Identifying Barriers to Effective Private Schooling for the Marginalized

A Case Study on Language Practices and Education Quality in Low-Cost Private Community Schools in Kibera, Nairobi

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Abstract

A growing sector of low-cost private schools is providing basic education to some of the poorest people in the world, mainly living in urban slums and underdeveloped rural communities. There is concern about the life conditions of slum dwellers, while education is seen as a key motor for development. As more and more countries have made at least primary education free of fees in compliance with the Education for All agenda, these poorest communities do not seem to benefit from this policy and opt for low-cost private schools instead.

At the same time, there is concern about the quality of education that these schools are able to deliver. Many operate below the radar of government control and have access to very few resources. Furthermore there is apprehension that these schools take advantage of the lack of public education delivery by the government, taking money from poor households and giving little in return.

In Kenyan slums, education is seen as one of very few ways to escape a life in poverty. Parents want their children to enjoy a good quality education in order to provide them with opportunities to live a better life and escape the slums. The gaps between rich and poor are increasing despite considerable national economic growth, and the current education system seems to reproduce and exacerbate inequality. The purchase of educational services from private operators is traditionally seen as a mechanism that provides the privileged with a better quality education than the public schools can offer.

The international development community is concerned about the low levels of literacy in the sub-Saharan African region. The longstanding focus on increasing access to educational opportunities for all is now complemented by the focus on increasing the quality of education, in order to provide learners in primary school with basic literacy and numeracy skills.

This thesis argues that a focus on quality and literacy in the African context must involve a critical examination of the use of European languages in education. English is the official language in Kenya and is broadly used in education, but it is hardly spoken in slum environments where Kiswahili functions as the *lingua franca*. Language is not only a tool of human communication but also a carrier of symbolic, social and cultural capital.

This study sets out to critically examine the quality of education and language use in low-cost private schools in Kenya's largest slum Kibera, found in the western part of the capital Nairobi. It applies a qualitative multiple case study of three low-cost private schools in different parts of Kibera, centring on local community members.

The study found that in general, the main barriers to quality education are caused by policy, financial constraints and the community environment. Multiple reasons were also found for why parents enrol their children in low-cost private schools instead of no-fee public schools, the most important being a recognition of a higher level of education quality and more accountable teachers in low-cost private schools. It is argued that parents of low socio-economic households choose to enrol their children in low-cost primary schools for practical and quality reasons alike.

The study found similar teaching practices in all three schools. In examining the use of languages in schools, a disconnection was found between the natural use of languages among inhabitants of the Kibera slum and the language policy and practice in the three schools. Classroom observation revealed a coping strategy of code switching, especially when teachers applied English as the language of instruction. The amount of code switching was compared between the different core subjects. Another important finding was the influence of the national examination system on curriculum and pedagogy, including the choice of language of instruction.

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Christian H. J. Wilbers

Oslo, April 26th 2014

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AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation
CASAS	The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CRE	Christian Religious Education
CS	Code Switching
EFA	Education For All
FPE	Free Primary Education
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HCT	Human Capital Theory
ICT	Information- and Communication Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KCPE	Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education
LCPE	Low-Cost Private Education
LCPS	Low-Cost Private School
LOI	Language of Instruction
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TPR	Teacher-Pupil-Ratio
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

1 Introduction

This first chapter sets out to provide contextual information and highlight current trends about relevant topics involved in the study. It is designed to inform the reader about the investigated topic, the research site and the conceptualization of education quality and language in education and how these two concepts relate.

Throughout this thesis the term *pupils* is used to describe children enrolled in primary and pre-primary Kenyan schools. The term *Swahili* is used when discussing the Swahili people and culture, while *Kiswahili* is used for the language.

1.1 Low-Cost Private Schooling for the Poor

> A careful investigation into ways of improving the quality of private education, and of ways of improving access to it, may be a more fruitful way of meeting the educational needs of the poor, rather than assuming that it is only through public education that these needs can be met. Examining and understanding the models being created by private social investors and entrepreneurs may be a first step on this path (Dixon & Tooley, 2012, p. 704).

Throughout the developing world, but foremost in Africa and Asia, low-cost private schools (LCPSs) are serving the basic educational demands of the poor, living mostly in remote urban regions or urban slum settlements (Tooley, 2009). Most of these schools provide primary education, while some also offer secondary schooling. It may sound as a paradox, as private schools traditionally are considered as an option for the privileged and certainly not for the poorest. Especially in countries where public, no-fee education exists; why would parents choose to enroll their children in private schools?

There is research that indicates that insufficient supply, severe quality issues, corruption and hidden fees in public schools (Dixon & Tooley, 2005; Dixon, 2012; Heyneman & Stern, 2013) makes parents from some of the poorest households opt for LCPE. Seeing as a large part of such schools are not recognized or even deemed illegal, by governmental educational bodies, collecting accurate data on the existence of such schools is a challenge. However, educational researchers such as Tooley and Dixon have set out to discover this large, partly non-formal education sector to acknowledge the part they play in the attempt to achieve universal basic education.

Despite the controversies surrounding the sector of nongovernmental, low-cost education there has been an increased interest by researchers in the LCPS sector since the turn of the millennium (Dixon, 2012), and at the moment of writing further research is being carried out in several African countries as well as in Asia. Dixon and Tooley published a book titled *Private Education is Good for the Poor* in 2005, clearly stating their positive view of the growing sector worldwide. Farrell and Hartwell (2008) on the other hand, though speaking highly positively of alternative community schooling, warn about celebrating the sector too much. Available literature is often laudatory, but "a critical literature reflecting the less than perfect as well as the successes has yet not really developed, and is much needed" (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008, p. 37).

It is not the intention of this paper to take a stand on whether LCPE is a positive or negative societal phenomenon, or whether broader support is the way forward to achieve Education for All (EFA), one of the United Nations' development goals by 2015 (Niemerg, 2013; Tooley, 2005). But it would be naive not to recognize the importance and impact of the sector, catering for millions of marginalized children and their families in the so-called developing regions of the world. Their influence on the goal to achieve EFA worldwide cannot be ignored, even by those in favour of the state as the appropriate entity for education delivery in the form of public schools.

There is a large variety of types of LCPSs, some of which will be described later, but they have in common that they in one way or another have strong links with the community in which they exist (Dixon & Tooley, 2005; Farrell & Hartwell, 2008). As I witnessed myself during my field study in Nairobi, Kenya, many of these schools cater for the most disadvantaged children of the community by offering free spaces to those unable to pay school fees due to orphanhood or severe poverty. The local community I encountered uniformly referred to these schools as community schools.

Community education is a very old phenomenon in Kenya and existed long before colonial authorities introduced education in the form of formal schooling to the region (Bunyi, 1999) and long before any nation-state apparatus existed. Educating young people was something that happened in real life, by hands-on experience within communities through an intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge, skills and values. Although rooted in the community, these modern community schools take on the form of the formal school model as brought to Kenya by the Europeans. However,

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despite the fact that these schools have teachers, classrooms, curricula and time schedules they are often referred to as informal or non-formal, as most of them do not meet the standardized school requirements as specified by the Kenyan educational authorities.

Farrell and Hartwell (2008) emphasize the role of alternative schooling in the global struggle to achieve EFA, presenting promising research on booming alternative school models in developing countries around the world. LCPE is but one of many alternative schooling models, many of which seem to be able to implement innovative teaching and comparably better results on important subject matters such as literacy and numeracy, although often possessing extremely scarce resources. Farrell and Hartwell especially emphasize the notion of flexibility that alternative schooling has compared to large, hierarchic bureaucratic public school systems. They speak of an ongoing "quiet revolution" (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008, p. 16) in radical alternative schooling; embracing innovative teaching and locally relevant curricula. On the other hand they claim public school systems to be resistant to change or reform, even when modern science has contributed much to our knowledge on how humans learn.

Although some of these alternative school movements have grown to incorporate thousands of schools, Farrell and Hartwell (2008) describe the majority of these schools as community based organizations "with strong organic linkages with the communities in which the learners live" (p. 16). An often-overlooked fact is that such community schools also create job opportunities in poor communities where unemployment may be high, although the working conditions for employees may be poor compared to government schools or high cost private schools.

LCPSs mainly rely, as the term suggests, on marginal school fees paid by parents. This means that they have to operate on minimal budgets, having little to spend on teacher salaries, textbooks and physical structures. Additionally, they are difficult to control by governmental bodies. Due to this fact, there is concern about the quality of the education these schools are able to deliver. Obviously, they are not able to pay teacher salaries according to government policy and teacher unions, making it unattractive for any highly educated teacher to apply for a teaching position at such a school. The structures that make up these schools have little in common with the buildings and classrooms the developed world considers a school building. All in all, as will be explained in more

detail later on, there are huge barriers that have to be overcome every day. Nevertheless, the sector of alternative schooling continues to grow and the results they present despite all constrains are impressive:

> In most cases which have been seriously evaluated, the results are very good in terms of enrolment, retention, completion, movement on to the next level of schooling, and measured academic success. Typically, the performance in achievement tests of students in these schools is at least as good as – often better than – that of students in standard schools (Farrell & Hartwell, 2008, p. 16).

Kenya is one of the countries where LCPSs are "mushrooming" (Dixon, 2012, p. 187) despite the nationwide introduction of free primary education (FPE) implemented after national elections in 2003. The number of such schools is rapidly growing in Kenyan urban slums according to an updated research report published by Dixon and Tooley in 2012, a follow-up of a study on the impact of the national introduction of FPE in 2003 on LCPSs in Kibera. They ask the question *why* parents opt for fee-based private education when public education is, or at least should be, available to all. They conclude that parents do not choose to enroll their children in LCPSs just because it is their only option for providing their children with primary education, but that education quality is just as, if not more, important to parents from poor households as it is for those more privileged.

When assessing the choices parents make to enroll their children in other schools than public state schools, the two concepts of *excess demand* and *differentiated demand* are often applied. The choice of alternative schooling due to a lack of capacity in the standard school system is known as excess demand, while opting for alternative schooling for its difference is known as differentiated demand (Oketch, Mutisya, Ngware, & Ezeh, 2010).

While Dixon and Tooley (2012) argue that differentiation demand is an important motive for parents to opt for LCPS in Nairobi slums without excluding the notion of excess demand, Oketch et al. conclude that excess demand through the lack of access to and the failure of free public education is the solitary reason:

> We can now contribute to the debate on why the poor attend private schools when there is a policy of FPE in Kenya. It is because of excess demand as result of low public expenditure in education in the slums (2010, p. 31).

The concepts of excess and differentiated demand for private schooling are arguably not as clear-cut as they may seem, making it difficult to categorize the demand for LCPE under either one of them. I will come back to this particular disagreement in the discussion of my own findings in chapter 5.

1.2 The International Discourse on Education Quality

While the global struggle to succeed with the provision of universal primary education by 2015 still continues, in addition to expanding access there is increased focus on the quality of education. There is increased concern about millions of children not achieving necessary basic skills despite the fact that they are enrolled in school; "Spending time in primary school is no guarantee that a child will be able to read and write" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014, p. 7).

The 6th goal set on the EFA agenda in Dakar in 2000 is titled *Quality of Education*, but there is still a long way to go for many countries. It is important to note that not only low- and middle-income countries face challenges regarding the quality of education. Also high-income countries come short when it comes to providing quality education for *all*, supposing that equity is an immutable component of quality education (UNESCO, 2014). In a competition driven education system, which currently by far is distributed across the entire globe, certain groups such as immigrant minorities, those from low socio-economic households and those with learning disabilities continue to underperform. UNESCO claims that the quality imperative will be even more central to the global education agenda after 2015:

> Improving quality and learning is likely to be more central to the post-2015 global development framework. Such a shift is vital to improve education opportunities for the 250 million children who are unable to read, write, or do basic mathematics, 130 million of whom are in school (2014, p. 5).

For some regions in the world, one of them Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the possibility of reaching universal primary education by 2015 however appears gloomy. Additionally, education quality measured in pupil/teacher ratio is alarmingly low, with 23 of the world's 26 countries having a ration exceeding 40:1 located in SSA (UNESCO, 2014). Another major concern is the level of illiteracy in the region; according to numbers presented by UNESCO

"youth illiteracy is particularly widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, where 40 % of young people are not able to read a sentence" (2014, p. 208).

Weak governmental institutions are common throughout the region, and although Kenya has seen a relatively politically stable development since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1963 ethnic tensions continue to threaten national peace and development. When governmental institutions are weak and mistrusted, the community becomes the most important support for many of the less fortunate. Governmental institutions, including the public education system, are doing little to improve the lives of Kenyan urban slum dwellers. Those institutions and organizations that operate in Nairobi slums are mostly large international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), UN organizations and community based organizations (CBOs).

When conducting research among the poor in Kenya one has to be highly sensitive about how marginalized groups relate to the national government, especially when the researcher is living in a developed country where public institutions function and are accountable. Living in a slum like Kibera means living on the edge of existence in extreme poverty while being surrounded by golf courses and rich estates. The relative dimension of poverty is large in Nairobi. Government representatives are by many perceived as representatives and agents of oppression, public education being no exception to the rule. Maathai (2009) describes how corruption and embezzlement among politicians is a severe problem constraining Kenyan development.

After having focused on the expansion of global access to basic education for decades, the 2013/4 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) released by the UNESCO (2014) bears the title: *Teaching and Learning; Achieving Quality for All*. Access to education does not necessarily mean the same as learning. At its worst, very low quality education can be a waste of time for both pupils and teachers, not to mention the obvious loss of resources spent. Nevertheless, it appears that a focus on quality raise is more complicated than a focus on the expansion of access to basic education. Certain quantifiable measures of education quality such as teacher-pupil-ratios or the availability of necessary learning materials are relatively straightforward to study and debate. Other aspects of quality, such as pedagogical practices and the choice of curriculum, are much more complex and an element of discussion. In fact, the very question of which purpose(s) formal education should serve and which role it should play is highly disputable.

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Any debate on the quality of education must take departure in the content of that *what* (curriculum) is being taught as well as *how* (pedagogy) that content is being taught and how individual educational achievements are to be measured (assessment). Language is of utmost importance to both *what* and *how* teaching and assessment take place, though often not given the importance it deserves in the quality discussion. According to Watson (2007) there is no use in discussing education without the notion of which and how languages are used in instruction in previously colonized countries. When language is not taken seriously, neither is ethnicity or inequality.

The discussion on education quality is thus highly political, as large scale education distribution has a huge impact on any society. In discussing education quality, one has to acknowledge that several contradictory views exist. The UNESCO GMR of 2005 focused specifically on *The Quality Imperative*, stating the UN philosophy on education quality as based on four pillars:

1. *Learning to know.*
2. *Learning to do.*
3. *Learning to live together.*
4. *Learning to be.*

(UNESCO, 2005, p. 30)

In this report, UNESCO also recognizes several "education traditions and associated notions of quality" based on different philosophical strands:

1. *Humanist approaches.*
2. *Behaviourist approaches.*
3. *Critical approaches.*
4. *Indigenous approaches.*
5. *Adult education approaches.*

(UNESCO, 2005, p. 32)

All of these traditions have implications for the notion of quality of LCPE, and analyzing the different values and contradictions between them provides a framework for the discourse on education quality. While UNESCO as a multilateral UN organization naturally has its focus on state education, it recognizes the large contribution made by the private sector to increased access to basic education. Comparing the 2005 GMR with the 2014 report, it appears that the variety of quality perceptions have been lost along the way. Whenever there is mention of improved quality of education, test results of key subjects are given as the sole indication.

Without embarking on a discourse analysis on the changing language in GMR reports, it may appear that the quality definition as set by UNESCO, without doubt a powerful influential organization concerning the global education discourse, has polarized itself to a behaviourist view. Education systems are frequently measured through terms of *performance* and the *achievements* of pupils (UNESCO, 2014).

According to Tikly and Barrett (2013), "it is possible to identify two broad approaches that have shaped the debate about education quality, particularly in the global South, namely the human capital theory (HCT) and human rights approaches" (p. 11). The UN agencies, together with other INGOs preoccupied with human rights, have long been agents for the humanist human rights approach. However, the HCT approach shines through in the 2014 GMR as an incentive for developing countries to invest more resources in the education sector. While a human rights approach emphasizes the individual right of education, a HCT approach is more concerned with the societal benefits of education. These societal benefits are measured in increased productivity and economic growth. It is crucial to recognize the conflicting values between different quality perceptions in order to identify parental choice for alternative education such as for example locally rooted community schools. This however does not imply that education has to serve one purpose only, either economic or human development. A holistic approach to education may incorporate elements from all the five approaches as presented by UNESCO in the 2005 GMR, contributing to both financial and human growth.

Community education as alternative to public state education is a worldwide phenomenon, often thought of as related to a critical approach to education, initiated by groups or individuals that for philosophical, political, religious or cultural reasons do not want state education for themselves or their children. As various reasons for choosing alternative education exist, so do also various perceptions of education quality. Community education exists both in formal and informal forms, and may receive approval from governmental authorities, be merely tolerated but not recognized, or even be deemed clandestine. The extent to which government bodies allow community education and other educational alternatives to exist may indicate the level of control a state wishes to exercise on its people, which in turn may give an indication of the political and ethnical stability of that state.

The important dimension is that the very concept of education quality is linked to society at large and that "agreement about the objectives and aims of education embodies moral,

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political and epistemological issues that are frequently invisible or ignored" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 37). Language is thus more than a tool of communication alone, whether used in a dialogue or a one-way setting. Looking beyond the instrumental HCT elements of education, the language discourse has to involve much more than only focusing on language as a just a tool for transfer of knowledge happening in schools. Language is a carrier of culture and identity, arguably the most important carrier. According to Fishman (1972), language is not only a carrier of manifest content:

> Language itself *is* content. A referent for loyalties and animosities, an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships, a marker of situations and topics as well as of the societal goals and the large-scale value-laden arenas of interaction that typify every speech community (p. 4 [emphasis by author]).

Any education quality discourse is hence destined to fall short if the varying definitions of quality are not recognized. And any discourse on education quality is destined to fail if the important matter of both written and spoken language is left out of the debate, especially in the case of Africa. The complexity of nation building on the African continent, where foreign powers allowed themselves to draw the national boarders cutting across *micro-nations* (Maathai, 2009) and *speech communities* (Fishman, 1972) towards the end of the 19th century requires much sensitivity to all that what languages carry, represent and symbolize.

1.3 Language and Education Quality

> Since the majority of the world's nations are multiethnic and multilingual, any study of education internationally cannot ignore the linguistic dimension that overrides so much of the policy (Watson, 1992, p. 118).

If the definition of education quality can be argued to be politically charged, the question of which language of instruction is to be used in classrooms appears to be even more of a political minefield. This counts especially for multilingual settings, where parents may be skeptical of what UNESCO (2014) refers to as mother tongue education. Even the use of the term mother tongue is politically charged, indicating that there is another dominating, more official and important language present. In the case of SSA, languages which commonly are referred to as mother tongues or vernaculars may actually be languages with a much larger national or regional number of speakers than those inherited by European settlers and still in use for scientific and official purposes. Research shows that children achieve remarkably higher results concerning the ability to read and write when they receive instruction in their

mother tongue, and that this not only counts for the reading and writing of the mother tongue itself, but also for the learning of a second language on a later stage and other subjects such as for instance math (UNESCO, 2014; Bunyi, 1999, 2008). The potential of improved academic performance is however far from the only compelling reason for critically assessing the use of European languages in African education.

The achievement of literacy is of main concern in primary education, receiving much attention in the GMR 2013/4 (UNESCO, 2014). SSA continues to be ranked at the bottom of youth and adult literacy. This same region "is probably the most linguistically complex area of the world, if population is measured against languages" (Spencer, 1985, as cited in Bunyi, 1999, p. 339). In industrialized countries, very few pupils are required to become literate in an external language that is not naturally spoken in their home community (Bunyi, 1999). But this is the case for millions of children in SSA. Learning to read and write in a language that is not naturally spoken in the home, which is nowhere related to the mother tongue, maybe not even mastered by a child's parents, is likely to be a huge disadvantage. This is however the case for thousands of children growing up in urban slums in Nairobi. Furthermore, a lot of knowledge has to be acquired through the means of that language.

Farrell and Hartwell (2008) point to research in Ghana, where the alternative School for Life schools teach disadvantaged children literacy in their mother tongue while public schools use English as medium of instruction from the very beginning. Not only did School for Life pupils adapt very well to the English language instruction in higher government school grades, they actually performed better, confirming the hypothesis that children who first become literate in their mother tongue more easily become literate in a secondary language.

The UNESCO GMR 2013/4 asserts that "the quality of education during childhood has a marked bearing on youth literacy" (2014, p. 21). If literacy is about learning to read and write language, the notion of literacy and *which* language children are to be literate in has to be incorporated into any discourse on education quality. This particular matter often goes unmentioned.

Language of instruction is strongly linked to the notion of achieved literacy. Because the ability to read undoubtedly influences the ability to retract information from textbooks, ICT sources or classroom blackboards, it has an impact on education quality in the form of achieved learning results. In other words; being able to read means being capable of achieving

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knowledge and information through the decoding of the written word. UNESCO links widespread illiteracy to widespread poverty (2014). Despite the positive indications of the benefits of using indigenous African languages in primary education, Bunyi argues that "delegitimization and devaluation" (1999, p. 343) of indigenous languages still continues in Kenya and many other African countries.

1.4 Informal Settlements in Nairobi, Kenya

A large part of Nairobi's population lives in impoverished informal settlements, also known as slums or shanty towns. Exact numbers do not exist, but the aid organization Oxfam estimates that at least half the population lives in informal slum settlements (2012). Kibera is currently Kenya's largest informal slum settlement, located in western Nairobi. The neighbourhood, situated in a dry valley, has a unique history, with its roots as settling grounds for retired Sudanese Nubian soldiers of the Kings African Rifles early in the 20th century (Parsons, 1997). Since then the area has been heavily deforested to make room for housing. Although still harbouring a large Nubian population due to its special demographic history, Kibera has much in common with other large informal Nairobi settlements such as e. g. Mathare and Mukuru.

Official statistics tend to vary, but Kibera has an estimated population of up to one million inhabitants. Many of Kenya's 42 official ethnic groups or micro-nations are represented in Kibera. Although Kibera is Nairobi's largest slum, it is as mentioned far from the only one. More than half of the capital city's rapidly increasing population lives in informal settlements like Kibera and the numbers are growing due to rapid urbanization (Oxfam, 2012). As the slums continue to grow, the demand for education grows with it. Therefore the LCPE sector will continue to grow as well; at least as long as the public education system is struggling to provide educational opportunities to everyone as it does at the moment.

The majority of slum dwellers are essentially excluded from participation in larger society due to poverty and poor infrastructure, which in addition to low chances for life improvement and social mobility creates a vicious cycle of social exclusion. However, Kibera also functions as its own micro society with lots of small businesses, banks, social institutions and places of worship. The population continues to increase, as more and more rural Kenyans

leave the countryside in favour of the capital. Oxfam (2012) estimates that no less than half of Kenya's population will be found in urban areas by 2050. In Nairobi and other large cities poor rural dwellers expect to find increased possibilities through paid work, but their chances are few and many end up living in slum settlements as they provide the only affordable housing option to them. Many of those searching for a better life in Kenya's large towns have a minimum of education, often with their mother tongue as language of instruction. Their English skills are poor and they have none or few official certificates to refer to in the application for paid labour. The immense differences in living circumstances between large cities and the countryside means that those moving to urban areas from a rural upbringing do not have the qualifications required to participate in an advanced economy and labour market.

Slum dwellers are in a vulnerable position. The houses, usually made of tin sheets, mud and wooden poles offer little protection against the hot sun and expose people to all sorts of crime. No functional disposal of waste poses health hazards, especially to children who play among the rubbish. According to Oxfam (2012), slum dwellers in Nairobi represent more than half of the city's population but are cramped together in area that only takes up 5% of the city's residential areas and only 1% of the city's total land area.

Considering that few slum structures comprise more than two floors and the majority are one story shacks, one can imagine how cramped the slums are and what threat the pollution caused by garbage as well as human and animal waste poses to people. In addition to increasing food prices, urban slums in Nairobi have been heavily affected by recent ethnical and political tensions in Kenya.

1.4.1 Recent Ethnical and Political Tensions

An ethnic conflict erupted in Kenya after the presidential elections in 2007, supposedly fuelled by powerful politicians after the political opposition suspected election fraud by the ruling Kikuyu party. The conflict affected slum areas heavily, as mentioned due to having a population consisting of people from many different micro-nations which were mobilized by politicians but also because many rural dwellers were displaced due to armed conflict in western regions of Kenya. Many fled to the Nairobi area; their houses burnt down, where they resettled in the already cramped slums.

The entire country was destabilized, many were killed in clashes between Kenyan micro-nations and thousands were made homeless and internally displaced. In Kibera, churches and businesses were burnt down. Since then there has been a national emphasis of downplaying the importance of ethnic origin as to prevent further conflict. At least in urban areas, it is a taboo to identify oneself too much with one's ethnic origin. This includes the use of any other language than English (the official language) or Kiswahili (the national language) outside of the home situation.

Maathai (2009) argues that the moderation of ethnic origin and identity eventually will foster more conflict, emphasizing the importance of the indigenous culture and language of every micro-nation. She prefers this term in favour of the terms "ethnicity" or "tribe", claiming these to be negative Western constructs that discriminate African indigenous culture.

The dialectic between the nation-state as a macro-nation and ethnic groups as micro-nations creates a useful framework of analysis in the case of ethnicity, language sociology and politics in Kenya. Language sociology is a central element of this thesis, and must hence be understood in its political and ethnical milieu. Outside the large cities, most micro-nations have their own traditional geographical territories. Within these largely homogenous communities, children continue to receive primary education in their mother tongue. Large cities such as Nairobi and Mombasa are unique in the sense that people from all micro-nations live closely together, creating an urban society of rich cultural diversity but also a climate for potential ethnic conflict.

Rural Kenyans that move to the country's large cities undergo a cultural assimilation, in a way they are being *detribalized*. While local vernaculars are commonly used in rural areas, Kiswahili becomes the new language of interethnic daily communication in urban areas. English also becomes much more important as it is the language of education, business and all that is considered as *modern* in Kenyan society. And because modernity follows urbanization, so does the English language. A slang language based on English and Kiswahili called *Sheng* is also widely used in urban areas, especially among younger generations.

Since 2011, Kenya has participated in military interventions against the Al Shabaab militia in neighbouring Somalia, mainly to protect its million dollar tourist industry from taking a blow. The Somali conflict creates an unsafe situation in North-Eastern Kenya, where foreign tourists and aid workers have been kidnapped and sometimes killed. Many people of Somali

origin live in poor neighbourhoods of Nairobi, mainly in the North-Eastern neighbourhood Eastleigh. Counteractions in the form of terrorist attacks by the Al Shabaab militia in multiethnic neighbourhoods of Nairobi and Mombasa have fuelled public acts of revenge against people of Somali origin. At the time of writing tensions are still high in Nairobi, with an elevated level of security operating to protect tourists and the civilian population. During the field data collection of this study a large uptown shopping mall was attacked by Al Shabaab terrorists in an area known as Westlands, leaving many civilians dead.

National elections in 2013 remained relatively peaceful, resulting in another president from the Kikuyu micro-nation, elected by very close margins. But much of the source of the conflict dating back to 2007/2008 remains in reality unresolved, with current president Kenyatta facing trial at the international criminal court in The Netherlands due to allegations linked to the post-election violence following the previous presidential elections. The tradition of voting on candidates from one's own ethnic group means that most resources are distributed to members of the largest groups, leaving most rural and slum citizens excluded from the benefits of the current economic development. At the time of writing the Kenyan government struggles to convince the UN to withdraw the allegations towards President Kenyatta for the sake of the stability of the country. Ethnicity and politics are hence dangerously intertwined in Kenya.

The national elections of 2013 were historical in Kenya. Not only was a new president elected, but a reform involving the devolution of political power was implemented with the potential of a higher degree of local decision making. The effect of this devolution is still not measurable at the time of writing, but there is hope for an improved situation for those currently poor and marginalized.

Within the frames of these larger national and international conflicts, the inhabitants of slum settlements such as Kibera continue to face huge challenges in their everyday lives due to poverty. Nongovernmental providers attempt to fill the gap of lacking public services, many are non-profit but some also see the opportunity to gain profit by providing services such as paid toilet facilities and drinking water. The lack of provided public services includes that of basic education. Public service provision would contribute to legitimize the illegal settlement, which appears to be undesired by the government. Three public primary schools surround the Kibera slum area, but due to the lack of public services many NGOs, CBOs and individual entrepreneurs are actively involved in service delivery, including that of basic education.

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The informal nature of many slum schools means that they lack national external control systems, although some are partly recognized and regularly inspected by local educational authorities. To a large degree, education quality and content is defined by each school operator(s). This particular concern creates much controversy around LCPSs and raises the question whether they really are able to deliver quality education. This does not necessarily imply that these schools perform poorly. According to Farrell and Hartwell (2008), many independent schools achieve excellent results with a minimum of resources and the lack of professional teachers in the traditional, pre-trained sense.

1.5 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to analyze educational practices as provided by nongovernmental schools in the Kibera slum area in Nairobi, with particular focus on literacy training and language use in basic education, using productive pedagogies (Lingard, Hayes, & Mills, 2003) to develop an instrument for measuring teaching and learning quality on the classroom level. Differences and similarities between schools may provide useful information that can contribute to the understanding of literacy and language training in LCPSs in the multilingual environment of Kibera. Within the theoretical framework of this thesis, language is viewed as a key expression and carrier of culture. Language forms an important part of this research due to its relevance for teaching and learning in classrooms.

The goal is to provide useful knowledge on literacy and language teaching in a slum setting and encourage debate on the quality conceptions of nongovernmental schooling for the poor. Adapting a transformative, social justice view designates that debate on policy and practices that affect people's lives should be a dialogical, democratic process. The people affected by policy need to have a voice in defining which are the best practices and policies for themselves. Such a view harmonizes with the ideas of Maathai (2009) on the importance of local decision making and democratic involvement in developmental questions. In the context of this research project, this implies democratic involvement of the local community members in decision making on schooling. Therefore they form the most important source of data for this study.

1.5.1 Research Questions

As learning to read and write is a prerequisite for all other learning, literacy and language in classroom practice are seen as key elements to education quality. In modern day education, the ability to read and write is a necessary for the acquirement of knowledge. In a multilingual environment pupils may be required to become literate in several languages simultaneously.

Other barriers to education quality in LCPSs will be highlighted in order to identify possible solutions.

The following research questions guide this case study and thesis report:

1. *How and to what extent are English, Kiswahili and other languages used in primary school instruction and during informal settings in LCPSs in Kibera?*
   Through the observation of formal and informal settings in schools, the aim is to analyze how teachers, pupils and parents use the different languages represented in the community. Through interviews and informal conversations I will attempt to create an understanding of the behaviour towards different languages and the roles that they play in the local school community and in the home situation of LCPS pupils compared to society at large.

2. *How are barriers that restrain the existence and development of LCPSs in Kibera identified?*
   The aim is to identify the main problems that currently obstruct LCPSs in the provision of quality education for children in Kibera. This includes a study of the slum community environment surrounding the schools.

3. *How do teachers and parents perceive quality education, and how is the quality of classroom instruction in Kibera LCPSs?*
   Through interviews with parents the aim is to create an understanding for why they choose to enroll their children in LCPSs when public education is free of school fees. If the quality of education provided by LCPSs is perceived to be better; on which grounds is education quality defined and why is it perceived to be better than the education provided by public schools?
   There is concern about the quality of instruction that these schools are able to offer, due to notorious poverty, the lack of professionally trained teaching staff and little or no governmental control. Despite these concerns, LCPE is a growing phenomenon in

poor neighbourhoods of low-income countries. In order to gain proper knowledge on the quality of instruction, whether it is relevant, inclusive and effective for all pupils, observations of teaching practices are analyzed through a framework of productive pedagogies. The use of different languages in instruction and the potential effect they have on pedagogical processes will herein be emphasized.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter has provided the necessary background information for the topic of research, reflected upon the principal concepts involved and elaborated on the focus and rationale of the study.

The next chapter consists of a literature review on the current discourse of the topics and phenomena involved. Together with the applied theory presented in chapter 3, it aims to provide the foundation for how the topic will be approached in the field, and how data is to be analyzed and discussed.

Chapter 4 describes the research method that guides data collection and analysis. It aims to explain the chosen methodology in relation to the research questions and the philosophical strand this study is built upon. In the 5th chapter the findings from the field study will be presented and interpreted through the application of the theoretical framework introduced in chapter 3 and the revised literature discussed in chapter 2.

Important findings are presented and discussed in chapter 5, attempting to answer the research questions. Other important findings that emerged during the field data collection are also discussed.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the thesis, including incentives for further research and recommendations for how the research problem can be tackled to improve the current situation of education quality of LCPSs in urban slums in Nairobi.

2 Literature Review

This chapter sets out to present some of the literature available on private education for the poor, language in education and its implication for education quality. While a lot is written on the topic of bilingualism/multilingualism and mother tongue use in education as well as different perceptions on education quality, literature covering the phenomenon of LCPE is scarce though increasing.

The content of the UNESCO GMR is a good indicator for where international focus on education currently is directed. The title of the 2013/4 GMR indicates an emphasis on teaching, learning and quality. After being focused on the large scale increase of education distribution worldwide, attention now seems to be directed towards the classrooms and those processes of interaction that happen there. This focus coincides with the focus of this study, investigating quality through studying that what actually happens in schools instead of assessing larger system wide policy and practice.

2.1 Low-Cost Private Education

In investigating the phenomenon of LCPE, a system wide approach is arguably impossible for several reasons:

- There is little written material on LCPE. Much of that what is written seems to lack empirical objectivity due to a bias either *for* or *against* the growth of the sector. This polarization reflects that the sector, although by no means a recent phenomenon, continues to be stigmatized and delegitimized by both governments and multilateral organizations. The fact that the sector has continued to grow even after FPE has been introduced in many developing countries means that its contribution and role cannot longer be ignored in the discourse of universal primary education (UPE).
- As the LCPS sector is at least partly informal and outside of the government system, large-scale data simply does not exist for all the countries where it exists, and is thus unavailable to researchers. Depending on each particular country's education policy, many of these schools have good reasons to stay below the radar of government supervision and control. As the UNESCO reports show, obtaining data on the formal

public school systems is sometimes hard enough, even though most countries keep databases on educational developments.

- A third problem is the fact that these schools go by different names and terminology, often depending on the point of departure of the inquirer or how educational bodies categorize them. An economic inquiry may for example look to the sector with an emphasis on entrepreneurialism and the private, market based provision of education. Hence they are referred to as private schools. An ethnographic inquiry may refer to the very same schools as community schools due to the fact that they are initiated and operated by individuals from the local community; serving needs the local community has which public institutions do not fulfil. Hence they may be referred to as community schools. Focusing on poverty and urban development, one may refer to these schools as slum schools where the poor educate themselves due to their exclusion from society at large. They can also be tagged as independent schools, due to the fact that they operate outside the control of the public education system. Or as alternative schools, because they constitute an alternative to public schools.

Both terminology and categorization of the LCPS sector thus poses a challenge to anyone investigating the existence of these schools on a large scale. As many analytical approaches to the sector are possible, so also is arguing for or against its impact on education for the marginalized on the basis of a wide range of different arguments. The scarcity of long-term impact data makes it difficult to make any clear-cut statements.

The prime interest of educational researchers seems to be how the LCPS sector impacts the agenda of achieving UPE. The Commonwealth Secretariat in London published a book in 2008 in the form of a three country case study on LCPSs in India, Uganda and Nigeria with the title "Low-cost Private Education: Impacts on Achieving Universal Primary Education", edited by Bob Phillipson (2008). It presents and discusses mainly quantitative findings from those three countries, acknowledging both benefits and complications the sector poses for quality education. The main focus is how the sector impacts access to education for the poor.

Similarly to Dixon and Tooley (2003; 2012) this study does not only pose the question what the impact of the LCPS sector is on the achievement of UPE, but also what the implementation of FPE has meant for the LCPS sector.

Uganda introduced FPE already in 1997, six years before Kenya, and was like Kenya and many other developing countries faced with the result of an overloaded public education system where teacher/pupil ratios skyrocketed and learner quality dropped accordingly. The consequence of the situation was that many parents from poor households moved their children from LCPSs to government schools due to the promise of free education, but moved them back to LCPSs again when they witnessed the immense drop in quality due to an overloaded public education system (Phillipson, 2008). The study also mentions language of instruction and early English language teaching as an incentive for parents to opt for LCPS in the case of India. The authors make an important point in mentioning that many poor parents in all three studied countries are illiterate and poorly informed on the consequences of education through a language which pupils and teachers alike struggle with and do not use outside the school environment.

As mentioned, Dixon and Tooley have contributed much to the knowledge and attention on LCPE, especially in former British territories such as India and Eastern Africa, as well as in a few West-African countries. In 2005 they published a book titled *Private education is good for the poor.* The book title reflects their conclusion by far. Tooley, who discovered the LCPS sector in slums in India while investigating high and middle class private education for the World Bank Group, has been promoting the benefits of LCPE for the poor ever since.

Phillipson et al. (2008) are somewhat more reticent in their judgments about the sector, highlighting benefits but also warning about the potential dangers and negative impacts in the form of possible exploitation of the poor and illiterate. Although a higher quality of education in LCPSs is perceived by parents, it is unsure whether the quality of education actually is superior to that of public schools. LCPSs may be much more concerned on drilling pupils for exams, sacrificing other important aspects of education.

Heyneman and Stern (2013) also mention the problematic potential of school directors and owners taking advantage of poor parents, who due to illiteracy and scarcity of access to reliable information lack the knowledge to make well-informed choices for their children's education. Comparing the choice of parents for public or private schools does currently not make much sense in the case of Kibera, as there are only three reportedly overcrowded public primary schools surrounding the large slum.

As more attention is directed to the growing LCPS sector, more research articles are emerging. Dixon and Tooley are continuing their research in India and SSA, and published an update of their study on Kibera LCPSs in 2012. The 2013/4 UNESCO GMR (2014) problematizes the low wages that teachers at LCPSs have to endure, not providing them with the ability to be self-sustainable on the teaching salary alone. As I will discuss further in chapter 5; weighing the wages and conditions from LCPS teachers up against those of teachers in public schools serves little purpose.

UNESCO GMRs are written in an outline of how things *should* be and what governments and the international community *should* do in a world where all governments are expected work hard to serve the educational and social rights of the poor and marginalized through public education delivery. Because goals are currently not being reached through this approach, sensitivity to alternative approaches such as LCPE is important, at least for the time being. On the same note, conditions of teachers in LCPS should not be measured against those of public servants, but rather to those of people slum dwellers with at least some education. Compared to a life of unemployment or a daily hustle for a minimum of income to survive, LCPE gives them the opportunity to raise some income while at the same time serving the needs of the community and gaining important professional work experience. As the IDF Foundation (2013) points out, LCPE fosters a form of small-scale entrepreneurialism which is generally seen as very positive within the multi- and bilateral support to slum upgrading.

The 2013/4 UNESCO GMR comments that teachers in LCPSs have less training and average years of professional experience than their counterparts employed in public schools. Looking to the research by Farrell and Hartwell on alternative education models published by the International Institute of Educational Planning in Paris in 2008, formal training and the number of years of professional experience among teachers seem to play a minor role when investigating the results of alternative nongovernmental schooling. The notion of local accountability, along with an intrinsic motivation to teach and in that way take responsibility for the development of the local community, may have a much larger impact on how pupils perform in schools. The lack of training and experience of LCPS teachers may be compensated with a much more beneficial teacher/pupil ratio because more teachers may be employed due to the low salaries costs. In fact, most of the advantages accredited to LPCS's come from their local community connection. It seems that public schools could improve a lot if they could be embedded in the local community in the same way these private schools are.

The 2013/4 UNESCO GMR report refers to findings by Heyneman & Stern (2013) from their study on LCPE in Jamaica, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Their emphasis is on how public policy should and can be adjusted towards LCPSs in order to serve the educational needs of marginalized groups. The study confirms findings by Phillipson et al. (2008) and the research of Dixon and Tooley (2003; 2012). Regarding the case of Kenya, Heyneman and Stern (2013) explain much of the growth of the LCPS sector after national introduction of FPE to the fact that public schools do charge hidden fees, which makes the price of education similar or in some cases even higher compared to that of a LCPS. Important reasons for parental choice for LCPE are thus largely answered through the study of available literature, but vary by country and region. The body of literature is currently increasing, as the topic continues to attract attention by educational researchers.

2.2 Language and Education Quality in the African Context

> […] language and the issue of a good quality education are inseparable. It is not possible for learners to learn if they do not understand lessons; and they cannot understand lessons if they do not understand the language in which the lessons are taught. This is also the case with teachers (Afitska et al., 2013, p. 154).

The issues of language in education, language of instruction and all other terms and concepts related to the role of languages in education in bi- and multilingual societies seem currently to be a hot topic, especially in the case of the African continent. Figures reflecting literacy rates and other educational development in SSA continue to worry the international development community (UNESCO, 2014) to such an extent that there is talk of a stagnation or even recession in educational development, hampering all other aspects of economic and social development.

Some educational researchers are looking to the issue of the continued use of colonial or European languages in education, claiming that such language policy only serves small elite groups and restrains quality education for the vast majority of Africans. As in many cases, the poorest part of populations located in rural areas and urban slums are the most disadvantaged because colonial languages play no relevant part in their daily lives.

> A society develops into modernity when its citizens are literate in the languages of the masses. In other words, it is not possible to reach modernity if the language/languages

of literacy and education are only within the intellectual ambit of small minorities. Historically, the jump towards expanded knowledge production and reproduction in societies has only been possible when the languages of the social majorities have been centrally placed (Prah, 2009, p. 7).

According to a paper published by Kwesi Kwaa Prah in 2009, Robert Phillipson's book *Linguistic Imperialism* from 1992 on the linguistic imperialism of English was an important igniter of the heated debate on the use of colonial languages in schools. Prah is one of many critical researchers on language use in African schools, affiliated with the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS). CASAS is currently working on finding new ways to implement African languages in African education.

Grace Bunyi has contributed with research and writing on the case of education quality and language use in Kenya, emphasizing the link between language and identity. She poses the crucial question of *how* one is to define and measure the concept of literacy in Kenya, claiming that expecting Kenyans to be functionally literate in English and perhaps Kiswahili, ignoring all other indigenous languages gives a wrong image of literacy rates. She presents strong arguments for the use of indigenous languages in all layers of Kenyan education (Bunyi, 1999). Her work has also contributed to the UNESCO monitoring reports on the case of education in Kenya.

Birgit Brock-Utne has produced much work on the importance of language policy for education quality. Her studies on the use of Kiswahili in the Tanzanian education system have important implications for neighbouring Kenya, although there are noteworthy linguistic, historic, and socio-cultural differences between the two countries. Like Bunyi (1999); Brock-Utne critically investigates the concept of literacy and the continued use of English as language of instruction in Anglophone Africa (Brock-Utne, 2000).

The UNESCO GMR of 2014, although focused on quality, teaching and learning, has offered little attention to the importance of language of instruction (LOI) for quality. It acknowledges that "speaking a minority language can be a source of disadvantage" (2014, p. 198), and further refers to research in western Africa, where education in through French as LOI seriously obstructs the chance of learning for the majority of children.

In the case of western and eastern Africa however, speaking a *majority* language and not the minority language used in school instruction, although deemed official, may be a source of

disadvantage. Recognizing only minority speech communities as disadvantaged in education hence does not grasp the full dimension of the language barrier.

The GMR further refers to research that shows that pupils familiar with the LOI due to its use in the home situation, perform better in standardized tests than their peers that speak a different language at home. Furthermore, pupils who struggle with the language of instruction moreover face the chance of social discrimination in addition to achieving lower scholastic achievements. This does not only affect purely language oriented subjects:

> In mathematics, too, language, culture and poverty often interact to produce an extremely high risk of being left far behind. Poor students speaking a minority language at home are among the lowest performers (UNESCO, 2014).

The above illustrates the very unfortunate position of children growing up in the Kibera slum, and why the question of language of instruction is such an important question for children being educated in urban slums. It seems that equity and hence quality in education cannot be addressed without addressing school language policy.

2.3 Summary

Available literature in the form of books, research papers and articles confirms that LCPE, education quality, and language of instruction are important current matters in the field of comparative and international education. Both LCPE and language issues in African schools seem to be controversial topics, where policymakers, politicians and researchers alike inhabit various opinions. This chapter has far from presented all the literature that forms the backdrop for this study, but it has pointed to some of the main streams currently available on the covered topics.

There seems to be little written material available specifically on language policy and practice in low-cost private community schools, except the fact that there are indications that school policy on language of instruction may influence parents' choice of school in the case of India. Hence language of instruction may be a factor for a differentiated demand for private schooling where there is strict government policy on language use in schools. As parents' search for quality education is seen as a major powerhouse for the mushrooming of LCPSs, scrutiny of education quality at such schools is important, and in the case of Kenya such a quality assessment cannot avoid the analysis of language use in schools.

If LCPSs are truly rooted in the local community, a natural assumption would be that the natural tongue of inter-ethnic communication, Kiswahili in the case of Kibera, would be applied by schools outside the government system simply because it provides the best tool of communication for both teachers and pupils even though English is used in urban public schools. The theoretical framework and studied literature in this chapter may together provide some of the possible answers to why this is not necessarily the case.

Private education, education quality and language of instruction are all highly political matters, where a variety of both governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders have specific interests to promote and protect. It is however in the interest of the marginalized population to investigate how these matters play out in the community classrooms. If social justice and equity are to be promoted, all decision making should be rooted in how policy affects the poorest part of the population.

3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical backdrop of this study. It intends to explain which theories are applied and how, where, and why they were chosen to support the analysis.

A critical, constructivist worldview guides the entire trajectory of this research. In analyzing the issue of poverty and marginalization as encountered in urban slums, the critical sociology of Bourdieu is applied. His specific interest in the education system as an important *field* where societal stratification is created makes Bourdieu's approach relevant for any sociological study on modern, institutionalized education.

3.1 Bourdieu and the Sociology of Education

The French critical sociologist Pierre Bourdieu based much of his work on empirical research, producing "…a vast body of work in his lifetime" (Hart, 2013, p. 49). Much of Bourdieu's work on education was based on studies of the French and the Algerian education systems. Although higher education was the prime interest of Bourdieu, his theories on social constructions and especially his work on social reproduction and the importance of language in education are relevant to a critical research of educational phenomena. According to Hart (2013), particularly "…Bourdieu's conceptions of habitus, field and forms of capital aid understanding of the way policies and institutions can contribute to reproducing inequalities as well as overcoming them" (p. 50). Applying these concepts may hence serve to identify processes that exacerbate social injustice and inequality to anyone that wishes to bring about change. Bourdieu's ideas on social reproduction may however appear somber and deterministic. Especially the concept of habitus which appears to somehow imprison every individual by his or her unconsciously adapted values and attitudes is heavily criticized by Sullivan (2002) for leaving little room for individual freedom of choice:

> Bourdieu's claim that the notion of habitus solves the conflict between structure and determinism on the one hand and agency and individualism on the other is quite unjustified. In fact Bourdieu's theory has no place not only for individual agency, but even for individual consciousness (p. 163).

Sullivan (2002) places more emphasis on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as an applicable analytical tool for social research. The concept of habitus is only deemed relevant as an explanation on which cultural capital people acquire based on their familial and cultural

environment. An important aspect of the concept of habitus is the realization that people do not necessarily base important life-directing choices on rational thinking alone but may as well be more or less unconsciously influenced by learnt attitudes and values.

Bourdieu became interested in the unequal distribution of scholastic credentials, in turn causing unequal opportunities in post-world war European society, despite that education was democratized and largely made accessible to all. Like many other critical researchers of his time, Bourdieu wanted to know more about why those from privileged households outperformed their peers from less fortunate backgrounds in terms of scholastic achievements. Before access to education became available to practically anyone, the achievement of higher education by the rich was contributed to the fact that only they had the opportunity to continue education all the way into young adulthood. The continuing social reproduction of the education system inspired Bourdieu to investigate the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms, theorizing on the reproduction of a dominant culture in schools rewarding those that possessed the proper, dominant *cultural capital* and sidelining those that did not (Grenfell et al., 2012). Bourdieu's recognition of several forms of capital is central to his sociological theories.

Language was increasingly seen as an important manifestation of cultural capital and hence a crucial element in Bourdieu's studies. Schools and other educational institutions, in fact the entire education system as a whole, forms an important *field* where social stratification is created and reproduced on the basis of acquired forms of capital, and hence not on merit alone. Individual merit was believed to determine scholastic achievements when education was made accessible to everyone. The analysis of social reproduction in more or less institutionalized fields is another key element in Bourdieu's extensive work.

Many African countries, including Kenya, have created universal access to at least primary education through the elimination of school fees during the last 20 years. But instead of creating equal opportunities for all, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow. According to an analysis of 20 African countries by UNESCO, "…children from richer households are more likely not only to complete school, but also to achieve a minimum level of learning" (2014, p. 19). According to the same report, this trend is seen in rich, industrialized countries as well. Providing equal educational opportunities hence requires more than just access to education for all. It requires quality for all, a need that is reflected in the title of the UNESCO GMR 2013/4; *Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All*.

Bourdieu's work on social reproduction may provide guidelines to researchers interested in social reproduction through education, paving the way for adjusting such inequalities which in turn may lead to a better understanding of quality for *all*. Grenfell et al. explain how these mechanisms of social stratification owe their power to the fact that they operate in a hidden sphere that overtly appears to be a leveled playing field:

> Such a system of selection is in fact more effective when it operates in a covert manner than if privilege of birth were asserted at the outset. Indeed, within the systems operating in the democratic school, inequalities of social origin are translated and re-expressed as inequalities of talent, which allows for their *legitimation* in the face of the possessed and dispossessed (2012, p. 55 [emphasis by author]).

Viewing the education system as a field of selection based not on merit but on prepossessed inherited social and cultural, capital provides a paradox but also an explanation to the UN human rights view and expectations on education and its potential to make societies more equal. This view may also contribute to the understanding of why marginalized groups opt for educational alternatives other than state schools that represent a dominant national culture and sideline those that do not possess the "right" form of social and cultural capital including speaking the "right" language(s).

In the case of Kenya, a majority of the population in urban slums consists of first or second generation city migrants. First generation urban migrants from rural districts of Kenya carry the natural acquired social and cultural capital with them from their ethnic origins or micro-nations, with the indigenous language (also known as vernacular or mother tongue) as a main bearer of customs and culture. From being of great value in the community they used to be a part of, suddenly that all becomes irrelevant and even stigmatized when one is required to adapt to modern city life in Nairobi. An important part of Bourdieu's theories on forms of capital is that one form of capital may be transferred to another, thus having the necessary monetary capital may compensate for a lack of cultural and social capital. Most rural Kenyan dwellers however do not possess much monetary capital, as subsistence farming or cattle herding does not convert in monetary resources. They furthermore leave their established social networks behind in their micro-nations; hence they have no relevant social capital to trade of either.

According to Bourdieu's theory the formal education system assumes pupils to possess the necessary cultural capital, including using and understanding *educated* language. This

assumption causes much confusion in the classroom due to misunderstandings, and pupils of lower class are most likely to be the ones that have the most difficulties with understanding *pedagogic transmission* in the educated language (Sullivan, 2002). Because pupils are supposed to understand the pedagogic transmission, particularly those pupils of lower class may be reluctant to announce that they do not understand what is being taught them due to the risk of further stigmatization. On the basis of this theory it is interesting to pose the question of what the impact on such pedagogical transmission may be if pupil and teacher alike are rooted in the same, marginalized community. It would be natural to assume that the teacher would apply language and teaching style to whatever is perceived as most efficient within that community, so as to facilitate the pedagogical transmission and make it as effective as possible. It would also be natural to assume that teachers, presuming that they have the best interests of their pupils in mind, would teach the children that what is most relevant to lead to prosperity and growth for the individual pupils and the community alike. Certainly, these are assets of the precolonial non-school community education which Bunyi (1999) describes.

Community education can potentially transfer cultural capital that forms the habitus of that particular community, if the members of that community do in fact embrace their own habitus and external influence is limited. Public governmental education, guided by centrally organized curriculum and teacher training, will on the other hand transfer the dominant habitus as formed by the highly educated elite. But when community education is restrained by government policy, curriculum, discrimination, stigmatization of minority culture, and poverty, this may not be the fact. Through a Bourdieuian perspective one can claim that states have a desire to control education in order to pursue a broad implementation and affirmation of the dominant habitus, while the explicit, overt reason may be an assurance of quality and equality. The process of nation building through *detribalization* simultaneously becomes a process of securing the continued authority of the dominant habitus while also securing the privileges of the dominant ruling classes. Fragile, fairly young African nations such as Kenya, consisting of culturally very diverse populations, are more likely to practice such control than older, more culturally and ethnically homogenous nation states. This process of competing forms of cultural capital may explain the practices encountered in community schools in Kenya.

Supposing that education is truly a field where some win and some lose, and the outcomes are based on the different forms of capital that pupils possess and not on the combination of talent

and effort, a strong incentive for parents to opt for private community education can be theorized although it is difficult to put to the test. If poor, lower class slum household children would attend schools and share classrooms with peers of much more fortunate backgrounds and hence much more cultural capital than themselves, they are destined to lose the competition to their more fortunate peers. Although of course socio-economic differences exist between households and families within the slum population, they are relatively small in comparison to the socio-economic differences between households in the slum and those of middle/high income neighbourhoods. Analyzing poverty as more than just a lack of monetary capital, as in the theory of poverty as *capability deprivation* offered by Sen (1999) which will be described later in this chapter, may further explain why some of the poorest people in the world choose to educate themselves (Tooley, 2009).

However, in approaching modern day education and the function it serves through the eyes of Bourdieu merely as a system of social selection, harbours the danger of pessimism based on the deterministic, inescapable social reproduction in the field of education. It is important to remember that Bourdieu's theories mainly emerge from a highly competitive, bourgeoisie French higher education system which lies far away from Nairobi's slums. Sullivan (2002) points to this particular concern in critiquing Bourdieu's theories and their relevance to social scientists.

I will now briefly discuss Bourdieu's key concepts relevant to this study.

3.1.1 The Concept of Habitus

Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to describe the set of attitudes and values inherited through family and community relations. Habitus is not the most important notion for this study, but has implications for how values and forms of capital are naturally inherited and learnt from the social and cultural environment of the family and community of every individual. Furthermore the concept of habitus is central in Bourdieu's theory on social class formation and reproduction. Every society has a dominant habitus, which is preoccupied with maintaining and increasing the attitudes and values embraced by the dominant class, and hence values education because it serves that purpose (Sullivan, 2002). Privilege is thus a result of a match between an individual's unconsciously adopted habitus and the dominant habitus of the society in which he or she lives, legitimized through the covert social selection embedded in the education system.

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Although important in grasping an understanding of Bourdieuian sociology, Sullivan (2002) questions the value of operationalization of habitus in social inquiry due to its vagueness.

Habitus may help to explain the reproduction of social environments in Nairobi, and why groups of people of specific culture continue to live in parallel communities or pockets with little integration between them, even though new generations are formed. In the context of this paper, the concept of habitus will mainly be referred to as an influence on human choice because it explains how people find meaning in certain aspects of life. The concept of habitus may clarify the very distinct aspirations that people have, and therefore also the choices they make regarding education.

Hart (2013) defends Bourdieu's notion of habitus against claims of determinism such as made by Sullivan (2002), by arguing that Bourdieu did acknowledge that even those with a disadvantageous habitus could seize opportunities and free themselves from an unfortunate future. In fact, Bourdieu himself was an example of someone from a less privileged rural background succeeding in the French higher education system (Hart, 2013). Different forms of capital may hence be required and are not deterministically predestined.

3.1.2 Forms of Capital

> It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one introduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory (Bourdieu, 1986, as cited in Hart, 2013, p. 52).

Bourdieu was of strong opinion that social theory had to escape the heavy influence of economic theory, by recognizing that other resources in the form of symbolic, social, and cultural capital also shape social relations and the potential every individual has for succeeding in life. Bourdieu's theory of different forms of capital harmonizes with the idea of human development as freedom measured as *capabilities* by Sen (1999) in that they both depart from an economic approach to development. Different forms of capital may be transformed into capabilities (Hart, 2013), which in turn may deploy into what Sen describes as *functionings*. Functionings are the very manifestations of human flourishing and require certain conditions such as freedom of choice and education. Many variables may however limit the possibility to develop capital into capabilities and functionings, severe poverty being one of the main obstructions.

Symbolic capital constitutes of one's individual prestige and authority, shaped by personality, attitudes, and actions. Symbolic capital may be linked to language, and specifically to Fishman's theory on *behaviour towards* language that bears a resemblance to Bourdieu's concept of *relation to* language. Symbolic capital is displayed wherever properly speaking a specific language provides one with symbolic status. This does not necessarily have to be the *high* language of the dominant habitus. E. g. being comfortable with the urban slang called Sheng; including knowing all the newest terms, may be important symbolic capital among urban youth subgroups in Nairobi. Clothes, technological devices, and other material possessions are also important manifestations of symbolic capital.

Symbolic capital may also be linked to the use of English in Kenya. Due to the status associated with being fluent in English dating from British colonial rule, it carries a symbolic value of modernity and high-class affiliation. English may be used in contexts where Kiswahili would have been a more efficient medium of communication, but nonetheless be applied due to a *behaviour towards* or *relation to* English based on the view of English being a language of formality and authority.

While symbolic capital as well may reflect a habitus different from the dominant elite, e. g. that of a subculture, cultural capital in the Bourdieuian perspective "…consists of familiarity with the *dominant* culture in a society, and especially the ability to understand and use 'educated' language (Sullivan, 2002, p. 145[emphasis added]). Taking different forms of capital into consideration, instead of simply applying financial capital or the somewhat outdated concept of social class, works well with Sen's idea on relative individual levels of poverty seen as the ability to achieve functionings from capabilities. Different forms of capital may be important for capabilities, and can be related to Sen's concept of *commodities* (Hart, 2013). Both approaches depart from a traditional economic and instrumental view, leaving room for individual considerations and interpretivism. Bourdieu puts much emphasis on how different forms of capital are transferred through inter-generational transfer from the home and community. Sen's theory is more focused on how capabilities may be created by every individual given that the necessary conditions of freedom, security and resources are available. Adding this aspect to Bourdieu´s central theories on sociology may free it from the deterministic austerity of the idea that anyone's path of life is defined by family and community roots alone such as it is criticized by Sullivan (2002). Having mentioned this, it is

important to notice that Bourdieu himself also was of the opinion that social origin does not determine everything a person does, thinks, means or values throughout every moment of life.

Like symbolic capital, cultural capital is closely related to use of language. Bourdieu saw language that reflects familiarity with a society's dominant culture as an especially important form of cultural capital. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) speak of the possession of *linguistic* capital as influential for educational accomplishment. They claim that the influence of linguistic capital is at its most observable in the early years of schooling, when the acquirement of skills in reading, writing and understanding language are central for teaching and assessment. Whether aware or not; teachers take the *style* of language used by their pupils into account. This counts for all levels of formal education. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) recognize the family and in particular the occupation of the father as a prime determinant of a pupil's possession of cultural and hence linguistic capital, emphasizing that language is more than a tool of human communication alone that one either masters or not. Rather; the ability to reach deeper levels of language expressed through an ever richer vocabulary provides opportunity for a deeper understanding of complex phenomena:

> Moreover, language is not simply an instrument of communication: it also provides, together with a richer or poorer vocabulary, a more or less complex system of categories, so that the capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures, whether logical or aesthetic, depends partly on the complexity of the language transmitted by the family (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 73).

Bourdieu and Passeron here speak of high and low variations within one language, namely French. Fishman's theory on "High" and "Low" languages (1972), which will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter, confirms the crucial importance of language competence for learning opportunities. Depending on whether a society is monolingual or bi-/ multilingual, 'educated' language may be a specific, *high culture* variant of a commonly used language or as in the case of Kenya; a completely different language of external origin. Adapting the view on complexity and deeper levels of language as presented by Bourdieu and Passeron in the example above gives ground for serious concern about the limitations pedagogical processes encounter when neither pupils nor teachers have a deep understanding of the language that is used in classrooms, especially when that language is very different from the language acquired in the home and even more so when that language is not widely and naturally used in the community environment. According to Tikly and Barrett (2013), particularly the

community environment plays a crucial role for the quality of education to those of lower socio-economic status.

Education systems presume that pupils hold the necessary cultural and linguistic capital, resulting in much confusion and ineffective teaching because pupils do not understand that what the teacher intends to teach them, when in fact they do not. Pupils on the other hand are reluctant to admit a potentially embarrassing lack of cultural capital. Low-class pupils hold less cultural capital and are therefore more likely to fall behind the apparently meritocratic achievements of their better-off counterparts, a mechanism that causes a societal reproduction of inequality in schools. In making such a claim, Bourdieu implicitly indicates that possessing monetary capital and enjoying high societal status equals possessing cultural capital. The exact ways of how cultural capital is generated from fiscal capital are not made very clear by Bourdieu, but the link between higher social class and educational achievements is long established (Sullivan, 2002).

It is important to note that Bourdieu focuses on subtle notions of classroom practices and pedagogic action as the arena where social stratification is created and correspondingly justified as meritocratic competition. Exceptions to the rule, of which Bourdieu himself was a good example, only contribute to the legitimization of the education system as a fair, leveled ground or *field* (Sullivan, 2002).

3.1.3 The Concept of Field

As already mentioned Bourdieu based much of his theories on the role of education on studies of the French higher education system. He saw the education system as an important field, a playing field where the rules are more intricate than any game man can possibly invent. Within that field several subfields can be found, such as the fields of primary and higher education. Fields are social arenas where anyone´s capital is put to the test. Looking to the education system in Kenya, officially everyone is entitled to play a part in the field of basic education because it is free of charge. In fact, many are excluded due to reasons previously discussed. LCPE can hence be seen as a field created by those not allowed to participate in the official field of public education, constructed as a subfield on the conditions of those involved. Tooley (2009) points to the problematic fact that the western model of public education involving trained teachers, a large bureaucratic governing system and a wide range of material amenities, simply is too expensive to be able accommodate all pupils in low-

income countries. LCPE can hence be seen as a sector and a field constructed upon the resources, possibilities, and habitus of the poor strata in low-income countries. The hope is that participation in this subfield may prepare pupils for future access to the fields of secondary and higher education. An important part of this preparation is to equip the pupils with social and cultural capital associated with the perceived habitus of those fields, explaining the use of high status languages and the emphasis on conformity and discipline as well as the eradication of undesired habitus in the form of indigenous social, cultural and symbolic capital. Sadly, this leads to a process where those that already have little fiscal capital sacrifice most other forms of capital they may possess as well. They do this in the hope that adapting to the dominant habitus and its attitudes, values and language may benefit them in the fields of education and the labour market, and consequently escape a sinister cycle of poverty.

3.2 Poverty as Capability Deprivation

The term poverty is usually used to describe the lack of sufficient material and financial resources, traditionally measured by income level. Sen (1999) challenges this traditional view of poverty, analyzing poverty as *capability deprivation* (p. 87). Through expressing this view Sen recognizes that financial capital alone does not provide a full picture of social reality, harmonizing with the emphasis Bourdieu puts on several other forms of capital. The notion of capability deprivation does not imply that income level is irrelevant when it comes to measuring poverty, but that poverty is more complex and needs to be seen in how far an individual is limited in the freedom his or her freedom to make important life choices.

Observing the life of slum dwellers in Nairobi, applying Sen's approach is useful in analyzing the impact poverty has on individuals and community institutions such as LCPSs. One thing which became very clear during my observations was the limitation of choice on an individual and institutional level extreme poverty causes. One example is how schools have to accept the textbooks which are granted to them by beneficiaries, without the possibility of choosing any other or supplementary material.

Next to limited possibilities of choice, the poor can be limited in converting income into what Sen describes as *functionings* (1999, p. 88). Disabilities or illness, but also a lack of proper education and access to information can prevent people from using their income wisely to

reap the maximal benefits in the sense of increased capabilities. Substance abuse, which is a widespread problem in Nairobi slums, may further contribute to this particular disadvantage.

Another interesting aspect of Sen's approach is the relative dimension of poverty, measured by how a person is able to take part in the life of the community he or she lives in. In Nairobi, with its large gaps of socioeconomic life standards, a person who may be poor measured by the standards of a middle class neighbourhood may be quite rich in the Kibera slum, actually gaining a higher status among the very poor. This may partly explain why poor rural immigrants choose to settle in the slums, despite the dangers and incommodities this causes them. Cheap housing leaves more resources for buying other products and services. One could easily expect slum residents to save the little money they have by for example not going to bars or hairdressers, but the large number of such businesses indicates that these are frequently used by a large part of the population. They are important institutions of local community life, which according to many of my interview participants is an important and positive aspect of life in the slums.

In combining Sen's capability approach and Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of human needs, one can argue that a certain level of security and availability of resources is necessary for any person to live a life in freedom. While Sen's theories are based on socioeconomic grounds and Maslow's on psychological, there are certain communalities. Sen (1999) points out how a capability approach to poverty concentrates on "deprivations that are *intrinsically* important" (p. 87) while low income alone is an *instrumental* matter. In doing so, this approach defines the personal impact of poverty as much more profound than merely a lack of resources.

Relative poverty is according to Sen contextual to the community that particular person lives within, and can therefore not be universally generalized, because the relation between low income and low capability is varying. Generalizing on country, or even region or city level in Kenya, would hence make no sense. According to Sen (1999) one has to look even further; at every family and individual. Any individual is linked to a community, harbouring distinct values related to the place he or she lives. However, a slum such as Kibera can by no means be seen as a healthy, sustainable community for people to live their lives in. AIDS, violence and health and security hazards cause severe limitations the development of capabilities. Sen's capability approach to poverty does not replace, but rather diversifies the notion of third world poverty.

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Adapting this approach has implications for life in rich developed settings as well; be it in pockets in developing countries or in the rich, industrialized parts of the world. If a certain amount of resources is needed for an individual to develop the capabilities to socially function in a particular environment, that person can be relatively poor compared to his or her surroundings. This has implications for a developmental view based on economic growth. The attainment of more and more resources and increased choice of freedom will then raise the relative level of what it takes for a person to take part in life of the community and achieve a certain status, or put in Sen's words: "more income is needed to buy enough commodities to achieve the *same social functioning*" (1999, p. 88, [emphasis by author]). This view not only challenges the very foundations for a traditional view on development as economic growth, but furthermore raises the question whether there is a limit to where personal freedom is beneficial for an individual.

Contextualizing poverty to communities, instead of nationwide measurements, helps creating a more accurate picture of the current economic situation of many countries in SSA. Many speak optimistically about the moderate economic growth in Kenya, the economic hub in eastern Africa, which according to the World Bank Group was estimated to be 5,7 percent in 2013 and 6,0 percent in 2014 (2013). But the fact is that a large part of the population and especially people living in arid rural areas and in urban slums do take little part in this growth, as long as there is a large gap in income. One of the key recommendations made by the World Bank Group is that "public spending should work to remove the role that geography, gender, ethnicity and wealth play in influencing access to key services, so that everyone is in a good position to seize the opportunities being generated in a growing economy" (2013, p. iv) Paradoxically, as some people become richer and index prices rise, the poor become relatively even poorer thus the gap in inequality is not reduced despite national economic growth.

Because basic services such as education and healthcare have the potential to increase an individual's productivity, it should be a societal interest and not only an issue of individual rights for anyone to have the access to such services. According to Sen (1999), earning power and capability improvement strengthen each other. Through increased capabilities, more income can be generated. And more income in turn generates improved capabilities and freedom of choice.

Due to the disproportional income growth in Kenya, a capability deprivation approach to the wide struck poverty in Nairobi slums may provide a useful analytical frame for grasping the

complexity of the current situation. Public policy makers can arguably make better decisions based on a diversified approach to poverty such as Sen's definition of poverty as capability deprivation. According to Tikly and Barrett (2013), in applying education as key to unlocking capabilities "…the quality of education can only be evaluated with reference to specific contexts" (p. 15). On such a note, education quality can thus not be defined universally. The authors refer to three environments that determine education quality; namely the school environment, the home/community environment and the policy environment. Tikly and Barrett further refer to the analysis of SACMEQ II data which suggests that the home/community environment possibly is the most influential of the three when it comes to the learning opportunities of pupils from low socio-economic households in the case of Africa (2013). Living in a slum community hence negatively influences quality learning possibilities. One of the mentioned impediments to quality learning is living in a community that does not commonly use the LOI that is applied in schools.

3.3 The Sociology of Language

The sociology of language is a field that studies how use of languages and different varieties of language such as dialects and sociolects are applied in social interaction within and between speech communities. According to Fishman (1972) there is a constant interaction between "…the characteristics of language varieties, the characteristics of their functions, and the characteristics of their speakers" (p. 7). Fishman defines a speech community as a group of people where "…all members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its appropriate use" (1972, p. 22). Hence there is consensus on appropriate language use within a speech community, whether the rules are explicit or implicit. Apart from these factors, the term gives no definition of size or other aspects of communality of a speech community. The way human beings use language is by no means static, as the constant interaction brings about changes over time. Behaviour towards languages changes alongside changes in social structures. One may argue that the symbolic capital associated with speaking a particular language or variety depends on the sociocultural status of that language through the eyes of the observer. What for members of a given speech community may be interpreted as a dialect may for an outside observer rather be viewed as a sociolect.
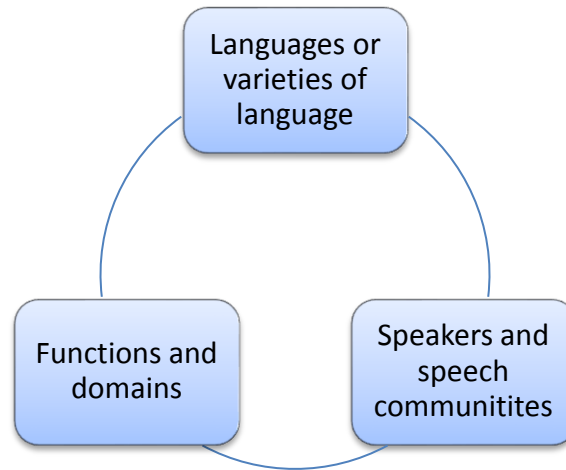
Figure 1: The constant interaction within diglossic speech communities (Fishman, 1972).

In so-called bilingual or diglossic speech communities, where more than one language is used within one speech community, Fishman (1972) argues that a hierarchy exists; where each particular language is applied within a particular social domain serving particular functions. However, also differences *within* one language in the form of certain dialects or wording can be applied to different domains. People change their way of speaking and writing depending on the context of communication.

Bourdieu was focused on revealing the particular role of *educated* or *academic* language in social reproduction. Fishman has less of a conflict focus, and theorizes how languages or varieties of languages can coexist and each serve an important role within its given domain. In the case of Africa, the use of European languages inhibits the development of African languages and hence their applicability in modern society. When languages remain unused for educational and scientific purposes, new terms are not established. The longer a language is neglected for "high" purposes, the more does it fall behind in constructing new terms to be used in a modern economy. According to Prah (2009), African languages have to be "intellectualized" to function in modern society so that the entire continent can escape the use of European languages which contribute to a state of neo-colonialism, seriously hampering development throughout Africa.

Brock-Utne and Skattum (2009) argue that a wide range of African languages categorized as distinct languages essentially can be harmonized as variations of one and the same language, and hence can be harmonized to use the same written code. The division was mainly made by previous missionary activity that developed written codes to languages existing only in oral

form. This notion may be of paramount importance to the issue of language of instruction in education in Africa, as it would facilitate the making of textbooks and other learning material in indigenous languages.

According to Fishman (1972) one language will serve as a H(igh) language and the other as L(ow) within a diglossic speech community. Adapting these earlier ideas from Ferguson, Fishman additionally recognized how highly unrelated languages could coexist as H and L languages, as is the case in Kenya and most other African nations that use European languages as official languages. The radical differences between English and Kiswahili however do not restrain the mixing of elements from the H and L languages. Kiswahili has incorporated many words from English, as may be expected primarily for terms and objects that were introduced by the English and the culture they brought along with colonial rule. An urban phenomenon in the entire East African region is the crossover language of *Sheng,* a slang language that mixes Kiswahili and English, mostly expressed through a new wave of urban youth culture.

The H language is the language of the formal domain, used in official settings such as political and educational institutions. The L language on the other hand serves the domain of mainly informal communication on the community and family level; communication that is more often dialogic than in the domains where the H language is applied. Fishman stresses that for a bilingual society to be defined as diglossic; it has to be linguistically stable. Stability requires each of the two languages to serve separate roles in their particular domains. A society simply does not need two different languages serving the same purposes within the same domains. Fishman's concept of *domain* may be related to Bourdieu's concept of *field*. A field may contain many different domains, and analyzing speech behaviour within these particular domains may as such bring clarity to the social processes being played out in the field. Fishmanian sociology of language may hence become a tool for any social researcher observing and analyzing social processes within a particular field of a bilingual society. Studying language behaviour within or between speech communities that switch between different languages leaves any researcher with a much less complicated task compared to those that embark on studying (often subtle) changes between varieties of one and the same language.

In the case of Nairobi, English is clearly the H language while Kiswahili serves as an L language. This language dynamic is most likely very different in other parts of Kenya, where

more homogenous cultures or micro-nations still actively use their mother tongue. In Nairobi however, other vernaculars are suppressed from all communication beyond the intimacy of the household as people from all micro-nations are culturally and linguistically assimilated to the diglossic use of English and Kiswahili.

A critique on the apparently consensual, complementary existence of two (or more) languages as described by Fishman (1972) as diglossia is given by Kembo-Sure (2009). In the context of foreign, colonial languages, Kembo-Sure argues that languages in a diglossic speech community do in fact compromise each other, and that the use of the colonial inherited H language restrains the development of the indigenous L language by excluding it from all that is high culture.

Furthermore, in the African and Kenyan context, the fact is that society is not bilingual but rather multilingual as most people speak three or more languages (Bunyi, 1999). But due to the limited use of all other languages in public spheres, Fishman's framework of linguistic functions in the form of diglossia can still serve an analysis of language functions and behavior towards language in Nairobi's schools. In a society where both ethnic identity and social status are reflected by which language one speaks and how well one speaks it, the application of language sociology may reveal social patterns and how these are maintained or challenged in social fields. As the use of language is different within rich parts of the population than within the poor, language may not only be an expression of socioeconomic status but also appear to be a tool of pursuing upward socioeconomic mobility. As the education system is an important field for gaining opportunities, and schooling is inseparably intertwined with language use, the role of language in creating, changing or upholding social structures cannot be ignored.

4 Methodology

There exist a large variety of research methods within modern social research. In addition to the traditional deductive quantitative inquiry and the more recently developed qualitative research field there are multiple combinations possible. Not only the topic of interest should be considered when developing a research strategy, but also the very idea of what kind of knowledge one wishes to acquire. Quantitative research methods are often used to produce numeric, generalizable outcomes. Qualitative studies are used by social researchers that aspire to produce thick, rich descriptions of social phenomena while at the same time being sensitive to how social reality is constructed by the individuals or particular groups involved.

According to Bryman (2012) the epistemological foundation of qualitative research departs from the natural scientific inquiry in that it stresses that the social world is to be understood "through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). Such an understanding of the social world is known as *interpretivism.*

The choice of method has implications for the way research questions, problems or hypotheses are stated, explored, analyzed and finally reported. Any research method is based on personal or institutional preferences of social and societal views, including certain ontological and epistemological points of departure.

Explicitly stating this philosophical backdrop to a study and explaining its relevance for the phenomenon to be investigated may bring much clarity to the reader. In this chapter I tend to do just that, by explaining how I approach my topic and why I choose to use a particular research method and strategy.

4.1 Research Strategy and Design

This study of language and quality at Nairobi slum community schools is constructed as a qualitative multiple case study design. An important strength of a case study is that social phenomena may be studied in their natural surroundings, but they leave a researcher with no options to control the environment of the study. Case studies also require much planning, time and resources. Despite these weaknesses, there is claim that case study is a social research method that has been gaining widened accept in areas such as health and education (Yin, 2014; Patton, 1990).

Studies based on different methods on community slum schools have been done (Dixon & Tooley, 2003, 2012; Oketch et al., 2010; Phillipson, 2008; Heyneman & Stern, 2013), but there still exists a lack of knowledge about how these schools are operated, the quality of education they deliver and which challenges they are currently facing. Considering Bourdieu's theoretical concept of habitus, one has to be open to the possibility that perceived challenges do not necessarily include wider patterns of social exclusion. In other words; a habitus of values and attitudes largely exists on a non-conscious level. Any researcher that gets closely involved with a community through a case study must acknowledge that the data he/she collects is a result of the communication between the researcher and the people of interest. As such, a social researcher must acknowledge that also he/she has a set of values and attitudes acquired through inherited habitus and biographical experiences.

My claim is that the language situation in urban slums differs from other domains of Kenyan society due to rural migration and the very marginal life standards of slum inhabitants, as confirmed by a report by Oxfam (2012). Through investigating the use of and attitude towards language in this highly diverse speech community (Fishman, 1972) by acquiring direct knowledge from the community itself, I hope to reveal how the inhabitants of the Kibera slum settlement educate the children of the community and especially how they deal with the complex, ever changing multilingualism of the community. My intention is to apply a constructivist approach to the problem to be studied; identifying problems but also searching for possible solutions through the means of field study and literature review. The chosen research method and design imply that action must be undertaken to change the current status quo of social injustice, hence aiming at societal transformation.

Because a qualitative case study attempts to explore a social phenomenon as experienced through the eyes of the people involved, it requires extensive interpretation of the findings, as the data by itself is meaningless without the necessary contextual information. Such information must include wider aspects of life outside the cases itself. Exploring the nature of these schools, and how they deal with the challenging social, political, cultural, linguistic and economic frames in which they exist may contribute to a deeper understanding of these educational institutions. In turn, a better understanding of these institutions may inform policy making on quality education provision for the poor and clarify some of the controversies clouding the sector.

In choosing a qualitative social research approach, one elects an anti-realist world view stressing that people construct their own knowledge on social realities as groups and individuals. To qualitative social researchers embracing interpretivism and constructivism, the social world cannot be measured through a realist approach, for it is constructed by the people involved. On the same note, one can only create knowledge on the social world by identifying the perceptions and understandings of it by those directly involved. Qualitative research, and in particular classroom ethnography, form an important supplement to the tradition of quantitative research (Patton, 1990; Bryman, 2012). As low quality of education is becoming an ever larger concern (UNESCO, 2014), especially in the regions of the world commonly referred to as *developing*, a term which in itself is highly dubious and reflects a dominant world culture, the study of educational processes on school and classroom level may contribute to much clarity on current barriers to education quality. As this method of research forces researchers to come in close contact with participants and submerge themselves into the reality and experiences of the people and social institutions under scrutiny, the result can be a much needed expansion and deepening of true sensitivity to contextual, cultural and local relevance. When qualitative research on educational *processes* is combined with a more traditional quantitative measurement on educational *outcomes,* I argue that important, solid knowledge is created. This is however a somewhat exaggerated polarization, as processes and outcomes equally can be studied through both quantitative and qualitative methods.

4.2 Research Site

The research site consists of the large informal slum settlement known by its Nubian name of Kibera, meaning forest, in western Nairobi. Nowadays the forest has vanished to make room for thousands of shacks with corrugated tin roofs. Due to practical reasons I focus on one slum settlement only, although several smaller slums can be found elsewhere in Nairobi. Kibera is by far the largest slum in Nairobi and most likely the most populous in all of eastern Africa. Previous and current research on private education for the poor in Kibera (Dixon & Tooley, 2003, 2012; Oketch et al., 2010; Heyneman & Stern, 2013) provides important quantitative data to support this study. There are numerous LCPSs in Kibera and the sector continues to grow according to Dixon and Tooley (2012) despite the fact that parents have to trim money for school fees from reduced budgets due to increased food prices; a result of a food crisis in Nairobi slum areas erupting in 2009 (Oxfam, 2012). Non-inhabitants are not a

welcome sight in slums, thus access to visitors has to be through the support of people that are either residents or those that work in the slums. The fact that I have an established network in Nairobi and the Kibera slum was thus another important factor for the choice of Kibera as the field study site.

The time frame for field data collection was 8 weeks, whereby the first week was needed for contacting and visiting the three schools that make up the case study sample. The final week was reserved for the closure of the field study. Engaging in social institutions such as schools requires social skills and sensitivity to people, especially when the researcher is foreign to the research sites. Sufficient time is needed for proper introduction and closure at each school. This leaves a total of six weeks for school observations and interviews, with a period of two weeks spent at each school. The intensity of observing and interviewing at all three schools within this time frame meant that transcription and data analysis mostly were done after the field data collection was finalized, although emerging findings were allowed to influence data collection.

Community schools in slums are hard to find and contact in advance, due to the slums' poor infrastructure and means of electronic communication. Some schools wish to stay below the radar of officials and researchers, for reasons that will later be explained. This requires a researcher to actively search for and physically visit these institutions. For those not living in the slum it may well be a dangerous task, as official law enforcers tend to avoid these informal urban areas and skepticism towards strangers operates as a way of civil protection.

The comparative, intensive case study approach made it possible to distinguish subtle similarities and differences between the studied cases and link these to a larger discourse on LCPE, education quality and language in education in Africa.

4.2.1 Case Study Sample

The case study involved three primary schools, all within the borders of the slum settlement. All three are so-called community schools, meaning they are run and operated by inhabitants of the local community without the direct involvement of larger NGOs, INGOs or governmental institutions. This method of sampling is referred to as *criterion* sampling by Patton(1990), and is applied when "…sampling is to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion for importance" (p. 176). LCPE certainly involves other types

of schools as well, but I was interested in investigating schools with as tight bonds to their surrounding communities as possible. According to Yin (2014), a selection of 2 or 3 cases is usually applicable in case studies when somewhat similar results are to be expected. In comparing single and multiple case designs, Yin argues that "although all designs can lead to successful case studies, when you have the choice (and resources), multiple-case design may be prepared over single-case designs (2014, p. 63). A random selection of three schools may give an indication of the nature of LCPSs in Kibera, although the sample is not large enough to make generalizations for the entire slum. Case studies are not applied when the making of wider generalizations is a goal of the research.

Communities providing education is a very old phenomenon in Kenya, existing long before colonial powers introduced formal education in the form of schooling to the region. The modern time community schools investigated in this study however take on the form of the formal school model as brought to Africa by the Europeans. These schools are often referred to as informal or non-formal, as most of them do not meet formal school requirements as specified by the Kenyan educational authorities (Heyneman & Stern, 2013). Other frequently used terms are slum schools, private schools for the poor and low-fee private schools. Throughout this thesis the terms low-cost private schools (LCPSs) and low-cost private education (LCPE) will be used.

The three schools are located in different parts of Kibera, which itself is divided into many different neighborhoods containing various compositions of ethnic groups. There are socio-economic differences between these neighbourhoods. Some areas are safer than others as they are better illuminated and have access to a better infrastructure of conducible roads.

All three schools provide national standard primary education, preparing the pupils for their final primary school exam known as the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). This exam is normally undertaken during the month of November at the end of the 8th school year and lasts a total of four days.

All of the involved schools also offer pre-primary education (pre-unit). One school additionally offers a standard four year secondary education. These other education levels have however not been a focus in this primary school study, though contextual observations were carried out where possible.

4.3 Units of Analysis

According to Patton (1990), claims that case studies are fit to support units of analysis up to the organization and community level. In this study the main units of analysis are the educational organizations referred to as LCPSs and their services, consumed by individuals of the community. When studying an organization, naturally one studies the people that make up the organization and those that are influenced by it. In this case, the important matter is what individuals in and linked to these organizations are *thinking, feeling, experiencing*, *doing* and *undergoing*. Such findings are deemed highly relevant in the interpretivist research paradigm. Combining observations of real life situations with interviews and informal conversations gives the possibility to gain insight in how people think, feel and experience their social reality and how they choose to act and behave based on their inner motives. Smaller units of analysis are also included in this study in the form of particular lessons and classes. A further distinction is made between formal and informal settings in schools. Formal settings are defined as any activities that include organized teaching/learning or meetings, while informal settings include all other time spent at school.

Non-participatory or direct observation alone may reveal what people are doing, but give no direct insight in what they are experiencing or thinking on an individual level. Interviews on the other hand give an insight in what people are thinking, feeling and experiencing. Participatory observation provides a means of creating situations where findings can be tested, although variables cannot be controlled as in an experiment. All three methods of data collection may however be influenced by the presence of an external researcher. Brought together, the data from these three data collection methods can be used to create a coherent picture of the reality of the scrutinized phenomenon as experienced by the people involved. Combining these two methods of data collection, one can observe the coherence or incoherence regarding if people actually do what they say and say what they do.

In the analysis of these organizations, data collected from individuals and field experiences from the organizations at large have to be put together in order to form a complete picture. An embedded design, as opposed to a holistic design, is recommended by Yin (2014) when multiple units of analysis are involved.

The units of analysis of this study can be classified into three groups, as is illustrated below in table 1.

Macro units of analysis	Schools and environment	Organization and community level
Meso units of analysis	Classes (grades 1 to 8)	Group level
Micro units of analysis	Lessons/teachers/pupils/parents	Individual level

Table 1: Levels of units of analysis.

Each of these units has important contextual circumstances which need to be taken into account in a comparative analysis. In a real life case study however, many influences are destined to be hidden from the observer as variables cannot be controlled. Yin (2014) recommends case study design where the investigator has little or no possibility to control the events, as is the case in this study.

While the lack of control may be a weakness in a case study design, an undisputable strength is that the phenomenon is being investigated in real life involving real people in their living, working and studying environment. This obviously demands a lot of personal, communicative skills from any researcher and a humble approach and attitude towards the group of interest, especially when this is a vulnerable group.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

Two principal concerns I had before travelling to Kenya were regarding the access to the slum schools and my own personal safety in the slum. I had only briefly visited the Kibera slum earlier and was very aware of the fact that my European appearance would attract a lot of attention. I did not know whether this attention would be primarily negative or positive. I had also been told that my presence could jeopardize those that were seen with me because people may think that I handed them money.

Access and collaboration with schools turned out to be relatively easy, although certain expectations about my role and ability to help the schools sometimes formed a challenge. I never felt threatened anywhere in Kibera, though I was careful always to leave the slum before dark and used motorcycle taxis through parts referred to as *bad* by local inhabitants.

I used semi-structured interviews, direct observation and participant observation as data collection methods during my fieldwork. Initially I had planned to develop questionnaires

with the aim of saturating and triangulating data from observations and interviews, but did not find this to be necessary as I considered data to be reliable as the field work drew to its closure.

Before going to the field I was unsure about whether I would be able to act as a participant observer. As this proved to be possible, at least at two of the schools, it allowed me to develop a third method of data collection, however highly intertwined with direct observation. Yin (2014) separates participant observation from direct observation, emphasizing the value of the *insider* perspective. Although I by no means was an insider to the pupils, teaching classes provided an opportunity for in-class communication with pupils and to observe their behaviour and ways of communication without the presence of a teacher. The spending of more time at each school might have given me the opportunity to be a more natural element of the school environment, but within the frame of two weeks spent at each case school and the fact that I was quite an exotic appearance as the only present European, made it impossible to blend in.

4.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews form the most extensive source of data collected for this study, especially regarding the thoughts, feelings, experiences and views of the individual participants. Interview data cuts across all units of analysis, depending on the participant´s relation to the organization. Although teachers and parents were the most important informants for this study, I chose to carry out two focus group interviews with pupils as well to learn about their career aspirations and relation to school. Interview guides directed the questions to be asked to different groups of participants, but frequently I allowed interviews to depart from the standard questions whenever something potentially interesting was brought up by participants.

Semi-structured guides allow interviews to change direction and follow an explorative path, making it possible to pursue a conversation partly based on the conditions of the participant. A guide is however necessary to ensure that relevant data connected to the research questions actually is collected. I therefore designed three rough guides containing questions I wanted to be answered; one for every category of participants.

4.4.2 Direct Observation

Direct observation makes up the second largest data set. Like interviews it cuts across all levels of units of analysis, as observations are made in any accessible situation possible in and around the schools. Direct observation also involves the larger community and environment outside the schools, though most data was collected during teaching/learning practices in lessons.

The strength of direct observation is its nature of little interference, while it at the same time bypasses the personal translation of events by interview participants. Semi-structured observation guides for in-class observation ensured that relevant data was collected, while at the same time leaving the possibility open to record any other contextual data that may be of importance. A challenge is to distinguish between deciding what is to be considered relevant or not while in the process of observing, especially while being in an unaccustomed environment. Patton (1990) points to the important fact that data collection through observation allows the researcher to directly observe a phenomenon as opposed to through the insights of interview participants, which may be biased. Observations are however very time consuming and labour intensive.

4.4.3 Participant Observation

Yin (2014) makes a distinction between direct and participant observation, but I shifted a lot between these two observation methods depending on the occasion. The fact is that it frequently changed a number of times during on single day, without the possibility of drawing a clear line to when one ended and the other began. A lesson is quite an intimate affair between the teacher(s) and the pupils in the classroom, and although one tries to be as invisible as possible during direct observation there is always some communication going on, however subtle it may be.

An important question is whether it is possible to triangulate between these three data collection methods when the distinction between direct and participant observation becomes blurry. The data collected from direct observation is much larger than the amount of data collected by participant observation. However, the role as participant provided me with a large amount of contextual information and was of immense value in getting to know pupils and teachers.

4.5 Data Analysis

Yin (2014) prescribes an embedded approach to data analysis whenever multiple units of analysis are involved. Each case is first analyzed and interpreted separately, to be followed up by a cross case analysis. Findings and patterns may then be compared and lead to an overall conclusion. In order to be able to adapt data collection methods during the field study and be open to unanticipated phenomena, findings were analyzed during the field study. Without a thorough literature study and application of theory this would not have been possible, simply because I would not have known how to focus my attention based on the research purpose and questions alone. According to Patton, "the challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal"(1990, p. 371). Patterns must therefore be allowed to emerge from the data, but theory is needed as a framework for the interpretation and presentation of that data.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Doing research within a community of marginalized and vulnerable people requires thorough reflection on ethical considerations. Although I had contacts within Nairobi city and the Kibera slum from previous visits, this was the first time I was going to collect real life data from people living, learning and working in the slum.

The lack of financial resources results in a wide range of deprivations and potentially vulnerability among the inhabitants of Kibera. Political tensions are under control for now, but recent history shows that the situation easily ignites. Doing research that involves native language and ethnicity is thus a sensitive theme in a country where politics is defined by ethnicity.

My preference for a participatory role was not only due to an improved data collection. I did not want to disturb these schools in their daily work by my presence, and preferred to offer my contributions in any way possible. As I had predicted I got plenty of requests for financial contributions, but only agreed to assist by providing them some basic learning materials such as blackboard chalk, math sets and writing books.

My research questions require no particular sensitive information on the lives of the people involved. As the focus is mainly institutional, I had little interest in knowing the life stories of participants and avoided questions that would provide sensitive data I didn`t need. Nonetheless, through informal conversations with participants I was given sensitive information. This was not recorded in any way, but contributes to creating a completer picture of how people live in the slum and experience their world.

As I have mentioned earlier, I am convinced that I would have lost out on a lot of important information through these informal conversation if I had not submerged myself into the school environment as an active, participating researcher.

Even if most of the data is not judged to be very sensitive, all names of participants and institutions are constructed.

At every school where I conducted my research I provided a document explaining my research purpose, research questions and roughly what I was looking for. Interview participants were given a consent form guaranteeing them full anonymity and explaining that they could withdraw or refuse to answer any question if they wished to do so, without having to explain the reason why. I also included my e-mail address in case they ever wanted to contact me with further information or questions. When necessary this document was orally translated to Kiswahili or Luo by my local assistant and interpreter.

4.7 Concerns Regarding Reliability and Validity

Concerns on reliability and validity of conducted research are, or should be, of much importance for quantitative and qualitative researchers alike. The quantitative social research field has established fixed criteria for measurement during its long dominant position (Bryman, 2012) though there are no fixed, largely established measures for the validation of qualitative studies.

Bryman (2012) presents several alternative criteria to reliability and validity for qualitative researchers, describing *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* originally developed by Guba and Lincoln as good alternatives to reliability and validity.

4.7.1 Trustworthiness and Authenticity

One of the problems with applying quality concepts from the quantitative research tradition to a qualitative study is that epistemological and ontological strands about social reality are very different. As previously mentioned, the constructivist and interpretivist foundations of qualitative research depart from the realist view. However, according to Bryman (2012) there is still debate on how the quality of qualitative research can and should be assured. An important technique I adapted in the process of data collection and analysis was that of data triangulation, which serves to strengthen a study according to Patton (1990). I applied different sources of data, while I attempted to enhance credibility by discussing my findings with school staff and finally relating them to other relevant studies.

According to Brock-Utne (1996), Western researchers doing study on education in Africa have to be aware of their Eurocentric background. The aspect of reliability and validity starts, and might already fall, by the very way that the research problem and/or questions are voiced.

Regarding qualitative study, Brock-Utne refers to a component called *ecological validity* (1996, p. 617) as especially important for the quality of social research in Africa. This term relates to the notion of *fairness,* a criterion for authenticity as suggested by Lincoln and Guba, presented by Bryman (2012). It raises the question whether the researcher has paid sufficient attention to collecting and presenting the different viewpoint of *all* members of the investigated social venue. Any institutional hierarchy is likely to inhabit groups or individuals with views that conflict with those of dominant leaders. Being insensitive to these nuances may provide an inaccurate picture of the phenomenon under study. Broad and detailed data has to be gathered in order to comprehend the actual situation and hence certify high ecological validity and fairness. In a qualitative case study, this demands a thorough selection of informants and units of analysis.

Making all voices heard and spending extensive time on directly observing the school activities, thereby ensuring high ecological validity, is of paramount importance for this study. The critical, grass root approach of this study would be completely invalid if data was collected on policy alone, only considering how things are *supposed* to be. A few good examples were a school policy poster in a staff room I visited proclaiming that only English should be spoken in school, and a head teacher telling me that corporal punishment by

teachers was not occurring in his school. Both of these proved to be wrong, but would not have been revealed were it not for innumerable hours spent on direct observation.

Another major concern was the impact that my presence would have on the normal every day situation of the schools. As earlier mentioned, my physical appearance attracts a lot of attention and Kibera inhabitants have a certain pre-perception of the European. The question I asked myself was whether behavior of participants and daily happenings would change during my stay, and how large such an impact would be. This is one of the weaknesses of a partly participatory case study.

I had no specific method of ruling out or judging that influence, although I encountered certain indicators. One very strong indication of a low level of observer influence was the persistent practice of physically punishing pupils while I was in class, even when this conflicts with the Kenyan law and teachers most likely know that most Europeans strongly disapprove of it. I am convinced, however, that spending a maximum of time on both direct and participatory observation not only provides very rich data but also "normalizes" the presence of an exterior observer.

An unexpected result of spending that much time at schools, which may be judged to be both negative and positive, was the emotional bond that I developed with pupils, teachers and other school staff.

5 Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents and discusses the main findings from the field data collection in relation to the literature and theory applied to this study. The findings have emerged from a broad data set from 30 days of school observation and a total of 19 semi-structured field interviews. In selecting participants I prioritized to interview only school staff directly involved in pedagogical activities, as well as randomly selected pupils and their parents. Due to practical limitations, the number of interviews carried out at each school differs:

St Manuel	St Catherine	Leonard Friends
1 head teacher	1 head teacher	1 teacher
2 teachers	1 teacher	1 treasury board member
5 parents	1 pupil focus group	4 parents
1 pupil focus group		1 pupil focus group
9 interviews	**3 interviews**	**7 interviews**

Table 2: Number of interviews carried out at each school.

In addition to the 19 interviews and collected observation data, much information was gathered during informal observations and conversations in and around the schools. I used every opportunity I encountered to acquire extensive contextual data that could enrich my understanding of the schools and the slum community in which they operate. Amongst others, I was invited to a Kiswahili teacher seminar organized by the Kibera branch of the Kenya Independent School Association and got the opportunity to socialize with teachers and pupils outside the environment of the school on a class field trip I organized. The information gathered during informal settings has been of paramount importance because it has helped me to understand my findings and at least a small part of the reality in which the participants live their lives. Due to security reasons I was not able to accomplish my wish of living in the Kibera slum during these two months of field study.

During the selection process of case samples, only very basic criteria about the schools were known. The following 5 criteria were the only ones that had to be fulfilled in order for s school to qualify as a sample unit:

1. Schools had to be located in the Kibera informal settlement.
2. Schools had to provide the full 8 years of primary education.
3. Schools had to be independent, private community schools.

4. Schools had to be located in different neighbourhoods of Kibera.
5. Schools had to be accessible and accept my presence.

Anything else about these schools was unknown to me before I had the opportunity to actually visit them and meet principals, head teachers and teachers during the preparatory week of my field work. Before continuing to present and discuss my findings in this chapter, I will present important contextual information on each of the schools. The following subchapter hence presents extended information about the school sample, which was unknown to me before the field data collection was initiated.

5.1 Field Findings of Case Schools

During my field work I was eager to discover the challenges the three LCPSs currently faced and how the community perceived possible solutions to overcome these challenges. Having been in Kibera before as well as studied literature and NGO reports on the Kibera slum, the overall life conditions of Nairobi's slum dwellers were already known to me. I had observed numerous educational institutions on my previous visit, most of which were located in anonymous sheet metal structures. Frequently I would spot a large group of children sitting behind wooden school desks in a poorly lit room whenever a door was opened as I walked by. With the optimistic article on alternative schooling by Farrell and Hartwell (2008) fresh in mind, I was eager to find out more about the innovative education practices happening at independent schools.

None of this had however prepared me for the conditions of the large slum that met me when I set out on foot to visit the schools that had accepted my presence and were willing to collaborate in my research project. I will not reveal the exact locations or names on any of the schools or participants involved, but find it important to point to some of the differences and similarities between them.

All three schools are to a large degree Christian religious, with Leonard Friends receiving some support from a Quaker church organization. The three schools are located in different parts of the slum area, which itself is divided into many different neighborhoods containing various compositions of ethnic groups. St Manuel is located on the northwestern outskirts of Kibera, St Catherine in the southwest while Leonard Friends is in southern central Kibera. The location of St Manuel and St Catherine on the outskirts of the slum settlement made them

more easily to access by public transportation than Leonard Friends, where I had to use motorcycle taxi because walking was considered too dangerous for me. The first two schools also had better access to open spaces outside the school compound due to their peripheral locations, although restrictions were caused by road construction in the case of St Catherine and private property ownership in the case of St Manuel.

All three schools provide primary education, preparing the pupils for their final exam known as the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). This exam is normally undertaken under government representative surveillance at the end of the 8th school year and lasts for four days. The 3rd and final term of the school year ends in November, meaning that schools were busy with preparing class 8 pupils for their exams in during the months of September and November when I was visiting. All of the involved schools also offer pre-primary education (commonly referred to as baby class and pre-unit). St Manuel furthermore offers the four years of standard Kenyan secondary education. These other school levels have however not been a focus in this school study, though contextual observations were carried out wherever possible.

I put an emphasis on finding schools in different areas of this large slum because ethnic configurations differ in the various neighbourhoods of Kibera. Although the slum may appear as one large unorganized mass of structures and paths to an outside visitor, the slum consists of many different neighbourhoods consisting of varying ethnic compositions. Different ethnic configurations may have an influence on the language situation, as a high concentration of a particular ethnic group may promote an extended use of that group's indigenous language. E. g. St Catherine is located within a part of Kibera with a high percentage of Luo inhabitants, probably the largest ethnic group or micro-nation represented in Kibera according to interview participants. While vernaculars of e.g. the Kamba and Kikuyu micro-nations are of the Bantu language family and closely related to Kiswahili, the language of the Luo micro-nation belongs to the Nilotic language family.

The schools also differ significantly in size and number of pupils and teachers. Exact numbers are difficult to calculate, because there is inconsistency in school participation. Children may be taken out of school for a time when parents are unable to pay school fees or go upcountry to their place of origin for familial reasons. The head teacher of St Manuel reported that the number of pupils had fallen drastically after the post-election violence in 2007/2008 and yet not had recovered.

School:	St Manuel	St Catherine	Leonard Friends
Location:	North-western Kibera	South-western Kibera	Southern central Kibera
Levels:	Pre-unit, primary, secondary.	Pre-unit, primary	Pre-unit, primary
No of pupils:	Approx. 400	Approx. 300	Approx. 200

Table 3: Number of children enrolled in each school.

As previously mentioned I placed no emphasis on religious affiliation when selecting my sample, but all three schools teach a curriculum dominated by Christian religion. Although there are quite a few Muslims among the population in Kibera, by far most inhabitants and schools are Christian. Muslim pupils were observed at both St Manuel and St Catherine, although following the Christian Religious Education (CRE) lessons like all other pupils. Schools can choose between teaching religion in Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. These three religions are also reflected in the final KCPE exams, where pupils need to select a batch of questions in either one of them in the compulsory exam in CRE. All three schools were found to be highly confessional in their religious teaching, with the exception of a few CRE lessons observed in higher primary levels.

One variable which was not taken in to consideration in this study is that the behavior towards Kiswahili may be influenced by religious belief. Kiswahili originates from the Swahili people along the Indian Ocean coast. Both Swahili culture and language are much influenced by Arabic culture and language and hence also Islam, due to the intercultural exchange shaped by the ancient trade routes in the Indian Ocean. I did however not encounter any explicit comments on this particular issue; hence I consider it to be of minor importance to this study.

Although some LCPSs receive some extra funding by religious institutions and other beneficiaries, they are completely dependent on school fees paid by parents. As I will explore in further detail later, the financial situation is one of the main existential challenges these community schools are facing. Many parents have no regular fixed income but do small jobs here and there, a way of temporary work known as *jua kali* (bitter sun) in Kiswahili, which serves to at least put some food on the table. Paying school fees on a regular basis is therefore very difficult for many parents, especially for those running a household with many children or single parents, in turn causing very insecure income conditions for teachers and other school staff:

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Most of the parents are not well, they lack money. So sometimes it takes long for them to pay school fees. Sometimes our salary delays because of the lack of school fees (Class 3 teacher, St Manuel).

Another common factor for the three schools that make up the sample for this study is the lack of a proper, permanent building structure and amenities such as satisfactory toilet facilities and playgrounds for the pupils. As I will further explain later in this chapter, these shortcomings do not only cause a very poor and unpleasant, sometimes even hazardous, school environment for pupils and teachers alike but also makes it impossible to register as a recognized school by the educational authorities.

Nevertheless, there are considerable differences between the standard of physical structures between the three schools. St Catherine stands out from the other two schools with a relatively spacious compound and somewhat better buildings, though the majority still being simple metal sheet shelters. At the time of study the school yard was being upgraded through the planting of trees. St Manuel on the other hand is very cramped, with open latrines centrally placed in the school creating an unhealthy and malodourous environment. At Leonard Friends, an unfinished second floor was being constructed on top of the old mud and concrete classroom block. Poor physical structures were often mentioned as a main concern and impediment to a higher quality of education by interviewed parents and school staff.

A considerable problem with the metal sheet structures is the severe heat that is radiated down into the classrooms when the sun heats the roof at midday. I often found it almost unbearable to remain inside a classroom at midday, while it on other days could be very cold early in the morning. These structures offer little protection against dust and harsh weather conditions, and floods and fire form a serious threat to the slum inhabitants. The ground Kibera is built on is unstable, consisting of dirt and mud. The heavy deforestation to create space for structures has destabilized the ground of the area even further.

All in all, the challenges of living, not to mention running a school, in a slum are numerous. Social networking is important, and there are numerous self-help groups. The image of poor, passive slum dwellers does not give justice to the majority of hardworking people I observed. Although it is natural to have a problem focus while carrying out data collection for a thesis, I also wanted to know if participants perceived any positive sides of living and working in a slum settlement.

5.1.2 Perceived Challenges and Benefits of the Slum Community

One does not actually have to visit a slum to be able to acknowledge that living conditions are extremely poor. During my field work in Kibera, I was conscious of not only identifying problems and challenges that schools and inhabitants face. I wanted to know if there were any positive aspects of life in the slums as well. My own perception of the slum changed a lot during the two months I spent large parts of the days there. At first the bustling, loud and dirty environment can appear very intimidating, but little by little it occurred to me that it is also a place of human resilience, creativity and entrepreneurialism. Everywhere there are street workshops that repair and maintain vehicles, little shops that sell crop and other foodstuffs, butcheries and carpentries. Simply describing the poverty and hazards of the slum would not do the people of Kibera justice.

In and around the schools I met a strong community fellowship, although many teachers proclaimed frustration about the level of participation and follow-up by their pupils' parents. Among the benefits most frequently mentioned was the positive human interaction:

> The people. I like the people, the children. They're nice. The interaction is better compared to those people (Class 3 teacher, St Manuel).

The presence of numerous NGOs was also mentioned as a positive aspect of life in the slums. Kibera is an internationally relatively well known slum, due to its appearances in several movies and music videos and because of the UN-Habitat headquarters that are located nearby. Countless NGOs are active within the slum providing much needed poverty relief. However, the problematic aspect is that the widespread NGO activity may provide a justification for national authorities not to take action.

There is a weak presence of official law enforcement in Kibera, so people from the civil society protect one another. Neighbours find safety in knowing each other and the community well, and those that do not have their home in the slum will frequently be approached and questioned about their business in Kibera. Mob justice is also a part of the self-regulation of slum society; being caught in stealing can in worst case cost the thief his or her life by the hands of an angry crowd. I was cautious not to make any negative comments about the surroundings I suddenly found myself within. There is much pride in the habitus of slum dwellers, and although the standard of the schools leaves much to desire they are often in

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better condition than the houses in which families live. Opinions differ among teachers; while one teacher referred to the social community of the slum as rotten, another named it positive:

> It is positive because, like in Kibera – ok, people; before they come here they say: This place, they talk it negatively like we have robbers, thieves, you cannot walk on your own. But when you come in, you find that people live socially. They are quite friendly. Other than other places: Like when I walk around, I myself with a cellphone, I try to talk and say: Oh, here you can talk but if you could be at a certain place in the neighbourhood, this phone could have gone. Yeah, so Kibera is safe. And people try to know each other. If you are new, people start asking "Where are you coming from?" They must know what you are doing, because you may assume someone…and something bad happens (Subject teacher, St Catherine).

Although the teacher above suggests that the slum is safe, armed robbery and assault on girls and women happens frequently in Kibera's dark spots. Dark spots are places where the light from the tall lampposts does not reach. Several NGOs have successfully been working on mapping the slum and its dark spots to alert inhabitants of the dangers. Knowing your neighbours is thus not only a matter of pleasurable social contact, but critical for ones safety in the slum. Schools also rely on the local community for protection. Unfortunately, not all members of the community have the best interests for the schools. The head teacher of St Catherine reported to me that:

> It is good that the community is involved in the operations of the school. Because I have seen that somebody may decide to help the school, you may decide to bring food to the school. But the community do not understand. They normally come and take the food away. So we should really think of involving them so that they know the problems of the school. Yeah. And make the school safe for the children (Head teacher, St Catherine).

Almost all problems that participants mentioned can be traced back to the main source of poverty. Schools also fall victim to petty crime. Violence and drug and alcohol abuse are caused by the frustration experienced by young men deprived of their natural aspirations for paid work that can support the founding of a family. If the community environment is such an important measure for education quality, any community upgrade will benefit learning conditions for children. This endorses the crucial link between community and school in poor neighbourhoods.

I will now briefly discuss the reasons for why parents opt for LCPSs in Kibera.

5.1.2 Parental Choice for LCPE

Dixon and Tooley (2012) refer to a study carried out by Oketch et al. (2010) which shows that the attendance of private schools is almost twice as high as the attendance of public schools in slums compared to formal neighbourhoods. This indicates a persisting and growing demand for education in the slums, reflecting a growth of population and most likely also an increased awareness of the importance of education among parents. It seems a paradox that a higher percentage of primary school aged children are enrolled in private schools in slums than in middle-class neighbourhoods in Nairobi.

Oketch et al. (2010) explain this phenomenon by indicating that parents in the slum choose private schools because no other option is available, a matter of *quantity*, while wealthier parents choose to enroll their children in private schools in search for better *quality*. However, several of the parents I interviewed, some of which had children in public schools as well, indicated that their choice of a LCPS was based on a matter of quality. Many claimed that quality was very low at public schools, responding that they would not choose to let their children attend one of the few non-fee public schools around Kibera when asked if they would do so if given the possibility:

> In public school there are so many students in each class, so the teachers don't concentrate, they concentrate on the group. But here the concept is individuality, the child is an individual, when the child doesn't do well, they call the parent, they talk with the child. They focus on the individual of the child, unlike in public - they focus on the group because there are so many. There is no concentration. They cannot take that responsibility (Mother of two, St Manuel).

Dixon and Tooley (2012) on the other hand suggest that the importance of a good quality education may be most important for the very poorest residents of slum communities, for whom "…educational opportunities may matter more than for anyone else" (p. 692). Parents of richer households may have the desire to provide their children with the necessary means to enjoy a life style that matches their own. The necessary cultural capital is already present in the family. Parents of poor house-holds unsurprisingly want their children to enjoy a *better* life than themselves; hence their children have to acquire cultural capital through education.

There are also multiple indications of hidden costs at seemingly free public primary schools that can partly explain the popularity of LCPSs among the poorest parents, but the most frequently mentioned reasons for choosing a LCPS were the quality of education and

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accountability of teachers. Most parents I interviewed told me that teachers at public schools are irresponsible and unaccountable, while the private slum schools put all their effort in preparing the pupils as well as utterly possible for their class 8 exams. This apparently strong teacher commitment was reinforced by parents I interviewed at all three schools.

Parents frequently addressed language subjects as the most important for their children to learn. According to Bourdieu, linguistic capital is crucial for succeeding in education. Parents seem to be well aware of the fact that the learning of proper English skills is a key to higher social status. As pointed out by Qorro (2009), parents are however not aware of the fact that their children do in fact not learn English efficiently through the use of English as LOI. A mother at St Manuel explained that she perceived English to be learnt well through its application in the classroom, when asked about which school subjects she regarded as most important for her children:

> All subjects, but basically the knowledge. But apart from knowledge, through that knowledge they learn English, Kiswahili, math…(Mother, St Manuel).

In Nairobi, most public and private schools alike apply English as the main LOI. Therefore LOI is not an important factor for parents to opt for LCPE in the case of Kenya.

I will now turn to look to how the large number of LCPSs in Kibera manages to function financially in the difficult economic environment.

5.2 Funding and Finance

All three community schools rely completely on parental school fees to cover their running costs, an income which as previously mentioned is highly instable. School fees vary by class, with the higher classes and especially class 8 as more expensive than the lower primary classes. In average the school fees were about 4.000 Kenyan shillings, or 45 USD. The individual ability to pay school fees is also affected by national economic fluctuation. According to Oxfam (2012), in 2009 a national food crisis developed in Kenya affecting especially those living in urban slums. There is no land for people to grow anything, and although some people have livestock such as pigs and goats most foodstuffs have to be bought. Kenya has experienced severe periods of drought, a problem likely to continue due to global climate change. Food prices skyrocketed, leaving slum households with fewer resources to cover school fees. During my field work in September and October 2013, the

Kenyan government increased value added tax on a number of basic foodstuffs and petrol to increase its national tax revenue. Poor and densely populated environments such as Kibera are extremely vulnerable to the slightest increases in the price of necessary basic foodstuffs, and increased petrol prices require bus and *matatu* (public transport minivans) operators to raise ticket fares. Multilateral development organizations such as UNESCO have to be careful when they advise governments of developing countries to increase their education budgets through increasing tax revenue. Marginal households are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by even small increases in the taxation of goods and services.

In addition to collecting parental school fees, Leonard Friends additionally receives some financial and management support from the church association it belongs to, and all schools attempt to attract beneficiaries that can support them economically. The situation at St Catherine was particularly difficult at the moment of field inquiry. The school had received financial support during several years from a Kibera based NGO and a Russian philanthropist, but both of these financial sources had recently been cut off. According to the head teacher the NGO was corrupt and the Russian philanthropist had lost her business. The school had started to depend on the "extra" income these two sources had added to the income from school fees, and the current financial vacuum was creating a crisis. The discovery of the troublesome financial situation of St Catherine explained why the facilities of this school were relatively good and well maintained compared to those of St Manuel and Leonard Friends, while at the other hand teachers were waiting for their salaries and the school lacked the resources to cover the upcoming KCPE exams.

The mentioned example indicates how vulnerable the financial situation of LCPSs in Kibera is. Unsustainable financial support may in fact cause damage when it is later cut off, as schools begin to rely on the extra available resources. Teachers may have to be discharged from their work or parental fees may suddenly have to be increased to compensate the loss. The informal status of the settlements in which these schools exist inhibits them from getting loans in any commercial banks, which means that they have no financial buffer which may help them through hard times. In the end, the only somewhat reliable source of income is the school fees paid by parents.

An important finding is that in investing in the education of their children through providing them with schooling, parents actually invest in their own future as well. Children are an important resource not only because they can do chores in the household at present time, but

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they are also the ones that can support their parents once they grow up and hopefully enter the labour market. The main idea is that how higher the educational achievements of their children (measured in test scores), the better the chances for a well-paid job in the future, the more they can expect to be cared for later on.

> Then back home, you will find that they do help their children. The parents I mean. You know, the kind of poverty that we have in Kibera specifically, it is not all that good. So you will realize that when the pupils undergo all that process, and they get a chance somewhere, they can raise the standard of living to the parents (Subject teacher, St Manuel).

As the absolute majority of parents are employed in the informal sector or run a small private subsistence business, there are no lookouts for any financial provision when the day comes that they have to stop working due to illness or old age. Their children are the only ones they can hope to depend on when that day comes. This may partly explain the pressure parents put on their children to succeed in education, and why discipline is such a valued virtue perceived as an important asset of quality in schools.

This further illustrates the point made by Dixon and Tooley (2012); that the poorest parents have the most to win or lose on their children's education and hence are highly preoccupied with what they perceive as good quality education.

5.2.1 International Aid to LCPE

Large bilateral aid agencies such as USAID limit their support to the LCPE sector to the provision of learning materials in the form textbooks. Although most donor-financed text books I encountered during my research were written and published within Kenya they were financed by USAID. This poses a risk of potential foreign cultural and linguistic influence. The lack of willingness to get more involved in the LCPE sector by bilateral aid organizations is likely to be influenced by the controversies surrounding these institutions. A clear legislative framework could improve the situation.

A report prepared by Niemerg for the IDP Foundation in May 2013 concludes that several large bilateral aid agencies currently are supporting projects that involve LCPE. This may indicate that the attitude towards the private sector is changing. In the case of multilateral UN agencies, although some resources may trickle down to the LCPS sector, no direct financial support is provided. According to Niemerg (2013), the support of LCPE fits program goals of

the UNDP, but "actual support to LCPS and other NGO-based low-fee non state education providers is non-existent" (p. 16). According to this report, supporting LCPS would serve multiple UNDP target goals including encouraging local entrepreneurialism, job creation and service delivery. Niemerg explains that UNICEF traditionally has supported local governments on policy-level, but is likely to get more involved in the LCPS sector in the future.

Financial instability was mentioned as the main obstacle to deliver quality education by all parents and school staff I interviewed. It has negative impact on all other important facets such as the quality of the school facilities, the ability to provide nutrition for poor children, to buy proper learning materials and very essentially it impacts human resources. The fact that teachers cannot expect to be paid regularly makes them look for greener pastures, causing a lack of continuity in the teacher pool:

> The main one is the financial instability. It is not very easy for a school like this to run minus the financing. Number one; the teachers who are there – by the end of every month they will wish to have at least a token of appreciation for what they are doing (Head teacher, St Manuel).

An improvement of the financial situation would most definitely improve the situation of these slum schools and raise the quality of education. Even a very low level of financial support could make a large difference, so that at least buildings can be maintained, teachers paid and learning materials bought. But also foreign aid donations can prove to be unsustainable, as is often seen for example through political disagreements. Ideally, any country should be able to support its own education system.

5.2.2 Government Policy on LCPE

Another barrier for Kenyan LCPSs is formed by current governmental policies. Heyneman and Stern (2013) have done research on how policy could be changed to facilitate the conditions for private schools for the poor. Within the current national policy framework, the Kenyan government classifies these schools as small private businesses and a yearly tax fee is charged. The problem is that for an educational institution to be registered as a school under the ministry of education, one of the criteria for registry is that the school must own the land upon which it is built. As slums are technically illegal settlements, none of these low-fee private slum schools succeed in fulfilling this criterion. The only way these schools can

register is under the Ministry of Sports, Gender and Social Services (Heyneman & Stern, 2013, p. 120). Government policy is that fee charging organizations under this ministry are taxed as businesses. This is just another example of how public policy contributes to the marginalization of slum inhabitants, limiting their capabilities of social improvement. Considering the fact that these community schools fulfill a task the government has sworn to fulfill, such a policy is highly questionable. When slum dwellers end up paying (more) for services other citizens receive for free, further exacerbation of inequality is the result.

Looking to the literature on LCPE, one of the main topics of debate appears to be the question how governmental institutions should relate to the LCPS sector.

Another result of Kenyan land owning policy is that public schools only can be built outside the slum. This implies that parents living in the middle of the slum daily must send their children on a potentially hazardous school way. Neither parents nor teachers mentioned this particular issue in interviews I conducted, but may be important for why parents choose to enroll their children in private schools. According to the research of Heyneman and Stern (2013) this is one of the main reasons for the expansion of slum schools.

A way to avoid such taxation would then be to sidestep public registration, but this would make any school an illegal business and deprive them of the right to offer the national KCPE exams at the end of the 8th primary school year. This would make a school less competitive compared to any registered counterparts, attracting less enrollments and hence less income through parental school fees.

During conversations with teachers I heard rumours that there are in fact a number of schools in Kibera that take advantage of the situation and generate quite a large income for their owner. During my field study I had no time to investigate these rumours further, nor were they part of my scope. I find it hard to imagine that this is possible, as there is a certain competition for enrollments and high school fees would make parents reluctant to enroll their children. However, in a climate of poverty and high levels of unemployment it may be plausible that some private school owners exploit their teaching staff. Corruption exists at all levels of Kenyan society, thus it would be naïve to think there is none within the education system. According to Heyneman and Stern (2013) however, corruption may be less of a problem in small, highly transparent community based institutions then in large, bureaucratic government systems such as the public education system. My own findings from interviews

with teachers and parents coincide with the findings of both Tooley and Heyneman and Stern. Teacher absenteeism seems to be less and the teachers are found to more accountable in private schools.

The fact is that government policy at the time of writing makes no difference between for-profit and non-profit educational institutions. The complex situation of land ownership and regulations contributes to further marginalize the social rights of slum inhabitants.

Looking to the literature on LCPE, one of the main topics of debate appears to be the question how governmental institutions should relate to the private LCPS sector.

To register as a school under the Ministry of Education one of the criteria is that the land is owned. Looking to the literature on LCPE, one of the main topics of debate appears to be the question how governmental institutions should relate to the private LCPS sector.

> It is difficult, because right now as we are in Kibera the government do not have any plan with the informal settlement. So if you initiate a school in Kibera, it is not easy for the government to support you. So that is the difficulty we are seeing. Again being this as a primary school, and the government is declaring out there that primary education is free it is very difficult to approach any organization to really help, because what they will be saying: The government is providing free primary education – what support can we give? (Head teacher, St Catherine).

The comment above illustrates how public policy also influences NGO activity negatively.

As Tooley (2012) points out, forming a public private partnership between the government and slum community schools by providing them partial funding could boost the Kenyan government`s plans to really provide education for all. Such a solution could me much less costly than multiplying the amount of public schools to provide education for all those growing up in urban slums.

5.2.2 Employment of Teachers

LCPS teachers are paid much less than their peers employed by government schools in Kenya, where wages are negotiated with the state through powerful teacher unions. In addition to being much lower, salaries are also much more insecure because schools need to collect parental fees to be able to pay teachers. A whole other range of conditions can be added to the list of incommodities these teachers have to withstand.

The question is why teachers then choose to work at these schools, comparing their detrimental situation to the situation of teachers at government schools. Phillipson (2008) also raises this particular question. It is important to note that a majority of these teachers come from the local community. Only one teacher I interviewed reported to have moved from a different part of Nairobi for employment, while many others reported to have moved to Nairobi from rural areas mostly in western Kenya for education and employment possibilities.

As the local community is defined by poverty and unemployment, comparing these teachers with government school teachers is perhaps not the right thing to do when posing the question as why they choose to work under these poor conditions. Rather, one should look at other employment possibilities within the slum community. A majority of people do work that in Kibera is called *jua kali* (Kiswahili for "bitter sun"); very temporary and poorly paid day jobs. Compared to such work conditions, or having no employment at all a teaching job, although poorly paid, is a much better option for many. Being a teacher also generates respect within the local community as it contributes to community development through a more educated future population.

I encountered much devotion and commitment amongst teacher I spoke to and interviewed, although I frequently heard that most teachers seize the opportunity for *greener pastures* when such an opportunity was offered. This results in a high level of teacher turnover, jeopardizing education quality through inconsistency in the teaching staff. Parents frequently mentioned this as a prime concern for the quality of education LCPSs deliver.

5.4 Perceived Challenges to Education Quality

Without exception, all my findings indicate that parents opt for private education not only for reasons of excess demand but also for differentiated demand. But as long as the differentiated demand is based on a search for perceived higher quality of education, without any specific criteria other than discipline and better and more hours of education, one can argue that this differentiated demand is based on the lack of public quality education in and around slum settlements. In that sense it can also be seen as an excess demand.

Heyneman and Stern (2013, p. 3) state three reasons for the continued demand for private education, seen from a comparative public education strand:

1. An insufficient supply of public school spaces.
2. The low quality of public schooling.
3. A public education system that fails to meet the diverse, differentiated needs of families.

Their first reason is clearly about excess demand, while their third reason is a sign of differentiated demand. However, the second reason can be claimed to be caused by both simultaneously. The understanding of quality may be highly interpretive depending on whatever one has reason to value.

As there is no such thing as a commonly agreed upon set of quality education indicators as was discussed in the introduction of this paper, claims cannot be made whether overall quality is better or worse in LCPSs than in government schools. According to Phillipson (2008), the evidence that LCPSs deliver a better product than public schools is hard to analyze although standardized tests have been carried out to measure scholastic performance. However, although parents mostly mentioned academic skills such as reading, language and math skills as indicators of education and school quality, they mentioned additional features of quality when asked to explain why they choose to enroll their children in a LCPS, of which the most frequently mentioned, were the following:

- Relatively small classes.
- Attentive, accountable teachers.
- The follow-up of pupils, also outside school environment.
- A majority of the school day is focused on "learning".
- Strict pupil discipline.

Teachers, on the other hand, mentioned the involvement of parents as important to quality. Even if parents do pay school fees, they are often very busy and have not time to follow up their children. I was frequently told that school meetings with parents had low attendance rates. A reason for this may be the many hours spent each day to make a decent living in the slums. The head teacher at St Catherine reported that much effort is spent on sensitizing parents about the importance of schooling and the follow up of their children. Every beginning of term the school organizes sessions for the parents, inviting educational experts and children from the community who have succeeded in education and are doing well in life:

> You see; teachers are also human beings. If parents are reluctant, they are also reluctant. We organize some sessions for the parents; we invite some experts from the ministry of education or anybody else whom they can listen to (Head teacher, St Catherine).

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Although no standards can be set for education quality outside the scholastic performance criteria, the focus of this qualitative inquiry is what education quality means for the people involved. It is how parents themselves interpret the quality that matters for which choices they make, and schools and teachers are sensitive to their preferences while at the same time setting their own quality agendas as institutions of community development. One thing I discovered, which is rarely mentioned in any assessment of the LCPS sector, is that these schools have an importance for the local community that outgrows merely being an educational institution. At St Catherine, a new building housing showers, water closets and an internet computer lab for use by both the school and the community was being set up with support from a Danish bank. The provision of such services can generate some much-needed income for the school, while at the same time offering basic ICT education to the pupils.

During my fieldwork experience I spent much time on trying to reveal the main challenges to raising the education quality at these community schools. Although I encountered numerous obstacles, almost all of them could somehow be traced back to the overarching problem of poverty.

Even the insecurity in the slum, mentioned by many parents and teachers as highly concerning, is indirectly caused by the widespread poverty of the area. These schools do not only fulfill an important task in providing education, they also keep the pupils away from negative activities while their parents are away from home making a living. Children that do not enroll or drop out of school are therefore double disadvantaged. They miss out on an opportunity to pass the primary school KCPE and additionally become more exposed to abuse, violence and negative peer pressure. Poverty causes a high rate of petty crime, I was often told that any object that is not fixed to anything most likely will be gone during the night. When I bought a light bulb for the dark class 5 classroom at St Manuel, I was told that it had to be taken out of its socket and locked away inside the head teacher's office at night because the classroom door was missing a padlock.

Unemployment, idling, frustration and substance and alcohol abuse also foster other, more severe types of violence. At St Catherine, every classroom had an AMREF (African Medical and Research Foundation) poster on the wall explaining the measures to be undertaken if one has been raped. When asked about challenges the school faces, a teacher at St Manuel reported the following:

> There are a lot of challenges. When I say challenges, we have many challenges with the society surrounding the school. I am very sorry to say that it is rotten. Yeah it is rotten. The kind of living that the parents themselves live, now the children they take that kind of living and they want to bring that to school. And how people behave in the society, it is not all that good. But this one, they want to bring them home. They want to bring them to school. So you realize that it is very difficult to control it - the children in the slum area. Because of the society that they interact with the people from the various parts of the Kibera - no, their behaviour is not all that good (Subject teacher, St Manuel)

The issue of education quality evidently begins by conditions far outside the school grounds. The community schools intend to function as safe havens, but in fact they are highly vulnerable institutions. The buildings cannot be locked properly and professional security measures would be a cost none of these schools can afford. Their security lies in the fact that they are perceived to have an important function in the local community. Anyone caught doing damage at a school in Kibera would likely face a horrific mob justice.

With a lack of meaningful free time activities for children, risk lures everywhere. The same teacher at St Manuel explained to me how he saw substance abuse as a main barrier to learning:

> When you talk of drug abuse that is the main problem. You realize that even pupils from class 4 tell you he is using alcohol, using tobacco, using "bhang". Now this one alters the body reaction. So when these kind of pupils come to class it will be a little bit difficult for the teacher to control this kind of pupils (Subject teacher, St Manuel).

The above examples illustrate quality issues to learning, yet again confirming the importance of the community environment for pupils of lower socio-economic households as mentioned by Tikly and Barrett (2013).

On the other end of the spectrum, one can identify issues that strain the quality of teaching. Next to monetary challenges, human resources are a main concern. However, also this concern can be directly linked to a lack of resources, because teacher salaries are very insecure. Due to a low and insecure income, qualified teachers change to a more secure employment position when they get the chance.

LCPSs tend to lose good teachers due to this financial problem, causing a lack of consistency in the teacher pool. The lack of qualified teachers further means that teachers teach subjects they know very little about, something that causes a lot of teaching "straight from the

textbook". This gives them a very limited possibility to engage in discussions on deeper knowledge regarding the subject they are teaching.

Many teachers reported to me that they work extra hours doing private tuition in the evenings. Due to this, there is little or no time to prepare for lessons the following day. This is another obstruct to quality based on financial issues. In general, when one looks at all challenges these schools face they can all be traced back to a source of financial instability.

While interviewing and observing teachers, it became clear that there are many aspirations among the teachers to engage the pupils in much more than what can be found in the textbooks alone. Activities such as sports, field trips, music and creative arts are all tempered by the financial shortcomings. Sen's view of poverty as capability deprivation, related to Bourdieu's concepts of multiple forms of capital is clearly demonstrated in this context. Teachers expressed their frustrations about the plausibility that gifted and talented pupils lose the chance to ever develop their individual abilities, simply because the community, family and school do not have the means to stimulate these. By expressing this frustration, teachers confirm the critique expressed by Maathai (2009) about the failure of African states and education systems to develop human resources in African societies.

Currently, ICT tools are about to be introduced in Kenyan public primary schools. The majority of LCPSs do not even have access to electricity, and certainly not the resources to buy computers. How the LCPS sector in Kibera will deal with this issue is unknown. The management of St Catherine has engaged a Danish development bank to construct a multistory community building on their school compound, which in the future will be equipped with amongst others a computer lab providing connection to the internet. The school pupils, teachers and members of the community alike can all benefit from the project once it is completed. Such community initiatives may be a way forward, if they are well governed and economically sustainable.

5.5 Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Schools can be argued to create a habitus of discipline and submission to absolute truths when the ability of critical thinking is not encouraged. As such schools are powerful institutions, serving as agents for dominant culture. In the case of Kibera LCPSs, external influence in the

form of textbooks and standardized seems to define these absolute truths, not the schools or the teachers themselves.

> Most of the community schools, they are just giving education because other people agreed it. But what we have not come into our senses and started asking ourselves; is what we are providing to these kids. Because the child is very innocent, they only capture what we give them. So do we give half-baked education, or do we give the real thing? That is not only going to help the child pass; that is going to help the child to succeed in the future (Head teacher, St Catherine).

Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are key elements of school education, and all three need to be included in a discourse of education quality. While curriculum and assessment can be studied through written documents, the only way of truly studying pedagogical practices is by entering the domain where these are manifest; namely the classrooms. It is the only way of observing that what is really happening, opposed to what is supposed or told to be happening.

UNESCO (2014) frequently uses pupil/teacher ratio as a measurement for quality of education. As previously mentioned there is concern about the high and increasing illiteracy ratios in Sub Saharan Africa. In Kenya, the introduction of free primary education in 2003 saw a steep increase in pupil enrollments in public schools, while recruitment of new teachers and construction of necessary schools and classrooms lagged behind.

During my field observations at community schools in Kibera I found no classes with a number larger than 58 pupils. In fact, class 8 at St Manuel was an exception to the rule with such a large number.

Average class sizes from level 1 to 8 at the three schools were as follows:

School	Smallest class	Largest class	Average class size
St Manuel	16 pupils	58 pupils	26,4 pupils
St Catherine	22 pupils	30 pupils	23,2 pupils
Leonard Friends	14 pupils	25 pupils	19,3 pupils

Table 4: Class sizes observed at case schools.

The largest class consisted of 58 pupils, while the smallest number of pupils I observed was in class 8 at Leonard Friends. Both the largest and the smallest class were found at level 8, which is the last class of primary school, and those pupils with families who can afford it attend the KCPE national examinations.

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According to Farrell and Hartwell (2008) independent schools outside the national public education system have the advantage that they can adapt and develop alternative, flexible models of curriculum and teaching. Such institutions have the potential to model their schedule on local needs or desires of the community. The schools I encountered in Kibera seemed however to be very limited in their freedom. Examination, as I will explain later, is a partial cause of this limitation. However examinations are mainly guiding curricular material, not pedagogical practices. Upon asked what would happen if the school was to change its curriculum and teaching practices dramatically, the head teacher of St Manuel reported the following:

> The government come and intervene. The reason why they will come and intervene; they want the children in Kenya – all of them – to have equal education. Be it in public, be it in private, be it in non-formal. They want the children in Kenya to undergo a certain curriculum. And that curriculum is provided for all. So if you have your own curriculum, therefore - how will you handle the national exams because there are the people setting the national exams. It is very difficult. So that is why you must just go with the one they want (Head teacher, St Manuel).

The notion of equality appears to be very strong in the education philosophy in Kenya. Diversity and individuality are sacrificed in the name of equality, with as result that equality becomes uniformity. I encountered another example of this education philosophy when I asked a subject teacher at St Manuel how he includes the various ethno-cultural backgrounds of his pupils:

> Ok, when it comes to a learning institution like this, the kind of cultural background has to be neutralized. Everybody must be equal. No one deserves a differential treatment. They must be equal. No tribe is more special than the other. So, when it comes to a learning institution like this, all the background cultures have to be neutralized. And we start as a family (Subject teacher, St Manuel).

The similarities I encountered between the three schools by far outgrew the differences in teaching styles and pedagogy. Individuals hence became more important units of analysis than the schools during the field study.

5.5.1 Teachers' and Parents' Views on Pedagogy and Curriculum

> The curriculum right now does not recognize the art crafts, or creative arts. Yes, it is there in the syllabus. But it is not examined. So any teacher with a clear mind will not really concentrate on the subjects which are not examined. So they will only concentrate on the five subjects which are being examined, and that is all. Although

the government insists that we allocate time for creative arts, for those skills to be taught. Yes it will be indicated in the timetable, when you come you will see that. But they are not being done practically in the classrooms (Head teacher, St Catherine).

Many teachers I interviewed were concerned about the fact that the current teaching practices and curriculum do not provide the pupils with the skills they need, but with the training to pass exams. The latter seems to be the main priority for a majority parents, and is highly understandable given the expectation of the potential of education to lift their children and hence themselves out of a life in poverty. Education seems to take on an almost religious dimension in Kenya, and like churches and mosques schools stand out as well-maintained, clean buildings compared to the simple hutments that surround them. For those living in slums it may provide the only way out of poverty:

Education is the key to life. Without education, there is nothing you can do. In other words; education is power (Head teacher, St Catherine).

Almost all time spent in school is devoted to the five mentioned key subjects, and schooldays in Kibera LCPSs are long. Kenyan public schools are strictly bound by time regulations, while all three schools I visited had longer and more weekly school days than prescribed by the Ministry of Education. St Manuel pupils from class 4 till 8 were at school from 6 am to 6 pm six days per week. Pupils in class 7 and 8, being intensely trained for the KCPE exams, were further offered tuition after church time on Sunday afternoons. Whether that many hours spent in school contributes to a quality education or is counterproductive is a matter that should be discussed, but is outside the grasp of this thesis. According to a teacher at St Catherine, Kenyan primary schools focus too much on theoretical learning and education is increasingly concerned with competition in the white collar labour market than for personal development and self-reliance:

Now in Kenya, the purpose of education in Kenya is now like competition. It is not like where people get practical skills. It is just theory and competition to go to good schools and get good jobs. People don't learn to get skills so that they can be self-reliant. Previously, there was this practical subjects, whereby people could learn carpentry, practical subjects. But you find that someone finishes high school, but cannot do anything practical. So these people are unproductive. So eventually we will miss people like masons, carpenters… (Subject teacher, St Catherine)

During my interviews with parents I encountered a large variation of opinion on the amount of daily school hours and how the time in school should be spent. Schools harbouring pupils for so many hours every day means that parents have the freedom to work long hours. Every

morning there is a gigantic movement of labourers leaving the slum by foot or bus to work in Nairobi's central business district and other parts of town. Many of them do not return before late in the afternoon, when the gigantic movement moves in the opposite direction. I always found myself moving against the current, seemingly being the only one to enter the slum in the early morning and leaving before darkness fell and Kibera became too dangerous for me to stay.

The other two schools had shorter school days, but still had pupils stay longer than the public schools are allowed to. This illustrates how community schools are more flexible in catering for the practical needs of the community. The slum is a dangerous place, especially for children, and these schools provide a safe place that keeps them of the streets. Heyneman and Stern (2013) emphasize safety issues as an important reason for parents to choose to enroll their children in LCPSs within the slum rather than public schools outside..

The complex issue of land ownership means that public schools only exist on the outlines of the slum settlement. Kibera stretches over a large area and has many "dark spots", making it dangerous for children living in the central areas of the slum to walk such a large distance every day. As paths and roads are hardly navigational for larger vehicles and poverty anyway excludes such luxury, there is no school bus service within the slum catering the public schools.

Parents I interviewed frequently mentioned the importance of the school as a safe haven where children were taught discipline and desirable conduct. Negative peer influence outside school, especially related to substance abuse, was a concern for many. Although none of the parents mentioned that the hours spent at school were excessive, there was disagreement on *how* the hours should be spent. Some parents expressed worries about the lack of more sports, arts and free play possibilities while others wanted there to be even more study hours and less free time:

> I can only recommend the school to keep, mainly to keep the children busy with education, with the learning. Not to play so much because sometimes they are playing so much, they come home dirty (Mother, St Manuel)

I found myself exhausted every day at 16.00 due to the heat and intense didactic teaching in the classrooms, and could not stay longer because I had to leave before darkness, with the Nairobi afternoon traffic jams being notorious. Much of childhood is sacrificed on learning for these children, and I could not help myself for repeatedly asking whether it really is worth

it while doing my field observations. However, whenever I talked to teachers, parents or children I encountered optimism on the issue of education.

Besides the ability to cater for the community's needs as described, I encountered little innovative pedagogy and curriculum in any of the schools. When every hour is spent on covering the basic needs, little time and resources are left for innovation. Observing life in the slums, this seems to be a general pattern constraining both personal and social development. Poverty is hence also depriving people of capabilities because bare survival consumes almost all time and energy. This mechanism, together with the limited access to information, may explain why the poor masses living in slums seldom organize themselves in acts of demonstration claiming their constituted rights.

Overall, the sample schools exhibited a rather traditional, didactic "teacher talks, pupils receive" approach. As there are no available resources for such amenities, there are no ICT tools present in class. Teaching and learning are therefore very much based on available textbooks, a majority of which were donated by USAID. People in urban slums in Nairobi can be surprisingly disconnected from the immediate news streams present elsewhere in the city, as newspapers are a cost most cannot afford. The development of the internet and mobile phone technology are currently revolutionizing the flow of information towards people in slum settlements. Through a service called *Mpesa* everyone with a mobile phone can now transfer money within the country. One teacher told me how she accesses the internet through her mobile phone to be able to find information to supply the textbooks used in class when these have shortcomings.

According to Martha Qorro (2009), who did research on English and Kiswahili language use in Tanzanian secondary schools; a classroom culture of rote memorization, parroting and lack of substantive dialogue is a direct and inevitable result of neither teachers nor pupils mastering English as language of instruction. As these pupils progress through education and some of them eventually become teachers themselves, their meagre English proficiency will be passed on to the following generation of pupils, gradually deteriorating the quality of English. A main coping strategy employed by teachers mentioned by Qorro, which I abundantly witnessed myself, is code switching (CS) between English and Kiswahili. I observed this in almost every lesson taught in English, although school policy indicated that only English should be used except for in Kiswahili lessons. Through observing code switching, contextual and situational application of languages combined with a framework of

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productive pedagogies I will now present some of the core findings from my classroom observations.

5.5.2 Productive Pedagogies

Lingard et al. (2003) argue for placing pedagogy at the core in order for schools to be proper learning organizations for all children. Bourdieu agreed upon this emphasis on classroom practices, seeing pedagogical action as the core element for whether inequalities in learning achievements are leveled or instead exacerbated. Lingard et al. elaborated on a concept of *productive pedagogies,* identifying "twenty classroom practices that support enhanced student outcomes of both an academic and a social kind" (2003, p. 400). The concept evolved from a large Australian study on classroom practices, where the aim was to develop pedagogical practices that would serve those pupils not traditionally seen as quick learners by diversifying classroom dialogue.

The aim of this study was to depart from the instrumental measurement of school effectiveness and enter the field of education sociology. The authors suggest that the negative thesis of schools as (re)producers of inequality "…needs to be complemented by a positive thesis about what schools and teachers can achieve in a global context of growing inequality and often more parsimonious funding for education and weakened equity agendas" (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 402). They emphasize that the teachers have to be repositioned as *subjects*, rather than merely *objects*, in education policy discourse.

This qualitative inquiry attempts to focus on classroom practices and the very delivery of education at the classroom level. Lingard et al. (2003) argue for a focus on the teacher and the pedagogical processes happening within the walls of classrooms as crucial to improve quality, instead of engaging in a system wide approach where policy is thought to reflect the reality of what is happening in schools. Brock-Utne (1996) stresses the importance of ecological validity in educational research, indicating that valid knowledge only can be created by investigating all levels of social organizations. All of these approaches argue for drawing attention to the classrooms. But while stressing the importance of teachers and pedagogy, Lingard et al. (2003) also warn about the potential dangers of the classroom level focus. While the state is heavily involved in the articulation of curriculum and assessment, as is found to be the case in Kenya, pedagogy is an area of education where teachers still can exercise their professional freedom. In other words; *what* is taught and assessed in schools is

widely defined by governmental authorities, whereas *how* the syllabus is being taught still leaves freedom for variety to schools, teachers and particular lessons. Pedagogy is however profoundly influenced by curriculum and assessment.

A standardized national examination system such as the KCPE in Kenya completely controls not only *what* is being assessed but also *how* it is assessed. As assessment and curriculum influence pedagogy, a strong governmental control of the former two limits pedagogical freedom substantially. This is the reason why the authors warn about why "…placing teachers and their knowledge at the core of schooling practices and policy is a dangerous strategy (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 417). They fear that the operationalization of conceptual productive pedagogies may be used to construct performance-based criteria for measurement and unequal rewarding of teachers.

An important reason for why I choose to apply this model of teaching/learning quality measurement is that it does not give any guidelines for the content that should be taught, making it broadly applicable within all kinds of educational contexts. Neither does it give any implications for how education quality should be defined.

What makes this model applicable to the study of Kibera slum schools is that it is developed on a notion of improving learning for pupils from "traditionally underachieving backgrounds" (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 410). The authors claim that those pupils who already perform well in schools are less sensitive to pedagogical improvements, while those pupils that struggle in a climate of traditional, one-way pedagogic practice can benefit substantially from an increased social and academic value if pedagogical practices are diversified.

While placing the teacher and pedagogical practice at the core, Lingard et al. stress "…that there are structural reasons why a lot of the teaching in schools does not have the characteristics of productive pedagogies" (2003, p. 419). A wide range of such structural restrains where communicated to me in interviews with teachers and head teachers.

The twenty indicators of productive pedagogies are divided into four main categories, consisting of a four-dimensional model that groups together indicators of intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment and engagement with and valuing of difference under four headings, as is shown in table 5 below. Naturally, not every single lesson can embrace all of these dimensions of productive pedagogies and this is not necessary either. But during the school week, pupils should preferably be engaged in all these activities.

In order to operationalize the concepts and measure the presence of productive pedagogies, Lingard et al. developed a 5-point scale where 1 indicated that a practice was not at all observed and 5 a sustained, high-level presence.

Dimensions:	Subscales:	Classroom activities:
Intellectual quality	Higher order thinking	Are higher order thinking and critical analysis occurring?
	Deep knowledge	Does the lesson cover operational fields in any depth, detail or level of specificity?
	Deep understanding	Do the work and response of the students provide evidence of understanding of concepts or ideas?
	Substantive conversation	Does classroom talk break out of the initiate/respond/evaluate pattern and lead to sustained dialogue between students, and between teachers and students?
	Knowledge problematic	Are students critiquing and second-guessing texts, ideas and knowledge?
	Metalanguage	Are aspects of language, grammar, and technical vocabulary being foregrounded?
Connectedness	Knowledge integration	Does the lesson range across diverse fields, disciplines and paradigms?
	Background knowledge	Is there an attempt to connect with students' background knowledge?
	Connectedness to the world	Do lessons and the assigned work have any resemblance or connection to real life contexts?
	Problem based curriculum	Is there a focus on identifying and solving intellectual and/or real-world problems?
Supportive classroom environment	Student control	Do students have any say in the pace, direction or outcome of the lesson?
	Social support	Is the classroom a socially supportive, positive environment?
	Engagement	Are students engaged and on-task?
	Explicit criteria	Are criteria for student performance made explicit?
	Self-regulation	Is the direction of student behaviour implicit and self-regulatory or explicit?
Engagement with difference	Cultural knowledges	Are diverse cultural knowledges brought into play?
	Inclusivity	Are deliberate attempts made to increase the participation of all students of different backgrounds?
	Narrative	Is the teaching principally narrative, or is it expository?

	Group identity	*Does teaching build a sense of community and identity?*
	Citizenship	*Are attempts made to foster active citizenship?*

Table 5: Conceptualization and operationalization of productive pedagogies.

The variation in teaching styles and quality of pedagogy I observed in a context of productive pedagogies was much larger between individual teachers than between the studied schools. This observation confirms the importance of comprehensive in-classroom observation when research on education quality is carried out, as measurements in the form of test results alone cannot provide a complete image of social and academic aspects of quality. It appeared to me as if teachers at all three schools were given much freedom to apply their own teaching styles.

Although variation was larger between teachers independently from the schools where they were employed, some differences were found on school level. I observed a very high level of self-regulation among pupils at all schools. Pupils frequently worked on assignments without the presence of a teacher. Some lessons, such as *creative arts*, were carried out by the pupils themselves on a regular basis. Due to a lack of materials for other forms of art, these lessons consisted of both traditional and modern songs and dances.

St Catherine, although scoring high on dialogue based pedagogy, had a comparatively lower level of pupil self-regulation. A reason for this may be that I stayed at this particular school during a time of mid-term examinations and furthermore a climate of an ongoing financial crisis at the school, whereby the structure of normal school days was heavily interrupted. However, all the schools I investigated can be said to exist in a lingering situation of financial crisis as I previously have explained.

Applying the framework of productive pedagogies to classroom observation, I discovered that there was a minimum of innovative, dialogue based teaching and learning in all of these schools. Remembering the enthusiastic article by Farrell and Hartwell (2008) on alternative schooling, I was quite disillusioned by the practices I encountered in Kibera LCPSs. A majority of the long school days were devoted to rote learning, oral repetition (parroting) and direct copying from the blackboard. I was deeply concerned by all the hours children in all classes spent sitting on wooden benches, hardly moving. The endurance, resilience and hardship these children withstand are truly amazing.

Similar to Qorro (2009), also Brock-Utne (2014) asks whether such a technical, one-way teaching style is a direct result of the fact that neither teachers nor pupils master the language

of instruction to an extent where profound dialogue or "Substantive Conversation" and "Higher-order Thinking" (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 410) are at all possible.

Off course there were exceptions. I witnessed moments of excellence, including entire lessons converting into a spontaneous dialogue between the teacher and the pupils. I witnessed a class 8 English lesson at St. Catherine devoting an entire lesson to discussing the creative use of language in the English composition test for their upcoming national examinations. I witnessed science lessons full of local relevance, where English language textbooks were suddenly forgotten and the use of Kiswahili words made the teacher switch completely from the prescribed language of instruction to the natural language of communication. Teachers expressed sincere concern and devotion to the pupils they are educating during interviews, and parents confirmed the engagement of teachers at all schools:

At all three schools, but especially at St Manuel, I observed Kiswahili language lessons where the teacher had no book in his hand, but instead moved freely around between the pupils in the classroom and talked to his pupils. As mentioned, Kiswahili lessons are the only lessons where the language of instruction is Kiswahili. The very low level of English language use in these lessons reveals the natural relation both pupils and teachers have with the Kiswahili language, even those with a non-Bantu language as their mother tongue.

An analysis of the data gathered on the presence of elements of productive pedagogies reveals that quality of teaching was at its highest in English language lessons, Kiswahili lessons taking the third place after science lessons. Social studies on the other hand involved very few elements, which is alarming because critical thinking and problem based teaching should arguably be extremely important in a socially marginalized setting such as Kibera. The observation data related to elements of productive pedagogies were somewhat startling, as I generally found Kiswahili lessons to be more vibrant, involving and alive. However, there was a distinction between which particular elements were present in class.

English lessons had a high score mainly because of a supportive classroom environment, while Kiswahili lessons scored high on elements of intellectual quality. Science lessons on the other hand scored high on elements of relevance, due to well adapted and problem-focused textbooks. Medical and environmental challenges seemed to be commonly problematized, while a critical examination of social challenges was not at all observed.

During an observation of a class 6 English lesson at St Manuel, I made the following observation:

> Children seem to handle English well *in* the classroom, but often seem to lack skills *outside* the classroom. What is this phenomenon? (Class 1 social studies lesson, St Manuel, 25.09.2013)

I was fascinated by this phenomenon. I observed pupils read and speak in English in class, but when I approached the very same pupils during an informal situation outside in the school compound they would sometimes just look at me with confusion, apparently not understanding what I was saying. This happened even when I deliberately spoke with an East African English accent. According to Fishman's theories on language, members of diglossic speech communities may associate languages or varieties of language with particular domains. The classroom may well be seen as a different domain than the schoolyard, despite that they both are a part of the school. As I have previously mentioned I never observed any use of English outside classes between pupils and teachers.

Theses language domains Fishman describes may hence be very small and intertwined, only separated by a wall, a specific context or a symbolic situation. In the teacher staffroom at St Catherine, Kiswahili was always the language of communication between teachers during informal moments of the school day. But all formal meetings were (at least supposed) to be held in English. These language patterns, where a H(igh) and L(ow) language have their specific domains, are likely to exist without the awareness of the speech community. When an outside visitor uses the H(igh) language in a domain where the L(ow) language is commonly used, members of the speech community may be confused.

5.5.3 The Influence of National Examination

During my study of these three schools it became increasingly clear how large the impact of the KCPE examination is on these community schools. Subjects which are tested are highlighted throughout the entire primary school trajectory, while other subjects are given a cold shoulder though they are listed in the national primary school curriculum. Both parents and teachers reported to be missing diversity in the curriculum and teaching. Subjects involving art, sports and music were mentioned by some. A class 3 teacher put in in the following words:

> For example; you are interested in something – doing something – apart from education. Let´s say music, art – in Kenya it doesn't favour you. We don't draw. We don't sing. We don't cook (Class 3 teacher, St Manuel).

The comment from the teacher above illustrates how education in Kenya is defined as dealing solely with academic, theoretical learning, while artistic, physical or practical activities are seen as something *apart* from education. The examination of only five theoretical key subjects is likely to have created such an understanding of what education is. A mother at St Manuel told me about her son who loves to draw, and that she is worried that her son draws in class and does not concentrate on whichever subject which is being taught. His passion for drawing has no room in school. As school days last from 6 AM to 6 PM, the only chance he has to exercise his drawing interest is late at night when he should be going to sleep.

Among teachers I interviewed, the absence of art and practical, vocational subjects was often blamed on the state curriculum and the influence of standardized tests. The absence of sports was on the other hand considered to be caused by the lack of materials and suited outdoor space. The Kibera slum is a very densely populated area, with little space for playing fields. Although both St Manuel and St Catherine are located on the outskirts of the slum, private landowners and highway construction respectively put limitations to utilizing the available space for such activities. A teacher at St Catherine told med how practical subjects used to be an important part of the school curriculum earlier, but were now removed because they would no longer be tested in national examinations:

> It happens because of policy from the government. Because these subjects who were there, they were being examined. But now they removed this part of examining these subjects. So these subjects that are not examined, they are just there. For a show. But they are not being taught (Subject teacher, St Catherine).

The question remains on what it is that prohibits the management of a community school such as St Catherine to plan their own curriculum and teaching activities, based on their own idea of what the children in the community need. Upon asked this particular question, the teacher explained to me how one has to adapt to the public school regulations because all children need to do the same exam and the competition is fierce.

It is very likely that other restraints are present, although these were not explicitly mentioned by teachers or parents. There is a certain competition among schools in Kibera for enrolling a maximum of children, due to the simple fact that having large classes means more income

through school fees. The main concern of poor parents is to make their children succeed and achieve a higher standard of life than they experience themselves. This will in return also serve their own interests as they grow older, because the expectation is that with good education their children will be able to support them when they become too old to create an income and support themselves. Without the support of one's children, ageing in a slum has a sinister outlook. All of the parents I interviewed answered that they see the future as bright when asked about how they view the future prospects of their children, reflecting high expectations on their children's behalf.

I encountered a similar optimism during focus group interviews and informal conversations with children at all three schools. Whenever I asked them about their aspirations and dreams for the future, career was the main concern and topic being discussed. One could say that their expectations of all becoming either doctors, politicians, pilots or lawyers are overstated and unrealistic due to the limitations they encounter as poor and marginalized slum inhabitants. But on the other hand these slum children share the aspirations and ambitions of all other children, arguably even more motivated to reach their goals because the potential gain is so large. Additionally I found these children to have a high level of social awareness, explaining me how they would come back to the slum to help poor people when they succeed with their careers.

Standardized assessment has thus a large impact on curriculum and pedagogy in these schools. Hosting the examinations is also a costly affair for schools and hence for parents. Examination papers have to be purchased, and an official inspector and a policeman have to be catered for by the school. This includes covering transport and alimentation. At St Catherine I was told that the school management had to rent a vehicle for the transport of the visiting policeman, education inspector and all the necessary papers. These costs have to be covered through extra examination fees, all which make it a relatively large expense for many of the poorest parents to let their children attend the KCPE examination. Without passing the test though, the 8 years and countless hours spent on primary education have little value.

As academic skills and the possibility to reach higher education is seen as the superior trajectory to achieve a well-paid career, all emphasis is put on passing the KCPE with the best marks possible. Everything that is not perceived to be directed to this particular cause is destined to become a luxury one can't afford and hence should not waste any time on. A mother I interviewed expressed her concern about the large amount of time spent at breaks

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and play during the school day. This contrasted heavily with my own observations and experience; witnessing long school days with endless hours of didactic teaching and passive learning.

There was disagreement between both teachers and parents, something which became clear during the semi-structured interviews I carried out at every school. Some parents expressed their worries on the lack of a more diverse curriculum and school day, while others indicated that they were satisfied with the intense focus on the assessed core subjects. The emotional and social wellbeing of the child seemed to be a secondary concern for many parents, accumulation of academic skills being the primary concern.

Multiple choice tests are carried out twice a term throughout the entire primary school, preparing the pupils for their final exam giving them the possibility to continue to secondary education, if they succeed in finding the money to pay for it. Unfortunately, the majority of the pupils that pass KCPE exams with excellent marks may not continue to secondary education due to the lack of means to pay for it. Considering the immense slum population in Kibera alone, not to mention the rest of Nairobi or entire Kenya, it requires little imagination to grasp the enormous loss of human resources caused by this limitation. This has an implication for education quality as well, as assessment policy such as examination costs may be a barrier the poorest parents cannot overcome.

During my stay at these community schools I got the impression that a whole lot of curricular and extra-curricular subjects and activities are sacrificed on the grounds of preparing the pupils as well as possible for their final KCPE. I expected these independent schools to be free from governmental influence in choice of curriculum and teaching, but soon found out that they are all heavily controlled by government legislations on exams. This was a common factor for all three schools. As these exams reflect the national curriculum and syllabus, community schools find themselves forced to apply the same curriculum and syllabus to avoid a mismatch between that what is taught and that what is tested.

In class 8 at St Catherine I found the following description on the blackboard: *34 days to KCPE*. Every day the number would be changed to reflect the amount of days left to prepare for the final exams. Another indicator of the paramount importance of the KCPE was the countless lessons spent on revisions of previous exam papers in all tested subjects, as curriculum from all classes can be touched upon in the KCPE. The test is almost entirely

multiple-choice based, with the exception of written essays in English and Kiswahili. In these essays a topic or a beginning/ending of a text is given and pupils are to write a narrative story based on these.

A third factor limiting the freedom of these schools is the direct control exercised by the educational authorities through inspections. Despite the fact that no funding is provided by governmental institutions they want to have some control on these institutions. The existential frames for these schools are as such highly problematic, but still a large and increasing number of them are operated within Kibera. Dixon and Tooley (2012) have done extensive longitudinal research on these schools, claiming they found 116 of them within Kibera alone in 2012 (p. 690). Their primary focus is on why parents continue to enroll their children in fee-paying private schools while there has been a national policy on FPE in Kenya since 2003. I will now look further into this particular question.

5.7 Language Policy and Use in Schools

Kenya is by far the only example of countries inheriting complex language situations from previous colonial rule. Education is one of the fields where dilemmas occur regarding the proper use of languages. Watson (1992, 2007) describes how many nations and regions worldwide continue to struggle with the paradoxical language question, emphasizing colonial history as a main contribution to the complexity of language policy many governments are facing:

> The linguistic complexity bequeathed by the colonial powers to newly independent governments has led to difficult choices for many regarding the best language policy for independence. If a state chose a European language as a national language, because at the time of independence it was the language of government and justice, it was perceived as neutral in a situation where the use of another language might have led to conflict because that language would have favoured one particular group (Watson, 1992, p. 112).

Many previously colonized African countries struggle with the dilemma of whether to continue with the use of a European language as the national/official language or to select an indigenous language for official, nationwide purposes. The latter option is feared to cause ethnical tensions and conflict, reflecting the ties between language and ethnicity and ethnicity and politics. Maathai (2009) recognizes the impact of former colonization in today's challenges for societal development on the African continent, but stresses that merely blaming current problems on happenings of the past is no excuse for not taking proper action.

Critical researchers such as Qorro (2009) and Bunyi (2008) are of the opinion that poor teaching and learning, due to the use of colonial languages as LOIs, merely serve an elite group of already wealthy people, while leaving the masses behind and prevent real development throughout SSA.

Diglossia in formerly colonized countries is different from diglossia in countries with a long history of independence. The national language introduced by colonial authorities carried the political motive of cultural indoctrination and unification. Those of the indigenous population that were chosen to be educated in and through the language of the colonial power, got their education in order to serve the interests of the foreign power. The reward for faithfulness was to receive privileges other indigenous people did not. These origins of colonial education and language have to be taken into account when education and language sociology are studied

contextually in Africa. English was not naturally adapted by people of Kenyan micro-nations by trade or migration, but came from overseas as part of a political system based on racial and ethnical inequalities. Colonial language policy hence served to differentiate, and so did colonial education. An education system that was designed to create inequality and privileges for a few is nowadays expected to foster equality and possibilities for all, a huge paradox that needs to be critically analyzed. Applying the theory of social reproduction through education by Bourdieu and critically assessing the role of language(s) in the field of education may provide an explanation for why national education systems fail in their expected task of leveling society, and why Africa is lagging behind on developmental and educational goals compared to other continents.

English continues to dominate the Kenyan education system, also at its lower levels. The practice of English as main LOI was even observed in pre-school lessons. During observations of pre-school lessons at Leonard Friends, I discovered that the teacher had difficulties with making the children separate English words from each other. Quite a few words that are pronounced differently in British English sound phonetically the same in Kenyan (East-African) English. I noted the following during an early morning English lesson at Leonard Friends:

> Some of the English actually becomes more difficult here; "short" and "shot" are pronounced the same way. Even the word "shirt" is pronounced almost exactly the same (Leonard Friends, 24.10.2013).

The children were learning English by didactic teaching, but were confused by different words being pronounced similarly in Kenyan (East African) English. Fishman uses the term East African English on page 89 (1972). Though overlooked by many native English speakers, English is a difficult language to learn as there is much inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation. This counts especially for the various pronunciations of vowels.

Kiswahili on the other hand, is very consistent. Similar to Spanish; a letter always keeps its distinctive phonetics, no matter its position within in a word. English can therefore be claimed to be comparatively difficult to learn, especially when little correct English is heard by those supposed to learn it.

Nevertheless, all three schools of study have a policy of English as the main language to be used and spoken within the school compound. Only Kiswahili language lessons are supposed to be taught in Kiswahili. The observed reality was however that except for when talking with

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me, neither pupils nor pupils spoke English with and to each other outside the classroom. A better ability to speak Kiswahili and recognize other Kenyan languages would have been beneficial for my data collection, and were as such personal limitations during my research.

I was at first highly surprised by this finding, expecting that community schools would choose to use Kiswahili as the main language of instruction due to its widespread use as lingua franca between members of different linguistic groups in Kibera. I had noted that English was much written, but hardly spoken, in the slums.

An interesting notion is that rural schools in Kenya still tend to educate primary school children in their mother tongue, making it an interesting study to explore how they deal with this particular issue. As KCPE exam papers are written in English with the subject of Kiswahili as the only exception, it most certainly poses a disadvantage for those pupils that hardly use English nor in school or at home.

They may misunderstand questions related to all subjects that make up the exam and therefore provide the wrong answer. In examining test papers used at different primary levels, I often found the English language to be of low quality. In addition to the poor English, certain questions were quite hard to interpret and could easily be misunderstood. Some of these questions occurred to me as trick questions.

The problem is thus that even if children may actually learn more by being educated in their mother tongue, they general idea reflected by teachers is that they may underperform on tests and exams due to their lack of English skills. Of course, also children at Kenyan rural schools receive English language classes, but the fact remains that the use and importance of English is less in rural areas, as it also is in low level socio-economic communities in urban slums. This is due to less presence of English language media and the very limited use of English as medium of communication in the informal labour market dominating slums and the farming and cattle herding practices dominating rural communities.

The heavily exam-based school trajectory in Kenya therefore complicates the issue of multilingualism, potentially providing an advantage to English speaking children from higher socio-economic levels of society. Language of instruction and examination may then be contributing to exacerbate existing inequalities and the maintenance of elite privileges (Watson, 2007; Broch-Utne, 2000). Parents of children growing up in slums recognize

English as the language of success, and perceive English language skills as of one the most important skills achieved at school.

Because slum community schools rely completely on the choice of parents to educate their children and the fees they pay, it is natural that these schools choose the LOI that parents perceive as the best for their children. Parents, living a life under tough conditions, want to give their children the opportunity to acquire cultural and linguistic capital as means for upward social mobility. The Kibera slum has an extreme population density, and by late 2012 a number of 116 private schools were found to exist by Dixon and Tooley (2012). This means that there are many schools located in a short walking distance from most Kibera households, creating competition for the enrolment of pupils between neighbouring educational institutions. More pupils enrolled, means more income for the schools. A school director that would choose Kiswahili or another Kenyan language as main LOI would probably receive few enrollments. This confirms the statement by Dixon and Tooley (2012) about how also poor parents, like their wealthier peers, are preoccupied with quality of education as *they* perceive it. Limited knowledge of what actually takes place in schools and how children learn means that parents do not necessarily know what is best for their children. Learning English is perceptibly best done through a school situation that forces children to learn it through its application as LOI. These schools being community schools; teachers themselves are usually recruited from the local community. Due to the very limited use of English in the slum community, poor English skills may be transferred on to the next generation. This particular mechanism was found in studies of Tanzanian secondary schools by Qorro (2009). Schools and teachers on the other hand are under a constant pressure to provide parents with value for their money by drilling pupils to pass exams.

When asked about challenges to deliver quality education, the language barrier was never mentioned directly. An explanation for this may be that the concepts of *education* and *English* are closely intertwined in the dominant cultural habitus. If language is a barrier to learners, it is a highly invisible one, compared to other tangible barriers such as the lack of learning materials, proper nutrition and school facilities. When asked about the use of English in classrooms during interviews, I frequently had the idea that teachers had difficulties with admitting that it posed a challenge to them. If English functions as the H language, which operates in the domain of education, than the professional identity of those that represent that domain, in this case the teachers, will be expected to possess that linguistic capital. The

school system hence does not only expect pupils to possess the required linguistic capital such as explained by Bourdieu and Passeron (1972), but also expects this of the teachers. If pupils are little likely to speak up about their lack of understanding due to the fear of being stigmatized, one can only imagine the taboo it would be for teachers to bring this up.

The head teacher at St Catherine explained the complex language situation in his school in the following words, while at the same time confirming that the English language as medium of communication is of little relevance in Nairobi's slum communities:

> This being a slum, the language that is mostly used is Kiswahili, which is the language of the catchment area. There is also Sheng, which most of the youth communicate with. And you find that when we instruct, or when we provide teaching in the classrooms, we use English. So we find the difficulties with the children, or with the pupils, in the classroom because they are more used to Sheng and Swahili. So that is a very big challenge for us (Head teacher, St Catherine).

Although there is no mention of any of the vernaculars that pupils may speak in the home situation, he explains how three languages all serve a purpose within different overlapping domains. The fact that poor English skills amongst teachers might be a problem as well was not mentioned when the head teacher was asked to elaborate further on the use of English as LOI, and the hypothetic possibility of a switch to Kiswahili as the main LOI:

> If at all we can teach in Kiswahili, than most of the kids will understand what we are teaching very fast. But when it comes to exams and the curriculum itself, English is being used as an instruction language, so right now it is very difficult because everything is developed in English; the syllabus, the course books and everything and the examinations still in place. So if at all it can be changed in Kiswahili, the better. But if we have to continue with English, we have to try a formula in which children can be motivated to talk English. And this is not easy; we have to involve the community, even the parents at home so that when the children go home, the parents assure that the children speak English. Or if possible, if parents can speak the same language, English, then it will be an advantage for us because we speak English, so when they go home they speak English (Head teacher, St Catherine).

The alternative of a switch to Kiswahili is thus to educate and sensitize the community to speak English. Analyzing the diglossic coexistence of languages within their particular domains, it seems however little likely that current language habits can be changed in such a way.

Although Kiswahili functions as a lingua franca for Kenya and a large East-African region, it is by no means neutral. It has its origins from the coastal trade and the Swahili population that lives there, thus it originated as the mother tongue of a specific micro-nation. Kiswahili owes its large importance and widespread use to its role as an intercultural trading language. As earlier mentioned, it is also much closer related to other Kenyan Bantu languages than those from other language families found in Kenya, mainly the Nilotic and Cushitic (Ethnologue, n.d.).

A subject teacher at St Catherine explained to me how he prefers to teach in English, although a majority of pupils where perceived to understand lessons better in Kiswahili:

> I prefer to teach in English, because that one is an international language. Kiswahili; it has some limitations. Not everybody understands Kiswahili, so through communication it can bring problems. But also, Kiswahili is good, because if we teach in Kiswahili children understand more. They get what you are trying to explain quite easy (Subject teacher, St Catherine).

He further emphasized that people coming from non-Bantu micro-nations like himself, actually speak English better than Kiswahili and that Kiswahili as main LOI would create inequality among speakers from different language groups:

> We have some people, like the Luo's, they are not good in Kiswahili but very good in English. Because Kiswahili is a Bantu speaking language. Nilotic languages are very far from Kiswahili. […] If you give Kiswahili as a priority, Bantu's will benefit more (Subject teacher, St Catherine).

Classifying ethnic groups into clusters of language families creates another level of meso-nations in addition to Maathai's concept of micro-nations and the country as a macro-nation. This third dimension is important in the analysis of behaviour towards language in Kenya because it contextualizes Kiswahili and reveals its lack of neutrality.

Language barriers to *all* in the form of English as LOI was by this teacher argued to be a better solution than language barriers to *some* as a result of a hypothetical switch to Kiswahili as LOI, which would create ethnic inequality due to differences in linguistic capital among pupils. St Catherine furthermore had an interesting policy not found at the other schools: teachers encouraged pupils to speak English from Monday till Thursday, while on Fridays they were allowed to speak Kiswahili.

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Kiswahili is thus not geographically or ethnically, and to a certain degree religiously, neutral. In a certain sense English can be claimed to be just that, with the exception of English being more widespread within urban areas and especially in the capital Nairobi. Certainly English is not politically neutral, as it is primarily used among the cultural and economic elite. Using either of these languages in education thus entails potential unequal opportunities among population groups in Kenya.

Fishman (1972) explains how a country's official (H) language of government and education tends to dominate in "noninteracting" (p. 25) communication. This may explain why teachers tend to oblige to official school language policy when addressing the class as a whole, while I often observed a sudden, apparently unaware, switch to Kiswahili whenever a teacher would address a particular student.

Although from external origin, I argue against a view of English as a purely foreign language. One can observe that such a simplification of the role of English in today's Kenyan society is incorrect, because it is widely used among many Kenyans according to my own observations elsewhere in Nairobi. Although I encountered little knowledge on the origin of English and its use in Europe and elsewhere in the world among teachers and pupils I interviewed, one cannot deny that many Kenyans have made English their own language. Certain societal groups in Kenya have internalized and developed the language on their own premises through continuous use. During a class 8 English lesson I observed at St. Catherine I was amazed by the amount of rich lingual expressions based on local culture, fauna and flora. They were analogies and metaphors that somehow reflected western life philosophy, but reflected images deeply rooted in Kenyan life.

Ignoring the internalization of the English language in Kenya in an analysis of language policy and practice in the education system, whether formal or non-formal, and viewing it merely as a foreign intruder would give an incorrect impression of the multilingual situation in Kenya.

In the focus group interviews I conducted with pupils, not one of them reported that English was a language they spoke at home or anywhere else outside the school situation. This confirms the hypothesis that the English language is less used by slum dwellers than by better off Kenyans. A main reason they simply could not speak English at home was that their parents had very basic or no skills in the English language. Their parents were neither born

nor educated in Nairobi, and it is likely that they received whatever education they have was in mother tongue.

Focus group interviews with pupils also revealed weak English skills when asked to express themselves on a topic. Upon asked which language they preferred when having to express themselves or talk to someone about a potential problem, Kiswahili was always the answer. Surprisingly no one would choose their mother tongue vernacular. For this particular generation of children in Kibera, Kiswahili then seems to be a much more relevant language than any other. The multi-ethnicity of the slum appears to eradicate any cultural or linguistic heritage rural migrants may carry with them. Schools perform as social institutions that contribute to this process in the name of equality, as status differs between the ethnic groups:

> Ok, when it comes to a learning institution like this, the kind of cultural background has to be neutralized. Everybody must be equal. No one deserves a differential treatment. They must be equal. No tribe is more special than the other. So, when it comes to a learning institution like this, all the background cultures have to be neutralized. And we start as a family (Subject teacher, St Manuel).

Because language is a prime marker of ethnic origin, any use of vernaculars is banned from schools. Teachers undoubtedly have strong authority, something that became clear during focus group interviews with pupils. Speaking any other language than English or Kiswahili is considered a stigma, something backward, primitive and old-fashioned. Fishman explains how the H language in a diglossic speech community may be associated with high values, while the other L language is associated with "intimacy and folksiness" (1972, p. 46). All other vernaculars are easily shoved away due to this already complex situation of dual languages. Indigenous language and culture were reduced to the curriculum of social studies in the schools I studied, although I occasionally observed indigenous dances, music and songs at schools. When such activities were initiated it usually happened outside the planned lesson schedule.

The H language, in this case English, is associated with higher cultural, political and social institutions such as schools, churches and political institutions. According to Fishman, the H language is often used in "non-interactive" communication; such as a President speaking to the population, a pastor preaching to his church community or a teacher lecturing his pupils. The L language is more frequently used when a dialogue is expected, such as in trading goods or conversing with family and friends.

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My classroom observations confirm this pattern of code switching. While English largely was the main language of instruction at all three schools except for during the Kiswahili language lessons, teachers would frequently switch to Kiswahili when addressing his pupils about practicalities not directly related to the learning material. Attitude towards language can thus not be overlooked in an analysis of how language is used in schools. Such attitudes are likely to be highly unconsciously constructed and maintained, even when they may cause a counterproductive language use.

As Bunyi (1999) notes, "African societies were multilingual long before European colonization" (p. 339). But in most cases languages were linguistically and geographically related to each other. Highly different languages coexisting in one and the same place are referred to by Fishman as c*oterritorial* languages (1972, p. 56). Nairobi has a large variety of coterritorial speech communities. The city's history of continuous migration has shaped a population that is extremely diverse in culture and language. Originally the land of the Kikuyu people; European settlers and a large community of Indian railroad workers added up to Kenyans from all other micro-nations migrating to Nairobi. Today's population consists of very distinct speech communities originating from Africa, Europe and Asia. Sociocultural differences are according to Fishman (1972) a main maintenance variable wherever very distinct languages are coterritorial. Although difficult, it is not impossible to overcome a coterritorial language cleavage according to Fishman.

5.7.1 The Linguistic Environment of Nairobi's Slums

Similar to teachers, children that have spent their entire life in the Kibera slum and those that have moved there from a rural environment with their family alike have little affinity with the English language, simply because it is hardly used in their natural surroundings outside school. As the most disadvantaged Kenyan population consists of rural subsistence farmers, cattle herders and urban slum dwellers, the use of English language in schools likely contributes to further inequality because the poor do not possess the linguistic capital that is required to succeed in education. This phenomenon is observed throughout all African countries where a European language is used in formal education (Brock-Utne, 2014; Watson, 2007). It may serve the interests of minor, urban elite, but marginalizes the majority of the population.

The environment of Kenyan middle class children may for example contain considerably more written and spoken English. Their parents may be employed in a sector where English is used as language of communication, and furthermore their parents are likely to be more educated making them able to assist their children in the language learning process. In fact, English is spoken in many homes of higher socio-economic communities. These children may also be more exposed to English medium media such as television shows, movies, books and newspapers.

As people in slums live their lives relatively isolated from other layers of society, they can be classified as a speech community of its own (Fishman, 1972). As previously discussed, Nairobi has many different speech communities which linguistically are far apart from each other. In addition, these communities are also economically and to a certain degree culturally far apart from each other. The only thing that brings these communities closely together is their shared geographical location.

The largely informal work sector in slums does not utilize the (H)igh language of English, with sign writing and business names as a peculiar exception to the rule. Most adults simply do not master any other language than their mother tongue and Kiswahili. Speaking Kiswahili properly may be a challenge by itself for those that have moved to the Nairobi area and suddenly find themselves in a multi-ethnic environment while their ancestors lived and worked in largely mono-ethnic and mono-lingual communities for centuries. This accounts especially for speakers of non-Bantu languages. Learning Kiswahili becomes necessary to be able to communicate with neighbours and colleagues, and further opens up a whole new dimension of access to information. Internet and mobile phone technology are momentarily revolutionizing communication and the access to information throughout the African continent, hopefully contributing to the situation of the poorest population. The current generation of parents does however not possess the *cultural capital* of mastering the H(igh) English language.

But what these parents observe is that the English language is mastered and used by the rich and the well-educated, hence it is perceived as the path to a better life. Parental preferences appear as part of the reason that LCPSs teach through English medium, according to what I observed in the pre-primary classes at Leonard Friends primary school from the very beginning of formal schooling.

Teachers at the schools I observed are making the best of the situation, working long days for very little income. At St Manuel I never saw any of the teachers eat during the 12 hour schooldays. As I daily left the school for lunch break, it took a while before I realized this. And despite the fact that I witnessed a majority of teaching practices characterized by low pedagogical quality, I observed impressive skills among pupils in numeracy and literacy even in the lower classes. In class 3 at Leonard Friends I observed the class reading simple sentences in Kiswahili, although collectively. At the same school I observed a class 5 revise a class 4 English test, whereby the pupils clearly struggled when reading individually, skipping endings of words and sometimes even entire words. Pupils regularly reported to me that they found that Kiswahili was easy to speak, but hard to write while English was easy to read but hard to speak.

The test papers I often observed during tests and revisions were linguistically erroneous, something I encountered every time I analyzed an English test paper. Unfortunately, my limited knowledge of Kiswahili made it hard to spot errors in the Kiswahili test papers. I expressed my worries about the low quality test papers to teachers, who responded that test makers were lazy and usually in a hurry. As none of the schools had functioning printer facilities, buying these test papers was the only option. These test papers have much influence on what and how the pupils learn. They form an authority by itself, due to the importance of receiving high marks on these standardized tests. Test results were commonly displayed on classroom walls.

These standardized tests are already implemented on the pre-school level, and in form resemble the KCPE exams which class 8 pupils have to take to get their primary school certificate and be allowed to continue to secondary school. There is a risk that pupils adapt incorrect language and spellings from these tests if these are poorly constructed. I never received a proper answer to why schools do not complain about the quality of these tests, demanding for a higher standard as they actually pay for them.

Such a multiple choice test based, standardized curriculum creates a culture of *wrong* and *right* with little in between. In a textbook where the correct missing word has to be filled in or in a multiple choice test where one out of four options is the right answer, there is little room for discussion. If there exists only wrong and right; what is there to discuss and have a dialogue about? I observed these tests and textbooks at every school, at every class level from

pre-primary till class 8. Pupils grow up with the views of schools providing the absolute truths, everything else being wrong.

I observed a class 4 math lesson where pupils were pinched hard and painfully by their math teacher if they got a wrong answer. Such a fundamental culture of what is right and what is wrong does not foster higher-order thinking or problem solving skills, as it does not address the individual abilities of pupils but limits itself to external information to be internalized.

During participant observations while teaching classes, I had the opportunity to give pupils assignments they were not normally used to do. During an English language lesson in class 4 at St Catherine I was allowed to teach, I asked the pupils to form two groups and plan and make a television commercial for a new brand of toothpaste which I in than recorded on film and showed back to them.

What I wanted to do with this particular assignment was to encourage the pupils to use English in a creative way. The class was divided into two groups of about ten pupils each. Although the assignment may have been too complicated and unusual to them, the interesting result was that both groups did *exactly* the same thing. They had made a list of good things to do concerning personal hygiene, such as brushing one's teeth and washing hands, and stepped in front of the class to read these out loud while I recorded.

Although amazed by the high level of math skills I observed at all three schools, I also observed a lack of basic multiplication abilities and understanding of coherence. Observing a math class at St Catherine I wrote down the following:

> Technical skills are very good. But they rely completely on "formula", many lack the ability to cross-check their answers. They fail to see illogical connections between their answer and the question asked (Class 4, 14.10.2013).

Pupils seemed to know the formula needed, but were unable to relate a wrong answer to the given assignment. Hurrying too quickly through the curriculum in order to keep up with the expected progress of primary education achievements may cause such weaknesses in important skills, especially among academically less able pupils.

5.7.2 Code Switching in Classrooms

Qorro (2009) explains how a momentary switch to another language is a coping strategy for teachers and pupils when they are not able to communicate properly in the language they are

using. I observed the frequency of so-called code switching (CS) during lessons, to see if there were any comparable differences between the subjects taught.

The resulting field data on CS within lessons as well as during informal settings during schooldays revealed a clear pattern. Although there were exceptions, I observed considerable more CS during lessons where English was used as LOI. I chose to count the number of times CS was initiated by a teacher in class, setting the criterion that for a departure of the LOI to be considered as CS it had to include more than just the use of one single word or short expression. Teachers frequently used expressions like e.g. *tuko sawa?* (do we agree?), *haraka haraka* (hurry) or *mzuri sana* (very good) during teaching in English, without engaging in more extended CS. Communication between pupils in class was never observed to be in English.

Because Kiswahili language lessons are the only lessons officially to be taught in Kiswahili at the three schools, these lessons formed the only units of comparison to all other lessons when it comes to measuring CS from Kiswahili to English.

At St Manuel, where the head teacher functioned as Kiswahili teacher in all higher grades starting from class 4, I observed between 8 and zero incidents of CS from Kiswahili to English during Kiswahili lessons, witch an average of 1,4 switches to English per lesson. This teacher repeatedly reported to me that he was worried about the level of Kiswahili language skills among the pupils, something he reported to be a national concern. Due to midterm examinations, I had no possibility to measure CS in Swahili lessons at St Catherine. At Leonard Friends I observed only one incident of code switching to English in Kiswahili lessons.

Of the lessons observed, math and science lessons stood out as the lessons with the highest number of CS from English to Kiswahili. A simple but plausible explanation for this may be that these are complex subjects where causal explanations are needed for proper understanding. Paradoxically, these very same subjects were often mentioned as a reason for having to use English as language of instruction due to the lack of proper mathematical and scientific terms in Kiswahili. English language lessons had a comparatively higher much rate of CS, with an average of 5,4 switches per lesson. No code switching to any *other* language than English or Kiswahili was ever observed in any of the schools, neither in formal or

informal settings. The taboo associated with the use of any other language than English and Kiswahili anywhere in school seems to be strong in Kibera.

Although primary focus was on language lessons, I observed code switching in other lessons as well. Table 6 shows the number of times CS was observed in lessons, though only CS initiated by the teacher was counted.

Subject:	No. of observed lessons:	Lowest no. of CS:	Highest no. of CS:	Average no. of CS:
CRE[1]	8	0	13	5,8
English	11	0	17	5,4
Math	14	0	14	3,2
Science	7	1	18	8,9
Social studies	5	0	14	5,4
Kiswahili[2]	10	0	8	1,4

Table 6: Code switching by teachers during lessons.

It is interesting to observe that CS was much more frequent in science lessons than in any other lessons. Science instruction is highly explanatory, where sensitivity to causality is important. The teaching of other subjects was found to be mostly descriptive, where information was presented by the teacher or through the means of textbooks and copied into the pupils' writing books. All too often this involved the listing of words and concepts by the teacher, which were then copied by pupils afterwards. Although some input came from pupils while such lists were made, they seemed to be little more than a collection of related facts:

> A lot here indicates misunderstandings due to exaggerated use of textbooks. This whole week I have seen the making of lists. What do they learn from this? (Class 1 social studies lesson, St Manuel, 03.10.2013).

The relatively low number of observed classes makes it impossible to use this data for anything else than indicators. Together with more extensive observation data though, it creates the image that subjects requiring a deeper understanding of phenomena have the most to lose out on the language barrier. The fact that these schools lack any material to do practical experiments in science classes gives even more reason for concern.

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[1] Christian Religious Education.
[2] Kiswahili is the only subject taught with Kiswahili as LOI.

Even when using one's own mother tongue, teaching is a demanding profession. Having to teach in a language which one is largely unfamiliar with makes it an almost impossible task. No teachers should be blamed when criticizing language policy, as they themselves fall victim to a situation which they can hardly influence. Although English may be the mother tongue of some Kenyans, it most certainly is not the case for the disadvantaged living in urban slums.

5.7.3 The Impact of Language Practices in LCPSs

Dixon and Tooley (2012), like UNESCO (2014), examine common indicators of quality such as pupil-teacher ratios but put no emphasis on the notion of language and its importance for quality in an urban slum setting defined by a speech community where English has little relevance. Though the issue of language of instruction is of much larger importance and goes way beyond the confinement of urban slums, I argue that it is especially delicate in an urban slum such as Kibera.

Firstly, people from all regions of the country live very closely together in a marginalized, high risk environment. Ethnic tensions have in the past had severe impacts on slum communities, such as was witnessed during the post-election violence that ravaged Kenya in 2007/2008. A large part of the generation that are now parents of primary school aged children relocated from a rural area to the urban slum, of which few demonstrate well developed skills in English and some also struggle with Kiswahili as they themselves were educated in their regional mother tongue or not formally schooled at all. This leaves them with few possibilities to assist their children with English and sometimes Kiswahili language education. Quite a few of my interviews with parents had to be carried out in Kiswahili and Luo, as many parents were uncomfortable with speaking English. Though most ost of them seemed to understand me quite well, indicating what is perhaps a form of embarrassment concerning their oral English skills.

The 2013/4 UNESCO GMR limits its focus on language to stating that those who speak a minority language are disadvantaged not only when it comes to being in school, but also in whether they learn once enrolled.

> Language and ethnicity are deeply intertwined. While the language a child speaks at home is often a crucial element of personal identity and group attachment, language can be a potent source of disadvantage at school because in many countries children

are taught and take tests in languages they do not speak at home (UNESCO, 2014, p. 198).

In Kenya however, the language of school instruction is a minority language, measured in numbers of actual speakers (Ethnologue, n.d.). Although not spoken everywhere, a much larger part of the population is familiar with Kiswahili than with English. Consequently a majority of the population face disadvantage because they are educated and tested in a language they do not speak at home.

The optimistic side of this particular issue is that it is likely to change and improve over time, as coming generations of parents largely will be educated in English and Kiswahili. Kibera therefore is a rapidly changing environment concerning language skills and education, undoubtedly powered by the large amount of LCPSs that exist in the slum. It is therefore tempting to agree with Dixon and Tooley (2005) on the community benefits of these schools, especially as long as government options of education provision are undersupplied.

I observed a large number of teachers to be very insecure in their use of English. Obviously, it was much more difficult for me to observe limitations in the use of Kiswahili as language of instruction; although I got the impression that many lack a personal affinity with the language. I was often told that the proper Kiswahili is spoken in the coastal regions of Kenya, where it has its origins, as well as in Tanzania.

Another issue regarding LOI in slum settlements consists of relevance. Although I found much optimism among parents, pupils and teachers alike, it is likely that most children will not succeed in climbing the social ladder to higher socio-economic levels of status and white collar jobs where the use of English may be more relevant. Strengthening their Kiswahili skills may therefore be much more relevant, but parents prefer their children to be educated in English as they believe it may increase their chances for a good career. Several Kiswahili teachers I spoke to expressed concern about the level of Kiswahili among pupils in higher primary school classes on a national scale.

Using any other vernacular as LOI in Kibera is not really an option, unless one wants to segregate children in schools by their ethnic roots. When asked about challenges and impediments to the quality of education, the issue of language diversity was never brought up by any participant. Education and the use of the English language seem to be thoroughly intertwined. As the idea and concept of formal education in the form of schooling was

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established in Kenya throughout the colonial era and British rule, education and English went hand in hand. When Kenya became independent in 1963, everyone was given the possibility to be educated in English. During the period of colonial rule such restriction was limited. Therefore it is hardly a surprise that English dominates the entire education system, although research shows that quality lags behind.

It was only when language was specifically addressed through interview questions that it became a topic of discussion. Teachers tended to have the ability to discuss the importance of language only in the form of compulsory subjects taught at school, with a few exceptions. One teacher from Luo origin convinced me that he preferred to teach in English rather than in Kiswahili, because Luo people master English better:

> You know English, as for the culture; we as Luo's what we could speak best is English (Subject teacher, St Manuel).

Based on data gathered from classroom observation, this reply was highly unexpected as most teachers I observed seemed much more comfortable with Kiswahili, non-regarding their ethnic and linguistic background.

To properly understand such a reply, one has to know the developments in Kenyan politics after liberation, which is highly defined by ethnic division. There is intense competition for supreme political power between politicians from the largest Kikuyu micro-nation and the third largest Luo micro-nation. Kikuyu is a language of Bantu origin, related to Kiswahili. The Luo language is of the Nilotic language family, another one of the three large language groups within Kenya. The use of English is considered ethnically neutral, but as Bunyi puts it: "whereas indigenous languages may divide people along ethnic lines, English divides them along class lines" (1999, p. 348). A teacher may therefore report to prefer English due to his language-oriented attitudes (Fishman, 1972), even if he masters Kiswahili at a superior level. As mentioned I witnessed countless departures from the English language policy at all schools I visited, and did not observe any differences between teachers of Luo, Luhya, Kamba or any other ethnic origins on code switching. Whenever communication became less formal, whether in the classroom, the staffroom or outside during breaks, Kiswahili was always used. This tended to happen even during my presence, e. g. in the teacher staff room at St Catherine.

One remarkable finding during my observations was that class level, and hence the age of the pupils, did not seem to impact the balance between English and Kiswahili used in instruction. I had expected there to be a notable difference between the lower and higher grades of primary school classes, with teachers of the younger children applying Kiswahili to a larger degree, but this was not evident in my data. Nor was there any notable difference between the three schools. It is possible that teachers are extra aware of training the children in the English language in the lower grades to improve their language skills and understanding for further learning. But I also witnessed a class 3 science lesson, officially to be taught in English and based on English textbooks, gradually converting to a vibrant class conversation with Kiswahili as main LOI.

During a day of observing class 1 at St Manuel, I hardly noticed any use of Kiswahili by the teacher during lessons. Another day I observed a teacher using Kiswahili a total of no less fourteen times in a class 8 social science lesson. However, the variation between the teachers was large. Some teachers would often use Kiswahili to explain a complex topic, while others were very strict on using only the formal LOI. Observer influence may have played a part in these situations, as teachers tended to react differently on my presence in class. Because English is supposed to be the LOI, teachers may have made an extra effort to keep to policy due to my presence in the classroom.

Typically, there would be a buzz of pupils talking in Kiswahili before a class was to start. Teachers could walk around and engage in conversation with the pupils, using Kiswahili. Such practice fits the theory of Kiswahili as the L language of the informal domain. Switching to English whenever a lesson started, seemed to be very natural for both teachers and pupils, but to me as a foreign observer it appeared as a strange artificial divide between that what is *education* and all that happens around lessons during a long school day.

I encountered an interesting case of language during my two weeks stay at Leonard Friends. A small girl was enrolled in pre-unit, the uppermost pre-primary group. Her family was of Kisii origin in western Kenya and had recently moved to Nairobi and Kibera. She spoke no English or Kiswahili and there were neither teachers nor other children speaking Kisii in the school. Although the Kisii speak a Bantu language, communicating with Kiswahili speakers is difficult because Kisii is too distant from Kiswahili. Hence she could not communicate with anyone, apparently making her very frustrated. I often observed her beating other children during breaks, seeking some form of contact with her peers. Even if there would have been

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another person mastering Kisii in the school, policy is that no vernaculars are allowed within the school grounds.

This particular girl will most certainly learn the basics of English and Kiswahili through her presence at school relatively quickly. The case illustrates a good example of how people of other Kenyan regions are assimilated, not integrated, into an urban slum community. The old cultural capital has to make way for the new one, suited for an urban life. This particular case furthermore illustrates the extreme differences found in Kenya between urban and rural life styles. While some continue to live an ancient pastoral lifestyle, herding cattle and living in basic huts, others work for multinational software companies in Nairobi's central business district.

The Maasai people in southern Kenya for example have not adopted the technology of the wheel, but many have embedded the use of mobile phone technology into their daily lives. In the northern region of Turkana clashes between pastoralist micro-nations and international companies searching for oil illustrates the tension between the traditional and modern world and values. Applying one national curriculum may serve the cultural and political nation building, but will exclude all those for which the content has little relevance and/or do not comprehensively master the main language of instruction used in schools.

6 Conclusions and the Way Ahead

Findings from my field data collection confirm much of what is found on the literature on LCPE worldwide. Improving financial and jurisdictional conditions for the LCPS sector would almost instantly contribute to the global EFA agenda due to improved access to education for those most marginalized, and further allow LCPSs to raise tangible elements of education quality in the form of improved structures, access to a larger variation of learning materials such as textbooks and more continuity in the teaching staff due to better payment. Although the Kenyan government may choose to direct all funding to the public school sector, they could improve the conditions of LCPSs by changing policy while the public education system is being strengthened to support the increase of primary school enrollments due to the implementation of FPE, urbanization and population growth.

As for the question whether private schools may damage the sector of public schooling, LCPSs are a minor source of concern than high cost private schools. The latter draw well-resourced parents, pupils and teachers away from public schools, creating an unequal education system where those with money can buy higher quality services. Supporting LCPE, or at least removing barriers to the survival of the sector, may relieve the public school system from some of the immense pressure that it received after FPE was declared throughout Kenya in 2003. When the public school system is strengthened, access for marginalized groups is expanded and the quality of education is raised, parents will most likely choose public education for their children. This however presupposes that hidden costs are removed so that the total expenditure for households for public schooling is considerably lower than the costs for LCPE. The ministry of Education could learn from the community involvement found in LCPSs, possibly raising the level of accountability and motivation among teachers in public schools. Laws on land ownership however make it difficult to build public schools within acceptable walking distance for those living in the middle of Kibera.

A major constrain on the education quality in Kenya is the outdated national standardized examination system. It urges teachers to apply rigid teaching methods dominated by rote learning and repetition. The dominance of the English language in the national syllabus and examination papers should give room for a bilingual approach, at the very least equating Kiswahili to English. Current language practice disfavours the poor disproportionately because they are the least likely to live in an environment where English is widely used as a

natural medium of communication. If education is reduced to merely become a competition for credentials in the form of standardized test scores, it fails to serve the purpose of creating competent, self-reliant citizens able to contribute to the societal and economic growth of the nation and all its regions and rich cultures.

If Kenyan authorities really want to educate today's children to become creative and versatile members of a modern nation able to compete in the global economy, they should commence on a radical reform of primary school curriculum and examination procedures. Such a reform can only improve education quality if it takes into account the importance of indigenous culture and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity. This in turn depends on the will to give African languages a more central role in the education system, starting with primary education but not stopping there. Maathai (2009) mentions how the most overlooked natural resource on the African continent is also the most important resource, namely the human resources.

Interviews and observations carried out in the field show that most teachers are well aware of what the children in their community should learn and do in school to be able to improve the life conditions of themselves and their families and become self-reliant. Although LCPS teachers may have enjoyed comparatively less education than their peers in public or high cost private schools, they make up for it in the devotion to their task as testified by the interviewed parents and pupils. Primary school curriculum should give more value to practical, vocational subjects to enhance self-reliance and prepare pupils for more diverse work opportunities.

With improved access to information through the use of ICT, LCPS teachers may further educate themselves and diversify their teaching style based on modern research of how children learn. The situation may further be improved through the active use of community schools as institutions of culture and knowledge, giving teachers the possibility to sensitize parents about the importance of education and important research on language matters.

This is however restrained by the current situation of poverty, where teachers and parents are constantly busy with acquiring the basic resources to survive. When teachers spend their evening hours on private tuition and the school days furthermore are long and occupy a major part of the weekend, teachers are left with little time for lesson preparations and professional self-development. National universities could get involved by offering in-service training to

community school teachers during school holidays. Aid donors could provide instant poverty relief to LCPE and offer school owners minor loans for school improvements.

The recent increase in food and fuel prices has worsened the situation of slum dwellers, jeopardizing parents' ability to pay school fees. Applying Sen's view of poverty as capability deprivation is particularly helpful in analyzing the barriers that people and community institutions in slum settlements encounter. Not lawfully owning or renting property deprives slum dwellers from much of the common rights that recognized citizens enjoy.

An important aspect often overlooked in the debate on LCPE, mentioned by Niemerg (2013), is that the running of LCPSs provides much needed entrepreneurial opportunities for slum inhabitants, who have few possibilities for paid work elsewhere. As NGOs focus on slum upgrading in African countries characterized by rapid urbanization, they should not look beyond the multiple benefits such local initiatives may have for the community. More than just educational institutions, the case of St Catherine illustrates that community schools can be important institutions for cultural, educational and political activities and hence improve the poor situation in slum settlements. The recent devolution of political power may provide possibilities for local decision making, and community schools can function as local hubs where people can come together.

The debate on LCPE should not evolve around a general discourse of the privatization of education. It should take departure in the needs of the marginalized and how their situation may be improved. UNESCO (2104) and the MDGs are focused on what should be done and what governments should do to improve the situation, but seem to fail when it comes to taking departure in the current reality and urgent needs of people. Solely investing more money in education will not necessarily improve the educational opportunities of the poor, as long as societal structures or fields continue to reproduce inequality. Poverty relief for those most in need should be the primary concern, while the ideological question of whether private initiatives should be financially and politically supported or not should be a secondary concern.

When governmental institutions fail, it is natural that people attempt to replace the public services they are entitled to receive by coming up with their own community solutions. It also encourages a culture of opportunism to those who see chances for making profit. It is difficult to draw a clear line between entrepreneurialism and opportunism in the Kibera slum.

Entrepreneurialism should ideally serve the community at large, while opportunism puts money in the pockets of a few individuals. One should however not underestimate the ability of the community to regulate such activity.

When public policy is shaped as such that it confines entrepreneurial initiatives in fear of opportunism, a government is not only escaping its constitutional duty but also actively contributing to a further marginalization of those vulnerable groups already sidelined. Measured against the current situation of a notable national economic growth in Kenya such exclusion is unacceptable.

Reforming policy on LCPE should go hand in hand with a reform of policy on slum development and urban planning, recognizing the importance of the local environment for learning achievements. The rapid urbanization process could be counteracted by improving the living conditions of those that live in rural areas and reduce the flow of urban migrators, a process that hopefully can be realized with the recent devolution of political decision making.

Kenya could play a leading part in the much needed reintroduction of African languages in education. The country is in a beneficiary position compared to many other SSA countries due to a relatively stable economic growth and political system that in turn attracts foreign investments, plus a national lingua franca that is spoken by a large part of the population. Yet ethnical tensions within the country continue to pose a threat to the nation's prosperity, constraining the development of political stability and strong governmental institutions, including that of public education. Several political leaders, including Kenyan opposition politician Raila Odinga, have alerted about the dangers of a current political climate dominated by ethnical distinctions. The current tendency of downplaying ethnic origin and the stigmatization of cultural and symbolic capital from Kenya's micro-nations may temporarily keep those tensions under the surface but is by no means a long term peace solution as long as the source of the problem, namely the unequal distribution of opportunities, is not tackled.

During the last two years it is observed how Kenyan authorities have emphasized the threat of external enemies such as the Somalian Al Shabaab and the International Criminal Court's allegation on President Kenyatta as a western conspiracy against Kenya, apparently to enhance a culture of national unity. It seems that peacekeeping is currently higher up on the national agenda than the freedom of expression and cultural and ethnical belonging. There is a

fear of the violence of 2008 erupting again, and currently it seems that Kenyans have to choose between keeping peace and the right of cultural and linguistic expression. This political climate is not beneficial for an increased use of African languages in education.

On a larger scale, Kenyan authorities can no longer ignore the threat to national security that is formed by millions of people living in utmost poverty in large urban slums. Living on marginal resources, the threat of social unrest rises when food and fuel prices suddenly upsurge. This does not only pose problems to the poor when it comes to feeding themselves and their families, but also forces the closure of small scale businesses because people can no longer afford the goods or services they provide. No society can be healthy when the gap between the rich and the poor is that large, and the education system could play an important role in equalizing the living conditions of people. This should not be done by forcing cultural and ethnic uniformity on people, but rather by giving everyone a fair chance to enjoy a quality education at least on the primary and secondary level.

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Attachments

1. **Consent form for interview respondents**

Language, literacy and quality in nongovernmental schools in Kibera, Nairobi.

A Master thesis for the course 'Comparative and International Education' at the University of Oslo, Norway.

I agree to participate in this project, with the following conditions:

- The aim of this project is to study and analyze educational services provided by nongovernmental learning institutions with a focus on language, literacy and quality of education.
- The information I give in the interview will only be used for the purpose of this study.
- I can withdraw from participation at any desired moment.
- I am free not to answer certain questions or discuss certain topics without having to explain the reason for doing so.
- All interview data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No real names of persons or institutions will be used in any publication of the research.
- I allow the interview to be recorded by means of digital sound recording to facilitate the transcribing of data for the researcher. Recordings will be fully deleted after being transcribed.
- For any information on the project, I can contact Christian H. J. Wilbers by e-mail address christian@wilbers.no.

Signature of respondent: _____

Date: _____

Signature of interviewer: _____

Date: _____

2. **Interview guide for school management and teachers**

This group of respondents is the most accessible one, as contact already is established during the observation phase. The structure of management is expected to be very different at the different institutions involved in this research; therefore interview questions may have to be adapted to the situation.

Interview draft for teachers and school management:

1. *How would you describe the purpose of education as you see it?*
2. *Do you experience it as a difficult task to run and work at a school in a slum setting?*
3. *What challenges does the school currently have?*
4. *What do you think are important issues in quality education?*
5. *How do you think that the quality of the school could be made even better?*
6. *What do you see as the most important things children learn at your school?*
7. *What do you think that your school can do to improve the future prospects of the children living in the slum?*
8. *Do you see language as important for quality education? (If not brought up).*
9. *Which language do you prefer to teach in?*
10. *Do you experience it as challenging to run a school and teach in the economically poor, multilingual setting of the slum?*
11. *Do you see any positive sides of the slum community?*
12. *What other skills are important to learn for the children?*
13. *How and to which degree are parents/households involved in the school?*
14. *If there is one single skill that you want every child to learn at this school to be able to succeed, what would that be?*
15. *How do you include the various cultural backgrounds of the children and the diverse culture(s) of Kenya in the school?*

3. **Interview guide for parents/households**

These respondents are most likely to be parents, but can also be other guardians that have responsibility for children in school age. Their views on the value and relevance of schooling and on the present and future situation of children are highly important for this research. Parents may be interviewed separately or as a family in the form of a focus group interview.

Interview draft for household/guardians:

1. *Could you describe the role that the school plays in your child´s life?*
2. *Do you see the learning as useful?*
3. *What do you think are the most important things that the child learns at school?*
4. *Do you experience challenges that negatively affect the child´s ability to attend school and achieve good learning results?*
5. *How do you see the future prospects for your child?*
6. *Is there anything that you wish the school should change or improve to the benefit of your child?*
7. *Which language do you normally speak in the home situation?*

4. **Interview guide for pupils**

Pupils at the schools form a less important group of respondents compared to school personnel and households/parents in the case of interviews, as their views are less influential. At the same time they are at the center of the attention and the target group of the study, and the transformative participatory nature of this study requires their voice to be heard. In addition; comparing desired capabilities through education as perceived by all three groups of stakeholders may form an important departure for analysis.

Interview draft for pupils:

1. *Do you like to go to school?*
2. *Which subject is your favourite?*
3. *What would you like to do when you grow up to be an adult?*
4. *What do you think you have to learn to do that?*
5. *Which language do you speak at your home?*
6. *Do you prefer to speak English or Kiswahili? Or perhaps another language?*
7. *If there is something you do not understand in class, do you usually ask your teacher for help?*