. Political parties become formalised and organised around conferral of patronage to insider clients 4. Discretionary allocation of rents (e.g. access to natural resources, access to public jobs and procurement contracts)	**Programmatic** *Where political and economic rules have become impersonal* 1. Competition between multiple strong political factions/ parties 2. Public bureaucracy is ruled by impersonalised norms, rules and meritocratic recruitment 3. Political parties become formalised and organised around programmatic platforms 4. Rents are accessed on the basis of initiative and talent

Source: Levy (2014).

4.2.2 The political settlements framework and its applicability to Malawi

Linking Figure 4.3 to Malawi, many studies have written about the effects of its political settlement ('competitive clientelist') on governance and service delivery (Booth et al., 2006; Cammack, 2011; Cammack, 2017; Said & Singini, 2017; Tenthani & Chinsinga, 2016). Malawi is a hybrid "neopatrimonial" state, meaning that while a framework for formal law and administration exists, the state is captured by informal networks. This, according to Booth et al., means that the *"distribution of spoils of office takes precedence over formal functions of the state, severely limiting the ability of public officials to make policies in the general interest"* (2006; p. 9).

As was discussed in Chapter 2, competition for electoral power is mainly organised along ethno-regional lines. Under such a system, an increasing number of political parties seek to build support through relationships of patronage. The period 1964 to 1978 – under a one-party system – has been described as the only period in Malawi's history where a long-term development agenda took hold (Said & Singini, 2017). The over-riding objective of (re)election comes at the expense of long-term development, meaning that public bureaucracy is often defined by personalised rather than programmatic characteristics (Cammack & Kelsall, 2010; Said & Singini, 2017).[40] This arrangement allows elites to employ a number of discretionary practices that target resources to more politically useful groups (O'Neil & Cammack, 2014).

As is typical of a competitive clientelist state, the delivery of public services in Malawi establishes *"a social contract with the population that mostly maintains [just] enough services [needed] to sustain social conciliation"* (Cammack, 2017; p. 661). Incumbent politicians, vulnerable to competition from rival political groups, push for delivering goods and services that are highly visible in order to increase their chances of re-election (Chiweza & Waldock, 2011). This complements what Kingdon et al. (2014) and Hickey & Hossain (2019) propose, which is that investments targeting educational access under such political settlements are preferable to those promoting educational quality. Access reforms involve tangible resources through which politicians can "be seen" to be delivering development to their constituencies. Quality-enhancing reforms, on the other hand, are investments targeting areas relating to accountability and cost-effectiveness. Harding & Stasavage (2013) argue that, in a number of African countries, policies seeking to improve school quality are less of a "vote winner" than, say, reducing school fees. In other words, voters are more likely to reward political leaders to whom they can directly attribute programmes to. The same cannot be said of quality-enhancing reforms, which not only have few tangible results in the short-term, but may also potentially threaten the personal interests of politicians in clientelist settings.

[40] Consideration as to whether competitive elections "reinforce" clientelism or otherwise, have a programmatic effect, is also worth taking account of. In the latter case, elections may induce the political elite to provide public goods country-wide, especially where these are visible (see Chinsinga, 2012 for further debate).

4.2.3 The relevance of the Political Settlements Framework for this thesis

Specifically in relation to this thesis, the usefulness of the Political Settlements Framework is its emphasis on what effect the distribution of organisational power has on institutions and policies (Khan, 2017). Chapter 3 illustrated how in many countries teacher deployment processes are heavily influenced by personalised norms relating to nepotism, patronage or clientelism. It is useful to define these terms again for the purposes of this chapter. Nepotism is where those with power or influence may favour relatives, friends or kin. Patronage refers to where support is provided to specific groups in exchange for their electoral support (Kingdon et al., 2014). Clientelism is where the distribution of resources is made in exchange for voter support, meaning that programmatic policies are rarely distinguishable between political parties (Andrews, 2015). These personalised norms are reflected within Malawi's political settlement.

Similarly, competition between multiple political parties in a system defined by clientelism potentially affects the way in which resources are distributed. In Malawi, Chiweza found evidence of finite resources for infrastructural development being spread thinly amongst constituents, such that *"each MP has something to show his/her constituency for electing him/ her"* or to increase their chances of re-election*"* (2016; p. 107). An example of this relates to teacher housing, where official guidelines stipulate that District Councils should allocate this according to a needs-based approach based upon education zone data. In practice, however, MPs dismiss these guidelines in favour of "sharing the cake equally among constituencies" (ibid.). This is relevant given how construction of classrooms or teacher housing is likely to affect both how teachers are allocated and whether they would want to be deployed to work at that school (see Chapter 9).

Lastly, the Political Settlements Framework is useful to consider in the context of decentralisation. Political settlement analysis primarily concerns itself with the distribution of power in society, while decentralisation is about shifting power and decision-making functions to lower levels of government (Barnett, 2018). As discussed in Subsection 4.1.2, the Ministry of Education in Malawi has been reluctant to cede real power to local education authorities (Chimombo, 2008; Chiweza, 2010; Thomas, 2017). Abdulai argues that this is because decentralisation reduces the discretionary powers afforded to the national political elite, whereby it minimises *"their capacity to resort to clientelist distribution of*

resources as a political survival strategy" (2017; p. 83). Elsewhere, Levy argues that in competitive clientelist political states, decentralisation reforms are unlikely to take root, because such *"reforms reduce opportunities for discretion in hiring decisions and because….leaders lack a consistent and long-term orientation towards change"* (2015; p. 245). In countries like Malawi, where politicians are increasingly vulnerable to losing power to other rival political factions, the commitment of the political elite to decentralisation remains weak.

4.3 Levy-Walton Conceptual Framework

The sections above have presented an overview of both the Accountability Framework and Political Settlements Framework, how they apply to Malawi and their relevance to this thesis. The approaches taken by both frameworks are useful in helping to understand the challenges relating to service provision. With this in mind, I turn to the conceptual framework utilised for this study, which incorporates elements of both these frameworks. The Levy-Walton framework broadly considers:

1. A country's particular political settlement and how this manifests itself in a particular sector across various levels of governance through the enforcement and monitoring of rules.
2. A diagnosis of organisational behaviour within the overall system and across different sectors and different levels of governance.

The framework attempts to *"operationalize a political settlements approach in the domain of service provision"* (Hickey & Hossain, 2019; p. 34) and focus on the *"many layers within a specific sector in between the top levels of policy-making and the service provision front line"* (Levy & Walton, 2013; p. 4). The Levy-Walton framework identifies the determinants of public organisation performance, as presented in the steps below (ibid.):

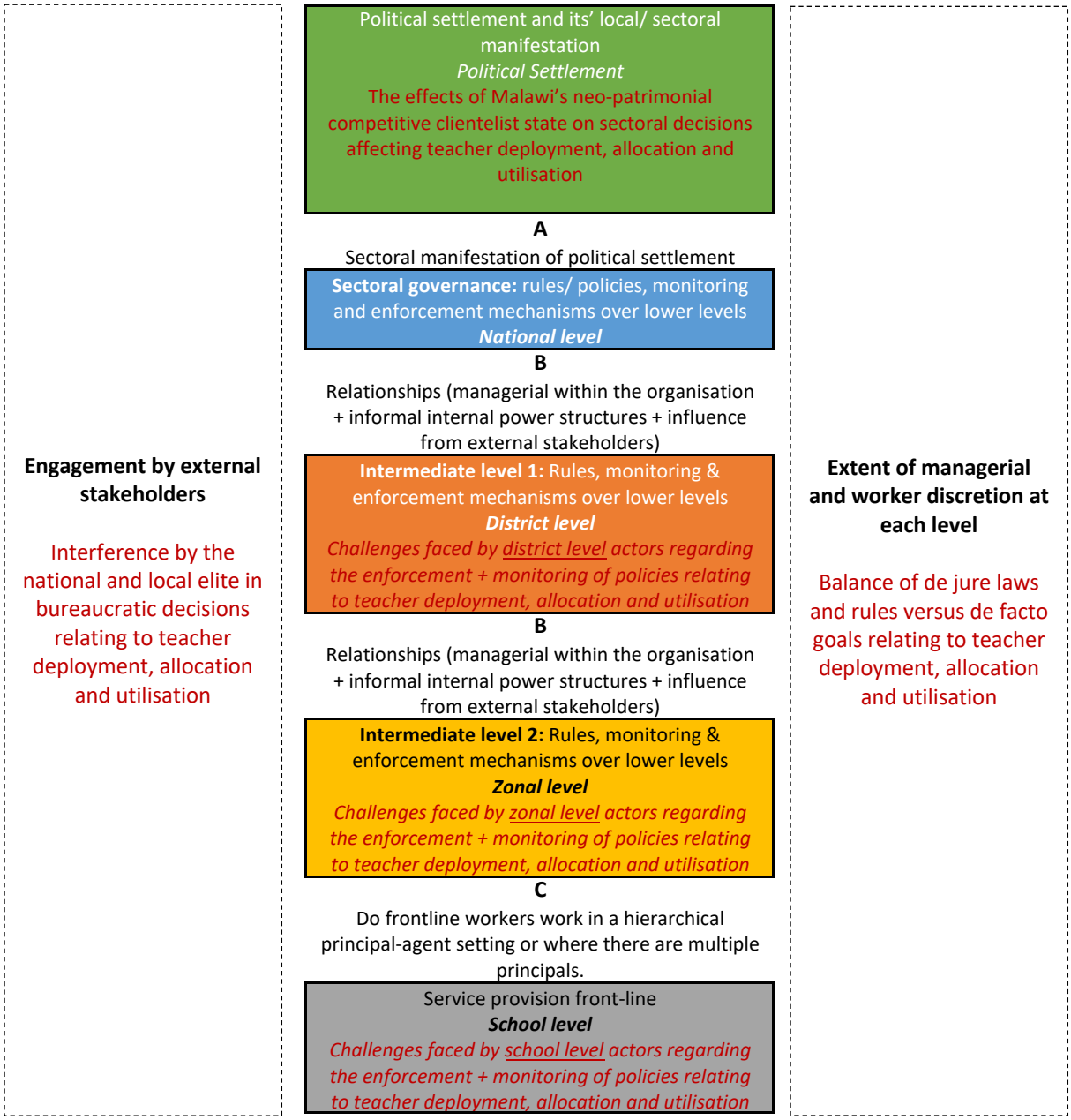
a) The underlying **political settlement** of a country affects sector-level interest groups, coalitions and ideas.
b) Sector-level interest groups, coalitions and ideas affect de jure/ de facto governance arrangements.
c) De jure/ de facto governance arrangements affect the quality of performance management.

d) Quality of performance management affects **performance.**

These steps can conceivably be mapped onto the Accountability Framework, which attributes performance outcomes to a series of principal-agent relationships. However, the criticisms levelled at this framework (e.g. poor focus on middle levels of governance, informal institutions and the power and micropolitics and the effects of these on relationships of accountability) means that for the Levy-Walton framework the Accountability Framework acts as a starting point (Levy & Walton, 2013).

Each level of the framework illustrated in Figure 4.4 is characterised by various actors and institutions (formal and informal). Also existing at each level, are the types of information flows that can underpin monitoring and the extent to which sanctions are available to support enforcement (Levy & Walton, 2013). In relation to this thesis, the Levy-Walton framework's approach is about exploring the political drivers at the national level that affect teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation. Next, the multiple levels of governance within the education sector in Malawi (central, district and local) as well as at the school level are considered. Each level of government is characterised as an institution, which comprises *"a set of rules, monitoring and enforcement arrangements"* (Levy & Walton, 2013; p. 11) which can be on the basis of de jure or de facto rules, or both. Crucially, the framework considers the involvement of stakeholders external to formalised relationships of accountability together with the level of discretion available to principals (Figure 4.4). These are relevant to the thesis' research questions, which require exploration of the challenges faced by district, local and school level officials in enforcing and monitoring teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation in order to be addressed.

Figure 4.4: Mapping Levy-Walton framework to Malawi's education sector[41]



Source: Adapted from Levy & Walton (2013; p.10).
Notes: The text in red specifically maps out what the objectives of this thesis in relation to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation, according to the different aspects of the Levy-Walton Framework.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 has discussed the Accountability Framework and Political Settlement Frameworks and how they each add value to this thesis. However, as was supported by the review of the literature discussed in Chapter 3, complexities relating to the effective management of teachers mean that formal relationships of accountability alone are unable to address these.

[41] This has been adapted to reflect the different levels of governance in Malawi's primary education system.

For this reason, a framework combining the two is deemed important for better understanding how informal institutions affect formal relationships of accountability relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation in the Malawian context.

The Levy-Walton Framework focuses on multi-levels of governance, with a particular emphasis on the "in-between spaces." These levels are under-researched, whilst being where external interference and managerial discretion are most likely to occur. To address this gap, the research questions and design of this thesis, discussed in Chapter 5, incorporate the sub-national levels of governance alongside the top and bottom echelons of the education sector.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Chapter purpose and structure

The previous four chapters have introduced the focal research topic this thesis set out to investigate (Chapter 1), provided background context to the issues of interest (Chapter 2), reviewed the relevant existing literature (Chapter 3) and discussed the conceptual framework that will be applied (Chapter 4). These chapters have all considered this in the context of the persistent inequity in deploying and allocating teachers, which is the focus of this work. In this chapter, I explain the methodological decisions I took before, during and after the fieldwork, which helped to establish rigour for addressing the research questions. I also discuss reflections around my positionality as a researcher working in Malawi.

In Section 5.1, I start by presenting the research questions this thesis will address, which have been developed through identification of the gaps in the evidence. In Section 5.2, I describe the mixed methods methodological approach adopted for this study and explain its suitability. In Section 5.3, I detail the research design, the selection of sites and provide justification for the choices made. In Section 5.4, I discuss my positionality as a Global North researcher undertaking research in a Global South context. Finally, in Section 5.5 I discuss my data collection tools for addressing each of the four research questions, and the accompanying data analysis relating to these tools.

5.1 Research questions

In Chapter 4, I presented a conceptual framework that took as its starting point the effect of a country's political settlement on enforcing and monitoring rules at different levels of sectoral government, including those relating to teacher management. It informed my data collection and analysis, whilst also helping to shape the overarching focus of this study, which is:

A district level study on the deployment, allocation and utilisation of teachers between and within Malawi's primary schools: an accountability and political settlement approach

The following four questions break this down into specific parts of the overarching topic of enquiry. The research of enquiry is sub-grouped under Research Question (RQ) 1a and RQ1b, which relate to teacher deployment, and RQ2a and RQ2b, which focus on teacher

allocation and utilisation. I address both these themes, first, by measuring the scale of the problem and second, by explaining what the reasons for this are. Utilising the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 4, I centre the enquiry on the extent to which the characteristics of Malawi's political settlement and formal relationships of accountability are appropriate for dealing with the problems identified.

RQ1a: To what extent is the deployment of primary school teachers between schools equitable? *(Quantitative)*

The justification of having RQ1a as the opening question, is that it measures the magnitude to which inequitable teacher deployment is a systemic problem, thereby signalling why this is an area worthy of study. The purpose of RQ1a is to measure the extent to which the deployment of teachers has been undertaken with equity in mind. The intention is to highlight the two issues which potentially affect this, these being the deployment of newly recruited teachers to schools and teacher transfers between schools.

RQ1b: What are the reasons for the uneven deployment of primary school teachers between schools? *(Qualitative)*

The purpose of RQ1b is to explain the trends identified in RQ1a and what accounts for the variation (and therefore inefficiency) in teacher distribution. Relating this back to the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 4, the aim is to identify the enforcement and monitoring challenges concerning government rules around teacher deployment. More broadly, these challenges are considered through the lens of Malawi's national political settlement, and what effect this has had on managing teacher deployment

RQ2a: To what extent are primary school teachers allocated equitably to different classes within schools, and what are the consequences of this on the utilisation of teaching time? *(Quantitative)*

RQ2a probes how headteachers allocate teachers in the event of a shortage or a surplus of teachers at school level. It serves as an extension of RQ1a and purposively looks at how teacher allocation (like deployment) affects (in)equity and (in)efficiency. The purpose of RQ2a is to measure what effect teacher allocation has on equity (pupil-teacher ratio [PTR] between different standards) and efficiency (teachers actual utilisation of teaching time) within schools.

RQ2b: What are the reasons for the uneven allocation of primary school teachers within schools? *(Qualitative)*

As with RQ1b, the purpose of RQ2b is to explain what accounts for the trends identified in RQ2a. Relating this back to the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 4, the aim is to identify the enforcement and monitoring challenges concerning government rules around teacher allocation and utilisation. Again, I approach the challenges through Malawi's national political settlement and what effect this has had on forms of accountability regarding the management of teacher allocation and utilisation.

5.2 Methodological Approach

5.2.1 Mixed methods research design

Up until the turn of the 21st century, two contrasting paradigms dominated the field of academic research in international comparative education: quantitative and qualitative paradigms. A "third research paradigm" of mixed methods research is one that a growing number of researchers believe can bridge the divide between these two paradigms (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). Supporters of the mixed methods approach point to the richer evidence that multiple sources of data can provide when studying a problem or phenomenon, thus allowing a more complete picture to emerge (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Before I justify why my research is best suited to a mixed methods approach, I briefly discuss the pragmatist worldview, which underpinned my methodological choices. Tashakkori & Teddie (2003) document the primacy of pragmatism within mixed methods design, arguing that the research question is of primary importance and that research design should not be forced into a choice of diametrically opposed worldviews. In relation to my own research, the appeal of the pragmatist worldview is that the ideas that it is based on are consistent with what is at the heart of what I am exploring. That is, an exploration of the ways in which stakeholders might promote or indeed prevent change within organisations (Baker & Schaltegger, 2015).

5.2.2 Justification of a mixed methods approach for this thesis

As the field of mixed methods has evolved so too have the number of reasons justifying its use as a methodological paradigm (White, 2002; Bryman, 2012; Johnson et al., 2007). Among those relevant to my study, are an "enhancement" or "building upon" quantitative

or qualitative findings; “completeness” where a more comprehensive account can be instigated, if both quantitative and qualitative findings are utilised; “explanation”, where one method helps to explain findings generated by another method; and “triangulation”, where qualitative and quantitative research can be combined so that they are mutually corroborated.

These justifications for a mixed-methods research design very much reflect the *problem-driven* approach adopted for this study. The first step of such an approach is to identify the problem (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2), whilst the second, involves quantifying the extent of the problem (Chapter 6 and Chapter 8). The third step investigates why the dysfunctional patterns observed in relation to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation exist (Chapter 7 and Chapter 9). The qualitative data for this study serve to “explain” the quantitative trends. This explanation helps to “enhance” the quantitative findings relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation trends. This will lead to fuller understanding of the *“incentives, relationships, and distribution and contestation of power between different groups and individuals”* (McLoughlin, 2014; p. 2). In sum, investigating the problems of interest using both quantitative and qualitative methods offers a more complete understanding of these issues concerning teacher distribution in Malawi rather than simply deploying one of these alone.

5.2.3 Types of mixed methods research design

The next matter is to consider the prototypes of mixed methods research design and how the “mixing” or “integration” of the two forms of data can be achieved. This can be through *“combining them (or merging them), sequentially by having one build on the other, or embedding one within the other”* (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; p. 59). The level of interaction, priority of the quantitative and qualitative strands, timing and where and how to mix the two forms of data all inform the choice of mixed methods design (ibid.).

Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) discuss several circumstances when *convergent parallel design* is appropriate to utilise, including when both types of data must be collected in one visit to the field and where the researcher feels there is value in collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data. The dominant type of data is qualitative (RQ1b and RQ2b), whilst quantitative methods (RQ1a and RQ2a) play a secondary role (ibid.), insofar as these provide evidence of the trends that will subsequently be explored in further detail

through the former method. Timing wise, I collected my data concurrently before proceeding with the analysis. According to Johnson & Christensen's (2012) definition, my research fell within the *"dominant status/ concurrent"* bottom left-hand quadrant of their design matrix (Figure 5.1).

While I collected and analysed the strands of data separately, during the *interpretative stage* of analysis I mixed the data through a synthesis of the results in my final discussion (Chapter 10). The sequencing of how I carried out the interpretative stage was crucial. For each of the two themes I analysed and interpreted the quantitative data first. The patterns emerging from these findings then allowed me to anchor the interpretation of the qualitative data.

Figure 5.1: Typology of mixed methods research design

		TIME ORDER DECISION	
		CONCURRENT	**SEQUENTIAL**
PARADIGM EMPHASIS DECISION	**Equal Status**	**QUANTITATIVE** **+** **QUALITATIVE**	**QUALITATIVE > QUANTITATIVE** OR **QUANTITATIVE > QUALITATIVE**
	Dominant Status	**QUALITATIVE** + Quantitative OR **QUANTITATIVE** + Qualitative	**QUALITATIVE >** Quantitative OR **QUANTITATIVE >** Qualitative OR Qualitative > **QUANTITATIVE** OR Quantitative > **QUALITATIVE**

Source: Johnson & Christensen, 2012.

5.3 Methodological approach, research site and sample

5.3.1 Research site of study, zone and school context

Purposive sampling

One core aspect of gathering data is for it to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical or conceptual framework (Bernard, 2006). The selection process to determine where and from whom data will be collected is an imperative part of this process (ibid.). Sampling techniques in social and behaviour science can fall under probability, purposive or convenience sampling strategies (Teddie & Yu, 2007). The nature of the study determines

whether the form of sampling adopted is open (probability) or systematic and pre-determined (purposive or convenience) (Cohen et al., 2017). While probability sampling tends to be used in quantitative studies, it is primarily purposive sampling that is used for qualitative studies (Teddie & Yu, 2007).

Maxwell defines purposive sampling as that where, under particular settings, *"persons, or events are deliberately selected for important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices"* (1997; p.87). One of the goals of purposive sampling techniques is to *"achieve comparability across different types of cases on a dimension of interest"* (Teddie & Yu 2007; p. 82). Teddie & Yu (2007) list six different types of purposive sampling techniques.

Of these, extreme or deviant sampling would be an example of purposive sampling whereby extreme or deviant cases are selected to enable comparability across different cases (Teddie & Yu, 2007). This was the sampling technique that I used to select the zones and schools for this study in order to study cases experiencing either a teacher shortage or a surplus compared to requirements. This can be justified on the basis of teacher distribution being characterised by extreme variation in PTR across primary schools in Malawi (Chapter 2).

The selection of the district, zone and schools for this study

Administratively, Malawi is made up of three regions (North, Central and Southern). Within these three regions, the governance of the primary education system is further split by the different levels of sub-national government, which include six administrative education divisions, 34 districts and 443 education zones, under which 5,594 primary schools sit. The methodological choice of this study was driven by privileging depth of information rather than breadth, whilst also prioritising an approach focusing on all parts of the education system. For these reasons, I selected one district for the focus of study and the choice of district was contingent on one exhibiting a large variation in the deployment of teachers in relation to enrolment.

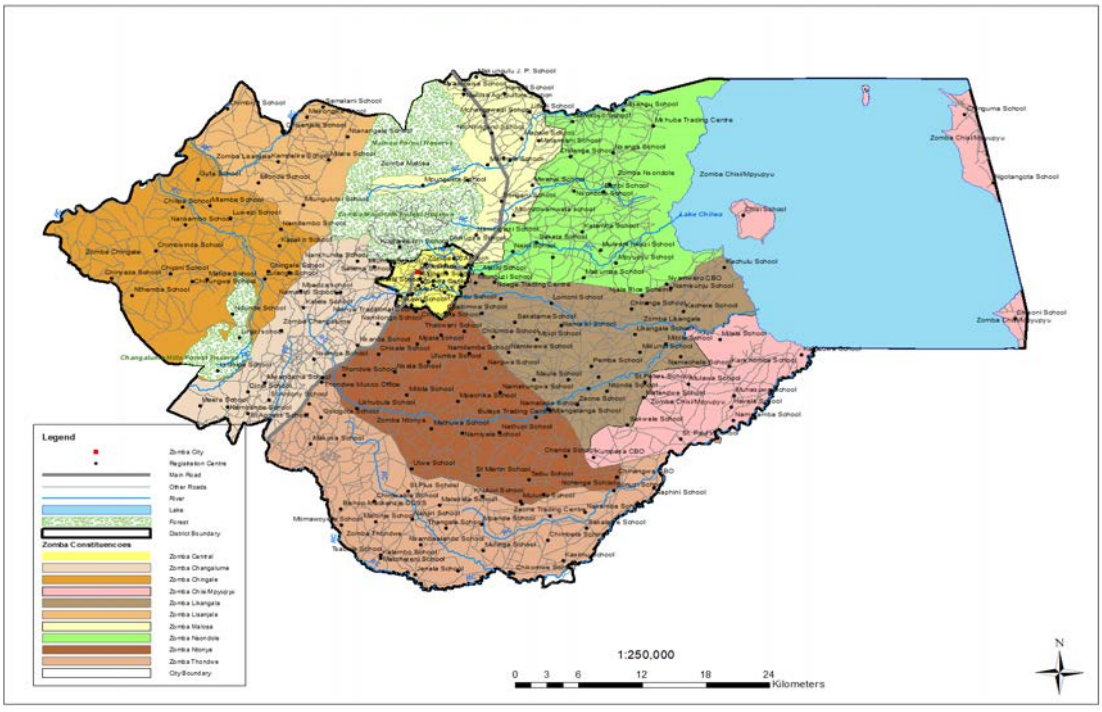
I selected the district for the study using administrative data from the 2016 Education Management Information System (EMIS), which I was given access to by Ministry officials prior to departing for fieldwork. This data related to the 2015/16 school year. Using these data, I calculated the extent to which the distribution of teachers appeared due to factors

other than enrolment. The results confirmed Zomba Rural district faring amongst one of the worst districts when using this measure. While this was the primary reason for the district selection, other reasons included its close proximity to the Centre for Education Research Training (CERT) at the University of Malawi, where I was to be attached for the duration of my fieldwork. Another reason was the proximity of Zomba Rural district to an urban district (Zomba Urban). Given the study's focus on teacher movement, proximity to an urban setting was important.

A constituency map of Zomba (which includes Zomba City) indicates there are ten political constituencies of which nine are in Zomba Rural district (Figure 5.2). There are 13 primary education zones in Zomba Rural district meaning the following:

i. schools falling under one political constituency are either spread out across several primary zones or
ii. schools falling under one primary education zone are spread out across one or more political constituency

Figure 5.2: Constituency map of Zomba district



Source: Malawi Electoral Commission.
Notes: Zomba Central constituency refers to Zomba Urban district, whilst the remaining nine constituencies fall within Zomba Rural district.

Once the district had been selected, I then used extreme sampling techniques to select the two zones that would be the focus of this study. The variable used to select these zones was

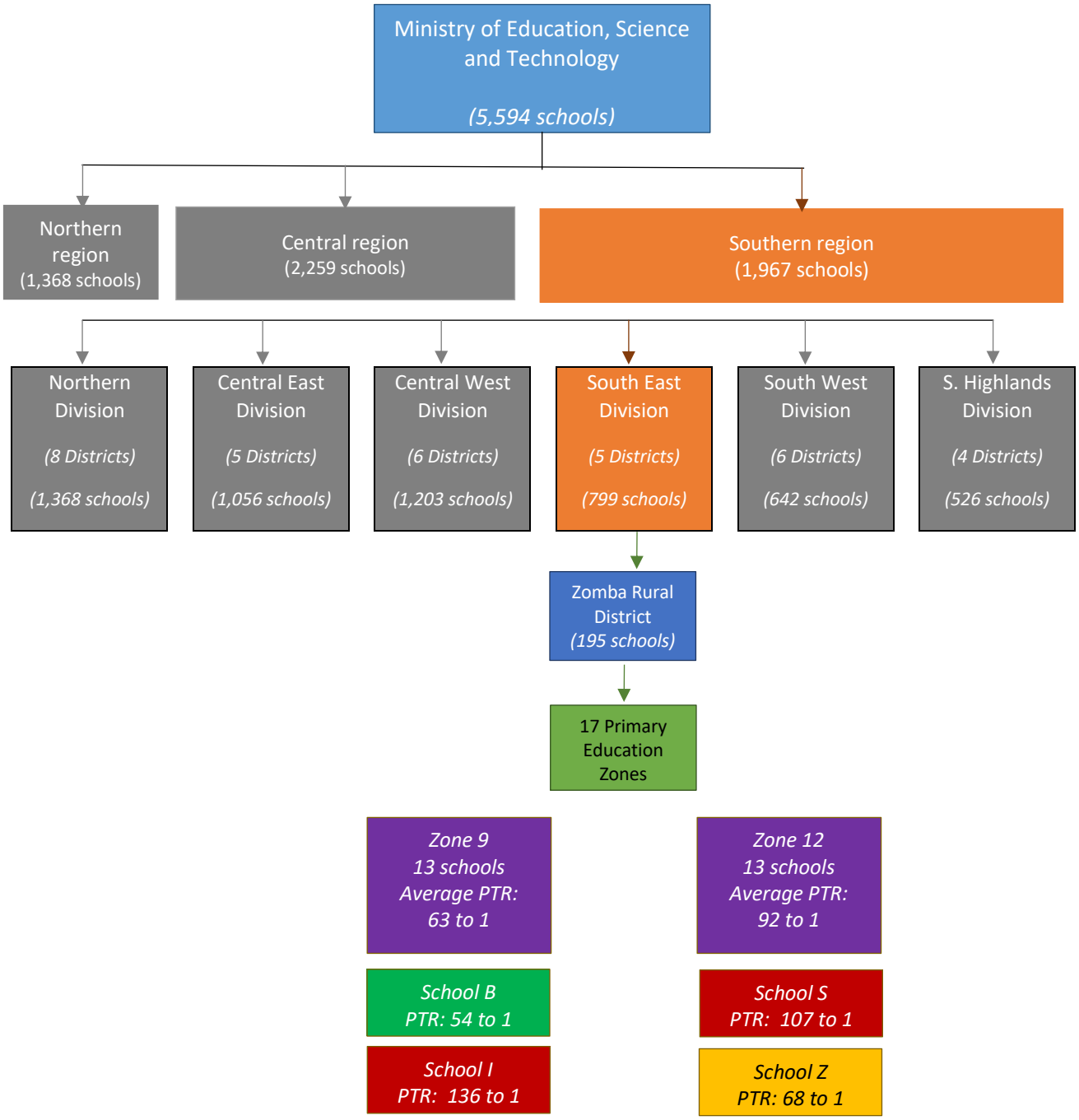
their average PTR (Figure 5.3). For this, I utilised the 2017 EMIS data (relating to the 2016/17 school year), which District EMIS (DEMIS) officials at Zomba Rural district granted me access to upon my arrival there in November 2017. Together with the EMIS data, I utilised the knowledge that district education officials had of the zones within Zomba Rural district. Criteria to help me narrow down the zones, included getting a sense from officials which zones were popular or unpopular with teachers, and which had a hard time retaining them.[42]

Once I had selected each zone, I chose two schools within each. These were selected on the basis of extreme variation where a school had a low PTR or a high PTR. The sampling of schools was done on the basis of the first theme of this thesis, which was the overall PTR of schools. While the allocation of teachers – which relates to the second theme of the thesis – would have been a variable to factor in for school selection, there was no reliable government data on this. Similar to the zone selection this was undertaken using both EMIS data and the knowledge of the Primary Education Adviser (PEA) of their particular zone. Following discussions with the PEA, one to two days were spent in each zone to visit a sample of schools in order to get a general sense of how those in the zone compared with one another. In addition, this time allowed me to establish how long the school actors had been working at the school, and whether they would be willing and available for me to spend time collecting data at their school. The visits to these schools were also an opportunity for me to corroborate whether the EMIS data that I was basing my selection on was still valid given that this data was over a year old. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to mitigate the effects of data unreliability.[43]

[42] Due to part of my fieldwork taking place during the rainy season, questions to district and zonal officials also included asking how passable certain roads were by car during this period.

[43] Based on previous experience of working with the EMIS data during my time at MoEST, enrolment data can be subject to extreme variations. This is further corroborated by other studies (see Rakner et al., 2004; Pritchett, 2013), who discuss the problem of data reliability in official government documentation.

Figure 5.3: Choice of district, zones and schools for study



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS 2018 database.

Table 5.1: Characteristics of the four schools

	Enrolment	No. of teachers M = Male F = Female	PTR	Infrastructure CR = Classroom TH = Teacher houses SR = Staff-room	No. of classes taught	Location[44] DEO = District Education Office TC = Trading Centre
School B	1,141	26 M = 9 F = 17	44	14 CR (permanent) 8 TH Electrified = Y Water = Y (piped water)	12 Std. 1-4 = 2 classes per standard Std. 5-8 = 1 class per standard	Distance from: DEO = 5-9.9km TC = 4.4km Serves 7 villages (all less than 1km away from school
School I	1,320	14 M = 12 F = 2	94	8 CR (permanent) No TH Electricity = N Water = Y (Borehole)	8 Std. 1-8 = 1 class per standard	Distance from DEO = 10-19.9km TC = 3.8km Serves 7 villages (3 = <1km; 2 = 1-1.9km; 1= 2-2.9km; 1 = >5km
School S	633	6 M = 5 F = 1	106	6 CR (4 permanent/ 2 temporary) - St. 4 and St. 5 taught outside - St. 1 + St. 2 taught in temporary classrooms - St.3, St. 6, St. 7 + St. 8 taught in permanent classrooms 1 TH Electricity = N Water = Y (Borehole)	8 Std. 1-8 = 1 class per standard	Distance from DEO = 30 -39.9km TC = 13.7km Serves 7 villages (4 =<1km; 1 = 1-1.9km; 2= 2-2.9km
School Z	611	9 M = 7 F = 2	68	8 CR (permanent) 6 TH (3 permanent, 2 temporary, 1 being rehabilitated) Electricity = N Water = Y (Borehole)	8 Std. 1-8 = 1 class per standard	Distance from DEO = 40km and above TC = 9km Serves 7 villages (4 =<1km; 3 = 1-1.9km)

Source: Data collected by author during school visits.

While the research design falls under the mixed methods dominant status/ concurrent status (Subsection 5.2.2), the selection of the four primary school to answer RQ1b and RQ2b have attributes to a multiple comparative case study approach (Yin, 2017). Such an approach is normally used when looking at social behaviour within specific settings (Barnett, 2018). As McTavish & Loether state, case study research *"provides a description of a setting, illustrates important concepts, fills in the dynamic details of how things influence each other,*

[44] Information from this column was taken from the EMIS database.

uncovers reasons and meanings behind behaviours" (2002; p. 182). Moreover, in using a comparative case study of four schools, a more robust strategy is employed than with a single or two case analysis (Yin, 2003). Lastly, several studies that were reviewed during my own literature search utilised a similar approach when collecting qualitative data (Williams 2016; Kjær & Muwanga, 2016; Kelsall & Heng, 2014).

5.4 Issues relating to research ethics and positionality

5.4.1 Permission to collect data

Prior to starting my fieldwork in Malawi, I formally wrote to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) to ask for permission to conduct an investigation into the primary education sector in Malawi. I set out the broad parameters of what my research would focus on, together with the data I was aiming to collect. The Secretary for Education, Science and Technology (SEST) granted permission for me to carry out this research (Appendix Figure A.1). Prior to leaving Malawi at the end of fieldwork in August 2018, I compiled a short summary of my initial findings, which I submitted to the relevant Ministry of Education officials. Additionally, I sought (and secured) permission to be attached to CERT for the duration of my fieldwork (Appendix Figure A.2).

5.4.2 Informed consent

The 2018 British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research expect the researcher to ensure that the participants involved in the study have *"voluntarily informed consent to be involved in a study….and that researchers will remain sensitive and open to the possibility that participants may wish, for any reason and at any time, to withdraw their consent"* (BERA, 2018; p. 9). For my own study, I formally sought the permission of all stakeholders involved to ensure that my research not only abided by what is stipulated in BERA guidelines, but also, to Malawi's national laws and codes of practice. In terms of the latter, these are contained within *"The Framework of Requirements and Guidelines for Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities in Malawi"*, which is administered by the National Commission for Science and Technology. Before commencing with the data collection process, there were a series of steps I took that aligned with these guidelines.

Firstly, I met with each of the participants involved in the study to discuss with them the aims of the research, what it would be used for, the procedures and methods that I, as a

researcher, would be employing to collect the data and my own background. This initial meeting was an opportunity for the participants to ask me any questions they had about the study. Secondly, I emphasised the right of the participant to refrain from responding to any question they were uncomfortable with answering, or withdrawing from the study at any time should they so wish (Cohen et al., 2017). Given the sensitive nature of some of the questions, I talked the participants through how the tape recorder worked. As part of the preliminary meeting, I sought assurance that they were comfortable with its use to collect data and made them aware of when they were being recorded so that they could request me to pause or stop the interview at any time, if they so wished. My experience of the interviews themselves taught me that participants who were more comfortable with sharing information would, if unwilling to go "on record", either refuse to answer a certain question or ask me to pause the recorder, so they could speak about the issue *"more freely."* However, with time I also learnt that the silences exhibited by some participants could mean either discomfort or reflection on the question being asked and given the "power distance" between the researcher and researched I needed to take special care in interpreting this action.

Thirdly, all participants who took part in the study were assured at the beginning that their confidentiality would be maintained and that their identities would be protected through anonymity. Information I collected from each participant was logged as coded numbers, rather than names, to avoid anything that could lead to their inadvertent identification. The names of the zones and schools that I worked in were anonymised throughout this study. Instead of referring to them by their actual name, I referred to the two zones of study as Zone 9 and Zone 12 and schools as School B, School I, School S and School Z throughout the thesis. While the district I worked in – Zomba Rural district – has not been anonymised, I have protected the identity of officials working at the District Education Office (DEO) by refraining from citing which department they worked in.[45]

Once these issues had been discussed, I asked each participant to read and sign a consent form which included all this information. These were available in both English and Chichewa (Appendix Figure A.3). One interaction with an ex-colleague who I interviewed at the

[45] The district name was difficult to anonymise due to the reference made in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 to ex-President Joyce Banda and her home village.

Ministry level was particularly insightful for me in the use of administering these forms. While I viewed the confidentiality form as a conduit through which to formalise the rights and protection of all participants I interviewed, this formalised approach appeared as a source of tension when I introduced it to this ex-colleague. They responded with *"Ah Asma, we know you. We've worked together! We are old colleagues. You should not be bringing this [the confidentiality form] to create mistrust between old friends."* While this was the only vocal opposition to the form, it did make me reflect whether some of the apathy to the formal administration of the form I had sensed with earlier participants at the school level had had the unintended effect of creating further distance between researcher and participant.

5.4.3 Researcher positionality and reflexivity when doing research in the Global South

Researcher positionality can be understood as *"where one stands in relation to 'the other' in research"* (Merriam et al., 2001; p. 411). Inevitably, depending on the researcher's ontology (how reality is understood) and epistemology (how reality is investigated) the research process is going to be affected (Cohen et al., 2017). Another element regarding positionality is in relation to the background, culture and experience of the researcher, which can affect how data is interpreted (Creswell, 2014). Early discussion on researcher positionality assumed a simple dichotomy of "insider" versus "outsider" status to categorise whether or not the researcher is a member of the group being studied (Merton, 1972). However, it has been criticised for its inadequacy in taking into account the complexities of researcher and participant identities by critical and feminist theorists as well as those using post-modernism, multi-culturalism and participatory research approaches. Instead, reconstructing the insider/outsider dichotomy *"in terms of ones' positionality vis-à-vis race, class, gender, culture and other factors, offer….better tools for understanding the dynamics of researching within and across one's culture"* (Merriam et al., 2001; p. 405) is preferred.

When conducting fieldwork in the international context, it is necessary to be attentive to issues to do with colonisation, development and local realities (Sultana, 2007). Issues concerning the ethics, politics and power relations around knowledge production must be considered (Giwa, 2015). The power relations are laid bare by how Global Southern spaces can be viewed in Western academy as where *"knowledge travels to rather than from"*

(McFarlane, 2006; p. 1419). Within the field of international comparative education, the "insider-outsider" dilemma is at the fore as most of the research done on education systems in the Global South has been conducted by Global North researchers (Crossley & Tikly, 2004; Doiron & Asselin, 2015). Vulliamy (1990) and Stephens (1990) both make reference to the challenges of being an outsider in relation to context and language when carrying out qualitative educational research in Papua New Guinea and Nigeria, respectively.

Reflexivity in the research process involves the researcher's own reflection on her/his positionality and critically evaluating the power relations involved in the research process (Sultana, 2007). It has been defined as *"an ongoing process that constantly returns to the question 'What do I know?' and 'How do I know it?' in order to maintain continual questioning as to where the information has been created"* (Hertz, 1997; p. viii). Specifically in relation to research conducted in Global South, reflexivity requires engaging critically with issues of *"class and educational differences (i.e. material, social and political power differences) [which] remain trenchant markers of difference, and often precondition exploitation in the research process"* (Sultana, 2007; p 375).

In the context of my own research, my ethnicity, education, dominant language, cultural upbringing and socioeconomic status were all factors I recognised were going to be important issues affecting how identifiable I was going be to the stakeholders I interviewed. My own perception of my positionality when working on issues relating to international education within institutions in the Global North has been very much framed around my ethnicity (British-Pakistani), class (lower-middle), type of education (state-school educated) and gender (female). However unsurprisingly, conducting research in Malawi revealed how markedly differently I was perceived by the participants of the study in the context of my ethnicity, class and education.

I was frequently referred to as "Mzungu" rather than "M'mwenye" by sub-national government officials. In Chichewa, and in general East African countries, Mzungu is literally translated to mean "White Person" while "M'mwenye" is traditionally the label given to Malawians of Asian origin or Indian/ Pakistani people migrating to Malawi. Despite my appearance being outwardly South Asian, my visits to DEO would almost always be met with officials exclaiming *"the white woman is here again!"* or once, when an interview with an official was unexpectedly interrupted by a phone call, the interviewee explained *"I am busy*

doing an interview with a certain white woman."[46] During my search on literature relating to positionality and experiences of researchers working in the Global South I found an extensive literature problematising Global North researchers conducting fieldwork in Global South (Sultana, 2007; Vulliamy et al., 1990).[47] However, within this literature I could find nothing substantive that appeared to have been written about the ethnicity of the researcher and hence would appear to have been white-washed from the discussion.

The class and educational difference between me and participants were most pronounced at the school level when interviewing headteachers and teachers. In all cases, teachers were educated up to the end-of-secondary education. In the case of older headteachers and teachers the requirement to become a primary school teacher was to pass the end-of-lower-secondary school examination – the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE). In addition, some teachers teaching the infant standards appeared less confident speaking to me in English. At these levels of the primary system, teachers taught all subjects, apart from English, in Chichewa. The nature of Malawi's hierarchical structure means that people coming from rural areas are deferential to urban and educated English-speaking elites. Educational credentials or evidence of schooling are similarly an important mechanism by which to mark social distinction, as this decides who has *"the right to speak first or to speak authoritatively, and who do[es] not"* (Watkins & Kaler, 2016; p. 5). Methods I utilised to help mitigate the researcher-participant barriers were to work alongside a young Chichewa-speaking research assistant from Zomba Rural district; spending a considerable amount of time at the schools I worked in even when I was not interviewing stakeholders; and wearing a *chitenge*[48] as oppose to my western attire that I normally wore when interviewing district and central level government officials.[49]

At the district office the barriers were broken down in other ways. Unlike Malawi's other cities, such as Lilongwe and Blantyre, Zomba City is small and contained. Practically, this

[46] Another presumption is that most visitors to Malawi who are of South Asian origin are, like the Malawian-Asian population, more commonly associated with the economic and commerce sector.
[47] Comparatively less literature was available on the experience of researchers from the Global South, and the production of knowledge in these locations (Giwa, 2015; Mwambari, 2019).
[48] This is an East African fabric traditionally worn by women and wrapped around the chest or the waist.
[49] In 1965, Hastings Banda enshrined into law a dress code which banned women from wearing trousers. While this ban was lifted in 1994, negative attitudes in rural Malawi towards women wearing trousers remain commonplace.

means that everyone knows one another and, more importantly, what is going on – especially when a new "Mzungu" has arrived in their midst. My visibility as a foreigner was enhanced by the fact that during the seven months I spent living in Zomba to conduct fieldwork, I travelled everywhere mostly on foot.[50] Even in cities, Malawians tend to be friendly and curious towards outsiders. I was often asked where I was from, what I was doing in Zomba and where I was staying. This information it appeared fed back to some district officials, who, not long after I started my fieldwork, indicated they knew the person who I had rented a room from to stay at for the duration of my fieldwork. This, together with my friendship with a well-known and well-liked British-Malawian family from Zomba,[51] came to be known to officials at the district office. These personal connections helped "break the ice" and validate my credentials as a researcher from the University of Cambridge. Another way in which the "power-distance" was further diminished was that the District Education Manager (DEM) was studying for a masters degree at CERT, which aided the fieldwork in that he was familiar with the ethical processes relating to research, and also understood that I was not affiliated to MoEST.

To date, the discussion has considered the unequal power relations between me as a researcher from the Global North and the participants of this study. However, Sultana in her study discusses how *"power relations can work both ways, especially if one is a female researcher in an overtly patriarchal field context"* (2007; p. 380). In the context of my own study, the interactions I had to navigate at the level of central, district and local government departments all involved male bureaucrats apart from one female ex-colleague who I had previously worked with in Malawi. Malawi is a deeply hierarchical and patriarchal society. Hence, in certain instances it was necessary to adopt elements of what Kandiyoti (1988) terms the "patriarchal bargain."[52] In the context of my own fieldwork this required me to, at times, take on "passive" character traits by not coming off as too self-assured or else only speak when spoken to. This was especially so because male bureaucrats were a necessary conduit in either giving me permission to carry out research, or else allowing me access to government data. Navigating these reverse power relations revealed to me the very

[50] This obviously excluded visiting schools and zonal offices, which were considerably further away.
[51] Now based in the U.K.
[52] This is defined as a measure women choose to adopt, which involves accommodating patriarchal norms in order to maximise their own power, safety and/ or options (Kandiyoti, 1988).

different experiences of collecting data as a lone female PhD researcher versus the protection from the "patriarchal bargain" seemingly offered to me when working for MoEST ten years earlier.

By extension, this experience allowed me to observe how female teachers navigated the "patriarchal bargain" in other ways when dealing with government bureaucrats. On several occasions when these female teachers visited the district education office, I witnessed them almost always having to deal with male officials. More often than not I observed that it was mostly female teachers who were waiting in the corridors, mainly to see a human resources official about pay issues. On more than one occasion, the male official, who was based in an office I would often wait in before meeting other district officials, would comment on the female teachers visiting. On the selected days teachers were allowed to visit the district (Tuesdays and Thursdays), the official would comment to say "*Asma, do you notice the beautiful flowers in this office?"* or *"Today there are many beautiful flowers coming to the office."* While these conversations left me feeling deeply uneasy, the meaning behind these words put into context some of what I was observing.

The above has illustrated the ways in which I was located in the "outsider" space. My previous work in Malawi, which was discussed in Chapter 1, conversely placed me within the "insider" space. These past positions affected the fieldwork dynamic in several ways. First, and foremost, my specific positions back then helped me to navigate the process to attain the permission needed to conduct the fieldwork much more easily. While it had been almost ten years since working at MoEST, old colleagues from the Planning Division who still worked at the Ministry were able to speed up the normal bureaucratic protocols, which require permission from the SEST to carry out research in Malawi.

Secondly, the insider knowledge of Malawi's education system helped me navigate around what Paige refers to as *"forbidden narratives"* hidden beneath *"peculiar silences and areas of tensions – forbidden zones that the interviewer had to approach with care"* (1998; p. 9). The previous positions I had held meant being subsumed within power structures, where the bureaucratic arm of government carefully navigated the politicisation of tasks that technocrats were formally responsible for.

Thirdly, working mainly away from Lilongwe meant ex-colleagues in the capital were keen to ensure I had direct access to the correct people necessary to undertake the research. As an example, when I arrived for my fieldwork in Zomba Rural district in November 2017, the Budget Team from Ministry headquarters were there holding the mid-year review of the budget in Zomba. One of these officials, with whom I had worked when I was part of the same unit between 2005 and 2009, was at this meeting. Present at the meeting were also representatives from Malawi's DEOs to whom I was informally introduced to by my ex-colleague from the Ministry. Later, when visiting Zomba Rural district to begin formal preparations for data collection, the DEM remembering me from that meeting welcomed me to the district. The past association with MoEST appeared to break down some barriers with district officials. However, in other respects it created unanticipated hurdles, in that some officials remained wary as to whether the nature of my fieldwork was truly independent from MoEST. This was perhaps exacerbated by a joint MoEST-World Bank teacher audit, which had been carried out at the district level a few months before I commenced fieldwork for a study exploring issues similar to what I was researching. With this study still fresh in their minds, the automatic assumption by some officials of my affiliation to MoEST led me to believe was a reason why some officials refused to be interviewed.[53]

Reflecting on the insider-outsider dichotomy above, I adopted the position of an outsider concerning the object of study. However, in order to build a rapport with some participants I did draw upon my existing networks and prior knowledge of Malawi's education system both to collect data and contextualise the findings.

5.5 Data collection and analysis methods

5.5.1 Choice of research instruments for the research questions

In total, three methods were utilised to address the four research questions. These were semi-structured interviews, secondary data collection of government administrative data and questionnaires administered at the school level (Table 5.2).

[53] While most officials were willing to be interviewed, this was not the case with those from the Human Resources department. I asked whether they would be comfortable in consenting to an interview without the use of the tape recorder. However, this was to no avail.

Table 5.2: Research questions and corresponding data collection methods

Research Question	Data collection methods
RQ1a: To what extent is the deployment of primary school teachers between schools equitable?	**Secondary government administrative data (EMIS)** • Given access to databases for EMIS 2008 to 2018
RQ1b: What are the reasons for the uneven deployment of primary school teachers between schools?	**Semi-structured interviews** • Central Ministry education officials • District education officials *(Zomba Rural district)* • Primary Education Advisers *(Two case study zones)* • Headteachers *(Four case study schools)* • Teachers *(Two teachers each in four case study schools – infant and senior standard)*
RQ2a: To what extent are primary school teachers allocated equitably to different classes within schools, and what are the consequences of this on the utilisation of teaching time?	**School-level researcher-administered questionnaire** • Administered to 371 teachers in 26 primary schools in two case study zones
RQ2b: What are the reasons for the uneven allocation of primary school teachers within schools?	**Semi-structured interviews** • Central Ministry education officials • District education officials *(Zomba Rural district)* • Primary Education Advisers *(Two case study zones)* • Headteachers *(Four case study schools)* • Teachers (*Two teachers each in four case study schools – infant and senior standard)*

5.5.2 Data collection methods

Secondary government administrative data (EMIS)

Over the last century or so, there has been an expansion in the collection of large-scale educational data aimed at better understanding education systems (Davis-Kean & Jager, 2017). The information contained within these datasets has allowed researchers and policy-makers to monitor progress within and between countries. They have also facilitated researchers in overcoming the challenges often associated with primary data collection, especially the time it can take to collect this data. Government datasets, such as EMIS, offer data on students, teachers and schools and are also large enough to be statistically powered (ibid.).

In the context of my own research, measuring the nature of teacher distribution (RQ1a) was achieved through EMIS data. I briefly discuss the disadvantages relating to the EMIS data. These concern the reliability of school administrative data due to either deliberate misreporting or inaccurate reporting. Linden & Shastry (2012) discuss the incentives for

schools to misreport data deliberately, especially in contexts where district officials rarely verify school reporting. One of these pertains to how administrative data often serves as a proxy for how public resources are allocated to schools. In Malawi, for instance, textbooks, teachers and school grants[54] are distributed on the basis of enrolment. Then, there is the inaccurate reporting of data mainly due to the lack of effort on the part of the headteachers in completing questionnaires (Barnett, 2018). Ravishankar et al. report that in Malawi the *"[o]fficial data on enrolment, repeaters and dropouts are mutually inconsistent, suggesting significant under-reporting by schools of the number of pupils who drop out of the system"* (2016; p. xvii).

Davis-Keen & Jager identify *"the lack of control that a researcher has in the questions or assessments that are administered"* (2015; p. 4) through secondary data collection. As an example, information collected on teachers in Malawi's EMIS presently only report the current school that the teacher is working in and hence, there is an absence of electronic data concerning the school posts that a teacher may have previously held. Given the interest attached to this thesis, this was an area where the EMIS data was limited in its usefulness. Another challenge is the frequency of collection, compilation, cleaning, inputting and releasing of the information from this large dataset. EMIS data in Malawi, for instance, is normally collected in the first term of the school year (September-October) and is not released until the following school year.

While the discussion on the EMIS data illustrates some of the problems, it also offered tremendous advantages in the context of this study. Without access to the EMIS data across a period of time, the extent to which teacher distribution was (in)equitable would have been challenging to quantify adequately in the way I wished to address it in this thesis. As an example, my experience of conducting a survey in each of the 26 schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12 took, on average, half a day (see proceeding section).[55] These 26 schools, however, represent just 10 percent of all primary schools in Zomba Rural district.

[54] The formula for the School Improvement Grant (SIG) allocates a flat-rate of MK600,000 (US$820) per school. However, when enrolment exceeds 1,000 the school receives an extra MK100 (US$0.14) per child.
[55] This is in the context of a. the primary school day and b. returning back to the school to administer the survey questions to teachers who were absent during the first visit.

School-level researcher-administered questionnaire

Questionnaires are a widely used instrument for collecting survey information and are comparatively straightforward to administer (Wilson & McLean, 1994). These can be self-administered by the participant or take the format of a researcher-administered survey, which involves the researcher asking the participant questions (Menter, 2011). While a questionnaire can take many forms, the general rule is that the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical it has to be (Cohen et al., 2017).

The purpose of Research Question 2a was to analyse the trends relating to teacher allocation and utilisation within primary schools. Prior to fieldwork commencing, the intention had been to use government administrative data to address this based on the information I was aware that the EMIS survey collected (Appendix Figure A.4).[56] However, upon arriving in Malawi and accessing the EMIS databases in person it became clear that the question had been interpreted differently across schools, which made its use untenable. In some cases, headteachers were filling in the "periods taught" information, according to the number of lessons a teacher was required to teach on the time-table, while in other cases it was the number of classes a teacher appeared to actually take responsibility for. Furthermore, in the case of many schools this information had not been filled in by the school administrator.

To mitigate these problems, I designed a questionnaire very similar to that which the EMIS administers (Appendix Figure A.5). However, one key difference was that, unlike the EMIS, I also gathered information on which subjects teachers were responsible for teaching.[57] Asking for subject-specific information was found to elicit more reliable data, especially in cases where a teacher was sharing a class with another or where they were teaching across more than one class. I administered this questionnaire to 371 teachers in the 26 schools located in Zone 9 and Zone 12. The survey took approximately 10-15 minutes per teacher to complete.

[56] The EMIS questionnaire collects data on the class a teacher has been allocated to teach, together with the number of periods she/he teaches a week.

[57] The EMIS only asks how many periods a week a teacher teaches in total. When piloting this questionnaire in a primary school close to CERT in Zomba Urban district, I immediately found that asking something along the lines of the EMIS questionnaire made it much more difficult to verify whether or not what the teacher was reporting was being inflated, i.e. reporting to me the number of periods s/he was *expected* to teach.

Semi-structured interviews

For the purposes of this thesis, I selected semi-structured interviews as the tool to help explain the trends that were emerging from the quantitative data. Kvale & Brinkmann describe the purpose of semi-structured interviews as a medium through which to *"obtain descriptions of the life world of the interview in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena"* (2009; p. 3). An important aspect of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews I administered was allowing me to gather the perspectives, insights and experiences of the individuals I questioned in relation to the phenomena of interest (Bryman, 2012).

Within the field of qualitative research, interviews remain the most common form through which data is collected, with the major difference between them being their *"degree of structure"* (Cohen et al., 2017; p. 270). I was strongly influenced by Patton's description of interviews, where he states that *"we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe…We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions…We cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things"* (1990; p.340). The intangible nature of the more contextual information I was seeking to collect, which was about exploring day-to-day invisible and non-discernible pressures, reflected this sentiment.

The advantages of semi-structured interviews are that they help to instigate reciprocity between the researcher and the participant (Galletta, 2013). They also allow for the researcher to follow up with questions based on the participant responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Lastly, such interviews allow for a certain level of consistency between different stakeholders, which in the case of this thesis was vital given the aim of comparison across the four schools, and two education zones.

Participants interviewed for the study were selected on the basis of collecting different experiences and perspectives of teacher distribution, allocation and utilisation within the primary education system. A full list of who was interviewed are contained within Appendix Table A.1.[58] An interview guide allowed me to formulate pre-planned interview questions,

[58] During the fieldwork, the interview participants also included one Focus Group Discussion with members of the SMC and PTA for each of the four schools. However, the direction of the fieldwork changed from a broader focus on resources to one focused exclusively on teachers. Hence, these discussions with stakeholders – while providing useful background to school resources – were discounted in the final analysis.

which covered the main topics pertaining to the phenomena being studied (Taylor, 2005). This can be reviewed in Appendix Figure A.6. The objective was to collect the same types of information, but understanding it from the perspective of the different categories of participants I interviewed (e.g. district officials, zonal officials, headteachers, teachers).

Interviews with all participants lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. Apart from the infant standard teacher in School B, all interviews were conducted by me in English. The research assistant that I had employed was present at all the school-level interviews in the case of School B, School S and School Z in the event participants were more comfortable conversing in Chichewa.[59] Conducting interviews in English meant that teachers did sometimes switch to Chichewa in their responses before "catching themselves" and repeating what they wanted to say in English for my benefit.

Interviews with local, district and central government officials were conducted only by me. All interviews apart from that with the infant standard teacher in School B were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In the case of the one exception, the responses were translated into English and transcribed by a professional transcriber from Malawi. Both during and after each interview I took notes, which not only helped me to begin to identify the themes that were emerging, but also, helped identify areas to question participants on in subsequent interviews. While the topic guide was used for interviews I conducted with participants at the zonal and district levels of government and with school actors, my interviews with central government officials were more informal and largely relied on interrogating for information around themes I had collected at the other levels of government and at school level.

With all the interviews I undertook, I tried to ensure my presence was as non-intrusive as possible. My interviews with school officials were carried out to ensure, as much as possible, minimum disruption to their teaching schedule. To that end, interviews I carried out with headteachers and teachers in School S and School Z took place before the start of the school day at 7am or after teaching had ended due to the shortage of teachers during teaching hours. In the case of all interviews, if the stakeholder was not available on the day I visited, I would reschedule the interview for another time or day.

[59] The research assistant had a sudden family emergency when I was carrying out the interviews in School I.

A reliance on interview data poses a number of methodological problems that it is useful to discuss briefly. First, the reliability of interview data can be called into question where informants fail to remember key events relating to the topic at hand, or else there may be an element of bias contained within their responses (Bryman, 2012). This was especially important, such that during my interviews with stakeholders, I prompted respondents for empirical examples where appropriate so as to not over-rely on "boiler-plate" responses (Pherali et al., 2014). While achieving a valid interpretation of qualitative data is challenging, there were various methods I utilised to achieve a certain level of robustness. Firstly, I sought to double-check that the information that I had collected was correct through interrogating the issue at hand with other interviewees where possible, while protecting the earlier interviewed participant's anonymity. A second method was to corroborate information with secondary data sources where this was available. As an example, where stakeholders cited specific examples of teachers transferring to other schools during a given period, I cross-checked this with government administrative data I had access to.

Secondly, findings from qualitative studies where the population is small and the participants have been purposively selected present a challenge concerning the generalisability of findings (Bryman, 2012). Flyvbjerg (2006), however, lists a common set of misunderstandings relating to generalisability when considering qualitative case study research, arguing that *"[p]redictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals"* (2006; p. 7). Moreover, qualitative findings may support the development of theoretical generalisations concerning social processes, which can be applied to achieve a better understanding of the situation in other settings (Barnett, 2018; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

5.5.3 Data analysis methods

Secondary government administrative data (EMIS)

School categorisation according to teacher need

The purpose of Research Question 1a (see Section 5.1) was to judge the extent to which the deployment of teachers was carried out on the basis of need, or being geared towards reaching the 60 to 1 PTR. In order to ascertain what was the case, the data analysis in Chapter 6 relies on a categorisation of "need" against which to judge this against. For this I utilised an approach used by DeStefano (2013) in categorising schools. This is based on

whether a school exhibits an excess or shortage of teachers, according to government policy that stipulates a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 60 to 1 (DeStefano, 2013). These categories are listed in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Categorisation of schools

Category	Definition	Formula
High need	A school with a shortfall of more than five teachers needed to achieve the 60 to 1 PTR	$(T^a - T^r) < -5$
Some need	A school with a shortfall of between two and five teachers needed to achieve the 60 to 1 PTR	$-2 > (T^a - T^r) \geq -5$
No need	A school with an adequate number of teachers needed to achieve or be close to achieving the 60 to 1 PTR	$-1 > (T^a - T^r) > 1$
Surplus	A school with an excess of between two and five teachers needed to achieve the 60 to 1 PTR	$2 > (T^a - T^r) \geq 5$
High surplus	A school with an excess of more than five teachers needed to achieve the 60 to 1 PTR	$(T^a - T^r) > 5$

Source: Category and definition taken from DeStefano (2013).
Note: The formula was derived using the following steps:
[1] Let En be the total enrolment in a hypothetical school
[2] Let the subscript *a* denote actual and subscript *r* denote required
[3] I assumed 60 pupils per teacher (PTR), which is the required threshold by the government
[4] So, the required [r] and actual [a] number of teachers are:

$$T^r = \frac{En}{60}$$

$$T^a = \frac{En}{PTR^a}$$

[5] Hence $(T^a - T^r)$, denotes either a shortfall (negative) or excess (positive) for the government PTR of 60 threshold.

Teacher shortage: inefficiency versus shortfall in numbers

An extension of RQ1a is the distribution of the teacher shortfall between the shortage of teacher numbers versus the inefficient way in which teachers are distributed. The problem statement in Chapter 1 identified how the teacher distribution system in Malawi leaves a huge variation in the PTRs experienced by many schools. In some schools this is well above 60 to 1 and leaves a shortage of teachers (schools falling under the category of "high need" or "some need" in Table 5.3 above). Whilst in other schools the PTR is well below 60 to 1 and leaves teachers superfluous to requirements (schools falling under the category of "surplus" or "high surplus" in Table 5.3 above). With a system characterised by "inefficiency", the analysis in Chapter 6 was focused on ascertaining the extent to which the shortage in the system was due to the inefficiency versus a "real" shortfall in teachers.

This was done by applying the following formula which calculated the "inefficiency" *(I)* in the system due to a shortage or excess in teachers above and below the PTR rule of 60 to 1:

$$I = \left(\sum_{k=1}^{K} \frac{E_k}{S_k} \right) \times 100$$

"Teacher shortfall" (TS), on the other hand, was represented as follows:

$$TS = \left(1 - \sum_{k=1}^{K} \frac{E_k}{S_k} \right) \times 100$$

Assume K schools in the system (k = 1,…, K)
Let teacher excess for school k be E_k – that is, when $(T^a - T^r) > 0$
Let teacher shortage for school k be S_k – that is, when $(T^a - T^r) < 0$

Teacher movement database

A final part of addressing RQ1 involved creating a database to determine where in the system a teacher may transfer to. I created this database in Excel and did this through utilising all of the EMIS databases I had access to. This was achieved by following a number of steps:

1. Extracting the teacher names and corresponding employment numbers for those teachers who were reported be working in each of the 26 primary schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12.
2. Next, I identified all cases of a teacher "leaving" a school in Zone 9 or Zone 12. This was where a teacher who had appeared as working at a school in a previous year was no longer doing so in the following year.
3. The EMIS database was then searched using the teacher's name and employment number. This allowed me to identify the new school the teacher was now teaching at.[60]
4. Based on Table 5.3, I compared the category of the school the teacher had left to that of the new school s/he was working in. This category was based on the year the teacher was no longer appearing as working in the original school.

[60] In a number of cases the teacher's details could not be found on the system, which could be attributed to retirement. However, to mitigate the likelihood that this could be a case of EMIS misreporting, I also searched those teacher details in subsequent EMIS databases. If the teacher still could not be found, the assumption was made that the teacher had left the teaching profession.

5. Next, I identified all cases of a teacher "joining" a school in Zone 9 or Zone 12. This was where a teacher who appeared on the staff list of a school, but did not do so the year before.
6. The EMIS database for previous years was then searched, using the teacher's name and employment number. This allowed me to identify the old school the teacher had been teaching at before joining the school in Zone 9 or Zone 12.[61]
7. Based on Table 5.3, I compared the category of the school the teacher had left to that of the new school s/he was working in. This category was based on the year the teacher was no longer appearing as working in the original school.

School-level researcher-administered questionnaire

The survey data collected from the 371 teachers the 26 primary schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12 was organised and the data was inputted into two Microsoft Excel documents, according to the zone. Within each zonal document, the raw data was organised by school and by teacher. The following information was extracted from the raw data.

1. Type of teaching arrangement by class and by teacher

The type of teaching arrangement for each of the 371 teachers I administered the survey to was based on the following categories:

a. Teacher teaching standard/ class alone
b. Teacher teaching one standard/ class with another teacher
c. Teacher teaching more than one standard/ class

2. Theoretical versus actual pupil-teacher ratio

Given the impact that the type of teaching arrangement potentially has on the number of teachers physically being in a classroom and being involved in face-to-face teaching, the analysis involved isolating the difference between a "theoretical" PTR versus an "actual" PTR. Theoretically, PTR assumes that all teachers assigned to a class are physically in the classroom and teaching. Actual PTR, on the other hand, has to distinguish whether the

[61] In a number of cases the teacher's details could not be found on the system. This could be due to this being a new teacher. However, to mitigate the likelihood that this could be a case of EMIS misreporting, I also searched for those teacher details in previous EMIS databases. If the teacher still could not be found, the assumption was made that the teacher was new to the profession.

arrangement meant the teacher is in class either teaching or assisting the other teacher teaching, or outside of the classroom.

The theoretical (t) and actual (a) PTR are:

$$PTR^t = \frac{En}{T^t}$$

$$PTR^a = \frac{En}{T^a}$$

[1] Let En be the total enrolment in a hypothetical class
[2] Let the subscript *t* denote theoretical and subscript *a* refer to the actual number of teachers in classroom according to the teaching arrangement.

3. Actual teaching time as a share of official teaching time

Semi-structured interviews

The combination of interviews with 19 officials at district, zonal and school level using the interview guide, together with informal discussions with informal interviews with four officials at central headquarters, produced a wealth of very rich data relating to the issues of teacher distribution, allocation and utilisation in Malawi. Familiarity with the data was achieved in the following ways. Travelling to conduct interviews with participants at district and local government or with school actors generally occurred from early morning up until early afternoon.[62] Thereafter, I would travel to the office that CERT had allocated to me at the University of Malawi. Here, I would spend the rest of the day listening to the recording of the interview(s) I had conducted that day and make a note of any follow-up questions I needed to pursue with those participant(s) at our next meeting. Upon completing the transcripts of these recordings,[63] I read each transcript two or three times to get a clearer sense of some of the themes and complexities emerging and noted these down.

The next step involved a more systematic approach to organising my themes, which involved a thematic analysis of the interview data. I utilised the thematic network analysis approach taken by Attride-Stirling (2001), which looks at three levels:

[62] Interviews with actors at School S and School Z largely took place early morning before school started or in the afternoon to avoid the disruption of teaching during official teaching hours. This was due to the shortage of staff at these schools.
[63] During the fieldwork, an ongoing crisis of the supply of electricity meant that completing all the transcripts on my laptop took a lot longer than expected. Most of these were completed in the first three months after I had returned to the University of Cambridge (September to November 2018).

1. **Global Theme:** These are the super-ordinate themes
2. **Organising Theme:** These group together basic themes into a cluster of similar issues. They also enhance the meaning of the broader theme
3. **Basic Theme:** These are the lowest order themes. By themselves they say little about the text and hence, they need to be considered within the context of other basic themes.

The **global themes** for this research piece relate to two pre-set themes linking directly back to the research enquiry of this piece, which relate to:

1. Management of teacher deployment (RQ1a and RQ1b)
2. Management of teacher allocation and utilisation (RQ2a and RQ2b)

Thereafter, I utilised a hybrid approach of deductive and inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Utilising this approach meant there were two data phases to organise and analyse the data. The first phase identified four **organising themes** used to create the *deductive* framing code, which provided an initial structure regarding how the data should be organised. These themes were identified from both the interview guides (Appendix Figure A.6) and the conceptual framework (Chapter 4). During this first phase of the analysis, where I had identified these broad *apriori* themes, I used NVivo for my data organisation and analysis. These organising themes were as follows:

1. Formal rule-based policies
2. Enforcement challenges
3. Monitoring challenges

The second phase of the data analysis phase was when I undertook a more inductive approach, which allowed me to identify emerging **basic themes** from the transcripts. These themes were mapped to the organising themes listed above. These basic themes were acquired by an iterative process. They were categorised through a close reading of the interview transcripts as detailed above as well as drawing on the review of the literature (Chapter 3) and the conceptual framework (Chapter 4) to offer important insights and guidance regarding the organisation or emergence of themes (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Global, organising and basic themes

Global Theme	Organising *'Deductive'* Theme	Basic *'Inductive'* Theme
Teacher deployment management	Formal 'rule-based' policies	Teacher deployment policy
		Teacher transfer policy
	Enforceability	Engagement by external stakeholders
		Distribution of power
		Managerial discretion
		'Delegation-resourcing' incoherence
	Monitoring	'Delegation-resourcing' incoherence
		Distribution of power
Teacher allocation and utilisation management	Formal 'rule-based' policies	Teacher allocation policy
		Teacher utilisation policy
	Enforceability	Engagement by external stakeholders
		Distribution of power
		Managerial discretion
		'Delegation-resourcing' incoherence
	Monitoring	Distribution of power
		'Delegation-resourcing' incoherence

Conclusion

In Chapter 5, I have explained why a mixed methods approach, adopting a concurrent-dominant status approach, was deemed suitable for this study. In utilising such an approach for my thesis, Chapter 5 identified the purpose of semi-structured interviews in helping uncover trends identified in the quantitative data relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation. Beyond the research design, my reflections in this chapter focused on my positionality as a researcher from the Global North conducting fieldwork in Malawi. This discussion considered the "insider-outsider" dichotomy and how this could and did, at times, affect my research when in the field. This discussion revealed that, whilst I was largely perceived as an outsider by participants, my previous work in Malawi had brought me, to some extent, into the sphere of the insider space.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, presents the findings from the analysis of the EMIS data, thereby addressing RQ1a, which is focused on the issue of teacher deployment.

Chapter 6: How are teachers deployed between schools and districts?

Chapter purpose and structure

Chapters 6 and 7 address the first theme of this thesis which relates to teacher deployment between schools. The purpose is to consider the inequity in the deployment and movement of teachers between schools and the extent to which it has contributed to Malawi's teacher shortage crisis. The aim is also to investigate why these trends persist. The importance of this is in respect to providing a detailed "diagnostic" assessment as to where the system is at in terms of teacher deployment. The inequitable deployment of teachers between schools is considered both in terms of assessing the government pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) between schools, and also, the extent to which their deployment (and movement) helps or hinders this objective. More specifically, it allows for ascertaining why different parts of the system experience the teacher shortage very differently. This sheds light on where further enquiry should be oriented in the qualitative data collection in order to provide comprehensive understanding of the research interest.

Specifically, the purpose of Chapter 6 is to address the first research question of this thesis: *"To what extent is the deployment of primary school teachers between schools equitable?"* The majority of this chapter draws upon secondary data using government administrative data that I was given access to. These were the Education Management Information System (EMIS) databases for school years 2007/08 to 2017/18,[64] together with the monthly staff returns data which is administered at the district level.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 6.1, I briefly refer to the current government directives and policies relating to how teachers should be equitably deployed to schools. In Section 6.2, I consider the patterns of teacher deployment at the national, district (Zomba Rural) and zonal levels. I specifically consider this in the context of Malawi's education system, where schools with teacher shortages exist side-by-side with schools that have

[64] The EMIS data is collected at the beginning of the school year and released for publication the following year. In relation to the EMIS 2008, this refers to data collected between October and November 2007, which was published in 2008. This in turn refers to the school year 2007/08.

teacher surpluses. Accordingly, the chapter discussion considers the extent to which the primary teacher shortage is due to the unequal way in which teachers are distributed across the system. Section 6.3 moves on to considering how initial teacher deployment and teacher transfers are related to their inequitable distribution in the system. While I introduce this section with an overview of Zomba Rural district as a whole, the focus of this section is micro-level tracking of the movement of teachers in and out of the two zones and the four primary schools I selected for this study. By doing so, I refocus attention beyond initial deployment to the transfer of teachers between schools and how this may affect the equitable distribution of teachers.

6.1 Policies relating to the distribution and allocation of teachers

6.1.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 gave a brief overview of government policies relating to the distribution of teachers to schools contained within the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) and the corresponding Education Sector Implementation Plans (ESIP). These provided the parameters to guide how teachers should be distributed between schools and what the government intended to do to achieve a more equitable distribution. While the NESP set an overall PTR target of 60 to 1, a specific target of 70 to 1 was set for rural areas to be reached by 2017/18 (GoM, 2008*a*). Policies relating to both increasing the number of teachers in the system and more effectively distributing them are strategies for reaching this target. Given the focus of this research, next, there is a brief discussion on some of the policy interventions relating to distribution.

6.1.2 Targeting rural districts

The Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) system was introduced in 2005. As part of the terms and conditions of being enrolled onto this course, teachers are, upon graduation, required to commit to working in a rural district for at least five-years. They are forbidden from being sent to work in any of the urban education districts (Blantyre Urban, Lilongwe Urban, Mzuzu City and Zomba Urban). However, schools in these four districts accounted for just 3 percent of all primary schools in the 2017/18 school year. Therefore, the impact of this policy is likely to be modest, especially because this exemption is not extended to the urban areas within the remaining 30 “rural” education districts.

6.1.3 Teacher relocation

A global policy to address the issue of inequitable teacher deployment has been through forced or involuntary relocation of teachers in surplus schools to those in remote or rural areas where there is a shortage (Mulkeen & Chen, 2008). While this has not appeared in earlier policy statements, one of the targets set out in the 2015 ESIP II Action Plan was to redeploy teachers already teaching in the system. This was either to schools within the district that they were already teaching in (5,971 teachers) or to schools in another district (2,851 teachers) (GoM, 2015*a*).

6.1.4 Demand-led interventions to teach in remote hard-to-reach areas

In many countries in the Global South, a popular strategy employed by governments to attract teachers to work in rural areas has been to introduce a hardship allowance (Mulkeen, 2010). In Malawi, the Government of Malawi rolled out a hardship allowance in 2010, which was intended to compensate 20 percent of teachers working in remote primary and secondary schools. Initially, this was capped at MK5,000 (US$6.8) per teacher per month, before rising to MK10,000 (US$13.7) in 2014. A critical evaluation of the implementation of the hardship allowance is set out in Asim et al.'s 2017 study.

Other incentives to strengthen the demand to work in rural and remote areas include investment in the sorts of services and amenities that would attract teachers to work in these areas. In the context of Malawi, the shortage of adequate teacher housing in rural areas is one of the main disincentives identified by previous studies (Kadzamira, 2006; Mulkeen, 2010). To address this, the NESP pledged to build 1,000 primary school teacher houses annually over the 10-year NESP period (GoM, 2015*a*).

6.2 An overview of the (in)equity and (in)efficiency in teacher deployment

6.2.1 Introduction

This section presents the data trends relating to how teachers are deployed to work in primary schools across Malawi, with a specific focus on both equity and inefficiency of how this distribution has been undertaken. It begins with an overview of national teacher deployment trends. This is both useful to understand the problem more broadly and to contextualise where Zomba Rural districts sits within these national trends. The remainder

of the section presents the analysis concerning deployment from a district and zonal level perspective.

For the analysis, the categorisation of schools according to whether they have a high need, some need, no need, surplus or high surplus of teachers is utilised to shed light on the extent to which inequity and inefficiency defines Malawi's teacher deployment system. These were discussed in Chapter 5, along with a full definition of what these categories refer to.

6.2.2 Degree of randomness in teacher distribution

To begin with, the aim is to quantify the extent to which teacher distribution is contingent on school enrolment patterns and one way of doing this is the randomness coefficient ($1-R^2$). This allows for understanding how systemic unexplained variation is in relation to the deployment of teachers in an education system. Just prior to the publication of the NESP, the randomness coefficient relating to primary teacher distribution was estimated at 42 percent (World Bank, 2010). In other words, 42 percent of teachers were being deployed to schools for reasons other than the enrolment. By 2017/18 the randomness coefficient had fallen to 27 percent, suggesting an improvement in teachers being distributed according to enrolment figures. The improvement coincides with the period where policies intended to improve teacher deployment were introduced.

While the national figures appear to indicate an improvement over time, when disaggregated by district the randomness coefficient is markedly worse in many districts. Table 6.1 shows that only 11 out of the 34 districts highlighted in green had a more equitable distribution of teachers compared to the national average. The remaining 23 districts, which are highlighted in orange, had considerably more inequitable distribution of teachers compared to the national average. One of these 23 districts was Zomba Rural district, which ranked as one of the worst districts. This greater randomness at district level provides yet another justification for focusing more specifically on the district level of government in a context where despite a number of different policies being introduced there is still a great deal of variation.

Table 6.1: Degree of randomness in teacher distribution, 2017/18 school year

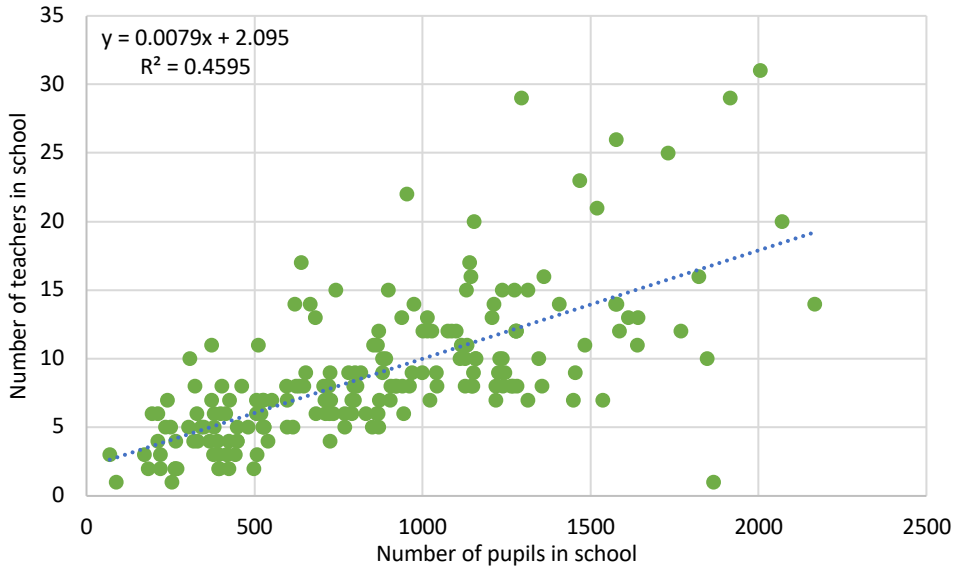
District	R^2	Randomness coefficient	Average PTR	Highest PTR	Lowest PTR
Mzuzu City	0.90	0.10	62	114	8
Chikwawa	0.87	0.13	80	186	42
Lilongwe Urban	0.87	0.13	77	133	18
Blantyre Urban	0.86	0.14	83	165	24
Zomba Urban	0.83	0.17	48	63	26
Lilongwe Rural East	0.83	0.17	68	208	32
Lilongwe Rural West	0.81	0.19	67	219	26
Mangochi	0.78	0.22	81	405	24
Kasungu	0.77	0.23	70	182	8
Blantyre Rural	0.76	0.24	60	194	8
Mwanza	0.76	0.24	70	128	29
Thyolo	0.74	0.26	74	206	10
Neno	0.73	0.27	73	173	25
Likoma	0.73	0.27	64	93	24
Nkhotakota	0.73	0.27	73	178	21
Phalombe	0.71	0.29	76	148	43
Nsanje	0.70	0.30	80	162	31
Mzimba South	0.69	0.31	67	257	13
Balaka	0.68	0.32	71	197	20
Mulanje	0.67	0.33	73	162	31
Ntcheu	0.67	0.33	66	162	21
Chitipa	0.67	0.33	55	109	16
Rumphi	0.64	0.36	52	178	14
Karonga	0.64	0.36	65	142	5
Dedza	0.61	0.39	71	196	9
Machinga	0.61	0.39	85	212	15
Salima	0.60	0.40	72	187	15
Nkhata Bay	0.58	0.42	64	192	11
Mchinji	0.55	0.45	71	181	7
Nchisi	0.51	0.49	63	188	14
Zomba Rural	0.51	0.49	76	254	12
Chiradzulu	0.50	0.50	69	185	13
Dowa	0.49	0.51	68	860	21
Mzimba North	0.46	0.54	62	241	11
National	**0.75**	**0.25**	**71**	**860**	**5**
Intra-district average	**0.69**	**0.31**			

Source: Researcher's calculations based on 2018 EMIS database.

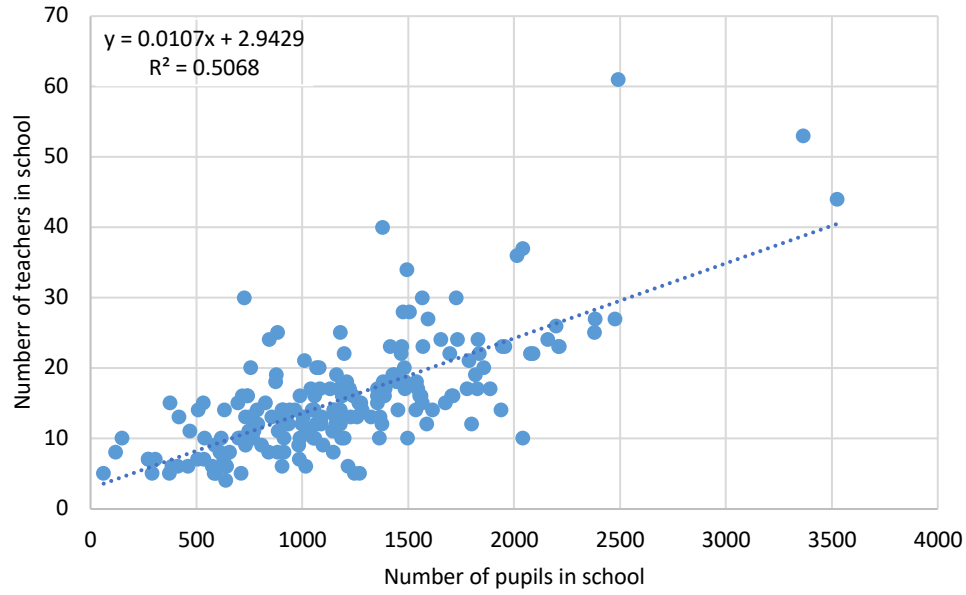
For Zomba Rural district, when comparing the R^2 measure over a 10-year period, the data indicates there was only a slight improvement in reducing the randomness in teacher distribution. This fell from 54 percent in 2007/08 (Figure 6.1A) to 49 percent in 2017/18 (Figure 6.1B), thus suggesting that the policies listed above in Section 6.1 largely failed in their objective. To illustrate the point, a school in Zomba Rural district with an enrolment of 1,500 students had as few as 10 teachers or as many as 34. Similarly, schools with 10 teachers had a school population as low as 149 or high as 2,039 students (Figure 6.1B).

Figure 6.1: Degree of randomness in teacher distribution in Zomba Rural district

A. 2007/08 school year



B. 2017/18 school year



Source: Researcher's calculations based on 2008 and 2018 EMIS databases.

6.2.3 Schools with a surplus versus schools with a shortage of teachers

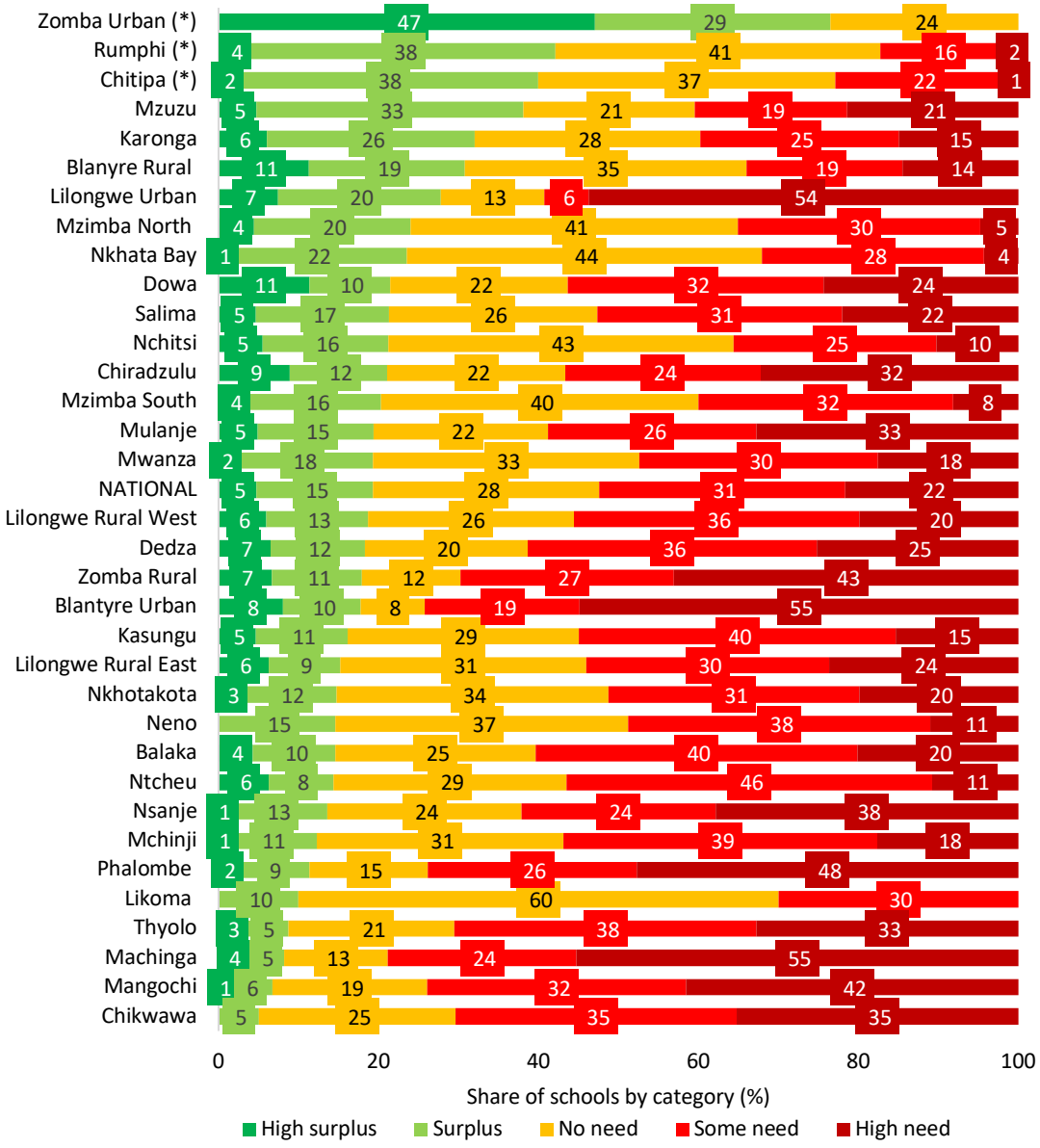
National level perspective

Nationally, the average PTR fell from 78 to 70 over the period corresponding to the implementation of the NESP period (2008-2017). However, these figures disguise the huge variation in PTRs across schools, which ranged from between five to 860 pupils for every teacher. My analysis started by evaluating the extent to which teachers were inefficiently distributed when taking the government target that distribution should be on the basis of a 60 to 1 ratio. To do this, I used the categorisation of schools presented in Chapter 5, which involved drawing on the categories DeStefano (2013) developed in his study.

Figure 6.2 shows that in the school year 2017/18 over half of all the 5,594 public primary schools in Malawi appeared to be falling short of the number of teachers needed to meet the 60 to 1 target against their enrolment levels. In 21 out of 34 education districts in Malawi, more than half of the schools either had a high need or some need of teachers. At the other extreme were those primary schools with an excess of teachers compared to what they needed to achieve the 60 to 1 PTR. In 2017/18, close to one-fifth of public primary schools fell under this category.

The district level breakdown indicates that regardless of whether one was experiencing an overall shortfall of teachers or not, all 34 districts had schools under their jurisdiction that had surplus teachers to requirements. Moreover, all districts, apart from Zomba Urban district, had primary schools with a shortage of teachers. This suggests the inefficient distribution of teachers was a systemic issue present in all education districts.

Figure 6.2: Share of primary schools with s surplus or shortage of teachers by district for the 2017/18 school year



Source: Researcher's calculations based on 2018 EMIS database.
Note:
[1] Districts marked with an asterix (*) have achieved the PTR of 60 pupils to one teacher.
[2] Districts are ranked from highest to lowest according to the combined share of total schools with high surplus or a surplus of teachers in schools.

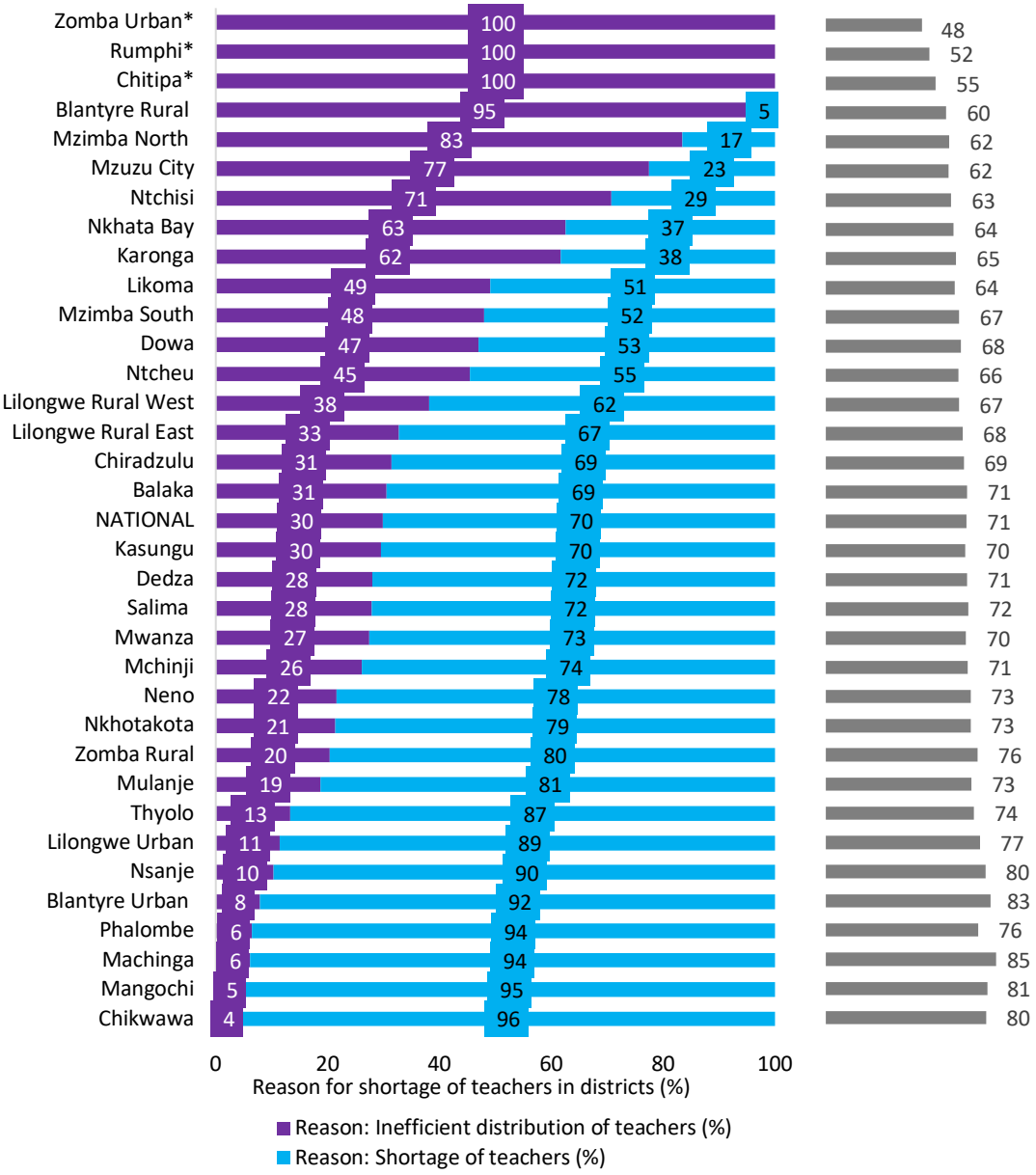
For the school year 2017/18, the primary education sector had 72,613 teachers compared to the 85,479 teachers that it needed were it to meet the government-set PTR target of 60 to 1 (an overall shortage of 12,866 teachers). The shortage of teachers appears to have been exacerbated by the share of schools with a surplus of teachers. When factoring in the inefficiency of how teachers were being distributed, the teacher shortage rose to 18,354. The next part of my analysis distinguished between the two causes of the teacher shortages

at the national and district levels. I achieved this by isolating whether the teacher shortage by district was due to the shortfall in overall numbers needed to reach the 60 to 1 PTR target, or if it was owing to the inefficient distribution of teachers to schools that had surplus teachers (Figure 6.3). The formula setting out how this was calculated was provided in Chapter 5.

Using this approach, 70 percent of the teacher shortage was attributed to a shortfall in teachers, with the remainder being due to their inefficient distribution. This was the equivalent of 5,475 teachers, or 8 percent of the total primary teaching force in school year 2017/18. Put another way, the teacher shortage was 43 percent higher than it needed to be owing to the inefficient distribution of teachers. Great variation existed between individual districts as to whether the reason behind the teacher shortage was due to the shortfall in overall numbers or because of inefficient deployment. Inefficient allocation of teachers as a reason for the overall shortage of teachers ranged from 95 percent in Blantyre Rural to 4 percent in Chikwawa in 2018. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the data shows an inverse correlation between the overall PTR and the share of the teacher shortage attributed to inefficient allocation. In other words, the closer a district was to reaching the 60 to 1 PTR, the greater the overall shortage of teachers was attributable to their inefficient deployment.

The data reveals two things. Firstly, for each of the 31 districts where a teacher shortage existed, this was larger than necessary given the overall teacher numbers available to reach the 60 to 1 PTR target. Secondly, a district close to achieving the 60 to 1 PTR target was not necessarily going to see its teacher shortage problem disappear. The data supports the perspective that there was a systemic country-wide problem of district officials failing to deploy teachers to work in schools where there was a shortage, or otherwise reallocating teachers from schools with a high surplus to those where there was a shortage.

Figure 6.3: Reason for teacher shortage by district and corresponding PTR for the 2017/18 school year



Source: Researcher's calculations based on 2018 EMIS database.
Note:
[1] Districts marked with an asterix (*) have achieved a PTR of 60 to 1.
[2] Figure ranks districts from highest to lowest, according to where the share of the shortage of teachers is due to the inefficient distribution of teachers.

District level perspective

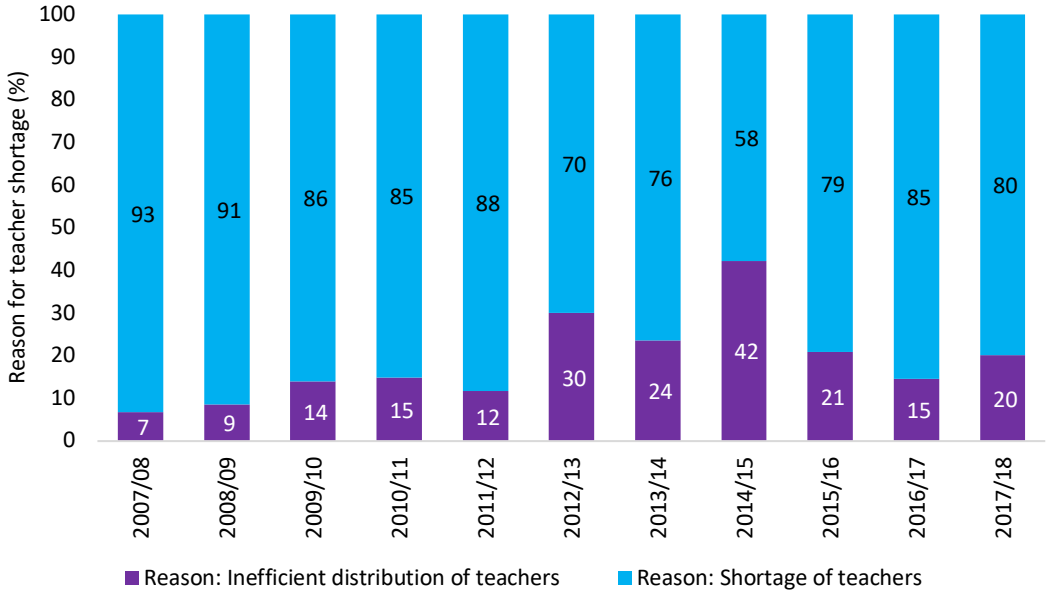
The sections above have provided a brief snapshot concerning the problem of inefficient distribution of teachers that all districts, to varying degrees, have been facing. For the remainder of this chapter, the analysis discusses the inefficient deployment of teachers within the context of Zomba Rural district. The purpose is to consider the progress made towards meeting the overall NESP target, with a specific focus on whether teacher deployment has been carried out equitably and in a way that has come closer to achieving the 60 to 1 PTR for all schools. While the national level analysis discussion in the previous section largely focused on a standalone period of school year 2017/18, the discussion in relation to Zomba Rural district considers this in the context of the last decade.[65]

Zomba Rural district is the home district of the ex-President of Malawi, Joyce Banda (2012-2014).[66] While the district still experienced an overall shortfall in teachers during this period, the total number of teachers rose significantly during her presidency. Zomba Rural district experienced the sharpest increase in teacher numbers between 2011/12 and 2012/13, which corresponded to the first year of Joyce Banda's presidency. Compared to the national average of 15 percent, the growth in teacher numbers was 26.8 percent in Zomba Rural district. This large increase caused the district's PTR to fall from 85 to 1 to 70 to 1 in the space of one year. In fact, of the total increase in teacher numbers between 2011/12 and 2012/13, seven percent went to Zomba Rural district alone (see Appendix Table A.2).

Alongside this growth in teachers, the share of schools experiencing a shortage in declined from 69 in 2011/12 (the year before Joyce Banda became president) to 54 percent in 2014/15 (the last year of her presidency). Moreover, over the same period the share of schools with teachers surplus to requirements rose from 16 to 26 percent. While the inefficient distribution of teachers accounted for 12 percent of the district's teacher shortfall in 2011/12, by 2014/15 this had risen to 42 percent (Figure 6.4).

[65] This also corresponds to the operational period relating to the NESP.
[66] The period of Joyce Banda's presidency corresponds to EMIS years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Figure 6.4: Reasons for a shortfall in teachers in Zomba Rural District: 2007/08 to 2017/18



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

Table 6.2: Teachers needed versus numbers teaching in Zomba Rural district

School year	PTR	Enrolment	Teachers	Change in number of teachers from previous year (%)	Teacher Shortfall (overall)[1]	Teacher Shortfall (actual)[2]	Teacher surplus[3]	Share of Zomba teacher workforce (%)[4]
2007/08	95	165,101	1,736		1,010	1,065	72	4.2
2008/09	98	164,374	1,684	-3.0%	1,063	1,135	99	5.7
2009/10	93	170,729	1,845	9.6%	1,001	1,001	127	6.9
2010/11	84	179,100	2,140	16.0%	836	966	146	6.8
2011/12	85	189,987	2,229	4.2%	897	986	118	5.3
2012/13	70	199,128	2,827	26.8%	496	683	211	7.5
2013/14	75	208,077	2,783	-1.6%	687	885	212	7.6
2014/15	71	214,068	3,025	8.7%	469	793	341	11.3
2015/16	79	209,356	2,653	-12.3%	799	1,033	220	8.1
2016/17	79	222,635	2,828	6.6%	883	1,022	151	5.3
2017/18	75	226,444	3,036	7.4%	812	1,008	208	6.9

Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.
Notes:
[1] Teacher shortfall (overall) refers to the shortfall in the number of teachers needed for Zomba Rural district to reach 60 to 1 PTR.
[2] Teacher shortfall (actual) refers to the shortfall in the number of teachers when selecting those schools falling under the categories where there is a shortfall in teachers, and summing up exactly how many teachers the schools fall short of reaching 60 to 1 PTR.
[3] Teacher surplus refers to the sum of teachers in schools where there is a surplus of teachers who are not needed to reach the 60 to 1 ratio.
[4] Share of Zomba teacher workforce refers to what share surplus teachers falling under [3] make up of the total teacher workforce in Zomba Rural district.

A comparison of the status of 186 schools that had data for both 2007/8 and 2017/18 indicates that when comparing the categories that school falls under (high need, some need, no need, surplus, high surplus), the majority (53 percent) stayed in the same category

that they were in ten years earlier, whilst for 19 percent the categorisation had worsened, and for 28 percent it had improved. When comparing against the 60 to 1 PTR target, the situation had worsened for 39 percent of schools, and improved for 52 percent (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Change in category of school within Zomba Rural district between 2007/08 and 2017/18

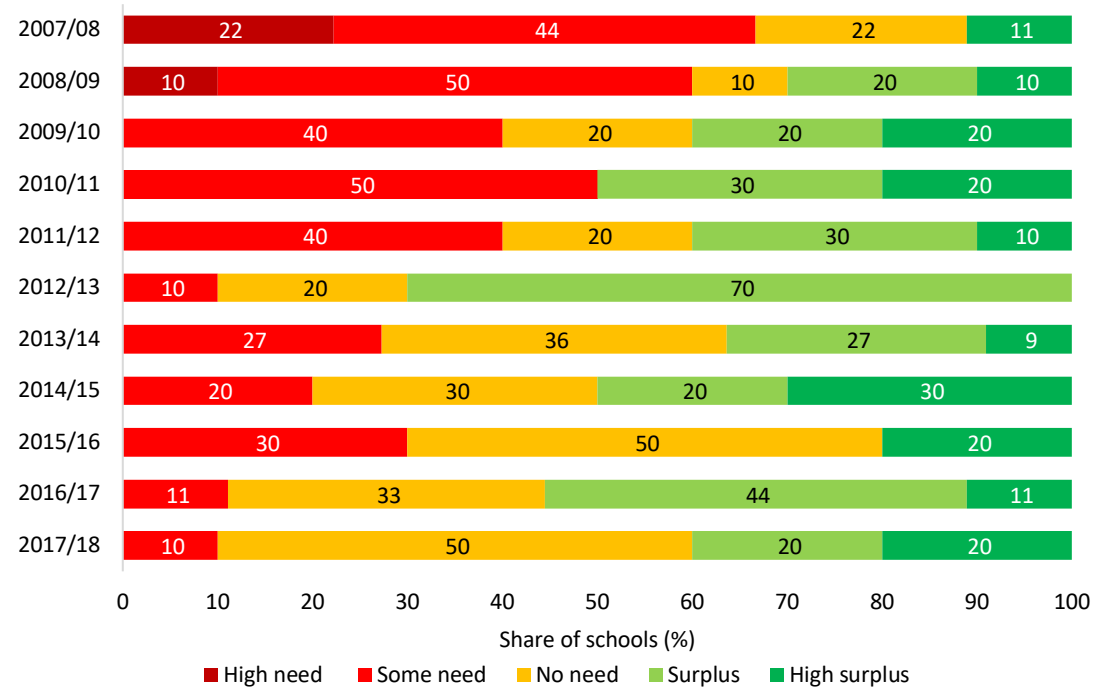
		2017/18				
		High surplus	Surplus	No need	Some need	High need
2007/08	High surplus	2 schools (1%) 2 = larger surplus	1 school (1%)	1 school (1%)		
	Surplus	5 schools (3%)	7 schools (4%) 3 = larger surplus 2 = no change 2 = smaller surplus			
	No need	3 schools (2%)	2 schools (1%)	7 schools (4%) 3 = larger surplus 2 = no change 2 = larger deficit	6 schools (3%)	8 schools (4%)
	Some need	3 schools (2%)	5 schools (3%)	10 schools (5%)	29 schools (16%) 15 = larger deficit 3 = no change 11 = smaller deficit	19 schools (10%)
	High need		5 schools (3%)	6 schools (3%)	14 schools (8%)	53 schools (28%) 18 = larger deficit 10 = no change 25 = smaller deficit

Source: Researcher's calculations based on 2008 and 2018 EMIS databases.
Note: Percentages in the parenthesis are the share of all primary schools in Zomba Rural district appearing in that particular quadrant.

Zonal level perspective

In the previous section, the data revealed that the number of surplus teachers in the district had increased under the Presidency of Joyce Banda. When considering this in relation to the 17 education zones in Zomba Rural district, the data trends illustrate that over a ten-year period, the share of schools with either a critical need or some need for additional teachers had declined in nine zones. One of these nine zones was Zone 6, which is the home area Joyce Banda. Over the entire 10-year period, Figure 6.5 shows that the first year of Joyce Banda's presidency (school year 2012/13) was when the share of schools in Zone 6 with a surplus jumped from 40 percent in 2011/12 to 70 percent in 2012/13.

Figure 6.5: Schools distributed by category in Zone 6, 2007/08 to 2017/18



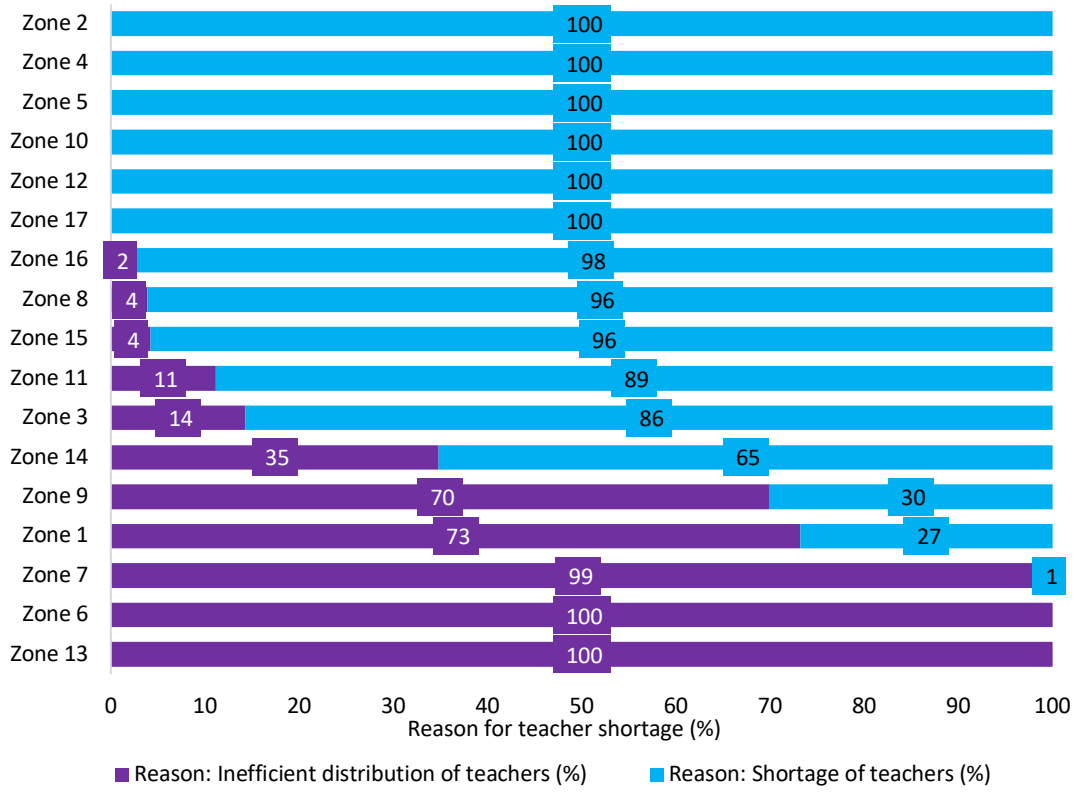
Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

Figure 6.4 considered whether the teacher shortage in Zomba Rural district was attributable to a shortfall in overall numbers of teachers, or due to inefficiency in how teachers were being deployed. Extending the same concept to 17 education zones in Zomba Rural district demonstrates the very different challenges facing zones insofar as teacher shortages were concerned. At one extreme were Zones 2, 4, 5, 10 and 12, where 100 percent of the teacher shortage was attributable to the shortfall in overall teacher numbers. Whilst at the other extreme were Zones 6 and 13 where 100 percent of the teacher shortage the zone faced overall was attributable to the inefficient way in which teachers were being distributed (Figure 6.6). What the data clearly illustrates is that the ESIP policy of redeploying teachers from where there is a surplus to where there is need appears to have been ineffectively enforced.

Another aspect that is worth noting is regarding the gender composition of teachers in zones that experienced a shortfall in teacher numbers versus those zones where the shortage was attributed to the inefficient distribution of teachers. In Zone 6 and Zone 13, where 100 percent of the shortage of teachers was attributable to inefficient distribution, approximately two-thirds of the teachers were female. At the other extreme were the zones

where 100 percent of the teacher shortage was due to teacher numbers, and where just one-third of teachers were female.

Figure 6.6: Reasons for a shortfall in teachers by education zone in Zomba Rural district for the 2017/18 school year



Source: Researcher's calculations based on 2018 EMIS database.

The selection of the two education primary zones, which were the focus of my fieldwork, offered two contrasting experiences of what accounted for the teacher shortage in Malawi. Zone 9 had a PTR of 63 to 1, according to the 2017/18 EMIS data.[67] As Figure 6.6 shows, 70 percent of the teacher shortage in the zone was attributable to the inefficient way in which teachers were being distributed. Of the 13 primary schools in Zone 9, two had a high surplus of teachers; four had a surplus of teachers; one had no need for additional ones; four had some need for additional ones; and two schools had a high need for additional teachers (Figure 6.7A). Since 2011/12 the inefficient distribution of teachers has constituted a greater reason contributing to the overall shortage of teachers rather than teacher shortages.

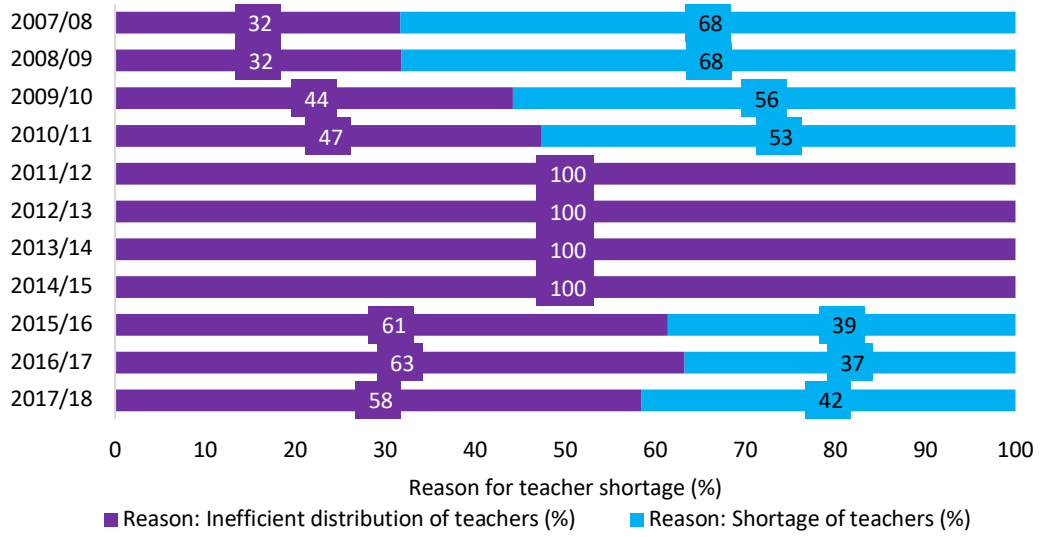
In Zone 12, on the other hand, 100 percent of the teacher shortage was attributable to a shortfall in their number. The average PTR in the zone stood at 92 to 1 according to the

[67] This section uses the EMIS data, which is based on data collected in October 2017. When I conducted my fieldwork in this zone between January and March 2018, the average PTR for Zone 9 was 56 to 1.

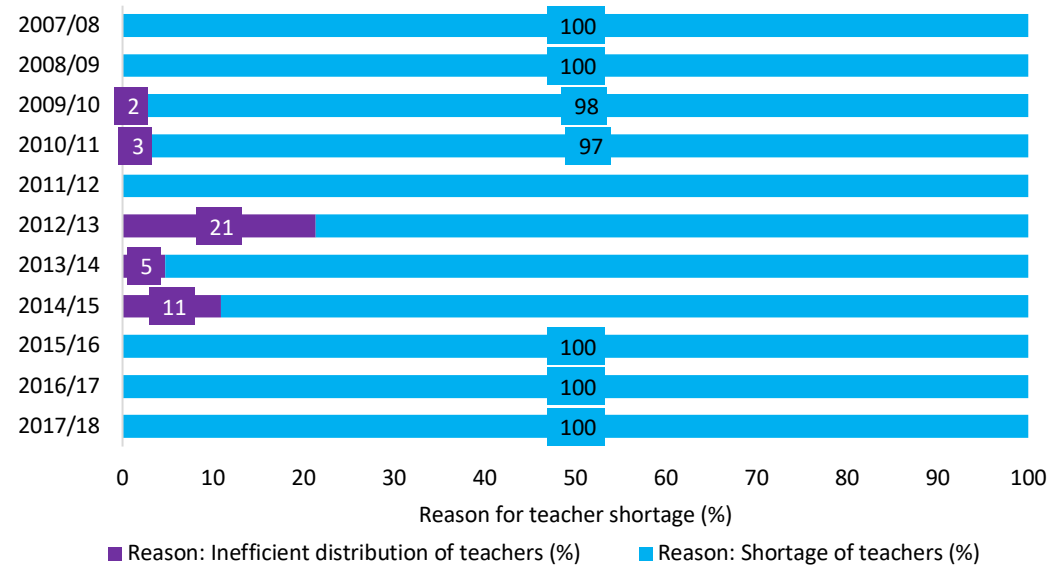
2017/18 EMIS data.[68] While this represented an improvement from earlier on in the NESP period, when the PTR exceeded 100, only one of the 13 schools in Zone 12 reported a sufficient number of teachers needed to reach 60 to 1 PTR in the school year 2017/18 (Figure 6.7B).

Figure 6.7: Reasons for shortfall in teachers over time for 2007/08-2017/18

A. Zone 9



B. Zone 12



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

[68] As was noted for Zone 9 in the footnote 67, the PTR when conducting my fieldwork in Zone 12 was 86 to 1.

6.2.4 Summary of Section 6.2

Utilising consecutive years of EMIS data, the aim of this section has been to understand the deployment of teachers, and what effect this has had on equity and efficiency. The data trends illustrate the extremities of how teachers appear to have been deployed across Malawi's primary schools. These trends corroborate what previous literature on Malawi's teacher deployment system has also concluded, which was reviewed in Chapter 3. However, the data trends also expand upon these extremities to distinguish the extent to which Malawi's teacher shortage has been caused by a shortfall, or the inefficient way in which teachers have been distributed.

6.3 Tracking teacher movement after they have been deployed

6.3.1 Introduction

Section 6.2 provided a discussion around the deployment of teachers, and the extent to which the teacher shortage crisis is due to shortfall in their numbers or their inefficient distribution. The purpose of this section is to understand better whether the deployment of teachers has been executed on the basis of need. To do this, I utilise the five categories of schools presented in Chapter 5 as a measure of a school's need for additional teachers. The section then moves on to discussing teacher movement across the education system, with a specific focus on Zone 9 and Zone 12.

I take as the starting point district-level teacher allocation data of newly deployed IPTE teachers to determine whether the distribution of such teachers was undertaken according to need. I then go on to compare whether teachers actually went to the school to which they were deployed. In the absence of a centralised system tracking the movement of teachers in the system, I have utilised the annual EMIS data available up until school year 2017/18, together with the April staff returns data from 2019. Chapter 5 has discussed the method behind this.

6.3.2 Deployment and movement of newly recruited teachers (a district perspective)

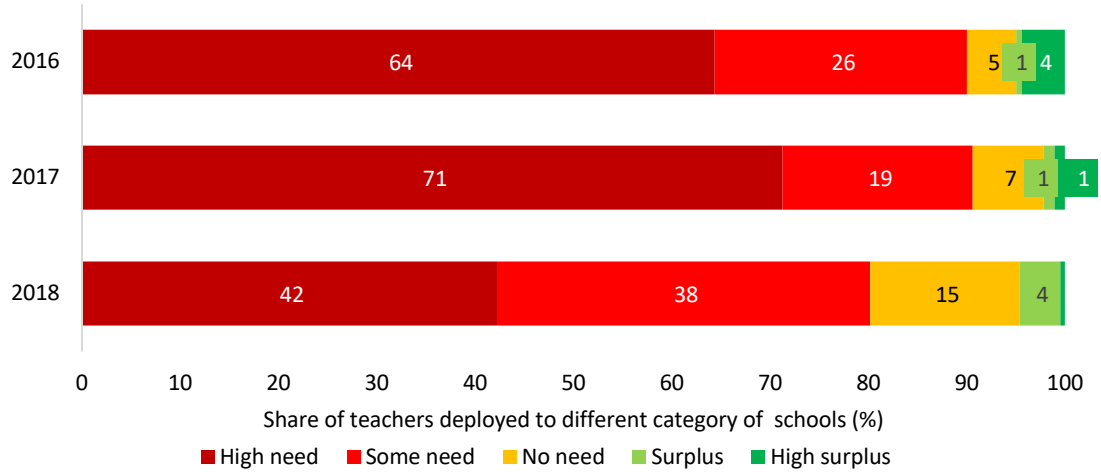
As a starting point, this subsection maps out how teachers who graduated from the IPTE programme, and who were deployed to work in Zomba Rural district were distributed to schools. The specific interest of this analysis is to consider whether deployment decisions took into account which schools had the greatest need. At first glance, it would appear that

the initial deployment for IPTE teachers in 2016, 2017 and 2018 was largely undertaken on the basis of need (Figure 6.8). In 2016, the share of teachers deployed to schools with either a high need or some need of additional teachers to reach 60 to 1 PTR was 90 percent. The equivalent in 2017 and 2018 was 90 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

However, a closer look at the data requires critical appraisal of this statement. This is because, while a number of schools with high need were receiving teachers, a significant share of schools falling under this category were not. And yet, at the same time a proportion of schools with some need or no need for additional teachers were receiving new teachers. In 2016, for instance, 40 schools experiencing a high need for teachers received additional ones. However, in that same year 31 schools did not any new teachers even though they had a high need. Similarly in 2017, the number of schools with a high need of teachers not receiving any was 23, while for 2018 it was 21 (or 25 percent) (see Figure 6.9).

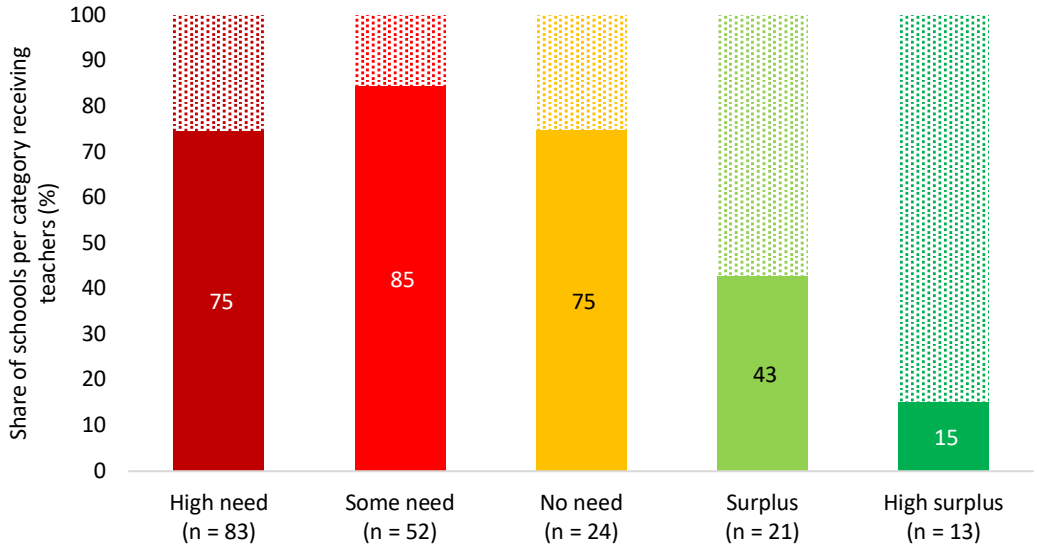
The deployment of teachers according to the rules set by government officials require that schools with a PTR of more than 60 to 1 should be prioritised when allocating newly teachers. However, a critical appraisal of this policy when set out against the data in Figure 6.9 questions the extent to which this has encouraged district officials to target the "low-hanging fruit." In other words, a question for further consideration is whether or not teacher deployment at the district level is done on the basis of where it is easier to send teachers to work in certain schools or zones. As the data here does not reveal this, it is a question explored further in Chapter 7.

Figure 6.8: Distribution of new graduate teachers according to category of schools for Zomba Rural district



Source: Researcher's calculations based on teacher deployment data and EMIS databases, various years.

Figure 6.9: Share of schools by category receiving new teachers versus those that did not in 2017/2018



Source: Researcher's calculations based on teacher deployment data and EMIS databases, various years.

The next part of my analysis tracks whether teachers were actually going to schools that they had been deployed to go and teach in. This was achieved by matching the employment number and name of the teacher graduates from the deployment lists and matching these to schools that they appeared as teaching under in the EMIS data. Time-series data for teacher graduates from the 2016 cohort extended over three years, whilst the equivalent for 2017 was two years. Teacher graduates who could be traced in the EMIS systems[69] were linked to the school they were reported to be teaching at and I divided them into five separate categories:

(i) teaching at the same primary school they were deployed to;

(ii) teaching at a different primary school, but in the same zone as their primary school of deployment;

(iii) teaching at a different primary school and in a different zone to that of their primary school of deployment;

(iv) teaching at a different primary school in a different district; and

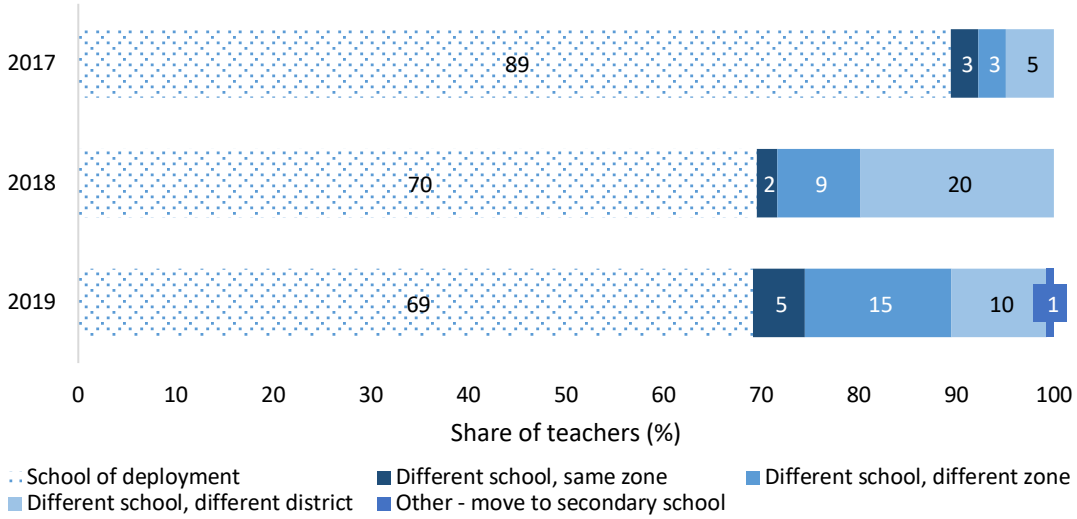
(v) teaching at a secondary school.

[69] In the case of graduates from the cohorts I have focused on, there were instances where the teacher graduate did not appear in the EMIS database in any of the years for which the data is available. I cross-checked these teacher names, and their employment numbers against the staff returns available to me and if they still not appear, I assumed they were no longer in the teaching force.

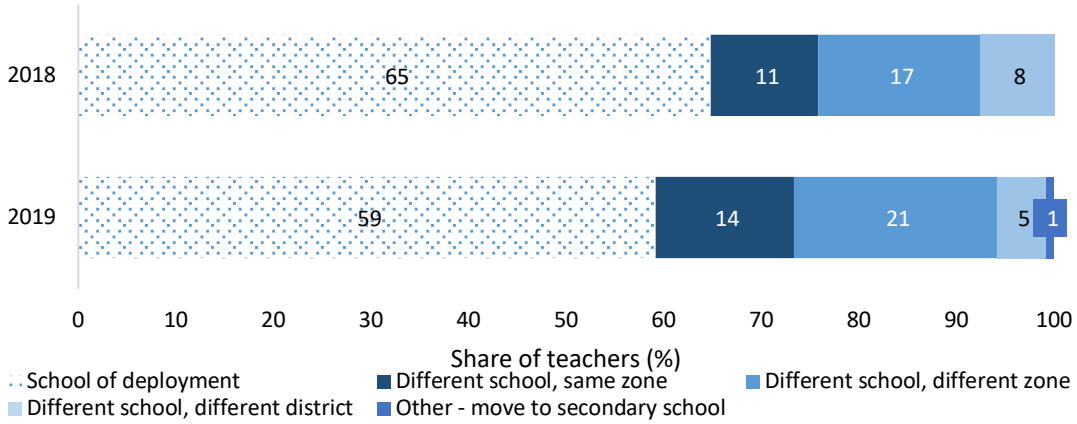
While the majority of teachers did stay in their school of deployment, a significant proportion in both the 2016 and 2017 cohort were found to transfer to teach in other schools. Of the 2016 teacher graduate cohort, 31 percent were found to be teaching in schools other than their school of deployment two years after their initial posting (Figure 6.10A). For the 2017 teacher cohort, the equivalent was 41 percent the year following where teachers were initially deployed to (Figure 6.10B).

Figure 6.10: Newly recruited teachers by year

A. 2016 teacher graduates



B. 2017 teacher graduates



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

6.3.3 Teacher deployment and movement (a zonal perspective)

Background to Zone 9 and 12

In this subsection, a more micro-level analysis is deployed, with consideration of the movement of Zone 9 and Zone 12 teachers in the education system. Currently, a major weakness relating to the management of teacher distribution in Malawi is the absence of a

national dataset that tracks the movement of where teachers are deployed to teach, and their consequent movement to work in other primary schools. For the purposes of this subsection and the proceeding one, the analysis relies on a dataset I constructed that is specifically focused on all schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12, using EMIS datasets for the school years 2007/08 to 2017/18. See Chapter 5 for an overview of this dataset.

The dataset's purpose was two-fold. Firstly, it tracked where teachers who were appearing under any of the schools in Zones 9 or Zone 12 in a given year had taught prior to arriving at that school. For the dataset, the assumption was made that any teacher not appearing in previous years of EMIS was a new teacher. Secondly, the dataset tracked where Zone 9 and Zone 12 teachers who had been reported as teaching in a school in those zones at some point, were now teaching even though they no longer appeared as doing so at that school.

I then disaggregated the type of teacher movement according the following categories:

1. Between two schools in the same zone;
2. Between a school in either Zone 9 or 12 and a school in another primary education zone in Zomba Rural district;
3. Between a school in either Zone 9 or 12 and a school in another district outside of Zomba Rural district.

Finally, I considered whether the change between where a teacher had previously taught compared to their current location had led to a worsening or an improvement in the allocation of teachers, according to the categorisation of the school in that year. Through this micro-level analysis of two contrasting zones, whether the movement of teachers helped or hindered the objective of equitably distributing teachers was addressed.

Movement of teachers into schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12

The first part of the analysis considered the movement of teachers coming to teach in a school within Zone 9 or Zone 12. For both zones, teachers for whom this was their first teaching appointment made up the largest component of incoming teachers between school year 2007/08 and 2017/18. However, Zone 12 schools appeared to depend much more upon the deployment of this category of teachers than Zone 9 (62 percent and 33 percent, respectively). In two-thirds of all cases where a teacher had been deployed to work in a school in Zone 9, they appeared to be established teachers transferring from another school. The equivalent figure for Zone 12 was two-fifths of all cases.

Micro-analysis suggests that the vast number of cases which involved teachers transferring to come and teach in a school in Zone 9 from other schools outside of Zomba Rural district (20 percent of cases) were from neighbouring districts (Machinga, Mangochi and Phalombe). Not only do these districts have some of the highest PTRs in the country, but they also have the highest proportion of schools where there is either a high need or some need for additional teachers. Similarly, teachers who were coming to work in Zone 9 from other zones in Zomba Rural district (23 percent of cases) were overwhelmingly coming from schools/ zones where a shortage of teachers existed. In 45 percent of cases where a teacher was transferring to come and work in Zone 9 from another zone in Zomba Rural, it was from a school with either a high need or some need for additional teachers to a school in Zone 9 with a high surplus/ surplus or no need for teachers[70] (Figure 6.11A).

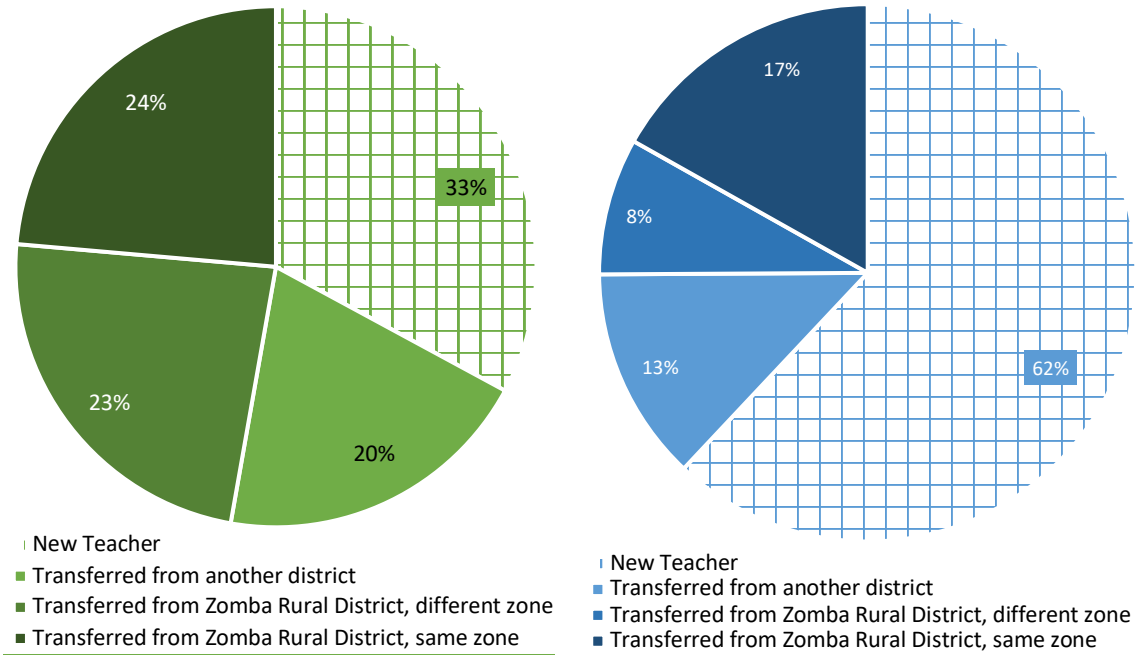
In Zone 12, on the other hand, teacher transfers from other zones in Zomba Rural district made up a very small proportion of all teacher movement into Zone 12 (8 percent). These results are perhaps not surprising given the remoteness of Zone 12, and thus, teachers in Zomba Rural district were more likely to have greater knowledge of the zone compared to those coming from outside of the district (see Chapter 7 for discussion on this). Almost one-in-five teachers who transferred to work in a school in Zone 12 were from other schools in the same zone (Figure 6.11B).

Teachers transferring from another school, who came to teach at a school in either Zone 9 or Zone 12, had very different effects regarding how their redistribution affected equity. In the case of Zone 9, these transfers appeared to have redistributed more teachers from schools with a high need or some need for teachers to schools where there was already a high surplus or surplus of teachers (Figure 6.12A). In the case of Zone 12, there appeared to be a slight improvement in the distribution towards schools with a high need for teachers. This is not altogether surprising given that most schools in Zone 12 fall under this category (Figure 6.12B).

[70] In the majority of cases, this appears to have benefited School F and School G.

Figure 6.11: Type of movement into schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12

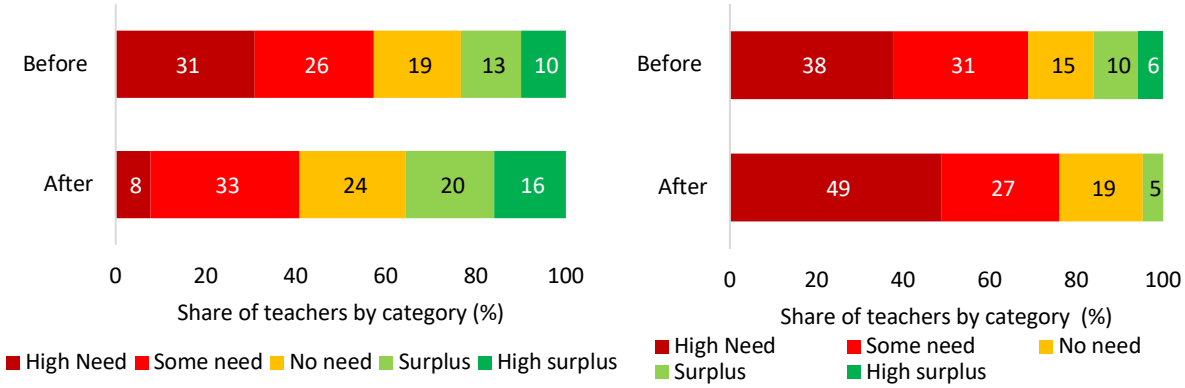
A. Zone 9 (n = 377) *B. Zone 12 (n = 279)*



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

Figure 6.12: Effect of teacher transfers into schools on equitable distribution by category of school

A. Zone 9 *(n = 253)* B. Zone 12 *(n = 106)*



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

Movement of teachers out of schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12

Regarding Zone 9 and Zone 12, teachers who left the teaching profession made up 32 percent of cases in Zone 9 and 41 percent in Zone 12. The remainder were teachers transferring out of a school to go and work elsewhere in the primary education system.

In Zone 9, teachers transferring out of schools to other districts made up 16 percent of cases. Of these, 45 percent of cases involved a transfer to a school in the neighbouring

Zomba Urban district, which borders Zone 9 and where all schools in the district have a surplus or sufficient teachers (Figure 6.13A). While government policy prevents teachers from being deployed to work in Malawi's four urban education zones (see Section 6.1), these figures would suggest that the enforceability of this policy was weakened through the teacher transfer process. In a further 29 percent of cases, a teacher who had been working in a school in Zone 9 with surplus teachers continued his or her teaching career in a school in another district where there were surplus of teachers.

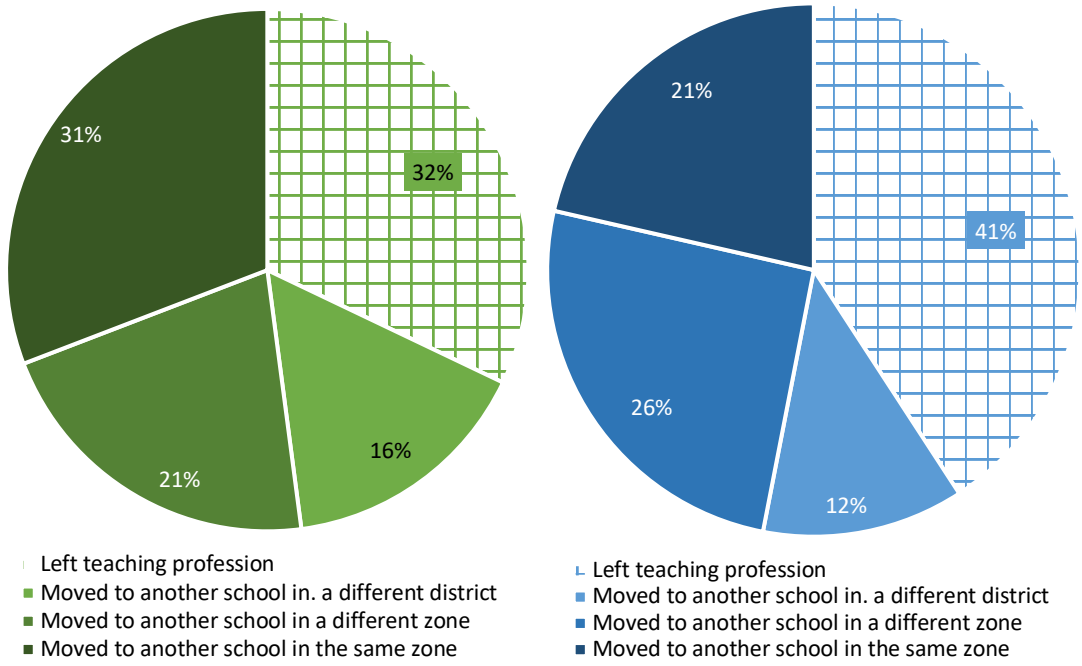
Teachers transferring to work in another zone in Zomba Rural district made up 21 percent of the cases of those moving out of a school in Zone 9. However, the zones these teachers transfer to appear to have perpetuated the problem of the inefficiency in teacher distribution, even if the school that they had been directed to go and teach in suffered from a shortage of teachers. For instance, in 63 percent of cases where a teacher transferred from Zone 9 to another education zone in Zomba Rural district, these were to schools in Zones 1, 6 and 13. However, the overwhelming reason for the teacher shortage in these zones is linked to inefficient allocation, rather than a shortage of teachers overall (Figure 6.6).

Teachers moving out of schools in Zone 9 to work in other schools in Zone 9 represented 31 percent of all cases of a teacher leaving a school. These appear to be more indicative of progress towards moving teachers from high surplus/ surplus schools to those with high need or some need. While this was limited, it had more of an equalising effect compared to the inter-zonal and inter-district movements discussed above.

Teacher transfers out of schools in Zone 12, however, tell another story (Figure 6.13B). In the majority of cases, transfers appear to have either been intra-zonal (21 percent of cases) or to other zones in Zomba Rural district (26 percent of cases). Intra-zonal teacher movement in Zone 12 appear to show teachers either transferring from schools with a high need for teachers to schools with either some need or no need for additional ones. In other words, a significant proportion of teachers transferring between schools in Zone 12 appeared to be moving to schools with a less critical shortage. As with Zone 9, a large share of total inter-zonal transfers from Zone 12 involved moving to teach in Zone 6 and 13 (33 percent), albeit a lower share. Teacher shortages in these zones, as discussed, were due to inefficient distribution rather than an overall shortfall.

Figure 6.13: Type of movement out of schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12

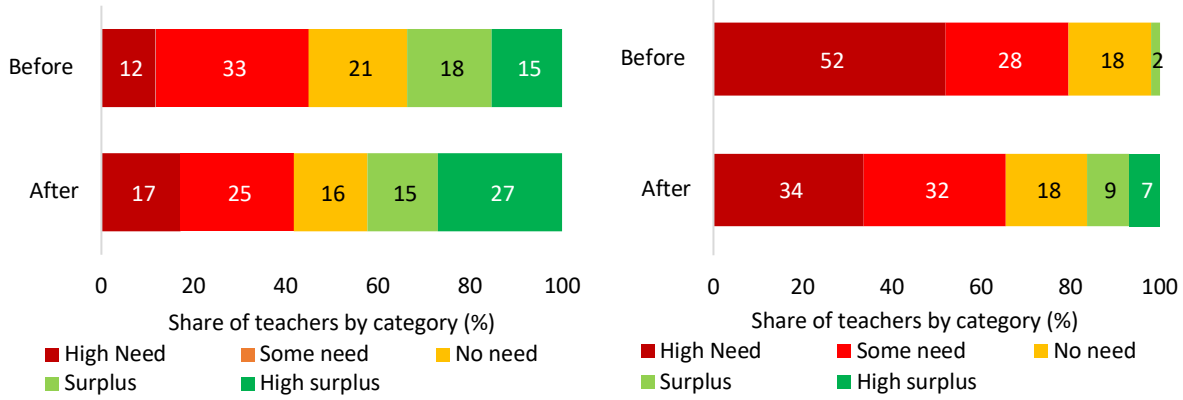
A. Zone 9 (n=240) *B. Zone 12 (n=196)*



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

Figure 6.14: Effect of teacher transfers out of schools on equitable distribution by category of school

A. Zone 9 (n = 163) *B. Zone 12 (n = 116)*



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

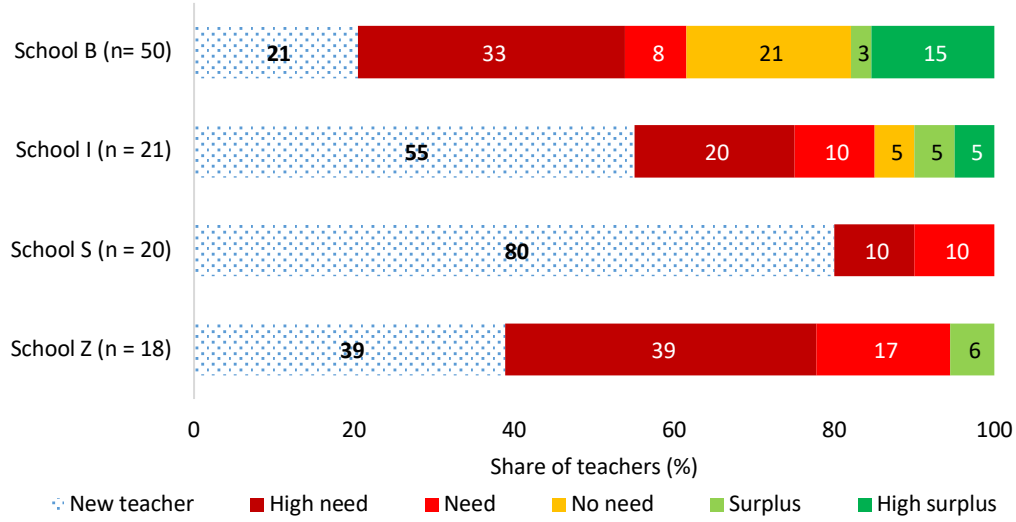
6.3.4 Movement of teachers into and out of the four case study schools

In this final subsection, I extend the analysis specifically in relation to the four schools that were selected as case study schools for this thesis. To recapitulate, School B had a surplus of teachers, School I and School S had a shortage of teachers and School Z had no need for additional teachers. Insofar as new incoming teachers to the school is concerned, the variation as to whether they gained these additional teachers mainly through newly graduated teachers or teachers transferring illustrates large differences between the four focal schools.

School B, which had a high surplus of teachers, seems to have received the overwhelming majority of its new teachers (79 percent) from those transferring in from other schools. The majority of these were either from schools in other education zones in Zomba Rural or schools in neighbouring districts suffering from a high need for teachers (33 percent). Of all the four schools, School B appears to have had, by far, the greatest volume of new teachers through teacher transfers.

School I and School S, both of which had a need for additional teachers to reach 60 to 1 PTR, received the majority of their new teachers as newly deployed ones (55 and 80 percent respectively). While the remainder of new teachers transferring to come to work at School I were from within the zone and outside of the zone, in the cases of School S and School Z all of teachers transferred over from schools in Zone 12 (Figure 6.15).

Figure 6.15: Where new teachers have come from to join the respective four case study schools



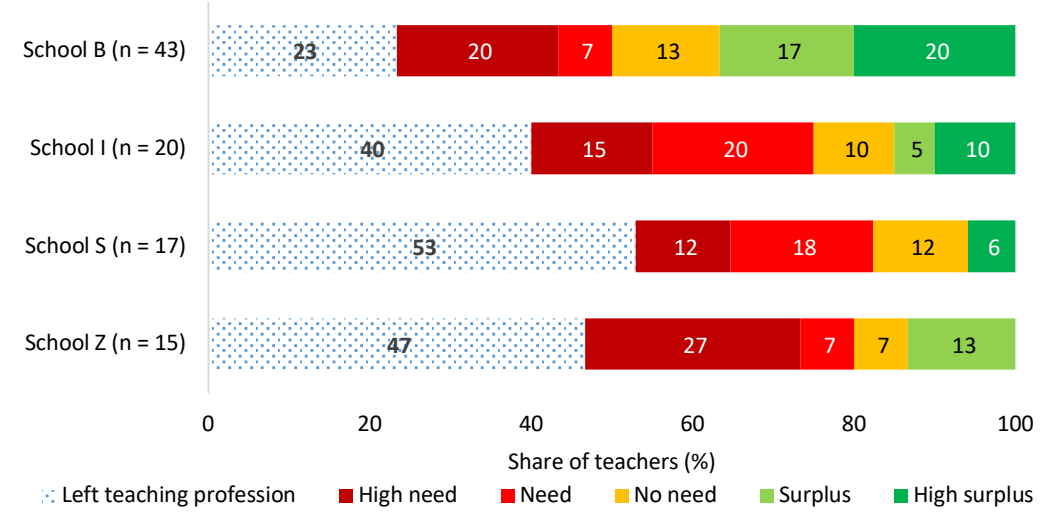
Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

Insofar as outgoing teachers to the school are concerned, once again there is a great deal of variation between schools. In the case of School B, the majority of instances where a teacher had left the school involved their going on to teach at other schools (77 percent). A large proportion of these cases were to schools that already had a surplus (17 percent) or a high surplus of teachers (20 percent).

At the other extreme are School S and School Z, where 53 percent and 47 percent of cases, respectively, were of teachers leaving the teaching profession permanently. Regarding cases

involving teachers moving to another school, these were mainly to other schools with a high need or need within Zone 12 (Figure 6.16).

Figure 6.16: Where teachers have gone to after leaving the respective four case study schools



Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

6.3.5 Summary of Section 6.3

In this section, how the deployment of newly recruited teachers was determined other than by factors concerning the critical need for new teachers has been discussed. While deployment appears to have targeted schools where there was a need for additional teachers, these were often not those with the highest need. Similarly, teacher transfers based on a micro-level analysis appeared to show how this worked against the principles of equity when based on teacher need.

Conclusion

Chapter 6 has presented a number of trends relating to the between school deployment of teachers, which has led to large variations in the PTR between different schools. A number of these trends link back to the Levy-Walton framework, which was presented in Chapter 4. These are as follows.

A first set of findings relating to the national policy instructing how teacher deployment should be undertaken appears to have been weakly enforced at district level to the detriment of equity considerations. The data indicates that several strategies, including limiting the deployment of newly graduated IPTE teachers to the four urban districts and redeploying teachers to schools with need, appear not to have been implemented at the district level.

A second set of findings relates to how the deployment of new teachers to schools with the most critical need may be failing due to the very broad instructions in place regarding how they should be distributed. The majority of teachers did appear to be deployed to schools where there was at least some additional need for them. However, given that the vast majority of schools in Zomba Rural district fall in the high need category, this raises the question of how effective the strategy in place is in ensuring teachers do get deployed to schools with the most critical shortages.

A third set of findings was the absence of accurate data to monitor effectively whether the deployment and transfers of teachers was being done with equity considerations in mind. This related more to my own experience as a researcher of collecting and analysing data for this chapter which was made challenging due to the absence of an established teacher tracking database in place.

Finally, the data appears to suggest that Zomba Rural district benefited from the largest increases in teacher numbers during the Presidency of Joyce Banda, whose home village is in the district. This period also coincided with when the inefficient distribution of teachers accounted for the largest share of the teacher shortage for the period considered for this study.

Chapter 7 continues the discussion on the first theme of this thesis, this being teacher deployment between schools. It presents the themes emerging from the qualitative stakeholder interviews with government and school actors on this issue. The reasons pertaining to the trends and patterns identified in this chapter in relation to teacher deployment between schools are probed in detail.

Chapter 7: What are the main challenges in managing equitable teacher deployment to schools?

Chapter purpose and structure

Chapter 6 presented my findings of the administrative data analysed to understand how inequitable the deployment of teachers was. The purpose of Chapter 7 is to address the second research question of this thesis, which asks *"What are the reasons for the uneven deployment of primary school teachers between schools?"* It builds on Chapter 6 by synthesising what education stakeholders identified as the main reasons for the continued inequitable deployment of teachers. The data for this chapter comes from my field notes and transcribed interviews that I administered with key informants at ministry, district, zonal and school levels.

Chapter 7 is structured as three main subsections. Section 7.1 discusses the processes relating to teacher deployment and transfers. This prefaces the interrogation later on in the chapter that considers how the system deviates from these processes. Section 7.2 discusses both the mechanisms teachers utilise to help get deployed/ transferred to a favourable school, and what makes the enforceability of equitable teacher deployment challenging. Finally, Section 7.3 discusses the ineffective monitoring systems relating to where teachers are teaching in the system.

7.1 Processes regarding the deployment and transfers of teachers

7.1.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 identified the wide variations in pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) between primary schools. Like most districts in Malawi, Zomba Rural district is characterised by schools with critical shortages of teachers existing alongside those with surplus numbers. In this section, the policies around teacher deployment and transfers in the context of Malawi's primary education system are analysed. The purpose is to understand how stakeholders interpret these policies in their day-to-day decision-making and how compatible these are with the objective of equitable teacher deployment. Transcribed responses in this chapter have been colour coordinated according to the type of actor interviewed. Central level government

official responses are in red; district level government official responses are in orange; zonal level government official responses are in yellow; headteacher/ deputy headteacher responses are in green; and teacher responses are in blue.

7.1.2 Deployment of teachers to districts

Up until 2017, the Basic Education Directorate at central headquarters allocated recently graduated Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE)[71] teachers to enable all districts to reach an average PTR of 60 to 1. However, from 2017 onwards the formula was adjusted and based on the following variables: (1) 60 to 1 PTR,[72] (2) whether it is a Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project (MESIP) district and (3) the number of classes/ streams per school.[73] The districts chosen for the MESIP project were intended to be those with the worst Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) results in terms of performance. Districts selected for MESIP were Chikwawa, Dedza, Kasungu, Lilongwe Rural West, Machinga, Mangochi, Mzimba South and Thyolo. Officials I interviewed privately, however, indicated that the selection of Thyolo district was due to it being the then President Peter Wa Mutharika's home district.

Currently government policy requires IPTE teachers to work in Malawi's 30 rural districts. The remaining four urban education districts (Blantyre Urban, Lilongwe Urban, Mzuzu City and Zomba Urban) are not meant to receive any teachers who have been newly recruited (Asim et al., 2017). IPTE graduates can indicate a first, second or third preference as to which district they want to teach in. A ministry official indicated how this was problematic in practice:

> *"I would really wish that everybody goes to at least their first choice or second choice district. But with all these numbers choosing districts near Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, Zomba cities it's very difficult."*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

[71] ODL graduates, on the other hand, are sent to teach in the schools they were assigned to when carrying out their teaching practice.
[72] Enrolment and staffing data is taken from the most recent EMIS data available when coming up with the formula.
[73] The Basic Education Directorate formula came under pressure to adjust the formula to ensure at least one teacher per class, which, in the case of small schools, would require more than one teacher for every 60 pupils.

Another official discussed the problem regarding the background of the teachers who end up applying and enrolling on the IPTE course. The great majority do not come from rural districts where there is the greatest need for teachers:

"Unfortunately those other districts – when we advertise for them to go to the Teacher Training Colleges – not many apply. The Mangochi one, the Nsanje one[74]….Obviously the more we continue to choose teachers from these urban centres, the more challenges we have in deploying them in the other districts."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

A further problem identified by school and zonal level interviewees was the conditions under which teacher trainees carry out their training practice.[75] According to school respondents at School B, which has had student teachers in the past, student teachers are allocated to classes that cannot exceed more than 60 pupils:

"For student teachers, we cannot let the other learners to go in that class, because sometimes...the supervisor for that students they do come. So, they just want 60 learners in that class."
(Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

"So, those student teachers are supposed to have their own class and the number of learners to be in that class should be not more than 60."
(Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

Housing provision for teacher trainees was a further condition stakeholders raised, which determined whether schools received teacher trainees or not:

"The lecturers from Phalombe TTC – they came to each and every school in the zone. Now, if they find that there is a house for the student teachers, it means you were allowed to be given student teachers. But those schools which had no houses, there are no student teachers."
(Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

The Primary Education Advisers (PEAs) also indicated that the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) often preferred schools within easy reach to enable supervisors to monitor their student teachers effectively:

"You know those college tutors they want their students to be in schools where there can be easy monitoring for them. More especially, where there are very good roads and very good accommodation for the students."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

[74] These two districts would be considered rural in nature, and currently have some of the worst teacher shortages.
[75] There is no paperwork that references the requirements. A spokesperson for the Department for Teacher Education and Development (DTED) however confirmed that teacher trainees must be given housing and be teaching 60 pupils or less.

"So because it's coming from their colleges saying 'We want you to go to the schools where we should reach you easily'"
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

These requirements all remain at odds with the reality of the teaching conditions the average primary school teacher in Malawi experiences, particularly in rural remote areas and regarding the infant standards.

7.1.3 Deployment of teachers to schools and zones

Once the Basic Education Directorate finalises which districts teachers should be deployed to, details of those they should receive are communicated to the District Education Manager (DEM). The DEM is expected to utilise the latest enrolment and staffing data to allocate IPTE teachers to schools. However, there appeared to be an absence of specificity in directing DEMs on exactly how teachers were to be allocated. Instead, government advice was to allocate teachers to "remote" schools where there was a "shortage":

"We tell the DEMs to allocate these teachers to remote areas where the shortage of teachers is very critical. But no clear guidelines to DEMs to say go for PTR, go for this, go for that."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

District and zonal officials when questioned how new teachers should be allocated, indicated that it should be based on rural schools or those with a PTR of more than 60 to 1:

"And we must make sure that when allocating teachers those schools should get priority. That is looking at the enrolment and staffing levels; their pupil teacher ratio is above 60."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"But in the rural areas where there is critical shortage of teachers, they usually say these teachers are for these schools"
(District Education Office, Zomba Rural district)

"And then he [the DEM] asks us 'where are the shortfalls – which schools?' And we normally give him which schools have shortfalls of teachers. And then he sends those [new] teachers to the schools."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

A challenge with these guiding principles is reflected in a point made by Asim et al., who state that *"Malawi's system relies on broad rules, based around binary concepts of rural versus urban and overstaffed versus understaffed"* (2017; p. 7). A good example of this are the conditions applicants have to adhere to in order to be accepted onto the IPTE course, one of which is agreeing to work in a rural *district* for a minimum of five years. However, this criterion is somewhat redundant given 30 out the 34 education districts are considered rural

(Asim et al., 2017). Moreover, the "understaffed" versus "overstaffed" category is too broad. In Zomba Rural district, which is categorised as understaffed, 70 percent of primary schools have a PTR of over 60 to 1 (see Chapter 6).

When questioned about the deployment decisions taken to prioritise where new teachers should be distributed, district officials indicated that those schools with the highest PTR should come first:

> *"It would be those schools where the PTR is 100, 200, 300. Really the most critical schools"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

> *"Schools with the worst shortages. And by this I mean where a teacher is handling up to 100 plus children all by herself"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

However, these responses appear to contradict the data in Chapter 6. Here I showed that while the deployment of teachers was largely targeting schools with a need for additional teachers, the schools receiving new ones were not necessarily always those with the most critical need. In later responses to follow-up questions, district respondents did intimate there being difficulties in keeping teachers in schools with critical shortages:

> *"These schools whereby teachers have called me to go to see the house they are putting [up] in….When it rains, it leaks a lot…. it is very difficult to convince teachers to continue living there."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

> *"Zone 5 – and the zones on that side of the lake – our experience is if we send teachers there we know they will not stay long. So, we must think of alternative solutions."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

When I asked for clarification on what these "alternative solutions" were, the official responded:

> *"We will send them there….but we expect them to not stay long. So, we look at other schools, where the number of teachers is short of the 60 [to 1] target."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

The suggestion that a teacher will "not stay long", if sent to certain areas was further elaborated upon by the PEA:

> *"You know the DEM has to think carefully when sending teachers to these remote schools in the middle of nowhere, so the district don't [sic] lose them completely as we have if we are too forceful."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

In 22 out of the 34 education districts the majority of schools were experiencing teacher shortages (see Chapter 6). The strategic decisions taken by officials to ensure they did not lose any teachers is, therefore, an important dynamic to bear in mind.

Another challenge was the absence of a formal government definition regarding what constituted a rural school. This not only affects the deployment of teachers, but also, the allocation of the hardship allowance, which has been made available to teachers working in rural schools since 2010. The responsibility for selecting eligible schools was left up to the DEM of each district. An audit carried out in 2010 found that DEMs had failed consistently to follow the weak rules formulated at the centre concerning eligibility for schools (Asim et al., 2017). Amongst the problems relating to the scheme has been the inconsistency as to which schools are eligible for the rural allowance. In practice, schools that should have been eligible were excluded from the scheme, while those that should have been excluded received the allowance (Asim et al., 2017). This was corroborated by one central government official:

"Because....you have Sikwere[76] Primary School teachers benefiting from the rural allowance scheme. But you have Sikwere[77] Community Day Secondary School close by – they are not benefiting."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

One district official further pointed to the incompatibility of how the rural hardship allowance operates in practice in the context of a system characterised by shortages in teacher housing:

"The teachers themselves….are saying 'OK, we are at this school, but where we live is a rural area. The school, itself, doesn't have enough teachers' houses.'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

More recently, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the World Bank, attempted to move away from the binary categorisation of schools according to "rural" and "urban" (Asim et al., 2017). Schools were grouped according to four separate categories to differentiate the hardship allowance a teacher should receive (ibid.) These were Category A (most remote), Category B (somewhat remote), Category C (not remote) and Category D (urban and/ or adequately staffed). See Appendix Table A.3.

[76] Name of school changed for anonymity.
[77] Name of school changed for anonymity.

At the time of the fieldwork, this policy recommendation was still in the discussion phase and had not yet been operationalised.[78] However, government officials with background knowledge to the proposals expressed scepticism regarding its enforceability. According to these officials, differentiating the hardship allowance in the way that was being proposed was unlikely to come to immediate fruition due to the negative political ramifications:[79]

"That one has not yet come into effect – the categorisation of A, B, C, D. Actually, that one may take some time to be effective, because politically there are some negative effects."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

"With the current system a lot of teachers are benefiting from the rural allowance arrangement. But with the categorisation we are likely to lose out a lot of schools, because they have basic social amenities. Doing that now, for a political party, would be suicidal."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

The discussion later in this chapter primarily focuses on nepotism, whereby the personal relationships politicians have with teachers has been negatively affecting the enforcement of their equitable deployment. The responses from the questions relating to the rural allowance above suggest that politicians' interference is also motivated by avoiding policies that may be unpopular with teachers. Relationships of patronage to secure vote buying is a common feature of clientelist political systems, such as Malawi's (see Chapter 4).

7.1.4 Current government policy on teacher transfers

Subsection 7.1.2 and Subsection 7.1.3 have both discussed policies relating to the deployment of newly qualified teachers. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, existing literature also illustrated how teacher deployment is affected by the high proportion of teachers in the system transferring between schools (Kadzamira, 2006; Mulkeen, 2010; Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010). While clauses relating to civil service transfers do exist in the Public Service Act, ambiguity amongst stakeholders remained around whether this extended to teachers. According to one district official, the absence of a specific policy relating to teacher transfers gave the district greater discretionary powers regarding these:

[78] The draft of the Ministry's Teacher Management Strategy states *"Deployment of newly recruited teachers will be prioritized towards remote Category A and B to rationalize teacher distribution in Malawi"* (GoM, 2018; p. 132).
[79] My fieldwork took place in year before Malawi's 2019 national elections.

"Initially those ones are not spelt out clearly, which is why we use our discretionary powers within ourselves to move teachers from one point to another. And, mostly, the requests I normally get from teachers range from following husbands."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Official responsibility and jurisdiction for teacher movement within a particular district lies with the DEM. PEAs do not officially have jurisdiction over moving teachers between schools and require the formal permission of that person when transferring teachers between schools in their zone. They do, however, play an advisory role to the DEM. Nevertheless, interview responses from various interviewees indicated either a misunderstanding of the policy:

"According to local postings, as I did from School L to School I, the PEA is responsible for that. He can manage to transfer you in his zone within the zone. But district posting, you must write a letter through that PEA to the DEM."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

Or PEAs moving teachers around without seeking the permission of the district:

"The PEA would issue postings to teachers without the knowledge of this office. We would get some complaints from the schools or from other stakeholders, be it the church. We called the PEA and said, 'This is an anomaly, we are not supposed to do this.'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

While the DEM has jurisdiction over the movement of teachers in his own district, the movement of teachers between two districts officially requires formal approval from central headquarters. However, the DEMs appear to work informally with one another to arrange transfers between themselves:

"We work with our colleagues in other districts to make sure no [sic] one of us is losing too many teachers. It requires cooperation. The District [Education] Managers of both places work together"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

A central ministry person also confirmed that transfers between districts are arranged between district officials themselves:

"How it should be is that the Ministry make[s] sure that the balance of teachers is not changed between districts. But those powers of moving teachers….if districts are not losing teachers, we normally say to the DEMs 'Go ahead'"
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

This absence of Ministry involvement is coupled with the failure of mandating DEMs to report the names of teachers who have reported for duty at the district to officials at central

headquarters (see Subsection 7.3.2). This potentially allows for greater discretionary oversight by DEMs.

7.1.5 Summary of Section 7.1

This section has presented an overview of official government policy relating to the deployment and transfer of teachers in the primary education system. The section has illustrated how either the broad-based definition or absence of policies leaves officials with a great deal of discretion concerning how teacher deployment and transfer matters should be interpreted.

7.2 Factors contributing to the poor enforcement of equitable teacher deployment

7.2.1 Introduction

This section discusses some of the key factors that have contributed to government officials in Zomba Rural district being unable to enforce an equitable deployment of teachers in the district. The central focus is on exploring the mechanisms teachers have been able to utilise effectively either to resist a deployment to an "undesirable" work-station or succeed in being deployed to a "desirable" school.

7.2.2 Sanctioning a favourable school placement on marriage grounds

Studies reviewed in Chapter 3 found that local customs influence how female teachers are deployed and transferred due to traditional norms concerning marriage customs (Asim et al., 2017; Kadzamira, 2006; Moleni & Ndalama, 2004; Ndalama & Chidalengwa; 2010). This is despite the Malawi Public Services Regulations stating that *"a married Civil Servant cannot expect to receive preferential treatment in relation to his posting or otherwise"* (cited in Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010; p. 17). Specifically in relation to a female civil servant the Regulations state that *"should domestic affairs arising out of her marriage conflict or interfere with her official duties, such as posting or transfer, the Minister reserves the right to terminate her appointment"* (ibid.).

However, district-level teacher transfer data that I accessed indicated that, of the 309 cases where a teacher had transferred to another school in 2017 and the first quarter of 2018, 40 percent were due to "marriage" or "following husband." This was followed by wanting to be closer to home village or relatives (24 percent of cases) and health reasons (16 percent

of cases).[80] When asked why teachers were still granted transfers on account of their marriage status despite official regulations directing against this, stakeholders discussed the importance of local customs:

> *"In our culture marriage is respected so much….So, the woman can go to the DEM and say 'I want to follow my husband' and the DEM can give her a transfer. It is following our local customs."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School S, Zone 12)*

> *"The system is the same and the people working in the offices are the same. They are used to this tradition….You know, they say, 'If you deny a wife from following a husband, then you are abusing that one.'"*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

Another government official explained how formal regulations risked perpetuating harm and disrupting the fabric of social cohesion:

> *"That lady becomes prone to prostitution and things like those. And by denying her following her husband, you are assisting in the multiplication of HIV and all that."*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

This disjuncture between formal and informal institutions is a key feature of how personalised political settlements, like those Malawi sits under, operate. District and zonal officials, of whom the overwhelmingly majority were male, discussed how marriage was problematic in implementing formal policy as it allowed female teachers to resist being deployed to work in schools with a shortage of teachers:

> *"We will face much more resistance in placing teachers to schools which need them…because they [female teachers] might be married and would like to live along the roads."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

> *"So, when these lady teachers have been posted to, maybe, areas like Zone 14, Zone 2 they say, 'But my husband is in town so do you want to break our family?' So, the DEM has got no choice, so he says, 'OK where can I post you?'"*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

The consequence of such practices mean that education zones in Zomba Rural district closer to urban centres are far more likely to have a higher proportion of female teachers (see Chapter 6). Government officials indicated that this often meant that schools with no official vacancies had a surplus of mainly female teachers:

[80] This is when discounting for transfer cases where no reason was given as to why the transfer took place in Zomba Rural District.

"You go to a school, you find 90 percent, 99 percent are female teachers. No male teachers. Although it's not because there is an existing vacancy for the female teacher, but because of this humanitarian situation."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

"For example, in Zomba Rural, schools like Lokwere, Kadziki, Chokwera[81]….um School B….these schools their PTR is below 50. The number of teachers who go to work there – lady teachers mainly – far exceed[s] the establishment."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

In Zone 9, the PEA indicated that those schools in his zone that were closer to town had a surplus of female teachers, who were there due to their husbands' occupations:

"Because we have got schools like School G, School B, School F, School M, School L. Those schools they receive teachers – more especially lady teachers – the husbands are working in town."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

Previous studies have speculated how acquiring a transfer on the basis of marriage has led to teachers sourcing fake marriage certificates in order to secure a favourable one (Asim et al., 2017; Kadzamira, 2006). During my own fieldwork, the discussion with stakeholders corroborated this. However, upon further clarification it appeared it was the marriages themselves which were not genuine and only officiated for transfer purposes:

"A lady teacher transferred from I don't know which district. She said 'I just find a man and we officiated a wedding at the DC's [District Commissioner's] office and I presented the letter to the DEM and I am transferred now.' But the lady was single."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

"A person have a brother….Then go to district assemble and say 'This is my husband his name is so so.' And they do register, but in the real sense they are not married."
(Headteacher, School , Zone 12)

When questioned about how common this was, district officials did not appear to think it a widespread problem. However, they did cite examples of how it had allowed a teacher to transfer from a less desirable area to a more desirable one:

"You know we have discovered by chance that a teacher we allowed to transfer from Zone 2 to Zone 13[82] was in fact not married. But only because the headteacher of her school in Zone 2 alerted us."
(District Education Office officer, Zomba Rural district)

A similar case was recounted by the headteacher of School I in Zone 9:

[81] Name of schools changed for anonymity.
[82] Zone 2 is a very remote area of Zomba Rural district, while Zone 13 borders Zomba Urban and is considered peri-urban in nature.

"I ask a certain teacher….to produce a marriage certificate. And after a time, she brought the document and says 'This is my marriage certificate.' But after further investigations from other sources, we found that she was not married, but because she has documents we couldn't do otherwise [sic]."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

My follow-up question to the district official was what action, in circumstances such as the one he had described, was typically taken:

"It is difficult to plant that accusation. Here, the lady teacher has a signed certificate from the DC [District Commissioner]. We are not detectives. We must – have to – take things on the face of it. Even if we are disbelieving of what the teacher is presenting to us."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The challenge of monitoring the authenticity of marriages is further exacerbated due to the types of marriage deemed permissible under Malawi's Marriage Act. Legislation passed in 2015 recognised four different types of marriage: civil (licensed), customary (traditional), religious and permanent cohabitation. While the 2018 Teacher Management Strategy stipulates that a request for reposting due to marriage or following spouse would require *"a legally acceptable marriage certificate"* (GoM, 2018), this measure appears difficult to reconcile with the different types of marriages currently admissible under Malawi law. In addition, while the 2018 Teacher Management Strategy appears to indicate that teacher transfers following a spouse are permissible, this is in direct contradiction with the Malawi Public Services Regulations. Moreover, Cammack et al. write about customary marriages and the recognised role of traditional chiefs in Malawi society in *"fulfil[ing] their mandate through various overlapping socio-cultural and political-economic functions that have emerged historically, including overseeing initiation rituals; keeping track of sicknesses, deaths, marriages and births"* (2009; p. 22). However, paper-based marriage certificates for customary marriages are absent.

7.2.3 Sanctioning a favourable school placement on health grounds

Beyond marriage, the health status of teachers was another justifiable reason through which teachers were granted a transfer:

"If a teacher is sick. We have sent a teacher to Zone 5 for example. But the teacher – for her to access her services for example Central Hospital or District Hospital – is a problem as regards to his or her illness."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Currently, Malawi has four central hospitals in the entire country, all of which are situated in the four main cities of Malawi. These are Kamuzu Central Hospital (in Lilongwe), Queen

Elizabeth Central Hospital (in Blantyre), Zomba Central Hospital (in Zomba) and Mzuzu Central Hospital (in Mzuzu). Beyond central hospitals, each district has a hospital that serves as a referral unit for health centres in that particular district. In the context of Zomba Rural district, primary education zones in Zomba Rural district, which are in close proximity to Zomba Central Hospital are also those zones closest to the boundary of the city. One district official pointed out that many of the requests for transfers on the grounds of health were for schools close to the Central Hospital:

"Most of the teachers would like to be posted near to the Central Hospital so as to access medical attention very easily. If somebody is ill and is working in Zone 12 or Zone 3, he says 'I find problems when I am ill to move from that far to hospital.'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Despite some of the schools in the zones I conducted my fieldwork in being a considerable distance away from any type of medical facility, those that were available were closer than Zomba Central Hospital. According to one district official however, the services offered at these medical facilities were often rudimentary:

"These medical centres you find in the trading centres are not really for if you are very sick. That is mainly only at the larger hospitals with better equipment."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

On the other hand, even when specialist treatment was not required interviewees spoke about teacher resistance against seeking treatment at these hospitals:

"You know some others can even say 'I need to be very close to the hospital.' But, if you go to Zone 2 there is also a health centre down there. But they will say 'No I don't want this health centre. I want a hospital like Central Hospital."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

Government officials went on to indicate that medical letters brought in by teachers requesting a transfer on health grounds would have the backing of medical professionals:

"The [medical] letter will normally recommend that a teacher who is seriously sick be close to [Zomba] Central Hospital for adequate treatment."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"What the hospital people do, they write a report saying 'This one cannot stay at that particular school, because it is a remote area. He or she needs to be near a hospital.'"
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

However, similar to the issue of false marriages, false health certificates instructing that teachers should work in schools in close proximity to large centres were discussed by stakeholders:

> *"They can just tell the doctor 'Can you process a medical report for me and say that I have a kidney problem,' for example. So, that doctor is going to prescribe something and he is going to give that person and in return for maybe money."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

> *"They are not genuine, but they become to be genuine, because the one [sic] written those documents are professionals. So, if they stamp those letters now they become genuine to the official."*
> *(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)*

> *"Because you know corruption is everywhere. One can consult a doctor, give him something 'Do this for me so I cannot be at that place [remote school].' That happens."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

There was some ambiguity as to what constitutes a valid medical certificate. Some respondents indicated that a medical report only from the four central hospitals was recognised by the district of the proof of an illness necessitating a transfer. However, other responses from key informant interviews contradicted this, indicating that certificates from district medical centres were also permissible as evidence to district officials. According to the 2018 draft teacher management strategy, the policy going forward more clearly states that *"DEMs should accept medical certificates only from DHOs [District Health Office] or DMOs [District Medical Office] in that district where the teachers are serving"* (GoM, 2018; p. 8). However, this fails to address adequately the circumstances around the issuance of bogus certificates.

In all cases where the issue of forged certificates was discussed, interview respondents could not ascertain how prolific this was throughout the system. However, many corroborated both their existence and the form they took.

7.2.4 Political pressure and personal connections

Chapter 3 synthesised global studies which found that, in certain contexts, political patronage or clientelist vote-buying was influential in matters pertaining to teacher deployment. In the case of Malawi, Asim et al. (2017) found that it was largely nepotism that negatively affected decisions taken around equitably deploying teachers due to the personal connections they had with political figures.

One of the areas that I explored was the extent to which outside interference adversely affected the enforcement of equitable teacher deployment. When asked what prevented teachers from being deployed to schools based on need, interviewees from all levels of the education system attributed this to teachers' personal connections:

"So, these people are the ones that don't want to work in the rural, because they have backing, they will say 'My so so so so is working at the Ministry. When the postings come out I will be working in the city.'"
(Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

"The only problem is that relationships breaks everything. Somebody can say 'My son has been posted to Zone 5. Can you please assist me?' So, you find that that person who is saying that is at Headquarters. So, the DEM pulls that teacher back."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

"Where maybe you are asked by the Minister or by the SEST [Secretary for Education, Science and Technology] or by the Chief Director 'I have a friend's daughter somewhere – you posted him in Chitipa, but the daughter is in Lilongwe.'"
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

My questions sought a better understanding of who the individuals were that were able to apply pressure to those formally responsible for how teachers should be deployed. District officials predominantly discussed this in the context of political actors:

"We get political pressures, which are something which determines the flow of teachers from one point to another."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"We get requests from the politicians, who might wish individuals who they favour to be closer to where they might access to facilities easily. Where the politician is powerful enough the individual is moved."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

At the start of my interview schedule with one district official it was implied that the district could withstand the political pressures faced in relation to teacher deployment:

"Yes, I can say that [the district] was able to withstand the pressure. When these influential people wanted their thing to be done….you tell them the facts about it."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Later on in the interview, however, the same official indicated that the district had to acquiesce indirectly to the demands of politicians in more powerful positions.[83] This was

[83] For clarification I asked respondents to indicate what they meant by "powerful politician." This referred to a Member of Parliament from the ruling party, which at the time of my fieldwork was the Democratic Progressive Party or a Member of Parliament with strong links to other power members of the Cabinet at the central level.

through politicians taking up the issue with government officials further up the system to try and over-turn the decision of the district office:

"But the way the person [politician] may receive that, perhaps it may annoy him or her. Therefore, he will decide to take the issue further. They have taken issues further to the Ministry."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

District and local officials also discussed the pressure central headquarters officials put on district officials concerning how teachers should be deployed:

"We normally get requests that are coming from the central office. There will be some individuals who have got their relatives that are working at our districts and they would like them to be placed where there are good amenities."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"Some, they are related to other people from the Ministry…. Now that person up there can decide 'No, this one I want him to be in maybe this district.' And after some time as well you find such a teacher instead of reporting to Zone 2 will be reporting here at Zone 9."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

The personal ramifications of a bad relationship with Central Ministry officials was discussed by district officials, when I questioned what would happen if their instructions were ignored:

"We also look at our relationships with them in Lilongwe. We also need to bear in mind that our promotions….are being done through the Ministry itself."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"So, if we are not in the good books with the people out there, who can be in a position to assist you in making good appraisals of your own record. So, we try our best to be in good books again with these officials."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"The Minister may react by giving you an immediate posting [elsewhere] or they will instruct officials under them to implement [it]."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

One district official spoke of his own experience of being transferred from Thyolo district due to resisting the requests of local politicians. According to his version of events, these politicians eventually went through political officials at the Central Ministry to demand his transfer away from the district:

"Eventually, I was posted out. It persisted and persisted. And the Director [of Basic Education at Central Head-quarters] said 'Would you move and go to Zomba.'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Of the sitting elected politicians in Thyolo district, 86 percent members had been elected on a Democratic People's Party (DPP) ticket, which was the ruling party at the time of my fieldwork,[84] whilst the proportion for Zomba Rural district was 33 percent (MEC, 2014). Specifically in relation to teacher deployment, the responses above imply that despite functions relating to teacher deployment being decentralised to the district level, these decisions can and are overruled by the Central Ministry. This reflects the discussion in Chapter 4 around the decentralisation experience in Malawi, where the Central Ministry still retains significant power over sub-national functions (Thomas, 2017).

The discussion, up until now, has focused on the impact personal relationships politicians have with teachers has had on teacher deployment decisions. When selecting my two zones for study I discovered that Zone 6 was the home area of ex-President Joyce Banda (2012-2014). Upon learning this, I wished to understand whether deployment decisions were also affected by political pressure on district officials to deploy teachers in a way that favoured the home areas of important political officials. District official responses appeared to reject this as being the case for Zomba Rural district. However, one official, with experience of working in other districts, answered this in relation to Thyolo district,[85] which is the home district of two recent ex-presidents – Bingu Wa Mutharika (2004-2012) and Peter Wa Mutharika (2014-2020):

> *"You know in Thyolo….sometimes it was about officials pressuring the [district] office for more teachers to go to the President's home village, because of his strong support there. And also MPs close to the President doing the same for their areas."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

Unfortunately, no district official who I interviewed was working at Zomba Rural district office during Joyce Banda's presidency, or else was not directly involved in matters relating to teacher deployment to schools. However, the PEA of Zone 9, who at the time was working in another zone in Zomba Rural district, was able to recall this period when questioned:

[84] This was based on the 2014 Parliamentary Elections for the National Assembly, as it was this period that corresponded with my fieldwork. It is important to note that this data does not take into account politicians who may "cross the floor" to another party after the elections take place.
[85] While the study focuses on Zomba Rural District, the district of the President came up numerous times in discussion. Officials familiar with this district who I interviewed indicated that in the case of Thyolo, the interference of politicians as to how teachers should be deployed in the district extended beyond nepotistic reasons and was also related to political patronage.

"During her [Joyce Banda's] presidency, definitely the way it was done [teacher distribution] was that her area benefitted more."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

While the PEA's response was the only one of my interviewees who discussed Joyce Banda's presidency as a factor affecting teacher deployment, his claim is supported by the data presented in Chapter 6. This appears to lend support to the idea that deployment of teachers was carried out in a way that benefitted Zomba Rural district more generally and over time benefited many of the schools in supportive home constituencies.

Given the nature of the study, the majority of the discussion has considered the impact of political interference of teacher allocation at the district level. However, I also sought to understand how these same issues affected the deployment of teachers to districts by the Central government. I began by questioning the extent to which officials believed that the teacher deployment to districts was informally captured by political influence:

"This is a political office! And it's not an office where you would say 'I will do this independent of external interference.'"
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

While the official indicated he *"would not talk about teachers"* specifically, he did discuss how his office was subjected to pressure when allocating other resources:

"Somebody up, up, up there. He comes and says 'My school needs desks as well.' What do you do? You get maybe 20, 25, 10, 15 from one school and give it to the school that already has the resources."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

These other resources – unlike school grants and teachers – are not distributed according to a nation-wide funding formula. Interference relating to the distribution of desks was similarly corroborated by officials at the district level, one of whom specifically highlighted it as a "political" issue:

"So sometimes, there is some – I feel –political issues creeping in. It could be it is the home of one of the ministers asking for desks, where desks are already present in the school."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"Desks have been donated by UNICEF to the Ministry. And the Ministry may look at which districts are to be given the desks…. Somebody influential has known that the Ministry has received this donation and goes to ask about that donation. 'Would you please consider my district?'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The same central government official, who appeared reluctant specifically to discuss interference of his office's role in deploying teachers to districts, later brought up MESIP, which provides funding to eight of Malawi's 34 education districts. Among the eight MESIP districts is Thyolo district (the home district of ex-President Peter Wa Mutharika) and Machinga (the home district of ex-Minister of Education Bright Masaka).[86] According to this official, however, not all MESIP districts that were selected met the criteria for selection:

> *"MESIP districts were those worst-performing districts. Those who did [the] worst on [the] PSLCE. But Thyolo – the President's district – was by then doing better. It did not meet the requirement for a MESIP district."*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

Media reports at the time of my fieldwork also discussed how the districts of Machinga and Thyolo benefited more from MESIP funds compared to the remaining six MESIP districts. Why MESIP is important in the context of teacher deployment is two-fold. Firstly the teacher allocation formula to districts has recently changed. Being a MESIP district now carries more weight within the teacher allocation formula and ensures additional teachers are disbursed there (see Subsection 7.1.2). Secondly, MESIP districts also benefit from the sort of investments that attract teachers to go and work at certain schools, e.g. provision of more teacher housing.

To date, the discussion has focused largely on the connections that teachers (or regions) have with politicians or government officials. Another example identified in the interviews of interference by individuals not formally responsible for the deployment of teachers was soldiers. Zomba Rural district is home to three army barracks. One district official discussed the provisions made for the spouses of soldiers to be placed to work in schools near to the army bases:

> *"We have got soldiers, for example, who are resident in Salima. And then they are posted to Zomba. Therefore, the man who has come to work in Zomba in Cobbe Barracks or Airway, and the wife wants to follow. So, we have to make arrangements for that."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

However, two of the three army barracks are situated close to Zomba's town boundary. Schools that are based near to this boundary already have a large surplus of teachers. The

[86] These officials were in office at the time that the MESIP districts were being selected and when funds were being disbursed in the first phase.

PEA of Zone 9 gave a practical example as to how the location of the barracks meant him losing a teacher from School M to a school in Zomba Urban district:

> *"So, those people [soldiers] always claim very strongly that 'We want our wives to be very close to us.' I remember I had one teacher at School M. Her husband is a soldier. So the DEM had to say 'Okay I will negotiate with the DEM Urban.' So, she went to Zomba Urban"*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

The PEA of Zone 12 talked about the coercive pressure the DEM faced when deploying soldiers' spouses to schools:

> *"If the DEM tries to remove those teachers to go to another school far from the barracks, sometimes the DEM receives threats from the soldiers….you can find teachers – more than 40 teachers – in one school."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

The PEA went onto problematise the behaviour of soldiers by discussing how official relationships of accountability are compromised by their intervention:

> *"They [the soldiers] will sometimes go to the DEMs office and demand their wives be close to them not knowing that they are employed by different people. They are working in different departments. Their wives have their own bosses and then again they have their own bosses."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

The PEA's responses summarises one of the key findings relating to the effective enforceability of teacher deployment. This is that formal principal-agent accountability relationships are severely weakened by non-education actors. These include not just the politicians and soldiers, which has been discussed in this subsection, but also health officials administering false medical letters (see Subsection 7.2.3).

So far, Subsection 7.2.4 has been focused on the negative effects of the interference of influential stakeholders on the equitable deployment of teachers at the district level. At the zonal level of the education system, the importance of personal connections has revealed the differences between Zone 9 and Zone 12 concerning how these connections were utilised. Part of Zone 9 borders the city's boundaries. Schools in this part of the zone (School B, School F, School G and School M) are considered more desirable by teachers to work in. According to interviewees, some teachers in these schools appeared closely connected to certain persons of influence:

"[Teachers in] School M and School G [in Zone 9] are well connected and others, just because their husbands are working in town. So, you can see most of the policemen`s wives are working at School M who are living in town."
(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"These are from influential families. For example, the one I know is the deputy headteacher from School B and her husband is a retired army officer and now is the accountant at a certain NGO."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

During my own visits to schools in Zone 9, teachers working in two of the schools (School B and School F) travelled to school using their own motor vehicles. Given that this is incredibly rare, I enquired who these belonged to. School actors indicated that they belonged to female teachers married to persons of high importance:

"Most of them are lady teachers coming from town. They drive their husband's cars. Their husbands – some of them are working in non-governmental organisations some of them are working at Chancellor College and whatever."
(Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

As was discussed in Chapter 6, teacher shortages in Zone 9 were largely due to the inefficient deployment of teachers among the 13 schools in the zone. Responses to questions relating to personal connections frequently mentioned teachers successfully resisting redeployment to schools in the zone with a critical shortage. The headteacher of School I (an undesirable school in the context of Zone 9) discussed the recent failure in redeploying three teachers from School B, School F and School H to go and work at School I:[87]

"Three teachers…. after seeing that they had been posted here they talked to the PEA. The PEA did not accept and said [to] them 'I sent you where there is work'…. [so they] went to the DEM…. and were sympathised and were given another posting letter to other schools."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

Upon further questioning, it was revealed that two of these teachers were redeployed to schools with a surplus of teachers within Zone 9, while the remaining teacher was redeployed to another zone in Zomba Rural district with a surplus of teachers. A further example of resistance to forced redeployment was cited by a teacher at School I:

[87] School B and School F had a surplus of teachers and while School H had a shortage, this was not as acute as for School I.

"He was given a transfer command to go to School K [a remote school]. So, he go straight to the [district] office to complain to his relative there. So, he was sent back to say 'I have spoken to the PEA. The PEA will assist you.' When he came back he was sent to School B."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

The PEA of Zone 9 similarly corroborated the connections teachers in the schools closer to the town boundary had, and the difficulty he faced in being able to transfer them to schools with a greater need:

"When you look at School M, School F, School B, the teachers there, they are difficult to move to schools in my zone, who really are in need of teachers. They are related to the policemen, to the army, to people up there at the District Commission."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"If we move them [teachers with personal connections] from those schools to other schools….in most cases it always proves [to be] a failure."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

The responses above indicate that intra-zonal transfers from schools with a greater surplus of teachers to schools with a shortage were difficult in Zone 9. However, this contradicts the data presented in Chapter 6, which appears to show that intra-zonal transfers were the only types of transfers in Zone 9 that were equity enhancing. It is important to note, however, that the responses above concern *well-connected* teachers, while the data analysed in Chapter 6 related to *all teachers*.

School actors who I interviewed in School I also confirmed the existence of teacher connections regarding the same schools that the PEA mentioned. This was often discussed in terms of what they to perceived to be their own lack of power:

"Yeah so teachers here – teachers whose villages are not from here – they plan, they want to move eventually. But without the friends….family our friends [fellow teachers] in School M or School B have? No the PEA cannot help us immediately."
(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

This was further elaborated upon by another teacher at the same school, who indicated that as a "poor" teacher there was less choice concerning where they could be placed:

"But for a poor teacher, [they] will say 'Eeeh! If I will not go there, I won't have anything to eat' So, you say 'OK, I will just go there.'"
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

In Subsection 7.1.2, how current teacher deployment policy requires newly recruited teachers to work in a rural district for a minimum of five years was discussed, with it being explained that the four urban districts were excluded. However, as I showed with the data

in Chapter 6, teachers were able to eventually transfer to one of these districts. The headteacher of School B (who had previously worked in School M) discussed how it was teachers working in the most desirable schools in Zone 9, who managed to transfer to schools in Zomba Urban district.[88] This was despite no school in the district experiencing a shortage of teachers:

> *"My fellow teachers are being posted to those schools [in Zomba Urban district] near the city. At the end of the school session maybe we can lose about 3 or 5 teachers going to urban, so creating another gap in the rural area."*
> *(Headteacher, School B, Zone 9)*

> *"A lot of teachers were moving from our zone, in particular, from School M and School F were joining our sister district, which is Zomba Urban."*
> *(Headteacher, School B, Zone 9)*

Unlike in Zone 9, teacher shortages in Zone 12 were almost completely due to the shortfall in overall numbers. Since he started working in the zone in 2014, the PEA indicated that a significant proportion of the new teachers promised to his zone did not report for duty.

> *"Teachers could be posted [to Zone 12]. Then you find they are not reporting. Maybe a quarter, a half of teachers, they do not come. When time goes you hear that the same name is, maybe, very close to town."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

Following up on what accounted for this high leakage, even when it was apparent where these teachers were now working, the PEA attributed this to personal relations:

> *"Just because of relationships. Some other education officers they tend to break the rules to say, 'I don't want my neighbour, my relative to go all that far.'"*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

Similarly, a teacher working in School S spoke about how personal connections meant that a teacher he knew, who was meant to be deployed to work at School S, was instead, reallocated to work elsewhere:

> *"We have some teachers who were posted at School S. But he managed to reject this place, because he is related with some people in the DEMs office."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School S, Zone 12)*

Like in Zone 9, however, teachers in Zone 12 appeared to indicate that resistance was only possible for teachers with ties to persons of influence:

[88] These schools are also close in proximity to the Zomba Urban district border.

"You are able to resist, if you have a backing. You are able to resist to say 'I am not going to this school, to this district.' But if you have nobody to back you, like us here, then you cannot resist.'"
(Infant standard teacher, School S, Zone 12)

Unlike the interviews with teachers in Zone 9, none of the teachers interviewed in Zone 12 indicated particular schools or teachers in the zone being linked to persons of influence. However, the PEA did indicate the pressures he often experienced from teachers whose home area was not within Zone 12. Even within such a remote zone like Zone 12, there was a hierarchy in teacher preference as to which school they would prefer to be placed in:

"Those teachers who are not from the Zone 12 area can often want to be placed in School Y, because of the amenities. We do plead with these teachers to be patient. Sometimes we do move them when we do receive new recruits."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

The last point in the statement appears to tie in with an earlier point made by the PEA in Subsection 7.1.3, where he discussed how teachers needed to be placed "carefully", so that the district did not end up losing them. In practical terms, the response above would appear to suggest that the least desirable schools in the district "lose" teachers to other more desirable schools in the zone when it receives new teachers.

To date, much of the discussion of this subsection has centred on how personal connections have weakened the enforceability of equitable teacher deployment by district or zonal officials. While these include teacher connections to personnel working at Zomba Rural district, none of the interviewees directly mentioned the DEM. However, in the case of Zone 12, the PEA transferring teachers between schools due to personal connections was discussed by school actors. According to what was discussed, Standard 8 teachers who had performed well in the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) had been transferred to School Y due to the headteacher of this school being married to the PEA:

"Last year, almost four teachers were transferred from other schools to School Y in order to boost up the performance of the school, and one of them is the one who was teaching with me in Standard 8."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

"One of the schools which was affected last year was this one, because two individuals were removed within a very short period of time, but these teachers were from Standard 8….they were removing these [because] we were able to come up with good grades."
(Headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

In another example cited by one school actor who had worked in Zone 12 for a number of years, it was explained how the previous PEA of the zone had favoured a certain school in the Zone 12 due to it falling under the same religious denomination[89] as him:

> *"The PEA….who was at this zone before the one now working….was also under that particular church. When it came to distribution of resources, it depended on his denomination….the number of teachers was much higher than other schools."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

This was corroborated by another school actor who, in addition, reported how the current PEA was also favouring schools based on his own religious denomination:[90]

> *"The person [PEA] who was working there was so much supporting School X, so School X had a lot of teachers compared to the coming in of this boss [the PEA]. Now, he is also ensuring that these schools especially the Catholic [schools]….has to have more resources."*
> *(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)*

In these examples, it would appear that, rather than teachers' personal connections, it was the affiliations a school had with government officials that were important. While it reflects a more localised example of nepotism, it nonetheless, presents an example of teachers being redirected in a way that contributes to their inequitable deployment. Although the interviewees in Zone 9 did not reflect on such a phenomenon, the locality of School B appeared to privilege it in receiving resources and other amenities that traditionally attract teachers to work at certain schools. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

7.2.5 Colluding with education officials in the system

Chapter 3 compared the transition of the form of corruption from one that was highly centralised under Kamuzu Banda's one-party political system, to one that permeated through all levels of governance after the introduction of a multi-party political system (Booth et al., 2006). The discretionary allocation of rents discussed in the context of competitive clientelist political systems is often in relation accessing high-level rents, such as natural resources, public jobs or procurement contracts (Levy, 2014). In this subsection, teacher deployment is discussed in terms of how this has been negatively impacted upon by low-level corruption at sub-national levels of governance.

[89] Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) denomination.
[90] Catholic denomination.

Fairly early on in my interviews respondents reported how teachers and district education officials from the human resources unit bypassed the DEM without his knowledge or consent to officiate teacher transfers. Both of the PEAs discussed the role of these officials in negatively affecting where a teacher could be stationed:

"And again, some other teachers are even bypassing the DEM. They go, maybe, to Human Resource Officers [and] then they process their movement. So then, we discover that this teacher has moved from this school to another school without our knowledge."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"Once the DEM has directed someone to go somewhere and that person finds that place not conducive for him or her to stay, he goes back to the office and….he goes to the Human Resource people and they twist the posting without the knowledge of the DEM."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

Similarly, one district official who I interviewed discussed the practical implications of what this collaboration meant:

"Sometimes they connive with the human resources officers….these are teachers that you are expecting at Zingangwe School.[91] The headteacher has got the names. Perhaps out of five he only receives three."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

It became clear in the course of the interviews that this was a problem permeating to districts beyond Zomba Rural district. Beyond personal relations, the responses appeared to indicate that what incentivised human resource officials to assist teachers was monetary bribes:

"They make relationship, they agree that 'I will do such a thing', or they pay something, like 'I will give you MK5,000, please try to assist me'….so that one also may think of the money, instead of thinking of the job, that I am here in this office in order to do this and this."
(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)

"They do that because of corruption. They discuss with some officials in the DEM's office and they agree the amount of money this teacher can pay the man. So, the man would be the one to transfer, to process the transfer."
(Headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

Elsewhere the incentives appeared to fall under the category of sexual bribery:[92]

[91] Name of school changed for anonymity.
[92] In the case of the sexual bribery, my own observations during my visits to the DEO were that most often it was female teachers waiting to speak to an official from Human Resources. All but one of the six clerks working in this office were male.

"Even some female teachers allow sexual intercourse just to have [a] posting to another school. It happens in most of the offices."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"I had a friend in Phalombe [district]. She slept with an HR [Human Resources] official. After having sex with that one she was offered a transfer [to Blantyre Rural]."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

Such incentives, according to one district official, created further problems for the DEM. This was because teachers arriving to report for duty not familiar with Zomba Rural district were often told about the conditions of their prospective duty station before starting work there:

"Information gets to the teacher concerned that that particular school that you are being deployed is in the remotest part of the district. And there are hard conditions that you are going to go through, if you accept this particular posting."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

A follow-up question to this statement revealed that it was not persons responsible for deployment decisions who disclosed this information:

"That particular information is sometimes disseminated by individuals in the DEMs office itself, who are not the individuals who are involved in making the deployment process."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The same official indicated that such information had led to teachers, in the past, publicly refusing to go to schools deemed as undesirable to work in:

"I can even share with you a photograph….of lady teachers refusing to go to a school that they have been deployed and choosing to have a vigil at the DEMs office."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

In the majority of cases, teachers who I interviewed were either reluctant to discuss the issue of bribing officials or else professed ignorance regarding the issue. In the few cases where the issue was openly discussed, teachers would draw upon examples of their fellow teachers having utilised such a mechanism. One exception to this, however, was that of the senior standard teacher stationed at School I, who discussed his own experience of transferring out of Mangochi district using this mechanism:

"So, when I was applying for the posting, my options were Blantyre [Rural] and Thyolo. But the government posted me to Mangochi, the district which I don't like."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

According to the latest data available, Mangochi district has one of the highest PTRs (81 to 1), while Blantyre Rural has one of the lowest (55 to 1). However, in spite of this the teacher

was successful in facilitating a cross-district transfer. That is, for a fee of MK10,000 (US$13.7), the teacher explained how a Human Resource Official at Mangochi district provided him with a transfer posting letter:

"He had his own stamp like a stamp for Mangochi DEM. So, he could process all the required letters and stamp them in the absence of the DEM. The most interesting thing was that he processed it on a Saturday – not on a working day."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

In this case, because the transfer was to another district, as the teacher reported, officials across different districts were working with one another in this corrupt practice:

"But this man had connections of his work, so that he should receive the bribes. So, he could have someone in Blantyre and say 'I have sent a person there. Assist him in this way.'"
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

I asked the teacher whether he was aware of other teachers in Mangochi district using a similar mechanism for securing a transfer, to which he responded in the affirmative:

"Some people were going to Lilongwe, Blantyre, Zomba….now some people can come here – a district of their choice."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

In spite of an education system that is producing a larger number of teachers, the teacher explained how low-level corruption was failing to assist areas with large teacher shortfalls:

"The government could send….500 teachers to Mangochi. But the teachers do not want to work in Mangochi. So, they would transfer through this way maybe….So, the DEM will realise that 'Ah out of the 500 teachers, I am remaining with 300.'"
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

The interview questions next sought to understand what created the opportunities for such a process to continue despite such practice being widely known. The difficulty in proving such malpractice existed was discussed:

"Though we cannot have concrete evidence that this is really what they are doing."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"Most of the time they have no proof. But you cannot proof [sic] them directly. No. Someone cannot do bribery. Bribery is done in private most of the time. Even the agreement of the sexual intercourse, it's always in private."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

Current practices also allowed for any malpractice to go undetected, according to one district official:

"The Human Resources Officer can issue an alternative posting letter and not put it in the [teacher] file. You think everything is alright, because you don't see anything which is amiss. Without knowing there is another letter, which has not been filed, which they have kept."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The senior standard teacher working at School I indicated that such processes may go undetected because of the number of individuals involved in the process:

"It cannot be discovered because the one who is receiving the money – the one who is helping you – is not only the person who is going to eat the money. He will take some, eat, and bribe his top official. So nobody can discover because all officials are doing the same."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

The absence of an electronic system of teacher transfers appears to have compounded the problem of being able to monitor teacher transfers more effectively. This was based both on my experience when collecting data and the opinion of one district official who spoke about this issue when discussing the issue of bribery:

"The reporting of transfers leaves much to be desired. We have requested the HRM department should be reporting more systematically, but up until now it is not being done."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Besides such processes going undetected, another reason for their continuation was the absence or weak punitive measures taken against the individuals involved. This is despite bribery being listed as one of 26 reasons for misconduct under the Malawi Public Service Regulations (GoM, n.d.). The senior standard teacher working at School I relayed what had happened to a human resources official in Mangochi involved in such malpractice once his actions were discovered:

"At first he was interdicted. Meaning he was receiving half his salary while he was under investigation….and he is now transferred to Lilongwe [district]."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

Teachers who partook in such practice were simply moved back to the original school they were meant to be posted to and "counselled:

"They are just like counselled. After that, because of the shortage of teachers, they cannot remove that teacher from the system. They just counsel that person, guide him and send him back to the school they want him to be."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

As is discussed elsewhere in the thesis, this response appears to indicate that the measures taken by government officials are influenced by the teacher shortages characterising the

system. Additionally, district officials appeared to have limited power to mete out disciplinary procedures where misconduct occurred. The strongest action the district could take once collusion had been discovered, was for a warning to be issued:

"For the teachers who changed using tippex we gave them a warning a letter. They were warned on that one. And for the Human Resources, they do not accept that they did it. But all the officers were warned verbally."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

This corroborates what is set out under the misconduct and disciplinary procedures, which illustrate how the most serious disciplinary proceedings are still controlled by the Secretary for Education (GoM, n.d.). See Chapter 4 for a further discussion of this.

When asked what other factors that contributed to teachers being able to by-pass the DEM in favour of human resource officials, some respondents were of the opinion that this was due to the DEM's absence:

"Because one time we had no DEM. The one we had was transferred and we were waiting for a new DEM to come. And there were some people who were entrusted to run the district. Those people were the ones who granted that boy a transfer."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

"It seemed like the DEM was not around, so….the Human Resources and other officers have that mechanism of moving those teachers from the rural to urban."
(Headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

Further questioning revealed that the example cited by the PEA related to a cross-district transfer from Zomba Rural district to Thyolo district. Regarding the example cited by the headteacher, it related to transfers from schools in Zone 9 to schools in Zomba Urban district. The issue of DEM absence was corroborated by the DEM himself, who recounted examples of such abuse taking place during a period when he was on extended sick leave:

"That time, I think I was on sick leave They [teachers] would be allocated a school….The teacher would get that note and go to the Human Resources to get a letter of posting to the school. But we discovered that some two or three teachers changed their destination."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The discussion concerning the DEM being bypassed by human resource officials led me to question whether other actors in the education system also engaged in low-level corruption of a similar description. I focused these questions primarily in relation to the PEA:

"The PEAs are able to report that 'That teacher was not on my list and he is at School X.' So, it is very difficult for the PEAs to connive with the teachers. But the main culprits are the Human Resources."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"A PEA can favour a teacher. Even in our zone, the PEA favours some teachers….But in terms of transfers, I have never come across a PEA doing bribes."
(Infant Standard Teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

One respondent speculated that collaboration with the PEA would only be possible within the PEA's own zone:

"Maybe bribery of the PEA can involve a local posting in his zone. So, the PEA will deal with his own zone. But outside of the zone? No. Because most of the time a PEA has less power. So, most of the inter-district posting does not involve the PEA."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

However, practical examples of the PEA being bribed was something none of the interviewees were concretely able to cite. Moreover, processes utilising bribery as a mechanism did not appear to be utiliised at the central level to influence which district teachers were deployed to go and work in:

"Sometimes they may come here, but not many. Because I think out there they do not know which office does the deployment."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

One of the reasons for this is that human resource officials appeared to be the initial and primary contact point for teachers once they had graduated or visited the district office.[93] This gave these officials a special vantage point that was not available to central ministry officials, who, to the teachers, represented a *"faceless bureaucracy"* (Bari et al., 2016) and who they did not have the opportunity to cultivate a personal relationship with. This appears to corroborate the discussion in Chapter 4, where it was explained how normative or cultural-cognitive institutions are more likely to dominate over regulative institutions at lower levels of government (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006).

7.2.6 Teacher cross-postings board

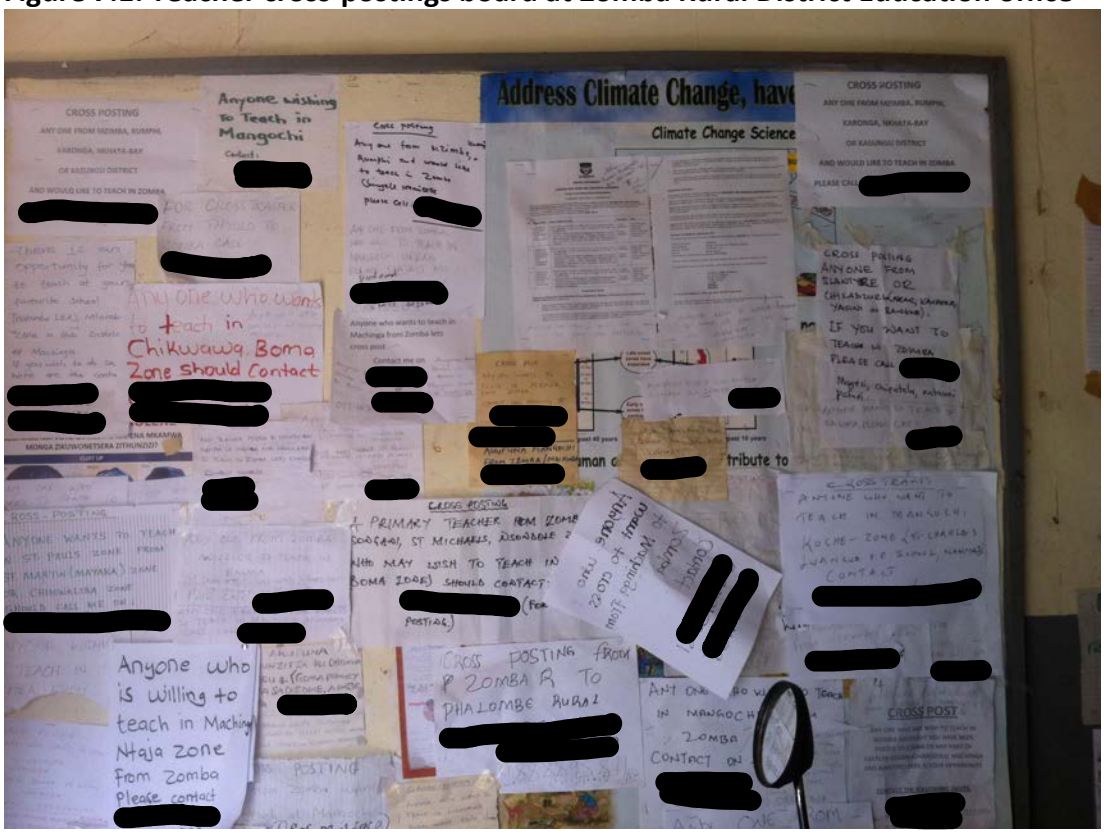
Cross-posting is a mechanism that can be utilised by teachers seeking a transfer. It typically involves two teachers in two different schools requesting permission to exchange with one another. The mechanism is intended to ensure that no school loses teaching staff in the process of a transfer. In most districts a cross-postings board exists. Teachers who are

[93] The latter was based on my own observations during the fieldwork.

seeking a transfer post information of where they are teaching, and where they would like to teach in the hope of finding a teacher they can cross-post with (Figure 7.1).

The majority of the notices I observed on the Zomba Rural district's cross-postings board were requests from teachers working in the neighbouring districts of Mangochi and Machinga. These also happen to be districts with the country's worst PTR and overall shortage of teachers (see Chapter 6). A smaller number of notices were also posted by teachers working in Zomba Rural district wanting to move within the district to another school to where they were currently working (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Teacher cross-postings board at Zomba Rural District Education office



Note: Personal information which could identify the teacher posting any notice has been obscured.

District officials indicated that the purpose of cross-postings boards had developed organically as an approach through which district offices could prevent the loss of teachers:

> *"This is an administrative mechanism that we [district officials] have initiated to ensure that no district should lose teachers. The only possible way to still maintain the number of teachers in our districts is arrange for cross-posting."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

Having seen the cross-postings board I was interested to learn more about what teachers thought of it in the context of transfers. Some expressed positive sentiments about its purpose:

"I think if you really try and, maybe you can be more flexible, then it [the transfer] can happen."
(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"You know if you want to move and you have no one speaking to help you then, yes, the transfer board can be effective."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

One teacher respondent, however, who had direct personal experience of the cross-posting mechanism, expressed scepticism about its usefulness:

"Cross-posting is only possible if you are lucky. If you find someone. Because in real life it is very difficult to find someone to go to Mangochi."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

The teacher had previously sought a transfer from Mangochi district – where he was deployed after completing his teacher training – to Blantyre Rural district. Eventually, he arranged a cross-transfer from Mangochi to Zomba Rural district through the use of the cross-postings board. While Zomba Rural district was not the teacher's original choice of district, he was of the view that this was a more favourable choice compared to Mangochi district. Similarly, another teacher from School S, situated in a very remote part of the district, was doubtful regarding the workability of the cross-postings board:

"You know most of these teachers this side. Maybe they are wanting to go to Police, Mponda, Zone 13, Zone 1 that side.[94] But no teacher from that side would dream to come here."
(Senior standard teacher, School S, Zone 12)

One teacher also expressed her opinion of it being a less effective strategy than those mentioned above in helping to secure a transfer:

"The problem with cross-posting to get a transfer – unlike other ways like when a lady teacher talks about marriage or health or important people – is that [the district] officials forget you. It is up to the teachers to find the solution between them if they can."
(Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

[94] These are either areas in Zomba Urban district or those parts of Zomba Rural district that are close to Zomba city.

A core feature of the cross-postings board was the specificity behind how it was meant to function.[95] However, to some of the stakeholders questioned this was not how the cross-posting mechanism worked in practice, especially for those coming from outside of the district. One district official complained about the ill-preparedness amongst some teachers coming to Zomba Rural district:

> *"Some of them will say 'I would like to be in Zomba City.' But Zomba City – they has no place to absorb them….So, unfortunately they will meet someone from Zone 2[96] who says 'We can cross-post.' The one coming from Mangochi has the mentality 'Once I am posted in Zomba, that's all.'"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

This raises an important point relating to the perception that a teacher coming from outside of Zomba Rural district may have the idea of it being more urbanised than it actually is.[97] This led me to follow up with a question as to whether teachers actually end up working in the school they cross-posted with the other teacher for. The same district official indicated that in the scenario described above, the teacher would still have to report for duty at the school in Zone 2. Other respondents at the zonal and school level, however, contradicted this. Speaking from their own experience they explained how the cross-posting mechanism meant remote schools had lost teachers:

> *"When that teacher coming from Mangochi hears that he is going to School I – very far from the town – he just discuss with people at the DEMs office. The Human Resource Management. So, they try to bribe them 'Ah just give me a school which is near.'"*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)*

> *"There was a teacher here who wanted to cross-post with her friend in Phalombe (District). And the teacher teaching here went to Phalombe, but the teacher from Phalombe did not report here. Unfortunately, that teacher was posted to School 1.[98]"*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

There was ambiguity as to how widespread the abuse of the cross-posting system is prone to. However, with that said even in the best scenario the current way that the cross-posting system operates means it is only able to sustain the status quo of a currently inequitable system.

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[95] It worked by assuming, for example, that Teacher A from School 1 in Zone X in Mangochi district would directly transfer with Teacher B from School 2 in Zone Y in Zomba Rural district.
[96] A remote zone in Zomba Rural district.
[97] During my own fieldwork I observed how the differences in the urbanisation between different parts of the district were acute.
[98] Name of school changed for anonymity.

7.2.7 Poor resource availability for involuntary teacher transfers

Discussion in earlier subsections on *involuntary transfers* has focused on the effectiveness of either marriage, ill health or personal connections in allowing a teacher to resist being transferred to remote schools or else allow them to be deployed to a school of their choice. While most interviewees discussed the difficulty in moving teachers to schools against their will, a number of respondents spoke of circumstances where teachers had been moved to schools in more remote areas:

> *"You know he was one sent out of the zone and then demoted from a headteacher to a mere teacher and in addition to this, he was transferred to the very remotest area, a place he did not want to go."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

> *"I have transferred some other teachers, because they were playing around with a girl child."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

> *"Here is a teacher who is always absent from work. The reason is he always comes to town. And you say 'OK, this one should be moved away from town. This one should go to Zone 5 or across the lake.[99]'"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

While involuntary redeployment of primary school teachers appeared to be utilised in cases of teacher wrong-doing, scaling it up more widely to address systemic inequity appeared to be less widespread. This was addressed by stakeholders interviewed in relation to resource constraints, which Mulkeen & Chen (2008) also addressed in their study. While not as commonly cited as a reason for why informal transfers were rarely instigated compared to other factors discussed elsewhere in this chapter, it was mentioned by some stakeholders:

> *"I think the first challenge is also lack of transportation. You find that when a teacher has to be transferred from one school to another, she/he has to be provided with transport."*
> *(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

> *"Another problem we face is the fuel for sending that one [the teacher] from here to elsewhere in the zone or district….if the funds are not available for that from the DEM, then the teacher stays."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

Under the Education Sector Implementation Plan Action Plan, one target was to redeploy teachers. The vehicle, fuel and allowance administered to redeploy a single teacher was budgeted for MK80,000 (US$109.3), if a teacher was redeployed to work in another district,

[99] These areas of Zomba Rural district, together with Zone 5, are very remote areas of the district.

and MK10,000 (US$13.7), if s/he was redeployed to work in another school in the same district (GoM, 2015). Based on budget information I was able to retrieve, Zomba Rural had budgeted MK957,000 (US$1,307) for organising the deployment and redeployment of teachers for financial year 2017/18. These resources were intended both to deploy new teachers to their work duty stations and to organise involuntary teacher transfers. However, according to the unit cost the amount budgeted would have targeted just 96 teachers, which resonates with what Pritchett (2015) terms the "delegation-finance failure", as discussed in Chapter 4.

7.2.8 Summary of Section 7.2

This section has discussed some of the main ways in which stakeholders at all levels of the education system have explained the poor enforceability of teachers being deployed to schools on an equitable basis. A number of factors were identified, including normative and cultural-cognitive norms superseding regulative ones; political/ outside interference over bureaucratic issues; low-level corruptive practices; and resource constraints hindering the effective enforcement of an equitable deployment of teachers. It could be argued that many of these aspects were made possible due to the absence or weak rules-based criteria concerning deployment or transfers, as was found in Section 7.1.

7.3 Monitoring where teachers are teaching in the system

7.3.1 Introduction

In the final section of this chapter, I discuss the challenges identified by stakeholders in effectively monitoring where in the system teachers are working. The focus is on the absence of a nation-wide monitoring tool that is able to track the deployment and movement of teachers. The discussion then moves on to consideration of the monitoring tools that district officials use to track which duty stations teachers are based at and the shortcomings of these tools.

7.3.2 Absence of a national-wide system to track where teachers work

When collecting data for this thesis one of the challenges I faced was the data gap in tracking teachers movement in the system (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). At the district level, the District Education Office (DEO) maintains responsibility for monitoring where in the system teachers are teaching. However, beyond the district the Basic Education Directorate at Central Headquarters has *"overall responsibility for the*

management and monitoring of primary education" (Asim et al., 2017; p. 7). In addition, the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) II Action Plan, which set a target of two visits per year to monitor the deployment of teachers in primary schools, apportioned responsibility for this to a number of other central government actors (GoM, 2015*a*).[100]

However, once the Basic Education Directorate had transferred to districts the names and numbers of teachers it was expected to receive Central Headquarters stopped tracking where teachers were in the system. No process appeared to be in place requiring districts to report back to Central Headquarters information confirming whether they had received these teachers, or reporting which schools they send newly deployed teachers to go and teach in:

> *"They [District Education Office] don't normally come back to Basic Education. They report to another department, which is HR [Human Resources]. They are the custodians of the data for teachers who have been registered into the system."*
> *(MoEST official, Central headquarters)*

This was similarly corroborated by the DEM:

> *"I haven't heard or seen anybody sending a report either on the WhatsApp group for DEMs or the Google DEMs group for emails."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

An official from the Basic Education Directorate explained that this was due to teachers being more tied to the Directorate for Human Resources and Management once they had graduated:

> *"For us, once we deploy them to schools we are not strongly tied to them. Instead, they are tied to Human Resource. Generally, there is not much interest in where they are and what they are doing."*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

This appears to contradict the roles and responsibilities of the Basic Education Directorate. It also suggests a major underlying weakness, which is the absence of a centralised function monitoring where teachers are in the system.[101] While more of the recent literature

[100] These include the Monitoring & Evaluation Unit housed in the Department of Planning, the Department for Human Resources, Teacher's Union for Malawi and the Teaching Service Commission.
[101] In 2018 and 2019, the Ministry of Education and World Bank – as part of the data collection component for the Malawi Education Sector Improvement Plan (MESIP) – collected information from each of the DEOs to compare the names of teachers who arrived at the district and the school to which they were being deployed to. This was meant to be compared against the deployment list for IPTE 10 coordinated by the Basic Education Directorate.

discusses how strong accountability systems can only be achieved through both thick and thin information (Pritchett, 2014), in the context of Malawi even the most rudimentary "thin" information is absent. Moreover, with no central oversight holding them to account, district officials may be more susceptible to the types of political pressures identified in Subsection 7.2.4.

Information or feed-back processes also appear weak when considering the district-zonal-school levels. Typically, once teachers have arrived at a given district, they are given their posting letters with information on the name of the school they have been deployed to teach at. While district officials indicated that they gave the names of the teachers the zones/ schools should expect to receive, this was not always corroborated by PEA and school officials:

"They just give us figures. 'In Zone 12 we are going to allocate so many teachers.'"
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

"We are told you will get such and such new teachers who will be reporting to your school."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

Elsewhere, district and zonal responses appeared also to contradict whether teachers were officially required to report via PEA first or else go directly to the school which they had been posted to:

"It was supposed to be they were supposed to report to this office first and then, you give them a map of the school….But sometimes they just go straight to the school."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

"They come and report for duty, and are given their posting letter and then, we tell them 'Go and report for duty' to the schools they have been allocated."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The lack of clarity discussed in these responses created potential loopholes such that teachers reported for duty elsewhere. This was illustrated by zonal and government responses, where examples of teachers, who in the past, had deviated to a school of their choice were reported:

"I can give you one example where I discovered, after going on my visits to the school, that the teacher had reported for duty at School B near to town, but in fact his posting was to School D."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"There was a scenario whereby they [the teacher] went to a headteacher and said 'I have come, they posted me to this school, but I would love to be at this school.' And the headteacher blindly said 'Ah you can stay. I am also having a shortfall of staff here.'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

When district officials were asked how teachers deviating from their official duty stations were discovered, the response was that they were typically found either when the matter was reported to the district:

"Some of the headteachers they keep quiet. They don't report. Until someone questions 'You gave us a teacher by the name so and so, but that teacher is not there. Where is the teacher?' We find out the teacher is placed in another school."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Or when a member of the Inspectorate and Advisory team happened, by chance, to come across them during inspections:

"We only come to realise, perhaps, when the PEAs or the – mainly the Inspectors – are going out to in the field…. And they say 'But how did you come to this school?'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

However, as will be explained in Chapter 9, inspection of primary schools, for a host of reasons, did not occur frequently. This means that without data as a tool by which to monitor where teachers were in the system, where teachers were working could lie undetected for a long period of time

A final problem relating to both my own observations on my visits to the DEO and interviews with district officials was that teacher records were all entirely paper-based:

"Yeah, having an electronic system is quite very important….That would assist us in keeping information very easily and even to trace the information."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

This was due to:

"I think the problem may be human capacity – it's not readily available. Even the computers – we don't have relevant servers whereby you can save these information."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The paper-based system made the movement particularly difficult to track. This was especially so for districts where the teacher was moving out of a district, after which that district had no record that the teacher had ever worked there, given that the teacher file has been moved to the district where the teacher now worked.

7.3.3 Absent and incorrect information data on teacher location

During the period I was conducting my fieldwork, Asim et. al (2017) released a report with their own findings on comparing the different government information systems for teacher tracking. The study's forensic examination of the sector's three existing databases' potential in being able to track where teachers were in the system, "*confirmed the existence of severe problems of fragmentation and inconsistency in teacher management administrative data in Malawi"* (2017;14). The three sources of data the study focused on were staff returns data,[102] EMIS data[103] and the payroll database.[104]

While staff returns data and EMIS data were, in principle, able to pinpoint which school a teacher was working at, the payroll database at the time I was conducting my fieldwork could only state which district a teacher was teaching in. Similarly payroll data is meant to capture which districts a teacher is actually teaching in. However, the Establishment Warrant per district is based on the 2004 Functional Review of the sector. Practically, this means that when an Establishment for a district a teacher is teaching in becomes "full" this teacher will have to appear under the payroll of another district where there is a vacancy. Asim et al.'s (2017) main focus was comparing the discrepancies in information within these databases. My own objective was to gauge the suitability of Malawi's current data systems in providing accurate information on where teachers were in the system. I focused specifically on staff returns, which Asim et al. found in their study to be *"the most accurate and up-to-date record of teacher postings"* (2017; p. 14). While the interviews I conducted did also focus on the challenges looking at the payroll database, for the purposes of brevity, I, for this section, focused on interview responses relating to data that were specifically able to track which schools teachers taught at. The furthest level of disaggregation the payroll goes to is the district level.

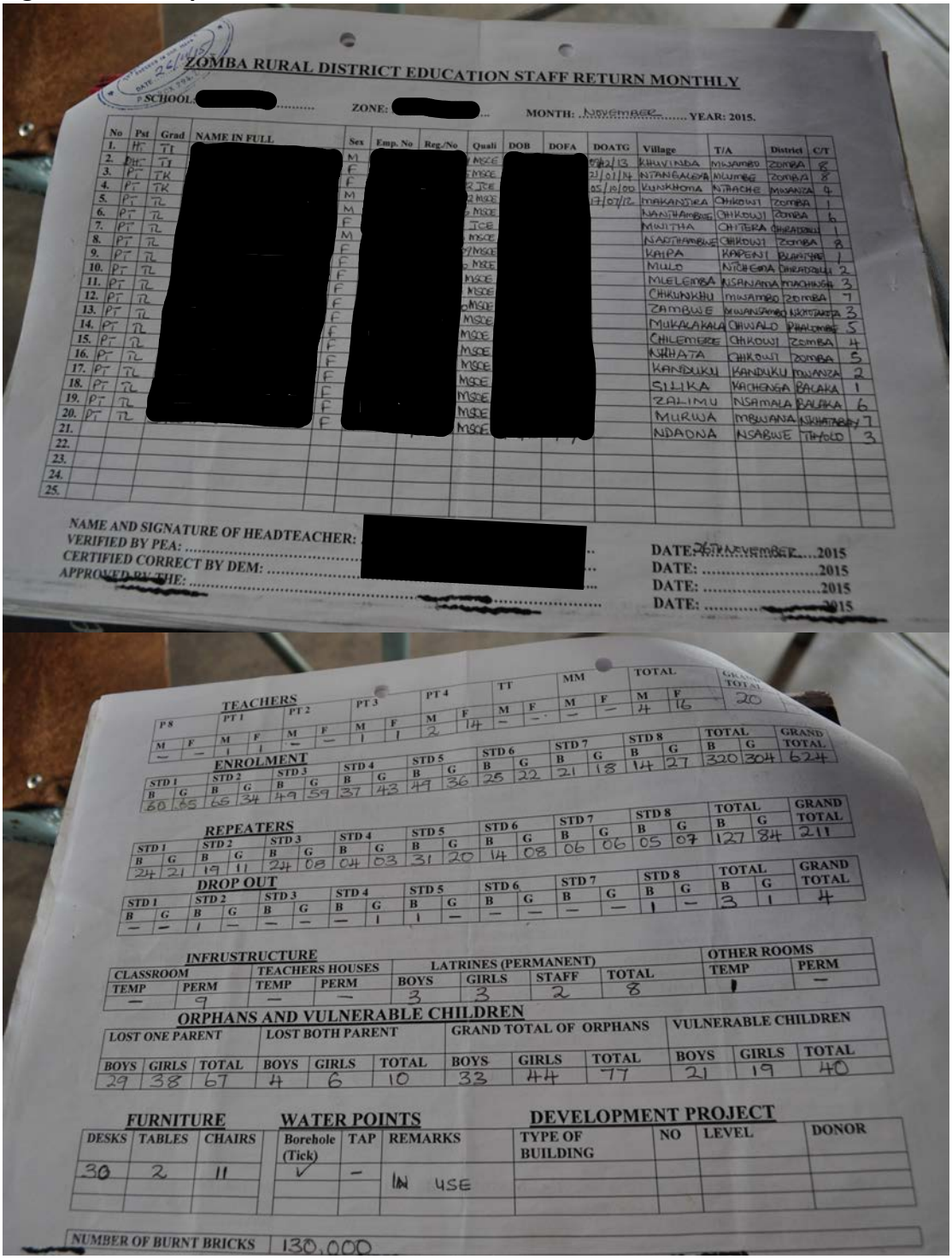
[102] Each month schools manually fill in a form (see Figure 7.2), which lists the details of all members of staff working at the school. These are delivered to the PEA who, in turn, delivers them to the district office for the DEMIS team to input electronically.

[103] The information collected by the EMIS is similar to what is collected by the monthly staff returns data. It is collected once a year in the first term of the school cycle (September-December), typically being published the following year (August-October).

[104] Payroll data typically indicates a teacher's pay-grade and the district payroll the teacher appears under. The responsibility for payment of teachers and the management of the payroll was officially handed over to Districts in January 2017.

As an opening to this section, Figure 7.2 provides an example of the sort of information a school would have to fill in once a month as part of the staff returns process.

Figure 7.2: Example of a school's staff return



ZOMBA RURAL DISTRICT EDUCATION STAFF RETURN MONTHLY

SCHOOL: [redacted] ZONE: [redacted] MONTH: November YEAR: 2015.

No	Pst	Grad	NAME IN FULL	Sex	Emp. No	Reg./No	Quali	DOB	DOFA	DOATG	Village	T/A	District	C/T
1.	HT	TT	[redacted]	M	[redacted]	[redacted]	MSCE	[redacted]	[redacted]	2/12/13	KHUVINDA	MWAMBO	ZOMBA	8
2.	DHT	TT		F			MSCE			21/01/14	NTANGALEWA	MLUMBE	ZOMBA	8
3.	PT	TK		F			JCE			05/10/00	KUNKHOMA	NTACHE	MWANZA	4
4.	PT	TK		M			MSCE			17/07/12	MAKANJIRA	CHIKOWI	ZOMBA	1
5.	PT	TL		M			MSCE				NANJIAMBE	CHIKOWI	ZOMBA	6
6.	PT	TL		F			JCE				MWITHA	CHITERA	CHIRADZULU	1
7.	PT	TL		M			MSCE				NAOTHAMBE	CHIKOWI	ZOMBA	8
8.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				KAIPA	KAPENI	BLANTYRE	1
9.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				MULO	NCHEMA	CHIRADZULU	2
10.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				MLELEMBA	NSANAMA	MACHINGA	3
11.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				CHIKUNKHU	MWAMBO	ZOMBA	7
12.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				ZAMBWE	MWANYAMBO	MWANZA	3
13.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				MUKAKAKALA	CHIWALO	BALAKA	5
14.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				CHILEMBE	CHIKOWI	ZOMBA	4
15.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				NKHATA	CHIKOWI	ZOMBA	5
16.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				KANDUKU	KANDUKU	MWANZA	2
17.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				SILIKA	KACHENGA	BALAKA	1
18.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				ZALIMU	NSAMALA	BALAKA	6
19.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				MURWA	MBWANA	NKHATABAY	7
20.	PT	TL		F			MSCE				NDAONA	NSABWE	THYOLO	3
21.														
22.														
23.														
24.														
25.														

NAME AND SIGNATURE OF HEADTEACHER: [redacted] DATE: 26th November 2015

VERIFIED BY PEA: ..... DATE: 2015

CERTIFIED CORRECT BY DEM: ..... DATE: 2015

APPROVED BY THE: ..... DATE: 2015

TEACHERS

PS		PT1		PT2		PT3		PT4		TT		MM		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
—	—	1	1	—	—	1	1	2	14	—	—	—	—	4	16	20

ENROLMENT

STD 1		STD 2		STD 3		STD 4		STD 5		STD 6		STD 7		STD 8		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
60	65	65	34	49	59	37	43	49	36	25	22	21	18	14	27	320	304	624

REPEATERS

STD 1		STD 2		STD 3		STD 4		STD 5		STD 6		STD 7		STD 8		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
24	21	19	11	24	08	04	03	31	20	14	08	06	06	05	07	127	84	211

DROP OUT

STD 1		STD 2		STD 3		STD 4		STD 5		STD 6		STD 7		STD 8		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL
B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	3	1	4

INFRUSTRUCTURE

CLASSROOM		TEACHERS HOUSES		LATRINES (PERMANENT)				OTHER ROOMS	
TEMP	PERM	TEMP	PERM	BOYS	GIRLS	STAFF	TOTAL	TEMP	PERM
—	9	—	—	3	3	2	8	1	—

ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

LOST ONE PARENT			LOST BOTH PARENT			GRAND TOTAL OF ORPHANS			VULNERABLE CHILDREN		
BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
29	38	67	4	6	10	33	44	77	21	19	40

FURNITURE

DESKS	TABLES	CHAIRS
30	2	11

WATER POINTS

Borehole (Tick)	TAP	REMARKS
✓	—	IN USE

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TYPE OF BUILDING	NO	LEVEL	DONOR

NUMBER OF BURNT BRICKS 130,000

Note: Personal information which could identify school or teacher information has been obscured.

Staff returns were a mechanism that allowed for the movement of teachers to be tracked within the primary education system, as stated by district officials:

"The returns should come regularly. So that we should be able to know how many teachers are present in the school. Either a teacher has died or a teacher has transferred to another school."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)
"Because ideally when the staff returns come, they should take time to go through them. 'Last month we had this officer. This month this officer is not here – where has he gone?' That is what is supposed to be done."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Staff returns were meant to be filled out, collated, submitted and electronically inputted on a monthly basis. However, when trying to access this data it quickly became apparent this was not the case. Instead data was available, at most, once every school term. A number of challenges as to why this was the case presented themselves, with the first relating to staff shortages. During the period I undertook my fieldwork, Zomba Rural district had two personnel employed as District EMIS (DEMIS) officials, together with four Zonal EMIS (ZEMIS) officials attached to 17 education zones in the district.[105] This was well below the required capacity needed:

"From the DEMIS section, I can say we don't have enough, because if anything, each zone, we are supposed to have a ZEMIS officer, but the resources are not permitting us to do this."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The shortage of staff was something reflected district-wide. Just half of the total established posts had been filled at Zomba Rural district based on the 2017/18 budget. This can be linked back to the discussion had in Chapter 4 on Malawi's "pseudo" decentralisation, and the wider point relating to how its political settlement may have more to gain from not providing the districts with personnel.

The shortage of ZEMIS officers meant that in many cases it was the PEA who had to take on the responsibility of collecting the monthly staff returns from schools:

"In the absence of the zone officer as DEMIS, we rely on the PEA. And sometimes the PEA is busy with some other activities. There is a delay in having that information."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Of the two education zones I worked in, the PEA in Zone 12 was responsible for collating, verifying and submitting the staff returns to the DEMIS office located at Zomba Rural district

[105] This reflects national level data, which shows that compared to the 500 education zones, there were only 167 ZEMIS officials.

in the absence of a ZEMIS officer. Together with shortages of personnel, zonal offices also faced a shortage of equipment:

"But the resources are not permitting us to do this. Besides having a ZEMIS officer we need to have a computer, so they can work on that. We don't have that."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The requirement to submit paper-based copies in a timely and regular manner was also affected by the physical distance constraints involved in submitting staff returns:

"The PEAs do not always manage to submit to us on time and we do have to be sympathetic to why. Some of them they have to come from very far."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"You know, for some of our PEAs, it means having to come too far, like from Lake Chilwa and the transportation costs are high from that side. So, they do not always manage to submit the information."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Twelve out of the 17 education zones in Zomba Rural district are situated 25 kilometres away from the DEO, with the furthest zone located 52 kilometres away. Similarly, long distances were a reason attributed by both PEAs as to why staff returns were submitted to them late by the headteacher:

"Some of the schools – they are very far from the TDC [Teacher Development Centre]. And in the rainy season….eh! The roads are impassable! So, with these schools, yes I experience some problems to getting these [staff returns]."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

"Some of the headteachers fail to meet the responsibilities. So we have got to, in most cases, to call for them. When we ask them they fail to do that."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

The problem did not stop after the DEO received the staff returns, as they were then required to input the data from the paper-based return for 200+ schools. My own interaction with district officials responsible for inputting this data was the perceived sense of the futility of doing so once a month. While this was partly related to staff shortages, the discussion invariably turned to the time spent on maintaining this data versus its actual use. Staff returns did not appear to be institutionalised in any other particular way, as confirmed by officials at the Central Ministry:

"Every term, in the districts, they collect staff returns. We get information, but we don't put it in the report. But our plan was that staff turnover and other data, which we can be collecting at the middle of the school year, should be in our statistical release calendar."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

While the staff returns served the purpose of potentially tracing absconding teachers, fundamental challenges relating to their functionality remained. For instance, there appeared to be no formal or informal mechanism through which districts were sharing their staff returns with other districts. This absence was especially important in the context of districts that were losing many teachers through inter-district movement.[106]

Another potential challenge related to the accuracy of the staff returns data. The majority of responses discussed this in the context of enrolment figures. The PEAs of both zones indicated these as being regularly inflated, with the incentive for doing so being based on the schools receiving additional government resources:

"We ask them [the headteachers] 'Why do you have these differences?' They don't give concrete answers. So maybe they look forward to receiving more supplies."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"Sometimes the headteachers do inflate the figures of the learners. To their thinking, they think that if they have a lot of learners, they will be receiving adequate resources."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

Discussion with stakeholders at all levels of the system confirmed that the distribution of all major government resources was contingent on enrolment figures, either from the EMIS or the staff returns.[107] For instance, teachers and textbooks are contingent on enrolment figures. For the School Improvement Grant, when enrolment exceeds 1,000 a school starts to receive an extra MK100 (US$0.14) per child. The justification to inflate enrolment figures, was given by a real-life example reported by the deputy headteacher of School Z regarding how one school in Zone 12:

"I will give a fake report where I will give…maybe I will say we have 6,000, instead of 4,000 learners to get extra books."
(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

"Some cartons of exercise books they sold them to shops around the trading centre….people identified that these exercise books were the ones that learners were receiving."
(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

[106] While this may not be relevant for Zomba Rural district, for more rural districts like Mangochi or Machinga districts this is important.
[107] While Central Ministry officials use EMIS data to deploy teachers to districts, the DEM will mostly use the recent staff returns data to decide on how teachers should be deployed to schools in his district as this has the most up-to-date enrolment figures.

The discussion around the falsification or incorrect submission of data related mainly to enrolment. However, earlier district responses had indicated that headteachers might be complicit in allowing teachers to teach in their school even when they were intended for another (see Subsection 7.3.2). When I raised the possibility of teacher data being intentionally falsified, however, the PEAs thought it unlikely to be problematic, because of other checks and balances in the system:

> *"In every headteacher's office, we do insist that names of the teachers, and details – like which classes they teach, which pay grade they are and so on and so forth – all this is clearly visible on the board."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

> *"And sometimes, when we are on supervisions to schools we may attend the roll call of the teachers and learners. This is done in our presence."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

The district office too felt that teacher data was unlikely to be deliberately falsified. However, they did indicate examples of where it had been inaccurately reported by headteachers on the staff returns sheet:

> *"Because some headteachers don't know that. Once the teacher has gone for studies, they scrape out from the staff return. Whilst the name is supposed to be there. Those are some of the issues that we meet."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

On a concluding note on the issue of staff returns, one part of an interview with an official at central headquarters struck me as being important in relation to data bias:

> *"DEMIS and ZEMIS officers were supposed to be coming from the National Statistical Office to avoid bias. Because if you send a teacher to collect data from a teacher automatically there is an element of bias in it, because that is his or her profession."*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

At the time I was conducting my fieldwork, all individuals collecting and verifying school-level information (whether it be the PEA, or DEMIS and ZEMIS officers) were recruited from a cadre of primary school teachers. As far as data collection was concerned, this, according to the same official, was different to data collection in other sectors, such as agriculture and health. In the case of these sectors, the ZEMIS officer equivalents would come from outside. The point raised about bias[108] raises a potential

[108] Unfortunately, this was the only reference to potential bias, which was discussed towards the end of my fieldwork with Central Ministry officials.

weakness concerning the strength around the accuracy of data systems in accurately reflecting the state of the education system.

7.3.4 Summary of Section 7.3

This section has analysed the poor monitoring of where teachers are teaching. At the time I undertook my fieldwork, there appeared to be no central oversight to ensure districts were deploying teachers to work in schools with critical shortages. The disjointedness between the national level and district level systems was a major weakness emanating both from my experience of collecting data and what stakeholder interviews revealed. Regarding the data sources district officials relied on to inform them where teachers were teaching, these revealed a number of weaknesses. These mainly stemmed from the financial and capacity constraints identified in regularly collecting, verifying and inputting data.

Conclusion

The main data trends discussed in Chapter 6 relating to the way in which teachers were deployed and transferred between schools, found these to be to the detriment of equity and efficiency. The purpose of Chapter 7 was to explain the main underlying reasons behind these deployment trends. Poorly defined or absent policies, political interference over bureaucratic issues, low-level corruptive practices and resource constraints were all factors that have been identified in explaining why the enforceability and monitoring of an equitable deployment of teachers between schools was challenging. In respect to how the poor management of teacher deployment between schools specifically relate to the Levy-Walton conceptual framework, the findings from this chapter reveal a number of things.

Firstly, the characteristics of Malawi's competitive clientelist political settlement appear to have had a direct negative effect on the equitable deployment of teachers at local (and central) levels of government. Political interference, either through the personal connections the local and national political elite have with teachers or through resources being directed to the home areas of the political elite, is at odds with needs-based considerations. This is similarly the case for other external stakeholders, who have been able to coerce district or local government officials into deploying teachers in a way that is contrary to equity considerations. These include soldiers and government officials at higher levels of government.

A second finding of the chapter is that absent or weak policies relating to teacher deployment have led to greater discretionary decision-making powers at the district and local levels of government. These levels of government are *"spaces….where much of the politics of service provision plays out"* (Levy & Walton, 2013; p. 2). This is important insofar as it means that resistance against external pressures as to where teachers should be deployed may be harder for the DEM to withstand where there are absent or weak formal rules. In addition, it has also meant normative-cultural reasons influencing teacher deployment decisions in the place of absent or weak policies. Relating this back to Malawi's competitive clientelist political settlement, a defining feature of such a system are the weak incentives for a rules-based approach to governance. That is, the systems are, instead, premised upon personalised norms.

The third set of findings relates to the poor monitoring of government policies concerning the deployment of teachers. These appear to mainly be due to the shortage of resources and capacity in regularly and effectively collecting, verifying and inputting data. The shortage of resources align with what other studies have reflected upon when considering the sorts of investments the political elite would like to see prioritised under a competitive clientelist system. Investment in areas that can improve quality, e.g. EMIS, is less desirable compared to funding areas where visible results are more readily achievable (Hickey & Hossain, 2019; Kingdon et al., 2014).

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 have addressed the first theme this thesis concerning the inequitable deployment of teachers between schools. Chapter 8 moves on to discussing the second theme of this research, that relating to the allocation and utilisation of teachers within schools.

Chapter 8: How are teachers allocated and utilised within schools?

Chapter purpose and structure

Through an analysis of government administrative data and stakeholder perspectives, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 discussed the first theme of this thesis, which was the inequitable deployment of teachers to primary schools. Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 move on to the second theme of this thesis, which relates to teacher allocation and utilisation within schools. The purpose of this is to consider the extent to which the inequitable deployment of teachers manifests itself at the school level in the way teachers are being allocated, thus contributing to Malawi's teacher shortage crisis. This is considered both in relation to achieving government pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) targets and utilising teaching time effectively.

The purpose of this chapter is to present to the reader how the current allocation of teachers within schools is undertaken, how this affects teacher shortages, and what effect this has on teaching practices within schools. It seeks to address the third research question of this thesis, which is: *"To what extent are primary school teachers allocated equitably to different classes within schools, and what are the consequences of this on the utilisation of teaching time?"* To this end, I utilise the data collected from a survey I designed and administered in the 26 schools situated in Zones 9 and 12 in Zomba Rural district during my fieldwork (see Appendix Figure A.5).

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 8.1 starts by comparing the distribution of enrolled pupils versus the distribution of teachers across the eight levels of primary. This serves as a useful starting point to understanding better how teachers are currently being allocated within schools according to standard, and the extent to which this takes into account the enrolment levels. Section 8.2 expands the analysis of Section 8.1 to consider the specific ways in which teachers are being arranged to teach within primary schools, and what these practices mean at the school level. The chapter concludes with Section 8.3, which primarily focuses on what impact the way teachers are arranged within a school has on the actual PTR levels and the implications for the utilisation of teachers' teaching time.

8.1 Allocation of teachers by standard and effect on pupil-teacher ratio

8.1.1 Introduction

This section starts with consideration of the different policies concerning teacher allocation in Malawi's primary schools. Then, the teacher allocation data in relation to how teachers appear to be distributed between schools is presented and what the consequences of these allocation decisions are in relation to the PTR is discussed. The presented data is both from a zonal perspective and in relation to the four schools I undertook my fieldwork in. In this chapter and elsewhere in the thesis, infant standards refer to Standard 1 and Standard 2; junior standards refer to Standard 3 and Standard 4; and senior standards refer to Standard 5 to Standard 8.

8.1.2 Policies concerning the allocation of teachers by standard

As of the time I was conducting my fieldwork, responsibility for allocating teachers to different standards was tasked to the headteacher of a school. Unlike how teachers should be deployed to schools, there appeared to be no official guidance offered to headteachers as to how they should be allocated within schools. Earlier studies on within-school allocation of teachers in Malawi have found that headteachers allocated fewer teachers to infant standards, relative to the number of students in these standards (Wolf et al., 1999; Croft, 2002; DeStefano, 2013). While the differences in class sizes can be attributed to the poor progression of pupils from infant to senior standards, large class sizes were also found to be exacerbated by the allocation decisions taken by headteachers. Recognising the large PTRs in infant standards as being significantly higher than the desired 60 to 1 PTR, the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) set specific interim PTR targets for Standards 1 to Standard 3, which were presented in detail in Chapter 2.

8.1.3 The distribution of teachers and enrolment per standard

The purpose of this subsection is to consider the allocation of teachers by standard versus the enrolment distribution within schools. Before I present the data, it is necessary to describe the parameters under which headteachers are making their within-school teacher allocation decisions. Double-shift and multi-grade teaching are strategies recommended in the NESP and/ or the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP). However, at the time of my fieldwork all schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12 were operating under a single-shift teaching system. In a practical sense, this meant teachers being allocated in a way that was not

making more efficient use of the existing infrastructure. Subsection 8.2.2 sets these policies out in more detail given that this is where the discussion around the utilisation of teachers is presented.

Zonal level analysis

In Malawi's primary schools, the timetable for infant, junior and senior standards starts at the same time. This, together with teaching operating on a single-shift system, meant that headteachers allocation decisions appeared to be on the basis of ensuring there was at least one teacher present per class. The number of classes/ streams per standard was, in turn, dependent on how many classrooms were available in a school.[109] The teacher allocation decisions made by headteachers were further affected by how the district practically appeared to make teacher deployment decisions to schools. These were on the basis of the average PTR of the school, rather than being governed by infant, junior or senior requirements. The Establishment Warrant per school – which was based on the 2004 Functional Review – calculates the vacancies per school on the basis of a PTR of 60 to 1 overall. However, given that the bulk of pupils enrolled at primary school were concentrated in infant and junior standards, the main headteacher allocation decisions appear to indicate that enrolment was not necessarily a determinant of how teachers were allocated.

Data to support this showed that in Zone 9, 64 percent of primary school pupils were enrolled in the first four standards of primary school. However, these standards received 49 percent of teachers. This was similarly reflected in Zone 12, where 68 of total enrolment was concentrated in the first four standards, with 50 percent of teachers being allocated to these standards (Figure 8.1A and Figure 8.1B).

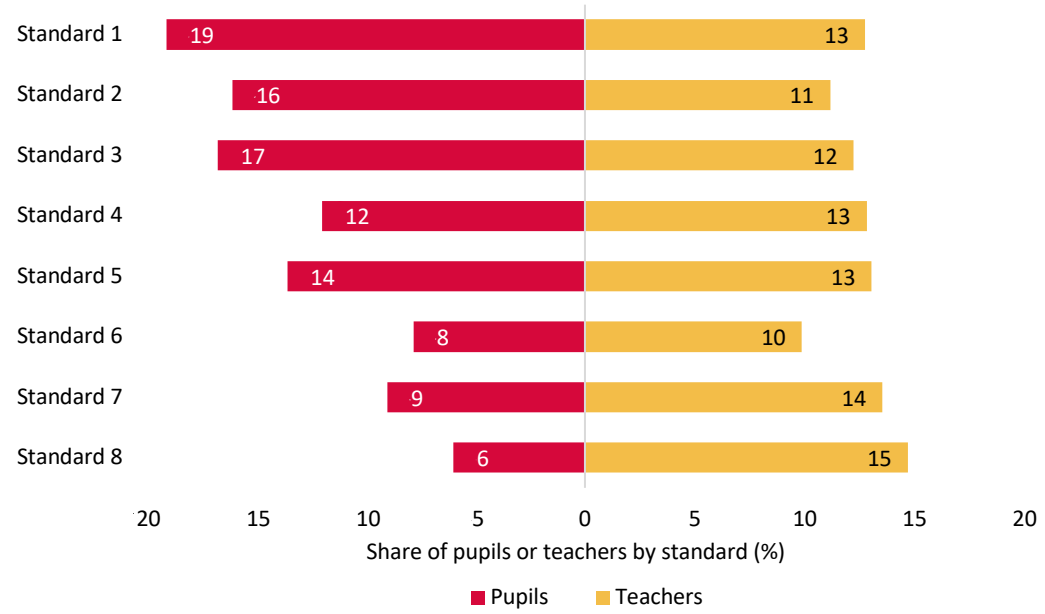
The skew in the distribution of teachers was the most extreme when comparing Standard 1 and Standard 8. Standard 1 enrolled the majority of pupils in both Zone 9 (19 percent) and Zone 12 (21 percent). Yet, the distribution of teachers to Standard 1 was significantly less than the share of total primary school children enrolled in Zone 9 (13 percent) and Zone 12 (12 percent).

[109] In the case of School S there were more classes than either teachers or classrooms. While it had eight separate classes for each of the standards, it only had six teachers and six classrooms.

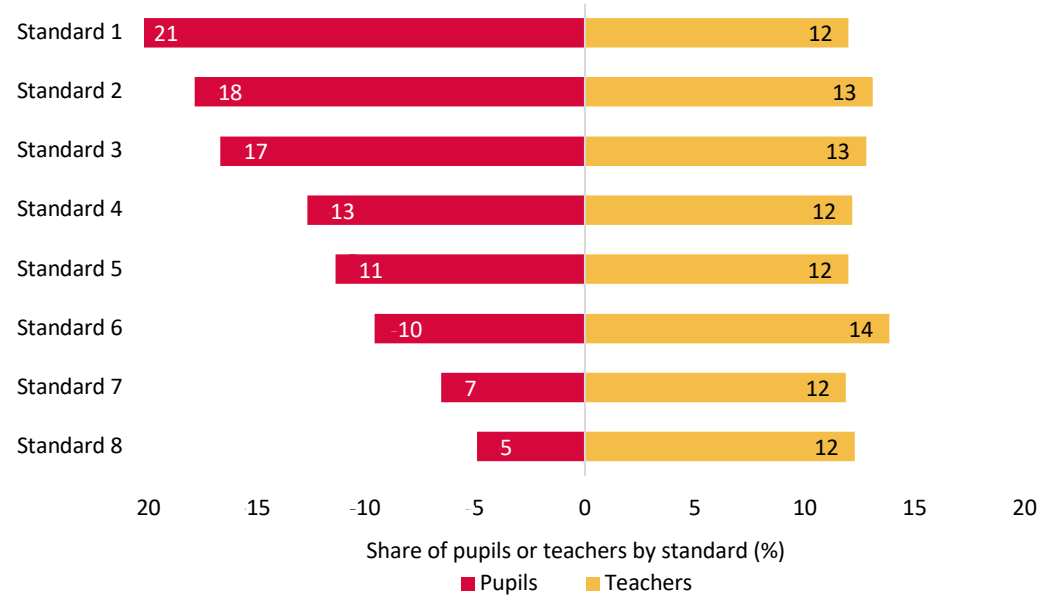
Conversely, Standard 8 had the lowest share of pupils overall in both Zone 9 (6 percent) and Zone 12 (5 percent). However, the distribution of teachers to Standard 8 was far greater than its share of total primary school children enrolled in Zone 9 (15 percent) and Zone 12 (12 percent) (Figure 8.1A and Figure 8.1B).

Figure 8.1: Distribution of teachers and pupils between the different standards of the primary education system

A. Zone 9



B. Zone 12



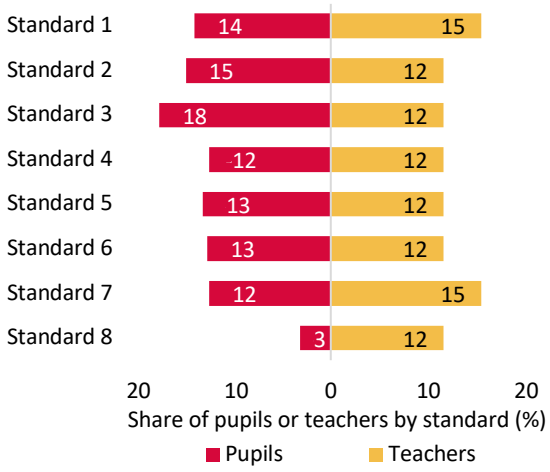
Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

School-level analysis

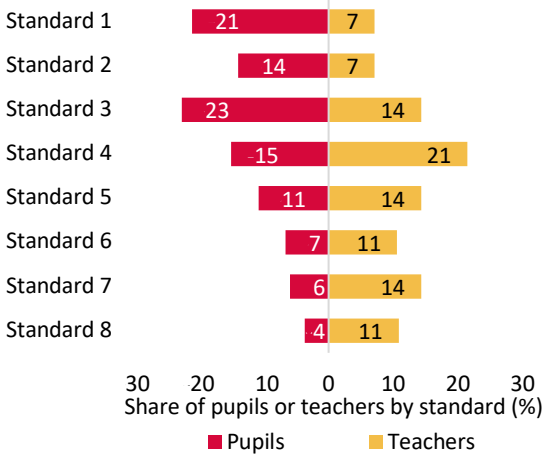
Of the four case study schools, the enrolment patterns at School I and School S reflects the national patterns, where enrolment numbers are highest in the infant standards and lowest in the senior ones. In School B, the distribution of students is roughly evenly distributed between the first seven standards, before a large drop in share of enrolment for Standard 8.[110] The enrolment distribution in School Z gradually falls until reaching the senior standards, where it evens out between Standards 5 to 8. In all four schools, Standard 8 receives a larger proportion of teachers compared to its share of enrolment. Conversely, the share of teachers allocated to Standard 1 is lower than its total share of enrolment in School I, School S and School Z, whilst in School B the share is roughly even (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2: Distribution of teachers and pupils between the different standards of the primary education system

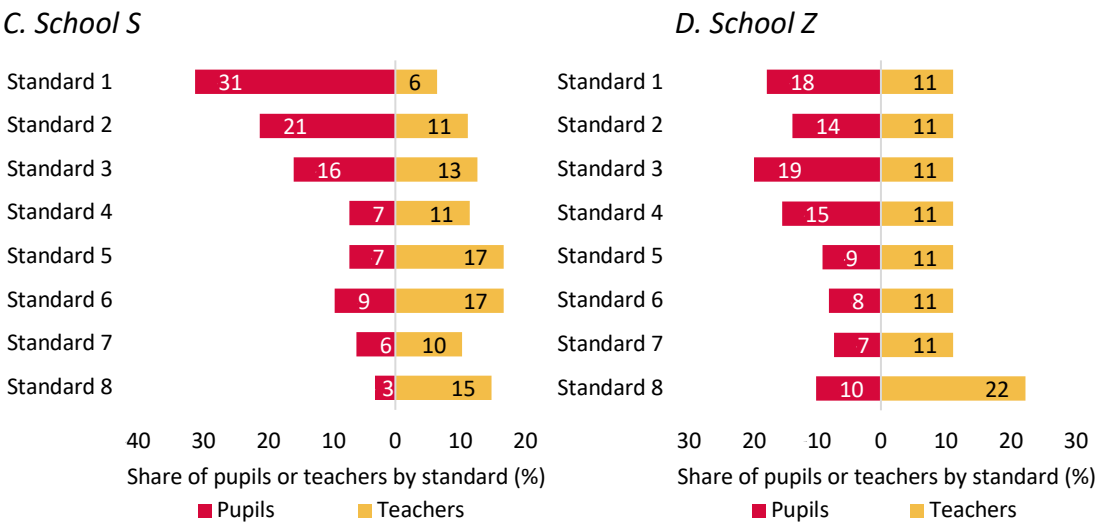
A. School B



B. School I



[110] The large drop in enrolment between Standard 7 and 8 was explained to me during discussions with interviewees. The first reason was largely due to pupils dropping out of the system given the additional school fees incurred in Standard 8 to do examinations. Another reason cited was parents transferring their child to a better school nearer to the city boundaries, where they were more confident of their children performing better in the PSLCE.



Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

8.1.4 Pupil-teacher ratios by standard

Next, I turn to what the implications were of equally distributing teachers across standards as described in Subsection 8.1.3 on the PTR.[111] The data, as one would expect, illustrates that such an approach is to the detriment of the infant and junior standards given they have a higher share of the enrolment population compared to the senior ones.

Zonal level analysis

In both Zone 9 and Zone 12, what was immediately apparent was the vast disparity in the PTR between infant and senior standards, particularly between Standard 1 and Standard 8. Six out of the 13 schools in Zone 9 (or 46 percent of schools) had a PTR of more than 100 in Standard 1. By contrast, 12 out of the 13 schools (or 92 percent of schools) had a PTR of less than 40 to 1 in Standard 8. For Zone 12, ten out of the 13 schools had a PTR of more than 100 in Standard 1 (77 percent) and in contrast, 8 schools had a PTR of less than 40 to 1 in Standard 8 (67 percent) (See Figure 8.3A and Figure 8.3B).

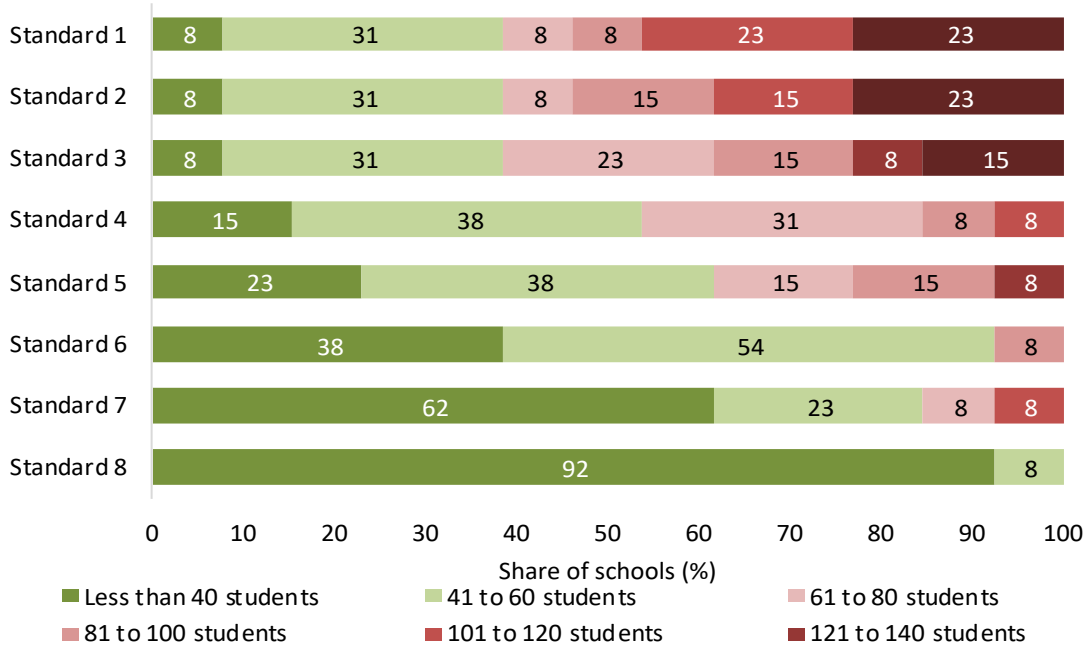
Part of the reason for a large proportion of schools in both Zones 9 and 12 having a PTR of less than the recommended 60 to 1 in the senior standards was the low enrolment in these classes. In Zone 9, in ten out of 14 Standard 8 classes enrolment was less than 60 pupils. The equivalent for Zone 12 was ten out of 13 Standard 8 classes. While low enrolment in senior standards was a factor for low PTRs in these standards, this was further exacerbated by schools' decision-making around teacher allocation favouring Standard 8. In 20 out of 27 Standard 8 classes in Zone 9 and Zone 12, two or more teachers were assigned to the class.

[111] In the subsection, an approach similar to that used by DeStefano (2013) is utilised.

In 13 of these 20 Standard 8 classes, however, the enrolment was less than 60.[112] This distribution was often in circumstances where the PTR in infant standards exceeded the 60 to 1 PTR target (Appendix Table A.4A and Appendix Table A.4B).

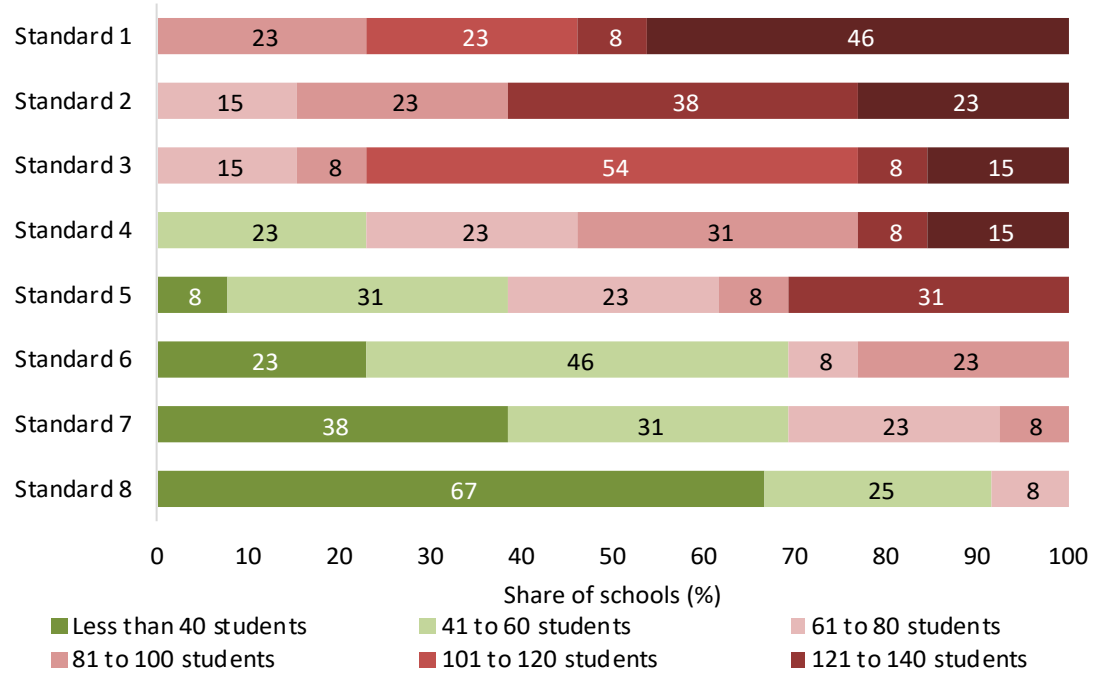
To understand the reasons for why more than one teacher was allocated to Standard 8, even in circumstances of overall teacher shortages, I remind the reader of the literature reviewed in Chapter 3. The Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) is the only high-stakes test taken in Malawi's primary schools, with the results determining a pupil's eligibility to transition on to secondary school. High-stakes tests similar to the PSLCE were found to influence decisions made by school administrators on how resources were distributed in contexts similar to Malawi (Ashadi & Rice, 2016; Reddy, 2010). Moreover, while a teacher's pay is not related to students' performance in the PSLCE in Malawi ("performance-related pay"), a question to explore is whether PSLCE performance affects teacher allocation decisions. This is explored further in Chapter 9.

Figure 8.3: Distribution of schools according to pupil-teacher ratio by standard
A. Zone 9 (Based on allocation by standard)



[112] Of these 13 classes, ten were in Zone 9, while three were in Zone 12.

B. Zone 12 (Based on allocation by standard)

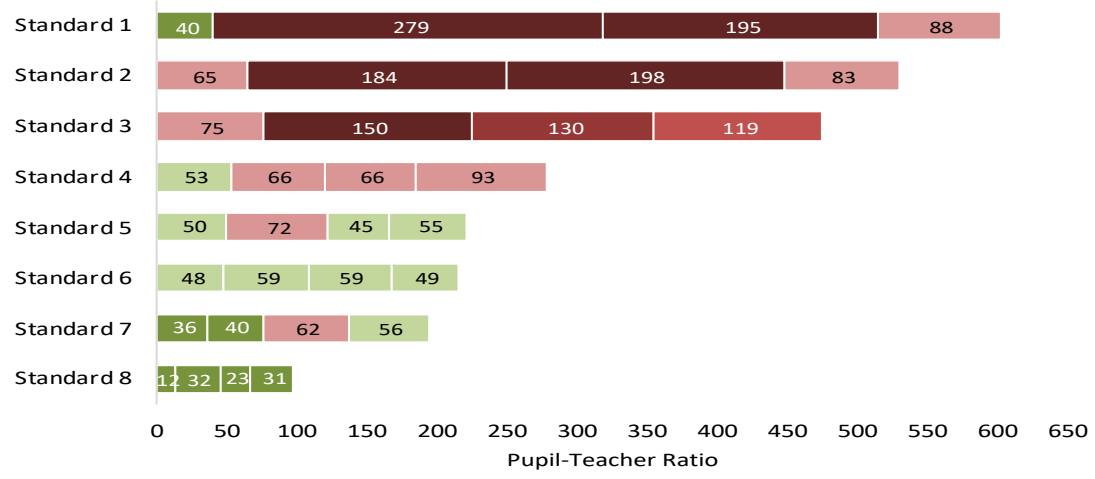


Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

School-level analysis

In relation to the four case study schools, the PTR for Standards 1 to 3 is significantly above 60 to 1. Only in the case of School B is the PTR for Standard 1 significantly lower at 40 to 1. Even when taking the specific PTR targets for Standards 1 to 3 as set out in the NESP – which were slightly higher than 60:1 – these schools are significantly off track. Conversely, in almost all cases the PTR for the senior standards is below 60 to 1, which is particularly the case for Standard 8, where the PTR is significantly lower (Figure. 8.4).

Figure 8.4: Pupil-Teacher Ratio by standard based on allocation



Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.
Note: The ordering of schools from left to right is School B, School I, School S and School Z.

8.1.5 Summary of Section 8.1

Section 8.1 has provided an overview of the allocation of pupils and teachers according to the different standards. The data has illustrated the significantly large differences in the PTR between infant and senior standards. Of the data that was available, it emerged that the majority of Standard 8 classes had more than one teacher allocated to them, which appeared to be the case even in schools with an overall teacher shortage. Section 8.2 moves on to extending this discussion to consider the different teaching arrangements in place across all standards, and how these differ across the schools.

8.2 Teaching arrangement

8.2.1 Introduction

Section 8.1 provided a broad overview of the current distribution of teachers and how the senior standards have, by and large, been favoured at the expense of the infant classes. Taking this as a point of departure, the purpose of this section is to consider the sort of teaching arrangements teachers engage in. This arrangement, in the context of this chapter, is concerned with whether a teacher delivers a single class by themselves, shares teaching responsibilities for a class with another teacher or teaches across multiple standards or classes. These practices are central to teacher utilisation and can have consequences for the actual PTR, which shall be discussed in Section 8.3. I start this section by looking at policies relating to the organisation of classes, before presenting findings from both the zonal and school perspectives.

8.2.2 Policies concerning teaching arrangement in terms of how classes are taught

Given the purpose of this section, I focus on three policies that the Government of Malawi has specifically categorised in relation to teaching arrangements: multi-grade, double-shift and team-teaching.

Multi-grade teaching

Multi-grade strategies *"address the uneven grade distribution often found in primary schools in low-income countries"* (Mulkeen & Higgins, 2009; p. 2). A core component would be to combine two or more senior classes where enrolment is low in order to release teachers and infrastructure to become available for over-crowded infant classes. Senior classes, it is argued, are also more amenable to these teaching arrangements given that children in these standards are older and more likely to be able to engage in independent learning

(ibid.). Ravishankar et al.'s (2016) study on the primary education sector in Malawi estimated that many senior classes were operating below capacity even though classrooms in many primary schools have been constructed to accommodate at least 100 pupils. ESIP I recommended the use of multi-grade teaching, and was specifically designed to target Standards 5 to 8 (GoM, 2013). However, multi-grade teaching does not appear in either the NESP or ESIP II documents (Chapter 2).

Double-shift teaching

Double-shift teaching involves teaching two separate groups of students at a school at different times of the day (morning and afternoon) due to the shortage of classroom space. In circumstances where there is a teacher shortage, the same teacher would teach both these classes. Where there is a shortage of infrastructure, but adequate numbers of teachers, different teachers would teach the morning and afternoon shifts. A number of studies have recommended the suitability of double-shift teaching in Malawi given the shortages in infrastructure and also, because the short number of teaching hours at infant grades lends its suitability to such an arrangement. Potentially half the children in lower standards could be taught in the mornings, while half would come to school in the afternoons, thereby reducing the PTR (DeStefano, 2013; Steiner-Khamsi, 2011). However, based on the 2018 EMIS handbook just 0.8 percent of schools are operating on a double-shift system with the majority (98.3 percent) still working according to a single-shift system. This is despite NESP as well as ESIP I & II prioritising it as a strategy (Chapter 2).

Team-teaching

Team-teaching is where two or more teachers are responsible for a class or standard, and they divide the teaching amongst themselves (Steiner-Khamsi & Kunje, 2011). Several studies reviewed for this thesis are highly critical of the practice of team-teaching in Malawi (DeStefano, 2013; Steiner-Khamsi & Kunje, 2011). They find that teachers are either idle or absent when their partner is teaching, meaning that actual teaching time for many teachers is much lower than the official hours of teaching mandated under the government timetable. Team-teaching practices also mean that *"teacher working hours become independent of student contact time"* (Mulkeen, 2010; 61)

DeStefano notes that the lower teaching hours are contrary to what would be expected in a primary education system like Malawi's, where, given the overall teacher shortage, one

"*would expect that teachers would be over worked"* (2013; 17). DeStefano goes on to note how this practice is *"especially possible in….schools that have surplus staff"* (2013; p. 15). Alternative discussions on team-teaching practices are more nuanced and consider its usefulness for infant standards, where enrolment is traditionally much higher. Rather than seeing team-teaching as a mechanism to lighten a teacher's workload, Croft considers it as a possible strategy to keep large groups of children in these infant standards *"interested and motivated in lessons"* (2002; p. 108).

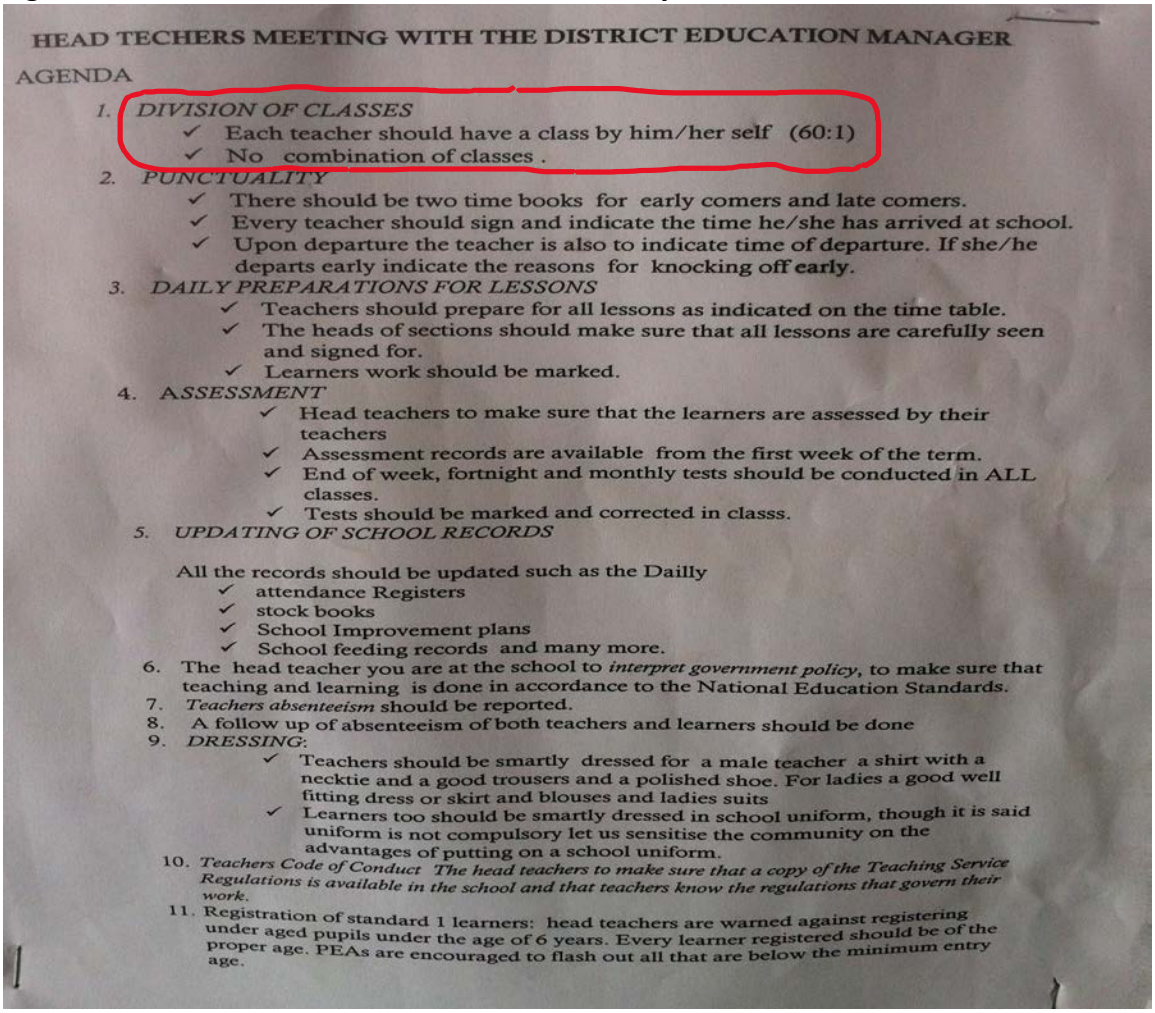
Government of Malawi policy appears to strictly forbid the use of team-teaching practices. During the period I was conducting my fieldwork this was stated in a high-level 2016 government circular I was given access to, as well as a directive to zonal officials, which I noticed at the PEA's office in Zone 9 (see Table 8.1 and Figure 8.5). However, when referring to the National Education Standards – which were finalised in 2015 – ambiguity around this policy creeps in. National Education Standard 21 states that *"[w]here teachers work together to support classes, they both take active roles in helping students learn"* (GoM, 2015b; p. 7). What is stated in this document appears more in line with Croft's (2002) recommendation of what team-teaching could entail**.**

Table 8.1: Excerpt from 2016 National Reading Programme circular regarding teacher utilisation

Team Teaching, Inter-Shifting, and Learning Shelters
• Headteachers must ensure that each Standard 1 teacher teaches his or her own set of students every day. Team teaching should be discouraged and large classes should be broken into smaller classes. Smaller classes will enable teachers to better manage students and provide them with more attention as well as offer them more opportunities to practice during Chichewa and English lessons.
• Headteachers should consider inter-shifting (or using existing infrastructure more efficiently by extending the learning day into the late afternoon when possible) to ensure that existing classroom infrastructure is used productively throughout the academic day beyond 14.30.
• Headteachers should consider ways to work with School Management Committees and parents to support the construction of affordable learning shelters in schools where there are insufficient classroom blocks. Learning shelters are considerably less expensive than standard classrooms but when constructed properly are still structurally sound and may be used to keep learners out of the sun or rain while they learn.

Source: MoEST government circular dated 19th October 2016.

Figure 8.5: Instructions on notice-board of Primary Education Adviser's office in Zone 9



HEAD TECHERS MEETING WITH THE DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGER

AGENDA

1. *DIVISION OF CLASSES*
   - ✓ Each teacher should have a class by him/her self (60:1)
   - ✓ No combination of classes .
2. *PUNCTUALITY*
   - ✓ There should be two time books for early comers and late comers.
   - ✓ Every teacher should sign and indicate the time he/she has arrived at school.
   - ✓ Upon departure the teacher is also to indicate time of departure. If she/he departs early indicate the reasons for knocking off early.
3. *DAILY PREPARATIONS FOR LESSONS*
   - ✓ Teachers should prepare for all lessons as indicated on the time table.
   - ✓ The heads of sections should make sure that all lessons are carefully seen and signed for.
   - ✓ Learners work should be marked.
4. *ASSESSMENT*
   - ✓ Head teachers to make sure that the learners are assessed by their teachers
   - ✓ Assessment records are available from the first week of the term.
   - ✓ End of week, fortnight and monthly tests should be conducted in ALL classes.
   - ✓ Tests should be marked and corrected in classs.
5. *UPDATING OF SCHOOL RECORDS*

   All the records should be updated such as the Dailly
   - ✓ attendance Registers
   - ✓ stock books
   - ✓ School Improvement plans
   - ✓ School feeding records and many more.
6. The head teacher you are at the school to *interpret government policy*, to make sure that teaching and learning is done in accordance to the National Education Standards.
7. *Teachers absenteeism* should be reported.
8. A follow up of absenteeism of both teachers and learners should be done
9. *DRESSING*:
   - ✓ Teachers should be smartly dressed for a male teacher a shirt with a necktie and a good trousers and a polished shoe. For ladies a good well fitting dress or skirt and blouses and ladies suits
   - ✓ Learners too should be smartly dressed in school uniform, though it is said uniform is not compulsory let us sensitise the community on the advantages of putting on a school uniform.
10. *Teachers Code of Conduct The head teachers to make sure that a copy of the Teaching Service Regulations is available in the school and that teachers know the regulations that govern their work.*
11. Registration of standard 1 learners: head teachers are warned against registering under aged pupils under the age of 6 years. Every learner registered should be of the proper age. PEAs are encouraged to flash out all that are below the minimum entry age.

8.2.2 Teacher arrangement decisions per standard

I start this section by considering how classes are arranged in all schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12. As mentioned in Section 8.1, all of the schools I collected data from in these two zones were operating on a "single" shift system. To that end, therefore, I collected information on whether teachers were responsible for teaching one class alone, shared teaching responsibilities for that class with another teacher or were responsible for teaching in more than one class. I deploy similar categories used by De Stefano (2013) in his study on teacher deployment in Malawi, these being:

i. **Teacher teaching a standard/ class alone:** Situation where a teacher teaches all subjects in that standard/ class alone.
ii. **Teacher teaching one standard/ class with another teacher:** Situation where a teacher is sharing the teaching requirements of a particular standard/ class with another teacher. In this scenario the said teacher is only teaching that standard/ class.

iii. **Teacher teaching more than one standard:** Situation where a teacher is teaching in more than one standard/ class

Multi-grade teaching, which was discussed in the previous section, traditionally relates to a situation where a teacher combines and teaches two or more classes in a single classroom. However, in the context of Category iii. listed above, it refers to a situation where a teacher is teaching two or more separate classes where s/he is either the sole teacher of those classes or else sharing teaching responsibilities with another teacher. While the teacher maintains responsibility for teaching two or more separate classes, these are taught in separate classrooms. These different categorisations act as a useful starting point to understanding whether beyond allocation (Section 8.1), the way that teachers are being arranged has been contributing further to the teacher shortage crisis.

Zonal level analysis

The majority of the 225 teachers teaching across schools in Zone 9 (79 percent) were engaging in teaching arrangements that fall under the category of "team-teaching." Just 12 percent of teachers in the zone were teaching all of the accompanying subjects in a particular standard alone. These largely fell under schools where there was either a shortage of teachers (Schools E, H, I, J and K) or in School G, where there was adequate infrastructure for teachers to take a class of their own (Figure 8.6A). The distribution of teachers team-teaching in Zone 9 was evenly disbursed between infant, junior and senior standards. However, when looking at the distribution of teachers who were handling a class by themselves, these were overwhelmingly concentrated in the infant and junior standards (69 percent) (Figure 8.6B).

In Zone 12, the majority of teachers (45 percent) were teaching a standard alone. However, two in every five teachers (or 40 percent) were engaged in a team-teaching arrangement (Figure 8.7A). What was particularly striking about the arrangement of team-teaching in Zone 12 was *where* in the primary school cycle it was taking place. Two-thirds (67 percent) of teachers team-teaching were based in the senior standards, of which, 22 percent were in Standard 8 alone. Just three percent of those team-teaching were based in Standard 1. In stark contrast, more than two-thirds (67 percent) of cases where a teacher was teaching a class alone were in the infant or junior standards (Figure 8.7B).

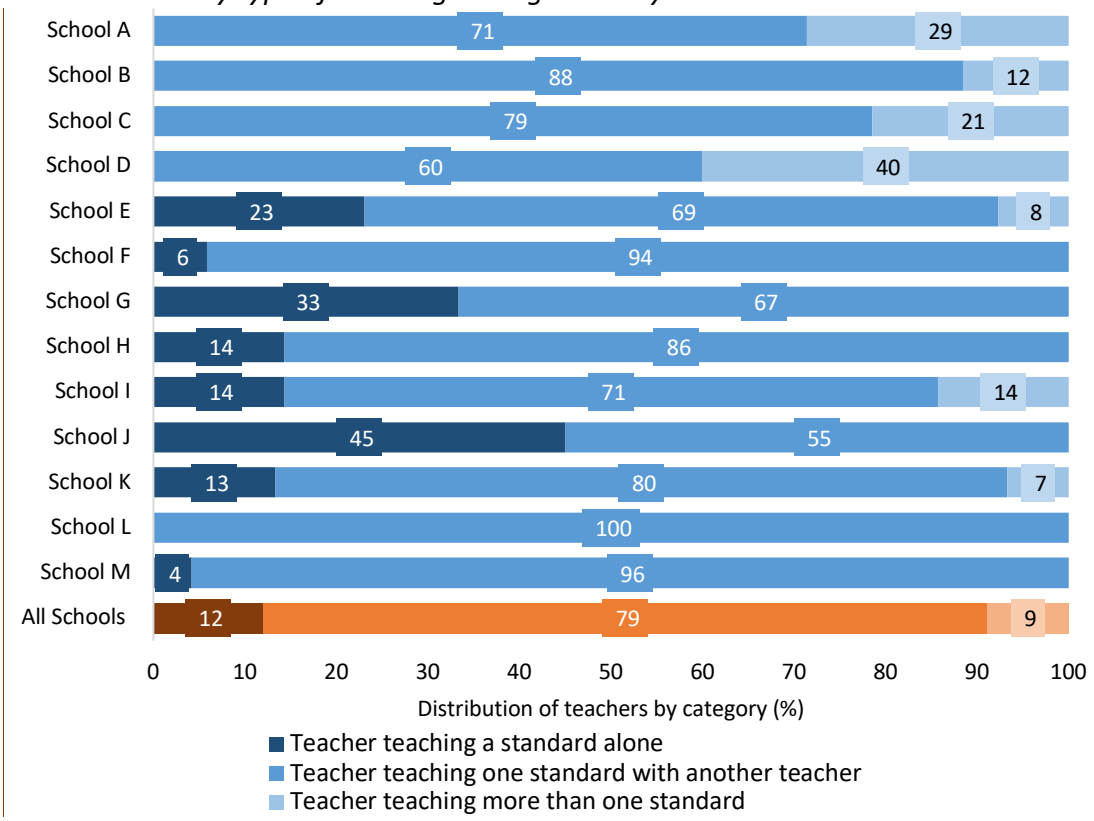
The data throw up a number of issues which one can feasibly argue will have adverse implications for the system being able to reach the 60 to 1 PTR goal. Firstly, despite government policy forbidding the practice of team-teaching, 23 out of the 26 schools in Zones 9 and 12 were engaging in it. Croft (2002) has argued that the practice of team-teaching could be justified on the basis of it helping to reduce the PTR of the larger classes for infant standards. This is if it was team-teaching in the true sense of the word, i.e. if both teachers were in the classroom. However, the data suggests that team-teaching mainly was taking place at the senior standards, where PTR was already low.

Secondly, government policy clearly states making better use of existing structures beyond 14:30pm, so that classes can be broken into smaller classes, which would be through overlapping or double-shifting (see Chapter 2). Despite most schools experiencing a shortage in infrastructure, all schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12 were operating on the basis of a single-shift system.

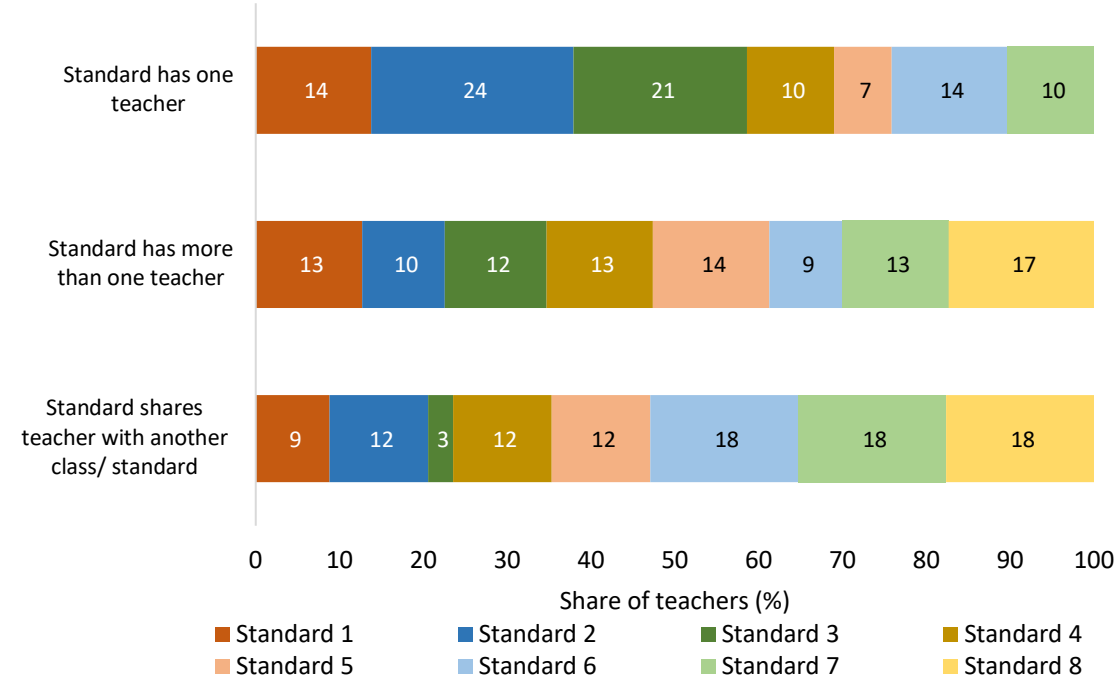
Thirdly, while multi-grade teaching was recommended as a strategy under ESIP I at the senior standards to make more effective use of the infrastructure and teachers (see Chapter 2 and Subsection 8.2.2), no school was utilising this strategy at the time of the fieldwork. Instead, 16 out of 26 schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12 had cases of teachers teaching across different classes/ standards. In a few of the schools in Zone 12, where teachers were teaching more than one class, Standards 7 or 8 had more than one teacher assigned to teach there. However, these teachers also appear to have been the sole teacher for infant and junior standards. This contravenes both what ESIP I proposed, and what multi-grade strategy was described as in Subsection 8.2.2. An example of what such a teaching practice across infant and senior standards means in practice is discussed in relation to School S later on in the chapter.

Figure 8.6: Distribution by type of teaching arrangement in Zone 9

A. Distribution by type of teaching arrangement by school



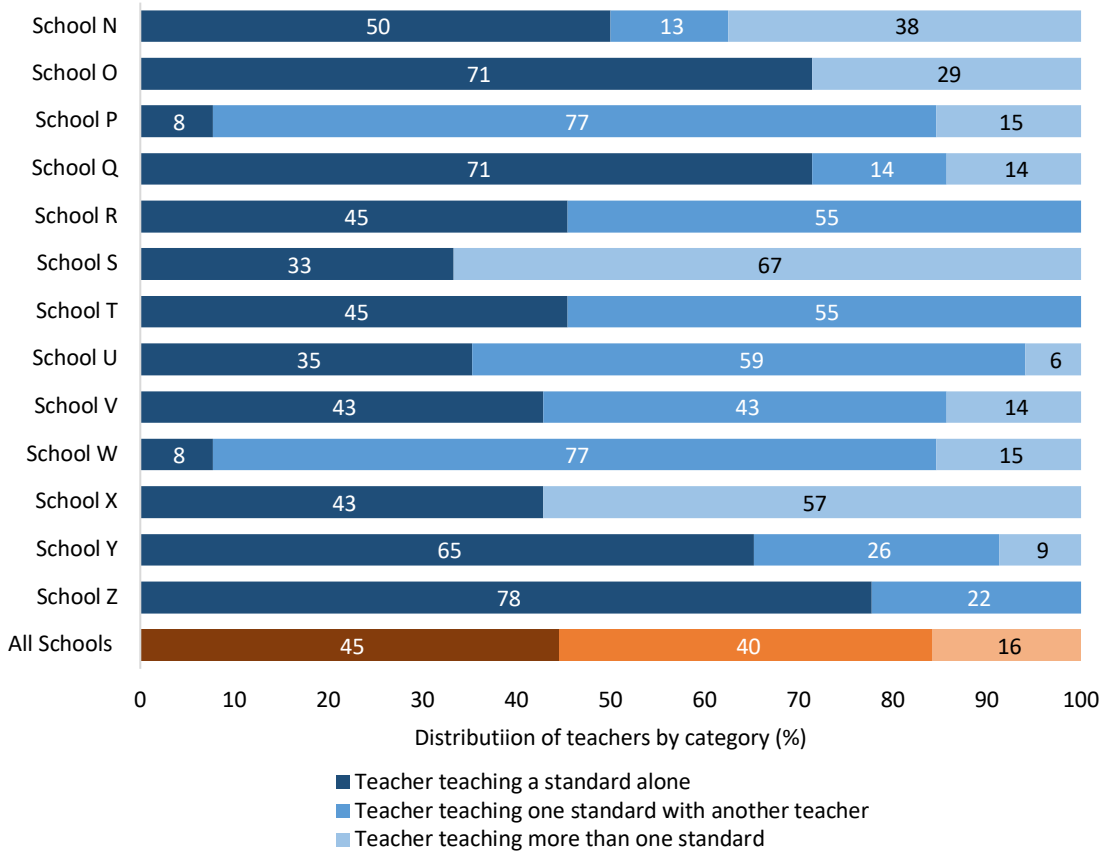
B. Distribution by type of teaching arrangement by standard



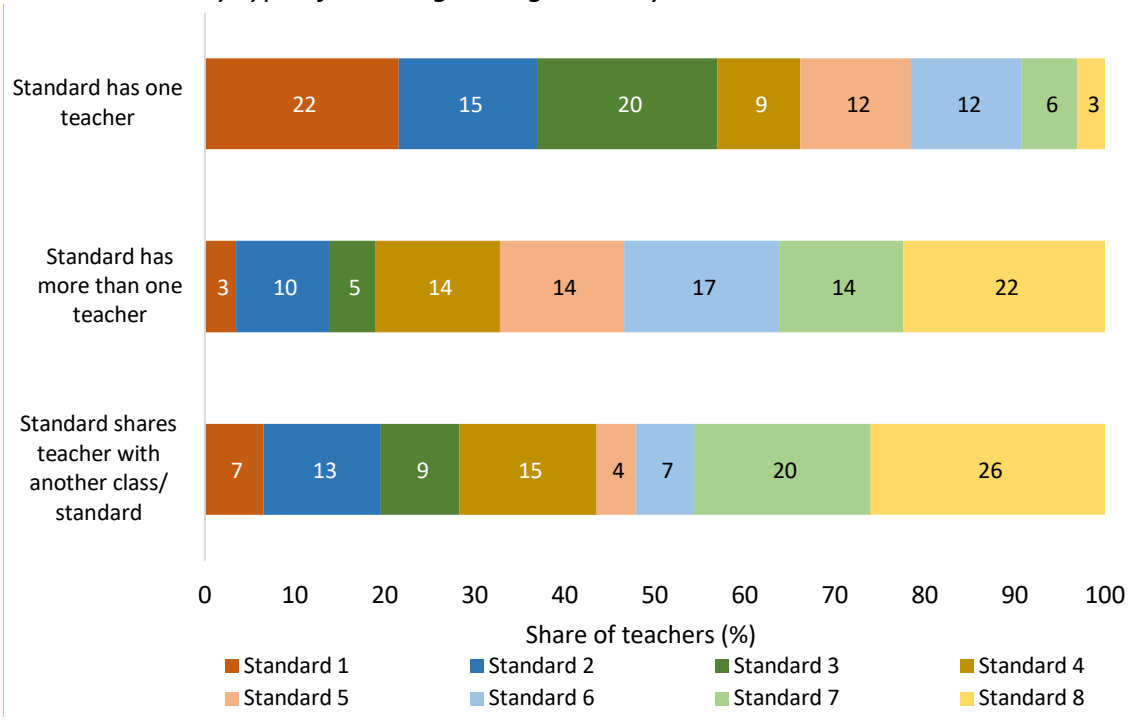
Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

Figure 8.7: Distribution by type of teaching arrangement in Zone 12

A. Distribution by type of teaching arrangement by school



B. Distribution by type of teaching arrangement by standard



Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

School-level analysis

Regarding each of the four case study schools, the arrangement of how teachers were organised was somewhat different. The majority of classes in School B were being taught using a team-teaching arrangement. Most of the teachers in School I were engaging in team-teaching; however, for the infant classes, teachers were teaching alone. Infant and junior classes in School S shared the sole teacher responsible for these classes with the senior standard ones. Finally, in all standards at School Z, apart from in Standard 8, teachers had to manage the class alone (Table 8.2).

Team-teaching took place in all four of these schools, yet the degree to which it was prevalent differed across the schools. While team-teaching took place in infant, junior and senior standards in School B and junior and senior standards in School I, it only took place in Standard 8 in School S and School Z (Table 8.1). In all four cases, therefore, Standard 8 had more than one teacher specialising in different subjects of the curriculum.

The practice of what team-teaching entailed was something remarkably similar in School B and School I for the classes where this was taking place, together with Standard 8 in School Z. Teachers engaging in team-teaching would normally divide teaching responsibilities according to subject, with the other teacher(s) responsible for the same class as them. When it came to a lesson for which the teacher was responsible for teaching, the other teacher/ teachers assigned to that particular class would typically either congregate in the school court-yard with other teachers also waiting to teach a lesson, or else they would leave the school premises, if their teaching responsibilities had finished for the day.

The team-teaching in Standard 8 in School S, in practice, meant something very different to that described above for School B, School I and School Z. The three teachers who were engaging in team-teaching in Standard 8 in School S were, in addition, the sole teachers responsible for other standards. Hence, when not teaching their designated Standard 8 subjects these teachers were teaching in these classes.[113]

[113] This arrangement describes the scenario before Standard 2, 3 and 4 finished for the day. In the afternoon, the team-teaching arrangement resembled something more like what was described in relation to School B and School I and Standard 8 in School Z.

Table 8.2: The practice of team-teaching according to the four case study schools and by standard

	School B	School I	School S	School Z
	14 classrooms	8 classrooms	6 classrooms	8 classrooms
	26 teachers	14 teachers	6 teachers	9 teachers
Standard 1	Class 1A: 2 teachers Class 1B: 2 teachers	1 teacher	1 teacher (St. 7)	1 teacher
Standard 2	Class 2A: 1 teacher Class 2B: 2 teachers	1 teacher	1 teacher (St. 8)	1 teacher
Standard 3	Class 3A: 1 teacher Class 3B: 2 teachers	2 teachers	1 teacher (St. 8)	1 teacher
Standard 4	Class 4A: 1 teacher Class 4B: 2 teachers	3 teachers	1 teacher (St. 8)	1 teacher
Standard 5	3 teachers	2 teachers	1 teacher	1 teacher
Standard 6	3 teachers	1 teacher	1 teacher	1 teacher
Standard 7	4 teachers	2 teachers	1 teacher (Std. 1)	1 teacher
Standard 8	3 teachers	2 teachers	3 teachers (Std. 2, 3, 4)	2 teachers
Teacher teaches class alone		**Team-teaching**		**Teaching more than one standard**[114]

Case Study 1: School B and team-teaching

Much of the literature alludes to team-teaching being a symptom of a shortage of classrooms (Croft, 2002; DeStefano, 2013) and to a degree, this was true based on my fieldwork observations. School B, School I and School Z each had more teachers than classrooms, with excess teachers to classrooms in these schools being arranged such that they team-taught with other teachers. However, during my fieldwork in School B the hypothesis that team-teaching was *only* a symptom of infrastructural shortages was rejected. This is one of the few schools I visited in both Zones 9 and 12 where there were more than eight classrooms. With 14 classrooms in total,[115] infant and junior standards (Standards 1 to 4) in School B each had two classrooms allocated to their standard. However, in spite of the adequate infrastructure facilities Standard 2 classes were being combined, as were the two Standard 4 classes. On paper, Class 2A had one teacher assigned to it while Class 2B had two. Similarly, Class 4A had one teacher allocated to it, while two teachers were responsible for teaching Class 4B.

[114] Multi-grade teaching traditionally means one teacher teaching two different standards together in one classroom. In the case of School S, however, this involved one teacher teaching two different standards in two separate classrooms.

[115] This included a double classroom block that was part of the old school structure and despite appearing to be in good condition, had long stopped being used.

In the case of Standard 2, the combination of the two classes began when one of the teachers responsible for Class B (Teacher 2) was absent for an extended period of time. This was to recover from injuries sustained in a motor accident she had been involved in at the start of the 2017/18 school year. With Teacher 2's absence, Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 combined both their two classes, with Teacher 1 taking responsibility for subjects that Teacher 2 had previously been teaching. Upon Teacher 2's return midway through Term 1 of the academic year 2017/18, the classes remained combined with Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 sharing three of the subject areas, and Teacher 3 continuing to teach the three subjects she was initially responsible for. A consequence of combining the classes together, was that it was no longer possible to accommodate the desks and chairs that had been previously used in both Classes 2A and 2B. These were stored in the now empty Classroom 2A, which stood empty and was no longer being used as a teaching facility. Another consequence, as one would expect following the combining of classes, was a rise in both the PTR and pupil-classroom ratio (PCR) (Table 8.3).

In the case of Standard, 4 the combining of classes started at the beginning of the second term of the academic year 2017/18. This was due to part of the structure of Class 4A being damaged by heavy rain and wind that had occurred in the district. Due to these unforeseen circumstances, Class 4A (taught by Teacher 1) and Class 4B (taught by Teacher 2 and Teacher 3) were combined. Teacher 1 took responsibility for one of the subjects that had been the responsibility of Teacher 2 and two of the subjects that had been taught by Teacher 3 prior to the classes combining. As in the case of Standard 2, the combination of classes led to a dramatic rise in PTR and PCR (Table 8.4). Additionally, desks and chairs from Class 4A were stored in Classroom 2A as the use of these could no longer be accommodated due to the need to now fit a large number of Standard 4 pupils into a single classroom.

Table 8.3: Effects on PTR before and after combining Standard 2 classes

Arrangement prior to combining	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Teacher 3**
	Class 2A	*Class 2B*	
	Bible Knowledge Chichewa English Expressive Arts Life Skills Mathematics	Chichewa English Mathematics	Bible Knowledge Expressive Arts Life Skills
	Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach: 93%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 27%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 67%
	PTR theoretical: 89 to 1	***PTR theoretical:*** 40 to 1	
	PTR actual: 89 to 1	***PTR actual:*** 80 to 1	
	PCR: 89 to 1	***PCR:*** 80 to 1	
Arrangement after combining	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Teacher 3**
	Class 2B		
	Chichewa English Mathematics		Bible Knowledge Expressive Arts Life Skills
	Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach: 13%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 13%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 67%
	PTR theoretical: 56 to 1		
	PTR actual: 169 to 1		
	PCR: 169 to 1		

Table 8.4: Effects on PTR before and after combining Standard 4 classes

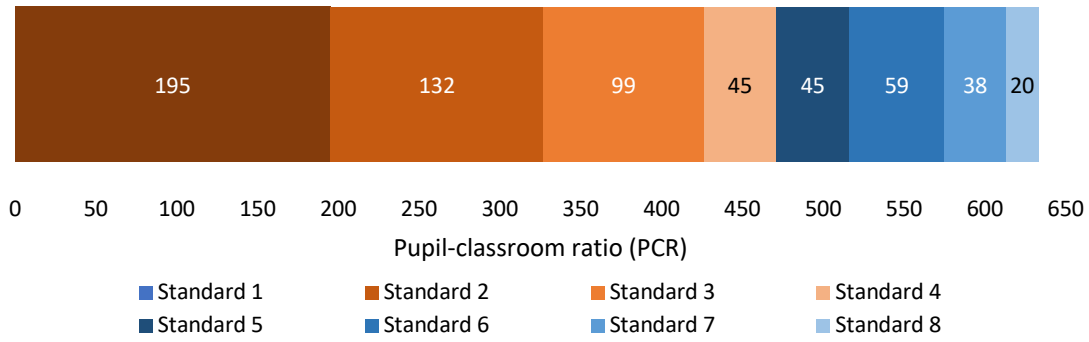
Arrangement prior to combining	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Teacher 3**
	Class 4A	*Class 4B*	
	Bible Knowledge Chichewa English Expressive Arts Life Skills Mathematics Science and Technology SES	Bible Knowledge Life Skills Mathematics Science and Technology	Chichewa English Expressive Arts SES
	Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach: 98%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 42%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 56%
	PTR theoretical: 68 to 1	***PTR theoretical:*** 37 to 1	
	PTR actual: 68 to 1	***PTR actual:*** 74 to 1	
	PCR: 68 to 1	***PCR:*** 74 to 1	
Arrangement after combining	**Teacher 1**	**Teacher 2**	**Teacher 3**
	Class 4B		
	Chichewa Expressive Arts Life Skills	Bible Knowledge Mathematics Science and Technology	English SES
	Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach: 38%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 32%	**Teaching time as a share of what teacher should teach:** 32%
	PTR theoretical: 47 to 1		
	PTR actual: 142 to 1		
	PCR: 142 to 1		

Case study 2: School S and teaching more than one standard

At the other extreme to team-teaching was the scenario where a single teacher was teaching two separate classes. The following focuses on School S, which arranged the six teachers teaching there to be spread out over eight classes, two of which took place outside in the open air (Standard 4 and Standard 5) due to a shortage of classrooms. Given that the school was not implementing an overlapping or double-shifting system, this meant that all teaching was taking place between 07:30am and 14:30pm, as stipulated under the official timetable (Table 8.5). Standard 5 and Standard 6 each had one teacher teaching all the subjects alone, whilst the four remaining teachers were teaching across more than one standard. The teacher responsible for teaching Standard 1 was also the sole teacher responsible for Standard 7. The three teachers each taking sole responsibility for teaching Standard 2, 3 and 4 were also sharing amongst themselves the nine Standard 8 subjects amongst themselves (Appendix Table A.5 and Appendix Table A.6).

School S is fairly typical of a school with high enrolment levels in the infant standards and fairly low enrolment at the senior standards. Under the traditional multi-grade arrangement, as discussed by Mulkeen & Higgins (2009), its enrolment distribution made it feasible to combine Standard 7 and Standard 8 to free up more teachers for the infant standards. Similarly, by combining these senior standards, it could make available one classroom to either Standard 4 or Standard 5, which were being taught outside. Instead, the class-sharing arrangements that were in place targeted the infant and junior standards (Standards 1 to 4), where class sizes were already high in the first three standards (see Figure 8.8).

Figure 8.8: Pupil-classroom ratio for per standard, School S



Source: Author's calculations based on school survey data.
Note: Standard 4 and Standard 5 are taught outside in the open-air.

Each Standard was taught separately, meaning that teachers who were teaching two different classes would have to leave pupils in one class, mainly unaccompanied, while going to administer to the other class that he or she was responsible for. This arrangement it is worth noting, is different to what is more conventionally understood as a multi-grade arrangement, where a teacher would be teaching more than one age group in the same classroom.

The arrangement for the teachers teaching both Standard 8 and Standards 2, 3 and 4 was administered in such a way that it ensured that the Standard 8 timetable was organised to minimise the number of lessons that clashed with one another (Appendix Table A.5). This was administered by the headteacher in the following ways:

- Standards 2, 3 and 4 teachers taught their respective subjects for Standard 8 when Tikwere (radio instruction) appeared on the timetable for Standards 2, 3 and 4, respectively. Tikwere did not take place at this school due to the absence of working equipment. These classes mainly took place in the morning periods.[116]
- The teachers solely responsible for Standards 2, 3 and 4 would teach these classes when one of the teachers they shared teaching responsibilities with in Standard 8 was teaching there.
- In circumstances where lessons overlapped between the standard the teacher was solely responsible for (Standards 2, 3 or 4) and the lessons that teacher was meant to teach in Standard 8, the teacher divided his or her time between the two classes.
- When Standards 2, 3 and 4 were dismissed for the day, the afternoon Standard 8 timetable was arranged in a way that reverted to a more typical team-teaching arrangement, i.e. the teacher not responsible for that subject would either wait outside the classroom or go home.

The teaching arrangement for Standards 1 and 7 was slightly different. Here, the sole teacher responsible for both classes divided her time between Standard 1 and Standard 7 classes, until Standard 1 was dismissed for the day, after which she taught only Standard 7 (Appendix Table A.6).

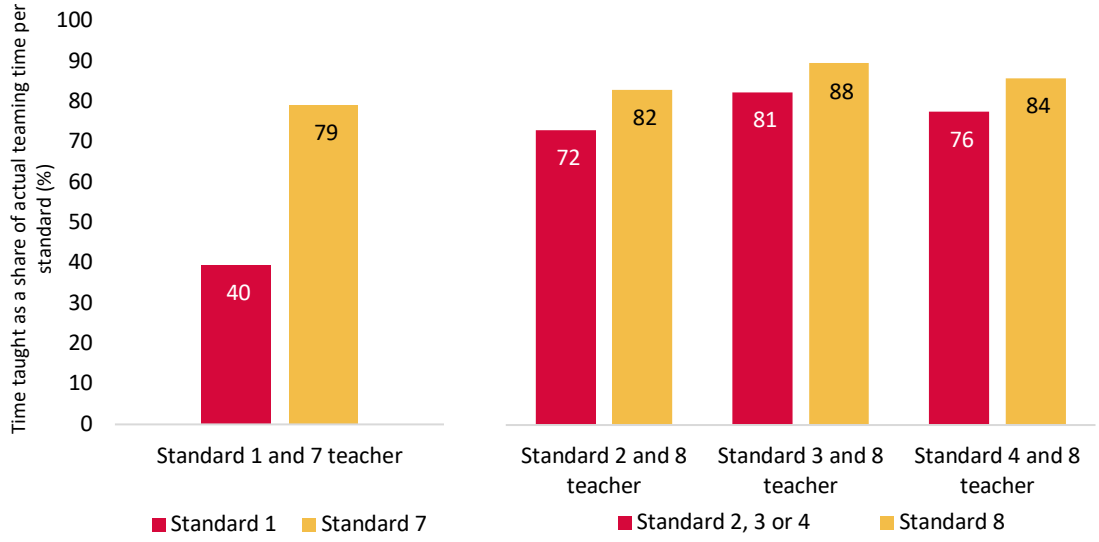
I went through the timetable of the standards with the headteacher and teachers where classes were being shared by one teacher, and documented the time that the teacher was physically present in the standards he or she was responsible for. This allowed me to

[116] This was also similar to the time-tabling arrangement for the teacher responsible for Standard 1 and 7 as Tikwere was officially part of the Standard 1 timetable.

compare how much teacher contact time pupils in each standard had compared to what was listed in the official timetable (Table 8.4).

As one would expect with such an arrangement, student contact time was less than the official school timetable in standards where teachers were responsible for two classes. However, the data shows that infant and junior standards were more adversely affected by the arrangement. In all cases, the teacher responsible for an infant/junior standard and a senior standard spent a lower percentage of the total recommended teaching time in the former compared with the latter. The most extreme case was Standard 1, where the students' contact time with the teacher was just 40 percent of the time the government had allocated for this standard. This compared to 79 percent for Standard 7 – the other class the teacher was responsible for (Figure 8.9).

Figure 8.9: Share of actual student contact time versus official contact time for standards sharing teachers in School S



Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

8.2.3 Summary of Section 8.2

Section 8.2 has provided an overview of how teachers were arranged within schools according to whether they took responsibility for teaching one or more class/ standard, and whether they shared these teaching responsibilities. The data illustrated how, in Zone 9, which had a surplus of teachers, the overwhelming majority of teachers were engaging in team-teaching. In Zone 12, which was characterised by a teacher shortage, most teachers were taking sole responsibility for teaching their classes. Section 8.3 moves on to

considering what effect the different ways teachers were arranged had on the PTR, and ultimately the utilisation of teaching time.

Section 8.3 Actual pupil-teacher ratios based on how teachers are arranged to teach

8.3.1 Introduction

Section 8.2 provided an overview of the different ways in which teachers were arranged to teach within a school, including those relating to team-teaching. This has added further nuance to what this may mean for the actual PTR, given the teacher could be absent from the classroom. Section 8.3 specifically considers how the way teachers were arranged to work within schools affected the *actual* PTR, thereby building on Section 8.1. It also probes what impact this had on the teaching hours, and how this deviated from official teaching time. I start this section by looking at policies relating to the official number of hours a teacher is expected to work versus that they are required to teach.

8.3.2 Policies concerning working time and teaching hours

Working time

According to the 1991 Malawi Public Services Regulation, the working hours per day for a civil servant total 8.4 hours per day. The Teaching Service Commission, on the other hand, indicates that work hours refer to the minimum number of hours that the Government "lays down" periodically (Ndalama &Chidalengwa, 2010). In 2014, the Office of the President and the Cabinet stated that the *"official working hours for Public Service have been amended so that officers work from 7.30am to 4.30pm, with the provision of a one hour lunch break"* (GoM, 2014).

Teaching time

Malawi's 2017/18 academic calendar for publicly financed primary schools set a total of 41 weeks of teaching. The teaching time for a Standard 1 translates into 820 hours of teaching time annually, or 20 hours per week. The equivalent for senior standards is a total of 1,312 hours of teaching time annually, or 32 hours per week (Table 8.5). In spite of the official differences in teaching hours between the infant, junior and senior standards, all teachers are renumerated at the same level.

Table 8.5: Official teaching time per standard

	Standard	Lessons per week	Minutes per lesson	Start time	End time	Teaching hours per week	Teaching minutes per week
Infant	**Standard 1**	40	30	07.30am	12.00pm	20	1,200
	Standard 2	45	30	07.30am	12.30pm	23	1,350
Junior	**Standard 3**	45	35	07.30am	13.15pm	26	1,575
	Standard 4	50	35	07.30am	13.50pm	29	1,750
Senior	**Standard 5**	55	35	07.30am	14.30pm	32	1,925
	Standard 6	55	35	07.30am	14.30pm	32	1,925
	Standard 7	55	35	07.30am	14.30pm	32	1,925
	Standard 8	55	35	07.30am	14.30pm	32	1,925

Source: Information collected from MoEST officials.

8.3.3 Pupil-teacher ratio when factoring in how teachers are arranged within schools

Figure 8.3A and Figure 8.3B illustrate the distribution of schools according to PTR by standard based on the data I collected from schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12. Given the prevalence of team-teaching in the system, as shown in Figure 8.6A and Figure 8.7A, and how it is operationalised in practice, I next consider what its impact on the PTR is to illustrate better the realities of the primary education system.

Zonal level analysis

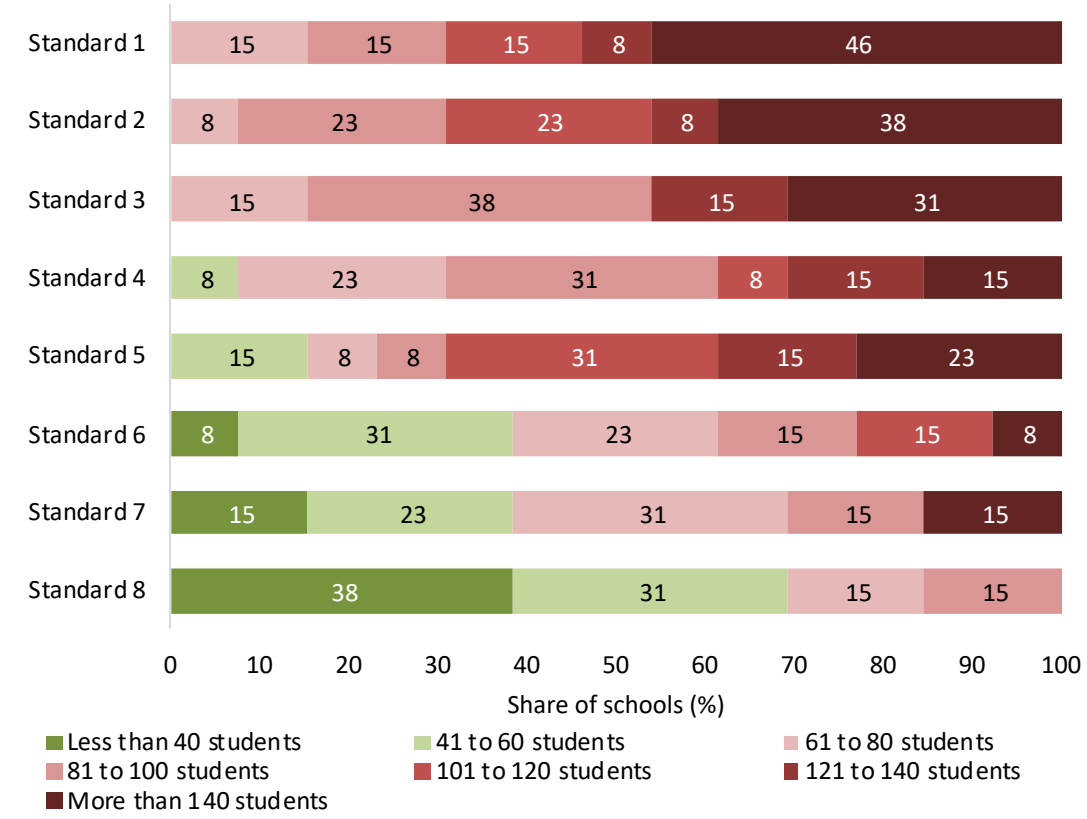
I start with a discussion regarding Zone 9. As was illustrated in Figure 8.6A, the majority of teachers in this zone were team-teaching and those who were doing so were spread across all standards. The effect of team-teaching on the PTR is dramatic, particularly when looking at the infant standards. As can be seen in Figure 8.3A, close to 40 percent of Standard 1 and Standard 2 classes had a PTR of less than 60 to 1. However, when factoring in how team-teaching works in practice, no Standard 1 or Standard 2 class in any of the schools in Zone 9 had a PTR of less than 60 to 1, with the majority having one above 100 to 1. At the other extreme are the senior standards which illustrate great variation. Prior to factoring in the impact of team-teaching, the majority of schools had a PTR of less than 60 to 1 for Standards 5, 6, 7 and 8. However, when accounting for how team-teaching works, the majority of schools had a PTR of more than 60 to 1 in Standards 5, 6 and 7. Standard 8 stands out as the only standard where the majority of schools – 69 percent – continued to have a PTR of less than 60 to 1 (Figure 8.10A). However, before factoring in the effect of team-teaching it had been 100 percent (Figure 8.3A).

What the data reveals is that when taking into account the effects of team-teaching, class sizes in Zone 9 and Zone 12 were remarkably similar across the different standards. This is

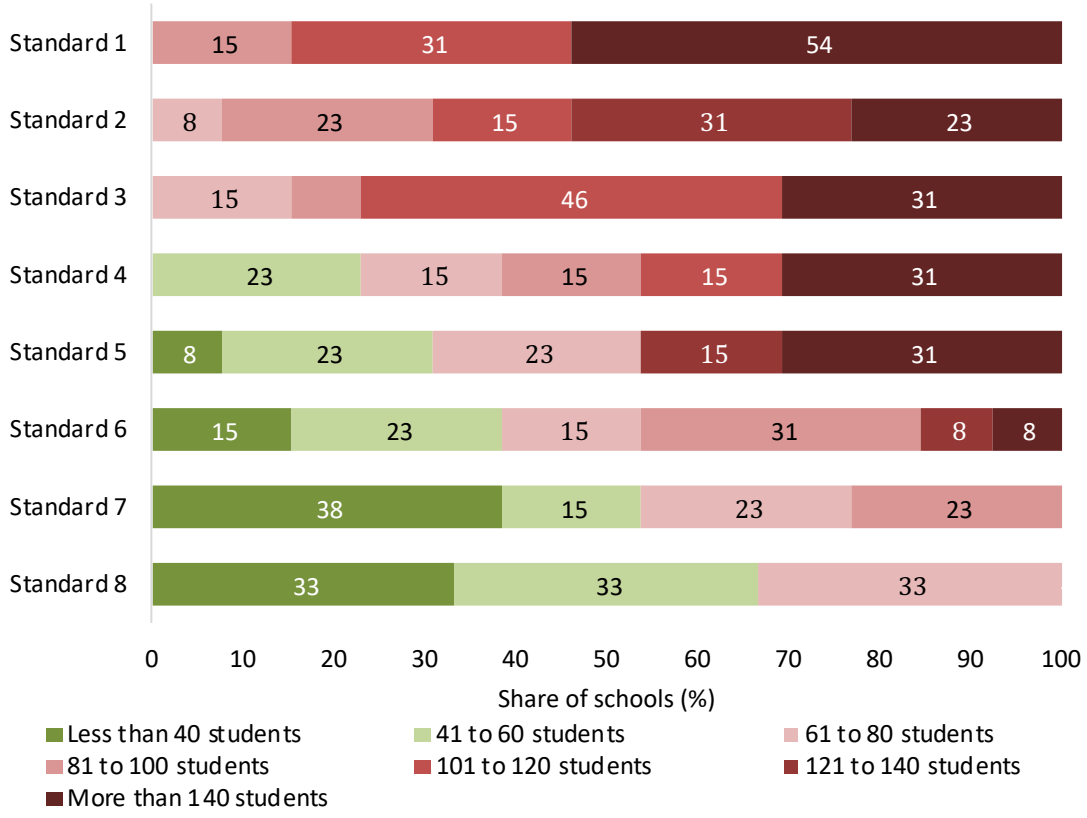
despite Zone 9 being characterised as a zone where the majority of schools had an excess of teachers, whereas the majority of schools in Zone 12 were suffering from a shortage. These findings are not dissimilar to what Duflo et al. (2012) found in their study of Western Kenya. Here, the authors found that adding new teachers to classes in order to lower class sizes led to teachers reducing their teaching effort.

Figure 8.10: Distribution of schools according to pupil-teacher ratio by standard

A. Zone 9 (Based on allocation and time taught by standard)



B. Zone 12 (Based on allocation and time taught by standard)

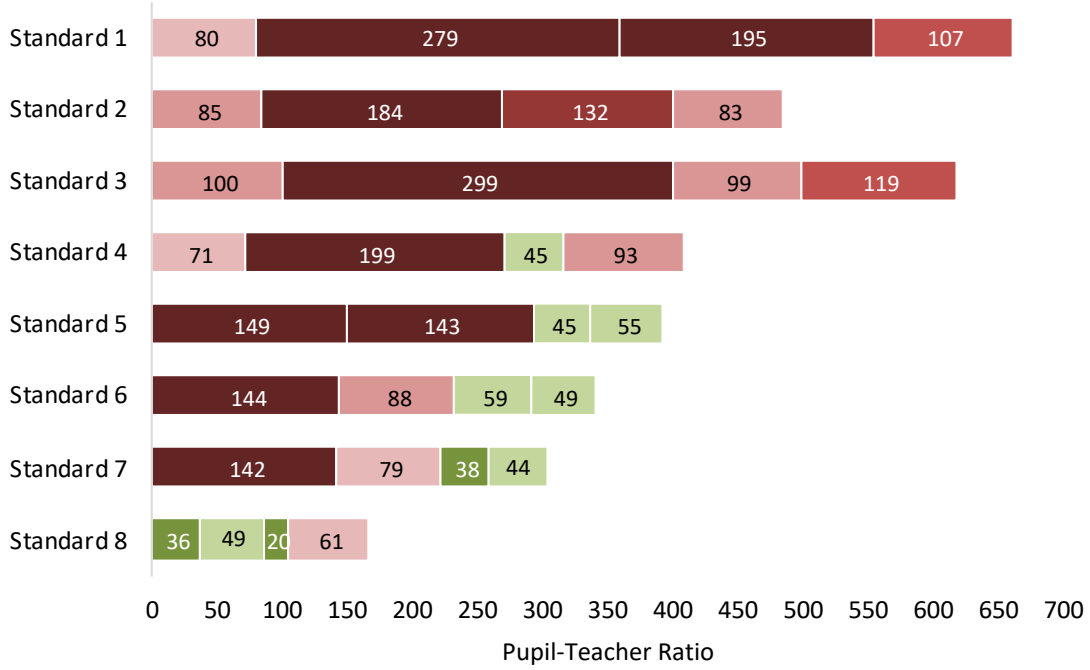


Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

School-level analysis

When looking specifically at the four case study schools, the effect of team-teaching appears to have affected the PTR for School B radically, where this practice was most prevalent, and also, in Standards 3, 4 and 5 in School I (compare Figure 8.4 with Figure 8.11). Strikingly, the practice of team-teaching actually means that the PTRs for Standards 5, 6 and 7 in School B – a school with the highest surplus of teachers – were worse than for any of the other schools. The PTRs for School S and School Z remained almost exactly the same as in Figure 8.4 given the almost complete absence of team-teaching in these schools.

Figure 8.11: Pupil-Teacher Ratio by standard – based on allocation and time taught



Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.
Note: The ordering of schools from left to right is School B, School I, School S and School Z.

8.3.4 Time taught by teacher as a share of time they should be teaching

A practical consequence of how team-teaching works is that the hours that a teacher should be teaching are significantly lower compared to if she or he is teaching a class alone (Figure 8.12A and Figure 8.12B). On average, for teachers in Zone 9 engaged in team-teaching, teaching time was anywhere between 39 and 47 percent of what the timetable stipulated. The equivalent for Zone 12 was slightly higher at between 47 and 68 percent. However, when looking at the average time taught by all teachers compared to the time they should have been spending teaching, those in Zone 12 (45 to 86 percent depending on standard)

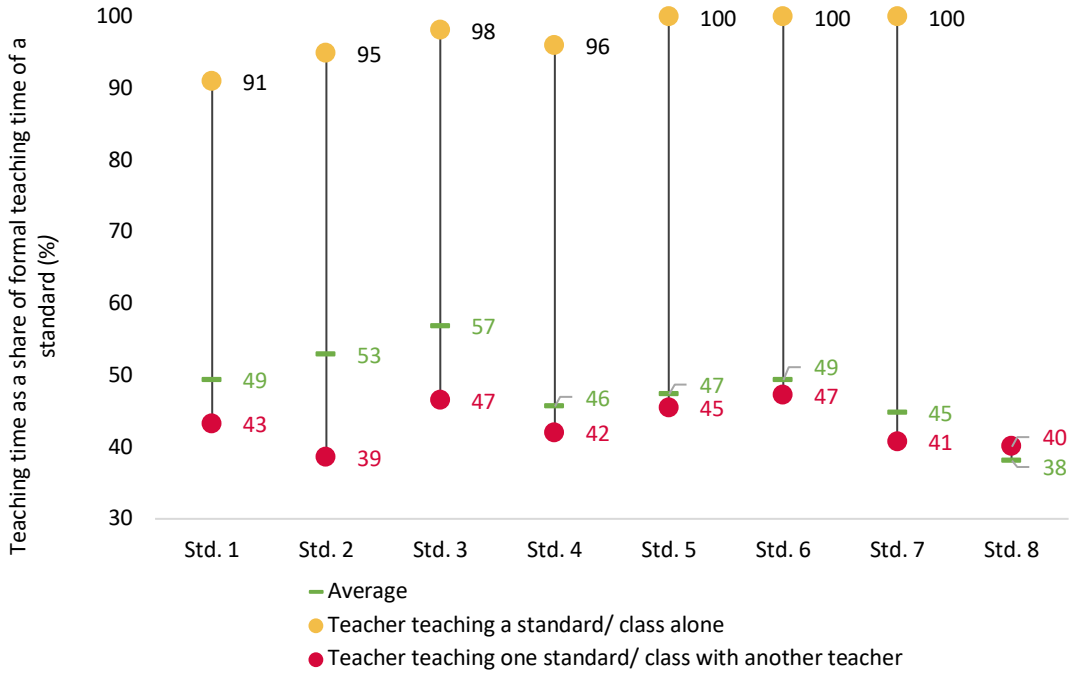
appear to have scored better compared to teachers in Zone 9 (38 to 57 percent depending on standard).

In Zone 12, there appears to have been an inverse relationship between the standard and the time spent teaching as a percentage of what teachers should have been teaching. In other words, Standard 1 teachers' actual teaching time as a share of what they should have been was greater than for those teaching Standard 8. The variation within Zone 12 and between Zone 9 and Zone 12 appears to have been almost entirely due to what extent team-teaching was prevalent. Where it was prevalent, the time spent teaching as a percentage of what teachers should have been teaching was much lower than that stipulated.

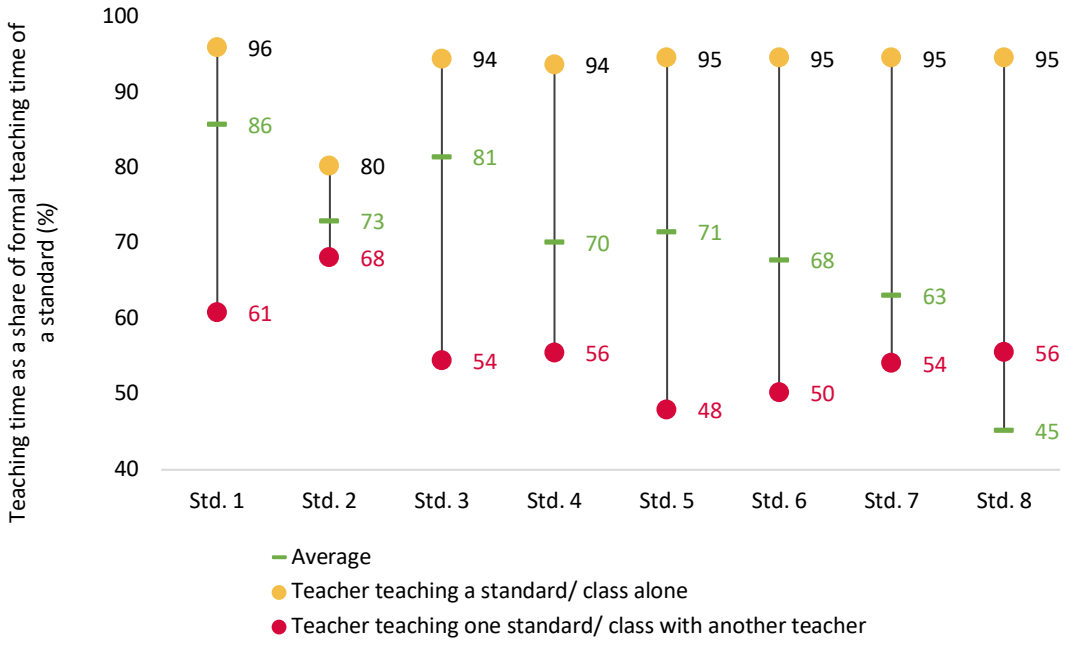
Enforcing the government-led rules on team-teaching practices appears problematic due to the mismatch between these rules and the reality facing schools. How classes – and by extension teachers – are arranged in most cases appears to be contingent on infrastructure availability.

Figure 8.12: Time taught by teacher as a share of time they should be teaching

A. Zone 9



B. Zone 12



Source: Researcher's calculations based on school survey data.

8.3.5 Summary of Section 8.3

When factoring into the equation how teachers are arranged, Section 8.3 has shown how schools with surplus teachers actually fared much worse in terms of the PTR compared to what was presented in Section 8.1. By extension, the practices at school-level also means that even before factoring in authorised and unauthorised teacher absences away from the school, the time teachers actually spent teaching was significantly below what they are required to.

Conclusion

Chapter 8 has raised a number of issues relating to the within school distribution of teachers in schools, which has led to large variation in the PTR between standards. The first is that the teaching arrangements appear to have been carried out on the basis of single-shift teaching, even though the circumstances for some of the schools would have deemed them suitable for adopting a double-shift or overlapping system to organise the teachers and infrastructure that were in place better.

The second issue relates to the way that teachers within this single shift system were being allocated by standard. Headteachers appeared to try and ensure a minimum of one teacher

per standard. However, the distribution of enrolment meant this was inadvertently favouring the senior standards at the expense of the infant and junior standards. The inequitable way in which teachers were found to be allocated between standards has bigger negative implications regarding the equity of public expenditure on education. This is because a large proportion of the most disadvantaged pupils do not reach senior standards to complete primary school. Household data sourced from the Malawi Demographic Household Survey 2015/16 shows that just one-in-three poor rural girls complete primary school, which compares unfavourably with over three-quarters of rich urban boys (UNESCO-UIS, 2019).

Lastly, the practice of team-teaching was found to be a widespread phenomenon, irrespective of whether a school had a shortage of teachers or a surplus. This severely impacted upon PTR targets and the effective utilisation of the time teachers should have been spending teaching. Studies in other Global South contexts have tended to focus on a comparison between the official instructional time a student should receive versus what they actually received due to teacher absenteeism (Bold et al., 2017). However, the analysis for this chapter has presented teacher absenteeism from a different perspective. It has shown that even before authorised or unauthorised absenteeism is taken into account, the official number of hours a teacher spends teaching is significantly lower than what it should be due to the teaching arrangements in place.

Chapter 9 continues the discussion on the second theme of this thesis, which is teacher allocation and utilisation within schools. It presents the themes emerging from the qualitative stakeholder interviews with government and school actors on this issue. Its purpose is to provide explanations for the trends and patterns identified in this chapter in relation to teacher allocation and utilisation within schools.

Chapter 9: Understanding what challenges the equitable allocation and utilisation of teachers in schools

Chapter purpose and structure

In Chapter 8, I presented my data findings relating to how teachers in primary schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12 were being allocated, and what impact this had on the utilisation of their teaching time. The purpose of Chapter 9 is to address the fourth, and final, research question of this research piece, which is*: "What are the reasons for the uneven allocation of primary school teachers within schools?"* I build on the findings presented in Chapter 8 by synthesising what the education stakeholders interviewed believed were for the reasons for the inequity in the allocation of teachers. The majority of the data from this chapter draws upon my field notes and transcriptions from the interviews that I administered with key informants at ministry, district, zonal and school level.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 9.1, I begin by discussing how issues relating to the shortage of classroom infrastructure impact upon teacher allocation and utilisation. This helps in understanding the current mismatch between what government policies instruct in terms of teacher allocation and utilisation versus the realities on the ground that influence the decisions schools take. Section 9.2 moves on to considering how subject and standard specialisation are defining characteristics of Malawi's primary education system. This, similarly, helps in providing insights into the decisions headteachers take when allocating teachers. The chapter concludes with Section 9.3, which considers the weakness in management as being a cause as to why certain practices persist. The value of this section is that it identifies the challenges for those managing teachers in implementing policies relating to teacher allocation and utilisation.

9.1 Classroom infrastructure and its impact on how teachers are allocated and utilised

9.1.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 identified the wide variations in pupil-teacher ratios (PTRs) across different standards in primary schools. This was found to be partly due to the mismatch between the

number of teachers and number of classrooms per school, which in many instances led to more than one teacher being allocated per class. A number of national policies contained in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) are aimed at achieving a lower PTR or a greater utilisation of teachers' teaching time through more effective use of infrastructure (see Chapter 2).

This section is focused on the relationship between classroom infrastructure shortages in Malawi's education system, and the ways in which this has affected teacher allocation and utilisation. Transcribed responses presented for the remainder of this chapter have been colour coordinated according to the type of actor interviewed. Central level government official responses are in red; district level government official responses are in orange; zonal level government official responses are in yellow; headteacher/ deputy headteacher responses are in green; and teacher responses are in blue.

9.1.2 Shortage of classroom infrastructure

In Chapter 8 Subsection 8.2 showed how in the four case study schools the number of classrooms appeared to be a contributory factor as to how teachers were allocated. The shortage of classrooms and how they were allocated amongst the different standards appeared to contribute to the prevalence of what was known as "team-teaching" (see Subsection 9.1.4). Stakeholders attributed the continued practice of combining classes, which is forbidden by official government policy, to the insufficient number of classrooms:

"A school having enough classrooms! Eh it is very rare! Even if you can enter into the city the classrooms are scarce. This is why most teachers we share."
(Infant standard teacher, School S, Zone 12)

"The government is saying teachers should not share classes…. that will not work because of a lack of classrooms and we are forced to put a lot of learners in one class."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

District officials indicated that the directive issued to schools was that in the event of inadequate infrastructure teachers should deliver lessons outdoors under shaded areas. This discouraged numerous classes being combined together to make one class. However, teachers regularly cited weather conditions for why classes could not be split as instructed:

"During the rainy season, we cannot teach outside, so we just put the learners together. We combine the class."
(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"Well the disadvantage of teaching these learners under the shade, it is seasonal. Now this is rainy season, you cannot teach the learners under the shade."
(Infant standard teacher, School S, Zone 12)

District officials expressed sympathy for the plight of schools who were unable to split classes during the rainy season, which normally runs from December through to March each year. However, the expectation from the District Education Office (DEO) was that during the dry season classes should be split:

"We understand that time because it was raining. But on a very good day, as it were, we know we have got that problem of shortage of classrooms they can find the shelter elsewhere."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Based on the case study schools I undertook my research in, my own observation was that teachers in the schools in Zone 9 were combining classes even during the non-rainy season. I asked teachers why this was taking place. Their responses indicated that the lack of shade and the space available made separate classes impractical to implement:

"Because outside, there are two harsh conditions; rain and sun. So, you see that at 12 o'clock, a learner cannot be outside learning, because we have few trees there."
(Infant standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

"If we can divide the class into two, then School I everywhere there will be children. So, we do that [combine classes] because of shortage of classes."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

Aside from double-shift and overlapping systems (see Subsection 9.1.3), the other government strategy to ameliorate the big class sizes and the inefficient use of teachers was the adequate provision of classrooms or learning shelters. Watkins & Ashforth in their study assert that, "*local actors are on their own, invisible to the education officials and donors in Lilongwe, the capital, who make policy and develop programs"* (2019; p. 6). Interviews with stakeholders corroborated the absence of these actors at the school level.[117]

Without a benefactor to assist them in constructing classrooms, three of the four schools where my research took place and where there was an infrastructure shortage, cited the School Improvement Grant (SIG) or the School Development Fund (SDF) as the main sources of financing for their construction needs. The SIG is a government grant disbursed on an

[117] In addition, while the Focus Group Discussions that I undertook with the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) were eventually not used for this study, they appear to have corroborated the absence at these levels of these benefactors.

annual basis, while the SDF are resources collected from parents at the start of every school year. One district official pointed out the importance of these funds in helping schools to construct additional shelters:

> *"Some of the schools have good shade, iron sheet shelters, which they have managed to construct under the School Improvement Grant."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

However, financial data I acquired from the DEO together with the interview responses from local and school-level actors illustrated the inadequacy of the SIG in assisting schools with infrastructural development. Budget data from the financial year 2017/18 suggested that the average SIG grant allocated to a primary school in Zomba Rural district was in the region of MK800,000 (US$1,093). These ceilings continued to be set by a formula controlled by central ministry officials, with no input from district officials.

Furthermore, strict earmarking from central government on SIG use further diminished its efficacy for school actors. At the time I was undertaking my fieldwork, 40 percent of SIG funds were earmarked under 'Access and Equity', which included activities for the construction and maintenance of school buildings. The problem relating to the inadequacies of SIG resources for capital investment frequently arose when discussing resources for construction purposes:

> *"Because they [the SIG funds] are not enough, they [the schools] build a temporary block using mud instead of cement for the building. So, when heavy rains come, they blow off that construction making the funds useless."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

> *"The SIG grants are not enough. That is why the schools are not improving. They cannot construct a school block in a year."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

UNICEF, for instance, has estimated that a double classroom block can cost anywhere between MK2 to MK3 million (US$1,366 to US$2,732), if funding is provided directly to schools (UNICEF, 2019). Based on my calculations, this would take between six and nine years to complete if the school were depending on SIG resources alone.

Similarly the SDF was another resource cited by respondents as important for construction. While fee-free primary education was officially rolled out across the country in 1994, the SDF remains an annual sum parents are obliged to contribute to the School Management Committee (SMC) at the beginning of the school year. In the four schools I undertook my

research in, contributions per child ranged from between MK300 (US$0.41) to MK1,000 (US$1.37) per school year. Non-payment of the SDF risked children being "chased" from schools, according to the discussions had with various stakeholders. In additional to the SDF contribution from parents, in three schools[118] parental/ community members contributed their labour towards moulding bricks and helping with the construction of school infrastructure.

During interviews with district officials, discussants emphasised the importance of the community taking an active lead in increasing the supply of school shelters:

"We also encourage the community to come up with shelters, whereby they can be learning when it is raining and when perhaps it is a sunny day, they can be learning under the shelter somewhere."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District)

As with the SIG funds, however, school actors reported how the parental and community contributions remained insufficient for building durable classroom structures:

"The classroom block demands a lot of materials and is very expensive. So, those stakeholders [school communities], they cannot manage, but they can do that by constructing a temporary shelter [which] cannot stay a long time. It can stay maybe a few years and then it falls off."
(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)

"We need more infrastructure at this school. But really, without a generous benefactor, we are in trouble. The resources from SIG, what we get from parents, it cannot build a [classroom] block."
(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

Community-built classroom structures, moreover, often fail to meet the minimum government standards of construction required. The Primary Education Advisers (PEA) in both zones cited the problem of community-built structures within their respective zones:

"Because of poor resources they may use grass thatch….of which the grass on the roof is not all that complete. When it rains, it leaks a lot. Most of the items….are soaked."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"People are hungry over having school blocks [and] they say 'Let's buy iron sheets and the walls will be constructed by us, the community.' Which is not good, because the walls will be temporary walls"
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

[118] School I, School S and School Z.

With the poor inspection of schools by government officials (discussed in Subsection 9.3.2), the low quality of community-built structures can sometimes lead to tragic consequences. During my fieldwork in Malawi a community-built classroom structure at Nantchengwa School – a remote and rural school situated in Zomba Rural district – was struck down by heavy winds during school hours. This proved fatal with the structure collapsing on pupils, immediately killing four children and injuring a number of others.

Besides the SIG and SDF resources, responses from stakeholders raised the importance of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) as a resource that could help with infrastructural development. During my fieldwork, the CDF fund amounted to MK23 million (US$31,421) per MP per annum. This represented a major increase from the MK7 million (US$9,563) when it was first introduced in 2006 (Chiweza, 2016).

Formal rules around the use of the CDF dictate that it is the District Commissioner who is the controlling officer. However, in practice, these formal procedures are bypassed by Members of Parliament (MPs) who regulate these funds and use coercive behaviour to sanction district officials who try to dictate how these resources should be used (Chiweza, 2016). Under the multi-party political apparatus the appointment of District Commissioners has become a highly politicised process (Booth & Cammack, 2013). The problem appears to be further compounded by the fact that between 2005 and 2014, there were no local elections to vote in councillors at the district level. According to interview responses, this meant politicians capturing and retaining full control over CDF resources, with little oversight from the District Council or affiliated sector institutions, such as the District Education Office:

> *"Those people [politicians], when it comes to CDF, really guard that money….they take that money as personal. So, it is very difficult even if you advise them in a meeting that 'We need your assistance with CDF.'"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District)*

One of the motivations for retaining control over CDF resources has been the sheer volumes channelled to the CDF compared to other local public funds. Chiweza (2016) estimated that by 2014 the CDF had become the largest discretionary central government transfer, making up 90 percent of district council's capital expenditure. According to one official, the consequences of MPs taking control over CDF resources mean that it deviates from the District Development Plan:

"They [MPs] really are not consulting the plan as it were. Because, if they were seriously consulting the plan, they would see these are the projects that have been laid out in the District Development Plan as far as my [the MPs] area is concerned."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District)

The PEA at Zone 12 claimed that the allocation of CDF and Local Development Fund (LDF) resources had been "politicised":

"The problem is that the LDF and the CDF have been politicised, because MPs – they are not there for development. They are failing to use the CDF and the LDF properly."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

While the importance of CDF resources was acknowledged by stakeholders, respondents from all levels of the education system reported that infrastructural funding from the CDF was either dormant:[119]

"Yeah, what they do normally is when they have been elected is they sit down, they are comfortable. Now when it comes to times like this – times when we are approaching elections – they start now moving around."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"In those days [in the past] they [the resources] were coming from CDF, but currently I don't know what CDF is doing. It's a long time where teachers houses were built within the zone. I don't know what they are doing"
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

Or else misused:

"MK 12 million can finish a school block….can't they finish a school block? Now….they are constructing that school block for three, four years. Is it on? Four years constructing one school block!"
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

"The [CDF] funds – when they [the politicians] receive it – they may try to split it into so many projects, which eventually they may not be able to finish due to the rising cost."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District)

These statements reflect what Chiweza (2016) discusses in relation to the mismanagement of the CDF by MPs who have siphoned off the funds for personal use[120] or allocated these funds thinly across all constituents (Chiweza & Waldock, 2011). The latter is so that each MP

[119] My fieldwork took place the year before Malawi's 2019 political elections were due to take place. Many local level interviewees speculated that in the run-up to the election these actors would start to become more visible to the schools and the surrounding community.
[120] The abuse of the CDF is well-documented, with a large percentage of CDF resources unaccounted for. One of the forms of abuse involves MPs reporting CDF resources being spent on completed infrastructural project for several years for accounting purposes. As a consequence, the projects remain uncompleted (Chiweza, 2016).

is visible and *"has something to show his/her constituency for electing him/ her"* (Chiweza, 2016; p. 107). It also means that the type of investment aligns with that where political elite can be seen to be *"delivering development"* (O'Neil & Cammack, 2014; p. 67).

With public funds for infrastructure appearing dormant, a school's success in attracting additional resources for infrastructure appears to be judged on the headteacher or community's ability to source these from elsewhere (Watkins & Ashforth, 2019). District and zonal officials discussed the role of the headteacher in sourcing funds by applying pressure on those controlling CDF resources:

> *"If a headteacher does not mount a lot of pressure on the politician, his or her school will not be in a position to get it."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

> *"Only if the school is pro-active. This will depend on the leadership of the schools, be it the headteacher or the School Management Committee."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

> *"If they are in good books with the politician they'll get the resources. So automatically, who gets the CDF resources also depends on the relationship between the headteacher and the one in control of those particular resources."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

The responses above appear to suggest that, in practice, securing CDF funding was contingent on a number of things. Firstly, school actors had to make themselves visible to the MP. Secondly, they had to be able to cultivate relationships with politicians. These responses appear to go against the official rules governing the use of the CDF, which are that it should be guided by the District Development Plan informed by inputs from the Area Development Committee (ADC).[121] As one response from a district official intimated, the flow of CDF funds to schools was politically expedient for the politician, as the catchment area around the school contained many "individuals":

> *"But to a politician who is sensitive enough, it's easy for the schools to get resources from the CDF, because they know that a school normally serves a lot of individuals."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

Further questioning on what the official meant when talking about "individuals" revealed this as meaning voters. Of the four schools I undertook my research in, however, only in the

[121] The ADC operates just below the District Assembly as a Traditional Authority. It is headed by a chief and consists of many villages (Samuels et al., 2009). The ADC is meant to compile all the requirements of villages that he presides over and submit these needs to the District Assembly.

case of School B was there evidence of a past MP actively assisting the school with infrastructural development. According to the PEA of Zone 9, this was due to the MP being from the same village as the school:

> *"This is her village. She is just coming from down…..after that forest there. So, she initiated some other projects, like construction of a Community Day Secondary School in her village, electricity there."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

A number of other schools fell under the MP's constituency boundaries, including School I. However, an infant grade teacher working at this school whose home district was next to it recounted how resources for developing schools in the zone appeared to favour School B:

> *"You know [the MP] was able to get many funds from benefactors from [the] U.K.[122] At that time, School I, we are crying for desks, classrooms. But only School B get [sic] these. Why? Because those attending School B are her people."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)*

Beyond the MP, the social capital of School B was enhanced by the personal connection it had with well-connected individuals, including a reverend and a high-ranking government official, who was also from the village School B was situated in. The reverend had brought in outside resources for the development of School B and other areas:

> *"He has got friends in the U.K. and he has been in U.K. So, he tried to source donors to bring resources to School B, to construct that secondary school….now his team [is] developing the area – a clinic that's very close to the school."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)*

While the high-ranking government official also brought resources to the school:

> *"So, these people wherever they are they say 'This is our home, then we need our community to be like this.' So, they try to hunt for what, such type of assistance."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

During the discussion about School B's social capital the PEA recounted how the school's association with the MP had seen public funds diverted to it. He recalled the school benefitting from the significant and transformative donor-funded infrastructural development almost a decade earlier. According to the PEA, however, these construction funds had been diverted away from schools where there was a real need for infrastructural development, to instead, come to School B:

[122] According to several of the interviewees, after serving as an MP this individual moved to the U.K.

"Someone else was working in Lilongwe and was connected to this MP for this project to come here….Basically, these projects were going to where there was a complete need. But looking at School B, by then it was okay."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

The majority of stakeholder responses collected and analysed for this thesis refer to nepotism in the context of teachers' own personal connections with the elite scuppering government policies relating to teacher distribution, allocation and utilisation. However, School B's association with persons of influence reflect how nepotistic relationships with the local/ national elite also appears to favour certain schools or areas when it comes to the distribution of public resources.

This subsection has revealed some of the resourcing challenges that impede progress being made on classroom infrastructural development, namely sufficient resources needed to increase the supply of classrooms and teacher housing. The following subsection moves on to the challenges in utilising existing classroom space more effectively.

9.1.3 Failure to roll out double-shift infrastructural policies

As outlined in Chapter 8, one of the measures promoted by the Government of Malawi to overcome the challenge of a shortage of classrooms and teachers has been the policy of double-shifting (see Chapter 2). To recapitulate, the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) II Action Plan proposed double-shift as a policy, and budgeted for those teachers who took part in such a teaching arrangement to receive an additional supplement of MK 10,000 (US$13.7) per month (GoM, 2015*a*). In this subsection, the reasons why a double-shift system has failed to be operationalised in the way it was set out in government policy are explored.

During the period I undertook my fieldwork in Zone 9 and Zone 12 all schools were operating on a single-shift arrangement. After ascertaining what double-shifting arrangements had occurred in the past,[123] I sought to understand why it was no longer being operationalised. The PEA pinpointed the failure of double-shift policy to government officials failing to remunerate teachers either on time, or at all:

[123] Schools confirmed that a double-shift arrangement had been implemented in schools in Zomba Rural district either during the third term of school year 2016/17 or the first term of the school year 2017/18 in School B, School I, School S and School Z.

"Because the district was saying, 'All those teachers who are going to follow the double-shift, they will be paid something else.' But to our surprise the District failed to even make those payments or they paid them very late."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

This failure was also corroborated by the headteachers and teachers:[124]

"Now we have been doing that [double-shifting] and they [the government] promised that they will boost up the salary. But to our surprise, we have been doing that, but no other extra money was added on top of our salaries."
(Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

"Yes, and also the double shifting policy failed, because teachers have to work double, so the government were saying we are going to pay you something on that. But the government did not. So the government has failed."
(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)

Zonal officials appeared sympathetic to the plight of teachers over the circumstances surrounding the discontinuation of double-shift policy. District officials, on the other hand, were of the opinion that the failure was due to the money teachers were renumerated failing to act as enough of an incentive:[125]

"But then some of these teachers say 'We cannot work twice and only get MK10,000.'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The perception of "double-shift" equating with "double-time", which, therefore, should have meant "double pay", was something also corroborated by school actors:

"So, people were complaining to say 'if it is double shifting, it should be a double salary.' So, I think had it been that it was a double salary, we could have been happy."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"Even the teachers themselves were not happy with the money that they were receiving, because whenever you are in a double shift, teachers were given ten thousand [kwacha]."
(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

The MK10,000 (US$13.7) monthly subvention awarded to teachers to undertake double-shift teaching was the equivalent of an 11 percent increase in the annual salary of a junior primary school teacher (Appendix Table A.7). Double-shift policy is important to consider in the context of working hours. Analysis in Chapter 8 considered teacher utilisation from the perspective of the number of hours spent teaching based on the

[124] While the focus of my fieldwork was on the more recent roll-out of double-shift policy over the 2017/18 period, an internet based search also found numerous reports of teachers going on strike due to the failure of the government to pay them an additional supplement for double-shift work.
[125] I was able to confirm later with the account clerks that payments had indeed been delayed.

official school time-table. However, teacher workload responsibilities can extend to those activities outside of teaching time (Chughati & Perveen, 2013). Discussion in Chapter 8 focused on the number of hours a civil servant is expected to work, which as of 2014 was from 07:30 to 16:30.

Understanding what stakeholders perceived the official policy to be around working hours was important in relation to the double-shift policy. District officials made a clear distinction between what teachers were expected to work versus what happened on the ground in practice:

> *"In most cases our teachers will only knock off when the class ends. They do not prepare their lessons. They will come tomorrow without preparations….So, we are trying to remind them that 'You are civil servants. Remember, we are supposed to work from 7.30 to 4.30.'"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

> *"We are saying a teacher is supposed to be at school by 7.00. And the latest one should knock [off] at 2.30. That's teaching hours. And government policy is saying those ones that are working as civil servants, they are supposed to knock off at 4.00."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

However, only one teacher I interviewed corroborated the response from the DEO when asked what they thought their official working hours were:

> *"When we were signing the GP1 forms,[126] we were told that we are government workers just the same as other offices and we are supposed to knock off at 4.30, if not 4.00."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)*

Many of the other teacher responses, however, interpreted their working hours as their teaching hours according to the standard and subjects they were responsible for teaching:

> *"Working hours for me are shared between me and my [teaching] partner. When we have finished our lessons for the day, only then, can we leave the school premises."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)*

> *"Our working hours depend on where we are teaching. Standard 1, Standard 2 teachers they knock off earlier than those of us teaching the senior standards We knock off at two."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

Where double-shifting and over-lapping had once taken place, this was mainly in infant or junior classes. This was due to the shorter hours of their curriculum making them more suitable to this type of arrangement. In circumstances where double-shifting took place in

[126] This is the form that teachers are required to fill out once they have been recruited as teachers within the public education system.

schools with a shortage of classrooms *and* teachers,[127] those taking the morning shift would be required to continue immediately with teaching the afternoon classes. This left them with no time to take a lunch-break:

> *"We were very tired. It is like you are double working there."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)*

> *"You find that the number of lessons that were covered meant those [learners] who are benefitting are those who were coming in the morning not the afternoon ones. Why? Maybe you find that the teacher was already tired."*
> *(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

One teacher expressed how children attending afternoon lessons were also disadvantaged, because the time the lessons were taking place was not conducive to learning:

> *"You know the brain does not work properly when the sun is overhead….so you find that the learners coming in the afternoon will not concentrate well and the rate of failures increased."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

Beyond their scope for learning in afternoon hours, the safety of children attending these sessions was also cited as a reason for the unfeasibility of double-shift arrangements. Children attending school from the furthest catchment villages would often have to walk considerable distances to return home, heightening fears that they would arrive there as the day approached dusk:[128]

> *"We tried even implemented here that one [double-shift] and after looking at it I say 'No no, no.' We are facing a lot of challenges, like learners were being frightened when coming to school. Some learners reported to their parents at very late at night."*
> *(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)*

> *"The main problem was people of this area are not friendly to the learners. When the learners knock off a bit late in the afternoon, they were harassed as they were going home."*
> *(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)*

The route home for children leaving schools that had implemented the double-shift policy in Zone 12 was particularly perilous during rainy season. This, according to respondents, was due to them having to walk back home via routes that took them through fields now overgrown with maize:

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[127] This set of circumstances is mainly applicable to rural schools in Malawi. In more urban settings, it may be feasible for different teachers to teach morning and afternoon classes given the larger numbers of surplus teachers teaching at these schools.

[128] Depending on the time of year, the sun in Malawi can set anywhere between 5 and 6pm.

"We lost three children, one during this when people…when the crops are in the garden….we had such issues, we lost a child. He was in Standard 4 and he was killed."
(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

"They did it [double-shifting] for at least three months. They did it when there were no shrubs in the garden. But once they planted maize, it was difficult for the learners to go to their own home."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

Subsection 9.1.2 and Subsection 9.1.3 have reported how government policies that commit to more school infrastructure and the better utilisation of existing classrooms have failed to be effectively implemented. The consequences of these failures meant that the teachers in the zones that I carried out my research in were operating within a single-shift teaching system where there was a shortage of classrooms. Subsection 9.1.4 explores how this led to team-teaching being widespread under such conditions.

9.1.4 Infrastructure availability and "team-teaching"

Several studies on Malawi have criticised team-teaching as hugely inefficient, with it largely being seen through the prism of one teacher handling large class sizes, while his or her partner sits outside of the classroom, often idle (DeStefano, 2013; Steiner-Khamsi & Kunje, 2011). A few studies have considered it as a strategy with the potential to keep large groups of children *"interested and motivated in lessons"* (Croft, 2002; p. 108).

Chapter 8 discussed how the combining of classes worked in practice in three out of the four schools[129] that I undertook my research in. The practice, according to my own observations, was more in line with where team-teaching is a mechanism through which to *"lighten the planning load"* (Croft, 2002; p. 108). Teachers articulated how the combining of classes invariably meant that during the time one teacher was teaching inside the classroom, the other would be outside:

"So, I will teach my two subjects then I knock off, sit down and chat. I will be doing whatever I want, maybe stay here in class on my phone or whatever. My colleague will continue teaching. I can be outside. I am done or I may wait for one of my subjects."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"After my period, instead of going in the class to assist my friend to control the class, I collect all the exercise books and start marking to see how the leaners have performed."
(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

[129] School B, School I and School Z.

"For example myself and my partner we are dividing the class, the other one teaching here 8A and the other one teaching there 8B. But you know, we teachers, we need sometimes to rest."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

The implication was that such practices led to larger class sizes, as summarised by one district official:

"Because when they are combining….the class becomes like 300 and there is just one teacher teaching. The others, they are just chatting or doing other things, which should not be the case."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

In Subsection 9.1.2 and Subsection 9.1.3 the discussion considered reasons as to *why* teachers may be compelled to combine classes in the context of infrastructure shortages. Of the three schools where combining of classes was occurring, this appeared to be true in the context of School I and School Z. However, in School B the practice of combining classes occurred even where infrastructure was available and which allowed for classes to be split.

While the 26 teachers at School B still exceeded the 14 classrooms available, each class[130] had two, three or four teachers per class. This arrangement meant that four classrooms remained unused for teaching purposes. Among these four vacant classrooms was a double classroom block that had long sat disused (see Figure 9.1), which had existed as part of the old school structure of School B:

"We have got that infrastructure….a very good structure. I have been advising even the members of the SMC, I said 'This structure is a very strong one, even compared to these ones. We need to utilise it.'"
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

Together with this disused double classroom block, two classrooms that had previously been used to teach Standard 2 and Standard 4 classes were not being used. In each of these standards the two streams had been combined. While the Standard 2 and Standard 4 teachers were reluctant to talk to me about the circumstances concerning why classes were being combined, other school actors discussed why this was the case:

"There you see the roof structure [of Standard 4] was blown away by the bad weather we were having in the district at that time, but we are raising funds to fix this problem. Then, these teachers will be back to teaching their own classes again."
(Headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

[130] Apart from one class in Standard 3.

"The teacher [in Standard 2] says 'I was once involved in a car accident, so I could not teach for a long time.' So I said, 'OK, the only thing to do is leave you to take certain subjects, but the learners need to be separated.' You find that she is not doing that."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

While these statements offered a justification for the arrangements, other school actors were more critical of this reasoning:

"Some teachers they just want to maybe to just write not enough lesson plans. So when they have combined, it's like they have reduced their work, because it's like 'We have shared now.'"
(Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

"Some of us teachers….are just difficult. The PEA has mentioned this several times. It only works for a while, but then it gets forgotten. People are just lazy, 'let's just combine the classes, teach them and then go rest.'"
(Infant standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

The infant standard teacher's response that recommendations only worked for a short time was also corroborated by local and district officials:

"Whenever the inspectors go out to a school and they find such a situation, they tell them to dismantle….they do that in the presence of the inspectors and when they leave they [the teachers] know tomorrow they are not coming back, they will combine them again."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"I know about what is happening in School B. So, I always talk to the headteacher and the deputy headteacher about this. But the splitting of classes only lasts a short while. The teachers go back to combining."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

The circumstances surrounding combination of classes in Standard 2 was a situation reflected in Croft's study, who noted that *"classes frequently continued to be combined, even when the situation which had caused the class amalgamation, improved"* (2002; p. 102). In addition, while the safety issues concerning the Standard 4 classroom were of valid concern, combination of classes seemed to be the default solution. The use of the vacant Standard 2 or the old disused classroom block were not seen as alternative resolutions.[131]

[131] The headteacher, who would make decisions relating to allocation of classrooms to teachers, seemed reluctant to discuss this point.

Figure 9.1: Disused double classroom block, School B, Zone 9

Beyond the shortage of infrastructure, absenteeism was cited as a reason for why classes may be combined, at least in the case of School B and School I.[132] An attempt at School B to split Standard 2 into two separate classes at the beginning of Term 2 in January 2018 was unsuccessful due to frequent absenteeism by one or more of the teachers:

> *"So, we found that maybe the class has to be split and you find that the other teacher is absent, so we say, 'OK, what are we going to do?' We just need to combine these learners." (Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9)*

In School I, absenteeism was a reason justifying the combination of classes when teachers had to travel from afar to get to the school.[133] One of the ways this was done was changing the official Standard 4 timetable, thus allowing teachers not have to come physically to school five days a week (see Appendix Table A.8). Three teachers were responsible for teaching Standard 4 in School I. The actual teaching timetable had been arranged so that subject areas were compressed over certain days or hours, according to which of the three teachers was responsible for the subject in question. This type of arrangement was the only

[132] Teacher absenteeism in the context of School B and School I in Zone I would often mean that the teacher's partner would teach the subjects s/he was responsible for during a teacher's absence. While the effect of this may mean that the government timetable is not adhered to, children were getting teacher contact time. This was especially true if arrangements between the teachers had been made in advance. However, in the case of School S and School Z the scarcity of teachers would mean that absenteeism affected the learners differently. During my time conducting research in these schools, teacher absenteeism would often mean children being sent home. Alternatively, classes ended up being combined so that one teacher was managing two classes together.

[133] School I did not have any teachers' housing for school staff. The distance it took for teachers travelling from the furthest point was approximately five kilometres and on foot it took them two hours to walk to the school and back.

one I observed across all classes in my four case study schools. However, CERT officials reported that they had come across similar arrangements in instances where a teacher was having to travel great distances to arrive at the school. When questioned about the current arrangement, the headteacher off School I said that the long distances teachers had to travel was the cause:

"Teachers have to walk very far to arrive here [at this school]. So, teacher absenteeism is a big problem for me!"
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

As well as how under these circumstances, the current arrangement of combining classes at least benefitted the learners:

"If teachers can combine the learners, at least are not losing out, as their friend [partner teacher] can lend a hand in the teaching in their absence."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

This aligned with the response of one Standard 4 teacher, who justified the arrangement as it meant learners did not lose out when a teacher was absent:

"A teacher can say 'Tomorrow I am not coming. So please, you should teach the children these lessons', but sometimes I will just teach my own subjects. I will use her periods to cover the lessons that I did not cover when I was absent."
(Standard 4 Teacher, School I, Zone 9)

In Chapter 7, interview responses with officials indicated that the more remote nature of School I compared to other schools in Zone 9 meant that teachers either wished to be transferred away from this school or were resistant to be sent to it. This characteristic of the school was important in linking it to the practice described above. When I questioned whether the headteacher reported frequent absenteeism to the PEA, his response raised the negative repercussions this could elicit for the school:

"If we are complaining and complaining to our boss [the PEA], the community simply it loses the teacher to another school. There is no help from the [district] office to send one [a teacher] who is committed."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

The shortage and poor distribution of teachers appeared to have increased the relative bargaining power teachers had in matters pertaining to their management at the school level. As shall be discussed in Section 9.3, this bargaining power manifested itself differently for teachers teaching at schools considered desirable versus remote schools where there were teacher shortages.

9.1.5 Summary on classroom infrastructure and its' utilisation on how teachers are allocated and utilised

Infrastructural issues have been one of the underlying reasons for explaining how teachers have been allocated between different standards. As Section 9.1 has shown, the shortage of infrastructure together with the prevalence of single-shift systems has been found to be one of the reasons for why the practice of "team-teaching" has been an endemic feature of Malawi's primary schools. This, in turn, has ultimately had consequences for the utilisation of teaching time.

9.2 Specialisation in the primary school system

9.2.1 Introduction

Primary school teachers, unlike their secondary school counterparts, are trained to be able to handle teaching any subject in any standard in the primary system (GoM, 2018). When headteachers are allocating teachers within schools, the decision must be independent of gender, qualification, type of teacher training or past teaching experience. In practice, however, the survey data I analysed in Chapter 8 revealed that the majority of teachers were not teaching all primary school subjects. Instead, subjects taught were shared through the practice of team-teaching.

This section is focused on stakeholder perspectives regarding the practice of subject and standard specialisation. It is specifically considered in the context of understanding what impact this has on the allocation of teachers, and the utilisation of their teaching time.

9.2.2 Subject and standard specialisation

Subject specialisation is something that teachers appeared to be exposed to while undergoing teaching training. School B was the only school in my four case study schools which met the criteria to be eligible to receive student teachers.[134] The arrangement for teacher trainees was to divide the subjects amongst themselves:

> *"Normally what they do, they do share. Like, for example, I will just take English and Chichewa. So, if you are taking English, I'm taking Chichewa, the next term, then they are going to swap those subjects between them."*
> *(Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9)*

[134] While it was eligible for teacher trainees, School B did not have any trainee teachers during the academic year 2017/18 when I was doing my fieldwork.

Whilst Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) teacher trainees did teach all subjects during the year spent in a primary school, they did so under conditions of team-teaching, which led to them teaching only a fraction of the subjects on the curriculum over the course of the day. Similar challenges were presented in Chapter 7, when discussing which schools trainee teachers are sent to go and work in. As well as for teacher trainees, subject specialisation was prevalent among teachers employed in the system. To school stakeholders, government policy strictly prohibiting specialisation in the primary education sector was unfeasible:

> *"The directive is not realistic, really. In other countries teachers are taking subjects they are a specialist in. And even here in Malawi, our friends in secondary [education] are sharing their subjects."*
> *(Infant standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)*

> *"Also, we can say even if we tried to implement it for one teacher to teach 60, it's very tiresome. And also in Malawi [we] have nine subjects. So, for nine subjects to be taught by one person and to prepare resources for that it's very tiresome."*
> *(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

In School Z, where there was one teacher per standard in Standard 1 to Standard 7, the Standard 7 teacher was visibly frustrated when discussing having to teach the entire curriculum for this standard alone to the class:

> *"There is a reason which make[s] me annoyed. I am not familiar with other subjects. Someone cannot master all the nine subjects to be an expert. But out of nine, he or she can maybe be an expert in teaching maybe five subjects."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

This frustration was similarly reflected in an interview with a Standard 8 teacher, who had been transferred to work from School B to School I.[135] The teacher shared the subjects taught with another teacher. Yet, the transfer had resulted in the number of subjects the teacher was responsible for teaching having increased:

> *"I remember when I was at School B primary school, there were many teachers. There were almost 32 teachers at that time, while when I came here there were only 16, which meant that the [work] load became bigger."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)*

[135] Later interviews with the PEA indicated that this teacher had been transferred by the DEM as a form of punishment for wrong-doing.

In spite of total enrolment in this teacher's Standard 8 class totalling 49 pupils, and being under the government recommended PTR of 60 to 1, the teacher believed more teachers were needed to allow for greater subject specialisation:

"Even though they say that they give one teacher to 60 learners, Standard 8 it is exceptional. It must be Standard 8 teachers should be maybe three or four even though there are 60 learners."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

School responses also justified subject specialisation on account of some teachers' discomfort with certain subjects:

"And very old teachers hate Life Skills, because they think it's full of erotic words. And some teachers who are prominent members of the church they may say, 'This is a sin, so I don't want to teach this.'"
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"The other subject is Life Skills…[it] is neglected because of our culture. Because Life Skills demands teachers teach things which are, in our society, somehow not to be told to young ones."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

While subject specialisation appears to be against official government policy, when interviewed on their thoughts on this, district officials supported the practice:

"There is no person who is a master of all the subjects."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"So, I do agree when those teachers are saying, 'No this is not my area of' and 'Where I can do better?' I think we have to understand them and say 'What can we do to solve the situation?'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Ministry officials, similarly, expressed sympathy regarding specialisation, believing it led to teacher professionalism:

"But personally I feel that specialisation is good, because it allows teachers to focus on a particular number of subjects. And [by] teaching the same subjects for some time, they become very good professionals."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

As discussed in Chapter 8, subject specialisation has appeared largely to favour the senior standards, even in schools where there appear to have been teacher shortages. Interviews with government officials revealed that team-teaching was more pervasive at the senior standards due to the poor rates of primary-to-secondary school progression in the district. This had led to a district-wide strategy that actively encouraged subject specialisation for

teachers at the senior primary standards. However, a crucial addendum to this arrangement was that senior standard teachers were required to teach subjects they specialised in to more than one class or standard:

> *"From Standard 6, 7 and 8 we should give chances to the teachers to say, 'Which subjects can you teach much better.' So, if they decide to say 'I am good in English.' 'OK, fine so you should be teaching English throughout these three classes.'"*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

> *"There is that practice [of subject specialisation], but it is only for upper sections. Maybe we feel it's OK because there is more content. So, in the upper sections you have a teacher teaching only mathematics. So, if there are, like, three Standard 8 [classes] he will be taking them for mathematics."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

However, as was reflected in the data in Chapter 8, rarely did teachers operate around the system described by these respondents.[136] I sought to clarify whether such a system had been initiated in any of the schools in my study in the past. Only in School B did the deputy headteacher indicate that the school administration had once tried to introduce such a system, but it had failed:

> *"No….we had that …that we had to organise at this school that the one who is teaching English in the upper classes that one should also continue with English in other upper classes…but [teachers] refused."*
> *(Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9)*

Elsewhere, headteachers talked about such systems being used in the past or in other geographical contexts:

> *"The PEA also sometimes introduced to us this system and also, when he visited me at School C he also introduced it to me and I started implementing that. I was using the teachers from Standard 5, Standard 6 and Standard 7 to go in Standard 8."*
> *(Headteacher, School B, Zone 9)*

> *"So in my home district[137] what they did is – or what they are doing – is if someone knows best on maybe English, he can teach English from Standard 5 up to Standard 8 going in all those....so what they do is one teacher on one subject, one examining subject."*
> *(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

However, when discussing such a system with teachers, the level of opposition to it was clear. Prior to the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) being

[136] This system should be distinguished from a "multi-grade" teaching system, which typically relates to a teacher teaching all subjects across more than one standard or class when there is an inadequate number of teachers for the number of classes.
[137] Rumphi district in Northern Malawi.

administered, Standard 8 teachers who I interviewed spoke of how the system I was describing would be unfair due to their current workload:

> *"So, you can't just go to a certain lower senior class[es], because there must be thorough preparation. You know, we teach during holidays as the other classes are closing, but we in Standard 8, we do continue, so it may be unfair for Standard 8 teachers to be also teaching in other grades."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)*

> *"So, Standard 8, mainly you need to start earlier in the morning. For example, here we start at 6 o'clock with learners and knocking off daily is 5 o'clock."*[138]
> *(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

An arrangement of subject specialisation at the senior standards seems to have unofficially been sanctioned and put into place by district and zonal authorities. However, this appeared to be largely absent when discussing the infant and junior standards. While the number of subjects being taught in these classes was smaller, class sizes were significantly larger than senior standard classes. One district official did seem amenable to the idea of subject specialisation at infant standards, with the proviso that the same teacher taught these subjects across all infant and junior classes:

> *"You will find that this Standard 1 teacher is good in English. Why can't we say that 'You are good in English and the way you teach the learners are really grasping the subject. Will you teach in Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3 and Standard 4.'"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

However, this was a lone voice amongst the government stakeholders I interviewed. As an example, excess teachers in Zone 9 meant a number of schools were initiating subject specialisation at infant and junior standards. However, the PEA was actively against the practice of subject specialisation at these levels:

> *"So, if a Primary Education Adviser arrives to find this happening we say 'No don't do that.' When you turn your back, you find they are doing the same thing again. In Standard 1 they have only got six learning areas. Why should teachers teach three subjects?"*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

In both School I and School Z the infant standards had one teacher allocated to them. The headteachers of both these schools held the opinion that the small number of subjects in these standards meant that these classes could be easily managed by one teacher alone:[139]

[138] These timings relate specifically to the Easter term when teachers prepare Standard 8 pupils for the PSLCE examination in May.
[139] This was despite the large differences in enrolment when comparing Standard 1 and Standard 8.

"But with the number of teachers there are at this time at this school…one teacher can manage to teach a [infant] class, because the content is not too much comparing to….these senior classes."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

"Ah no, maybe because you know the content in those classes is very small and even one teacher can manage to teach that class alone."
(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

In schools where teacher shortages existed, senior standard teachers expressed a similar position to the headteacher:

"Just because we know in the lower classes there are three or four subjects, now, whereby in upper classes we have got so many subjects that are examinable."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"Their [infant grade teacher] workload is not so high, not like what we have here in our classes. They can knock off [at] 11 or 12. But now us – [we] have longer hours and more to get through. So yes, more teachers to Standard 6 to 8, it should be better."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

The responses illustrates how the perception of infant standards being somewhat less demanding would appear to justify the way teacher allocation was being carried out. However, as Croft (2002) argues in her study, the lack of adequate classroom space or teaching and learning resources in the infant classes means that teachers must utilise greater levels of energy to engage the class, compared to teachers in senior classes, which are more likely to be adequately equipped with resources. The perspectives of infant standard teachers were that the allocation of teachers failed to take into account the large number of learners they had to manage by themselves:

"One teacher – me! – to manage 250 plus students! Eeeh you can get tired. It becomes a problem to keep them engaged alone. And as you saw yourself, I cannot get through all of them in the class."[140]
(Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"Just imagine in this class there are 105 [pupils]. In that class there is, like, 100 plus learners against one teacher. Can the learners learn? It cannot happen, they cannot learn."
(Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

So far in this subsection, I have discussed the practice of subject specialisation. I now move on to another form of specialisation – that of standard specialisation. In response to the question asking what decisions headteachers took into account when allocating teachers at

[140] This referred to the teacher checking the exercise books of all children to determine whether an exercise set in class had been correctly answered.

the school level, many discussed the National Reading Programme (NRP) [141] and Empowering Girls Through Education and Health (ASPIRE).[142] These programmes have been rolled out across all primary schools in Malawi and are standard specific. According to district and local government officials, training in ASPIRE and NRP is undertaken according to where teachers are currently teaching in the primary school system:

"As of now, we have the National Reading Programme, which is targeting Standards 1 to 4. The motive behind that is, if we train that teacher to be in Standard 1, the teacher maybe focuses much on that class and on the content."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"Because for example in this class, Standards 1, 2, 3, 4 – all the teachers we have trained them fully in this NRP programme."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

Headteachers, too, spoke about the importance of the ASPIRE and NRP programme in their decision-making:

"But nowadays….they have been taught the other methodologies [on] how to assist those learners to start reading while they are still in Standard 1. So, the PEA insist that those teacher[s] – they should not move to the other class."
(Deputy Headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

"First, when a teacher arrives, we have to interview him or her to see the past experiences, whether he or she has received training in NRP or what what [sic]. And see his or her documents and from there we have some of the little knowledge of that teacher."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

Similarly, teachers discussed the importance of NRP and ASPIRE in the context of how they were allocated:

"Because what happens now with things like ASPIRE it's like we are specialist. Specialist in senior class, specialist in infant class and so on and so forth."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"Even the headteacher will ask 'What class were you teaching there?' Or they will communicate to another headteacher 'Ah this one was teaching in the senior.' So, that one will be senior forever."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

[141] The NRP, which was rolled out nation-wide in 2016, aims to improve literacy skills in the infant and junior standards (Standards 1 to 4). It is led by MoEST with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for International Development (DfID).
[142] The ASPIRE project aims to improve the reading skills of girls in the senior standards (Standards 5 to 8) together with reducing the structural barriers to girls aged 10-19 years. It is a four-year USAID project that is being implemented by Save the Children.

However, specialisation was recognised as potentially creating further teacher shortages in the system:

> *"Specialisation would create more challenges, because some schools may not have teachers of a particular subject and other schools, maybe, would only have teachers for the upper levels; no teachers for the lower level and all that."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

Chapter 6 discussed the high numbers of teachers transferring between schools. This, together with how specialisation works in practice, has the potential to exacerbate the teacher shortage in primary education further. Moreover, the responses reflect a huge disconnect between what government policy appears to instruct, and how it has been interpreted at the lower levels.

9.2.3 The special status of Standard 8

Data I analysed for Chapter 8 showed that even in schools where teacher shortages existed, the majority of Standard 8 classes appeared to have more than one teacher allocated to it. In the four schools I conducted my research in, these classes all had more than one teacher allocated to them. In School S and School Z, Standard 8 was the only class with more than one teacher allocated to it.

Perhaps nowhere was this arrangement more notable than in School S, which had six teachers allocated across eight standards. The three teachers who were allocated to Standard 8 were also concurrently managing an infant or junior standard completely by themselves. The low enrolment of Standard 7 and Standard 8 in School S (38 pupils and 20 pupils respectively) could have conceivably lent itself to allowing these classes to be combined and taught by one teacher. Instead, however, the arrangement appeared to affect the infant and junior standards negatively, whereby not only had one teacher been left to manage large numbers of pupils, but they also had to share their class teacher with Standard 7 and Standard 8.

When I asked the headteacher of School S why teachers were allocated as they were, I was told that this was due to the examinations, together with the greater content at senior standards:

"These older students need more support from their teachers as we do have the zonal mocks to prepare them for.[143] There is much more content to get through than there is for the younger ones."
(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)

When directly asked why, given the low enrolment numbers, Standard 7 and 8 could not be a multi-grade class, the headteacher bemusedly exclaimed:

"One teacher for both these classes! For all the nine subjects! This would not be fair to the teacher neither for these learners."
(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)

When questioned why Standard 8 was allocated more teachers compared to other standards, the responses almost all related this back to the PSLCE pupils had to sit at the end of this particular standard:

"It's the exams! I think everybody just want[s] to concentrate [and] make sure their class do well in the MANEB[144] exams."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"I think to some of these leaders [headteachers], what they look at is they say 'These classes are examinable subjects.' So, they need teachers to maybe to take few learning areas and then concentrate on those few learning areas so that they can teach easily."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

School stakeholders discussed the PSLCE grades, and type of secondary school pupils were selected for as being what the school's performance was judged upon:

"So, if the learners in Standard 8 perform poorly during the MANEB examinations, the school is regarded as if you are doing nothing at the school."
(Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

"Most of the time you find that Standard 8 or in the senior classes they will need more teachers to at least to teach more effectively, so that the learner should at least gain selection [to secondary school]."
(Headteacher, School S, Zone 12)

"OK, the school performance is judged according to how many learners have passed PSLCE. Those schools are judged according to….say, learners who were selected for national secondary school."
(Senior standard teacher, School S, Zone 12)

[143] Zonal mocks refer to assessments done at the school level for Standard 5, Standard 6, Standard 7 and Standard 8, where the district prepares an exam for each of these standards and administers them at the school level.
[144] Malawi National Examinations Board.

The responses above appear to corroborate Watkins & Ashforth study on the political economy of schooling in rural Malawi, where *"success [of a school] is measured by a single metric: passing the Standard 8 exam at the end of primary school"* (2019; p. 23). Chapter 3 synthesised examples in the Global South of performance-related pay relating to how well schools perform on national assessments. While such a system does not exist in Malawi, in at least two schools I undertook my research in good PSLCE performance reaped financial rewards for either the school or the teacher:[145, 146]

> *"Whenever learners have performed well in class, the school management committee, the headteacher, the PEA could arrange and present gifts to schools that have done well."*
> *(Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)*

> *"If their child get[s] selected [for secondary school], the teacher is like a hero to the community. They [the community] do thank the teacher and the school, if their learners do well….Normally, through money or some other presents, like that."*
> *(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)*

The responses reveal, how to many school stakeholders, the PSLCE results are indicative of a school's performance and according to Barnett (2018), the quality of education. Conspicuously absent in any of the school stakeholder responses was any discussion of a school's performance being judged on mastery of basic skills. Watkins & Ashworth found that among parents, there was no indication that the *"mastery of basic skills, such as reading, writing or arithmetic, were valued for their own sake* (2019; p. 23). In relation to my own study, the PEAs for both Zone 9 and Zone 12 commented upon this in relation to the headteachers:

> *"I think to some of these leaders [headteachers] forget that they need to mould the learning from a young age. Instead, [they are] looking at the classes where they write the national examinations."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

> *"Headteachers need to be sensitised about the first years [infant standards]. Indeed, it is a big challenge. Because, if learners are being cared for in the lower classes, I think they will move up."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

The prioritisation of Standard 8 by headteachers over other standards needs to be contextualised in terms of how education actors higher up in the system conceived of

[145] The PSLCE was also cited as a reason by school actors in School S and School Z in Chapter 7 for why the PEA distributed teaches between schools in the way that they were in Zone 12.
[146] Further clarification revealed that these were normally resources collected at the community level.

schools' performance. When questioning district officials on the criteria used in deciding which schools should be inspected, they stressed the importance of the PSLCE result in influencing this:

> *"When the National Examination Results are out we look at the performance of the schools and we will say 'We have got problems in these schools. Will you please make sure that at any cost, we manage to visit these schools.'"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District)*

This was corroborated by central level government officials, who, when discussing what criteria were used to select Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project (MESIP) districts, reported that this was largely based on districts with poor PSLCE results.

As a concluding point to this subsection, monitoring tools within Malawi's primary schooling system currently collect information on how well schools perform in the PSLCE assessment. The headteachers' offices in all four schools contained chart information documenting the pass and selection rate of Standard 8 students. Omitted, however, was information regarding the number of children in other standards who progress throughout the system after taking end-of-year tests.

9.2.4 Summary on specialisation in the primary school system

In Section 9.2, the reasons why stakeholders believe subject and standard specialisation has permeated throughout Malawi's primary education system has been discussed. While official government policy discourages specialisation, many of the stakeholders managing teachers in the system were sympathetic to this practice especially at the senior standards.[147]

9.3 Weak monitoring and management of teachers

9.3.1 Introduction

Section 9.1 and Section 9.2 have discussed how the allocation and utilisation of teachers at the school level is often at odds with official government policy. The failure of double-shift teaching policies and the prevalence of team-teaching and subject specialisation have been important in explaining the trends identified in Chapter 8. The purpose of Section 9.3 is to

[147] While this is a point implicitly raised in this chapter and in Chapter 7, it should be noted that the main stakeholders responsible for the monitoring and management of teachers are ex-teachers themselves. This includes the DEM, Inspectors, the PEA and DEMIS/ ZEMIS officials.

examine more specifically what accounts for the very weak relationships of accountability when managing teachers.

9.3.2 Absent or weak advisory and inspection in the education system

In this subsection, I focus specifically on the role of the inspectorate and advisory, who are *"brokers connecting the Ministry with the schools"* (Watkins & Ashforth, 2019; p. 43). Inspection has been *"crucial in the management of education throughout its history"* (Matola, 2005; p. 2). The changing nature of the Inspectorate and Advisory in relation to Malawi's transition from a one-party to a multi-party political system is deemed useful to summarise briefly here.[148] Under the one-party rule of ex-President Hastings Kamuzu Banda, school inspections were a process of fault-finding. According to one respondent, they were *"something to be greatly feared"* (Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9). The inspectorate, during this period, *"lacked a human face,"* was *"extremely arrogant and threatening"*, but ultimately ensured that teachers *"conform[ed] and [taught] as was required by the Ministry"* (Matola, 2005; p. 3).

Under the multi-party system, however, the inspectorate was disbanded in a concerted effort to move it away from its authoritarian past. In its place came an advisory role, which was more concerned with teachers' continued professional development.[149] PEAs were managed by the Education Methods and Advisory Services (EMAS)[150] at central head-quarters to reflect these principles. However, one of the repercussions of this was that the "fear" teachers had of going against government policies gradually began to weaken:[151]

> *"We always try to bring teachers in terms of democracy 'Let's share. Tell me what are your problems….Never be afraid of me, because if you are going to be afraid of me, you'll not be able to work.' Now, when it comes in terms of inspection, teachers are not afraid of that."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

The concern over the deteriorating quality of education services meant that EMAS reinstated the inspectorate in 2005. In 2010, it became the Department for Inspectorate

[148] This subsection on the history of the inspectorate was aided greatly by my discussions with Esme Kadzamira and Ken Longden, who imparted a great deal of knowledge for which I am grateful.
[149] While the roles changed, the same personnel who had once been inspectors were now primary education advisers.
[150] This department was created in 1995.
[151] The history of the inspectorate was not something that was addressed in in the interview guide. However, some participants did reflect on the changes in the primary education system, from when they were primary teachers themselves under the one-party system to the present.

and Advisory Services (DIAS) (GoM, 2015*c*). DIAS has two distinct functions: that of advisory and that of inspectorate. The responsibilities assigned to advisers were to *"judge the extent to which schools [were] making progress….[in] implementing the policies of central government"* (GoM, 2015*c*; p. 18). Responsibilities assigned to inspectors, on the other hand, were to *"evaluate the impact of MoEST policies, programmes and initiatives….on the quality of education provided by schools and colleges across the country"* (ibid.).[152]

Government regulations stipulate that a PEA is responsible for visiting each of the schools in their zone (typically numbering between 10-15 schools) between three and six times a year (GoM, 2015*c*). Inspectors, on the other hand, are meant to inspect a primary school at least once every two years.[153] Unlike the PEA, who can visit the school in an advisory role by himself, a school being formally inspected must follow certain procedures. This includes a minimum number of inspectors being part of the inspection team:

"So, a district should have about six [inspectors] and when they are doing the inspections, we recommend that they go in threes. So, basically it's like two teams."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

"We are supposed to almost be 11 or 10, but we are only three [inspectors]….it's been like that for three years now, because we started our work in 2015."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

One of the immediate problems identified was the shortage of inspection personnel needed to fulfil this stipulation. At the time I was conducting my fieldwork in Zomba Rural district, there were three inspectors based there. However, local and district officials highlighted how inspector numbers were expected to diminish further:

"As of now there are only three inspectors. As I am talking now there are two – one has gone on retirement and maybe in two months' time there will be only one. So, one or two cannot even inspect schools, according to the rules."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"We don't have enough personnel to inspect. We have got two. One has retired and another one will be going soon."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District)

When asked what this would mean practically insofar as inspections go, government officials explained that inspectors would have to liaise with other inspectors from nearby

[152] Inspections are largely modelled on the OFSTED model in England (Roebuck & Roebuck, 2010).
[153] Harrison (2002) estimates that a hypothetical district with 13 zones and 200 primary schools would require 1,178 inspector days in order to inspect all 200 schools.

districts. This was to fulfil the requirement that inspections take place as part of a three-person team. With inspector numbers also stretched in other districts, however, the consequence was an ever-shrinking inspector pool needed to inspect a greater number of schools. My conversation with the inspection team at Zomba Rural district indicated that the inspectorate is often required to go and inspect schools in other districts as part of their duties. This has meant schools in Zomba Rural going for years without being physically inspected:

> *"We have had some schools that have gone three [or] four years without an inspector physically going there. And this is particularly important because, we do not have enough inspectors in the schools, in the districts."*
> *(MoEST official, Central headquarters)*

> *"So, schools are going five, six years without anybody visiting them and consequently, now there is laxity on the part of teachers….in trying to make sure that things – like standards are being maintained in the schools."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

The nation-wide shortage of inspectors was contextualised in relation to decentralisation by one official. While inspection functions have formally been devolved to the district level, targets set to inspect schools in Zomba Rural district were difficult to implement due to orders from officials higher up in the system:

> *"At district level we say 'We plan to visit so many schools this month', but suddenly, you receive a call to say 'Can you come to Lilongwe? We want you to inspect schools in Salima or in Nsanje [district].' So, that disturbs us."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

This example of "pseudo" decentralisation reflects some of the findings from previous studies that were discussed in detail in Chapter 4. These have reported the reluctance of the Ministry of Education to cede power to local education authorities (Chimombo, 2008; Chiweza, 2010; Thomas, 2017). This sentiment was reflected in district responses in matters pertaining to inspection priorities:

> *"I just feel the officers at the Ministry level do not want to release their powers and responsibilities to say maybe this can be devolved to the districts. They still want to hold onto the system."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

Aside from the inspectorate suffering a shortage of personnel, another problem identified by central and district officials was the lack of training inspectors receive:

"But this training [that inspectors receive] was only for one day. It was not a training as such. It was an orientation on how to use the forms for inspection."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"A problem we face is having training to make sure the inspectorate teams are really monitoring the standards efficiently in schools."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

Inspection of schools is undertaken according to the National Education Standards launched by the Ministry of Education in 2015. In total, there are 26 standards that fall under three areas[154] (GoM, 2015*b*).The aim of the Standards *"is to specify both minimum requirements and what constitutes effective practice in educational provision and practice"* (GoM, 2015*b*; p. 4).

Of the 26 standards, that which most closely aligns to the discussion of this chapter relates to Standard 21 (Staff deployment and management). Standard 21 requires, at a minimum, that *"teachers are on time for school and classes and are rarely absent"* and *"where teachers work together to support classes, they both take active roles in helping students to learn"* (see Appendix Table A.9 and Appendix Table A.10). However, while there are 26 standards, the inspection teams currently only focus on assessing certain standards prioritised by MoEST, which are specifically to do with raising learning outcomes:

"So, we wanted them to concentrate on these areas first…. plus looking at the way which inspections are done. We cannot do an inspection based on all the 26 standards. It would take us a whole month in a school."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

Education Standard 21 is not currently one of the standards assessed during school inspections. When questioned who monitored elements relating to team teaching practices as set out under Education Standard 21, ministry officials cited the importance of the PEA in addressing areas covered under other standards not inspected:

"When the PEA goes into the schools, he is able to look at that perspective as to what is going on in the school. So, yeah, he may touch on other standards that when the inspectors – when they go – they are not able to fully focus on these."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

[154] These are 1. Student outcomes that should be achieved as a result of being at school (six standards), 2. Teaching process that leads to students achieving these outcomes (eight standards) and 3. Leadership and management processes that are necessary for good teaching and learning to take place (12 standards).

Interviews with school actors also revealed the PEA being seen as an authority figure in curbing school practices that led to larger class sizes. During discussion around the combining of classes at School B, for instance, the school figures indicated that the PEA's visits led to temporary change:

"When the PEA says it, it works. The teachers split the classes – but after a while, it happens that it starts again."
(Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

"When the officials come they do that. They divide the class and someone is taking learners to the other class. But when the officials are out of the school, they combine again, that is what usually happens."
(Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

Likewise, the change in how the timetable was being taught to the Standard 4 class in School I was temporarily rectified during the PEA's supervisory visit to the school:

"But the PEA doesn't allow that. Most of the times when he comes, he can scold me [and say] 'Why won't your teachers listen?' And it changes, but not for long."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

Both PEAs, as is the norm, travelled to their school visits by motorbike. In Zone 9, the furthest school from the Teacher Development Centre (TDC)[155] is 11 kilometres away, while in Zone 12 the equivalent is at 14 kilometres distance. A challenge identified by ministry government officials when questioned about the problems that PEAs (and inspectors) faced, was the inability to conduct school visits due to the lack of resources for fuel, together with the poor maintenance of their primary means of transportation:

"The other challenge for both inspectors and the advisers that we have now is their mobility. Most of them were given motorcycles, but most of these have broken down and the districts are, maybe, not maintaining those."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

"There is an issue of funding where, OK, the motorbikes are there, but the DEMs are not giving them fuel to go and visit the schools. So yeah, people are just sitting in the offices without working."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

The PEAs of both zones reported how they had failed to make the minimum number of visits, as stipulated under government guidelines. Resources constraints were explained as a

[155] The TDC refers to the office where the PEA's office is based in the zone.

reason for why schools were irregularly inspected, together with other PEA responsibilities, as was highlighted by the PEA of Zone 9:

> *"As PEAs we are also supposed to be given – we call them Zonal Improvement Grants – every year. Unfortunately, we have stayed three if not four years without receiving these. It's just this year when we have been given this."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

> *"As we have remained without it [Zonal Improvement Grant], it impede[s] many of our activities. Supervision of schools in my zone, providing training to headteachers, SMCs and PTAs at [the] TDC."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

Both PEAs confirmed that the lack of resources to purchase fuel was particularly problematic when visiting schools that were a considerable distance away from the TDC where they were based:

> *"Now schools like School I, they are very far away. What we do is we need to visit such schools maybe at a very good time.[156] Sometimes the teachers take it as an advantage 'We are very far away; he cannot come here to supervise us.'"*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

> *"It is easier for the schools that are nearer to the TDC. For example, this [school next to TDC], I can come here without planning to come here. Because, if I find out I have no fuel, I cannot go to the farthest school. The only option is to come here and supervise."*
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)*

In both the case of inspectors and PEAs, the responses revealed how underfunding was a challenge to providing effective advisory and inspection services. Regarding which, it is important to relate back to the neo-patrimonial political system that Malawi sits under. As discussed at length in Chapter 4, several global studies have proposed that access reforms are preferred by the national elite over those focusing on quality-enhancing reforms, which would include expenditures relating to an improved school inspectorate and better monitoring systems (Hickey & Hossain, 2019; Kingdon et al., 2014).

Aside from resources, the lack of training that PEAs are given was also identified by central and district government officials when questioned about the challenges faced by PEAs in carrying out their official responsibilities:

[156] Further clarification as to what "good time" referred to confirmed that this relates to when the road is passable, which is normally outside of the rainy season.

"You know the PEAs that we have they are not trained. They start working and if at all we give them training, it's not on a regular basis. We don't come back to get feedback from them."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

"Even academically they need to be upgraded to degree level. Um, because as it is now, I don't think their level of thinking is up to date. They may have the experience of teaching, but in terms of planning for their zones activities, I don't think they are capable of that."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Central and district government officials also discussed how PEAs have been recruited from a cadre of primary school teachers. This is not dissimilar to what was identified in Chapter 7 in relation to District and Zonal Education Management Information System (D/ZEMIS) officers, who were mostly ex-primary school teachers. Officials pointed to the blurred lines of accountability between PEAs and those they managed:

"PEAs are basically teachers, so we take them from the teachers pool. Give them a little in-service training on the job that they are supposed to be doing. So, they are basically teachers also."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"At the same time, some of them are junior to the headteacher. So, you don't go and supervise your senior, ideally. So, that again is a systemic challenge."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"Some of them are even junior to the headteacher that they are going to advise."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

"PEAs would be [Grade] TJ[157]….Some, they have been picked as acting positions, so they may not have reached TJ. But the pool, they will take mostly from senior teachers."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

In Chapter 3, the reviewed literature discussed the importance of inequality and the large power distance, which characterise social relationships in Malawi (Booth et al., 2006). Davies et al. point out that the *"Malawi Civil Service….is characterised by a strict and hierarchical grading which ought to lead to clear lines of accountability"* (2003; pg. 148). The interview responses above regarding the PEAs pay-grade being below or equal to that of headteachers illustrates the opposite, and potentially leads to the problem of low power distance and something that is emblematic of the decentralisation experience in Malawi. In terms of the latter point, officials who should have received a salary-scale upgrade at sub-

[157] The interviewee indicated that the salary grade was TJ. This would be the equivalent grade to a "principal teacher." Personal emoluments information I managed to source for the 2017/18 budget year indicated that PEAs in Zomba Rural district were all on a lower pay-grade TI (the equivalent grade to a "chief teacher").

national levels of government were, instead, being informed by central government that, *"there were 'no vacancies at this level'"* (ibid.).

9.3.3 Headteachers are failing to implement government policies

Subsection 9.3.2 presented an overview of why the Inspectorate and Advisory arm of the primary schooling system has failed to curtail school-level practices that negatively affect the allocation and utilisation of teachers. In this subsection, the focus is on the role of the headteacher in terms of shedding light on the failures relating to the enforcement of government policies.

Within the various roles and responsibilities attributed to actors in the education system, one of the main headteacher responsibilities is to manage teachers effectively and to ensure that they are in class and teaching (Watkins & Ashforth, 2019). This was confirmed by government officials, who argued that it was headteachers who were ultimately responsible for stopping practices leading to large class sizes and poor utilisation of teachers:

> *"The headteacher – that's his job. He should not let the teachers be combining the classes. OK, if one is sick then I would understand. But if everyone is at the school – no they are not supposed to do it."*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

> *"The headteacher has got the power to give a warning letter to the teacher. Advising 'would you please dismantle your class?' and if the teacher does not heed to the warning, he may give a written warning and at the same time report him to the office."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

> *"That is what I am saying that [with] some teachers, the headteacher should come with force and say as if we are at a military, like, 'Do this.'"*[158]
> *(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)*

When asking government officials what they perceived were the main reasons for certain practices relating to teacher allocation and utilisation failing to be stamped out, the aversion to headteachers taking on their responsibilities was regularly cited:

> *"So, it's the headteachers, maybe, that are bringing in the laxity, because they cannot control their teachers."*
> *(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)*

> *"Some of our headteachers do not want to take these nasty responsibilities. That's a cause!"*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

[158] On this occasion, he was speaking about School B, where classes were being combined even where there was adequate infrastructure available.

"Yes, they don't want to take responsibility for that, for fear of being marked as a difficult headteacher. They may leave the situation, the prevailing situation like that and say 'OK, when the DEM comes, he will find out for himself. I will leave you like that.'"
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

Headteachers, however, offered a different perspective to that offered by government officials when questioned why they were unable to eradicate such practices. Rather than presenting it as a shirking of their responsibilities, they criticised the lengthy bureaucratic procedure when headteachers report teachers' behaviour to senior officials:

"Our powers are limited, because generally, when we report the matter to the PEA, and the PEA has not also the final say. So, the final say is in the hands of the DEM. Because of that long channel, it is difficult sometimes to manage [teachers]."
(Headteacher, School I, Zone 9)

"It needs to go through to the PEA – the matter then goes to the DEM. And the DEM is also very busy, so time lapses and because of that some [teachers] do not take it serious[ly]."
(Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12)

Discipline can be defined *"as actions or behaviours on the part of authorities in an organization aimed at restraining all behaviours that threaten to disrupt the functioning of the organization"* (Dzimbiri, 2016; p. 88). While headteachers alluded to the problem of the disciplinary process being too lengthy, district officials also referred to the limited control they had in disciplining teachers:

"Demotions, interdictions,[159] promotions – all of this we do not have control over. So somehow – my personal view – [is that] we are failing to deal with our troublesome teachers here."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

"In cases of teacher wrong-doing, we here [at the district] are able to move them to another school. But beyond that, that is left to our colleagues at the central level."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

As stated in government documentation, the *"[d]ecentralization Policy of 1998 has no implications on the disciplinary process as provided under the Government Teaching Service Regulations. The Responsible Officer (RO) still remains the Secretary for Education, even at local level"* (GoM, n.d.; p. 1). Limited district-level powers under decentralisation to mete out punishments to school actors was further compounded with the vacant position of the

[159] Interdiction in the context of this conversation turned out to be a form of punishment that would lead to a civil servant having a certain proportion of his or her pay docked for a given period of time.

Principal Human Resource Officer at the district level. The responsibility[160] of the person in such a position would be to administer teacher punishment:

> *"Because they are conversant with the Malawi Public Services Regulation,[161] they have to say 'No' to this teacher, if he has gone wrong. We have to follow this way of punishing this teacher and trying to warn him and so on and so-forth."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

Aside from decentralisation making it problematic to mete out punishment to teachers, in one interview response the discussion turned to how disciplinary action against teachers is negatively affected by political interference. In a discussion around discipline and teacher absenteeism it was intimated that the presence of political interference appeared motivated by political patronage and "vote-buying":

> *"Politicians who would just like to get mere political mileage by supporting other worthless people to advance their political ambitions. For example, here teachers who are always absent from school, they don't prepare. When you….give them warning letters and you speak against their bad behaviour they will go to the politician."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

In past elections, teachers and headteachers have also been recruited as polling staff, returning officers and presiding officers. According to numerous reports, some teachers and headteachers were implicated in the irregularities that marred the 2019 national elections. Another district official who had previously worked in the then-President's district in Thyolo,[162] discussed teachers going to politicians when the then-DEM of Thyolo district had instigated stricter disciplinary measures. Due to this, as the official explained, political forces caused the DEM to be transferred to the less desirable district of Mangochi:

> *"They will go to the politician and say they have done A, B, C, D and E. Trying to implicate the DEM….because of his strictness."*
> *(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)*

[160] The Principal Human Resource Officer is also the person responsible for taking forward serious or persistent cases of teacher misconduct to officials at central headquarters.
[161] These refer to 26 acts that a civil servant would be considered guilty of. Within the education sector, the Government Teaching Service Regulations has adopted all the misconduct actions identified under the MPSR and added one more misconduct type unique to teachers, thus bringing the total up to 27 (GoM, n.d.).
[162] At the time of my fieldwork, Peter Wa Mutharika was the President of Malawi (2014-2019). His brother, Bingu Wa Mutharika, had been President of Malawi between 2004 and 2012. The home district of both these Presidents was Thyolo district.

"When he tried to discipline other teachers, the teachers instigated a situation, whereby Stephen[163] [the DEM] was removed from Thyolo to Mangochi. But looking at the issues, Stephen was just doing his professional duties."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

It is useful to apply this sub-national government perspective to the context of Dzimbiri's (2016) discussion on the Malawi Public Service Regulation, which lists absenteeism as one of 26 acts of misconduct amongst civil servants. At higher levels of the government system, the findings of the 2014 Public Service Review Commission noted, *"there is fear by Senior Government officials of their juniors as well as lack of respect by junior staff of their superiors"* (cited in Dzimbiri, 2016; p. 89). This has led to *"unregulated absenteeism….leading to….a negative impact on delivery of services"* (ibid.).

Besides the challenge of discipline discussed above, the lack of training headteachers received concerning how teachers should be allocated and utilised was identified as being problematic. Currently, no formal policy is in place to direct how headteachers should allocate teachers to different classes. This is compounded by what both the PEAs identified as the lack of training and skills available for headteachers to implement this effectively:

"It is to do with leadership at school level. There is no document which prohibits them from doing that.[164] It's to do with the way they do their planning. I don't think they have that advance level of skills to do planning."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9)

"We have noted that a good number of the challenges we are facing in the primary schools are coming in because of the overall management at school level. We appoint people to become headteachers, but we don't capacitate them."
(Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12)

Government officials at the central level verified that the MESIP is the only training that specifically trains headteachers on how teachers should be allocated within schools. Component 3.1 of the MESIP states that headteachers, deputy headteachers and PEAs should be given training on resource management at the school level. One of the issues pertains to the allocation of teachers within schools. During interviews with Ministry officials, I was informed that this component of MESIP had been delayed in starting and was anyhow only applicable to the MESIP districts.

[163] Name changed.
[164] This related to discussion specifically around why headteachers are failing to allocate teachers in such a way so as to allow teachers to teach certain subjects across multiple standards.

However, the MESIP project is restricted to eight of the 32 education districts and does not currently include Zomba Rural district:

"You know, MESIP is about school leadership and training headteachers….and one of the issues is about the allocation of teachers. Unfortunately, it's just about 1,100 headteachers who will be trained."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

Beyond the responses discussed so far, an underlying theme relating to why certain practices forbidden by government were continuing to occur was the power dynamics between headteachers and teachers. These dynamics at the school level appear to reflect Dzimbiri's quote above, which highlights the insubordination of junior staff towards their superiors.

These were identified as occurring due to several reasons. The first was the duration a teacher may have served in a school versus that of a headteacher.[165] In School B, for instance, the deputy headteacher recounted to me the unsuccessful efforts to separate classes in Standard 2 and Standard 4. She attributed teacher resistance to the length of time some of the teachers had been teaching at the school[166] compared to the more recent appointment of both her and the headteacher:

"Most of the teachers they have stayed here long. So, they are not taking it as if it is a place of working, but just a place that it's like their home. So, like I am a new person. So, when I am telling them other things, they are just saying 'We can't do this way, we will do this way.'"
(Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

Similarly, in School I the senior standard teacher recalled how after arriving at the school, the headteacher made attempts to curtail the combining of classes:

"He [the headteacher], he didn't want us teachers who were sharing a class with our colleagues to be outside the classroom. 'No' he said 'You must assist the one who is teaching to be managing that class.'"
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

However, the teacher explained that this was unsuccessful as all the teachers aligned themselves against the headteacher, who was newly appointed:

[165] In two of the four schools that I conducted my fieldwork in, the headteacher was relatively new and had been in place for less than one year.
[166] While government policy states that teachers should not be teaching in the same school for more than five years, the PEA often fails to transfer teachers from schools where they have been teaching for a time in excess of this.

"Teachers made an alliance, so all the teachers ganged up against him. At least for a month or two months, at least he has changed."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

A second reason identified as to why teachers may disobey headteachers was related to the teacher's proximity to people of influence. In the case of School B, the well-connectedness of some teachers[167] was one of the reasons identified by school actors for why classes in Standard 2 continued to be combined:

"Some of our teachers here are married to government people in town. These are our bosses' bosses. So, of course, asking these teachers to change their ways is sometimes difficult [trails off]…. but anyway we are trying."
(Headteacher, School B, Zone 9)

"Some of our teachers here, they are not serious. If the [school] management or PEA's office instructs them to do something against their will, eeh! They can refuse. But it is because of who they know."
(Infant standard teacher, School B, Zone 9)

Thirdly, interviews with both teachers interviewed in School Z revealed that the headteacher was not seen as a figure of authority in the same way as other principals in the system were perceived:

"So this PEA does not play, he can ask you to write a report, he can give you any discipline at any time. But the headteacher – we are used to being with him for a long time, so we take advantage of that."
(Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

"You know this PEA it's the same as a relationship with a son and a dad. A dad is so cruel most of time. But with the headteacher it is like a mother-son relationship – no cruelty."
(Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

This could partly be related to the pay-grade of the headteacher of School Z being the same as a newly recruited teacher (discussed further down). In using the "mother-father" analogy, the teacher interviewed was insinuating that while a dad is willing to use physical punishment in certain instances on his children, a mother would not be. Relating this analogy back to the education system, the teacher's perception appears to be that the PEA is more willing – or indeed more able – to execute punitive measures against a teacher than the headteacher.

[167] Chapter 7 discussed how the strong connections that some of these teachers to the local elite also allowed them successfully to resist the PEA's attempts to move them from School B to schools with a greater need for teachers.

Discussing further the reason why teachers did not feel answerable to the headteacher, one respondent linked this directly to seeing himself as accountable to those who recruited him, rather than the headteacher, who was an "inferior" boss:

"Most of the teachers don't obey. I think most of the time they look down upon the headteacher. They may say 'The PS [Principle Secretary] is the one who recruited me, so you are not my boss.' So, the headteacher is an inferior boss."
(Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9)

This raises an important and wider point about the pseudo implementation of decentralisation, and the negative effects this has on relationships of accountability. While the discussion above prefaces it in the context of headteacher-teacher relations, other studies have considered how the centralised recruitment of teachers in Malawi has weakened district-teacher relationships of accountability (Chimombo, 2008; Thomas, 2017).

Above, teachers discussed some of the reasons for their insubordination towards headteachers. Government officials raised this matter further in the context of how headteachers were not formally appointed to their roles:

"We are having a lot of headteachers that are acting. So, some of them are not very strict, because maybe they are afraid of their fellow teachers. [The teachers] say 'Why are you being harsh to us. You are acting. You are not even the headteacher.'"
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

The pay-grade of a headteacher when formally appointed should be four grades higher than that of a teacher starting out in the education system (Appendix Table A.11). None of the headteachers in any of the 26 schools I collected information in either Zone 9 or Zone 12 had the pay-grade officially designated to a headteacher. Data given to me on salary grades at Zomba Rural district as a whole indicate that just nine names corresponded to the headteacher grade (TH). Of the four case study schools, the headteachers' pay-grade in School B, School I and School S was the equivalent to that of a senior teacher. This is just one grade up from the pay-grade of a teacher who has only just entered the profession. In School Z, the headteacher's pay-grade was the same as a teacher just starting out in the primary teaching profession (Appendix Table A.12). Compounding the problem was the low numbers of teachers who succeed in getting promoted:

"It has not been very easy for most of the teachers, because some teachers have attended interviews four times without being promoted….So, I can say in Zomba we have a challenge, because very few teachers have been promoted yearly."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

Which, according to the same official, translated into poor school leadership:

"So, it's very difficult for us….because we have many headteachers at the lowest grade. So, it's very difficult to give leadership to a school according to the policy."
(District Education Office official, Zomba Rural district)

This reflects a similar discussion to that in Subsection 9.3.2 in relation to the PEA. The low pay-grades not only causes problems relating to leadership, but given that the majority of teachers and headteachers fall under the lowest pay-grade the threat of demotion as a form of sanction is also difficult to implement in practice. As one teacher put it, the actual punishment meted out to teachers where it occurs is not enough to change behaviour:

"it's just a slight punishment…maybe like giving a punishment to a relative. The punishment does not force people to change."
(Infant Grade Teacher, School I, Zone 9)

Where large-scale teacher promotions have occurred in the past, this appears to have been linked to issues of political patronage. Chapter 3 discussed how, under Joyce Banda's presidency, technocrats at the Ministry of Education were instructed by the political elite to promote all 20,000 teachers at PT4 grade prior to the 2014 election (Dzimbiri, 2016). More recently, in the run-up to the 2019 National Elections, over 15,000 primary school teachers at grades TK, TJ and TH were promoted (Muheya, 2019). According to one central government official, Joyce Banda's sudden policy announcement severely delayed the recruitment of newly graduated IPTE teachers due to the cap on the wage bill:

"The monies….used to promote the current, or existing, teachers in the system….created a gap in terms of financing the recruitment of the teachers who had graduated. And since that time up to now. it's still a challenge, because we have been failing to employ all the teachers that we have trained."
(MoEST official, Central head-quarters)

A last reason identified for headteachers being unable to discipline teachers related to staff shortages in the system. In Subsection 9.1.4, the headteacher of School I discussed how the fear of losing a teacher from his school was why he condoned teachers not working every day. Teachers discussed how this teacher insubordination went largely unpunished due to the headteacher's fear that this would lead to the school to losing teachers:

"If this headteacher will report more negatives about his teachers, then maybe the PEA can decide to remove more teachers. It will mean the school will go back to the understaffed status. So, most of the headteachers will just try to discuss with the teachers."
(Standard 4 teacher, School I, Zone 9)

"It is with difficulty that teachers stay here at School Z, you know? So, the headteacher knows this, his boss [the PEA] knows this. If teachers are forced, they will find ways to leave [to another school]."
(Infant grade teacher, School Z, Zone 12)

Apart from the headteacher in School I, no headteacher interviewed linked the inability to stop practices contrary to government policies with the systemic challenge of teacher shortages. However, in Chapter 7 three of the four headteachers did complain about the teacher shortages that their schools were suffering from.[168]

9.3.4 Summary on weak management of teachers

In Section 9.3 some of the main weaknesses education officials responsible for managing teacher allocation and utilisation face when trying to implement official government policies around these issues have been uncovered. These have been related back to challenges concerning human capacity and resource constraints. Beyond these factors, stakeholders identified the resistance principals (DEM, Inspectors, PEA and headteachers) face from teachers in being able to implement these policies effectively.

Conclusion

In Chapter 8, the main trends relating to the ways in which teachers were being allocated and utilised within schools were presented. These were found to be to the detriment of equity and efficiency considerations. The purpose of Chapter 9 was to explore the main underlying reasons behind these trends. The availability of infrastructure, the practice of specialisation and the broader structural issues weakening the effective management over teacher allocation and utilisation were all found to be important causes. In respect to how the poor management of teacher allocation and utilisation specifically relate to Levy-Walton's conceptual framework, the findings from this chapter reveal a number of things.

The characteristics of Malawi's national political settlement appear to have directly affected teacher allocation and utilisation at the school level. Clientelism has led to the politicisation over how public resources are used, which has had a direct impact upon headteachers' decisions concerning the allocation of teachers within schools. This supports previous research undertaken in this area (Chiweza & Waldock, 2011; Chiweza, 2016). Political

[168] This is a similar to the discussion in Chapter 7, where it was found that the PEA's control over teacher deployment was hampered by the power of the teachers themselves. This was due to the uncertainty the PEA faced in not knowing whether the DEM's office would replace the teachers that had transferred out of the zone.

interference was also identified by district officials when discussing the use of punitive measures against teachers. Where this was raised, this appeared to pertain to the intent of strengthening relationships of patronage between local politicians and teachers.

The second set of findings relate to the challenges identified by district, local and school level actors in effectively enforcing government policies regarding the allocation and/ or utilisation of teachers. A number of reasons were acknowledged, including the power dynamics between principals and agents (in particular headteachers and teachers); the delegation-finance failure (Pritchett, 2015);[169] and decentralisation failing to give sub-national level actors the powers to implement policy more effectively.

The third set of findings concern the poor monitoring of government policies relating to allocation and/ or utilisation of teachers through the inspectorate and advisory arm of the education system being severely challenged. These appear to mainly relate back to the shortage of resources and capacity in terms of regularly and effectively carrying out inspections and supervisions. This aligns with what previous studies have concluded, which is that under competitive clientelist political regimes, the political elite prefer to invest resources in visible areas that promote their standing, such as access, rather than investments that can improve quality (Hickey & Hossain, 2019; Kingdon et al., 2014).

In Chapter 10, the discussion moves on to what the findings presented in this and the last three chapters reveal in relation to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation. This is considered in the context of the conceptual framework used for the study, and the extent to which the findings are supported by those of previous research in this area.

[169] This relates to Pritchett's discussion of incoherence within education systems (2015), which was discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 10: Discussion of the results

Chapter purpose and structure

This study set out to provide an understanding of the reasons why the inequitable distribution of teachers to and within schools has continued to persist in Malawi. Chapter 6 presented the trends relating to teacher deployment between schools. Chapter 7 explained the reasons for these trends through the perspectives of stakeholders at different levels of the education system. Chapter 8 presented the trends relating to teacher allocation within schools, and their utilisation. Chapter 9 sought to elucidate why these trends occur through interviews with key education stakeholders. The purpose of Chapter 10 is to bring together and discuss the main overarching findings of this thesis. This is pursued by considering their relevance to the conceptual framework, together with how these relate to previous studies undertaken on teacher management, particularly in relation to Malawi.

The chapter is arranged as follows. Section 10.1 revisits the Levy-Walton Framework which was discussed in Chapter 4 and discusses what part of the framework was suitable for this study. Section 10.2 then goes onto discuss the four main overarching conclusions which can be drawn from the data overall and how these specifically relate to the Levy-Walton Framework. These conclusions are interrogated specifically in relation to the characteristics of Malawi's national political settlement, and how these ultimately have impacted upon the governance of teachers at sub-national levels of government.

10.1 Revisiting the Levy-Walton conceptual framework and its application to findings of this thesis

The conceptual framework used for this study was discussed at length in Chapter 4. The central premise of this framework considers service delivery outcomes from the perspective of:

1. A country's particular political settlement and how this manifests itself upon a particular sector and at the various levels of governance through the enforcement and monitoring of rules.
2. A diagnosis of organisational behaviour within the overall system and across different sectors and different levels of governance.

The design of this study has been specifically focused on Point 1 above in relation to the governance of teacher deployment, utilisation and allocation in Malawi. This was undertaken with a focus on Zomba Rural district, the zonal levels of government and the level of the school (see Chapter 5).

10.2 What have been the main findings of this thesis

10.2.1 Introduction

Chapters 6 to 9 presented the findings relating to what this thesis was primarily interested in interrogating, which would lead to greater understanding of what accounted for the persistence in inequity and inefficiency in how primary teachers were being deployed, allocated and utilised. The four overarching findings identified in the data are:

1. Political interference in matters relating to teacher management (10.2.2)
2. Unequal distribution of power between central and sub-national government adversely affecting teacher management (10.2.3)
3. Poor information and inspection systems contributing to poor implementation of teacher management strategies (10.2.4)
4. Absent, weak or contradictory policies contributing to greater discretionary decision-making powers relating to teacher management (10.2.5)

The following subsections discuss each of these in turn and how they relate to the conceptual framework used for this study as well as the existing literature on the particular area of teacher management this thesis has been focused on. Throughout this chapter, the discussion makes specific reference to Figure 4.4, which illustrates the conceptual framework, as was presented in Chapter 4. The findings are related back to the particular parts of the framework they apply to, which are presented in this chapter in green text for a more transparent mapping to the framework.

10.2.2 Political interference in matters relating to teacher management

Main findings

The first main finding of this thesis is how political interference in matters relating to resource allocation has negatively affected the way in which teachers have been deployed, allocated and utilised. This was largely discussed in reference to nepotism. Teachers' personal connections with the local and national political elite was overwhelmingly found to have had adverse consequences for the equitable deployment of teachers. Elsewhere,

however, it was areas or schools with some sort of connection to politicians that were found to either have benefited from additional teachers or else, attracted the types of resources that traditionally make certain schools more appealing to teach at. While nepotism was found to be the context within which political interference was the most prevalent, several examples of such interference in teacher management issues appear to have been motivated by matters of patronage and vote-buying. This was both in regard to teacher deployment and teacher utilisation.

How these findings relate to the Levy-Walton Framework

The issue of political interference in matters to do with teacher management can be related back the overarching focus of the Levy-Walton framework. This pertains to the "characteristics of a country's national political settlement" and how these manifest at various levels of governance. In relation to political interference, it is useful briefly to remind the reader of some of the attributes of a competitive clientelist state, which is of relevance to this particular finding. The first is that the governance of the public bureaucracy is around norms relating to nepotism, clientelism and patronage. The second is that political parties are organised around transferring patronage to inside clients (Levy, 2014). This has been discussed at length in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4. Specifically in relation to this thesis, I found that these characteristics of Malawi's political settlement were strong drivers for political interference in teacher management issues.

The issue of political interference relates directly back to the part of the framework that focuses on "engagement by external stakeholders." The formalised roles assigned to bureaucrats concerning teacher distribution, allocation and utilisation at different levels of the system were explored in relation to this external engagement. Particularly in relation to teacher deployment, my findings illustrate the negative effects of interference by external stakeholders, which include politicians, along with other members of the local elite.

This relates to a third part of the framework reflected upon in Figure 4.4, which considers the influence of "informal internal power structures" in being able to enforce rules and/or policies concerning teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation. Official power structures relating to teacher management, as shall be discussed in Subsection 10.2.3, are still overwhelmingly concentrated at the level of central government. The thesis findings would appear to suggest that this distribution of power means that even where district officials

have jurisdiction over certain teacher functions, politicians (and other members of the elite) can over-turn this either directly or through officials in central government.

The extent to which these findings corroborate or differ from previous research

The revelation of political interference in matters relating to teacher management aligns with what previous research in Malawi has found, particularly in regard to teacher deployment (Asim et al., 2017; Ndalama & Chidalengwa, 2010). These studies, however, concluded that political interference in matters pertaining to teacher deployment issues are due to nepotistic relationships, *"rather than political patronage or clientelist vote-buying"* (Asim et al., 2017; p. 20). This reflects what Bennell & Akyeampong (2007) concluded, which was that the politicisation of the teaching force is less of a systematic problem in the sub-Saharan African region.

It is certainly true there is less evidence to be able to generalise that systematic relationships of patronage between teachers and politicians are as institutionalised as, say, those in South Asia (Béteille, 2009; Bari et al., 2016). However, my findings do point to particular instances where political interference was deemed to be expedient due to teachers being viewed as a potentially important voting bloc. These matters included the potential change to the rural hardship allowance policy, a pattern of promoting teachers nearer to election time and the sanctioning of district officials for punishing teachers.[170]

My findings on how nepotism specifically affects teacher deployment differ from these previous studies owing to the fact that I probed beyond teachers' personal connections with the political elite. The social capital of a school/geographic area in terms of its connections with the political elite is a less well-explored issue in terms of teacher distribution. The data provided evidence to support this capital as influencing how teachers themselves are distributed and/or how resources act as a "pull" factor as to where a teacher would want to work.

Elsewhere, my thesis also offers a new perspective on political interference by extending the discussion to the sort of repercussions district government officials may face should they disobey political actors. Booth et al. (2005) and Casley-Hayford et al. (2007) have

[170] And as an addendum to the fieldwork, in the run-up to the 2019 Presidential Elections 20,000 primary and secondary school teachers were promoted. This was similar to the 2014 election, when almost 20,000 primary school teachers were promoted shortly before elections took place (Dzimbiri, 2016).

discussed the fear of victimisation bureaucrats feel in the context of the sub-Saharan African region more broadly. However, my thesis narrows this specifically to what the ramifications are for education bureaucrats in Malawi should they disobey orders from informal actors. These mainly relate to negative professional and personal consequences for the bureaucrat involved.

10.2.3 Unequal distribution of power between central and sub-national government adversely affecting teacher management

Main findings

The second main finding of this thesis pertains to how aspects of low power distance have rendered formal relationships of accountability at the district level ineffectual when it comes to matters concerning teacher management. I identified four main reasons for the prevalence of low power distance. The first related to how teachers with connections to political elite created low power distance between themselves and the officials managing them. This was either through direct political interference or through the elite approaching central level officials. The second revealed teacher shortage as weakening the principal-agent relationships of accountability due to official principals fearing the loss of teachers to other districts, zones or schools, if they administered official policies too strictly. The third related to district and local officials not possessing the formal authority to sanction teachers for "*behaviours that threaten to disrupt the functioning of the organization*" (Dzimbiri, 2016; p. 88). Lastly, weak relationships of accountability were found to exist due to the pay-grades of district, local or school-level staff being too similar or even lower than the employees these education stakeholders were meant to be managing.

How these findings relate to the Levy-Walton Framework

The issue of low power distance at sub-national levels can be traced back to what the Levy-Walton framework terms "characteristics of a country's national political settlement" and how these manifest at various levels of governance. It is useful to remind readers that political settlement is primarily concerned with how power is distributed between different groups (Di John & Putzel, 2009). By extension the way power distribution is undertaken can have a direct influence on issues relating to hierarchy, power distance and subordination. Decentralisation is broadly about redistributing power through shifting decision-making functions to lower levels of government (Barnett, 2018). However, as is argued in several of the studies discussed in Chapter 4, decentralising decision-making functions in a

competitive clientelist state, such as in Malawi, reduces the power of the national political elite to distribute resources in a way that ensures their political survival (Abdulai, 2017). Malawi's political culture is one that has been defined as having a *"centralizing authoritarian tendency of the hierarchy"* (Chinsinga, 2012; p. 11). As the findings above illustrate, in relation to teacher management the failure to redistribute power from the centre to the sub-national level has manifested itself in several negative ways concerning teacher management.

A second and related part of the Levy-Walton framework that these findings align with, is regarding the practical consequences that a low distribution of power has had on "enforcing rules at each level of governance." Retaining the bulk of power at the central levels of government – whether this be through failing to give districts enough powers relating to teacher management or not giving them sufficient resources – has appeared to make the enforcement of rules at district, local and school levels difficult to achieve. The functions relating to the recruitment and discipline of teachers remaining at central government appears to have weakened the relationships of accountability between teachers and those at the sub-national level who are managing them. This has been exacerbated by the inadequate staffing at district levels, together with their corresponding pay grades. While the Malawi Civil Service is meant to have a hierarchical grading system (Davies et al., 2003), my thesis has illustrated that those managing teachers are not only ex-teachers themselves, but also, are on pay grades similar to the teachers. Within a socio-political culture that gives great *"deference to hierarchy"* (Chinsinga, 2012; p. 11), this appears to have contributed to the weak official relationships of accountability in Malawi.

The framework's emphasis on the connections between the different levels of the system considers this from the perspective of "informal internal power structures" and how this affects the monitoring and enforcement of rules. However, a weakness of this aspect of the framework, especially when factoring in what has been discussed, is the inadequate attention it gives to the *formalised* distribution of power. The framework fails to detail explicitly what effect the distribution of "official power" has, and what the implications of this are for the functional relationships of accountability.

The extent to which these findings corroborate or differ from previous research

Studies reviewed in Chapter 3, specifically in relation to Malawi, revealed that in a society characterised by hierarchy and inequality, social relationships where citizens are able to hold civil servants to account inevitably fail (Booth et al., 2006; Watkins & Kaler, 2016). High power distance between citizens and civil servants (including teachers) has been found to have negatively affected relationships of accountability in Malawi and elsewhere (Barquedano- López et al., 2013; Essuman & Akyeampong, 2011; Rawal & Kingdon, 2010; Watkins & Ashforth, 2019). Less well-explored in Malawi, has been an explicit analysis of what the consequences for accountability are in relation to low power distance. This is despite the Government of Malawi's 2014 Public Service Review Commission identifying the insubordination of junior staff to their seniors as being an area of concern (cited in Dzimbiri, 2016).

While a number of studies have been critical of Malawi's pseudo implementation of decentralisation (see Chapter 4), the practical consequences of what this means for teacher management has not been well explored. Studies elsewhere in the Global South have investigated the low power distance between teachers and those who are managing them (Akyeampong & Asante, 2006; Jaffer, 2010). The findings from my thesis appear to corroborate what these studies have discussed, whilst also expanding upon their conclusions. One area that was extensively explored was how teacher management was affected by the overall teacher shortage in the system. The interview responses clearly link what the consequences of this shortage have meant in relation to the distribution of power between teachers and those managing them.

10.2.4 Poor information and inspection systems contributed to poor implementation of teacher management strategies

Main findings

The third main finding of this thesis relates to the asymmetry of information concerning where teachers are teaching in the system, and how much time they spend teaching. Information and inspectorate systems monitoring the compliance of the system deploying, allocating and utilising teachers in line with government policy were found to be ineffective and served to undermine the principal-agent relationships of accountability (Booth & Cammack, 2013; O'Neil & Cammack, 2014). This very much reflects the principal-agent problems identified in Chapter 4, where agents *"have more information about what they*

are doing than does the principal [which] giv[es] them an advantage allow[ing] them to pursue their own interests" (Bossert, 1998; p. 1516). The interviews revealed that inadequate resources, including the number of inspectors and Zonal Educational Management Information System (ZEMIS) officers, financial resources for equipment and transportation, were barriers to being able to monitor schools effectively. Similar to what was discussed in Subsection 10.2.3, the interview data has elicited that these functions have not yet fully been decentralised in the true sense. This was found to be either due to capacity constraints, or else, the centre still retaining control over some of these functions.

How these findings relate to the Levy-Walton Framework

The main findings regarding poor information and inspection systems appear to relate to resourcing issues. These are both in terms of shortage of personnel and financial resources, which have rendered these functions ineffective. Relating this back to the part of the framework that looks at the "characteristics of a country's national political settlement," it is worthwhile to remind readers of the discussion in Chapter 4. This considered how, under certain political settlements, spending on investments that increase their visibility to the electorate are prioritised. Quality enhancing reform not only has few tangible results in the short-term, but also, may threaten the personal interests of politicians in clientelist settings, given their focus on issues to do with accountability and cost-effectiveness (Harding & Stasavage, 2014; Hickey & Hossain, 2019; Kingdon et al., 2014). Specifically in relation to this this thesis, the findings reveal an underfunded inspectorate system, both in terms of insufficient staff and limited means of transportation to inspect a large number of schools. This is similarly true of the shortfall in ZEMIS officers. This directly links to the part of the framework that focuses on "monitoring mechanisms over lower levels."

Aside from reflecting how these types of investments are not prioritised under certain political settlements, it also relates to what Pritchett (2015) terms system "incoherence", or more specifically, "delegation-finance" failure (see Chapter 4). In resource-poor contexts, such as Malawi, a gap between plans versus implementation due to a lack of resources is not uncommon. Linking this to relationships of accountability, the incoherence makes it *"harder to impose performance disciplines where mandates are unclear and policies contain serious internal and external inconsistencies"* (Booth & Cammack, 2013; p. 81). Despite its importance, however, the delegation-finance incoherence or indeed, any type of

incoherence is difficult to map directly onto the Levy-Walton framework. The framework does acknowledge, however, that *"[e]ven if the rules governing participation in rule-setting are clear….there could be weaknesses in the arrangements for monitoring, and for enforcing non-compliance at lower levels"* (Levy & Walton, 2013; p. 9).

The extent to which these findings corroborate or differ from previous research

Asim et al. (2017) forensically detailed how Malawi's information systems were inadequately equipped for knowing where teachers were working in the primary education system. While this thesis supports these findings, it also identified other structural reasons for the underlying weaknesses concerning information systems relating to Malawi's primary education system, which relate to resource and capacity constraints. Little research has been undertaken on the inspectorate in Malawi. The findings appear broadly supportive of research in other Global South contexts, where a lack of resources was found to contribute to infrequent and limited school inspection visits (De Grauwe, 2001; Herselman & Hay, 2002; Hossain, 2017; MacPherson, 2011, Mazibuko, 2007; Uwazi, 2009; Wanzare, 2002).

10.2.5 Absent, weak or contradictory policies contributed to greater discretionary decision-making powers relating to teacher management

Main findings

The fourth and final overarching finding of this thesis relates to how education bureaucrats have been able to employ discretionary decision-making when implementing teacher management policies. Teacher deployment policies, which are very broadly defined, gave the District Education Office a great deal of discretion regarding where teachers could be deployed. Similarly, the absence of policies specific to transfers concerning teachers led to cultural-cognitive rules being commonplace in the teacher transfer system. Teacher allocation policies were also found to be absent, thus meaning that the criteria headteachers selected when assigning teachers to classes were not necessarily based on enrolment levels per class. Moreover, policies relating to the utilisation of teachers were found to be contradictory. Government policy clearly states that every teacher should be assigned his or her own class. However, at the school level this was clearly difficult to implement due to the shortage of classroom infrastructure. Lastly, while there appear to be policies relating to the transfer of *civil servants* and what their working hours are supposed to be, the lack of specificity concerning teachers appears to have left these rules open to interpretation amongst education officials. These absent, weak or contradictory policies also

raise the question concerning the criteria different stakeholders should be judged on, or should be answerable to, if certain standards have not been set.

How these findings relate to the Levy-Walton Framework

In relation to the Levy-Walton framework, this finding corresponds to the part of the framework that considers the "characteristics of a country's national political settlement" and how these manifest at various levels of governance. The issue of discretionary decision-making powers can be traced back to an underlying feature of neo-patrimonial states like Malawi, which is the *"lack a common set of predictable rules, but also formal and informal rules [which] are often contradictory"* (Cammack et al., 2007; p. 3). Chapter 4 discussed why it was that competitive clientelist political states provide very weak incentives for a rules-based approach to governance. In such a system, it is dominated by personalised rather than impersonalised norms. This, by extension, means there is little motivation to *"work together to build institutions that will deliver national public goods over the long-term"* (O'Neil & Cammack, 2014; p. ix).

The findings from the data discussed in Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 revealed that across all aspects of teacher management that this thesis focused on, the "rules" were open to wide interpretation. Discretionary decision-making was able to happen, because of weak, absent or contradictory rule-setting around these areas of teacher management. This maps onto what the Levy-Walton framework terms the "extent of managerial and worker discretion at each level."

While the absent, weak or contradictory rules has meant a proliferation of discretionary decisions, this also needs to be considered alongside the lack of resources needed to implement these rules. Shortfalls in funds for implementing policies set out in the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) relate to what Pritchett (2015) terms the delegation-finance failure. In the case of some policies, such as the double-shift and the rural allowance policy, delegation-motivation failure could also be cited as a reason. This is a similar to what was discussed in Subsection 10.2.4 in relation to information and inspection. As was explained there, one of the weaknesses of the Levy-Walton framework in respect to my findings is that it does not adequately incorporate this role of incoherence in its model.

The extent to which these findings corroborate or differ from previous research

The findings broadly corroborate what studies reviewed for Chapter 3 found in relation to absent or weak policies regarding teacher deployment and transfer policies, both in Malawi and elsewhere in the Global South (Asim et al., 2017; Bari et al., 2016; Kota et al., 2018; Sharma, 2009). Where this study has expanded upon these past studies is in the context of within school allocation and utilisation decisions and importantly, what the consequences have been of absent, weak or contradictory policies concerning teacher management. Moreover, this thesis has also contextualised the failure of these policies in relation to problems of resourcing.

Conclusion

Much of the work undertaken over the last 15 years in Malawi has begun to consider the importance of its political settlement on the delivery of public services (Booth et al., 2006; Cammack, 2011; Cammack, 2017; Chiweza, 2016; Said & Singini, 2017; Tenthani & Chinsinga, 2016). The thesis' findings build on this past research by using the Levy-Walton Framework to interrogate what particular impact Malawi's national political settlement has had on formal principal-agent relationships regarding teacher accountability at sub-national levels of government. It has been argued that the retention of power and by default, resources at the central level of government, has left sub-national stakeholders more open to capture by the local elite, and incapacitated in terms of being able to implement government policies relating to teacher management effectively. These weak relationships of accountability at sub-national levels of government institutions appear to have been very much due to the characteristics defining Malawi's neo-patrimonial state. Over the last 25 years, these characteristics have been accompanied by an increasingly fragmented political landscape, with competing elites vying for power through the capture of public resources and institutions. The weakly defined or absent policies relating to teacher management (in themselves characteristics of a neo-patrimonial state) have further exacerbated these tensions.

The Levy-Walton Framework has been useful as a broad framework going forward. This has been due to its integration of political settlement theory, and how this has affected relationships of accountability at lower levels of governance and service providers. This, in turn, has allowed for interrogation of what this has specifically meant in the context of

teacher management issues in Malawi. This thesis has added to the field of research on teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation by illustrating how official principal-agent relationships are directly and negatively affected by the characteristics of Malawi's political settlement.

In the next chapter, Chapter 11, I present the main contributions of this thesis to existing knowledge, together with the limitations of the research. I conclude by considering what future directions research can take to understand more fully the complexities surrounding why interventions relating to certain aspects of teacher management in Malawi have failed.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

Chapter purpose and structure

In Chapter 10, the main messages emanating from this thesis, and how these relate to the literature reviewed (Chapter 3) and the conceptual framework (Chapter 4) used for this study were presented. From the main findings, I concluded that several elements of Malawi's political settlement have negatively encroached on the effective operationalisation of sub-national governance in managing issues relating to teachers. As Chapter 10 summarised, this appears to mainly be through a weakening of relationships of accountability across different state actors at these lower levels of government

Having discussed the main findings from my research in Chapter 10, the purpose of this chapter is to conclude this thesis with some closing reflections. Section 11.1 discusses the main ways in which this work has contributed to research on teacher management in the field of international comparative education. Section 11.2 considers the limitations to this study and finally, Section 11.3 contains some proposals for ways forward for future research.

11.1 What contributions has this thesis made?

11.1.1 Situating teacher management problems in Malawi within its political settlement

Chapter 4 discussed the emerging interest over the last few years in better understanding the different types of political settlements, and their impact on the quality of education systems (Hickey & Hossain, 2019; Wales et al., 2016). Amongst these studies are those that have focused exclusively on teacher accountability, with a specific focus on teacher absenteeism at sub-national levels of government (Ampratwum et al., 2018; Hossain et al., 2017). Where this thesis has contributed to this emerging field is to interrogate what effect Malawi's political settlement has had on formal relationships of accountability concerning teacher management at the district, local and school levels.

Previous studies undertaken on Malawi's political settlement have largely been through a national-level prism, without interrogating what the characteristics of that neo-patrimonial state have meant for different sectors (Booth et al., 2006; Cammack, 2011; Cammack, 2017; Said & Singini, 2017). O'Neil & Cammack (2014) go some way to addressing this, but do not

focus specifically on education or teachers. Research on teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation in Malawi has mostly looked at data trends to document the entrenched inequity and inefficiency of the system (DeStefano, 2013; Ravishankar et al., 2016). A few of these studies have investigated the conditions under which these trends have been continuing but have been largely apolitical in nature. Work by Asim et al. (2017) is the only available study on Malawi that has engaged with these shortcomings through a network analysis of formal and informal stakeholder influences on teacher deployment. However, it fails to give sufficient attention to the ways in which these pressures have manifested themselves into influencing decision-making.

A major contribution this thesis makes is in addressing the gaps discussed above. This has been achieved by integrating the strands of literature concerning the broad concept of "political settlement" into the more technical areas of "teacher management" that I have focused on. In applying the concept of political settlement theory – which is primarily about the distribution of power – to the different levels of the education system, I have addressed the problems relating to teacher management from angles previously not explored. In the context of Malawi's education system, the thesis' main contribution has been to demonstrate the different ways sub-national stakeholders' management of teachers (relationships of accountability) has been weakened due to the concentration of power at central levels.

11.1.2 Research design

Another main contribution that this thesis makes is in regard to its design. Firstly, this is through the emphasis on addressing the three inter-related issues of teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation together. Based on the review of the literature discussed in Chapter 3, these issues by-and-large tend to be addressed separately. In relation to Malawi, research by Ndalama & Chidalengwa (2010) and DeStefano (2013) comprised the only studies I could find that address the phenomena of teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation together through a descriptive analysis of the trends. In addressing these issues in conjunction with one another, this thesis has probed more deeply what impact a system defined by huge variation in teacher numbers between schools has had on school-level operations. This was primarily aided by the research design which involved selecting

comparator primary education schools and zones on the basis of whether these were experiencing a teacher shortage or surplus.

Secondly, only a very limited number of studies have investigated the issue of teacher deployment, allocation or utilisation using a mixed methods approach. The exceptions to this are Béteille (2009) and Asim et al. (2017), whose studies in India and Malawi, respectively, utilised such an approach when exploring the very specific issues of teacher management this thesis has also been focused on. An approach utilising quantitative methods alone is only able to identify patterns that exist without necessarily explaining them. On the other hand, a purely qualitative approach risks minimising or exaggerating the scale of the problem. In the context of Malawi, this thesis has gone beyond what past studies have done. It has involved identifying the deep-rooted structural reasons why practices continue to exist, causing teachers to be distributed in an unequal and inefficient way. A further contribution this thesis makes is that the quantitative data I analysed for this study has built on past data analysis carried out for previous studies. This was specifically the case in that I used administrative data to track teachers' movements in the system to build a more comprehensive picture of the (in)equitable deployment of teachers.

11.2 Limitations of the research

Whilst the study has aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of why the problems relating to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation persist, in this section, I discuss two specific limitations relating to this work. These concern constraints relating to data and the research design of this thesis.

11.2.1 Data constraints

Regarding the collection of secondary data sources for this study, this largely relied on government administrative data – namely information from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and staff returns data. Some of the limitations of these sources have been discussed elsewhere in the thesis, but are worth reiterating here. Asim et al. (2017) found that specifically in relation to teacher data, 16 percent of teachers were missing in the 2016 EMIS database. During my own experience of analysing multiple years of EMIS data, I was also able to corroborate similar weaknesses in the way EMIS was capturing teacher data. While the monthly staff returns data was a way of trying to ameliorate this weakness, owing to these not being systematically collected and/or recorded on a monthly

basis the underlying problems relating to the EMIS remained. In the absence of any other data source that captured both enrolment and teacher numbers by school, the EMIS data was utilised, whilst recognising its shortcomings.

Another data constraint was in relation to the poor/inaccurate data recorded in the EMIS concerning teacher allocation and utilisation (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). Due to this concern over its reliability, I instead, collected data from 26 primary schools in the two primary education zones of interest for this study. A limitation of this approach, however, was the extent to which the data results could be generalised to primary schools in the rest of Zomba Rural district, or the country as a whole.

11.2.2 Research design constraints

The Levy-Walton Framework is conceptualised in such a way that it *"allows for heterogeneity within the overall system….with the possibility of domains of more effective service delivery co-existing alongside domains of ineffectiveness*" (Levy & Walton, 2013; p. 8). A number of studies that have used this framework have done so in a manner that has allowed for a comparison between one part of the education system which is relatively ineffective against another part which is more effective (Levy, 2018). The design for this study, however, was focused exclusively on one district and the lower levels of governance accompanying this.[171] Time and financial constraints meant that the research design focused on a comparison between two zones within the same district, which were selected on the basis of variation between teacher surpluses and shortages. As such, the aspect of the Levy-Walton Framework, which focuses on heterogeneity in service delivery within education systems, was absent from this study.

Another research design limitation was the prominence given to education government or primary school officials. The interest in exploring the challenges faced by formal actors in implementing teacher management strategies informed this participant choice. However, multiple stakeholders corroborated how informal institutions outside the sector had been instrumental in decisions relating to teacher management. With this in mind, the narratives

[171] While I list this as one of the limitations of the study, further on in this chapter, I discuss how this presents an opportunity for how future research in this area can be developed.

of non-education actors could also have been integral to further perspectives surrounding this investigation.

11.3 Implications of the findings for future research

11.3.1 The interests of the political elite in deploying teachers

A selection of the studies reviewed in Chapter 3 focused on the inequitable deployment of teachers in many countries in the Global South being due to economic geography, which influences where teachers prefer to teach. A related but less well explored approach to understanding the existence of spatial inequalities in teacher deployment, is the extent to which the political representation of regions and districts affect this. Evidence of the ruling political elite and their vast influence over the allocation of public resources forms a considerable part of the political settlement discourse (Therkildsen, 2008). However, comparatively more has been written about this distribution of spoils by the national political elite in relation to the more lucrative resources emanating from the productive sectors. Less well explored and researched is the distribution of social sector public spending.[172]

This thesis' own findings lend support to the proposition that the distribution of education resources in Malawi has been influenced by the national and local political elite, particularly in relation to capital investment. A future area of research would be to extend the findings from this thesis, which are quite specific to Zomba Rural district. A proposal would be to consider the extent to which political representation of the national political elite by region has directly affected how public education resources are distributed by region/ district.

11.3.2 Heterogeneity in service delivery between different parts of the system

Subsection 11.2.2 explained how the Levy-Walton framework can be a model through which to consider how certain parts of the system which are ineffective in delivering public services exist alongside other parts that produce more effective outcomes (Levy & Walton, 2013). The purpose of this study was not to compare two parts of the system that are performing differently in relation to teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation. However, the data I collected and analysed for this thesis did illustrate the wide variation

[172] Abdulai & Hickey (2014) is a rare study, which focuses on Ghana, where the regional composition of the national political elite is mapped out against the effect this has had on the distribution of public education resources.

across districts when considering the extent to which the deployment of teachers was being undertaken according to enrolment levels (Chapter 6). Similarly, the stakeholder interview data I analysed for Chapter 9 provided evidence that certain districts were implementing strategies that allowed for teachers to specialise in subjects, whilst also teaching across multiple classes/ standards. This strategy was perceived as a more flexible and efficient way to utilise teachers' teaching time, but was absent in the teaching arrangements in Zomba Rural district.

An extension to the above would be to consider the political fault-lines between the three main regions of Malawi in the context of the multi-party system, as was discussed in Chapter 2. While I concluded there was the existence of political interference in district decision-making over teacher issues, the design for this thesis did not allow for a comparison with a district in another region where a larger number of politicians sat in opposition to the party in power. The work carried out by Asim et al. (2017) in modelling whether a relationship exists between the party affiliation of an MP and the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is a starting point to this.

Conclusion

The motivation for this study, as Chapter 1 set out, was to account for the persistence in the extreme variations in the deployment and allocation of primary school teachers in Malawi. Up until very recently, studies exploring these issues approached them from a very apolitical perspective. This has meant that the corresponding policy recommendations obfuscate the governance realities on the ground by narrowing their focus to concentrating on formal institutions. Through this thesis, I believe I have achieved its principal aim, which was about understanding why teacher deployment, allocation and utilisation has continued to retain its problems of inequity and inefficiency. The main conclusion is that the characteristics of Malawi's national political settlement have negatively affected formal principal-agent relationships relating to teacher accountability at sub-national levels of government.

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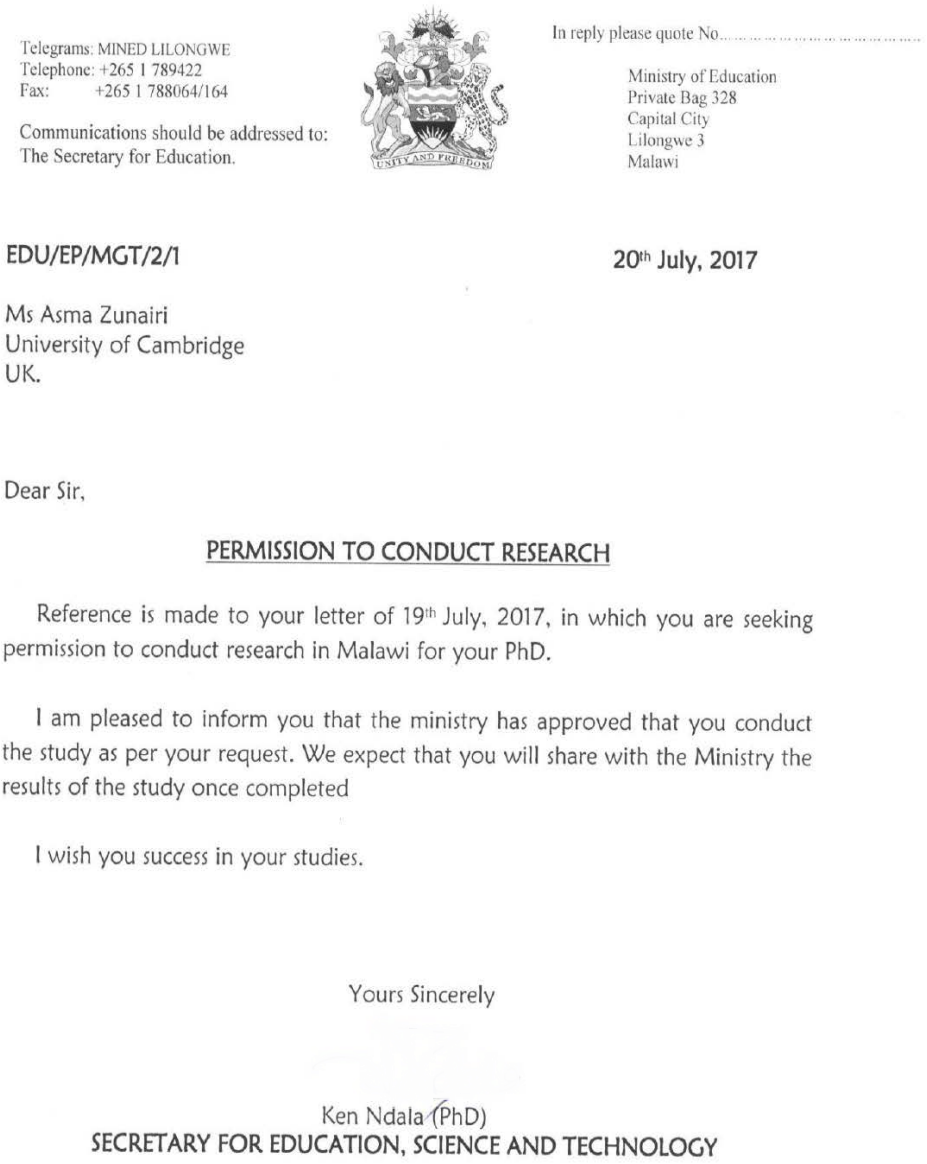
Appendices

Appendix Figure A.1: Permission granted by MoEST to carry out research in Malawi



Telegrams: MINED LILONGWE
Telephone: +265 1 789422
Fax: +265 1 788064/164

Communications should be addressed to:
The Secretary for Education.

In reply please quote No.....

Ministry of Education
Private Bag 328
Capital City
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

EDU/EP/MGT/2/1

20th July, 2017

Ms Asma Zunairi
University of Cambridge
UK.

Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your letter of 19th July, 2017, in which you are seeking permission to conduct research in Malawi for your PhD.

I am pleased to inform you that the ministry has approved that you conduct the study as per your request. We expect that you will share with the Ministry the results of the study once completed

I wish you success in your studies.

Yours Sincerely

Ken Ndala (PhD)
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Appendix Figure A.2: Confirmation of attachment with the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) for duration of fieldwork

CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING (CERT)

DIRECTOR
Dixie Maluwa Banda, Dip. Ed, B.Ed, , B.Ed(Hons), M.Ed, Ph.D

Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi
Telephone: (265) 524 222 09999 55667
Fax: (265) 524 046
E-mail: dmbanda5@gmail.com

24th July, 2017

Ms Asma T. Zubairi
University of Cambridge
Trinity Lane,
Cambridge CB2 1TN
UK

LETTER OF AFFILIATION

I am pleased to inform you that your request for your attachment to facilitate your doctoral studies on "The difference in the distribution, use and voice over teachers and resources between primary schools in Malawi" with the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) has been approved.

We would like to welcome you to CERT family,

We would like also to wish you success in your research work. If we can be of any assistance do not hesitate to come to us.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dixie Maluwa Banda
DIRECTOR, CERT

Appendix Figure A.3: Confidentiality form administered to interview participants

Background
My name is Asma Zubairi and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. I have previously worked in the Education Sector in Malawi at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with the Directorate of Planning. This research piece, however, is for my PhD and is an independent piece of work.

This research will contribute to the wider debate around the debate around equitable and inclusive education systems, specifically in the context of teacher distribution. The overall objective of the piece is to understand, in the context of Malawi's primary education system, the:

- Processes affecting the distribution of teachers across and within primary schools
- Stakeholders who exert influence over how teachers are distributed and used
- Extent to which teachers have become more equitably distributed and used

In order to gain access to this information, I would like to conduct three interviews with you. Each interview will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes where we will discuss your views around the distribution and use of teachers. These interviews will be spread out over the course of two to three weeks depending on your availability.

Ethics and Confidentiality
With your consent, I would like to record the interview. This is to ensure accuracy when I am conducting my analysis. The data, once collected, will be stored on my personal laptop of which only I will have access to. All materials, including audio-recordings and transcripts made of these, will be destroyed once the study is complete. All interviews will be confidential, including your name, the name of the school and its location, together with any other personal information which may inadvertently lead to your identification. To ensure complete anonymity I will instead assign you with a code name of which only I will be aware of.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Should you not wish to answer a question, you are free to do so. Should you not want to record the interview, or would like me to stop recording at any point during the interview then please inform me. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative repercussions.

How the data will be used
The data collected from this interview will contribute towards completing my final thesis in fulfilment of the PhD requirements of the University of Cambridge. The findings of my study will be presented to my degree committee at the University of Cambridge and potentially may also be shared amongst interested policy-makers both here in Malawi and internationally. With your permission, I would like to be able to use the interviews I administer with you to inform the findings for my final thesis. For that purpose, could you please confirm that you agree to take part in the study and that you give permission for me to quote or make reference to what you say by signing the agreement below.

Raising a complaint
Should you have any concerns or complaints concerning your treatment as a participant in this project you should contact the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cambridge (Tel: 0044 (0) 1223 766 238 or email cshssoffice@admin.cam.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely

Asma Zubairi
PhD Candidate, University of Cambridge
0044 (0) 7 413 967 577
atz24@cam.ac.uk

Informed consent for participants interviewed

Please mark all statements you agree with by putting an "X" in the box next to it

I have read and understand the information on the informed consent letter	☐
I grant consent for my interview to be audiotaped and transcribed	☐
I grant consent for access to documents or materials that I deem appropriate	☐
I understand who will have access to the data collected during the study	☐
I understand how personal data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the study	☐
I understand that research will be written up in a thesis, be published as an article in academic journals, used for presentations at conferences and for future research	☐
I understand how to raise concerns or make a complaint	☐
I consent to be a participant in this study having fully understood my rights as a participant in this study	☐

Appendix Figure A.4: Excerpt from EMIS survey on teacher allocation and number of periods taught per week

Surname (use names appearing on payroll) (a)	First Name & initials (use names appearing on payroll) (b)	Disability See Code (c)	Employment Number EDE0 (d)	Registration Number (e)	Sex M/F (f)	Date of Birth dd/mm/yyyy (g)	Highest Level of education See Code (h)	Teacher Grade See Code (i)	Teacher Training See Code (j)	Date of 1st Appt. dd/mm/yyyy (k)	Date of Appt. to present grade dd/mm/yyyy (l)	Additional School Responsibility See Code (m)	Total Teaching period per week (n)	Standard Teaching (o)			
														Std1 □	Std2 □	Std3 □	Std4 □
				T__/______/___		__/__/___				__/___/____	__/___/___			Std5 □	Std6 □	Std7 □	Std8 □
														Std1 □	Std2 □	Std3 □	Std4 □
				T__/______/___		__/__/___				__/___/____	__/___/___			Std5 □	Std6 □	Std7 □	Std8 □
														Std1 □	Std2 □	Std3 □	Std4 □
				T__/______/___		__/__/___				__/___/____	__/___/___			Std5 □	Std6 □	Std7 □	Std8 □
														Std1 □	Std2 □	Std3 □	Std4 □
				T__/______/___		__/__/___				__/___/____	__/___/___			Std5 □	Std6 □	Std7 □	Std8 □
														Std1 □	Std2 □	Std3 □	Std4 □
				T__/______/___		__/__/___				__/___/____	__/___/___			Std5 □	Std6 □	Std7 □	Std8 □

Source: Excerpt from EMIS questionnaire administered in 2017/18.

Appendix Figure A.5: Researcher-administered survey administered to 371 teachers in the 26 primary schools in Zone 9 and Zone 12

1. Name of Teacher:

2. What teaching pay-grade are you currently on?
   TL ☐ TK ☐ TJ ☐ TI ☐ TH ☐

3. Which is the main Standard you are responsible for teaching in?
   Std. 1 ☐ Std. 2 ☐ Std. 3 ☐ Std. 4 ☐

   Std. 5 ☐ Std. 6 ☐ Std. 7 ☐ Std. 8 ☐

4. Do you teach this Standard/ Class alone, or with another teacher?
   Alone ☐ With another teacher ☐

5. If you answered that you teach this Standard/ Class with another teacher for Q4, what is the name of the teacher/ teachers you share teaching responsibilities with?
   Name 1:

   Name 2:

   Name 3:

6. Which subjects are you responsible for teaching in this Standard/ Class?
   Agriculture ☐ Bible Knowledge ☐ Chichewa ☐

   English ☐ Expressive Arts ☐ Life Skills ☐

   Mathematics ☐ Science & Technology ☐ Social & Env Science ☐

   Tikwere ☐

7. How many periods a week do you teach for each subject for this Standard?
   Agriculture ☐ Bible Knowledge ☐ Chichewa ☐

   English ☐ Expressive Arts ☐ Life Skills ☐

   Mathematics ☐ Science & Technology ☐ Social & Env Science ☐

   Tikwere ☐

8. How long do you teach each period for?
   30 minutes ☐ 35 minutes ☐

9. **ONLY RELEVANT IF TEACHER ANSWERED "WITH ANOTHER TEACHER" FOR Q4:** Does the other teacher you share this Standard/ Class with assist you inside the classroom for any of the subjects you are responsible for teaching?
   Yes ☐ N ☐

10. **ONLY RELEVANT IF TEACHER ANSWERED "WITH ANOTHER TEACHER" FOR Q4:** If you answered "yes" to Q9, please indicate which subjects s/he assists you with?
   Agriculture ☐ Bible Knowledge ☐ Chichewa ☐
   English ☐ Expressive Arts ☐ Life Skills ☐
   Mathematics ☐ Science & Technology ☐ Social & Env Science ☐
   Tikwere ☐

11. Do you teach any other Standard/ Class?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

12. Which other Standard/ Class do you teach?
   Std. 1 ☐ Std. 2 ☐ Std. 3 ☐ Std. 4 ☐
   Std. 5 ☐ Std. 6 ☐ Std. 7 ☐ Std. 8 ☐

13. Do you teach this Standard/ Class alone, or with another teacher?
   Alone ☐ With another teacher ☐

14. If you answered that you teach this Standard/ Class with another teacher for Q13, what is the name of the teacher/ teachers you share teaching responsibilities with?
   Name 1:
   Name 2:
   Name 3:

15. Which subjects are you responsible for teaching in this Standard/ Class?
   Agriculture ☐ Bible Knowledge ☐ Chichewa ☐
   English ☐ Expressive Arts ☐ Life Skills ☐
   Mathematics ☐ Science & Technology ☐ Social & Env Science ☐
   Tikwere ☐

16. How many periods a week do you teach for each subject for this Standard/ Class?

Agriculture	☐	Bible Knowledge	☐	Chichewa	☐
English	☐	Expressive Arts	☐	Life Skills	☐
Mathematics	☐	Science & Technology	☐	Social & Env Science	☐
Tikwere	☐				

17. How long do you teach each period for?

30 minutes ☐ 35 minutes ☐

18. **ONLY RELEVANT IF TEACHER ANSWERED "WITH ANOTHER TEACHER" FOR Q13**: Does the other teacher you share this Standard/ Class with assist you inside the classroom for any of the subjects you are responsible for teaching?

Yes ☐ N ☐

19. **ONLY RELEVANT IF TEACHER ANSWERED "WITH ANOTHER TEACHER" FOR Q13**: If you answered "yes" to Q18, please indicate which subjects s/he assists you with?

Agriculture	☐	Bible Knowledge	☐	Chichewa	☐
English	☐	Expressive Arts	☐	Life Skills	☐
Mathematics	☐	Science & Technology	☐	Social & Env Science	☐
Tikwere	☐				

Appendix Table A.1: List of participants interviewed for study

	Participant	Reference in findings
1	Directorate of Inspectorate and Advisory (DIAS), Ministry of Education	MoEST official, Central head-quarters
2	Directorate of Basic Education, Ministry of Education	MoEST official, Central head-quarters
3	Directorate of Planning, Ministry of Education	MoEST official, Central head-quarters
4	Directorate of Human Resource Resources, Ministry of Education	MoEST official, Central head-quarters
5	District Education Manager, Zomba Rural District Education Office	District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District
6	Head of Inspectorate, Zomba Rural District Education Office	District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District
7	DEMIS official, Zomba Rural District Education Office	District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District
8	Principal Accountant, Zomba Rural District Education Office	District Education Office official, Zomba Rural District
9	Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9	Primary Education Adviser, Zone 9
10	Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12	Primary Education Adviser, Zone 12
11	Headteacher, School B[173]	Headteacher, School B, Zone 9
12	Deputy headteacher, School B	Deputy headteacher, School B, Zone 9
13	Headteacher, School I	Headteacher, School I, Zone 9
14	Headteacher, School S	Headteacher, School S, Zone 12
15	Deputy headteacher, School Z	Deputy headteacher, School Z, Zone 12
16	Teacher 1, School B	Infant standard teacher, School B, Zone 9
17	Teacher 2, School B	Senior standard teacher, School B, Zone 9
18	Teacher 1, School I	Infant standard teacher, School I, Zone 9
19	Teacher 2, School I	Senior standard teacher, School I, Zone 9
20	Teacher 1, School S	Infant standard teacher, School S, Zone 12
21	Teacher 2, School S	Senior standard teacher, School S, Zone 12
22	Teacher 1, School Z	Infant standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12
23	Teacher 2, School Z	Senior standard teacher, School Z, Zone 12

[173] Mid-way through interviews with the headteacher at School B was called away to his home village in the North of Malawi for an unexpected funeral. Given these developments, the remaining interviews were carried out with the deputy headteacher.

Appendix Figure A.6: Interview guide

A. Interview guide for District Education Office officials

Interview 1: Processes regarding the distribution of teachers and resources to and within schools

1. What is your role and responsibility working at the District Educational Office?
   Prompt 1: What are your overall responsibilities in relation to primary school teachers?

2. To whom are you directly answerable to in relation to fulfilling your roles and responsibilities?
   Prompt 1: Who do you feel most accountable to?
   Prompt 2: How is your performance measured, and by whom?
   Prompt 3: Who has the power to promote, sanction, demote or dismiss you?

3. Who are you directly responsible for managing? Does this include teachers?
   Prompt 1: Do you have the power to promote, sanction, demote or dismiss teachers?

4. What is the official policy as to how newly recruited teachers should be deployed to schools?
   Prompt 1: Are there any specific provisions made concerning remote/ hard-to-reach schools?

5. What is the official policy concerning how teacher transfers (both voluntary and involuntary) are to be administered?
   Prompt 1: What makes a teacher eligible for a voluntary transfer?
   Prompt 2: Is there a process to identify teachers subject to an involuntary school transfer?

6. What is the official process in deciding which schools in the district receive new teachers each year?

7. What information do you rely upon when distributing teachers schools?
   Prompt 1: What about the sort of information to monitor which schools teachers are currently teaching in?
   Prompt 2: Does any information allow you to track teacher movement between different primary schools?
   Prompt 3: What is the process in terms of reporting information on where you have deployed teachers to central government officials?

8. What is the official process concerning how teachers should be distributed to different classes?
   Prompt 1: Who is responsible for allocating teachers to different classes?

9. Is there official guidance on the number of hours a teacher is required to work according to their employment contract?
   Prompt 1: How does this relate to the number of lessons a teacher is required to teach in given week?

10. What information do you rely upon to monitor which classes teachers have been allocated to go and teach in?
    Prompt 1: Does this also monitor the number of hours or lessons taught in any given week?

Interview 2: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers and resources equitably between schools

1. What are teacher preferences in terms of which schools they would like to be deployed to work in this district?

2. How does the current practice of teacher deployment and teacher transfers in this district differ to that recommended by official government policy?
   Prompt 1: What are some of the challenges you face in ensuring that teachers are deployed to schools which suffer from a shortage of teachers?

3. What, in your view, are the main reasons a teacher can present to this office in order to successfully transfer to a school of his/ her choosing?

4. What are some of the common mechanisms which a teacher has successfully utilised to be deployed or transferred to a school of his/ her choosing?
   Prompt 1: How many of these fit under formal government rules?

5. Are there other stakeholders or institutions who, based on your own experience, can influence where teachers are deployed to work? Who?
   Prompt 1: How practical is it to resist these stakeholders? If not why not?
   Prompt 2: How does the involvement of these stakeholders affect formal rules around teacher transfer policies?
   Prompt 3: Do these stakeholders have any influence on how other education resources are transferred? If yes what resources?

6. Based on your experience to what extent do teacher's personal relationships with the local political elite affect where they end up being deployed to work?

7. In your opinion are the better resourced schools in this district more well-connected to the local political elite in this district compared to poorer resourced schools?
   Prompt 1: What influence, if any, does this have over how resources end up getting distributed?
   Prompt 2: What about in relation to teacher distribution?

8. What role do schools themselves play in attracting additional government resources?
   Prompt 1: What makes some schools more successful (e.g. school capacity, headteacher characteristics, school patronage network)?
   Prompt 2: Do stakeholders lobby on schools' behalf?

9. What are some of the challenges you face in monitoring where in the system teachers are teaching?

10. Do you follow-up on whether a teacher is actually teaching at the school she or he has been deployed to go and teach in? How is this done?

Interview 3: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers equitably within schools

1. What training are headteachers currently given as to how teachers should be allocated within the schools they manage?
   Prompt 1: Are there any factors which influence how a headteacher allocates teachers to different classes/ standards?

2. Based on your experience of this district, to what extent do you think headteachers favour certain classes over others insofar as teacher allocation to different standards is concerned?
   Prompt 1: Why do you think this is the case?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the consequences of a school performing badly/ well in the PSLCE examinations taken at the end of Standard 8?

3. Have government policies relating to over-lapping, double-shift or multi-grade mechanisms been implemented at school level in this district?
   Prompt 1: If not implemented, why not?

4. Based on your experience what are some of the current school practices relating to school allocation which deviate from government policies across the district?
   Prompt 1: What do you think the reasons for this are?

5. What are the different funds available for the construction of classrooms in this district?
   Prompt 1: Who decides on how these funds should be allocated to different schools?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the challenges you face in utilising these resources effectively?

6. What is the official district policy on teachers specialising in certain subjects?
   Prompt 1: Does this policy differ according to Standard? If so why?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the justifications for specialisation?

7. What, in your view, are some of the reasons for why practices relating to teacher allocation and utilisation at school level which go against government policy continue at school level *[specifically relating this to the practice of class combination and teacher absenteeism]*

8. What are some of the challenges the district personally faces in sanctioning teachers who go against government policies relating to allocation and utilisation?
   Prompt 1: To what extent do you think challenges are related to teacher connections?
   Prompt 2: Similarly what are some of the challenges the PEA or headteachers face in sanctioning teachers?

9. What are the current mechanisms in place to monitor whether teachers are teaching their own class and the number of lessons as per government guidelines?
   Prompt 1: How effective are these mechanisms?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the challenges relating to these mechanisms?

10. What is the criteria for selecting which schools will be inspected in any given year?
    Prompt 1: What challenges does this pose?

B. Interview guide for Primary Education Advisers

Interview 1: Processes regarding the distribution of teachers and resources to and within schools

1. What are your overall roles and responsibilities as Primary Education Adviser?
   Prompt 1: What are your overall responsibilities in relation to primary school teachers?

2. To whom are you directly answerable to in relation to fulfilling your roles and responsibilities?
   Prompt 1: Who do you feel most accountable to?
   Prompt 2: How is your performance measured, and by whom?
   Prompt 3: Who has the power to promote, sanction, demote or dismiss you?

3. Who are you directly responsible for managing? Does this include teachers?
   Prompt 1: Do you have the power to promote, sanction, demote or dismiss teachers?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the challenges you face in managing teachers?

4. What is the official policy how newly recruited teachers should be deployed to schools?
   Prompt 1: Are there any specific provisions made concerning remote/ hard-to-reach schools?

5. What is the official policy concerning how teacher transfers (both voluntary and involuntary) are to be administered?
   Prompt 1: What makes a teacher eligible for a voluntary transfer?
   Prompt 2: Is there a process to identify teachers targeted for an involuntary school transfer?

6. What is the official process in deciding which schools in the district receive new teachers each year?
   Prompt 1: What is your role in this process, specifically in relation to this primary education zone?

7. Do you, as Primary Education Adviser, have control over which schools in your zone should receive new teachers? If “yes” please describe your role?

8. What information do you currently rely upon to monitor which teachers are teaching in schools that you manage within your zone?
   Prompt 1: How frequently is this information updated?
   Prompt 2: Who is responsible for collecting this information?

9. What is the official process concerning how teachers should be distributed to different classes?
   Prompt 1: Who is responsible for allocating teachers to different classes?

10. Is there official guidance on the number of hours a teacher is required to work according to their employment contract?
    Prompt 1: How does this relate to the number of lessons a teacher is required to teach in given week?

11. What information do you rely upon to monitor which classes teachers have been allocated to go and teach in?
    Prompt 1: Does this also monitor the number of hours or lessons taught in any given week?

Interview 2: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers and resources equitably between schools

1. What are teacher preferences in terms of which schools they would like to be deployed to work in this zone? What schools do teachers not want to be deployed to go and work in?

2. How does the current practice of teacher deployment and teacher transfers in this district differ to that recommended by official government policy?
   Prompt 1: What are some of the challenges you think the District Education Office faces in ensuring that the deployment of teachers is to schools which suffer from a shortage?

3. What, in your view, are the main reasons a teacher can present to this office or the district education office in order to successfully transfer to a school of his/ her choosing?

4. What are some of the common mechanisms which a teacher has successfully utilised to be deployed or transferred to a school of his/ her choosing in this zone?
   Prompt 1: How many of these fit under formal government rules?

5. Specifically in relation to this zone, do teachers wish to be deployed here?
   Prompt 1: Do teachers who are deployed to this zone stay here long?
   Prompt 2: Do all teachers who have been deployed to work in this zone report for duty?

6. Are there other stakeholders or institutions who, based on your own experience, can influence where teachers are deployed to work? Who? Examples from this zone?
   Prompt 1: How feasible is it to resist these stakeholders? If not why not?
   Prompt 2: How does the involvement of these stakeholders affect formal rules around teacher transfer policies?
   Prompt 3: Do these stakeholders have any influence on how other education resources are transferred?

7. Based on your experience to what extent have teacher's personal relationships with the local political elite affected where they end up being deployed to work? Examples from this zone?

8. In your opinion are the better resourced schools in this zone more well-connected to the local political elite in this compared to poorer resourced schools?
   Prompt 1: Does this have any influence over how resources are distributed?

9. What role do schools themselves play in attracting additional government resources?
   Prompt 1: What makes some schools more successful (e.g. school capacity, headteacher characteristics, school patronage network)?
   Prompt 2: Do stakeholders lobby on schools' behalf?

10. What are the current mechanisms in place to monitor where in the system teachers are teaching?
    Prompt 1: What are some of the challenges relating to these mechanisms?
    Prompt 2: Do you regularly physically audit schools to determine where teachers are teaching?

11. Do you follow-up on whether a teacher is actually teaching at the school she or he was deployed to go and teach in in this zone? How is this done?

Interview 3: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers equitably within schools

1. What training are headteachers currently given as to how teachers should be allocated within the schools they manage?
   Prompt 1: Are there any factors you think which influence how a headteacher allocates teachers to different classes/ standards?

2. Based on your experience of this zone, to what extent do you think headteachers favour certain classes over others insofar as teacher allocation to different standards is concerned?
   Prompt 1: Why do you think this is the case?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the consequences of a school performing badly/ well in the PSLCE examinations taken at the end of Standard 8?

3. Have government policies relating to over-lapping, double-shift or multi-grade mechanisms been implemented at school level inn this zone?
   Prompt 1: If not implemented, why not?

4. Based on your experience what are some of the current school practices relating to school allocation which deviate from government policies across this zone?
   Prompt 1: What do you think the reasons for this are?

5. What are the different funds available for the construction of classrooms in this zone?
   Prompt 1: What are some of the challenges schools face in utilising these resources effectively?

6. What is the official district policy on teachers specialising in certain subjects?
   Prompt 1: Does this policy differ according to Standard? If so why?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the justifications for specialisation?

7. What, in your view, are some of the reasons for why practices relating to teacher allocation and utilisation at school level which go against government policy continue at school level *[specifically relating this to the practice of class combination and teacher absenteeism]*

8. What are some of the challenges this zone personally faces in sanctioning teachers who go against government policies relating to allocation and utilisation?
   Prompt 1: To what extent do you think challenges are related to teacher connections?
   Prompt 2: What are the particular challenges headteachers face in sanctioning teachers?

9. What are the current mechanisms in place in this zone to monitor whether teachers are teaching their own class and the number of lessons as per government guidelines?
   Prompt 1: How effective are these mechanisms?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the challenges relating to these mechanisms?

10. What schools in your zone have been inspected by district officials in the two years?
    Prompt 1: What are some of the challenges concerning inspection in your zone?

C. Interview guide for headteachers

Interview 1: Processes regarding the distribution of teachers and resources to and within schools

1. Please can you introduce yourself and tell me how long you have been teaching at this school, and where else you have worked both as a headteacher and as a teacher?

2. What are your overall roles and responsibilities as headteacher?
   Prompt 1: What are your overall responsibilities in relation to primary school teachers?

3. To whom are you directly answerable to in relation to fulfilling your roles and responsibilities?
   Prompt 1: Who do you feel most accountable to?
   Prompt 2: How is your performance measured, and by whom?
   Prompt 3: Who has the power to promote, sanction, demote or dismiss you?

4. Who are you directly responsible for managing? Does this include teachers?
   Prompt 1: Do you have the power to promote, sanction, demote or dismiss teachers?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the challenges you face in managing teachers?

5. What is your understanding of the official policy regarding how newly recruited teachers should be deployed to schools?
   Prompt 1: Are there any specific provisions made concerning remote/ hard-to-reach schools?

6. What is your understanding of the official policy concerning how teacher transfers (both voluntary and involuntary) are to be administered?
   Prompt 1: What makes a teacher eligible for a voluntary transfer?
   Prompt 2: Is there a process to identify teachers targeted for an involuntary school transfer?

7. What is the official process in deciding which schools in the district receive new teachers each year?
   Prompt 1: What is your role in this process, specifically in relation to this school?

8. Do you provide information on which teachers are currently teaching in this school?
   Prompt 1: How is this information collected?
   Prompt 2: How frequently is this information updated?
   Prompt 3: Who collects this information?

9. What is the official process concerning how teachers should be distributed to different classes?
   Prompt 1: Who is responsible for allocating teachers to different classes?

10. Is there official guidance on the number of hours a teacher is required to work according to their employment contract?
    Prompt 1: How does this relate to the number of lessons a teacher is required to teach in a given week?

11. Do government officials collect information on which classes teachers have been allocated to go and teach in? How is this done?
    Prompt 1: Does this also apply to the number of hours or lessons taught in any given week?

Interview 2: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers and resources equitably between schools

1. What are teacher preferences in terms of which schools they would like to be deployed to work in this district? Why are these schools favourable?

2. Are there any schools in this zone that teachers would prefer to be deployed to go and work in? What schools do teachers not want to be deployed to go and work in?

3. Specifically in relation to this school, do teachers wish to be deployed here?
   Prompt 1: Do teachers who are deployed here stay here long?
   Prompt 2: Do teachers who have officially been deployed to come and work at this school mainly report here for duty?

4. To what extent do you feel that teacher deployment in Zomba Rural district is based on schools that suffer from a shortage of teachers?
   Prompt 1: What other factors do you think could affect teacher distribution?

5. In your view what sorts of teachers get a favourable school placement or transfer?
   Prompt 1: Does it depend on a teacher merit or seniority?
   Prompt 2: What other factors do you think can affect a favourable placement?

6. To what extent do you feel teachers need good connections in order to be deployed or transferred to a school of their choosing?
   Prompt 1: What connections are particularly useful?
   Prompt 2: Based on your experience can you give any examples – either in relation to you or other teachers – where connections have led to a good school placement?

7. What other methods, based on your experience, are an effective mechanism which teachers can use to get a transfer of their choice?
   Prompt 1: Can you give practical examples of where these mechanisms have worked?

8. Do you receive information from the district on teachers your school will receive?
   Prompt 1: What information do you receive e.g. teacher numbers, teacher names?
   Prompt 2: What do you do if you do not receive the numbers of teachers stipulated?

9. Do you recall anyone from the government coming here to find out which teachers are working at this school?
   Prompt 1: Who was it that came to collect this information and when?

Interview 3: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers equitably within schools

1. What training are you, as a headteacher given as to how teachers should be allocated according to class or standard?

2. What are some of the factors which influence how you as the headteacher of this school decide to allocate teachers to different standards/ classes in this school?

3. In this school do you think certain classes or standards should have additional teachers? Which classes, standards? Why do you think this is the case?
   Prompt 1: If the school performs badly or well in the PSLCE examination taken at the end of Standard 8 what are some of the consequences for you? For the school?

4. To what extent does the classroom availability influence your decisions relating to how classes and teachers should be distributed in this school?
   Prompt 1: Where does this school get resources from for infrastructural development?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the problems you have experienced relating to infrastructural development?

5. Have government suggested policies relating to over-lapping, double-shift or multi-grade mechanisms been implemented at this school?
   Prompt 1: If not implemented, why not?

6. What are some of the challenges you face, as headteacher, in managing teacher misbehaviour at your school? *[specifically relate this to practice of class combination and teacher absenteeism]*
   Prompt 1: What are the reasons for this?
   Prompt 2: Are you, as headteacher, able to sanction teachers for these practices? How? Do you?
   Prompt 3: To what extent are you, as headteacher, able to enforce directives given by the PEA or District office in relation to teacher allocation/ utilisation decisions?

7. Who do you report teacher misbehaviour to?
   Prompt 1: What happens when teacher misbehaviour has been reported?
   Prompt 2: Has it led to a change in teacher behaviour?

8. Besides you, who else monitors whether teachers are teaching their own class, and whether they teach the number of lessons stipulated under government guidelines?
   Prompt 1: How is this done?
   Prompt 2: What typically happens when a teacher is found to be contravening government guidelines by these officials?

9. When was the last time the PEA came to supervise teachers at this school? When was the last time this school was inspected by district officials?

D. Interview guide for teachers

Interview 1: Processes regarding the distribution of teachers and resources to and within schools

1. Please can you introduce yourself and tell me how long you have been teaching at this school, and where else you have worked?

2. What are your main roles and responsibilities as a teacher?

3. To whom are you directly answerable to in relation to fulfilling your roles and responsibilities?
   Prompt 1: Who do you feel most accountable to?
   Prompt 2: How is your performance measured, and by whom?
   Prompt 3: Who has the power to promote, sanction, demote or dismiss you?

4. What is your understanding of the government official policy concerning how teachers should be deployed to schools?
   Prompt 1: What was the process utilised when you were deployed to work as a new teacher according to your first assignment?
   Prompt 2: Was the district you were sent to work in amongst the preferences you had listed?

5. If you were seeking a transfer from one school to another, what process would you follow?
   Prompt 1: What is your understanding as to what makes you eligible for a transfer?

6. Do you know or recall if government officials have come to this school to collect information on the name and numbers of teachers who work here?
   Prompt 1: When was this last done?
   Prompt 2: How regularly do you recall this being done?

7. What is the official process concerning which class/ standard you should be allocated to teach in?
   Prompt 1: Who is responsible for this?

8. Is there official guidance on the number of hours you, as a primary school teacher, are required to work according to your employment contract?
   Prompt 1: What about in relation to the number of lessons you are required to teach in a given week?

9. Do government officials (e.g. PEA, district official) collect information on which classes teachers have been allocated to go and teach in? How is this done?
   Prompt 1: Does this also apply to the number of hours or lessons taught in any given week?

Interview 2: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers and resources equitably between schools

1. What are teacher preferences in terms of which schools they would like to be deployed to work in this district? Why are these schools favourable?

2. Are there any schools in this zone that teachers would prefer to be deployed to go and work in? What schools do teachers not want to be deployed to go and work in?

3. Specifically in relation to this school, do teachers wish to be deployed here?
   Prompt 1: Do teachers who are deployed here stay here long?
   Prompt 2: Do teachers who have officially been deployed to come and work at this school tend to report here for duty?

4. To what extent do you feel that teacher deployment in Zomba Rural district is based on schools that suffer from a shortage of teachers?
   Prompt 1: What other factors do you think could affect teacher distribution?

5. In your view what sort of teachers get a favourable school placement or transfer?
   Prompt: Does it depend on a teacher merit or seniority?
   Prompt: What other factors do you think affect favourable placement?

6. In your opinion, do you think it is possible to succeed in getting a favourable school placement or transfer using regular/ formal processes? If not why not?

7. To what extent do you feel teachers need good connections in order to be deployed or transferred to a school of their choosing?
   Prompt 1: What connections particularly do you think are needed?
   Prompt 2: Based on your experience can you give any examples – either in relation to you or other teachers – where good connections have led to a favourable school placement?

8. What other methods, based on your experience, are an effective mechanism which teachers can use to get a transfer of their choice?
   Prompt 1: Can you give practical examples of where these mechanisms have worked?

9. Do you recall whether anyone from the government (e.g. Primary Education Adviser, District Education Office officials) coming to check whether you had reported for duty at the school you had been deployed to work in?
   Prompt 1: What about for other teachers who have been deployed to come and work at this school?

10. Do you recall anyone from the government coming here to find out which teachers are working at this school?
    Prompt 1: Who was it that came to collect this information? When?

Interview 3: Challenges in enforcing the equal distribution of teachers equitably within schools

1. What class do you teach and what is the current teaching arrangements in place? *e.g. do you share a class, teach across multiple class or just teach one class alone?*
2. What are some of the factors which influence how you think the headteacher of this school decides how teachers should be distributed to different standards/ classes in this school?
3. In this school do you think certain classes or standards should have more teachers than others? Which classes, standards? Why do you think this is the case?
   Prompt 1: Do you think the headteacher favours certain classes/ standards over others? Why?
   Prompt 2: If the school performs badly or well in the PSLCE examination taken at the end of Standard 8 what are some of the consequences for the school, headteacher, teachers?
4. To what extent do you think classroom availability influences how the headteacher arranges teachers and classes are arranged in this school?
   Prompt 1: Where does this school get resources from for infrastructural development?
   Prompt 2: What are some of the problems you think the school experiences in relation to infrastructural development?
5. Have government suggested policies relating to over-lapping, double-shift or multi-grade mechanisms been implemented at this school?
   Prompt 1: If not implemented, why not?
6. What are the reasons which are preventing each teacher from managing his or her own class according to what government guidelines instruct?
7. What is your own opinion of a single teacher handling all subjects by themselves?
   Prompt 1: What in your own view makes it necessary for teachers to have to specialise in certain subjects?
8. To what extent do you feel accountable to the headteacher at this school? What about the other teachers here?
   Prompt 1: What, in your view, are some of the reasons teachers do not listen to the headteacher?
   Prompt 2: What about the PEA? District officials?
9. When was the last time the PEA came to supervise teachers at this school? When was the last time this school was inspected by district officials?
   Prompt 1: Have these officials instructed changes on how classes and teachers should be arranged?
   Prompt 2: If yes to what extent do these recommendations get implemented?

Appendix Table A.2: Increase in teacher numbers for Zomba Rural district over the period of Joyce Banda's presidency (2012-2014)

	Number of teachers				Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR)				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015	Share (%)[174]
Northern									
Chitipa	1,094	1,212	1,303	1,405	65	62	58	54	1.4
Karonga	1,346	1,459	1,490	1,595	72	72	72	69	1.3
Likoma	65	64	72	73	52	57	52	52	0.0
Mzimba North	1,886	2,018	2,128	2,199	61	62	60	58	1.6
Mzimba South	1,776	2,000	2,182	2,184	80	75	70	74	2.6
Mzuzu City	825	876	901	985	64	60	61	57	0.6
Nkhata Bay	1,235	1,391	1,423	1,474	64	58	58	58	1.8
Rumphi	1,115	1,250	1,296	1,370	58	55	54	52	1.6
Central East									
Dowa	2,356	2,934	2,972	3,099	75	66	67	66	6.8
Kasungu	2,741	3,235	3,398	3,408	81	75	75	76	5.8
Nkhotakota	1,357	1,540	1,600	1,700	75	71	69	68	2.2
Ntchisi	1,106	1,302	1,306	1,349	70	64	65	63	2.3
Salima	1,444	1,812	1,848	1,897	69	60	63	63	4.3
Central West									
Dedza	2,476	2,829	2,784	3,238	76	71	77	67	4.2
Lilongwe City	2,331	2,486	2,657	2,733	65	67	65	63	1.8
Lilongwe Rural	2,265	2,825	2,977	3,268	85	76	77	73	6.6
Lilongwe Rural	2,813	3,484	3,727	3,762	73	64	62	63	7.9
Mchinji	1,892	2,267	2,226	2,401	76	68	73	70	4.4
Ntcheu	2,218	2,543	2,538	2,852	71	64	68	62	3.8
South East									
Balaka	1,476	1,829	1,956	2,046	75	67	66	62	4.2
Machinga	1,755	2,022	2,051	2,323	86	82	83	76	3.1
Mangochi	2,643	3,007	3,032	3,251	83	82	86	82	4.3
Zomba Rural	2,229	2,827	2,783	3,025	85	70	750	71	7.0
Zomba Urban	521	544	503	555	48	49	52	49	0.3
South West									
Blantyre City	2,075	2,098	2,230	2,309	77	80	78	74	0.3
Blantyre Rural	1,926	2,394	2,643	2,657	65	56	52	53	5.5
Chikwawa	1,672	1,887	1,894	2,144	82	77	80	77	2.5
Mwanza	554	624	572	678	60	55	61	55	0.8
Neno	539	587	623	690	70	69	70	67	0.6
Nsanje	1,173	1,258	1,162	1,369	68	66	74	66	1.0
Shire Highlands									
Chiradzulu	1,476	1,358	1,627	1,651	65	75	63	64	0.0
Mulanje	2,194	2,470	2,420	2,666	79	77	82	79	3.2
Phalombe	1,500	1,769	1,616	2,009	76	67	77	65	3.2
Thyolo	2,460	2,833	2,792	2,998	79	71	73	70	4.4
NATIONAL	**56,534**	**65,034**	**66,732**	**71,363**	**74**	**69**	**70**	**67**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher's calculations based on EMIS databases, various years.

[174] Share of the total increase in teachers between 2012 and 2013 which benefited each district.

Appendix Table A.3: World Bank classification of schools for rural hardship allowance

Category	Subcategory	Distance to Trading Centres	Availability of roads and electricity	Trading centre amenities	Proposed rural hardship allowance
Category A	A1	> 14 kilometres	No	All (2 or more)	MK 25,000 per month
	A2	> 14 kilometres	No	Partial (1 or less)	
	A3	> 14 kilometres	Yes	Partial (1 or less)	
	A4	7-14 kilometres	No	All (2 or more)	
	A5	7-14 kilometres	No	Partial (1 or less)	
Category B	B1	> 14 kilometres	Yes	All (2 or more)	MK 10,000 per month
	B2	7-14 kilometres	Yes	Partial (1 or less)	
	B3	< 7 kilometres	No	Partial (1 or less)	
	B4	< 7 kilometres	Yes	Partial (1 or less)	
Category C	C1	7-14 kilometres	Yes	All (2 or more)	MK0 or MK5,000 per month
	C2	< 7 kilometres	No	All (2 or more)	
	C3	< 7 kilometres	Yes	All (2 or more)	

Source: Asim et al. (2017).

Appendix Table A.4: Allocation of teachers in Standard 1 versus Standard 8

A. Zone 9

	Standard 1				Standard 8			
	No. of classes	Enrolment	No. of Teachers	PTR	No. of classes	Enrolment	No. of Teachers	PTR
School A	1	88	2	43	1	35	2	18
School B	2	80	2	40	1	36	3	12
		79	2	40				
School C	1	162	2	81	1	35	2	18
School D	1	239	2	148	1	39	2	20
School E	1	239	1	239	1	78	3	31
School F	1	101	2	51	1	30	3	10
School G	2	87	2	44	2	48	2	24
		86	2	43		85	2	43
School H	1	225	2	113	1	50	2	25
School I	1	279	1	279	1	49	2	32
School J	2	114	1	114	1	87	3	29
		116	1	116				
School K	1	220	2	110	1	87	2	44
School L	1	140	2	70	1	43	3	14
School M	2	70	1	70	1	53	3	18
		79	2	40				

B. Zone 12

	Standard 1				Standard 8			
	No. of classes	Enrolment	No. of Teachers	PTR	No. of classes	Enrolment	No. of Teachers	PTR
School N	1	110	1	110	1	27	1	20
School O	1	225	1	225	1	59	1	59
School P	1	294	1	294	1	76	2	38
School R	1	189	1	189	1	70	2	35
School S	1	195	0	509	1	20	1	23
School T	1	118	1	118	1	45	1	45
School U	2	160	1	160	1	28	2	14
		135	1	135				
School V	2	102	1	102	1	50	1	34
		96	1	96				
School W	1	272	2	136	1	61	1	44
School X	1	154	1	194	1	23	1	33
School Y	3	99	1	99	2	45	2	30
		100	1	100		44	2	29
		99	1	99				
School Z	1	107	1	107	1	61	2	31

Source: Data collected from school survey administered by researcher.

Appendix Table A.5: Classes affected by teaching arrangement in School S for Standards 2, 3, 4 and 8

A. Standard 8

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30-08.05	Sci + Tech *(07.30-07.55)*	Mathematics *(07.30-07.55)*	Mathematics *(07.30-07.55)*	Chichewa *(07.30-07.55)*	Chichewa *(07.30-07.55)*
08.05-08.40[1]	English *(08.15-08.40)*	English *(08.15-08.40)*	English *(08.15-08.40)*	SES *(08.15-08.40)*	English *(08.15-08.40)*
08.40-09.15[2]	Expressive Arts	Sci + Tech	Bible Knowledge	Sci + Tech	Sci + Tech
09.15-09.50[3]	Mathematics	Chichewa	Mathematics	Chichewa	Mathematics
09.50-10.05	**Break**				
10.05-10.40	Chichewa *(10.05-10.30)*	Expressive Arts *(10.05-10.30)*	Sci + Tech *(10.05-10.30)*	Expressive Arts *(10.05-10.30)*	Life Skills *(10.05-10.30)*
10.40-11.15	Agriculture *(10.45-11.15)*	SES *(10.45-11.15)*	Expressive Arts *(10.40-11.05)*	Mathematics *(10.40-11.05)*	SES *(10.45.11.15)*
11.15-11.50	SES *(11.30-11.50)*	Life skills *(11.15-11.40)*	Agriculture *(11.30-11.50)*	English *(11.30-11.50)*	Agriculture *11.30-11.50)*
11.50-12.25	Chichewa *(11.50-12.15)*	Agriculture *(11.50-12.15)*	Life Skills *(11.50-12.15)*	Chichewa *(11.50-12.15)*	Chichewa *(11.50-12.15)*
12.25-12.45	**Break**				
12.45-13.20[4]	English	English	Agriculture	English	English
13.20-13.55[5]	SES	Bible Knowledge	English	Agriculture	Sci + Tech
13.55-14.30[6]	Life Skills	Mathematics	Life Skills	Mathematics	Mathematics
Standard 2 teacher		**Standard 3 teacher**		**Standard 4 teacher**	

Notes: Times in brackets relate to actual time teacher is in class teaching Standard 8 class.

1. Tikwere (radio instruction programme) for Standard 2 (08.30-09.00am).
2. Tikwere (radio instruction programme) for Standard 3 (08.40-09.15am).
3. Tikwere (radio instruction programme) for Standard 4 (09.15-09.50am).
4. Standard 2 will have finished for the day, but Standard 3 and 4 still learning.
5. Standard 2 and 3 will have finished for the day, but Standard 4 still learning.
6. Standard 2, 3 and 4 have finished for the day.

B. Standard 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30-08.00	Mathematics	Chichewa	English	Mathematics	Chichewa
08.00-08.30	Chichewa *(08.00-08.15)*	Mathematics *(08.00-08.15)*	Chichewa *(08.00-08.15)*	English *(08.00-08.15)*	Mathematics *(08.00-08.15)*
08.30-09.00	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)
09.00-09.15	**Break**				
09.15-09.45	English	English	Chichewa	Mathematics	Chichewa
09.45-10.15	Chichewa	Mathematics	English	Bible Knowledge	Expressive Arts
10.15-10.45	Mathematics	English	Mathematics	Chichewa	Mathematics
10.45-11.00	**Break**				
11.00.11.30	Expressive Arts *(11.15-11.30)*	Life Skills	Mathematics *(11.15-11.30)*	Chichewa *(11.15-11.30)*	English *(11.15-11.30)*
11.30-12.00	English *(11.50-12.00)*	Chichewa	Life Skills *(11.50-12.00)*	English *(11.50-12.00)*	Life Skills *(11.50-12.00)*
12.00-12.30	Life Skills	Bible Knowledge *(12.15-12.30)*	Expressive Arts	Expressive Arts	English

Note: Shaded yellow boxes relate to overlap with Standard 8 class and time actually taught indicated in bracket.

C. Standard 3

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30-08.05	Mathematics *(07.55-08.05)*	Chichewa	English	Mathematics	Chichewa
08.05-08.40	Chichewa	Mathematics	Life Skills	English	Mathematics
08.40-09.15	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)
09.15-09.50	English	Mathematics	Mathematics	Chichewa	Mathematics
09.50-10.05	**Break**				
10.05-10.40	English	English *(10.30-10.40)*	English *(10.30-10.40)*	Chichewa *(10.30-10.40)*	English
10.40-11.15	Mathematics	SES	SES *(11.05-11.15)*	SES	Chichewa
11.15-11.50	Expressive Arts	Chichewa	Chichewa	Life Skills	Expressive Arts
11.50-12.05	**Break**				
12.05-12.40	Life Skills	English	Mathematics	English	Bible Knowledge
12.40-13.15	SES	Bible Knowledge	Expressive Arts	Expressive Arts	Life Skills

Note: Shaded orange boxes relate to overlap with Standard 8 class and time actually taught indicated in bracket.

D. Standard 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30-08.05	Mathematics	Chichewa *(07.55-08.05)*	English *(07.55-08.05)*	Mathematics *(07.55-08.05)*	Chichewa *(07.55-08.05)*
08.05-08.40	Chichewa	Mathematics	Life Skills	English	Agriculture
08.40-09.15	Life Skills	Mathematics	Mathematics	Chichewa	Mathematics
09.15-09.50	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)	Tikwere (no class)
09.50-10.05	**Break**				
10.05-10.40	English *(10.30-10.40)*	English	English	Chichewa	English *(10.30-10.40)*
10.40-11.15	English	Chichewa	SES	SES *(11.05-11.15)*	Mathematics
11.15-11.50	Mathematics	SES *(11.40-11.50)*	Chichewa	Life Skills	Chichewa
11.50-12.05	**Break**				
12.05-12.40	Expressive Arts *(12.15-12.40)*	SES	Mathematics *(12.15-12.40)*	English *(12.15-12.40)*	Bible Knowledge *(!2.15-12.40)*
12.40-13.15	Life Skills	Bible Knowledge	Expressive Arts	Expressive Arts	Life Skills
13.15-13.50	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Agriculture	Expressive Arts

Note: Shaded pink boxes relate to overlap with Standard 8 class and time actually taught indicated in bracket.
Source: Data collected at school level by researcher.

Appendix Table A.6: Teaching arrangement in School S for Standard 1 and Standard 7 who share a teacher

A. Standard 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30-08.00	Mathematics	Chichewa	English	Mathematics	Mathematics
	(07.30-07.40)	*(07.30-07.40)*	*(07.30-07.40)*	*(07.30-07.40)*	*(07.30-07.40)*
08.00-08.30	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere
08.30-09.00	English	English	Mathematics	Chichewa	English
	(08.40-8.55)	*(08.40-8.55)*	*(08.40-8.55)*	*(08.40-8.55)*	*(08.40-8.55)*
09.00-09.15	**Break**				
09.15-09.45	English	English	Chichewa	Chichewa	English
	(09.15-09.30)	*(09.15-09.30)*	*(09.15-09.30)*	*(09.15-09.30)*	*(09.15-09.30)*
09.45-10.15	Chichewa	Mathematics	English	English	Chichewa
	(09.50-10.05)	*(09.50-10.05)*	*(09.50-10.05)*	*(09.50-10.05)*	*(09.50-10.05)*
10.15-10.45	Mathematics	Bible Knowledge	Mathematics	Expressive Arts	Mathematics
	(10.30-10.40)	*(10.30-10.40)*	*(10.30-10.40)*	*(10.30-10.40)*	*(10.30-10.40)*
10.45-11.00	**Break**				
11.00.11.30	Chichewa	Mathematics	Chichewa	English	Chichewa
	(11.05-11.20)	*(11.05-11.20)*	*(11.05-11.20)*	*(11.05-11.20)*	*(11.05-11.20)*
11.30-12.00	Expressive Arts	Chichewa	Expressive Arts	Bible Knowledge	Expressive Arts
	(11.45-12.00)	*(11.45-12.00)*	*(11.45-12.00)*	*(11.45-12.00)*	*(11.45-12.00)*

B. Standard 7

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30-08.05	Mathematics *(07.40-08.05)*	English *(07.40-08.05)*	Mathematics *(07.40-08.05)*	Mathematics *(07.40-08.05)*	Chichewa *(07.40-08.05)*
08.05-08.40	Expressive Arts *(08.05-08.40)*	Sci + Technology *(08.05-08.40)*	English *(08.05-08.40)*	Chichewa *(08.05-08.40)*	English *(08.05-08.40)*
08.40-09.15	English *(08.55-09.15)*	Mathematics *(08.55-09.15)*	Agriculture *(08.55-09.15)*	English *(08.55-09.15)*	Mathematics *(08.55-09.15)*
09.15-09.50	SES *(09.30-09.50)*	Chichewa *(09.30-09.50)*	Mathematics *(09.30-09.50)*	Chichewa *(09.30-09.50)*	Mathematics *(09.30-09.50)*
09.50-10.05	**Break**				
10.05-10.40	Chichewa *(10.05-10.30)*	Expressive Arts *(10.05-10.30)*	English *(10.05-10.30)*	Agriculture *(10.05-10.30)*	Bible Knowledge *(10.05-10.30)*
10.40-11.15	English *(10.40-11.05)*	English *(10.40-11.05)*	Expressive Arts *(10.40-11.05)*	SES *(10.40-11.05)*	SES *(10.40-11.05)*
11.15-11.50	Sci + Technology *(11.20-11.45)*	SES *(11.20-11.45)*	Bible Knowledge *(11.20-11.45)*	Life Skills *(11.20-11.45)*	Agriculture *(11.20-11.45)*
11.50-12.25	Chichewa *(12.00-12.25)*	Life Skills *(12.00-12.25)*	Chichewa *(12.00-12.25)*	Sci + Technology *(12.00-12.25)*	Expressive Arts *(12.00-12.25)*
12.25-12.45	**Break**				
12.45-13.20	SES	Agriculture	Agriculture	Expressive Arts	Life Skills
13.20-13.55	Agriculture	Agriculture	Life Skills	English	Sci + Technology
13.55-14.30	Life Skills	SES	Sci + Technology	Mathematics	Sci + Technology

Source: Data collected at school level by researcher.

Appendix Table A.7: Comparing double-shift salary with overall teacher salaries

Teacher grade	TL	TK	TJ	TI	TH
Annual Salary	916,488	1,179,554	1,488,014	2,242,483	2,630,632
Leave Grant	28,000	28,000	28,000	30,000	33,000
Rural Teacher Allowance	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Double shift salary	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Total renumeration	1,164,488	1,427,554	1,736,014	2,492,483	2,883,632
Double shift salary as a share of renumeration (%)	*9*	*7*	*6*	*4*	*3*
Double shift salary as a share of total salary (%)	*11*	*8*	*7*	*4*	*4*

Source: Researcher's calculations based on government payroll data.

Appendix Table A.8: Official versus actual Standard 4 time-table in School I

A. Time-table in headteacher's office for Standard 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30 – 08.05	Mathematics	Chichewa	English	Mathematics	Chichewa
08.05 – 08.40	Chichewa	Mathematics	Chichewa	English	Mathematics
08.40 – 09.35	Agriculture	English	SES	Agriculture	English
09.35 – 09.50	English	Mathematics	Agriculture	Mathematics	Agriculture
09.50 – 10.05	**Break**				
10.05 – 10.40	Chichewa	English	Mathematics	Chichewa	English
10.40 – 11.15	English	SES	English	SES	Mathematics
11.15 – 11.50	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere
11.50 – 12.05	**Break**				
12.05 – 12.40	Expressive Arts	Agriculture	Chichewa	Life Skills	Bible Knowledge
12.40 – 13.15	Life Skills	Bible Knowledge	Mathematics	Chichewa	Life Skills
13.15 – 13.50	SES	Life Skills	Expressive Arts	Expressive Arts	Expressive Arts
Subjects taught by Teacher 1		Subjects taught by Teacher 2		Subjects taught by Teacher 3	

B. Time-table in Standard 4 classroom for Standard 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07.30 – 08.05	Mathematics	Chichewa	Chichewa	Mathematics	Chichewa
08.05 – 08.40	Chichewa	Mathematics	English	Agriculture	Expressive Arts
08.40 – 09.35	Agriculture	Life Skills	Chichewa	Mathematics	Mathematics
09.35 – 09.50	English	Mathematics	Agriculture	Life skills	Agriculture
09.50 – 10.05	**Break**				
10.05 – 10.40	Chichewa	English	Mathematics	Chichewa	English
10.40 – 11.15	English	SES	English	Expressive Arts	Mathematics
11.15 – 11.50	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere	Tikwere
11.50 – 12.05	**Break**				
12.05 – 12.40	Expressive Arts	Agriculture	SES	Life Skills	Bible Knowledge
12.40 – 13.15	Life Skills	Bible Knowledge	Mathematics	Chichewa	SES
13.15 – 13.50	SES	English	English	Expressive Arts	English
Subjects taught by Teacher 1		Subjects taught by Teacher 2		Subjects taught by Teacher 3	

Source: Data collected at school level by researcher.

Appendix Table A.9: National Education Standards

Area	No	Education Standard
Outcomes for students	1.	Learning in lessons
	2.	Students' outcomes in the curriculum
	3.	Attainment across the school
	4.	Students' participation in education
	5.	Students' behaviour and involvement in school life
	6.	Students' safety and protection
The teaching process	7.	A curriculum which is appropriate and relevant
	8.	High expectations
	9.	Teachers with good professional, subject and curriculum knowledge
	10.	Well-planned lessons
	11.	Teaching for effective learning
	12.	Accurate and constructive use of assessment
	13.	Teaching which meets the needs of all students
	14.	Effective management of behaviour
Leadership	15.	School vision, goals and values
	16.	School self-evaluation and improvement
	17.	School governance
	18.	School leadership
Management	19.	Partnership with parents and the community
	20.	Staff supervision and development
	21.	Staff deployment and management
	22.	Care and welfare of students
	23.	Access, equity and inclusion
	24.	Management of buildings and facilities
	25.	Management of material resources
	26.	Financial management

Source: GoM (2015*a*).

Appendix Table A.10: Education Standard 21

Level of Achievement	Requirements
4. Effective Practice	21.1 Staff are deployed within the school in line with their training, experience and skills. 21.2 Senior managers work very effectively with staff at all levels to improve the quality of students' educational experiences.
3. Exceeds minimum standards	21.3 Staff are deployed in line with classroom availability and class size at each stage. 21.4 Staff carry out their delegated responsibilities diligently.
2. Meets minimum standards	21.5 The school has sufficient qualified staff to teach classes and carry out management tasks. 21.6 Teachers are on time for school and classes and are rarely absent. 21.7 Where teachers work together to support classes, they both take active roles in helping students to learn.
1. Below minimum standards	The school does not meet all the requirements relating to Minimum Standards (Level 2).
Sources of evidence: • Records of staff experience, qualifications, appraisal and training • Observation of extent of implementation of Teaching Service Regulations, school policies, and Code of Conduct (or similar) for staff • Records of staff attendance and punctuality • Discussions with teachers, headteacher, senior staff, students and parents	
Links with other Education Standards: • Education Standard 2: Students' outcomes in the curriculum • Education Standard 16: School self-evaluation and improvement • Education Standard 18: School leadership • Education Standard 20: Staff supervision and development • Education Standard 24: Management of buildings and facilities	

Source: GoM, (2015*a*).

Appendix Table A.11: Teacher pay-grades

A. Teacher pay-grades

	Teacher grade/type							
	TL	TK	TJ	TI	TH	TG	TF	TE
	PT4	PT3	PT2	PT1/PO	P8	P7	P5	P4
Primary	Beginning teacher	Senior teacher	Principal teacher	Chief teacher	Headteacher			
Secondary			Beginning teacher (Diploma)	Beginning teacher (Degree)	Senior teacher	Principal teacher	Chief Teacher	
TTC				Beginning Tutor	Senior tutor	Principal tutor	Chief Tutor	College principal

B. Primary teacher pay-grades

	TL	TK	TJ	TI	TH
Level 1	93,754	107,943	149,781	177,778	199,069
Level 2	93,985	110,457	152,359	180,378	199,950
Level 3	94,457	113,278	155,720	183,451	200,650
Level 4	94,683	116,101	158,901	187,008	201,509
Level 5	94,952	119,801	161,541	190,051	203,600
Level 6	95,471	122,698	164,491	193,435	206,954

Source: Government payroll data.

Appendix Table A.12: Paygrade of headteachers and teachers by school

School B

Teacher	Gender	Grade	Qualification	Standard/ class taught	Number of subjects taught	Actual teaching as a % of official teaching time	Type of teaching arrangement
1	Female	TL	JCE	1A	3	38	Team teaching
2	Female	TL	MSCE	1A	3	30	Team teaching
3	Female	TL	MSCE	1B	3	30	Team teaching
4	Female	TL	MSCE	1B	3	38	Team teaching
5	Female	TL	MSCE	2A	6	93	Class taught by one teacher
6	Female	TL	MSCE	2B	3	27	Team teaching
7	Female	TL	MSCE	2B	3	33	Team teaching
8	Female	TL	MSCE	3A	3	36	Team teaching
9	Female	TL	MSCE	3A	4	53	Team teaching
10	Female	TL	MSCE	3B	7	89	Class taught by one teacher
11	Female	TL	MSCE	4A	8	98	Class taught by one teacher
12	Female	TL	MSCE	4B	4	42	Team teaching
13	Female	TL	MSCE	4B	4	46	Team teaching
14	Female	TL	MSCE	5	3	29	Team teaching
15	Male	TL	JCE	5	3	24	Team teaching
16	Female	TL	MSCE	5	3	44	Team teaching
17	Male	TL	MSCE	6	3	42	Team teaching
18	Female	TL	MSCE	6	3	22	Team teaching
19	Female	TL	MSCE	6	3	27	Team teaching
20	Male	TK	MSCE	7	2	18	Team teaching
21	Male	TI	MSCE	7	2	27	Team teaching
22	Male	TK	JCE	7	3	27	Team teaching
23	Male	TL	MSCE	7	2	27	Team teaching
24	Male	TK	MSCE	8	2	29	Team teaching
25	Male	TK	MSCE	8	3	31	Team teaching
26	Male	TK	MSCE	8	4	31	Team teaching

School I

Teacher	Gender	Grade	Qualification	Standard/ class taught	Number of subjects taught	Actual teaching as a % of official teaching time	Type of teaching arrangement
1	Male	TL	JCE	1	5	63	Teaching alone
2	Male	TL	MSCE	2	6	82	Teaching alone
3	Female	TL	MSCE	3	4	47	Team teaching
4	Male	TI	MSCE	3	4	53	Team teaching
5	Female	TL	MSCE	4	3	32	Team teaching
6	Male	TL	MSCE	4	3	30	Team teaching
7	Male	TL	MSCE	4	3	38	Team teaching
8	Male	TL	MSCE	5	5	55	Team teaching
9	Male	TK	JCE	5	4	45	Team teaching
10	Male	TL	MSCE	6	6	65	Team teaching
11	Male	TK	MSCE	6 8	2 3	44	Teaching more than one class
12	Male	TL	MSCE	6 8	1 6	85	Teaching more than one class
13	Male	TK	MSCE	7	5	55	Team teaching
14	Male	TL	MSCE	7	4	45	Team teaching
15	Male	TL	MSCE	On study leave			
16	Male	TL	MSCE	On study leave			

School S

Teacher	Gender	Grade	Qualification	Standard/ class taught	Number of subjects taught	Actual teaching as a % of official teaching time	Type of teaching arrangement
1	Male	TL	MSCE	1 7	5 9	100	Teaching more than one class
2	Male	TK	MSCE	2 8	6 3	100	Teaching more than one class
3	Male	TL	MSCE	3 8	7 3	100	Teaching more than one class
4	Male	TL	MSCE	4 8	8 3	100	Teaching more than one class
5	Male	TL	MSCE	5	9	95	Teaching alone
6	Female	TL	MSCE	6	9	95	Teaching alone

School Z

Teacher	Gender	Grade	Qualification	Standard/ class taught	Number of subjects taught	Actual teaching as a % of official teaching time	Type of teaching arrangement
1	Female	TL	MSCE	1	2	50	Teaching alone
2	Male	TL	MSCE	2	6	93	Teaching alone
3	Male	TL	MSCE	3	7	89	Teaching alone
4	Male	TL	MSCE	4	8	90	Teaching alone
5	Female	TL	MSCE	5	9	95	Teaching alone
6	Male	TL	MSCE	6	9	95	Teaching alone
7	Male	TL	MSCE	7	9	95	Teaching alone
8	Male	TL	MSCE	8	4	38	Team teaching
9	Male	TL	MSCE	8	5	56	Team teaching

Source: Data collected from school survey administered by researcher.
Note: Highlighted line relates to headteacher information.