



The Irish National Teacher: Origins, Identity and Contribution 1831-1871

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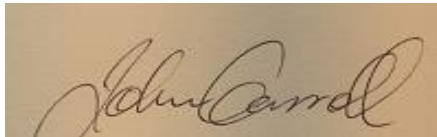
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Signature:

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'John M. Carroll'.

John M. Carroll

Date: 20 September 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures and Tables	vii
List of Appendices	viii
List of Abbreviations	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Abstract	xi

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The research question and timeframe	4
1.3 Rationale and motivation	7
1.4 National and international perspectives in the field	9
<i>1.4.1 Awareness of teacher histories</i>	9
<i>1.4.2 International awareness and import</i>	11
1.5 Thesis structure	14
1.6 A note on terminology	15
1.7 Conclusion	17

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Foregrounding Irish identity	20
<i>2.2.1 Identity in Early Christian Ireland, c.400-1000 AD</i>	20
<i>2.2.2 Ireland and identity from the Norman Invasion (1169) to the Act of Union (1801)</i>	25
2.3 An overview of the research era in context, 1831-1871	32
2.4 Educational provision prior to 1831	34
2.5 Teachers prior to 1831	40
2.6 The establishment of the national system, 1831	43
2.7 Teacher training and education	47
2.8 Teacher payment and salaries	52
2.9 The Inspectorate, 1832-1871	54
2.10 The Powis Commission, 1868-1870	57

2.11 Conclusion	59
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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	61
3.2 Theoretical understandings of identity	63
<i>3.2.1 Individual identity theory</i>	65
<i>3.2.2 Social and collective identity theory</i>	69
3.3 Methodological framework	75
3.4 Sources	79
<i>3.4.1 Primary sources</i>	80
<i>3.4.2 Secondary sources</i>	83
3.5 Document analysis	83
3.6 Ethical considerations	86
3.7 Limitations	89
3.8 Conclusion	89

CHAPTER 4

THE SELECTION, CHARACTER AND SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL TEACHER

4.1 Introduction	91
4.2 Contextual overview for this chapter	93
<i>4.2.1 Teachers pre-1831 in public and private settings</i>	93
4.3 Social origins of the national teacher	99
<i>4.3.1 A low class</i>	99
<i>4.3.2 Social mobility</i>	104
4.4 Selection and character of the national teacher	107
<i>4.4.1 Stanley's Letter</i>	107
<i>4.4.2 The selection and training process</i>	108
<i>4.4.3 The monitorial system</i>	112
<i>4.4.4 Rules for teachers</i>	115
<i>4.4.5 Marlborough Street-a new class of schoolmasters</i>	119

<i>4.4.6 Character and respectability</i>	123
4.5 Conclusion	132

CHAPTER 5

THE STATUS AND SOCIAL CLASS OF THE NATIONAL TEACHER

5.1 Introduction	137
5.2 Contextual overview for this chapter	139
<i>5.2.1 Teacher status and class prior to 1831</i>	139
<i>5.2.2 Perceptions of national teacher status</i>	141
5.3 Status and social class of the national teacher	144
<i>5.3.1 Precepts of respectability</i>	144
<i>5.3.2 Inconstant status</i>	148
<i>5.3.3 Influence and visibility in the community</i>	157
<i>5.3.4 Issues of remuneration</i>	167
<i>5.3.5 Alternative employments and supplementing salaries</i>	174
<i>5.3.6 'The position of the teacher is one peculiar to themselves' ...1859 onwards</i>	179
<i>5.3.7 National teachers and social unrest</i>	182
<i>5.3.8 National teacher's associations and coalescing for change</i>	185
<i>5.3.9 The Irish Teacher's Journal-A platform for the Irish teacher</i>	187
5.4 Conclusion	196

CHAPTER 6

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND THE NATIONAL TEACHER

6.1 Introduction	201
6.2 Contextual overview for this chapter	203
<i>6.2.1 Religion and education prior to 1831</i>	203
6.3 Religion and the national teacher	205
<i>6.3.1 Teacher denomination and training</i>	205
<i>6.3.2 Patronage and religious identity</i>	210
<i>6.3.3 Reinforcing religious affiliation-managers and teachers</i>	215
<i>6.3.4 Challenges to the national teacher's religious identity</i>	225
<i>6.3.5 Marriage and national teacher identity</i>	230

6.3.6 <i>Teacher denomination in the national system</i>	240
6.4 Conclusion	244
CHAPTER 7	
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION	
7.1 Introduction	247
7.2 Identifying the Irish national teacher	249
7.2.1 <i>Selection, character and social origins</i>	249
7.2.2 <i>Status and social class</i>	255
7.2.3 <i>Religious identity</i>	259
7.3 Import and contribution	264
7.4 Suggestions for further research	271
7.5 Conclusion	273
Bibliography	276
Appendix 1	301
Appendix 2	304
Appendix 3	311

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 3.1	Illustrating the contributory elements of national teacher identity	78
Table 5.1	National teacher salary scales according to classification 1839	167
Table 5.2	National teacher salary scales from 1851	168
Table 5.3	Illustrating causes of vacancies amongst national teachers from 1863-1867	189
Table 6.1	Overview of religious denominations of national teachers at Marlborough Street 1838-1867	208
Table 6.2	Patronage of national schools in 1868, according to Powis Commission Report	213
Table 6.3	Religious denomination of the national teachers trained in 1851	214
Table 6.4	Number of clerical and lay patrons of national schools according to religious denomination in 1870	217
Table 6.5	Numerical returns pertaining to marital status of national teachers in sixty school districts for 1860	234
Table 6.6	Figures for married and single principal teachers in 1867	237
Table 6.7	Figures for married and single assistant teachers in 1867	238
Table 6.8	Religious denominations of principal teachers across the four provinces	242
Table 6.9	Religious affiliation of the principal national teachers evidenced in Powis Commission Report	243

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Assistant Commissioners and their districts for Powis Commission Report	302
Appendix 2	Overview of primary source material used	305
Appendix 3	Letter of Ethical Approval from Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee	312

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNEI Commissioners of National Education in Ireland

CSO Central Statistics Office

INTO Irish National Teachers' Organisation

ITE Initial teacher education

ITJ Irish Teacher's Journal

MP Member of Parliament

NT National teacher

RIC Royal Irish Constabulary

UK United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland

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This thesis sees the collation of experiences and interests which have sustained me since childhood. Along the way, there have been many influential people and characters who have shaped my life; indeed, it is said that early experiences shape the individual and this was certainly the case for me. In particular, from infancy my mother's family furthered my fascination with history and events from times past. My grandfather Dan's stories of his time in Oregon during the 1920s and his huge store of verse had a profound impact on me as a youngster. This was later supplemented by my uncles, Sam and Denis, whose love for 'tracing' (genealogy) along with local lore, was a staple of their discussions. In the Newmarket area where they lived, stories of John Philpott Curran, John Twiss, the Whiteboys and Daniel O'Connell abounded. These social histories were vividly recalled and I loved my weekly trips to Rossacon, Newmarket. At national school over the county bounds in North Cork, the Master, Pat Collins, N.T., (R.I.P.) encouraged my interest in history while at home in Effin, in South County Limerick I was fortunate to have Pádraig Ó Fionnghusa, N.T., (R.I.P.) as a neighbour and family friend. Paddy's love of *An Ghaeilge* and local history furthered the family interest I experienced on the weekly trips to my maternal grandparents.

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ABSTRACT

The Irish national education system is long recognised as fruitful ground for historians of education. Established in 1831 by the pre-Independence administration, some forty years before similar systems emerged in other English-speaking domains, the national system realised exponential growth over a short period to become an embedded feature of the Irish educational landscape. Central to this narrative, but largely omitted from historiographical studies to date, are the school teachers who staffed the system. Colloquially known as national teachers (NTs),¹ these individuals were tasked with the delivery of the new national education system. The *lacuna* around early national teacher identity foregrounded the central research question of this work which sought to establish ‘Who was the Irish national teacher in the early decades of the nineteenth century?’ In essence, the purpose of the research was to examine who these teachers were, where they came from and how they came to inhabit a specific national teacher identity. In order to examine this early national teacher identity it became apparent that an understanding of identity as a phenomenon and the theory of identity was required. Readings of contemporary identity theory such as those outlined by Schwartz,² and Adams and Marshall,³ amongst others, led the researcher to recognise that there were modern elements which could be applied retrospectively to historical data, such as establishing a shared point of origin, social status and class, and religious affiliation. These core aspects of identity became the central elements of examining Irish national teacher identity in the historical context, in this study.

¹ The attribution of ‘NT’ (national teacher) denoting the teacher’s qualification can be understood to predate the introduction of the Bachelor of Education degree programme for teachers in 1974. From then on the title ‘primary teacher’ came into use. Arguably, this did not become widespread until the late 1980s and early 1990s, as many of those who qualified prior to 1974 retained the title of NT. For the purposes of distinguishing between the teachers referred to in this study and current terminologies, the moniker of ‘national’ teacher is used to refer to teachers in the historical sense, with the more modern title of ‘primary teacher’ used in the twenty-first century context.

² Schwartz, S.J. (2001) The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory and Research: A Review and Integration. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research (Mahwah, N.J.)*, 1(1), 7-58.

³ Adams, G. and Marshall, S.K. (1996) A developmental social psychology of identity: understanding the person-in-context. *Journal of Adolescence (London, England)*, (19)5, 429–442.

Drawing on archival material, largely grounded in official correspondence between the Inspectorate and the CNEI, data relevant to the Irish national teachers' identity are examined while those current theoretical understandings of identity noted above informed and guided this historical analysis of Irish national teacher identity between 1831 and 1871. Ultimately, the thesis draws firm conclusions around the identity of the early Irish national teacher. First, it is clear that the majority of those employed as national teachers originated amongst the poorer classes of Irish society while, second, the social class and status of the national teachers for the greater part of the time period under review remained in an ambiguous state. Third, in respect of religious beliefs, it is clear that the majority of those who were employed as national teachers were affiliated to the Catholic Church. Each of these elements of national teacher are discussed and analysed within the thesis to assess their contribution to the emerging identity of the Irish national teacher in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Finally, the import of this work cannot be understated. This is the first comprehensive research undertaken on the identity of the early Irish national teacher. This is tempered by the unique methodological approach employed, which utilises contemporary identity theories in tandem with document analysis to further understanding and knowledge of early Irish national teacher identity. Neither can the implications or resonance for the composition of the twenty-first century Irish primary teaching population be ignored. This positions this research as both timely and useful in assessing and analysing intake within Initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in Ireland at the present time.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The 21st century has seen significant changes to societies across the globe. The migration of peoples due to improved employment or educational opportunities, or as a result of conflict, contributes to such changes. Accordingly, as people settle in new locations they will usually integrate into local communities, adopting local practices or habits and oftentimes assuming specific cultural values or beliefs in an effort to recreate, revise or inhabit a new identity. Central to this thesis is the question of identity; how this is formed and what it means to express individual identity or engage with and inhabit collective identities.

For many people, their first exposure to specific cultural practices and values will be in the education system of a country. Arguably, one of the most influential figures within the educational experience is the primary teacher. Traditionally, in the Irish context, the persona of the teacher was accorded respect and a certain status in communities. Questions around current representations of Irish teacher identity have come to the fore in recent decades. Coupled with the increasing changes to the composition of the wider Irish population, identity both in the educational sphere and at a broader level in society was never more topical. Authors such as Keane, Heinz and McDaid amongst others,⁴ highlight the challenges that are inherent within

⁴ Keane, E., Heinz, M. and McDaid, R., eds. (2023) *Diversifying the teaching profession: dimensions, dilemmas and directions for the future*. London: Routledge; Keane, E., Heinz, M. and Lynch, A. (2023) Factors impacting on the retention of students from under-represented groups in initial teacher education in Ireland. *Tertiary education and management*, 29(1), 5-23.

the educational sphere regarding representation of minorities and increasing diversity.⁵ Despite the increased diversification of Irish society,⁶ the majority of those employed as primary teachers in the sphere of elementary education in Ireland remain, ‘stubbornly mono-ethnic.’⁷ While awareness around this continues to be raised by academics in the field such as those noted above, the roots of this singularity of identity amongst the Irish elementary teaching population remain largely unexplored. Therefore, the present study while rooted in the past, has important implications for understanding identity in respect of primary teacher diversity within Ireland and farther afield. The commonalities shared by the development of primary education systems historically mean that this research is broadly applicable across nations, particularly those that share a common imperial history.

In 1831, the pre-Independence administration in Ireland established a national system of elementary education following the recommendations of the then Chief Secretary Edward Stanley.⁸ Recognised as the first nationally instigated elementary education system in the English-speaking world,⁹ the ‘national system’ as it became known, developed rapidly to become an embedded feature of Irish society. It was some four decades later before similar systems emerged in other imperial settings internationally such as England and Ontario.¹⁰

⁵ Keane, Heinz and McDaid, *Diversifying the teaching profession: dimensions, dilemmas and directions for the future*, 6-11.

⁶ According to the figures published by the CSO (2022), the population of the Republic of Ireland stands at 5,149,139, with 631,785 (or 12.2%) of those being categorised as citizens who have their origins outside of Ireland.

⁷ Quoted in: Walsh, T. and McDaid, R. (2019) *Race Discrimination and the Management of Ethnic Diversity at Work: The Case of Elementary Teachers in Ireland* In: Vassilopoulou, J, Brabet, J, and Showunmi, V., eds. (2019) *Race Discrimination and Management of Ethnic Diversity and Migration at Work: European Countries' Perspectives*. UK: Emerald Publishing, 81-105:82. [Online]. Available at: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nuim/reader.action?docID=5850017&ppg=1> (accessed 23 July 2024).

⁸ See Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

⁹ O’ Donovan, P.F. (2017) *Stanley’s Letter and The National School System and Inspectors in Ireland 1831-1922*. Galway: Galway Education Centre, 25.

¹⁰ An elementary education system was introduced in Britain following The 1870 Education Act, and in Canada after the School Act in 1871.

However, Ireland retains the distinction of being the first and therefore, largely experimental foray into instituting a nationwide system of elementary education in the English-speaking world, with one historian noting that Ireland was positioned as somewhat of a ‘social laboratory where various policy initiatives were tried out which might be less acceptable in England.’¹¹ This also held true for British imperial practices in the wider empire, with systems of governance and exploitative practices similarly employed and facilitated in such far-flung centres as Jamaica and New Zealand.¹²

This thesis seeks to excavate the emerging identity of the Irish national teacher and consider how this identity developed over a formative period of forty years, between 1831 and 1871. Yet, the thesis does not aim to simply present a description of Irish national teachers during the nineteenth century in a traditional linear format. The core elements of this study are guided and facilitated by using modern theoretical constructs of identity to excavate nineteenth century Irish national teacher identity. In this, the thesis traverses both the traditional and modern to facilitate engagement with the sources and develop an understanding of this historical identity, with relevance for modern practices. Theoretical perspectives developed from the mid-twentieth century up to the current day are drawn upon and linked with historical data to guide the study. While this introduction recognises the importance of identity, and teacher identity, in the modern world, this study is grounded in a historical analysis and therefore, commences in the early decades of the nineteenth century with the foundation of the national system of elementary education in Ireland.

¹¹ Coolahan, J. (1981) *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*. Dublin: IPA, 3.

¹² Hall, C. (2002) *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Hall, C. (2008) Making colonial subjects: Education in the age of empire. *History of Education (Tavistock)*, 37(6), 773-787.

This chapter is divided into a number of constituent parts, commencing with a broad introduction for the reader here in Section 1.1, before briefly outlining the central research and embedded questions of the thesis in Section 1.2. The underlying rationale and motivation for pursuing the research is discussed in Section 1.3 while national and international perspectives of educational histories in respect of teacher identity are examined in Section 1.4. This is further divided into two subsections which consider the awareness of teacher histories generally, along with the awareness and import of these internationally. An overview of the structure of the thesis is offered in Section 1.5, while some aspects of terminology which the reader will encounter throughout the thesis are discussed in Section 1.6. Finally, a conclusion and summary to the chapter are presented in Section 1.7.

1.2 The Research question and timeframe

Central to the success of the Irish national system were the teachers who were employed within the national schools. The initial focus on developing the nascent education system across the island of Ireland, along with a greater concentration on the instillation of imperial values in society as a whole rather than the individual, meant these teachers were largely invisible within the new system of national education in Ireland, recognised only for their functionary role. This study centres on examining available evidence to reveal the identity of these early ‘national’ teachers. This presupposes the central research question of this study which considers, ‘**Who was the Irish national teacher in the early decades of the nineteenth century?**’ This question is central to understanding the roots of the national teachers in Ireland during the nineteenth century. Its import and relevance for current understanding lies in the development of the national system in nineteenth century Ireland. As noted, this was the first time a nationwide system of elementary education was envisaged in the English-speaking world and,

accordingly, a wholly new type of teacher emerged from within this crucible of education, imperialism and administration. Isolating composite elements of the Irish national teacher's identity from within the Irish national system's nascent phase of development will further understanding around who these teachers were and, perhaps, more importantly, what were the common attributes they possessed which allowed them to inhabit this new identity.

It is important to recognise briefly that the thesis focuses solely on those individuals who were employed within the national system of education and that provision is not made for those members of the religious such as the Christian Brothers or the Presentation Sisters who also provided elementary education in Ireland during the nineteenth century.¹³ In respect of identity as teachers those members of the religious who were affiliated to differing orders would not have been exposed to or experienced perhaps similar privations as some of those who became national teachers and, accordingly, their identities differed to the national teachers. Arguably, including the religious teachers would also significantly increase the range of material to be included in the thesis and, accordingly, lessen the treatment of the sources examined. Therefore, the decision was taken to concentrate on those who were under the remit of the national system only.

A number of embedded questions and an accompanying timeframe emerged to support the central premise of the thesis. While these are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.3 of Chapter Three, it is worth briefly articulating them here also. The embedded questions support the primary research question and are as follows:

¹³ The Second Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Enquiry published in 1826 notes 'Schools of the Christian Brotherhood and Sundry Religious Orders as well as Female Schools attached to Nunneries which also provided elementary education for children. See Fealy, G. (2023) *Coolfore, West Farney and the National School System 1826-1968*. Dublin: Eastwood. 8-10.

- I. What were the social origins and character of the individuals who became national teachers, and how were they selected?
- II. What was their social status and class, and how did these develop?
- III. What were their beliefs or religious affiliations, and how did these contribute to the national teacher identity?

Each of these contribute to answering the primary research question and establishing Irish national teacher identity as it emerged. These also resonate with 21st century concepts and understandings of teacher identity. The timeframe for the study commences with the establishment of the national education system in 1831 and concludes following the publication of the results of the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland)* in 1870, better known as the Powis Commission after its chair, the Earl of Powis. This forty-year span encapsulates the formative period of Irish national teacher identity, bookended by the beginnings of the national system and a comprehensive assessment of its workings by Powis after four decades, thus providing neat temporal parameters for the study. The period chosen is considered the most suitable in which to evaluate the emerging identity of the national teacher. The selection of the period in question was further strengthened by the events which bookend the period occurred. The commencement of the national system and the institution of the Powis Commission of Inquiry represent notable events in the historiographical landscape of Irish education, with the latter in particular heralding changes within the national system of education following its publication. When the national system began the concept of a ‘national’ teacher was unknown. By the time the Powis Report was published, the persona of the national

teacher was entrenched within society, with this further copper-fastened by the institution of the Irish National Teacher's Association in 1868.¹⁴

1.3 Rationale and motivation

The development of the Irish national education system in the nineteenth century justly stands as one of the pioneering endeavours in Irish history of education. Accordingly, since the 1970s, this has given rise to renewed interest in this unique field of research and many seminal works have emerged as a result.¹⁵ The researcher's motivation is underpinned by a long-held fascination with history which was encouraged from an early age at primary school level by those self-same primary school teachers. Later qualifying as a primary school teacher copper-fastened this interest and realised further studies at Master's level.¹⁶ Whilst examining content for the Master's thesis at the National Archives of Ireland, the researcher was struck by the lack of detail and information regarding the national teachers themselves, especially in the early decades of the national system. This compelled the researcher to delve further into this area. Direction and guidance from seasoned educational historians, supplemented by engagement with many of the core texts focusing on the history of Irish education, recognised there *was* a significant *lacuna* around the identity of the Irish national teacher, particularly from the beginnings of the national system in 1831 up to the publication of the Powis Report. This was complemented by the researcher's daily interactions in an Irish primary school with other teachers. Reflecting on the researcher's own primary school experience and later working as a primary school teacher, it was striking how little the identity of those employed as primary

¹⁴ This later became the Irish National Teacher's Organisation. See Section 2.8 of the next chapter.

¹⁵ See Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*; Doyle, J. (2020) *Model Schools- Model Teachers? A nineteenth century Irish teacher-training initiative*. Kilkenny: Geata Buidhe Books; Purséil, N. (2017) *Kindling the Flame: 150 Years of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation*. Dublin: Gill Books; O' Donovan, *Stanley's Letter*.

¹⁶ Carroll, J.M. (2020) *The Irish teacher: Nationalist contributions in the nineteenth century*. Unpublished MA thesis. University College London.

teachers had changed, if at all. There were no teachers of colour, they were largely Catholic in religious affiliation and maintained the rituals and routines of this Catholicism, even though it often appeared formulaic, and they were primarily women. Having an interest in history and having engaged with educational history at undergraduate and postgraduate level, it was clear there were questions to be asked around historical teacher identity.

In examining secondary works, it was noted that early contributions from historians such as Corcoran¹⁷ and Dowling¹⁸ were interrogated and expanded upon in the seminal works of Akenson¹⁹ and Coolahan.²⁰ More recent works such as those by Walsh, MacManus and O’ Donovan amongst others, built on and expanded these to provide further nuanced and informative insights into varying aspects of Irish educational history.²¹ However, the national teacher or ‘NT’ as they were wont to be known, has remained largely marginalised until recently in the field of Irish educational history.²²

The rationale for pursuing such an examination of early Irish teacher identity was strengthened by the prospects of revealing the unknown, as well as contributing to a greater understanding of Irish teacher identity in a historical sense. As the researcher has now moved to work in

¹⁷ Corcoran, T. (1916) *State Policy in Irish education, A.D. 1536 to 1816: exemplified in documents collected for lectures to postgraduate classes*. Dublin: Fallon Brothers.

¹⁸ Dowling, P.J. (1968) *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, 2nd Ed. Cork: Mercier Press.

¹⁹ Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*.

²⁰ Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*.

²¹ See Doyle, *Model Schools- Model Teachers?*; Purséil, *Kindling the Flame*; O’ Donovan, *Stanley’s Letter*; Walsh, T. (2012) *Primary Education in Ireland, 1897-1990, Curriculum and Context*. Oxford: Peter Lang; O’Donoghue, T.A., O’Doherty, T. and Harford, J. (2017) *Teacher preparation in Ireland: History, Policy and Future Directions*. UK: Emerald Publishing; Coolahan, J. with O’ Donovan, P.F. (2009) *A History of Ireland’s School Inspectorate 1831-2008*. Dublin: Four Courts Press; McManus, A. (2002). *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books 1695-1831*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

²² The following paper is a notable exception here. Walsh T. (2020) The evolving status of elementary teachers in Ireland (1831–1921): from ‘feckless and impoverished’ to ‘respectable’. *History of Education (Tavistock)*, 51(3), 326-345.

primary teacher education, they are keenly aware that the current Irish primary teacher demographic remains stubbornly the preserve of white, middle classes, despite efforts to challenge this through the institution of varying groups and initiatives.²³ In the following section, the relevance and resonance of this research beyond Ireland is considered, further amplifying its importance within the study of the history of education, nationally and internationally.

1.4 National and international perspectives in the field

1.4.1 Awareness of teacher histories

There is growing awareness of the import of research within educational history over the past two decades which extends beyond histories of systems and administrations, to focus on what might have hitherto been considered the minutiae of historical narratives such as personal and social histories.²⁴ Aldrich, writing in 2003, posits that a core aspect of historiographical research is ‘to rescue from oblivion those whose voices have not yet been heard and whose stories have not yet been told.’²⁵ The same author states:

The invisibility of some groups of people has been complemented by the neglect of some dimensions of education. While issues of formal education, for example schools and colleges, legislation and administration (the acts and facts approach) have received substantial attention, others have been manifestly ignored.²⁶

²³ See Migrant Teacher Programme at Marino Institute of Education, Available at: https://www.mie.ie/en/research/research_projects/ongoing_projects/migrant_teacher_project/migrant_teacher_bridging_programme/; TOBAR at Marino Institute of Education, Available at: https://www.mie.ie/en/study_with_us/diversity_and_inclusion_programmes/tobar/; Turn to Teaching Programme, Maynooth University, Available at: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/turntoteaching/>; Teacher Access Programme (TAP) at Trinity College Dublin, Available at: <https://www.tcd.ie/trinityaccess/>.

²⁴ Tröhler, D. (2020) History and Historiography: Approaches to Historical Research in Education In: Fitzgerald, T., ed. (2020) *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education: Debates, Tensions and Directions*. Singapore: Springer, 13-28.

²⁵ Aldrich, R. (2003) The three duties of the historian of education. *History of Education (Tavistock)*, 32(2), 133-143:135.

²⁶ Aldrich, *The three duties of the historian of education*, 135.

This is certainly the case in respect of the national teacher in nineteenth century Ireland. However, it is important to remember also that without the ‘acts and facts’ which have emerged from earlier scholarly contributions to Irish educational history, research such as that pursued here and in similar works is unlikely to have developed. Therefore, this current research on the identity of the Irish national teacher is only as valuable as the works which have preceded it, while its significance lies in its contribution to furthering first, an historical understanding of Irish teacher identity and second, it complementing the field as a whole. Most recently, Westberg and Primus note the diversification of approaches to conceptualisations of history of education and the use of varying theoretical approaches to enable this.²⁷ As noted in the preceding section, the adaptation of elements of theoretical approaches from other fields of research can facilitate differing approaches to historical studies. Westberg and Primus also note the broadening perspective of educational history to include ‘both the elites and the masses, the marginalized and disadvantaged.’²⁸ This holds true in respect of this research and Westberg and Primus’s contention that documentary sources ‘enable us to write a history from below and include marginalized voices’ is evidenced in this work.²⁹ This is also particularly important in this case as understanding the roots of national teacher identity in the nineteenth century can assist policy makers and practitioners in identifying commonalities with those groups less well represented in teacher populations today.

The implications and recognition of the importance of such histories in Ireland have seen papers published and books appear which consider these more nuanced aspects of educational

²⁷ Westberg, J. and Primus, F. (2023) Rethinking the history of education: considerations for a new social history of education. *Paedagogica Historica*, 59(1), 1-18.

²⁸ Westberg and Primus, *Rethinking the history of education*, 9.

²⁹ Westberg and Primus, *Rethinking the history of education*, 12.

history. For example, recent contributions from Harford,³⁰ Parkes,³¹ McDermid,³² and Walsh³³ address aspects of access for women to university education, teacher education during the nineteenth century, formal schooling for girls in the same period and teacher recollections in Ireland in the mid-twentieth century, amongst others; each of which attend to more subtle and lesser known aspects of Irish educational history.

1.4.2 International awareness and import

Studies which focused specifically on teacher identity as an aspect of histories of education began to emerge from the 1970s and 1980s. In Britain, Silver³⁴ published in 1983 on elements of these histories which had been neglected, while American authors such as Warren³⁵ and Cuban,³⁶ and later Altenbaugh in the 1990s,³⁷ considered histories of educational practice in America as well as investigating oral histories within these systems. Gardner and Cunningham writing in in 1997, focused the fact that teachers constitute ‘an occupational group about whom, at least in the British context, we know surprisingly little.’³⁸ Despite this output of educational history stretching over some fifty years, the focus on studies in the field of teacher identity remains limited internationally.

³⁰ Harford, J. (2023) Tracing the Contours of the History of Higher Education for Women in Ireland: Competing Discourses and Dominant Themes. *Encounters in Theory and History of Education*, 24, 4-21.

³¹ Parkes, S.M. (2016) ‘An Essential Service’: The National Board and Teacher Education, 1831-1870 In: Walsh, B., ed. (2016) *Essays in the History of Irish Education*. London: Palgrave MacMillan UK, 44-82.

³² McDermid, J. (2016) Girls at School in Nineteenth Century Ireland In: Walsh, B. ed. (2016) *Essays in the History of Irish Education*. London: Palgrave MacMillan UK, 04-128.

³³ Walsh, B. (2016) Teachers’ Experience of School: First-hand accounts, 1943-65 In: Walsh, B., ed. (2016) *Essays in the History of Irish Education*. London: Palgrave MacMillan UK, 202-233.

³⁴ Silver, H. (1983) *Education as History*. London: Routledge.

³⁵ Warren, D. (1989) Message from the inside: Teachers as clues in history and policy. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 13(4), 379-390.

³⁶ Cuban, L. (1984) *How teachers taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1980*. New York: Longmans.

³⁷ Altenbaugh, R.J. (1997) Oral History, American Teachers and a Social History of Schooling: an emerging agenda. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 27(3), 313-330.

³⁸ Gardner, P. and Cunningham, P. (1997) Oral History and Teachers’ Professional Practice: a wartime turning point? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 27(3), 331-342:331.

There is a growing awareness of the import of insights into those individuals within the varying systems of education internationally. For example, contributions from Marklund on the socio-economic and familial identity of Swedish primary teachers in late nineteenth to the early twentieth century provide interesting insights into a complementary cohort of teachers to the early Irish national teachers from an international standpoint.³⁹ Insights into Swedish teachers utilizing their skills to supplement their salaries are considered by Westberg, again providing some interesting correlations with the Irish national teachers' experiences during the nineteenth century, which are discussed later here in Chapter Five.⁴⁰ Recent contributions are also noted from O' Donoghue and Mortimer in respect of charting the trajectory of teacher identity in Papua New Guinea from its beginnings in the late nineteenth century,⁴¹ as well as contributions which focus on articulating marginalised teacher histories, such as those which centre on Catholic Lay teachers in second-level settings,⁴² to the experiences of women in pre-teaching roles in Australia in the early decades of the twentieth century.⁴³

Questions arising from interrogations of identity through the lens of educational history have also been considered by Jan Keane in respect of developing identity in Australia in the early twentieth century.⁴⁴ For example, Keane notes the use of 'readers' for children in elementary school settings being used in the Australian states, which developed by the Board of National

³⁹ Marklund, E. (2023) Teaching and family: either or both? Work and family among women primary school teachers in northern Sweden, c. 1860-1937. *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 48(4), 503-529; Marklund, E. (2020) Who was going to become a teacher? The socio-economic background of primary school teachers in northern Sweden 1870-1950. *History of Education*, 50(1), 27-49.

⁴⁰ Westberg, J. (2018) How did teachers make a living? The teacher occupation, livelihood diversification and the rise of mass schooling in nineteenth-century Sweden. *History of Education*, 48(1), 19-40.

⁴¹ O'Donoghue, T., and Mortimer, J. (2024) *Teacher Preparation in Papua New Guinea: Past and Present*. UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

⁴² O'Donoghue, T. (2018) The Experience of Being a Lay Teacher in Catholic Schools: An Approach for Investigating the History of an Under-researched Field. *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación*, 5(2), 163-178.

⁴³ Trotman, J. and O'Donoghue, T. (2010) Becoming a woman teacher: memories of learning to be a monitor in Western Australia in the 1920s and 1930s. *Oxford Review of Education*, 36(2), 171-185.

⁴⁴ Keane, J. (2018) *National Identity and Education in early twentieth century Australia*. UK: Emerald Publishing.

Education in Ireland, were exported to Australia for use in the national schools there.⁴⁵ Keane also highlights Church-State tensions over denominational schooling in Australian states, which while highlighting connections between educational histories in Ireland and Australia, also consider questions of national identity and the contribution of educational movements to this.⁴⁶ Another example which considers the impact of education systems on questions of identity internationally can be considered in light of ‘analysing transnational exchanges and cross-cultural transfers in the field of education between the Euro-Western world and Asia from the eighteenth century onwards.’⁴⁷ In this case, Bagchi, Fuchs and Rousmaniere address contributions which consider imperial education in varying settings and the transformative elements of these systems within those settings.

The importance of international perspectives on the history of education cannot be understated in pursuing a study such as this. As both Jan Keane and Bagchi, Fuchs and Rousmaniere note, events within the field of educational history do not occur in a vacuum. While commonalities exist within many historical episodes, the nuances and specificities of individual cases, such as the identity of the Irish national teacher continually further understanding and contribute to educational history. Awareness of the importance of understanding teacher identity was evinced in the publication of a European report on diversity within the teaching profession published

⁴⁵ The CNEI developed a series of graded reading books which could be used in the national schools. These texts were generally highly moralistic and infused with tones of imperial loyalties. The textbooks were exported throughout the colonies of the British Empire and proved to be a lucrative endeavour for the Commissioners. See Lyons, T., and Moloney, N. (2019) *Educational resources in the British Empire: Examining nineteenth century Ireland and Literacy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan; Also, Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 20; Walsh, P. (2008) Education and the "universalist" idiom of empire: Irish national school books in Ireland and Ontario. *History of Education (Tavistock)*, 37(5), 645-660; Morgan, K. (2012) Representations of self and the colonial ‘other’ in the Irish national school books In: Dickson, D. Pyz, J. and Shepard, C., eds. (2012) *Irish Classrooms and the British Empire: Imperial Contexts in the origins of modern education*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 42-52.

⁴⁶ Keane, *National identity and education...*

⁴⁷ Bagchi, B., Fuchs, E. and Rousmaniere, K., eds. (2014) *Connecting Histories of Education: Transnational and cross-cultural exchanges in (post-)colonial education*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1-2.

in 2016 by Donleavy, Meierkord and Rajania,⁴⁸ along with studies by Kelly⁴⁹ and Schleicher.⁵⁰ Each of these share a common cause in recognising the need for diversity in the modern teaching profession. Donleavy, Meierkord and Rajania seek to map the diversity of the teaching profession in Europe and recommend varying policy approaches to do this, while Kelly writes that UK governments have concentrated on developing ‘representativeness’ on the part of the teachers in respect of the general population,⁵¹ and Schleicher states that ‘most teachers in OECD countries are middle-aged, female and from the majority population group.’⁵² While these studies recognise and establish the facts relating to the composition of teaching workforces internationally, there is little or no inquiry into the roots of this homogeneity across bodies of teachers in different countries. This research then is crucial in contributing to discussion both in Ireland and other jurisdictions around early teacher identity and its impact on teacher identity today.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis comprises seven chapters in all. This chapter serves as an introductory chapter, while a contextual overview for the reader is offered in Chapter Two. This broadly contextualises Irish identity from the time of Early Christian Ireland up to the establishment of the national system in 1831. This is complemented by a brief contemporary outline of the primary political, cultural, religious, social and economic events which occurred alongside the development of

⁴⁸ Donleavy, V., Meierkord, A. and Rajania, A. (2016) *Study on the diversity within the teaching profession with particular focus on migrant and/or minority background: final report*. Publications Office of the European Union. [online]. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/s/zN7s> (accessed 24 July 2024).

⁴⁹ Kelly, A. (2024) Representativeness and diversity within the teaching profession in England, 2010-2020. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 108(103067), 1-28. [online]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2024.103067> (accessed 15th July 2024).

⁵⁰ Schleicher, A. (2014) *Equity, Excellence and Inclusiveness in education: Policy lessons from around the world. Background report for the international report on the teaching profession*. Paris: OECD.

⁵¹ Kelly, *Representativeness and diversity*, 1-28.

⁵² Schleicher, *Equity, Excellence and Inclusiveness in education*, 11.

the national system. An overview of some of the administrative structures employed by the CNEI, such as the Inspectorate, and the composition of the Powis Commission, is also offered here. The methodological approach employed to pursue the study follows in Chapter Three. This also includes the method employed to analyse the data, namely document analysis, and an explanation of the sources utilised throughout the research. Modern theoretical perspectives on identity from both individual and collective standpoints are also discussed in Chapter Three. These perspectives act as a backdrop to the analysis of the primary sources used and serve to guide the research foci. The central findings of the thesis, which are discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six, address core contributory elements to the identity of the national teacher. Chapter Four sees a point of origin for the majority of the national teachers examined and established, as well as addressing the selection, character and training of the national teachers, which sought to determine particular aspects of national teacher identity. The social status and class of the national teachers, issues around remuneration, external employments and the teacher's place within the community are discussed in Chapter Five. The religious affiliations of the national teachers are examined in Chapter Six. Teacher-manager relationships and marriage as an aspect of religious practice amongst the national teachers are also considered here. Finally, a summary and discussion of the evidence examined is offered in Chapter Seven, whilst reiterating the import and contribution the thesis will make to Irish and international history of education. Some points in relation to further research draw the thesis to a conclusion.

1.6 A note on terminology

Throughout the thesis the reader will encounter terminologies and language which is reflective of the period under review. While every effort has been taken to ensure clarity of expression throughout, there may be more nuanced aspects which are contemporary to the material discussed. Where warranted, a more fulsome explanation will be outlined in the footnotes. A

core element of this thesis is the use of the phrase ‘national teacher’, often abbreviated as NT. This is used throughout the thesis and is taken to refer to the teacher in the Irish national system of education during the nineteenth century. The moniker of national teacher has largely been replaced with that of ‘primary school teacher’ in modern settings. Therefore, the former can be taken as the teacher in the historical sense, with the latter in use for more modern iterations. It is important the reader notes also here the use of the word ‘elementary’ in respect of the national system during the nineteenth century. Occasionally, the word elementary is used to describe the national system of education or a system of education which caters for children roughly between the ages of four and twelve years old.

Some of the more common abbreviations encountered throughout the work include that of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland which are referred to as the ‘Commissioners’ or the CNEI, in abbreviated form and The *Royal Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland)*, which as noted earlier is largely referred to as the Powis Commission. It is also worth briefly mentioning the varying terminologies associated with the board on which the Commissioners sat. This was known as the ‘Board of National Education’, as well as the ‘National Board’ and the ‘Board of Education’ at varying instances throughout its history. Therefore, it is important to understand that the terms ‘Commissioners’ and the abbreviation ‘CNEI’ denotes the individuals who comprised the Board of National Education, whilst the latter is taken as largely representative of the entity in its entirety.

In respect of the Central Training Institute or the Normal Establishment as it was also known established to train the national teachers, this was also often described by its location, Marlborough Street, and it can be taken that any of these terms references the Central Training

Institute. Some further specific terminologies with regard to school types prior to the establishment of the national system, attributions for differing members of the Inspectorate and varying religious denominations are dealt with in the footnotes as the reader encounters them.

1.7 Conclusion

This thesis seeks to excavate the identity of the Irish national teacher between the years 1831 and 1871. It establishes and attributes an identity to the early Irish national teacher. In this the research has been guided by modern theoretical perspectives and the thesis has developed solely from the existing archival data and secondary sources which are available. It is important to note that there are no absolutes when undertaking research in a historical field, especially when the enquiry centres on a group on the margins of the historical narrative and at a temporal remove of nearly 200 years. The importance of this thesis lies in its approach to uncovering early Irish teacher identity and the possibilities for other such studies to be undertaken in the future using this approach.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter serves as both an interpretative aid and an overview for the main body of the thesis. This chapter attends to those aspects of the narrative which, without explanation, would preclude a successful interpretation of the research, while also considering those distinctive features, peculiar to Ireland's past and, particularly, its relationship with England, which underpinned the development of national teacher identity. The reader's understanding is furthered in this chapter to identify-these aspects of a common or shared identity which had endured since early Christian times in Ireland and which contributed to a distinctive Irish identity. Such characteristics of identity as identified in modern theoretical perspectives are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three. Much of the minutiae of the national system of primary education in Ireland and its development have been comprehensively detailed in earlier histories of the system, such as is found in the works of D.H. Akenson and John Coolahan, amongst others.⁵³ It is not proposed to replicate those histories in this study, however, such works provide both a succinct and authoritative voice, as well as opportunities for further reading on those distinct features of the development and structure of national education during the period under review.

⁵³ Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*; Doyle, *Model Schools-Model Teachers?*; O' Donovan (2017) *Stanley's Letter: The National School System and Inspectors in Ireland, 1831-1922*. Dublin: Four Courts Press; Coolahan with O'Donovan, *A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate*.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore, trifold. First, to contextualise for the reader some of the more singular episodes in Irish history from the time of early Christian Ireland, through the coming of the Normans in 1169, to the Act of Union with Britain in 1801. Second, to consider the research period from 1831 to 1871 through political, social, cultural, religious and economic lenses. And finally, to foreground the reader's understanding around the landscape of Irish elementary education prior to engaging with the central findings of the thesis. In respect of both the former points, further reading is detailed which will expand on the aspects noted and with regard to the latter, a contextual preface is also offered within each of the chapters of four, five and six where the primary research findings are discussed, and which further strengthen the reader's understanding on some of the aspects encountered in this chapter. It is noted that the reader may also expect to reencounter some of the points noted in this chapter at later stages throughout the thesis, albeit with differing foci or in greater depth.

The chapter commences here with a broad, contextual background of the period from Early Christian Ireland, circa 400 AD to the Act of Union in 1801, in Section 2.2. In the following sections, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 the research era in context and the state of educational provision in Ireland are addressed before considering the advent of the national system in 1831, along with some points regarding teachers in these systems. The foundation of the national system of education as well as the distinctive features of teacher training, education, payment and salaries are discussed in Sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8. An outline of the Inspectorate and its role in the national system is offered in Section 2.9, while an overview of the Powis Commission which bookends this research, is presented in Section 2.10. A conclusion is offered to summarise the primary points and reiterate their relevance and overall import in respect of this research.

2.2 Foregrounding Irish identity

2.2.1 Identity in Early Christian Ireland, c.400-1000 AD

The island of Ireland in the centuries preceding the Norman conquest of 1169 is anecdotally recalled as *Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum*-the land of Saints and Scholars. This was primarily due to Ireland's status as a site of early Christian settlement and the scholarly output which accompanied such sites of belief and learning. Mallory, on discussing settlement in pre-Christian Ireland, posits that the population on the island consisted of waves of people who had settled there since the Mesolithic era (c.8000 BC) and whose origins varied.⁵⁴ Breathnach writes that, 'Although an island, Ireland was not an isolated place at the edge of the earth and the Irish, or at least the ecclesiastical and literate classes, were acutely aware of the wider world and their place in it.'⁵⁵ Varying sources from archival material, alongside archaeological evidence, support these early constructions of Irish life.⁵⁶ Of particular interest within the scope of this study are those aspects which contributed to identity in a broader sense, e.g., belief systems, community structures, and educational practices. These stand as useful signposts to understanding aspects of a distinctive Irish identity from the pre-Christian age to the nineteenth century. Their import is also realised when discussing the theoretical aspects of identity in Chapter Three and discussing the links between such aspects of identity and the composite elements of the national teacher's identity.

Belief systems in early Christian Ireland, as an example, are evidenced by early missionary texts, such as those of Saint Patrick's *Confessio* which references the conversion of 'many thousands including female slaves and women of royal birth, together with the sons of kings,'

⁵⁴ Mallory, J.P. (2013) *The Origins of the Irish*. London: Thames and Hudson.

⁵⁵ Breathnach, E. (2018) Communities and their Landscapes In: Smith, B., ed. (2018) *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 1, 600-1550*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 15-46:16.

⁵⁶ Breathnach, *Communities and their Landscapes*, 16.

giving rise to the understanding that the native Irish worshipped Pagan gods before their conversion to Christianity.⁵⁷ The structure of the communities in which the missionaries preached is described as being ‘connected by a perceived or genuine common ancestry, by their mutual subjection to a king or kings, and by economic and trading links.’⁵⁸ Even at this early stage the construct of identity is recognised as being influenced by societal considerations and shared beliefs. Probably the single greatest impact on identity in early Irish society was the advent of Christianity, which brought ‘a new language and literacy and a new belief system to Ireland,’ furthering communities, particularly religious ones to become adept in the use of language and script to celebrate their beliefs.⁵⁹ This early focus on a system of belief remained as a key aspect of the Irish identity discourse from early Christianity up to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Recognising the deep-seated and long-held nature of beliefs as a central facet of identity for the Irish also contributes to understanding beliefs and religious affiliation as a central aspect of national teacher identity during the formative period of national teacher identity between 1831 and 1871.

A further important element of the continuance and mainstay of such affiliations within early Irish communities were the learned classes, whose literary abilities developed alongside the arrival of Christianity. Early Christian Ireland saw the development of monastic schools from the 6th century and to these can be accredited the ‘the flowering of literature and early learning in Ireland.’⁶⁰ In many instances these monastic schools undertook the practice of ‘fosterage’, a feature of early Irish society, whereby the son or daughter of a king or important noble were

⁵⁷ Carey, J. (2018) Learning, Imagination and Belief In: Smith, B., ed. (2018) *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 1, 600-1550*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 47-75:48.

⁵⁸ Breathnach, *Communities and their Landscapes*, 20.

⁵⁹ Breathnach, *Communities and their Landscapes*, 19.

⁶⁰ Ó Croinín, D. (2013) *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200*. Milton Park: Routledge, 169.

placed by their family in a monastery and learned to read and write.⁶¹ Breathnach notes the impact of this within communities when, ‘A sense of affiliation could be constructed, mainly by the learned classes for their noble patrons, by linking dynasties to one common ancestor.’⁶² The development of shared identity then within groups in early Irish society was recognised as being largely the preserve of the literate classes. This highlights an important historiographical point for this study, as the role of the teacher within communities during the nineteenth century was not something that developed overnight; indeed, it can be argued that such a role had historical precedence in the Irish context.

In further support of this, societal interactions extant during one kingship and the import of the literary class as a singularly identifiable group within this is discussed by Ní Mhaonaigh, who writes ‘The communicative force itself, however, was harnessed by the influential few’, signifying the elevated position occupied by those who had the necessary literary skills to both record, interpret and ascribe events as they saw fit.⁶³ This acknowledgement of the importance of literary skill in early Irish societies was later echoed in the activities of the Hedge Schools during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which are referenced here in Chapters 2 and 4. It also supports the singularity of the individual who possessed the necessary skills to read and write in early Irish society, and in turn the centrality of the national teacher to communities during the nineteenth century, when the national system was established. Arguably then, the Irish national teacher was the inheritor of a rich tradition of learning and dissemination from pre-Christian Ireland. This was later reinforced by the ‘Bardic Schools’

⁶¹ Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland, 400-1200*, 178-179.

⁶² Breathnach, *Communities and their Landscapes*, 20.

⁶³ Ní Mhaonaigh, M. (2018) Perception and Reality: Ireland c.980–1229 In: Smith, B., ed. *The Cambridge History of Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 131-156:133.

which existed between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶⁴ These bards or poets were repositories of historical and family lore as well as publicists of ‘social, historical and other rational discourse.’⁶⁵ Referencing the literary aspect which accompanied the work of the bards, O’ Sullivan writes:

the predominant literary influence from a cultural point of view was exercised by the court poets who were the product of the bardic schools...They were members of a hereditary profession, who were accorded a superior social status and who had received a thorough training in all that appertained to their career.⁶⁶

The bardic profession, alongside the monastic schools, stands as an indicator of the value and esteem in which learning and literary abilities were held by the native Irish from the advent of Christianity up to the Norman invasion. This ‘knowledge’ as it was deemed, set them apart from the ordinary people within the social structures of the time highlighting a singular identity, which, arguably, was later reflected in the Irish people’s desire for education during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

A historical assessment of the importance of the literary tradition in Ireland is offered by Stopford Green in Corkery’s seminal work, *The Hidden Ireland*, published in 1925, who writes:

If we turn to Ireland.... We find a country where for some 1,500 years, as far back as historic knowledge can reach, one national force has overshadowed and dominated all others. It has been the power of a great literary tradition. Political power was not centralised, and no single man was in a position to determine what the people should think, believe, or do. But in the learned tradition of the race there

⁶⁴ Ó Tuama, S. and Kinsella, T. (1981) *An Duanaire, 1600-1900: Poems of the Dispossessed*. Portlaoise: Dolmen Press.

⁶⁵ Ó Tuama and Kinsella, *An Duanaire*, xxi.

⁶⁶ O’ Sullivan, D. (1958) *Carolan: The Life and Times of an Irish Harper*. 2nd ed. Cork: Ossian Publications, 13.

was a determined order. In their intellectual and spiritual inheritance was the very essence of national life, the substance of its existence, the warrant of its value, the assurance of its continuity.⁶⁷

Whilst this assessment is couched in the language of the early twentieth century, it has relevance for this study as it highlights the deep connections between Irish identity and the literate individual. This singular aspect of national identity, ‘a great literary tradition’ is recognised as the ‘very essence of national life’, thus centralising it as a key aspect of identity in the Irish historical context and centralising the role of the individual who assumed this role.

Here, elements of Irish identity have been discussed, particularly in respect of the values placed on aspects of early Irish identity such as community, shared beliefs and education from early Christian Ireland. Certain aspects are highlighted, having endured as indicators of identity. Chief amongst these are beliefs and religious affiliations, and the importance of cultural practices, within which the literate individual occupied a leading role. While none are treated in depth, they allow the reader a brief insight into those singular aspects within early communities in Ireland which contributed to shared identities. They are also useful for the reader in contextualising the position of the national teacher in the nineteenth century within Irish communities. Not alone does it support the identity of the teacher within these communities, but it also recognises the teacher’s position as the inheritor of a rich and valued tradition. The arrival of the Normans and the concerted efforts undertaken by the invading power to effect change on the native Irish identity are addressed in the following section.

⁶⁷ Corkery, D. (1925) *The Hidden Ireland: A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth century*. Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son Ltd, 60-61.

2.2.2 *Ireland and identity from the Norman Invasion (1169) to the Act of Union (1801).*

In this section, some of the primary changes effected politically on Ireland during the period in question are outlined. It was decided to hone in on political changes as these had the single greatest impact on society at the time as well as affecting cultural and economic change. It does not intend to provide a detailed outline of every antecedent and consequence to these changes, rather to highlight those areas which will provide a contextual outline for a basic understanding of Irish identity by the time the Act of Union between Ireland and Britain came into being in 1801.⁶⁸ This is important as, arguably, the effects of steps taken by the English during the centuries immediately preceding the Act of Union influenced Irish identity and led to the institution of bodies such as the Board of National Education which will be discussed later.

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland in 1169 is well documented. Historically rooted in northern France, the Normans, led by Duke William, later known as William the Conqueror, took control of the English crown following the Battle of Hastings in 1066.⁶⁹ Subsequent integration with the existing Anglo-Saxon people saw the development of the Anglo-Normans. Ireland's position within western Europe at this time saw it 'as the only major island of the British archipelago left unconquered by either Romans or Normans. Its trading contacts with Normandy, Aquitaine and above all with Bristol... had long ago brought it to Henry's attention.'⁷⁰ The early establishment of the Anglo-Norman Lordships in Ireland after 1169 was

⁶⁸ In attempting to maintain a clear pathway for the reader, a brief reference to some etymological points is warranted here. Histories which focus on the medieval period with reference to Ireland, up to the late sixteenth century tend to focus on the word 'English' or 'Anglo-Norman' when discussing the people who settled in Ireland. The terms 'colonialism' and 'empire' are generally not applied here as it is recognised that these concepts developed later from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. By this time the language has shifted from 'England' and 'English' to 'Britain' and 'British'. It is generally understood that the latter accompanies the development of empire. See Kenny, K. (2004) *Ireland and the British Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5-7.

⁶⁹ Oksanen, E. (2012) *Flanders and the Anglo-Norman world, 1066-1216*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 11-12.

⁷⁰ Vincent, N. (2018) Angevin Ireland In: Smith, B., ed. (2018) *The Cambridge history of Ireland: Volume 1, 600-1550*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 185-221:190.

‘followed by wholesale distributions of estates, some of them acquired intact from their previous lords, others newly created’ and the accompaniment of English customs and pastimes, described as ‘francophone, aristocratic culture.’⁷¹ Castles were built and towns walled in stone, metaphorically signifying the permanence of the invader. Early efforts to nullify tensions between the native Irish and the Norman invaders teetered between the ‘assimilation and the preservation of a distinct identity, between the colonial rhetoric of the Irish as ‘enemy’ and the daily reality of alliance, intermarriage, and accommodation.’⁷² Efforts to maintain the loyalty of those who had settled in Ireland and become successfully rooted within communities were encouraged by varying monarchies over the centuries.

Of particular relevance for this study were precautions taken to encourage and maintain the ‘Englishness’ of the settlers in the guise of education, which were brought to bear during the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547). This took the form of a Parish Schools Act in 1537, which legislated for the provision of a system of education to address the perceived difficulties the English saw which, ‘keep many of the subjects of the said land in a certain savage and manner wilde kind of living, then the diversitie that is betwixt them in tongue, language, order, and habit.’⁷³ The enactment of the Parish Schools Act was to predate a long series of legislative measures taken by the English to employ education as a means of assimilation and acculturation in Ireland up to the late nineteenth century. The onset of the Reformation also impacted Irish identity over the course of Henry VIII’s reign, challenging the Catholicism of the Gaelic Lords and influencing religious identity in Ireland.⁷⁴ This was also accompanied by

⁷¹ Vincent, *Angevin Ireland*, 199.

⁷² Booker, S. (2018) *Cultural Exchange and Identity in late medieval Ireland: the English and Irish of the four obedient shires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2.

⁷³ Quoted in: Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 21.

⁷⁴ Lyons, M.A. (2017) The Onset of Religious Reform: 1460-1550 In: Smith, B., ed. (2017) *The Cambridge History of Ireland. Volume 1, 600-1550*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 498-522.

a programme of plantation which commenced in earnest during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603).⁷⁵ Ohlmeyer captures the essence of this approach stating:

Ireland with its very large Catholic population represented a potential security threat to England. This meant it had to be fully conquered, secured from internal insurrection, colonised and ‘civilised’. Central to this ‘civilising’ (or ‘Anglicising’) agenda was the promotion of the English language and the widespread use of English architecture, agricultural practices, culture, law, land tenures, systems of governance and religion (Protestantism).⁷⁶

In essence, the process of plantation meant effecting change on all areas of Irish life as it existed at this time and its accompanying features of identity. These were achieved not alone through mere occupation and military force but also through proscribing cultural, religious and economic practices across the island of Ireland.

The most infamous of these practices were the Penal Laws. Directed towards the native Irish who professed to Catholicism, this series of laws were enacted from 1695 and remained in statute until a gradual relaxation at the end of the eighteenth century and their disappearance with the enactment of Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829. The Penal Laws sought to obliterate all singular identity traits which set the Irish apart from the English. They addressed amongst others, religion, occupations, property rights and education.⁷⁷ The laws were described following their rescindment as:

a complete system full of coherence and composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance; and was well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a

⁷⁵ Brady, C. (2018) Politics, Policy and Power, 1550-1603 In: Ohlmeyer, J., ed. (2018) *The Cambridge History of Ireland, Vol. II 1550-1730*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 23-47.

⁷⁶ Ohlmeyer, J. (2018) Introduction: Ireland in the Early Modern World In: Ohlmeyer, J., ed. (2018) *The Cambridge History of Ireland, Vol. II 1550-1730*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-20:8.

⁷⁷ Scully, D. (1812) *A statement of the penal laws which aggrieve the Catholics of Ireland: with commentaries*, 2nd, enl. edn. Dublin: H. Fitzpatrick.

people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.⁷⁸

As the focus of this study lies within understanding concepts of teacher identity, it is worth briefly considering the approach taken by the English Crown toward Catholic education under the Penal Laws. The *Act to Restrain Foreign Education* (1695) is recognised as signalling the beginning of legislative repression against the Irish Catholics. Along with a provision to prevent Catholics travelling abroad to access education was the following clause, which stated:

And whereas it is found by experience that Tolerating and Conniving at Papists keeping Schools or Instructing Youth in Literature, is one great reason of many of the Natives of this Kingdom continuing ignorant of the Principles of True Religion, and Strangers to the Scriptures, and of their neglecting to conform themselves to the Laws and Statutes of this Realm, and of their not using the English Habit and Language, to the great prejudice of the publick weal thereof; be it further enacted...⁷⁹

This particular aspect of the Act is relevant here as it contextualises the importance of education within the sphere of identity in the eyes of the Crown. Recognising that by even tolerating and facilitating Catholics in teaching ‘literature’ to the young of Ireland, this was enabling and empowering what was viewed as dissidence among the native people. By allowing difference, i.e., that which was different to the religious beliefs, language and custom of the ruling classes, arguably, those self-same classes were ceding power and control over native identity to the native people and consequently threatening the hold of the invader over the country. The allusion to ‘Papists keeping schools’ in the seventeenth century highlights the centrality of the teacher within the eyes of the establishment and the accompanying threat that teachers and education possessed, were it to be allowed to flourish. Further strictures followed with regard to education; in 1697 an Act was passed which banished ‘all papists exercising any Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and all Regulars of the Papish Clergy’, essentially removing the

⁷⁸ Dowling, P.J. (1971) *A History of Irish Education: A Study in Conflicting Loyalties*. Cork: Mercier Press, 73.

⁷⁹ Ireland (1695) *An Act to Restrain Foreign Education*. Dublin: Andrew Crook.11. [online]. Available at: <https://go.exlibris.link/DffzT0Mr> (accessed 29 July 2024).

possibility of clerical-led education.⁸⁰ Ultimately, the overt nature of such measures saw limited success in completely eradicating singular aspects of Irish identity and the people maintained their customs and beliefs. Moving to the late eighteenth century, the most notable event happened in 1798 with the staging of the United Irishmen rebellion by a largely Anglo-Irish Protestant minority. While this failed, concerns around educational provision in Ireland began to appear at parliamentary level, doubtless encouraged by the external influences on the rise of nation-states and unrest among the Irish people.

It is likely that given the intellectual machinations of those tasked with expanding the British Empire at this time, a more structured and covert means of affecting identity through the provision of a controlled system of education was realised toward the end of the late eighteenth century. This was not a new endeavour on the part of the Crown as already noted. Clearly, the historical precedence existed for the use of education as a *modus operandi* within which identity could be manipulated to suit the desires of the ruling power. Kelly writes that ‘the state, its major institutions and the public viewed education as an improving force and that the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed a dramatic explosion in the number of schools in the kingdom.’⁸¹ The benefits of education in effecting change on identity was noted in an early publication addressing the provision of university education to Roman Catholics in Ireland, who believed the provision of education would address ‘those groundless animosities and homely prejudices which have caused all sense of common interest to be lost’,⁸² as well as

⁸⁰ Dowling, *A History of Irish Education*, 75-76.

⁸¹ Kelly, J. (2017) Educational print and the emergence of mass education in Ireland, c.1650-c.1830 In: Kelly, J. and Hegarty, S., eds. (2017) *Schools and schooling, 1650-2000: New perspectives on the history of education*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 35-72:35.

⁸² Anonymous (1784) *Considerations upon the Establishment of An University in Ireland, for the Educating of Roman Catholics*. Dublin: D. Graishberry. 9. [online]. Available at: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0129462835/ECCO?u=nuim&sid=bookmark-ECCO&xid=17f9740a&pg=54>.

helping to ‘hasten the reduction of political tensions and, by causing Catholics to turn their back on the points of view inimical to our welfare.’⁸³

Chief at this time in advocating for a revised system of education that would provide for the entire population in Ireland, both Catholic and Protestant alike, was Thomas Orde, Chief Secretary to the Duke of Rutland. Orde’s vision, although never realised, built on evidence gathered by himself and associates which recognised that the state of education in Ireland was unsatisfactory at the end of the eighteenth century. Orde saw education as a way ‘of attaching the Roman Catholics and making their leaders in some degree dependent on government.’⁸⁴

Orde wrote that the:

‘want of education’ was the root cause of the violence and disorder endemic in Irish life and, that if parliament was ‘disposed to throw the scourge of castigation behind’ and to choose conciliation instead, education was the means to infuse ‘the balm of information into the wound of ignorance.’⁸⁵

The strength of Orde’s convictions also lay in his belief that education, if made available to the Irish Catholic population, would ‘disperse “the mists of ignorance” and encourage their appreciation “of the superiority of our own protestant doctrines.”’⁸⁶ As an administrator and policy maker in the upper echelons of the Empire, Orde is suitably representative of the beliefs that characterised the imperial mindset. Whilst he was a genuine advocate for education and its ability to effect change, he also believed that the Irish people would benefit from being a part of the imperial identity. Albeit unsuccessful, Orde’s plan for education in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century brings this overview of aspects of Irish identity to its natural conclusion.

⁸³ Anonymous, *Considerations upon the Establishment of An University in Ireland*, 15.

⁸⁴ Kelly, J. (1986) The Context and Course of Thomas Orde's Plan of Education of 1787. *The Irish Journal of Education*, 20(1), 3-26:12.

⁸⁵ Kelly, *The Context and Course of Thomas Orde's Plan of Education of 1787*, 16.

⁸⁶ Kelly, *The Context and Course of Thomas Orde's Plan of Education of 1787*, 17.

The periods discussed have been book-ended by the import of literary ability in early Christian Ireland to efforts undertaken by the English to effect change on the Irish identity through processes of plantation and acculturation. It is testamentary to the perseverance of both peoples that the English pursued vigorously varying campaigns to undermine, remove and replace an indigenous identity with a separate English one; and equally so the efforts of the Irish to persevere in the face of such measures to retain their identity.⁸⁷

The preceding sections merely serve to highlight for the reader some of the more identifiable events and occasions over the course of a millennium and a half which might be used to develop an outline of Irish identity in a historical sense. The delineation of these events is intended to assist the reader in centralising the character of the teacher within the following discourse, and to locate those historical aspects of identity which may have contributed to the development of the Irish national teacher's identity and persona as a central figure in the narrative of nineteenth century primary education in Ireland.

⁸⁷ There is little in the way of data to illustrate the diverse nature of the Irish population at the end of the eighteenth century apart from some figures in respect of religious diversity. According to data recorded by Corcoran, estimates returned by the Anglican Bishop of Cloyne for the varying religious classifications in Ireland in 1787, noted three quarters of the population in Ireland were Roman Catholic, with one eighth classified as members of the Established Church, which was the term used for Protestantism in Ireland and a further eighth encompassing the remaining religions, such as Presbyterians and Quakers. This may provide the reader with some indication of the diversity of religious beliefs amongst the population as a potential indicator of overall diversity. See Corcoran, *State Policy in Irish Education, A.D. 1536 to 1816*, 39.

2.3 An overview of the research era in context, 1831-1871

The period encompassed by this research centres on the identity of the Irish national teacher between the years 1831 and 1871. It is important to understand that this identity and its development did not occur in a vacuum and, accordingly, it is worthwhile referencing the more noteworthy events of this period, with a nod to political, cultural, religious, social, and economic events. These provide an overview for the reader of the panoply of events that define Irish history of education between 1831 and 1871.

By 1831, Ireland was thirty years a member of the Union with Britain, which was enacted in 1801.⁸⁸ Whilst some notable events occurred prior to the commencement of this study, such as Robert Emmet's failed rebellion of 1803⁸⁹ and Daniel O'Connell's successful Campaign for Catholic Emancipation,⁹⁰ the subsequent four decades saw equally important occurrences take place which impacted every aspect of Irish life. Singular events may be highlighted, yet it is important that the reader understands that while histories tend to dwell on those more notable episodes, the complex nature of the British and Irish relationship impacted and influenced the people at every level, permeating every element of society, through political, religious, economic and cultural life. A comprehensive overview of all such episodes is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, it is worthwhile noting some of the more important occurrences of the time.

Among those historically influential events which shaped the period accompanying the introduction of the national education system from 1831 were O'Connell's continued efforts to effect a repeal of the Act of Union, which failed to garner the same momentum enjoyed by

⁸⁸ Geoghegan, P.M. (1999) *The Irish Act of Union*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd.

⁸⁹ Geoghegan, P.M. (2002) *Robert Emmet; A Life*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd.

⁹⁰ Geoghegan, P.M. (2003) *King Dan: The Rise of Daniel O'Connell 1775-1829*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd.

the campaign for Catholic Emancipation and, eventually, petered out.⁹¹ This decade also saw further political concerns emerge in the form of the ‘Tithe Wars.’ This became manifest as social unrest around the payment of taxes, or tithes, on agricultural produce to support the official church.⁹² The establishment of the Irish Constabulary in 1836,⁹³ partly in response to this social unrest and primarily to develop a police force in Ireland, was also a singularly important event in the historical and social landscape of Ireland at this time.⁹⁴ Finally, the Poor Law Relief Bill was also enacted in 1838 to provide a system of relief for the poor of the country.⁹⁵

While these varying imperial policies developed in tandem with the system of national education, events on a social and cultural front also coloured the decades in question. The emergence of *The Nation* in 1842, as a weekly journal, under the stewardship of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, Thomas Davis and John Blake Dillon, was to prove influential in establishing a nationalist movement called the Young Irelanders.⁹⁶ This preceded a failed military uprising in 1848.⁹⁷ Of even greater magnitude during the 1840s was the Great Famine of 1845-48 which saw the population of Ireland reduced from some 8.75 million in 1846 to 6.5 million in 1851.⁹⁸

⁹¹ Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*.

⁹² Shaw, D.J. (2021) An Economic Perspective on the Irish Monetary Tithe: A Trigger for Irish Banditti and Secret Societies Disturbances. *The Journal of European Economic History*, 50(3), 11-48; Donnelly, J.S. (2009) *Captain Rock: the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821-1824*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press; De Beaumont, G. (2006) *Ireland: Social, Political, and Religious*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁹³ According to Liam McNiffe, the ‘Royal’ prefix was added following the Irish Constabulary’s role in the suppression of the Fenian Rising of 1867.

⁹⁴ See *Bill to Amend Acts for the Appointment of Constables in Ireland* (1836). [online]. Available at: <https://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/documents/10891/pages/242848>; McNiffe, L. (1997) *A History of the Garda Síochána*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press Ltd; Herlihy, J. (2016) *The Royal Irish Constabulary: a short history and genealogical guide: with a select list of medal awards and casualties*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

⁹⁵ *Poor Law Ireland Act* (1838). [online]. Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1838/act/56/enacted/en/print.html>.

⁹⁶ Swart, W.J. (1997) *A terrible beauty is born: The framing of nationalism in Irish politics, 1790-1997*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Kansas.

⁹⁷ Swart, *A terrible beauty is born*.

⁹⁸ Ó Murchadha, C. (2013) *The Great Famine: Ireland's Agony 1845-1852*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc; Smyth, W.J. (2012) The Story of the Great Irish Famine 1845-52: A Geographical Perspective In: Crowley, J., Smyth, W.J. and Murphy, M., eds. (2012) *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine*. Cork: Cork University Press, 4-22.

These events were accompanied by the growing strength of the Roman Catholic Church, which following the rescindment of the remaining penal restrictions of the eighteenth century and the advent of Catholic Emancipation in 1829, saw Catholicism in Ireland grow in strength. The emergence of significant players on the national stage in the persona of individuals like Archbishop John MacHale and Cardinal Paul Cullen significantly impacted both religious and, indeed, educational affairs in Ireland during this period.⁹⁹ The disestablishment of the Established Church or the Church of Ireland, as it was known, in 1869 is also worth recalling here, as it signalled a clear shift in religious power across the nation in the mid to last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁰

Whilst these events do not constitute an exhaustive list, they serve the reader with a sense of singular episodes which accompanied the advent and development of the national education system from 1831. Beneath these lay the developing identity of the Irish national teacher which, though unrecognised and unrepresented in broader histories, is as important in the Irish historiographical landscape as any of the above.

2.4 Educational provision prior to 1831

Educational historians note that there ‘was much educational activity in Ireland and many and varied schools were provided by voluntary and individual societies,’ prior to and following the establishment of the national education system.¹⁰¹ The *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools and Public Education in Ireland*, published in 1837, offers a

⁹⁹ See Jenkins, B. (2006) *Irish Nationalism and the British state: from repeal to revolutionary nationalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press; Bowen, D. (1983) *Paul Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism*. Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 4-5.

¹⁰⁰ McCormack, C.F. (2018) The Irish Church Disestablishment Act (1869) and the general synod of the Church of Ireland (1871): the art and structure of educational reform. *History of Education (Tavistock)*, 47(3), 303-320.

¹⁰¹ Coolahan, J. (1981) *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*. Dublin: IPA, 9.

comprehensive record on the varying educational providers in Ireland in the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁰² The report delineates elementary education at the time into two distinct categories, stating:

Elementary Schools in Ireland are divisible into Public and Private. Under the first may be comprehended all schools supported by Public funds, whether by endowment, voluntary contributions by societies or parliamentary grants. Under the second, all schools maintained by individual benevolence or individual industry, as objects of speculation.¹⁰³

Those schools categorised as ‘Public’ were ‘many and varied’, and their ethos was often underpinned with a particular focus on acculturation or proselytizing practices. Significantly, the report also categorises the recently established national schools as being supported by national funds, however, as an outline of the structure and establishment of the national schools is offered later in this chapter in Section 2.6, it is preferable to concentrate on alternate providers of education here to contextualise the period. Among these other providers of elementary education were Parochial Schools established during the reign of King Henry VIII, to ‘teach the English tongue to all and every one,’¹⁰⁴ and Charter Schools where ‘the children of the Popish and other poor natives of Ireland, might be instructed *gratis* in the English tongue, and the principles of true religion and loyalty.’¹⁰⁵ Other schools recorded in the 1837 report include the Blue Coat School, the Hibernian School and the Hibernian Marine School, Erasmus Smith’s schools, Wilson’s Charity School and Bishop Foy’s school, each of which had differing administrative structures with their primary source of finance originating from the Exchequer of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (UK) or having connections to it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools and Public Education in Ireland* (1838), [701-I], H.C. 3-33.

¹⁰³ *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools*, 3-33:4.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools*, 3-33:4.

¹⁰⁵ *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools*, 3-33:6.

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools*, 3-33:7-9.

Within this category there were also those schools or associations which were in receipt of financial support from the UK Exchequer, but which were maintained by societies and individual groups. Chief among these were the Schools of the Association of the Suppression of Vice, the London Hibernian Society, and the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland, with the latter becoming more popularly known as the Kildare place Society (KPS).¹⁰⁷ The KPS was perhaps the most revolutionary of these institutions, recognising the need for a system of training for their teachers, amongst other innovative practices. This took place at Kildare Place in Dublin where the society established male and female Model Schools to oversee teachers' training in the use of the Lancastrian monitorial method.¹⁰⁸ The KPS subsequently played an important role in the developing framework of the national education system, with many of its policies and practices being adopted by the new national system of education.¹⁰⁹ For example, whilst operating a training system for teachers, the KPS encouraged the candidacy of a particular type of individual by circulating an outline of its desired characteristics for the teacher amongst its patrons.

The following extract from the records of the KPS regarding these traits is worth reproducing as these concepts, or at least an amended version, later became fundamental to developing the identity of national school teachers. The extract states:

As the most perfect system of instruction, must be of comparatively little value, where the master is incompetent, the Society anxiously recommends all persons desirous of having school masters of their

¹⁰⁷ *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools*, 3-33:10-12.

¹⁰⁸ Parkes, S.M. (2010) *A Guide to Sources for the History of Irish Education, 1780-1922*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 30-33; Ediger, M. (1987) *The Lancastrian Monitorial System of Instruction*. Northeast Missouri State University: ERIC; Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 88.

¹⁰⁹ For example the concept of a 'Model School' as devised by the KPS was taken on by the CNEI and instigated at Merrion Street initially, before later moving to Marlborough Street. See Doyle, *Model Schools-Model Teachers?*. O' Donovan notes that the use of textbooks published by the KPS for use within their schools, along with the development of an Inspectorate were two other concepts which Stanley drew on when outlining his plan for a national education system. The single, and perhaps, arguably most important element which emulated the KPS was the multidenominational aspect of the education provided. See O' Donovan, *Stanley's Letter*.

own nomination trained in the seminary, to be exceedingly careful in the selection of individuals for that purpose. Their age should not be less than eighteen, nor more than thirty years: they ought to have a competent knowledge of the rudiments of spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic; in temper they should be patient; in disposition mild, but firm; of diligent habits; of unblemished moral character; and fully convinced of the importance of inculcating on the young mind, a love of decency and cleanliness, of industry, honesty and truth.¹¹⁰

The concern which the society expresses around the choice of teachers is noted in their being ‘exceedingly careful’ as to who might be suitable for the role within the KPS. Basic competencies in literacy and numeracy are welcomed with further emphasis placed on traits of character, such as morality, patience and diligence of habit. The reference to the Kildare Place training school as a ‘seminary’, also highlights the strong religious and moralistic undertones which accompanied teacher training in the KPS and elements of which transferred to the national system. A modified version of this description of the desired teacher characteristics outlined by the KPS can be found in the Rules of the Commissioners of National Education as they appear initially in 1840 and later, in extended format in 1845.¹¹¹ Finally, schools administered by religious orders such as the Christian Brothers, the Sunday School Society, the Presentation and Ursuline Sisters were also noted at this time.¹¹²

The second category of elementary educational provision mentioned in the 1837 report addressed ‘Private’ schools. The report makes little or no observation on these schools other than to say that ‘though aware how much this latter class must affect the education of a country,

¹¹⁰ Appendix No. IV in Eighth Report of the Society (1820), quoted in Hislop, H.J. (1990) *The Kildare Place Society 1811-1831: An Irish experiment in popular education*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Dublin: Trinity College, 360.

¹¹¹ See CNEI (1840), *The Seventh Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1840*, [353-XXIII], H.C. London: HMSO, 119-120; CNEI (1845) *The Eleventh Report... for 1845*, [629-XXVI], H.C., Appendix XIV, 105.

¹¹² *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools*, 3-33.

Your (sic) committee do not consider themselves authorized to enter into their examination.’¹¹³

This observation referred to what were known as Hedge or ‘pay’ schools which catered for the majority of the Roman Catholic population throughout Ireland during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Their exclusion from the 1837 report is indicative of the low regard in which these schools were held by the imperial administration, despite their remaining in operation even after the onset of the national system, with Coolahan noting that, ‘the government authorities were suspicious of these schools fearing their potential for political subversion.’¹¹⁴

Commentary relating to numerical returns of children participating in education across Ireland is not recorded in the 1837 report for those outside of the newly established national system. Therefore, it is necessary to revert to an earlier official publication entitled *The First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, which although predating the publication of the 1837 report offers numerical returns in relation to numbers engaged in elementary education before the national system was established. The 1825 publication states that, ‘Education is still in a great Degree administered in the Pay schools of the country unconnected with societies...’¹¹⁵ with O’ Brien writing that official returns published by this report in 1825, show discrepancies around the actual numbers of children partaking in elementary education in Ireland at this time.¹¹⁶ In support of this, Fitzgerald notes that there were some 11,823 schools in existence in 1824 under varying managerial structures and religious patronage. Of these, the

¹¹³ *Report of the Select Committee on Foundation Schools*, 3-33:4.

¹¹⁴ Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 9.

¹¹⁵ *First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, H.C. (1825)*. [400-XII], H.C. London: HMSO, 102.

¹¹⁶ O’ Brien illustrates statistics returned by both the Church of Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church for 1826, with the former recording 498,641 children engaged in elementary schooling, while the latter notes 522,016 pupils involved in schooling. However, a later return from 1826 notes this number as standing at 568,954 pupils in 11,823 schools. See O’ Brien, G. (2013) *The 1825-6 Commissioners of Irish Education Reports: Background and Context* In: Fitzgerald, G., ed. (2013) *Irish Primary Education in the Early Nineteenth Century: An Analysis of the First and Second Reports of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1825-6*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1-44:21.

figure which comprised ‘pay’ or Hedge Schools was 9,352.¹¹⁷ The widespread nature of these schools and their unregulated provision of education to the poor in Ireland was both cause for concern and a motivational factor for the pre-Independence administration to establish a national system of elementary education in Ireland in the early nineteenth century.¹¹⁸ While elements of state involvement was present in some examples, such as the funding provided to the KPS from the UK Exchequer, this did not influence the actual administration or control of elementary education to any great degree. Neither was there any considerable influence exercised by any of the differing churches with regard to the provision of elementary education. Such influences were confined to proselytizing practices as noted within some of the early providers of elementary education in Ireland.

The proliferation of the Hedge Schools clearly points to the value which the poorer members of Irish society held in respect of education. Concurrently, some examples which support this are useful in supporting the contextual overview of education at this time. Observations from visitors to Ireland at the time recognised this value that the Irish placed on education. Edward Wakefield, for example writing in 1812, notes, ‘I do not know any part of Ireland so wild, that its inhabitants are not anxious, nay, eagerly anxious for the education of their children.’¹¹⁹ Wakefield continues, noting the comments of Lord Selkirk, writing ‘his Lordship remarked to me, that he was struck with, “the extraordinary anxiety of the lower orders in every part of Ireland where he had been, to educate their children.”’¹²⁰ The anonymous observations of an

¹¹⁷ Fitzgerald, G. (2013) Irish Primary Education in 1824 In: Fitzgerald, G., ed. (2013) *Irish Primary Education in the Early Nineteenth Century: An Analysis of the First and Second Reports of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1825-6*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 45-112:59.

¹¹⁸ Dowling, P.J. (1968) *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*. 2nd ed. Cork: Mercier Press. 31-34; McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books*, 57.

¹¹⁹ Wakefield, E. (1812) *An Account of Ireland Statistical and Political*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Browne. Vol. II, 397.

¹²⁰ Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 398.

MP recorded in 1803 offer a further insightful view on the interest and educational attainments of the Irish as the author sees it. He writes:

They are to an extraordinary degree inquisitive and communicative: their memories are surprisingly retentive; they are fond of wit and set so high a value upon learning, that the poorest labourers will often appropriate a portion of their scanty earnings to the education of their children. The more abstruse parts of arithmetic, and also mensuration and navigation, are taught in many of the poorest unendowed schools in Ireland. The art of writing is often carried almost to its utmost perfection amongst the people of this class: and their attainments in orthography and perspicuity of style, have frequently to my knowledge excited the amazement of strangers.¹²¹

The broader imperial mindset in respect of the overall approach to education is also reflected in this observer's writing. While these observations may not be wholly representative of political considerations with regard to education in Ireland, it is likely that the basic sentiment expressed here, remained as the underlying approach to Ireland when establishing the national system in 1831.

2.5 Teachers prior to 1831

Having established that Ireland was not devoid of elementary education in the early decades of the nineteenth century, it is worth briefly considering the individuals who worked as teachers in these settings. The teachers employed in these schools may be categorised along the lines of the schools; those employed in the designated public schools and those who worked in a private capacity. The parameters of this study do not permit a comprehensive analysis of these teachers, however, some points as to their employment and perceptions around what their role

¹²¹ Anonymous (1803) *Essays on the Population of Ireland, and the characters of the Irish by A Member of the Last Irish Parliament*. London: C and R Baldwin, 45.

entailed will further the reader's understanding around teacher identity prior to the foundation of the national education system.

Insights into the teachers who worked within schools, such as those categorized as 'public' above, are extremely scarce and such information as can be located on these teachers is found in official reports. While the following examples are by no means fully comprehensive, they at least facilitate a partial glimpse into aspects of these teacher's identity, albeit through an official lens. One such aspect of these reports focuses on the importance of religious identity as a prerequisite for employment and this is a common thread throughout the descriptions available, with an example from the 1837 report recording that the schoolmaster in the School for the Association of the Suppression of Vice had to be a Protestant and had to be appointed by the local Protestant clergyman, while teachers employed by the London Hibernian Society 'were not required to be Protestants,' with the extract noting 'they were eligible from any denomination.'¹²² Both examples here point to the import of religious identity as a core requirement for employment. This can be understood to be a singular mark of identity at this time, when few other attributes, save employment and status, might be used to classify differing groups in society.

Information about the teachers who worked in what were termed as 'pay' or 'hedge' schools is more plentiful and extensive commentary is recorded by Dowling and later, McManus, amongst others.¹²³ The teachers who worked in the Hedge Schools are generally understood to

¹²² *Report from the Select Committee on Foundation schools*, 3-33:10.

¹²³ Dowling, P.J. (1971) *A History of Irish Education: A Study in Conflicting Loyalties*. Cork: Mercier Press; Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*; McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books*; Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland*; Edwards, R.D. (1935) *Church and State in Tudor Ireland: A History of Penal Laws against Irish Catholics 1534-1603*. Dublin: Talbot Press; Lyons, T. (2022) *The Pay Schools of Ireland and their interface with the National System of Education: An historical Analysis*. Switzerland: Peter Lang; Lyons, T. (2016) 'Inciting the lawless and profligate adventure'-The Hedge Schools of Ireland. *History Ireland*, 24(6), 28-31.

have been a diverse group, with varying levels of educational attainment and ability. Their importance in relation to the identity of the national teacher lies in their position and status within communities. The position of the Hedge School teacher, it appears, was generally accorded respect. They were the inheritors of the Bardic tradition and were credited with making a level of education available throughout the period of the Penal Laws in the eighteenth century. Dowling writes that ‘Those who took up teaching as a profession had generally some distinction in learning’, while also noting that ‘some were distinguished poets, several were writers of important works on languages, history, geography, mathematics, and other subjects, while not a few were authorities in their own branches of study.’¹²⁴ It is generally understood that the aspiring Hedge School teacher served an apprenticeship to an established teacher, before branching out on their own, having learned all they could from their master. From this point on they assumed the moniker of a ‘poor scholar’, travelling from place to place enhancing their learning and attempting to build a reputation as a teacher of note.¹²⁵ More detailed examples relating to teachers, especially those of the Hedge Schools, prior to 1831 are found in the contextual preface of Chapter Five in Subsection 5.2.1. The primary concern in respect of all teachers and elementary education, prior to 1831, was its unregulated nature and the government’s concern around the potential harm that might arise from teaching which was not in keeping with an imperial ethos.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, 72.

¹²⁵ Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, 73.

¹²⁶ The primary concern around the unregulated nature of the Hedge School teachers was their potential for spreading dissension and engendering subversive tendencies amongst the poor. John O’ Driscoll writing in 1820, states that the Hedge School master ‘generally adds some traditionary tales of his country, of a character to keep alive discontent.’ See O’ Driscoll, J. (1820) *Thoughts and suggestions on the Education of the Peasantry in Ireland*. London: T. Cadall. While Wakefield when discussing the Hedge School teacher writes, ‘To persons of this kind is the education of the poor entirely trusted; and the consequence is, that the pupils imbibe from them enmity to England, hatred to the government, and superstitious veneration for old and absurd customs.’ See Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 398. Significantly, this was not solely the concern of the British administration, with a letter from Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin reproduced in the Sixth Report of the Commissioners in 1839, stating, ‘The rule which requires that all teachers henceforth to be employed be provided, from some model school, a certificate of their competency, will aid us in a work of great difficulty, to wit, that of *suppressing hedge schools* (emphasis in original), and placing youth under the direction of competent teachers, and of those only.’ See CNEI, (1839) *The Sixth Report...for 1839*, [246-XXVIII], H.C., 8-9.

2.6 The establishment of the national system, 1831

Ireland's status within the confines of the British Empire is recognised as ambiguous and contested.¹²⁷ Following the Act of Union in 1801, Ireland's administrative system came under the direct control of parliament in Westminster, London. The establishment of the national education system in 1831, as noted in the introductory chapter, emerged from a letter written by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Edward Stanley, to the Duke of Leinster, inviting him to become the chairman of a new board, which was instituted to oversee the development of a national system of elementary education throughout the island of Ireland for 'the poorer classes of the community.'¹²⁸ The emergence of Stanley's Letter outlining an elementary system was not a wholly new concept as noted earlier. Educational enquiries stretching back to 1791, and in the early decades of the nineteenth century, namely 1806-12, 1824-27, and 1830 provided the momentum for the realisation of a national education system.¹²⁹ Ultimately, it was the central tenets of Stanley's letter which became the guiding principles for the national school system in Ireland from 1831.¹³⁰ Understanding the structural composition of the national system of education is therefore a core component in understanding the developing identity of the Irish national teacher.

¹²⁷ The attribution of Ireland's colonial status is a source of constant debate given its status as a kingdom in its own right prior to the Act of Union. For further insights see Ohlmeyer, J. (2024) *Making Empire: Ireland, Imperialism, and the Early Modern World*. Oxford University Press; Kenny, K., ed. (2004) *Ireland and the British Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Howe, S. (2000) *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹²⁸ See Letter from the Chief Secretary for Ireland, to His Grace the Duke of Leinster, on the Formation of a Board of Commissioners for Education in Ireland, The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

¹²⁹ See Kelly, J. (1986) The Context and Course of Thomas Orde's Plan of Education of 1787. *The Irish Journal of Education*, 20(1), 4-5; Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 59-122; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*.

¹³⁰ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

In essence, the establishment of the national system of education began with the Board of National Education which served as a substructure for the nascent system. Stanley's vision was enacted by forming 'a government appointed, mixed-denominational board comprising men of high personal character' who would superintend the new system.¹³¹ The individuals, known as the Commissioners for National Education in Ireland (CNEI), comprised men of high social standing and also of varying denominational affiliations. In this, the composition of the board was to reflect a central tenet of Stanley's letter, whereby the system would be multidenominational and accessible to all children.¹³² Within the appointed board, one individual was appointed a 'Resident Commissioner', adopting a full-time position and receiving a salary in this role.¹³³ The Commissioners were responsible for the distribution of funds from parliament, 'of setting out rules and regulations, of controlling the curriculum, of publishing and sanctioning textbooks, of suspending teachers and removing managers.'¹³⁴

The Board of National Education invited expressions of interest from those who sought to establish a national school in an area or bring an existing school under the auspices of the board. There were several permutations permitted in the application process, with the letter noting that joint applications from both Protestant and Catholic clergymen would be favoured,¹³⁵ or from one or other of the respective clergy and their parishioners, or parishioners of both

¹³¹ Coolahan, J. (2017) *Towards the Era of Lifelong Learning: A History of Irish Education, 1800-2016*. Dublin: IPA, 10-12.

¹³² The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

¹³³ The first Resident Commissioner was Rev. James Carlilse, who was formally appointed in 1833. According to O' Donovan (2017), Carlilse was superseded by Alexander MacDonnell in 1839. When MacDonnell resigned in 1871, the baton passed to Patrick Keenan, whose rise through the ranks from national teacher to Chief Inspector saw him eventually assume the role of Resident Commissioner from 1871 to 1894. Christopher Talbot Reddington succeeded Keenan but only remained in the post for four years. He died in February 1899 and the fifth, and final Resident Commissioner for National Education was appointed shortly afterwards. This was Dr William Joseph Myles Starkie.

¹³⁴ Coolahan, J. (1981) *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*. Dublin: IPA.

¹³⁵ O' Donovan writes that 'joint applications were not common.' See O' Donovan, *Stanley's Letter*, 50.

denominations.¹³⁶ This person who made the application was usually entitled the ‘patron’ of the school. The school patron would then appoint a ‘manager’ and the manager would employ the teachers. In the majority of cases, the manager was a member of the dominant clergy within the local area and the patron, usually the bishop, or occasionally, a significant landholder.¹³⁷ Stanley’s efforts to facilitate a multidenominational experience within the national system, coupled with the manner in which applications to join the national system were structured, led to religious tensions. This primarily centred around the question of religious instruction in the schools. Initial cautious acceptance of the system amongst the leaders of the Catholic Church was tempered by Presbyterian and (Anglican) Church of Ireland dissatisfactions with aspects of the national system.¹³⁸ Recurring arguments and campaigning for changes to Stanley’s plan were gradually underpinned by growing denominational control of the national system as the national schools became vested denominationally. As one commentator notes, this denominational vestiture was facilitated by the legal title to the school building becoming held by local trustees or they retaining a non-vested status.¹³⁹

It is also important to note that the manager of the school exercised considerable power over the teachers employed within the school. They had responsibility for hiring and dismissing teachers, as well as control over the part-payment allocated by the CNEI for the teacher’s

¹³⁶ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

¹³⁷ See Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 14.

¹³⁸ The varying issues around denominational tensions and dissatisfaction with the national system from its inception have been well documented. In brief, the Presbyterians were unhappy about a number of points in the new national system, chief of which was the place of the bible and its use in the school day. They campaigned through the Synod of Ulster, under Dr. Henry Cooke, from 1832 to 1840 for amendments to the system. They were successful in this and concessions were made. The members of the Church of Ireland (Protestants) felt that the national system undermined Protestant primacy as leaders of the Church in Ireland. Coupled with tensions arising from the Tithe Wars, as noted in Section 2.1, members of the Church of Ireland left the national system in 1839 and established the Church Education Society. This initially enjoyed success but after the first decade was overtaken by the national system. For further reading see Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*; O’ Donovan, *Stanley’s Letter...*

¹³⁹ Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 14.

salary, responsibility for the school timetable, and the general maintenance of the school itself.¹⁴⁰ Further exploration of the tensions that occurred as a result of manager-teacher relationships are discussed in Section 6.3.3 of Chapter Six. The national system then was essentially a tiered and hierarchical structure. At the top of this was the Lord Lieutenant as initially the King's, and later on, the Queen's representative in Ireland.¹⁴¹ Under this was the Resident Commissioner and his colleagues, the Commissioners, who were responsible for the administration of the system. The Commissioners also had responsibility for an Inspectorate who oversaw the national system at a regional level. At local level, the patron of the national school maintained responsibility for the teacher, who was at the very bottom of this hierarchy.

Funding for the establishment of the national system came from the UK Exchequer, with responsibility for the distribution of part of this funding falling to the Commissioners. In recognition of the core elements of Stanley's Letter, it was outlined that government monies would only partly fulfil the requirements of the national school system. The funding from the Exchequer would be provided in part for the erection of school buildings, with responsibility for the school site resting with the local patron.¹⁴² Finance for paying inspectors, a partial salary to teachers, the cost of textbooks, maintaining a Model School in Dublin and 'defraying all necessary contingent expenses of the Board' also came from Westminster.¹⁴³ Beyond this, it was believed that local contributions would supplement the costs of teacher salaries and school requisites.

¹⁴⁰ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

¹⁴¹ See Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*.

¹⁴² The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

¹⁴³ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

The national system quickly took root and there was rapid growth in the number of schools established or brought under the auspices of the CNEI.¹⁴⁴ The Roman Catholic Church, whilst initially tolerant of the new system, became less so as the decades advanced and figures such as Bishop John MacHale, and Cardinal Cullen mentioned earlier, challenged the CNEI around the place of religious instruction in the national schools, along with the provision of denominational training for national teachers.¹⁴⁵

2.7 Teacher training and education

The establishment of the national system was accompanied by the understanding that in order to successfully develop the system and address issues surrounding the unregulated nature of education, most notably the Hedge Schools and the teachers therein, some element of teacher training was desirable. To this end, a Central Training Institute for national teachers was established. This was located at Marlborough Street in Dublin, where the present Department of Education stands. A system of regional or 'District' Model Schools as they were known, was also planned, the first of which was at Merrion Street, with more to be constructed nationwide.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ CNEI (1851) *The Eighteenth Report...for 1851*, [1582-XLII], H.C., Vol. 1, Appendix A, 3, notes that from Dec 1833 to Dec 1851, the number of schools increased from 789 to 4,704, with the initial number showing 107,042 children enrolled in 1833 to 520,401 in 1851.

¹⁴⁵ Harford writes that the growing opposition towards nondenominational teacher training was spearheaded by the Catholic Church and this was eventually acknowledged by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, C.S. Fortescue in 1866. However, the movement towards actual denominational training was not realised until a male college was opened by the Vincentians in Drumcondra in 1875, with a female college opening under the Sisters of Mercy in Baggott Street in Dublin two years later. See Harford, J. (2009) The emergence of a national policy on teacher education in Ireland. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 41(1), 45-56. In support of this, Parkes also writes that the chief oppositionist in this regard was the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Paul Cullen, who following the Synod of Thurles in 1850, encouraged the Catholic hierarchy to challenge the development of the Model Schools in their Districts and by 1863, the Catholic Church had imposed a ban on Catholics attending the Central Training Institute at Marlborough Street or any of the District Model Schools. See Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82.

¹⁴⁶ Doyle writes that difficulties with funding, religious tensions and administrative issues hampered the development of the District Model Schools across the country, with 14 of the 29 established by 1861 located in the north of Ireland. Doyle also notes that the geographical location of the schools was influenced by inspector's recommendations, lobbying by interest groups and religious pressures. See Doyle, *Model Schools- Model Teachers?*, 61-92: 297-299.

In this respect, the CNEI drew heavily on the model established by the KPS in 1811.¹⁴⁷ This saw the Central Model School established at Merrion Street where the national teachers would come to be trained as teachers, primarily in a system which had been developed in the KPS Model School.¹⁴⁸ The CNEI subsequently relocated the Central Model School to Marlborough Street, on their purchase of Tyrone House from the Marquis of Waterford in 1835.¹⁴⁹ Originally, the network of District Model Schools was envisaged for the whole island of Ireland, yet ultimately, only 29 were established with the first at the Central Training Institute or the ‘Normal’¹⁵⁰ establishment, as it was also known, opening there in 1838.¹⁵¹

It is important to note that a central premise of the developing training system focused on the retention of suitable individuals to staff the national schools. This centred on a mantra which rejected any and all elements of the persona of the Hedge School teachers, who traditionally were seen as agents for subversion and dissent. Burke notes that teachers at this time within the national system were intended to:

reform society by being models of morality and decorum for the poorer classes to emulate but, yet, to be conscious of their own lowly status within that society. A quasi-monastic type of teacher training aimed at inculcating the qualities of modesty, humility and gentleness in future teachers...while the intellectual capacity of the teachers would be enhanced through their training they were to be kept aware of the modest respectability of their lot.¹⁵²

The introduction of rules and regulations to govern the lives of the national teachers were also implemented by the CNEI. These, and their impact are discussed in greater detail in Subsection

¹⁴⁷ Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82.

¹⁴⁸ Doyle, *Model Schools- Model Teachers?*, 30-31.

¹⁴⁹ Doyle, *Model Schools- Model Teachers?*, 30-31.

¹⁵⁰ The term ‘Normal’ establishment which was used initially to describe the Central Training Institute was a nod to the *L'école normale* established in France during the French Revolution to provide training for elementary school teachers.

¹⁵¹ Doyle, *Model Schools- Model Teachers?*, 46-50; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 23; Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 146-149.

¹⁵² Burke, A. (1994) *Teaching: Retrospect and Prospect*. UK: Brunswick Press Ltd, 10.

4.4.4 of Chapter Four. While the training process within the Irish system of national education has been comprehensively mapped by varying historians of education, it is important to reiterate some of the primary characteristics of the system as they are relevant to teacher selection and consequently, identity.¹⁵³ Walsh notes that, ‘prior to the 1830s, preparation for the role of elementary teacher was undertaken mostly in an apprenticeship or monitorial style with experienced teachers, where the “most able and promising students” were selected to assume the role of “monitor”, in the classroom.’¹⁵⁴ This entailed the monitor teaching a small group of students under the direction of the class teacher. However, the haphazard and singular style of these apprenticeships did not and could not engender uniformity amongst elementary teachers.

The programme outlined then for teacher training in Marlborough Street encompassed two areas. First, existing teachers who were already teaching would be ‘called’ to Dublin to undergo instruction at the Central Training Institute where they would ‘cover the art of teaching, of composition and English literature, of natural history in all its branches, of mathematics, and of mental philosophy, including the elements of logic and rhetoric.’¹⁵⁵ The initial period of training envisaged was two years, but the resources of the CNEI fell short of providing this and the course, which began in 1833, was shortened to six months.¹⁵⁶ Each candidate was also to complete a period in the Central Model School, which was temporarily established at Merrion Street, prior to the opening of the Marlborough Street schools in 1838, whereby they put into practice the theoretical elements of their training.¹⁵⁷ The teaching methodologies

¹⁵³ See Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*; Parkes, *An Essential Service*.

¹⁵⁴ Walsh, *The evolving status of elementary teachers*, 326-345:5.

¹⁵⁵ Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 146.

¹⁵⁶ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C. 6; Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82.

¹⁵⁷ Separate female and male departments were opened in the Model School at Marlborough Street, as well as an infant Model School. In addition to this, an Agricultural School was established near Glasnevin in Dublin to ‘bring forward an intelligent class of farm labourers and servants.’ See CNEI (1837) *The Fourth Report...for 1837*, [110-XXVIII], H.C., 3-5.

employed in the Central Model School and later the District Model Schools, utilised Lancastrian principles which saw the Head teacher superintend a ‘paid monitor,’ who in turn selected and trained ‘class monitors.’¹⁵⁸ The method of teaching abandoned the individual method of teaching per pupil which was characteristic of earlier teaching styles, in favour of whole or small group instruction.

Parkes comments on the ‘monitorial’ system, as it was known, noting that the teachers required little knowledge beyond the ability to maintain ‘strict order and discipline’, along with strong organisational skills.¹⁵⁹ From 1844 the system was amended to allow payment to be made to monitors.¹⁶⁰ As Parkes outlines, the monitorship was categorised to allow for junior and senior monitors, who could then engage with the series of examinations conducted by the inspectors to qualify as an ‘assistant teacher.’¹⁶¹ Those pupils who displayed the necessary skills to teach assumed the role of monitor, thus ensuring that the supply and more importantly, identity of teachers, was carefully developed under the watch of the Inspectors and the Commissioners.

The initial categorisation of the teachers saw four divisions delineated. These were first, second and third class, with the fourth termed as probationary, for those teachers considered ‘unfit’ to be allocated any of the first three divisions.¹⁶² Advancement awaited these teachers through the varying levels of classification which followed the series of graded examinations. This added a further layer of complexity to the parameters around the formation of the Irish national teacher’s identity. The monitorial system was also to endure with the onset of national

¹⁵⁸ Professor Robert Sullivan with responsibility for the Male Model School in Marlborough Street outlined the structure of the teaching system there, in the CNEI (1840) *The Seventh Report... for 1840*, [353-XXIII], H.C. Appendix VII, 106. He delineates the categories of monitor, pupil-teacher and their relationship within the Model School classroom.

¹⁵⁹ Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82:46.

¹⁶⁰ Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82:65.

¹⁶¹ Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82:65.

¹⁶² The probationary category was introduced in 1839. See CNEI (1839) *The Sixth Report...for 1839*, [246-XXVIII], H.C. Appendix IV, 84.

education, but under the check of the Commissioners. Apart from the possibility of attending training at the Central Training Institute in Dublin, two more avenues to teaching were open to the prospective national teacher.¹⁶³ The first of these was within the proposed network of District Model Schools which were to be built throughout the country. The idea was that candidates, previously experienced as monitors, could attend these and undertake a short course there before moving to undertake a teaching position in a national school for two years, after which they would complete their studies at the Central Training Institute in Dublin.¹⁶⁴ Second, a series of examinations were put in place which allowed existing teachers to attain classification in the eyes of the CNEI and be ‘officially’ recognised.¹⁶⁵ The examinations were held in regional towns and the Inspectors oversaw these from 1839, with revisions in 1848.¹⁶⁶ The content of the exams was differentiated for the teachers depending on their level of classification. A teacher categorised as 3rd class, when sitting the examination, would be examined on ‘the elements of mathematical and physical geography, the Geography of Ireland and the general Geography of Europe.’ Contrastingly, a teacher of the first class would have to demonstrate ‘a popular acquaintance with the Laws of Heat, and the Structure of the Steam Engine, and the Elements of Chemistry.’¹⁶⁷ As the national system developed, it was the series of examinations and the courses at the Central Training Institute that proved the most fruitful in qualifying the national teachers, as the network of District Model Schools never developed to the extent originally planned by the CNEI. While administrative and financial issues prevented the development of the District Model schools, it was primarily objections raised by

¹⁶³ Walsh, *The evolving status of elementary teachers*, 6-7.

¹⁶⁴ CNEI (1846) *The Thirteenth Report...for 1846*, [832-XXVII], H.C., 9.

¹⁶⁵ CNEI (1839) *The Sixth Report...for 1839*, [246-XXVIII], H.C. Appendix IV, 84; CNEI (1840) *The Seventh Report...for 1840*, [353-XXIII], H.C. Appendix V., 104.

¹⁶⁶ These were revised in 1848. See CNEI (1847) *The Fourteenth Report...for 1847*, [981-XXIX], H.C. Appendix XXXV. 165; CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix IX., 8-9.

¹⁶⁷ CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix XXXV., 152.

the Catholic Church to the nondenominational status of the Model Schools that stymied their expansion.

2.8 Teacher payment and salaries

The teacher's salary, as outlined by Stanley, would be provided from local funds, with further monies provided from parliament for gratuities to teachers.¹⁶⁸ However, this quickly ran into difficulties as the local funds were either too small or did not materialise at all. The gratuities provided by the CNEI ranged from £8 to £10 annually and it was quickly realised that these were also insufficient.¹⁶⁹ This was addressed in 1839 when the classification system was introduced, with the revised terminology of an annual 'salary' being introduced, as opposed to a 'gratuity' for the national teachers. The system of classification predicated the amount of money the teacher received from the CNEI, based on their level within this. The allocation of classifications and promotions was undertaken by the Inspectorate following the examinations discussed above.¹⁷⁰ The initial scale of payments reflected the classifications of the national teachers as outlined in the previous subsection here. Their pay-scale also displayed a division in respect of gender, with female teachers earning less than their male counterparts. The categories of classification were extended initially in 1848,¹⁷¹ with three subdivisions attached to first class and two each to second and third class. An annual salary of £10 was also instituted for male probationary and assistant teachers, with £9 provided for their female counterparts. This was refined again some years later in 1851¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

¹⁶⁹ Coolahan, J. (1983) The Daring First Decade of the Board of National Education, 1831-1841. *The Irish Journal of Education*, 17(1), 35-54.

¹⁷⁰ CNEI (1839) *The Sixth Report...for 1839*, [246-XXVIII], H.C. Appendix IV., 84.

¹⁷¹ CNEI (1847) *The Fourteenth Report...for 1847*, [981-XXIX], H.C., 6.

¹⁷² CNEI (1851) *The Eighteenth Report...for 1851*, [1582-XLII], H.C., 21.

Issues around the salary scales remaining a recurring point of contention for the national teachers from the inception of the system up to the publication of the findings of the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Education* in 1870.¹⁷³ Increasing concerns around salaries had led to the organisation and development of teacher-led associations in the late 1850s,¹⁷⁴ and the establishment of a weekly publication called the *Irish Teacher's Journal* (ITJ) late in 1867.¹⁷⁵ This predated the coalescence of county and district national teacher's associations throughout 1868, which later became the Irish National Teacher's Organisation (INTO).¹⁷⁶ This became the first group to agitate for and on behalf of the national teachers around issues of pay, pensions and residences.¹⁷⁷ Thereafter followed a series of reforms for the national teachers, including contracts for teachers in 1873 and pensions for retiring teachers in 1879.¹⁷⁸ The difficulties many teachers faced around the country in regard to financial security saw them supplement their employment after school-hours, in an attempt to bolster their finances. This led to varied accounts of extraneous work which are detailed in Subsection 5.3.4 of Chapter Five.

¹⁷³ See Section 2.10 of this chapter.

¹⁷⁴ Moroney notes that 'reports of meetings of isolated groups of teachers began to appear in the newspapers' from the late 1850s. This would tally with the sample extracts held in the ED/7 files at the National Archives of Ireland. He also writes that a 'National teachers' Association for Ireland' was formed in 1857 but met with little or no success in lobbying government. Moroney notes the formation of a 'Central Teachers' Association' in Dublin in 1863, led by Jeremiah Henly, whose subsequent recruitment of Vere Foster as a spokesperson for the national teacher's cause lent weight to the movement. See Moroney, M. (2000) *National Teachers' Salaries and Pensions 1831-2000: A Historical Chronology and Review of the Role of the INTO*. Dublin: IPA, 23-26.

¹⁷⁵ Purséil, *Kindling the Flame*, 3-5.

¹⁷⁶ Accounts of meetings from 'Teacher's Associations' throughout Ireland appear in the monthly issues of the *Irish Teacher's Journal* (ITJ) from the March 1868 edition, with a plea for the reestablishment of early iterations of national teacher's groups found in that issue. By the publication of the January Issue of ITJ for 1869, the editor states there are nearly 100 associations organised. By January 1870, the ITJ was reporting on the Congress of the National Teacher's Associations. See *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) March issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland; *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1869) January issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland; *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1870) January issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland.

¹⁷⁷ Data on the early national teacher groups which agitated for reform to pay and entitlements, such as pensions, are quite scarce. Purséil (2017) and Moroney (2007) do note the formation of such groups but primary evidence is not noted for these. The ED/7 files at the National Archives of Ireland reference educational material that appeared in newspapers between 1854 and 1923 but again, there is little detail on the origins of the groups in any of these, other than the majority pleading the teacher's case.

¹⁷⁸ See Purséil, *Kindling the Flame*; Moroney, *National Teachers' Salaries and Pensions*; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 32.

2.9 The Inspectorate, 1832 -1871

The establishment of the national education system was also followed by the formation of an Inspectorate in 1832. Again, as noted earlier, in respect of the foundation of the national system, the Commissioners drew heavily on the structures developed and employed by the KPS. In essence, as one historian noted, the Inspectors became the ‘eyes and ears of the Board, promoting its objectives, evaluating progress, gathering information, ensuring implementation of regulations and reporting’ to the CNEI on the developing system.¹⁷⁹ The role of the Inspectorate has particular relevance in this research as they were intimately connected with the national teachers and their reports and evidence provides much of the detail which supports this study. The Inspectorate also had responsibility for enforcing the rules and regulations of the CNEI, which developed and expanded on those points noted by Stanley around the conduct and duties of the national teachers.¹⁸⁰ A more fulsome examination of these is offered in Chapter Four, Subsection 4.4.4.

The initial phase of development of the national system’s inspectorial wing was quite small, with only four Inspectors appointed to oversee the nascent system.¹⁸¹ As the system began to expand, the number of Inspectors rose accordingly. The Fourth Report of the CNEI for the year 1837 proposed the division of the country into 25 districts with a ‘Superintendent’ in residence at the Model School in the district.¹⁸² The term ‘Superintendent’ was later discarded in favour of ‘Inspector’. The growth of the national system saw the initial 25 school districts expand to 32 and eventually, 36.¹⁸³ The system saw a Head Inspector appointed in 1845, supported by

¹⁷⁹ Coolahan with O’ Donovan, *A History of Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 18.

¹⁸⁰ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

¹⁸¹ Coolahan with O’ Donovan, *A History of Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 19-21.

¹⁸² CNEI (1837) *The Fourth Report...for 1837*, [110-XXVIII], H.C., 4-5.

¹⁸³ Coolahan with O’ Donovan, *A History of Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 21-22.

District Inspectors, which was later amended again to create a further division with the title of Sub-Inspectors in 1847.¹⁸⁴ The District Inspectors were located throughout the island of Ireland, usually in the principal towns, while the Head Inspectors were found in the cities, from where they could oversee the operation, along with compiling and furthering their reports for the Chief Inspector.¹⁸⁵ The Inspectors themselves were expected to reflect the decorum and attitudes of the CNEI with the revised instructions for the Inspectorate published in 1855 stating that:

...in all social relations as a member of the community in which he moves, he is required to support in a modest but becoming manner, the bearing, character, and standing of a gentleman, and scrupulously to avoid everything calculated to lessen the respectability of his position.¹⁸⁶

Early applicants for the role of Inspector were interviewed for the position, however, this was later revised with the development of the Civil Service Commission in 1860 and an examination was required to accede to the role.¹⁸⁷ A review of the candidates who were employed as Inspectors between 1831 and 1871 notes that of 64 recorded of varying ranks, nearly two-thirds had some background in education, either as a national teacher or tutor of some sort, with the remainder having such diverse prior employments as ‘a partner in a mercantile house’ and a Lieutenant in the Militia.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Coolahan with O’ Donovan, *A History of Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 21-22.

¹⁸⁵ As the national system expanded, the initial cohort of inspectors also developed, eventually resulting in a tiered system with District Inspectors reporting to Head Inspectors who, in turn communicated their reports to two Chiefs of Inspection. This was later reduced to one Chief Inspector. See Coolahan with O’ Donovan, *A History of Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 29-32.

¹⁸⁶ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 182. Note Volumes I and VI to VIII are available online at <https://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi>, with Volumes II and III in hardcopy held at the National Library of Ireland.

¹⁸⁷ Coolahan with O’ Donovan, *A History of Ireland’s School Inspectorate*, 20.

¹⁸⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 168-170.

The Inspectorate was issued with instructions regarding their role and duties within the national system. The first iteration of these instructions was appended to the Third Report of the CNEI published in 1836.¹⁸⁹ These were amended and revised in 1838, in 1842 and again in 1854, with each iteration containing more detail and minutiae around the requirements and duties of the Inspectors.¹⁹⁰ A sample of the Inspector's duties note they had to 'obtain accurate information as to the discipline, management, and methods of instruction pursued in the school,' as well as examining the 'Class Rolls, Register and Daily Report Book; and to report with accuracy what is the actual number of children receiving instruction at the School.'¹⁹¹ Quarterly reports to the CNEI, along with assessing applications for aid also fell under the Inspector's remit.¹⁹² It is important to note that the remuneration for the Inspector's duties was vastly different to that of the national teachers with whom they came into contact. An initial outlay of £300 per annum was provided in 1833 but this was later reduced to £125, plus travelling expenses, before rising again in 1840 to £200.¹⁹³ This sharply contrasted with the highest point of salary for a first class male teacher, who received £30.¹⁹⁴

The expansion of the national system, as noted earlier, led to the restructuring of the school districts. This, correspondingly, saw an expansion on the workload of the Inspectorate. A sample of the geographical area which the Inspectors were responsible for is offered here.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 177-183. Note the instructions for the inspectors are noted as being appended to the third report in the Powis Findings as referenced here, but the extant copies of the third report do not have these details attached.

¹⁹⁰ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 177-183.

¹⁹¹ CNEI (1842) *The Ninth Report...for 1842*, [491-XXVIII], H.C. Appendix II, 20.

¹⁹² CNEI (1842) *The Ninth Report...for 1842*, [491-XXVIII], H.C. Appendix II, 21.

¹⁹³ Coolahan with O' Donovan, *A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate*, 21-22.

¹⁹⁴ CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix XXXV, 151.

¹⁹⁵ A list of all Inspectors and the thirty-four districts they covered is available In: CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix XXXIX, 157-158.

Edward Butler, Head Inspector writing in the Fifteenth Report, in 1848 notes that his duties saw him attend:

A large portion of the county of Cavan, parts of the counties of Armagh, Monaghan, Tipperary and Waterford, and the entire province of Leinster, with the exception of some Baronies in the counties of Carlow and Kilkenny, and in Queen's County.¹⁹⁶

A further description of the area covered is offered by Head Inspector William MacCready, in the same report, who writes, 'The nine districts allocated to me whose teachers I was called upon to examine were the following: the (sic) Londonderry, Coleraine, Ballymena, Belfast, Newry, Newtownards, Dungannon, Omagh and Monaghan.'¹⁹⁷ The area covered by the Inspectors in fulfilment of their role were considerable and all on horseback, or covered horse drawn carriage, if available, as the Commissioner's considered it unseemly for the Inspectors to walk when attending to their varying districts and noted this in their instructions.¹⁹⁸

2.10 The Powis Commission, 1868-1870

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland was established in 1868, under the stewardship of the Earl of Powis. Colloquially, the Commission took its name from the chair and its remit extended to examining every aspect of the primary education system in Ireland since its inception in 1831. The inclusion of this section on the Powis Commission may appear as somewhat of an outlier in the overall context of this chapter, however, it is warranted for several reasons. First, after the establishment of the national system in 1831, the instigation of the Commission of Inquiry was perhaps the singularly most important event to take place within the sphere of national education since the foundation of the system. Second, the data

¹⁹⁶ CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix XXXIX, 159.

¹⁹⁷ CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix XXXIX, 180.

¹⁹⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board. H.C.* [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 177-183.

collected by the Commission stands as the most thorough and comprehensive assessment of the national system in Ireland in the nineteenth century.

In respect of this work, the publication of the Powis Findings in 1870 provide a natural conclusion in the form of a temporal boundary to the study. Much of the data published in the Commission findings has proved useful in this work, therefore, a brief outline of its remit and structures should assist the reader in contextualising this data as the research progresses. Published in eight volumes, the findings comprise some 4,000 pages of material. Volume I outlines a general summary of the Commission's report. Volume II presents the evidence of each of the individuals tasked with gathering the data within their respective districts while Volumes III, IV and V record the minutes of evidence and a subsequent analysis of that evidence. Volume VI then details an educational census; providing numerical data on the number of pupils present in each national school in Ireland on the 25th of June, 1868. Volume VII attends to every administrative detail present throughout the national system. This includes an astonishing diversity of detail, categorised in 165 subsections. It includes everything from the religious affiliation of the secretaries employed throughout the lifetime of the Board of National Education, what allowances the students training to be teachers were given, numbers of inspectors, lists of books published by the Board, lists of school buildings, the condition the buildings were in, reports on infractions of use of schools in the years prior to the Powis Commission, to the religious denomination of patrons, teachers and monitors, along with many other details too extensive to list here. Finally, Volume VIII, attends to miscellaneous correspondence, among which is correspondence with different bishops and returns from religious orders such as the Christian Brothers.

It is also worth mentioning the individuals who collected the data. These were all men, 10 in all drawn from the upper echelons of imperial administrative society. They were styled ‘Assistant Commissioners’ and allocated a district each covering the country. A description of the individual Assistant Commissioners and the geographical area they covered is detailed in Appendix 1.¹⁹⁹

2.11 Conclusion

In offering this brief contextual overview, the reader is reminded that this is no more than a cursory glance at some of the events which acted as a backdrop to the development of the national education system from 1831 to 1871 and a synopsis of the administrative structures, and personnel, who inhabited the system during this time. Singular events such as the Great Famine, the Tithe Wars and publications like *The Nation* serve to illustrate for the reader that beyond the world of national teachers and the national system, events occurred which impacted the lives of the Irish people. Given, as noted earlier, that the national system was devised with the aim of providing an elementary education for the poor of Ireland, it is certain that many of these events influenced the lives of both teachers and pupils alike.

The overview of education prior to 1831 illustrates for the reader the variety of schools and elementary type education available to people, provided they had the means to access it. These contrast with the national system which followed from 1831 and rendered many of these earlier providers obsolete. The administration of the national system of education developed rapidly and as noted at the outset of this chapter, the administrative details of the Irish national education system have been well documented. The overview offered here serves to remind the

¹⁹⁹ See 300-302.

reader that the national teacher, though occupying a central position within Irish elementary education, was largely invisible within the vagaries of the system. Again, while considerable data are available on the training structures, examinations and the duties of the national teachers, the identity of the teachers themselves are obscured by the bureaucracies of imperialist practice and the desire for control over the people under this governance.

Details surrounding the differing scales of remuneration for the teacher are useful in providing context for the developing national teacher identity, as issues surrounding this were recurring for many years. The import of the Inspectorate here cannot be understated either. They facilitated both control and expansion of the national system, and in respect of this research, provided deeply insightful views on the teachers they encountered over the decades in question. Finally, some detail on the remit of the Powis Commission is offered to the reader as this bookends the study and the insights of the Assistant Commissioners both inform the research and offer some conclusive evidence on the identity of the national teachers as this study draws to a close. The methodological framework which underpins the research is examined in the next chapter, along with the theoretical lenses which guided the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As noted in the introductory chapter of this thesis the aim of the research was to establish the identity of the Irish national teacher in the period 1831 to 1871, given the *lacuna* which currently exists in this area. The methodological framework and theoretical approaches which have been utilised and adapted to structure the research are outlined in this chapter.

Prior to outlining the main focus of the chapter, it is worth briefly considering the temporal parameters which frame the research. The research addressed the identity of the national teacher between the years 1831 and 1871. This period is considered the most appropriate in which to examine the identity of the Irish national teacher from its nascent phase to a more assured presentation of identity. The availability of scholarly material which trace the development of elementary education in Ireland up to and culminating in the establishment of the national education system are plentiful.²⁰⁰ Many of these histories share focus on the administrative and logistical elements of education in Ireland before 1831. There is a noticeable lack of emphasis on teachers within many histories of this period, both prior to and following the establishment of the national system. With the exception of works which focus on the Hedge School teachers the teacher as an individual is largely ignored. This absence of knowledge around the early national teachers positions this study at the forefront of educational history. The initial approach envisaged the temporal parameters of the study encompassing the

²⁰⁰ The following works are generally regarded as seminal in respect of Irish educational history. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*; Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*.

period 1831 to 1921, however, on engaging with the archival material it was realised that this timeframe was too ambitious and this would not allow an in-depth examination of the available data. Therefore, 1831 was chosen as the natural point of commencement of the study, aligning as it does with the establishment of the national system of elementary education in Ireland. On reflection and engagement with the data, the year following publication of the findings of the Powis Commission²⁰¹ was chosen as the point at which the study would conclude, as this neatly encapsulates a forty-year period, as well as coinciding with a change in educational practice from this point onwards, as noted in the introduction to Chapter One. This allows the researcher to address the varying elements of the identity of the Irish national teacher from a nascent phase to a more assured presentation of identity in 1871.

This chapter commences with an overview of theoretical concepts of identity theory in Section 3.2, which have informed the methodological approach to the research. This is divided into two subsections addressing both individual and collective elements of identity theory respectively. An outline of the methodology which guided the research, is offered in Section 3.3, while the theoretical understandings which supported analysis of the data are also noted here. The sources used are considered in Section 3.4. Again, this is divided into two subsections to consider both primary and secondary sources which informed the research. The use of document analysis to examine the evidence gathered is discussed in Section 3.5, while the question of ethics in a work such as this is briefly considered in Subsection 3.5.1. A conclusion is outlined in Section 3.6.

²⁰¹ See Section 2.10 on Powis Commission in the preceding chapter.

3.2 Theoretical understandings of identity

Within the realm of the history of education, the application of theory serves as a lens through which interpretations and reconstructions can be facilitated and made. Popekwitz writes that epistemologies applied to historical interpretation are required in order to reach conclusions and facts on the events, personalities or period in question.²⁰² This is further supported by the work of Meda and Viñao who posit that in selecting a theoretical approach in which to analyse historical data, it is crucial to choose a lens through which the nuances and specific focus of the research enables a complete understanding.²⁰³

Interpreting and understanding the identity of the Irish national teacher requires a theoretical understanding of what identity as a phenomenon entails in a broad sense and how these theories might have relevance for this study. Without the addition of these contemporary signposts to the concept of identity, the historical analysis which centres here on excavating the identity of the early Irish national teacher becomes insecure and transforms the study into a purely historical narrative with little interpretation, relevance or possibility for application in future studies. To this end, the prominent theoretical understandings of identity are briefly discussed here. These attend to both identity as it applies to the individual and in a collective or shared sense. Such theories are located in the field of psychosocial research.

²⁰² Popekwitz, T.S. (2020) How Theory acts as the Retrieval Apparatus in methods: Historical Thoughts on Romanticized Intellectual Practices In: Fitzgerald, T., ed. (2020) *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education*. Singapore: Springer, 154-168.

²⁰³ Meda, J. and Viñao, A. (2017) School memory: historiographical balance and heuristics perspectives In: Yanes Cabrera. C., Meda, J. and Viñao, A., eds. (2017) *School memories: new trends in the history of education*. Cham: Springer International, 1-9.

Initially, identity theory relevant to the individual with early interpretations by Erikson²⁰⁴ and Marcia²⁰⁵ is discussed here before considering later contributions by Mollenhauer and Friesen,²⁰⁶ and Schwartz.²⁰⁷ The discussion then moves to consider ‘social’ identity theory, with observations drawn from the work of Stets and Burke, amongst others²⁰⁸, which is relevant for this study. The interconnected nature of each presentation of theory is useful in understanding the events and situations which realised the identity of the national teacher, as well as understanding the more singular features which surrounded the persona of the Irish national teacher.

Analysis and awareness of identity formation by theorists within the realm of psychosocial studies began in the mid-twentieth century, with Erikson,²⁰⁹ Marcia²¹⁰ and Tajfel,²¹¹ recognised as early contributors to the field of identity theory during the 1950s and 1960s. Later theorists such as Berzonsky²¹² and Grotevant,²¹³ publishing during the 1980s and 1990s along with more recent contributors such as Schwartz²¹⁴ expanded on Erikson’s earlier conceptualisations of identity theory and examined singular aspects of identity within the discipline. Contributors

²⁰⁴ Erikson, E. H. (1950) *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton.

²⁰⁵ Marcia, J.E. (1966) Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3(5), 551-558.

²⁰⁶ Mollenhauer, K. and Friesen, N. (2014) *Forgotten Connections: On Culture and Upbringing*. London: Routledge, 115.

²⁰⁷ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

²⁰⁸ Stets, J.E. and Burke, P.J. (2000) Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63(3), 224-237; Hogg, M. A. and Abrams, D. (1999) *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*. New York: Routledge.

²⁰⁹ Erikson, E. H. (1950) *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton.

²¹⁰ Marcia, J.E. (1966) Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3(5), 551-558.

²¹¹ Tajfel, H. (1974) Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*. 13(2), 65-93.

²¹² Berzonsky, M.D. and Papini, D.R. (2015) Cognitive Reasoning, Identity Components, and Identity Processing Styles. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research (Mahwah, N.J.)*, 15(1), 74-88.

²¹³ Grotevant, H.D. (1997) Identity Processes: Integrating Social Psychological and Developmental Approaches. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 12(3), 354-357; Grotevant, H.D. (1987) Toward a process model of identity formation. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 2(3), 203-222.

²¹⁴ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory...* 7-58.

such as Bermann, Schwartz, Kurtines and Bermann,²¹⁵ Adams, Shea and Fitch,²¹⁶ and Côte²¹⁷, also expanded aspects of identity theory to reflect a far wider range of external factors than those initially considered by the early theorists.

3.2.1 Individual identity theory

As noted above, much of the work which was conducted during the twentieth century by theorists within the psychosocial realm focused on individual characteristics of the self. Typically this saw theories honed and developed which examined how the individual comes to display or inhabit particular characteristics, or traits which contribute to personal or collective identity. Eriksonian theory, for example, interpreted by Schwartz was noted as particularly suitable in this research,²¹⁸ while some further insights can be gleaned from the work of Mollenhauer and Friesen.²¹⁹ This developed the concept of ‘identity synthesis’, or the collation of particular aspects leading to an outward manifestation of identity, some of which are highlighted by Schwartz including ‘career, romantic preferences, religious ideology and political preferences, among other facets... (which)...come together to form the mosaic that represents who one is.’²²⁰ Each of these elements are in essence timeless as they attend to concepts which are not bound to any particular era and are universal in their application. These aspects of identity theory are particularly suitable for application in a historical framework where the availability of evidence is sometimes hampered by the temporal locus.

²¹⁵ Berman, A.M., Schwartz, S.J., Kurtines, W.M. and Berman, S.L. (2001) The process of exploration in identity formation: the role of style and competence. *Journal of Adolescence (London, England)*, 24(4), 513-528.

²¹⁶ Adams, G.R., Shea, J. and Fitch, S.A. (1979) Toward the development of an objective assessment of ego-identity status. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 8(2), 223-237.

²¹⁷ Côte, J.E. (2006) Acculturation and Identity: The Role of Individualization Theory. *Human Development*, 49(1), 31-35.

²¹⁸ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

²¹⁹ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten Connections*.

²²⁰ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58:9.

Eriksonian identity theory concentrates distinctly on the identity of the individual and recognising that those aspects of identity mentioned already come together, or synthesise, to form an identity. Erikson supposes that childhood attributes and experiences contribute to the formation of an identity. The collation and solidification of these as the individual reaches adulthood represents what is termed ‘ego identity synthesis’.²²¹ Conversely, the inability to bring together experiences and ideals manifests as ‘ego identity diffusion’, whereby the individual is unable to settle into an accepted representation of themselves.²²²

In essence these attributions simply signal the stages at which identity becomes formed and then fixed. The ‘ego syntonic’ state, or ‘pole’ as Schwartz terms it,²²³ exists when one has reached adulthood and adopted particular traits, interests and perhaps outlooks on the world that single this person out as being a unique individual. Equally so the ‘ego dystonic’ pole of identity is apparent when the person cannot comfortably retain any singular traits or characteristics which might be said to contribute to the formation of a unique identity. This leads to the person continually searching for their ‘own’ identity and constantly changing aspects of themselves. With regard to this study such considerations of the individual’s development of their own identity are relevant and useful when examining identity in an individual sense and presupposing the identity of the Irish national teacher identity historically. Understanding that the persona of the national teacher in nineteenth century Ireland developed and assumed certain shared aspects and traits of identity allows the researcher to focus on discrete elements of identity such as social origins, status and social class and subsequently,

²²¹ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58:9.

²²² Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58:9.

²²³ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58:9.

religious affiliations within the panacea of historical data available, ultimately realising a construction of Irish national teacher identity in the historical sense.

The work of Mollenhauer and Freisen also considers the individual identity of the individual, yet this focuses on how external factors impact on identity. To an extent Mollenhauer and Freisen's work attends to aspects of Erikson's theoretical perspectives, yet Mollenhauer and Freisen omit 'individuality, personal character, and group affiliation', in favour of a singular examination of identity as it relates 'of the I to itself.'²²⁴ This exposition of the self and identity formation is also situated alongside the challenges and contemporary difficulties that ascribe to the identity formation process. Some of these challenges Mollenhauer and Freisen attribute to the decrease in affiliation with religious beliefs. Others may include advances in information technologies and communications which have eroded natural boundaries of place, distance and time between peoples.²²⁵ Such impediments to identity make interpretation of historical constructs of identity, such as this study, ever more relevant. Recognising that 'the question of individual identity is not an empirical or observable one, Mollenhauer and Freisen interpret historical aspects of identity through an examination of portraiture.'²²⁶ They further recognises the effect of shared cultural experiences upon the individual, which allowed for a *habitus* to develop, populated by people who not only hoped to improve their favourable social status and self-understanding, but also feared losing it.²²⁷ Again, this is supportive of the thrust of this study and worth noting as a contributory factor in the development of national teacher identity in Ireland. Erikson and Mollenhauer and Freisen attend to aspects and constructs of identity

²²⁴ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten Connections*, 116.

²²⁵ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten Connections*, 118.

²²⁶ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten Connections*, 127.

²²⁷ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten Connections*, 127.

which discuss the individual in the singular sense. Their theoretical contributions and interpretations of identity are useful in locating contemporary constructs of the individual.

The work of Adams and Marshall, as theorists who expanded on Eriksonian theory, also has relevance for this study when examining identity in the historical sense. Primarily this is due to the applicability of their theory to the evidence available on the national teachers in nineteenth century Ireland. Adams and Marshall posit that the individual's needs are twofold. The individual requires both individual and social functions for effective participation and performance within society. At an individual level, 'one's sense of self as a unique and individuated person' is met when an identity is formed and at a social, or group level, the outcome of identity formation is 'integration', whereby the individual experiences 'belonging' with a group who share aspects of the identity.²²⁸ This is crucial in understanding the position of the individuals who became national teachers and interpreting the growth of the national teachers with a collective identity. Adams and Marshall offer the proposition that 'An individual's personal or social identity not only is shaped, in part, by the living systems around the individual, but the individual's identity can shape and change the nature of these living systems.'²²⁹

A further and final view of identity theory, which supports Adams and Marshall's theory, is offered by Stets and Burke, who distil the construct of identity into that which forms an individual identity, as well as that of a social identity, whereby the individual is affiliated to a group, or shares an identity with others.²³⁰ In the singular construct of identity, as it pertains to

²²⁸ Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442:432.

²²⁹ Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442:432.

²³⁰ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:224.

the individual, it is recognised that the individual possesses what is termed a ‘reflexive’ ability, which allows the person to ‘take itself as an object and categorize, classify or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications’.²³¹ This is a central element of the identity formative process and can be applied equally to historical constructs as well as contemporary constructions. It is a common theme across the field of psychosocial theory and is shared in varying manifestations by numerous theorists.²³²

3.2.2. *Social and collective identity theory*

Having discussed identity formation as it attends to the individual and how the person develops an identity through developmental processes such as those outlined by Erikson, as interpreted by Schwartz, the process of identity formation in the collective as mentioned earlier has relevance for the development of the Irish national teacher’s identity. The primary theorist credited with developing the concept of social identity theory is Henri Tajfel,²³³ noted earlier, whose work examines intergroup conflict based on the biases of group members and how this affected belonging within what Tajfel and later, Tajfel and Turner, styled the ‘ingroup’ and ‘outgroup.’ More recently the work of Hogg and Abrams outlines social identity processes which expand on concepts developed by Tajfel and Turner during the 1970s.²³⁴ According to Stets and Burke, a basic interpretation of social identity is said to be formed when a group of individuals view themselves as members of the same category or group.²³⁵ They highlight two

²³¹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:224.

²³² See Davis, J.L., Love, T.P. and Fares, P. (2019) Collective Social Identity: Synthesizing Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory Using Digital Data. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, (82)3, 254-273.

Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58; Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442.

²³³ Tajfel, H. (1978) Intergroup Behavior In: Tajfel, H. and Fraser, H., eds. (1978) *Introducing Social Psychology*. New York: Penguin Books. 401-466; Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (2004) The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior In: Jost, J.T. and Sidanius, J., eds. (2004) *Political psychology*. New York: Psychology Press, 276-293.

²³⁴ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*.

²³⁵ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

key aspects of this formative process which have relevance here. First, an accentuation of the similarities between the members of the group, which is described as ‘self-categorisation’ and second the application of that process of accentuation which leads to members of the group highlighting their discrete similarities to create comparisons with non-group members.²³⁶ Within this categorisation of shared attributes are ‘attitudes, beliefs and values, affective reactions, behavioural norms, styles of speech and other properties that are believed to be correlated.’²³⁷ However, these categorisations do not manifest independently and develop within existing social structures.²³⁸ Historical precedence for such manifestations and maintenance of identity existed in Ireland prior to the advent of the system of national education in 1831. Recalling medieval efforts by the English to proscribe aspects of language, culture and habit on the Irish fall under the process of categorisation as outlined by Stets and Burke. As discussed in Chapter Two, Subsection 2.2.2, legislative actions often underpinned the shape of these efforts to effect change on historical Irish identity. The counterpane to the proscriptive efforts of the Irish was the retention of custom and language by those who sought to preserve these distinctive aspects of identity. These saw the Irish people maintain their ‘categorisation’ by accentuating the differences and steadfastly pursuing aspects of identity such as religious beliefs during periods of aggressive acculturation by the pre-Independence administration in Ireland.

Understanding the process of categorisation in the formation of a social or collective identity is central to effectively examining archival material with a view to establishing the identity of the Irish national teacher. The provision of education in the centuries preceding the establishment of the national system was haphazard and disorganised at best. As evidenced in

²³⁶ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:224.

²³⁷ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:225.

²³⁸ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

the preceding chapter, those systems which existed officially were embedded in proselytism and moralistic creeds, a counterbalance to which was provided by the ‘underground’ education in the form of the Hedge Schools. The result of this saw both newcomers and native Irish actively encouraging and repressing the other in an effort to achieve successful categorisation of identity. The establishment of the system of national education, it might be argued, came into existence in the form of a *tabula rasa* and the imperial framework to which it was borne envisioned it being staffed by a particular type of individual.

Stets and Burke also acknowledge the relevance of identity theory beyond that of a group identity, as it attends to the individual within the categorisation, noting ‘that among the class terms learned within a culture are symbols that are used to designate positions,’ i.e., teacher, doctor, labourer, soldier and so on.²³⁹ This gives rise to the understanding within a social structure that people ‘recognise themselves’ as ‘occupants of positions’, or roles.²⁴⁰ The relevance for this study is identifying those discrete elements from the archival sources which contributed to the persona of the national teacher. Stets and Burke note that such roles are usually accompanied by expected standards or behaviours.²⁴¹ These may be in the form of rules or guidelines which the members of the group adhere to and which contribute to the formation of an identity.

An example which will be discussed later in Subsection 4.4.4 of the next chapter are the ‘Twelve Rules for National Schools’, laid down by those in charge of the Irish national education system and which it can be argued contributed to forming the Irish national teacher

²³⁹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:225.

²⁴⁰ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:225.

²⁴¹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:225.

identity.²⁴² Indeed, the Inspectorate which accompanied the development of the national education system can be considered as the enforcers, or custodians appointed to the role of creating and developing teacher identity. In its infancy the Inspectorate was engaged by those in charge to weed out those individuals who did not conform to the system as envisioned by the Commissioners of National Education. This ensured that certain attributes and characteristics were prized among those who sought to develop a distinct cohort such as the national teachers. Examples of national teachers' refusing to accept the rules and regulations of the system are scarce and where examples are noted within the archival records, they usually relate to disputes between teachers and their immediate local manager, more often than not resulting in dismissal of the teacher in question.²⁴³

A further point which supports this is the concept of 'adaptation' as outlined by Baumeister and Muraven.²⁴⁴ Essentially this concept addresses the idea that identity does not develop in a vacuum, rather it is impacted by external influences, such as are found in the society in which the individual is located. Baumeister and Muraven consider several historical developments within western societies which may have created a space for individual identity to develop and which are worth outlining here. These include 'freedom of choice' and the development of concepts of 'self', which are also associated with the work of Erikson, as outlined earlier. Assessing the roots of such concepts that support the identity of the individual, Baumeister and Muraven cite urbanisation, industrialisation, the growth of transport infrastructure and methods of communication as some of the social conditions which impacted upon individual identity.²⁴⁵ The development of education systems is also acknowledged as a precursor to giving people

²⁴² CNEI (1846) *The Thirteenth Report...for 1846*, [832-XVII], H.C. Appendix XXVIII, 143.

²⁴³ For examples, see Subsections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4 of Chapter Six.

²⁴⁴ Baumeister, R. and Muraven, M. (1996) Identity as adaptation to social, cultural, and historical context. *Journal of Adolescence (London, England)*, 19(5), 405-416.

²⁴⁵ Baumeister and Muraven, *Identity as adaptation*, 405-416:406.

opportunities to broaden their sphere of employment and resultingly change identity.²⁴⁶ The import of external influences is outlined by Baumeister and Muraven who write:

History, culture, and the proximate structure of social relations create a context in which the individual identity must exist. People have individual wants and needs that must be satisfied within that context. Individuals actively choose, alter, and modify their identities based on what will enable them to get along best in that context.²⁴⁷

However, while these greater societal developments attend in part to the development of the identity of the individual, they do not fully support the development of identity in the case of the Irish national teacher. This has relevance for the historical development of teacher identity in Ireland but only in the circumstances in which the people who staffed the national system found themselves. Given the nature of Ireland during the nineteenth century and its status as a primarily agrarian country, those aspects such as urbanisation and improved transport infrastructure do not apply here. Yet the circumstances beyond these which might count as external factors such as the means of the general population, poverty, and inaccessibility to improved standards of living may have impacted upon those candidates who presented to become national teachers.

Given the nature of the societal structures which existed in Ireland during the nineteenth century, considered earlier in a broader sense in Chapter Two, an examination of developing teacher identity cannot be undertaken in isolation or without considering those factors beyond the individual which impacted on identity. Neither can a sole examination of the individual be

²⁴⁶ Baumeister and Muraven, *Identity as adaptation*, 405-416:406.

²⁴⁷ Baumeister and Muraven, *Identity as adaptation*, 405-416:406.

supported on its own, as data which attends to the individual national teacher appears unavailable. While it is true, as Baumeister and Muraven outline, that people have individual wants and needs that must be met within the context of their situation, such composite elements of the national teacher's identity in this case were fettered, as well as enabled, by the circumstances in which the identity developed. Indeed, as will be discussed, it is likely that the latter aspect of Baumeister and Muraven's observation is wholly true, in that the individual teacher, 'chose', altered and modified their characteristics and portrayal of 'self' on the route to becoming and inhabiting the character of Irish the national teacher.²⁴⁸

An observation from Guibernau is worth noting here as a final point in assessing individual identity in historical terms. Guibernau writes that the focus within historical reminiscences lies on the concept of collective identity, rather than the individual, with the exception being notable leaders or individuals who by their fame developed singular identities.²⁴⁹ According to Guibernau, identities emerge within a system of social relations and representations.²⁵⁰ Therefore it can be understood that identity in this instance, that of the Irish national teacher, emerged from the conditions in which it was located within the imperial administrative structures of the national education system. It did not develop in a vacuum and consequently was also impacted by those external economic, social, political and cultural factors which surrounded it. Guibernau writes that a developing and shared collective identity considers aspects of 'a common culture, history, kinship, language, religion, founding moment and destiny.'²⁵¹ This further supports the broad overview of Irish identity which was considered at the outset of this thesis in Section 2.2 of Chapter Two. Finally, as discussed in Section 1.4 of

²⁴⁸ Baumeister and Muraven, *Identity as adaptation*, 405-416.

²⁴⁹ Guibernau, M. (2007) *The Identity of Nations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 11.

²⁵⁰ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 11.

²⁵¹ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 11.

Chapter One further contextual elements are offered to the reader in each of the findings chapters of four, five and six. These are positioned at the outset of each of these chapters to ensure that the reader can access the material with the necessary information required to fully interpret the data discussed.

In this section, theoretical constructs of contemporary identity theory and how these constructs contribute to understanding identity were discussed. Their relevance and import in ascribing identity in the case of the early Irish national teacher cannot be understated, however, such theories cannot and are not directly applied to the data examined in this research. They simply serve to facilitate the reader's understanding that these are modern constructions and understandings of identity by eminent theorists in the field of psychosocial identity theory. Their import lies in their being useful in guiding the researcher's focus when combing through the archival material examined throughout the course of this research. Therefore, their application is not absolute but they are useful in establishing foci for examining the identity of the Irish national teacher in the nineteenth century. In the following section, the methodology employed to structure the research is discussed.

3.3 Methodological framework

The methodological framework which underpins this thesis is unique in structure. This is primarily due to the fact that there does not appear to be an existing methodological framework which excavates the identity of a distinctive group through a historical lens. McCullough warns against foisting a theoretical framework onto historical research which results in a particular methodological approach being undertaken, pointing out Karier's (1979) contention that such

frameworks have a ‘tendency to distort the world of the historical actor.’²⁵² Therefore, it was important that the framework which aligns with the research supports the data examined, with the contemporary theoretical elements of identity discussed in the preceding section here guiding the research focus on examining national teacher identity. The analysis of the historical data examined saw the researcher engage with the available material and identify those points which aligned with the theoretical aspects of identity discussed. On initially reading the evidence it was realised that some of the modern theoretical contributory elements of identity could be neatly ascribed in the historical setting so it was decided to concentrate on those elements that were more prevalent in the material examined.

The research question has already been articulated in Section 1.1 of Chapter One, however, it is outlined here in support of the methodological framework:

Who was the Irish national teacher in the early decades of the nineteenth century?

In examining the evidence available and being cognisant of those composite elements of identity noted in modern theoretical understandings, a number of recurring points arose when engaging with the data which were used to formulate the embedded questions.

- I. What were the social origins and character of the individuals who became national teachers?
- II. What was their social status and class, and how did these develop?
- III. What were their beliefs or religious affiliations and how did these contribute to the national teacher identity.

Each of these questions underpin a focus on a particular element of identity. For example in seeking to establish a shared point of origin for the majority of the national teachers, as

²⁵² McCullough, G. (2011) *The Struggle for the History of Education*. London: Routledge, 75.

evidenced in the material examined, those elements of identity theory outlined by Mollenhauer and Friesen²⁵³ along with Schwartz²⁵⁴ support the creation of an individual and collective identity. Theorists such as Tajfel,²⁵⁵ Adams and Marshall,²⁵⁶ and later Stets and Burke²⁵⁷ point to the categorisation and actualisation of identity, which is reflected in the influence and impact national teachers had in the communities they worked in. The minutiae and contributory elements of both questions one and two here underpin the broader understanding around the creation of a distinct national teacher identity, which is articulated in question three. The following diagram illustrates for the reader how the data generated in a trifold fashion each element which aligned with theoretical understandings and contributed to a conceptual understanding of the identity of the Irish national teacher during the nineteenth century. Each of these elements form the basis for chapters four, five and six which articulate the central findings of the thesis.

²⁵³ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten Connections*.

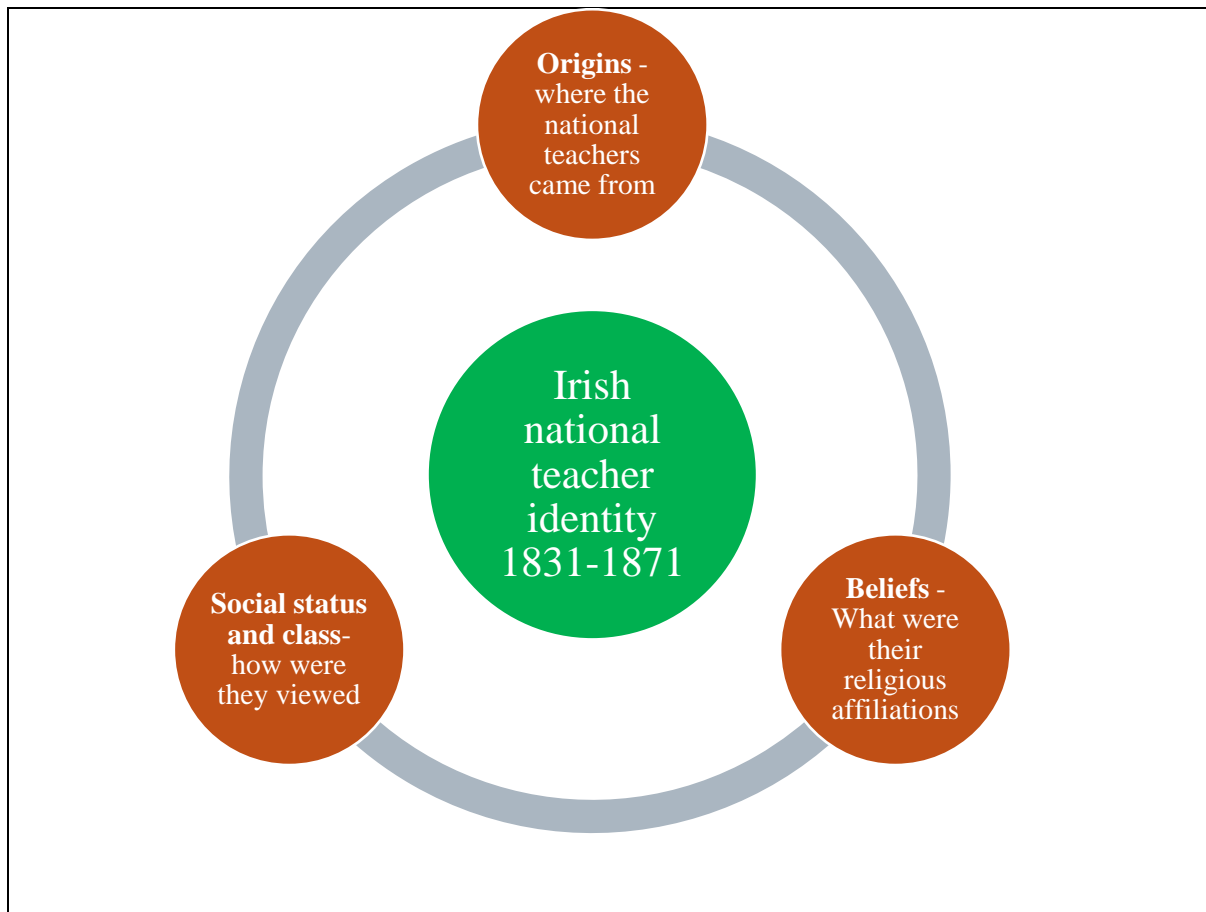
²⁵⁴ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

²⁵⁵ Tajfel, *Intergroup Behavior*, 401-466: 466; Tajfel and Turner, *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior*, 276-293.

²⁵⁶ Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442.

²⁵⁷ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

Figure 3.1 Illustrating the contributory elements of national teacher identity.



These elements generated by the research data aligned strongly with modern contributory elements of identity outlined in current theories. The first of these elements notes a common or shared point of origin for the majority of the national teachers. The second element considers the concept of social class and status amongst the national teachers and the final element in this triad examines whether or not the national teachers shared religious affiliations and how these contributed to establishing a collective identity. It is important to note that these themes are by no means unique in establishing an understanding of identity in modern academic constructs of identity theory. What sets them apart in this research is their application to historical evidence to conceptualise an identity. As noted above, these elements form the basis for the

central findings of the thesis and are further informed by subthemes generated by the material examined. As noted in Section 3.2 on theoretical understandings of identity, other contributors to identity exist, however, their application in this research is hampered by the nature of the available evidence, therefore the elements chosen present the greatest opportunity to develop an assured understanding of Irish national teacher identity between 1831 and 1871. The next section here considers the inclusion criteria for the sources used and an overview of these.

3.4 Sources

In respect of the inclusion criteria for the sources used to inform this research, the study focused solely on those aspects which would contribute to identity in its strictest sense. At all times while examining the archival sources the central research question of ‘Who was the Irish national teacher in the early decades of the nineteenth century?’ was to the forefront of the researcher’s mind. Therefore, any and all extraneous material or extracts, despite there being many interesting accounts and extracts, were excluded. An overview of the sources examined can be found in Appendix 2.²⁵⁸ This outlines what sources were examined and the scope of the material available. The researcher occasionally added a cursory description of the sources listed as a means of refining the parameters as the research was ongoing and assessments were made as to whether or not the content was suitable for use in this work or perhaps for a future study.

The focus while examining the sources was strictly on aspects of identity in the personal sense, such as origins, social status or religious beliefs and affiliations. This saw the research exclude elements which are documented such as qualifications, teaching abilities, or the state of the schoolhouses in which the national teachers worked. Aspects which concentrated on living conditions were included as the researcher understood their relevance in speaking to national

²⁵⁸ See 303.

teacher identity in a social construct. Occasionally, elements of the national teacher's identity such as their classification are present and cannot be removed as they may form part of a broader point.

3.4.1 Primary sources

A vast amount of material in respect of the administration and operation of the national education system exists in official repositories. Most notable, in respect of this research, are the Reports of the CNEI. These record the administrative workings of the national education system from 1831 through to 1922. The documentary evidence contained within the reports is exceptional and extends to more than 35,000 pages. This is supplemented by other official enquires such as the *Royal Commission of Enquiry into Primary Education in Ireland*, already noted in Chapter Two, and colloquially known as the Powis Commission. This published its findings in 1870 and these documents comprise some 4,000 pages of data relating to the intimate workings of the national education system. Further evidence was assessed in the Dublin Diocesan Archives in the form of the papers of the preeminent prelates at the time and in one case the papers of a secretary. This correspondence stretched to 1,453 indexed items. Material stored at the National Library of Ireland in the form of the ITJ

, published between 1868 and 1901 saw the initial years' issues between 1868 and 1871 yield some 235 pages of material and this was also examined for this study. Contemporary published works such as those by Dewar²⁵⁹ and Wakefield,²⁶⁰ amongst others, were also sourced at the

²⁵⁹ Dewar, D. (1812) *Observations on the Character, Customs and Superstitions of the Irish and on some of the causes which have retarded the moral and political improvement of Ireland*. London: Gale and Curtis.

²⁶⁰ Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*.

National Library; eleven in total were deemed relevant and these are detailed in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.²⁶¹

A trawl of material at the National Archives furnished some material but much of the richer material regarding the national teachers was found to fall beyond the temporal boundaries of this study and, as such, was noted for potential future research. The most notable of this material is found in the ED/9 files which span the period 1877 to 1924. Instances of teacher's misdemeanours and transgressions against the rules of the CNEI offer accidental insights into the national teachers' lives in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The ED/9 files were noted as a potentially rich source of information which could complement the material documented here, perhaps allowing for the development of discrete case studies on particular schools or districts. Source material in the form of the Irish Crime Records, accessed previously by the researcher at postgraduate level,²⁶² was revisited in this study and some useful extracts were found here. This material is also available at the National Archives of Ireland.

As discussed earlier, personal and individual histories are rare and accessing such material is largely impossible. Resultingly, this research was bounden to draw on the sources detailed here. The majority of the material utilised, with some exceptions, emanated from the reports which the Inspectorate forwarded to the Commissioner's Office in Dublin on an annual basis and

²⁶¹ Anonymous (1803) *Essays on the Population of Ireland, and the characters of the Irish by A Member of the Last Irish Parliament*. London: C and R Baldwin; Balch, W. (1850) *Ireland, as I saw it: The character, condition, and prospects of the people*. New York: G.P. Putnam; Corcoran, *State Policy in Irish Education, A.D. 1536 to 1816*; Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland: A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth century*; Crofton Croker, T. (1823) *Researches in the South of Ireland, Illustrative of the Scenery, Architectural Remains, and the Manners and Superstitions of the peasantry, with an Appendix containing A Private Narrative of the Rebellion of 1798*. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street; Dewar, *Observations on the Character, Customs and Superstitions of the Irish*; Joyce, P.W. (1910) *English as we speak it in Ireland*, 2nd Ed. Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son Ltd; Kildare Place Society (1825) *The Schoolmasters Manual- Recommended for the regulation of schools*. Dublin: Bentham and Gardiner; O' Driscoll, *Thoughts and suggestions on the Education of the Peasantry*; Scully, *A statement of the penal laws*; Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*.

²⁶² See Carroll, *The Irish teacher*.

which were included in the annually published reports. These proved the richest source of material examined. It is important for the reader to note that in respect of the contributory elements of identity which emerged from the data examined, there were many instances where these elements denote shared characteristics and contribute to the construction of Irish national teacher identity, and which were finely interwoven. The separation of these threads was at times challenging and on occasion to remove a particular element from an original source which might focus for example on the remuneration or the social origin of the national teacher obscures some other equally vital element which is central to the story of the national teacher. Therefore, there are instances where the evidence may appear to overlap or present with only marginal differences to examples already discussed. It is argued that the inclusion of such extracts reinforces the study by highlighting for the reader the nuanced elements of the national teacher's identity in this research. Therefore, a certain degree of movement within the researcher's interpretation of the evidence used is evident. Occasionally, the researcher utilises more lengthy extracts rather than concentrating on a single clause or concept within the reference. It is believed that such excerpts assist in presenting a more fulsome account of the evidence used and the researcher's interpretation of these data. It is hoped that the signposting within the research will serve to focus the reader's understanding on the relevance of the data examined.

It is important to note that where original material has been sourced from archival data, such as excerpts or tables, spelling and syntactic formation, and presentation has been reproduced as it exists in the original. Placenames as they appear in archival sources or official reports have also been faithfully reproduced. On occasion these have been modified over time and may be at variance with current versions. Where this is the case, it is remarked upon in the footnotes.

3.4.2 Secondary sources

A considerable amount of secondary material was utilised to inform the study. This can be divided into two groups. First, the historical material and second, the theoretical material. Of the former, a number of seminal works are regularly drawn on within the thesis. These works, notably by Akenson²⁶³ and Coolahan²⁶⁴ remain the core texts for students of Irish educational history and their inclusion is warranted in any comprehensive study of Irish educational history. These provided the researcher with an understanding of the system as it developed over the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These were amply supplemented by other histories, both general and educational in focus, which are recorded in the bibliography here. The second aspect referred to here notes the use of material which considers identity theory and aspects of this. It is important to note that there was ample opportunity to concentrate on the minutiae of identity theory but that was not the aim of the research, which remained intent on the historical elements of the national teacher's identity. Therefore, identity theories examined and discussed only serve to guide and inform the study and highlight for the reader the relevance of the research undertaken, its cross-temporal possibilities for future studies and recognising where data and theory align. Finally, an overview of the sources examined is found in Appendix 2. This provides the reader with an understanding of the available sources consulted to analyse the emerging identity of the national teachers.

3.5 Document analysis

Document analysis was deemed the most suitable and viable method in which to examine material to establish the identity of the early national teachers. In essence, this research employs inductive analysis to construct an understanding of Irish national teacher identity in a historical

²⁶³ Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*.

²⁶⁴ Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*.

sense. The use of documents supports this and their value in such research is articulated by Bowen, who writes ‘documents are the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed.’²⁶⁵ In this and many other historical sites of enquiry Bowen writes that ‘documents may be... the only viable source.’²⁶⁶ In this instance, this is certainly true. Bowen also points to the advantages and disadvantages of document analysis; the more challenging being ‘retrievability,’ whereby the researcher has difficulty accessing suitable material to support the research.²⁶⁷ Indeed, in this case the greatest challenge initially lay in accessing material due to the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic in March of 2020. This hampered access to some sources in the initial phases of the research.

A second important point regarding the viability of document analysis in this research relates to the availability of material around the early national teachers when examining historical sources at a micro level. This amplifies the obscurity of the individual in nineteenth century records, particularly those from the lower social classes, when examining historical figures at a macro level. This has implications for the research conducted and the inferences that arise from the research. One historian notes that, ‘The study of individual lives has often been developed in isolation from broader considerations of historical and social dimensions’... while... ‘conversely, historical and social inquiry have been prone to ignore the personal and the individual in their emphasis on the bigger picture.’²⁶⁸ This has certainly proven true in the case of the Irish national teacher and it became apparent very early in the research that sources

²⁶⁵ Bowen, G.A. (2009) Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40:31.

²⁶⁶ Bowen, *Document Analysis*, 29.

²⁶⁷ Bowen, *Document Analysis*, 32.

²⁶⁸ McCullough, G. (2004) *Documentary Research: In Education. History and the Social Sciences*. London: Routledge Falmer, 7.

beyond those of the official repositories were scarce, if non-existent. As a result, the research material used emanated from published, official sources.

A further element worth noting is what Bowen refers to the problem of ‘bias in selectivity’, whereby the researcher only attends to those documents that align comfortably with the research paradigm.²⁶⁹ The question of biases, beyond the researcher’s desire to select documents which support the thesis, must also be recognised within historical documents themselves. The most challenging aspect of engaging with the research was the voluminous and often alluring data which the researcher encountered in exploring the historical evidence for contributions to national teacher identity. The question of bias, particularly in respect of the data selection, was countered by maintaining a disciplined approach throughout the research. It is important to note also that the majority of documents examined to support this research were constructed within the framework of the British Empire. Accordingly, those tasked with their creation were embedded within imperial systems and their views often reflect contemporary imperial understandings at this time. The researcher had to be aware of this and apply a balanced approach in the selection and use of documents which would present the evidence as it appears, without a greater bias toward favourable or unfavourable accounts of either national teachers, the imperial administration or the individuals involved within the history.

The method employed within the lens of document analysis here focused on examining the documentary evidence gathered to identify key words and phrases which reflected each of the three primary elements of identity illustrated in Figure 3.1 above. Therefore, the records were

²⁶⁹ Bowen, *Document Analysis*, 27-40.

examined with a focus on information which would identify the social origins of the candidates who became teachers, their social status and class and religious affiliations. On occasion these insights comprised a line of text from an inspector or commissioner, or a paragraph. For example, a trawl of the 35,368 pages of the CNEI Reports from 1831 to 1921 realised 335 pages of excerpts and relevant data. At the preliminary stage, the research period focused on analysing all of the reports of the CNEI which exist up to 1921. Thereafter, Ireland gained independence from the British Empire and the responsibility for education was transferred to *Saorstát na hÉireann*, the Irish Free State as it was known. Ultimately, as the focus of the study was refined the material covering the forty-year period in question realised 164 pages of data.²⁷⁰ As noted in the introduction to this chapter, much of this material was found to be beyond the scope of the research and as such was not used when the temporal parameters of the study were refined. Those excerpts and material which have been utilised are those which are the most fulsome and have the greatest relevance in understanding the historical identity of the Irish national teacher in the forty-year period in question.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Finally, issues around ethical considerations in research must always be addressed. As the locus of this study encompasses the forty-year period between 1831 and 1871, the risk for harm arising from a misuse of information in respect of ethical considerations is greatly reduced. There is a scarcity of material within archival sources which attests to the social lives of the national teachers and such material as is available is documented through official media, such

²⁷⁰ This comprises all CNEI reports from 1831 to 1871. The reader should note that some of the reports are not available in this tranche. The 21st and 35th reports cannot be found.

as the reports of the CNEI. Therefore, the only possibility for potential harm to an individual's descendants would require significant genealogical researches.

However, this does not and should not nullify the researcher's awareness of ethical approaches within the historical field. A general approach to ethics contends that social scientists/researchers collect data in an 'ethically proper' manner and treat the subject(s) with respect.²⁷¹ An observation by Kitchener and Kitchener notes that there are three areas which govern ethics in the social sciences; that of ethical codes, national or federal codes and general ethical principles.²⁷² For example, within the area designated 'codes of ethics', the researcher might consider confidentiality regarding documents examined of a sensitive nature. McCullough notes issues around copyright, freedom of information and data protection which should also be taken into consideration when examining documents in a historical study.²⁷³ However, as the documents examined throughout this research were all in the public domain, namely at the National Archives and National Library of Ireland, as well as online resources which document historical British Parliamentary Papers, it is likely that the potential for harm is greatly minimised.²⁷⁴

The question of researcher bias is also noted as important within this research. The integrity of a resource, or in this case, document may be undermined by author bias, which in turn affects the 'truth' of the document. However, as one historian of education notes, biased accounts

²⁷¹ Kitchener, K.S., and Kitchener, R.F. (2009) Social Science Research Ethics: Historical and Philosophical Issues In: Mertens, D.M., and Ginsberg, P.E., eds. (2009) *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. London: SAGE, 5-22.

²⁷² Kitchener and Kitchener, *Social Science Research ethics*, 5-22:6.

²⁷³ McCullough, G. (2004) *Documentary Research: In Education, History and the Social Sciences*. London: Routledge Falmer, 41.

²⁷⁴ See <https://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi>.

evident in documentary evidence cannot be ignored as often they may be the only evidence available to the researcher.²⁷⁵ An interesting aside to the question of bias must also consider what McCullough terms the ‘survival’ of documents, with consideration given to what was deemed important enough to be retained or not.²⁷⁶ This is certainly true in light of the current research, whereby, official materials documenting the national system of education in Ireland were held by the pre-Independence administration, but socially focused accounts of the national teachers themselves are rarely available. The researcher was mindful of these aspects of bias in selection and examination of the documents available and noted this as an important element of the research process throughout.

Finally, it is also important to note in respect of ethics that the researcher has a duty to represent all data utilised in the study as accurately as possible. This requires rigid adherence to a system of referencing and accurate representation of sources. This ensures clarity, originality and honesty within the research represented, which ultimately, impact on future publications and the wider research community. General ethical principles which served as a useful point of reference for these considerations were available under the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Guidelines.²⁷⁷ In conjunction with this research project a Tier 1 Ethics application was made and received approval under the guidelines of Maynooth University, under whose remit this research was conducted. A copy of the Letter of Approval from Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee can be found in Appendix 3.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ McCullough, *Documentary Research: In Education*, 36.

²⁷⁶ McCullough, *Documentary Research: In Education*, 36.

²⁷⁷ British Educational Research Association Guidelines (2024). [online]. Available at: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online>

²⁷⁸ See 310.

3.7 Limitations

A very brief outline of some of the limitations to this research are considered here. As noted, the locus of the research predicated the researcher's engagement with particular types of data. In this case, the researcher was wholly dependent on documents from the era in question. While elements of this proved rich, limitations must also be acknowledged around its nature and usefulness. The vast majority of the data which inform this research were drawn from official reports. These had to be considered in light of their motives and possible biases, such as an imperial mentality and loyalty to the British Empire. While these accounts proved central in developing the research, it must be borne in mind that they offer official perceptions and views on the national teachers at this time and were not specifically written with the focus of this research in mind. Given the hierarchical nature of the national education system, first-hand accounts from the teachers themselves are very scarce, and when available, are usually presented by another. Some excerpts, such as letters, were uncovered over the course of the research but their contributions were inevitably lesser.

3.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, then, it can be seen that the research has examined a little over 40,000 pages of primary material from original nineteenth century documents. These have been carefully read to identify and extract any information which would contribute to understanding the identity of the Irish national teacher from the inception of the national education system to 1871. Not all of the material has been useful and as the research progressed it became evident that some archival material such as the ED/9 files discussed earlier was beyond the parameters of the investigation. As noted, a considerable amount of secondary material was also drawn upon to support the research and this served to structure the research in its initial stages.

Importantly, from a methodological standpoint, this research has emerged from a thorough investigation of the available sources. This sees elements of contemporary theory such as that outlined by Schwartz,²⁷⁹ amongst others, examined and taken into consideration when reading the material available and consequently, applied through a historical lens to further understanding of the Irish national teacher's identity between 1831 and 1871. In this respect the methodological approach is unique and well-placed to maximise the potential of the available evidence. The next chapter is the first of three chapters which outline the central findings of the thesis. This addresses the selection, character and social origins of the Irish national teacher

²⁷⁹ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

CHAPTER 4

THE SELECTION, CHARACTER AND SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL TEACHER

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the selection, character and social origins of the Irish national teacher following the establishment of the system of national education in 1831 are examined. The selection and character were influenced by both the imprimatur of the newly established system of national education and the social origins of the candidates who acceded to the position of national teacher. In examining these aspects of early Irish national teacher identity the chapter will establish a collective point of origin for the majority of those who became national teachers in the early decades of the elementary school system in Ireland. This is an essential element in addressing theoretical constructs of identity as outlined by Tajfel, amongst others in Section 2.1.2 of the methodological framework which guides this study.²⁸⁰

A contextual outline prefaces the main body of this chapter. This acts to supplement the broader contextual overview at the outset of the study. This briefly examines the provision of education in Ireland prior to the establishment of the national education system in 1831. Some further examples of teacher identity before 1831 are also offered in Subsection 4.2.1. This is followed by the first of two central elements within this chapter. The social origins of those individuals who became national school teachers, along with aspects of social mobility amongst the

²⁸⁰Tajfel, *Intergroup Behavior*, 401-466: 466; Tajfel and Turner, *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior*, 276-293.

national teachers between 1831 and 1871 are examined in Section 4.3. The parameters developed and enforced by the Commissioners, which influenced national teacher identity in respect of the selection and character of the individuals who became national teachers, are considered in Section 4.4. The original remit of the Stanley Letter, which influenced the Commissioner's conceptualisation of the new teacher identity is recalled in Subsection 4.4.1, before moving to consider the selection and training processes in Subsection 4.4.2. The monitorial system which is addressed in Section 4.4.3 warrants separate treatment as, ultimately, it proved an enduring aspect of the training process. A closer examination of the parameters which were devised by the Commissioners to regulate national teacher identity is offered in Subsection 4.4.4 before considering how these parameters were translated into practice through rules and regulations laid down by the CNEI and the resultant impact on the candidates who became national teachers. Section 4.4.5 supports the former section by examining detail pertaining to some of the early entrants to the Central Training Institute at Marlborough Street while in Section 4.4.6 concepts of character and respectability as evinced by the national teachers and detailed in the reports of the Inspectors are discussed.

While both Sections 4.3 and 4.4 are treated separately here and attend to social origins, and the subsequent selection and training of the national teachers, it is believed that they are mutually dependent and that the separation of one from the other would undermine the study in establishing a definitive and collective point of origin for majority of the early Irish national teachers.

Evidence is drawn from a number of primary sources to examine the above points. These include official Commissions of Inquiry on education in Ireland, such as the 1824 and 1837

reports on education, along with the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland*, better known as the Powis Commission in 1870. In tandem with these are the reports of the Inspectorate made annually to the CNEI from 1834. Some material is drawn from Diocesan Records, specifically the papers of Archbishop Daniel Murray. Secondary sources based on contemporary biographical writings of visitors to Ireland in the early nineteenth century were also examined with some excerpts employed to provide more general and contextualized information on the people in Ireland both prior to and following the establishment of the national education system.

It is important to understand that given the relative obscurity of the individual within society during the period in question, such evidence as is available on the national teachers is primarily located within official government sources. This impacts on the understandings which can be accrued from this type of data and the reader must be mindful that such constructions of Irish national teacher identity can only be inferred from the available sources. This is discussed within the methodology which precedes this chapter. The chapter concludes with an assessment and discussion of the elements discussed here which contribute to developing Irish national teacher identity between 1831 and 1871.

4.2 Contextual overview for this chapter

4.2.1 Teachers pre-1831 in public and private settings

In this section, some of the primary points around the types of teachers involved in the provision of elementary education prior to 1831 are expanded on. These reinforce the points discussed earlier in Chapter Two. This is important as it establishes a point of reference from which comparisons can be drawn between teachers who worked in elementary education prior

to 1831 and the national teachers who followed. This is also salient as some teachers from these existing sites of elementary education later transferred to the national system.

As discussed in Chapter Two, elementary education was available in Ireland prior to 1831. However, the provision of this was not systematic and could be described as haphazard and unorganized at best. Neither was it influenced to any great degree by state or church control, despite some of the providers receiving finance from the UK Exchequer. Again, as discussed in the contextual chapter, those aspects of teacher identity which characterised teachers prior to 1831 centred primarily on religious affiliation along with questions of individual morality and character.

Some further references which support those outlined in Section 2.5 of Chapter Two are offered here. These also focus on the moral character of the teacher in publicly funded schools before 1831. An example from Mr. Corneille following a visit to the Clontarf Charter School in 1808 describes the master ‘to be a very zealous, diligent, and proper person in his station.’²⁸¹ Whereas at Shannon Grove Charter School in 1817, Mr. Thackery notes, ‘The Qualifications of the Master do not fit him for the Duty of Education. The only Concerns he seems to have with the Family is (sic) providing it with Food and Fuel.’²⁸² The contrast between the teacher who is ‘zealous’ and ‘diligent’ cannot be more evident than the teacher Mr. Thackery visits. The latter’s preoccupation with his family is seen as far from ideal for one occupying the role of teacher. It is worth reiterating, as noted in Chapter Two, that instruction in morals and

²⁸¹ *First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, (1825) H.C. [400-XII]. London: HMSO, 11.

²⁸² *First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 12.

religion within such public centres of elementary schooling was seen as central to the role of education in this period.

Accordingly, much emphasis was placed on religious identity, with examples such as the following which required that schoolmasters appointed to the Association of the Suppression of Vice had to be ‘A Member of the Established Church’,²⁸³ while the London Hibernian Society stated that ‘In selecting teachers to provide over any of the society’s schools, moral Character and Competency for the Office are the only requisites required’, with individuals of all religious persuasions welcome to apply.²⁸⁴ In assessing these few examples it is noteworthy that religious affiliation along with precepts concerning moral character were core aspects of identity during the early nineteenth century.

The second aspect of this section considers teachers referenced in Section 2.5 of Chapter Two who worked within the pay or Hedge Schools. Sources for these teachers are more readily available and comprehensive accounts of the Hedge Schools are provided by Dowling²⁸⁵ and later, MacManus.²⁸⁶ Insights into the persona of those teachers who operated in a private capacity in the Hedge Schools are included in P.J. Dowling’s seminal work on the Irish Hedge School. Dowling, a native of Slieverue in South County Kilkenny, was an early contributor to Irish educational history, completing his doctoral thesis on the Hedge Schools of Ireland, which

²⁸³ *First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 32.

²⁸⁴ *First Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, 67.

²⁸⁵ Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*.

²⁸⁶ McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books*.

was published in 1935.²⁸⁷ The following historical extract from Dowling's work portrays a popular image of the Hedge School teacher at this time:

The country schoolmaster is independent of all system and control; he is himself, one of the people, imbued with the same prejudices, influenced by the same feelings, subject to the same habits; to his little store of learning he usually adds some traditionary tales of his country, of a character to keep alive discontent. He is the scribe, as well as the chronicler and the pedagogue of his little circle; he writes their letters and derives from this no small degree of influence and profit...²⁸⁸

The Hedge School teacher is recognised by Dowling as being an important person within the community and central to providing education to those who could not afford to attend the official schools or who shied away from the proselytising or overtly religious nature of such schools. However, there is little focus within Dowling's work or similar examples on either religious or self-identity and such understandings as can be gleaned from these accounts focus on the teacher's impact or standing within communities.

The best known example from the nineteenth century is the diary of Humphrey O' Sullivan, a Hedge School teacher who records his daily life between 1827 and 1835.²⁸⁹ On May 14th, 1827 O' Sullivan details his arrival at Callan in Co. Kilkenny in March 1791 with his father *Donnacha Ó Súilleabháin*, 'schoolmaster', where they built a 'small school cabin...'²⁹⁰ O'Sullivan goes on to write, 'It was many a long year myself and my father spent teaching school in this cabin, and in another slightly bigger sod-walled cabin at the Tree in *Cill Dá Lua*;

²⁸⁷ See Walsh, J. (2001) *Sliabh Rua: A history of Its People and Places*. Kilkenny: Slieverue Parish Pastoral Council. Walsh writes that both P.J. Dowling's parents were national teachers, as well as his maternal grandfather, who was appointed to the local national school in 1851. Walsh also notes that P.J. attended UCD and later worked at Strawberry Hill in England where he taught History of Education and supervised teaching practice. Both the *Hedge Schools of Ireland* (1935) and his later work, *A History of Irish Education* (1971) made significant contributions to the Irish history of education.

²⁸⁸ Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, 89-90.

²⁸⁹ De Bhaldraithe, T., ed. (1979) *The Diary of Humphrey O' Sullivan*. Cork: Mercier Press.

²⁹⁰ De Bhaldraithe, *The Diary of Humphrey O' Sullivan*, 23.

and in a good school house in *Baile Uí Caoimh...*²⁹¹ Both of these sites were located some 10 kilometres to the north of the town of Callan. The varying geographical locations of these temporary schools illustrates the transitory nature of the O' Sullivans as teachers at this time and may be taken as contrasting with the situation of the teachers in the public schools.

In the introduction to the translation of the diary, *De Bháldraithe* notes that Humphrey O' Sullivan later moved his school to Callan town and had one hundred and twenty pupils enrolled there.²⁹² *De Bháldraithe* also notes that Humphrey's brother had a school in Little Bridge Street with one hundred and four pupils on the roll.²⁹³ Humphrey O' Sullivan later closed his school and opened a linen shop. His interest in politics, collecting ancient manuscripts in the Irish language, his friendship with the local priest and doctor position Humphrey O' Sullivan within the rural community in south Kilkenny as an important figure at this time. Throughout the diary there is no mention of Humphrey O' Sullivan's religious affiliation. These brief insights into the identity of this Hedge School teacher reveal a haphazard employment at best, with indications that the teacher was susceptible to pursuing other forms of employment which, as will be discussed later, became standard practice for many of those who became national teachers and sought to improve their incomes.

In summary, it is evident from both the detail offered earlier in Chapter Two and the more nuanced examples here that there was a wide variety of schools and teachers operating in Ireland in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The available sources highlight an overall

²⁹¹ De Bháldraithe, *The Diary of Humphrey O' Sullivan*, 23. (Killaloe and Ballykeefe are townlands in the parish of Callan in Co. Kilkenny).

²⁹² De Bháldraithe, *The Diary of Humphrey O' Sullivan*, 9.

²⁹³ De Bháldraithe, *The Diary of Humphrey O' Sullivan*.

lack of coherence and structure within the provision of elementary education in Ireland. This, undoubtedly impacted on the teachers employed within these schools also. It is worth pointing out that teachers, *per se*, whilst noted within sources prior to 1831, are only referenced as an element of the system and not as an integral or crucial component to the successful provision of education. Teacher identity then, prior to the establishment of the national system, can be understood to be both disparate and diverse.

In tandem with this, is the understanding that while theoretical components of identity as discussed in Chapter Three, such as attitudes, beliefs or behavioural norms may have been present during this time, the regulation and enforcement of such elements were not specifically pursued in many of the schools. Accordingly, while there was no fixed construct of Irish teacher identity, nor provision for such a construct, parameters around what the persona of the teacher should embody, did exist before the establishment of the national system. The parameters established by the KPS as noted earlier by Hislop in Chapter Two support this, yet the scale of KPS's operation perhaps precluded these becoming recognised outside of the KPS.²⁹⁴ The onset of the national system in 1831 overcame this and developed firm parameters around the structure, and provision of elementary education in Ireland which sought to counteract the disparity and diversity within earlier sites of Irish educational provision. This, ultimately, led to the formation of the national teacher's identity. It is important to discuss these parameters around teacher identity in order to highlight the origins of these contributory elements to the identity of the national teacher. This is discussed in the next section.

²⁹⁴ See Section 2.4 of Chapter Two.

4.3. Social origins of the national teacher

As noted in Chapter Three of this study, identity in a theoretical sense requires an integration of both individual and shared elements which, ‘come together to form the mosaic that represents who one is.’²⁹⁵ Such lenses assist the researcher in developing understandings of identity in a historical domain. For example, Subsection 4.4.6 of this chapter concentrates on highlighting distinctive elements of Irish national teacher identity such as ‘respectability’ which ultimately contributed to the formation of the Irish national teacher’s identity. However, the concept of a collective point of origin for the Irish national teacher is the first element in this chapter which reveals the identity of the Irish national teacher between 1831 and 1871. Establishing a definitive point of origin for these teachers is challenging, yet it is possible to identify some common social origins for the majority of the corpus of national teachers in the period 1831 to 1871. The evidence gathered to identify the origins of the national teachers is drawn from a number of sources, as noted at the outset of the chapter. An analysis and discussion of the more salient examples are offered here in a linear manner, commencing with the reports of the Inspectorate to the Commissioners in sub-section 4.3.1, before moving to section 4.3.2 which examines further evidence from the Inspector’s reports to the CNEI attesting to teachers becoming socially mobile despite their origins.

4.3.1 *A Low class*

The first indication within the reports of the social origins of the national teacher comes from the Fourteenth Report of the Commissioners, published in 1847, which records the following extract:

²⁹⁵ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory...*7-58:9.

We have observed, with satisfaction, a marked improvement in the appearance, manners and attainments of every successive class of teachers, who come up to be trained in our Normal establishment. With reference to the last two classes, we have ascertained that 34 teachers in the last and 73 in the present had originally been educated as pupils in the National schools.²⁹⁶

This points to the origins of these national teachers who are attending the training institute in Dublin as having originated within the national school system itself, therefore, these pupils were likely some of the early attendees within the national system and most likely were of humble origin. Dr Newell, writing in the Twentieth Report for 1853, points to the social origins of the teachers employed within the national schools as originating in the poorer sections of society. Dr Newell's inspection covered 'the entire of the counties of Cork and Kerry, about one-third each of the counties of Limerick and Waterford and about one-fourth of Tipperary,' which he writes saw him travel 3,715 miles over the course of eleven months!²⁹⁷ Newell's observations offer a valuable insight into the origins of the national teachers he encountered in the course of his duties. He writes:

The male teachers, however, will be found receiving from all sources, salaries under £17 per annum. On this income not only they, but frequently their large families have to *exist* (emphasis in original). Of the seventy-one teachers referred to, twenty four are married and their families average six in number, while several of the unmarried have mothers and sisters to support. It may fairly be asked, how can a man with six persons in family afford himself and then the common necessities of life on an income of £17, particularly at the present price of provisions? I know myself that many of the third, and some of the second class Teachers, very rarely can eat meat, and that Indian meal is their chief dietary. While numbers of the National Teachers are in such a wretched condition, it is really surprising that so many eligible persons are becoming members of the corps.²⁹⁸

There are several points of relevance to national teacher identity here, which although buried within the nuances of Newell's writing, offer insights into the social origin of the national

²⁹⁶ CNEI (1847) *The Fourteenth Report...for 1847*, [981-XXIX], H.C., 9

²⁹⁷ CNEI (1853) *The Twentieth Report...for 1853*, [1834-XXX], H.C. Vol. II, Appendix G, 153.

²⁹⁸ CNEI (1853) *The Twentieth Report...for 1853*, [1834-XXX], H.C. Vol. II, Appendix G, 156.

teacher. Newell's commentary on the dietary habits of this cohort of teachers is telling. In referencing the consumption of 'Indian meal', which served as a substitute food source for the starving during the Great Famine six years earlier (1845-1848), the teachers are located at the lower levels of the Irish demographic. Newell's reference to the scarcity of meat available for these families further supports this. Newell also advocates for improved salaries and adequate remuneration for the teachers as a means of improving their standing within communities, which also largely indicates a low economic status among these national teachers.

An important caveat must also be offered here in respect of general social class at this time in Ireland. Recognising that the concept of social class seeks to categorise society based on social and economic status, it is important for the reader to note that while the national teacher is at the lower end of the social scale, there were also those who were destitute and comprised a further group at the very lowest level of society. Given the means available to this class it is unlikely that any of the national teachers originated here.

A trawl of the Reports of the Commissioners from 1855 to 1863, encompassing the Twenty-second to the Thirtieth Report consecutively, provides further clues to support the contention that the origins of the national teachers lay firmly within the lower ranks of society. An interesting observation for example, is offered by Head Inspector, Patrick J. Keenan, later Chief of Inspection and eventually, Resident Commissioner of National Education.²⁹⁹ On discussing the teacher within the rural community, Keenan notes that, 'the teacher of a National School is in a deplorably isolated situation, for his lot is to be without an equal, and those above and below him are, for analogous reasons removed beyond his approach.'³⁰⁰ This indicates that the

²⁹⁹ O' Donovan, *Stanley's Letter*, 149.

³⁰⁰ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-XXVII-pt.ii], H.C. Appendix G, 87.

teacher, having originated amongst the lower ranks of society, now occupied a void between classes by dint of their very occupation being unable to advance or retreat while their developing identity was in a state of flux.

The Twenty-fifth Report for the year 1858, offers further evidence of the national teacher's origins where Inspector Craig writes to the Head Inspector Dr Patten, saying the teacher 'is deprived of the society so essential to his comfort, as he is by education, raised above the common people.'³⁰¹ Craig's observations, while sympathetic, serve to categorise the national teacher and in doing so attribute the teacher's origins to the 'common people,' as well as indicating that this new identity is at one remove in contrast to these teacher's earlier identity. This also aligns with contemporary constructs of identity which consider the fluctuating state of identity under the premise of the ego-dystonic stage outlined by Schwartz and discussed in Chapter Three. A further attribution of origin comes from Inspector Patterson, in respect of one of the Belfast school districts, who writes 'Their means and modes of living are decidedly superior to those *of the class from which they spring*.'³⁰² This clearly places the origins of the national teachers at the lower end of the Irish social demographic.

Another example which supports the teachers originating among the lower classes is recorded by Inspector Quinlan, who considers:

that very many deserving men of such a body are, as I write, itinerants- nightly, or at most weekly lodgers *among the people on whose offspring they are*, by their incessant but ill-requited labours.³⁰³

³⁰¹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Appendix B, 111.

³⁰² CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Appendix B 112.

³⁰³ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Appendix B 147.

This reference to the teachers lodging amongst ‘the people on whose offspring they are’ firmly locates the origin of most of the national teachers among the lower classes, yet, at this juncture their accession to the position of national teacher has not provided some of them with the necessary financial support to justify independent living, or to further their social mobility.

The origins of the national teachers are also reinforced within the Twenty-sixth Report for 1859, in the submission of District Inspector Dowling, to the Head Inspector Timothy Sheahan. District Inspector Dowling offers lengthy testimony on the national teacher, from which the following excerpt is relevant here. He writes:

*The class from which the teachers have sprung is that of peasants, small farmers or farm-labourers (emphasis in original)... they live among their friends; almost all teach in their native parishes... Their residences, unless in the case of schools to which the residence is attached, are not to be distinguished from those of the peasantry, but are not in any case markedly inferior.*³⁰⁴

Dowling’s comments are decisive and conclusive, positioning the vast majority of entrants to the role of national teachers amongst the lower classes, which includes ‘peasants, small farmers or farm-labourers.’ Undoubtedly, the position of a national school teacher offered these people an opportunity to improve their position in life. Head Inspector Dr Newell, writing in the Twenty-eighth Report for 1861, observes ‘the teacher sees that he is no worse off than many around him, whose social position is at least equal to that of his own...’, again strengthening the contention that the teachers were of humble origin.³⁰⁵ A later submission from District Inspector Macauley in the same report notes, ‘the teachers have become a respectable body of men, generally imbued with a proper sense of self-respect---in character, conduct and appearance, much elevated above the grade in society from which they are usually selected.’³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Appendix B, 173.

³⁰⁵ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C. Appendix C, 178.

³⁰⁶ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C. Appendix C, 292.

This is further proof of the teachers having originated among the lower classes in Irish society at this time.

It is worth considering that while the national system was responsible for developing and enforcing parameters around the identity of the Irish national teacher, it can also be credited with empowering those who became national teachers as will be discussed in the following section. The teachers, as Macauley says, ‘have become a respectable body of men...’ in direct contrast to their origins. It is also interesting that the concept of respectability, discussed later in this chapter in Subsection 4.4.6 as one of the contributory elements to identity, continued to infuse the persona of the Irish national teacher identity in 1859. This ensured that this concept or attribute of respectability remained a core element of Irish national teacher identity.

4.3.2 Social mobility

While similar observations to those documented already complete the Twenty-eighth Report to the Commissioners, there is a shift in the descriptions of the teachers offered by the Inspectors from 1859 onwards and an increasing awareness of the national teacher’s social mobility. In respect of this, District Inspector Patterson, considering the role of the teachers themselves within their chosen occupation, writes:

The teachers in this district generally occupy a position somewhat above that from which they have sprung. Were they not teachers, most of them would be labourers, weavers, or farmers of the smallest holdings, with incomes lower, labour more severe and place in society less respected (original emphasis). From what I have been able to ascertain since I took charge of this district, I believe they

are, as a class, decidedly improving in intelligence and devotion to their business. They have deliberately chosen the occupation.³⁰⁷

The underlying tone present in this extract is not uncommon throughout the correspondence between some members of the Inspectorate and the Commissioners. This is an embedded feature within imperial discourse. Inspector Patterson infers that, in this instance at least, the national teacher should be grateful for the position which he or she has been fortunate enough to acquire, and that their elevation in society from the lower ranks is due in no small part to the forbearance of Empire. Of importance also is Mr. Patterson's observation that the teachers have 'chosen the occupation', and that whilst not only expressions of gratitude should be made, the national system should be lauded for its enabling of the national teachers. Indeed, this might also be ascribed to those who worked as Inspectors under the CNEI. As noted earlier, in Section 2.9 of Chapter Two, many of those employed as Inspectors has their origins in the national system as teachers, or were drawn from other 'respectable' professions such as the merchant classes. While Ireland and the British Empire did not neatly ascribe to the status of colony and coloniser as noted in Section 2.6 of Chapter Two, there are perhaps elements of the national teacher relationship with the entire system of national education which bespeaks an imperial rhetoric, whereby the conquered people expressed gratitude for the benefits of empire.³⁰⁸

Two final observations are noted by District Inspectors in the Thirty-first and Thirty-second Reports for the years 1864 and 1865 respectively. District Inspector Bateman, with responsibility for the Swinford district in Co. Mayo, writes, 'Coming, as the majority of them do, from the ranks of the agricultural labouring class, they prefer their labour, though it is sometimes hard enough, to physical toil, to which, moreover, many of them have become

³⁰⁷ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C. Appendix C, 317.

³⁰⁸ See Hall, *Making colonial subjects*, 773-787; Howe, S. (2000) *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony*.

unused.’³⁰⁹ District Inspector Bradford in 1865, in the Thirty-second Report, notes, ‘they come from a poor ignorant class, they want energy and intelligence, and are altogether unlike what the future instructors of a country should be.’³¹⁰ Again, these observations reinforce the contention that majority of the national teachers were from the lower classes in Irish society.

Some final points on teacher origins are drawn from *The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland*, established in 1868 to examine all aspects of the national education system in Ireland in the greatest detail and discussed earlier in Section 2.10 of Chapter Two. Testimony collected at this time by Mr. J. Percival-Balmer, Assistant Commissioner, regarding the teachers in Co. Kerry, notes:

Favourable reports were continually given by their clergy and others; although occasional, but rare breaches of social morality bring dishonour upon a class whose superior education and official position tend to lift its members above the grade from which they are mostly sprung.³¹¹

This account offers a more singular example of the origins of the national teacher and while it is not possible to generalise on this alone, it is likely that many of this teacher’s peers would have originated in similar circumstances. Further dialogue from Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward in the Powis Report notes:

The National teachers, may be said, as a rule, to have sprung from the lower classes, either from the small shopkeepers or tradesman’s class in the towns, or from the peasant, farmer, or agricultural labourer’s class in the country. They are all of them the creation of the National system, from it they got the education, which in its service, they impart to the younger generation.³¹²

³⁰⁹ CNEI (1864) *The Thirty-first report...for 1864*, [3496-xix], H.C. Appendix C, 242.

³¹⁰ CNEI (1865) *The Thirty-second Report...for 1865*, [3713-xxix], H.C. Appendix D, 297.

³¹¹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 376-377.

³¹² Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 127.

This is one of the few recorded observations within the Inspector's reports that mentions those national teachers with urban roots. This may be attributed to the fact that Ireland as a primarily agrarian country saw a greater concentration of national schools and, accordingly, teachers being of rural background. Scott-Coward's observation on the origins of the national teachers in 1870 can be taken as being generally in keeping with similar observations offered from the Inspector's reports to the Commissioners. Although Scott-Coward's assertion that 'they are all of them the creation of the National system' may be true by the mid-nineteenth century, as noted earlier in the chapter, this cannot be ascribed to all the early incumbents in the system.

4.4 Selection and character of the national teacher

4.4.1 Stanley's Letter

In this section initially, the processes by which those individuals who became teachers were selected are examined, before moving to consider their character. Stanley's Letter of 1831 made provision for teacher training and 'establishing and maintaining a Central Model school in Dublin and the training of teachers for country schools.'³¹³ In respect of the teachers who would staff the new national system, the letter outlined the following points which are reproduced here. The Letter states that those applying to establish national schools could appoint their own teacher under the following conditions:

1st. He (or she) shall be liable to be fined, suspended, or removed altogether, by the authority of the Commissioners, who shall, however, record their reasons.

2nd. He shall have received previous instruction in a model school in Dublin, to be sanctioned by the Board. N.B. It is not intended that this regulation should apply to prevent the admission of masters or mistresses of schools already established, who may be approved of by the Commissioners.

³¹³ Hyland, A., and Milne, K. eds. (1987) *Irish Educational Documents, Vol.1*. Dublin: CICE, 98.

3rd. He shall have received testimonials of good conduct, and of general fitness for the situation, from the Board.³¹⁴

These points became the imprimatur for the Commissioner's vision and define their approach towards the teachers within the national system. The presentation of the conditions in the original text of Stanley's Letter is insightful. The initial point immediately focuses on punitive measures which will be taken against the teacher for failure to comply with the Commissioner's directions. This is followed by a requirement that the teachers employed within the system will be 'instructed' in a Model School around their role. This point also allowed for the engagement of those who were working as teachers in varying sites of elementary education prior to 1831 to become employed under the new system. This was important as it facilitated the transitory phase in the initial decades of the national system, whereby existing teachers who were not a product of the national system could be employed by the Commissioners, thus furthering the expansion of the national schools. The final point, arguably, saw the Commissioners cede some control over the developing identity of the national teacher, by requiring that testimonials from the Board be provided. This was possibly seen as a safety mechanism to ensure that 'suitable' candidates would be provided.

4.4.2 The selection and training process

Stanley's vision of the Irish national teacher transmuted into practice with the establishment of the Board of National Education on which the Commissioners sat. This amplified the degree of control exercised by the CNEI over the national teachers and their training to a far greater level than might have been experienced by those teachers who had worked in schools such as the Hedge Schools, The KPS, or the Erasmus Smith Schools as discussed in Section 2.4 of

³¹⁴ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

Chapter Two.³¹⁵ Among the recommendations which the Commissioners followed were those enshrined in Stanley's Letter which stated 'Persons presenting for admission to the normal establishment must produce a certificate of good character from the officiating clergyman of the communion to which they belong.'³¹⁶ The Normal Establishment, as noted in Chapter Two, was one of the terms for the Central Training Institute which was established initially at Merrion Street in 1834 and shortly after moved to Marlborough Street, Dublin in 1838. The Central Training Institute, in which the teacher training took place, was adjacent to the headquarters of the CNEI at Tyrone House and catered for all those who wished to become teachers.³¹⁷ The requirement to provide a certificate of good character also extended to selection for the District Model schools. By requiring the applicants to provide a certificate from a member of the clergy to support their application, the Commissioners were in essence initiating a filtration system to exclude those deemed unsuitable for the role of national teacher, as well as ceding an element of control over the selection of suitable candidates to the clergy. This was further reinforced in the Second Report of the CNEI published in 1834 which noted that the national teacher should be:

living in friendly habits with the people, not greatly elevated above them, but so provided for as to be able to maintain a respected station; trained to good habits, identified in interest with the state and therefore anxious to provide a spirit of lawful obedience to lawful authority, we are confident they would provide a body of the utmost value and importance in promoting civilization and peace.³¹⁸

Populating the developing system with individuals who were, 'trained to good habits' and 'identified in interest with the state', as well as being obedient to 'lawful authority' was to underpin the concept of national teacher identity for decades to come. Such parameters and considerations prioritised character traits and particular elements of individual identity which

³¹⁵ Walsh, *The evolving status of elementary teachers*, 326-345.

³¹⁶ CNEI (1838) *The Fifth Report...for the year ending 31 March 1838*, [160-XVI], H.C., 6.

³¹⁷ O' Donovan, *Stanley's Letter*, 20-21.

³¹⁸ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for the year ending 31 March 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C., 5.

saw concepts such as respectability amplified in the formation of the Irish national teacher's identity.

It is likely that the initially demanding steps to be considered for entry to these schools as prospective candidates for national teaching precluded many applicants. An example of the entry requirements is found in the report of Head Inspector Edward Butler in respect of Newry Model School in 1849. Butler writes:

Selected from among the paid monitors and other meritorious pupils of National Schools, who show a taste and disposition for the business of a teacher, these young men...undergo a course of one year's training in the Model School, where they are boarded and lodged at the public expense.³¹⁹

The Inspector goes on to say that due to a shortage of suitable candidates for the Newry Model School, a request was made to the inspectors to 'send such deserving persons as were anxious and willing to present themselves, with a view to being fitted for teacherships.'³²⁰ Butler's use of language is interesting here, with concepts of 'merit' and 'disposition' being highlighted as necessary for the role of teacher, but more relevant is his comment on the teachers being 'fitted' for the role, which aligns with the Commissioner's ideal around the persona of the national teacher. Arguably, in the eyes of the imperial administration the role of Irish national teacher existed in a hypothetical sense and the person who sought this position would be required to adapt in order to inhabit the role. This certainly appears to have been the case and those who became national teachers ultimately assumed the role, within the parameters outlined by the Commissioners. In regard to the admission process for the District Model Schools, Inspector Butler further states:

³¹⁹ CNEI (1849) *The Sixteenth Report...for 1849*, [1231-XXV], H.C., 230.

³²⁰ CNEI (1849) *The Sixteenth Report...for 1849*, [1231-XXV], H.C., 231.

Each applicant has been required to furnish a statement, written by himself, of his acquirements, occupation, age, and views in offering himself for the situation. He had also to be provided with certificates from his clergyman, from the manager and the teacher of the last school he had attended, and with the written consent of his parents to his entering the establishment.³²¹

This fivefold application, comprising a personal statement from the prospective candidate, along with three more from the clergyman, manager and teacher of their last school, along with a letter from the candidate's parents would ensure that only the most determined individuals would apply for the position. A 'graded programme of examinations' was also instigated for teachers, whereby the teacher who could not access the Central Training Institute or a District Model School could take exams and ameliorate their classification for a greater degree of salary.³²² It is worth pointing out that of these elements established for teacher preparation and training, both the Marlborough Street Training Institute, along with the District Model Schools, ultimately proved unsuccessful and it was the series of examinations, and the monitorial system which were responsible for providing the vast majority of the national school teachers who staffed the system in the period under review here.³²³

This also raises questions about those who were initially employed within the national schools and when considering the data gathered from the Marlborough Street training college records, it would appear as if any person who conformed to the standards desired by the Commissioners, was deemed suitable. It is noted that on occasion teachers employed in the early years of the system had progressed to the national system from earlier institutions such as the KPS or Erasmus Smiths' schools or indeed, from the ranks of the Hedge Schools.³²⁴ In selecting

³²¹ CNEI (1849) *The Sixteenth Report...for 1849*, [1231-XXV], H.C., 231.

³²² Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82:47.

³²³ Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82:47.

³²⁴ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-XXVII-pt.1], H.C. Appendix G, 42.

teachers from varying earlier providers of elementary education, it may have been hoped that these teachers would be more adaptable in assuming the role of national teacher and facilitate the development of the new system in an easier fashion. Head Inspector Dr Newell writing in 1858, recalls:

the teachers first appointed by the board of National Education, being either selected from these Hedge teachers (as they were called), or educated by them; hence their slow advancement toward the desired status.³²⁵

The Inspector's observation here reinforces again the need to counteract any earlier iterations of teachers and develop a wholly new system under the CNEI.

4.4.3 The monitorial system

As noted in Section 2.7 of Chapter Two, the monitorial system, along with the graded examination series conducted by the Inspectorate, were the most successful in producing teachers within the national education system and from 1844 the system was amended to allow payment to be made to monitors.³²⁶ References to the monitorial system and monitors within the reports of the Inspectorate also support the socially reproductive element of the national education system however, in this instance it is those singularly identifiable characteristics, such as the concept of respectability, which contributed to developing the Irish national teacher's identity.

Examples from the reports of the Inspectorate highlight the importance placed on particular character traits or candidates who would embody the desired values of the Commissioners and

³²⁵ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-XXVII-pt.1], H.C. Appendix G, 42.

³²⁶ Parkes, *An Essential Service*, 45-82:65.

Empire, thus developing and reinforcing those theoretical elements of identity. The first of these is provided by Inspector MacCready on visiting the Ballymena District Model School in 1849, when he wrote, ‘I may add that the candidates generally have been drawn from the paid monitors of our ordinary schools, or chosen from among their most distinguished pupils.’³²⁷ This reinforces the understanding that the candidates who were presented to the Central Training Institute at Marlborough Street or the District Model Schools were drawn from within the ranks of the schools themselves, be these ‘ordinary’ national or District Model Schools.

Head Inspector P.J. Keenan also commended the Commissioners encouragement of the monitorial system, noting that:

The Commissioners of National Education have always encouraged monitorial teaching; they have seen that a child who is employed, at stated times, in the teaching of a class of his fellow pupils, is rendering most valuable assistance to the master, is improving himself in knowledge, and undergoing the best possible training for becoming a teacher.³²⁸

Favourable status was also granted to those who had relatives already employed within the national schools, as demonstrated by Inspector Kavanagh, who notes the following on a visit to Bailieboro District Model School in County Cavan. He writes:

On the day which the school opened, Mr. Clarke, District Inspector and I, examined the candidates for the office of pupil-teacher and of paid-monitor. The number for each was considerable and we selected for the two pupil teacherships one who had served four years as paid monitor and one who had been educated in a National school; and for the monitorships, one, the sister to a national teacher, and the other, daughter to a National teacher.³²⁹

³²⁷ CNEI (1849) *The Sixteenth Report...for 1849*, [1231-XXV], H.C., 266.

³²⁸ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C., Appendix B, 166.

³²⁹ CNEI (1849) *The Sixteenth Report...for 1849*, [1231-XXV], H.C., 299.

Inspector Clarke also comments of the calibre of the candidates stating ‘there is a gradual improvement in the teachers in all respects exhibited in the past year.’³³⁰ Clarke credits the Commissioners with the foresight to have encouraged this improvement from within the national school system by:

The extensive means adopted by the Commissioners for raising up a superior class of teachers by appointing paid monitors in the ordinary schools and training them for the office...cannot fail in due time to render the teachers of Irish elementary schools equal to those of any country in the world.³³¹

With the publication of the Twenty-eighth Report in 1862, the number of monitors recorded within the system was, ‘upwards of 2000’ and Head Inspector Dr Newell writes that, ‘the paid monitor is selected almost invariably because he exhibits a liking for teaching and desires to become a teacher.’³³²

District Inspector Seymour, writing for the Westport area in 1861, also affirms the character of the national teacher and the monitorial process, saying:

In general those who serve as monitors turn out most satisfactorily; a few of those have, even in my short experience of the district, been creditably distinguished by their zeal and efficiency in the advancement of their pupils and, in their laudable ambition to elevate themselves; indeed, these two qualities will rarely be found separate, and both will be observed to strongly mark and distinguish the teachers who have received their own education or training under the national system from others who have not enjoyed that advantage.³³³

The conviction with which the inspector delivers his pronouncements here is notable. Using vocabulary such as ‘mark’ and ‘distinguish’, alongside ‘quality’ and ‘advantage’ is both purposeful and affirmative of the character and subsequent, identity of the national teacher.

³³⁰ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C., Appendix B, 148.

³³¹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C., Appendix B, 148.

³³² CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C., Appendix C, 165.

³³³ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C., Appendix C, 286.

District Inspector Seymour points to the gradation of the national teacher's success as being firmly linked to their origins. He also considers those who are successful national teachers as having, 'the sturdy and hopeful virtue of self-reliance.'³³⁴ It might be inferred that these are the teachers who are willing to embrace the profession and aspire to a new identity. In juxtaposition to which, he references the teachers who do not wholly subscribe to this new identity, 'in whom the effects of an education have been overborne by the radical vices of the class from which they come', along with a 'conspicuous absence of zeal, providence and emulation.'³³⁵ Central to this process and indeed, the broader narrative which underpinned the Irish system of national education was that 'emulation', which District Inspector Seymour refers to. The development of the national teachers, as a body, who would strive to emulate those civil servants within the British Empire, and in turn impress the benefits of this emulation on their pupils, was a central theme within imperial systems of education in the nineteenth century.³³⁶

4.4.4 *Rules for Teachers*

Finally, an expansion of the primary points outlined in Stanley's Letter around good conduct and the ability of the Commissioners to remove any teacher for any infraction were enforced under a series of rules and regulations which were instigated for those who were employed as national teachers following the establishment of the system. The rules were published annually and appended to the CNEI reports.³³⁷ From the outset, the Commissioners were conscious of the importance of the teacher's role, however, this concentrated more on the perception of the teacher than their welfare. As early as 1834 the Commissioners queried the suitability of the

³³⁴ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C., Appendix C, 286.

³³⁵ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C., Appendix C, 286.

³³⁶ See Hall, *Making colonial subjects*, 773-787; Kinealy, C. (2006) At home with the Empire: The example of Ireland In: Hall, C. and Rose, S.O., eds. (2006) *At Home With The Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 77-100.

³³⁷ CNEI (1840) *The Seventh Report...for 1840*, [353-XXIII], H.C., 119-120.

teachers in the national schools and questioned their ability in, ‘promoting morality , harmony and good order in the country parts of Ireland.’³³⁸ The Commissioners envisaged the national teachers as models for emulation and believed that regulation around teacher behaviour, and conduct, would further this vision. This also supports those elements of collective identity theory as discussed in Chapter Three, which saw societal groups inhabit identity through shared traits.

A series of rules and regulations were then instigated as the national system began to take root. In the Fourth Report of the Commissioners, published in 1837, ‘the necessity of placing the National Schools under persons of a superior class’ is noted.³³⁹ This report also outlines the Commissioners’ belief that a Superintendent,³⁴⁰ would be appointed to each school district in the country and that, ‘he shall receive a report upon each (school) from the Teacher once a month.’³⁴¹ The Sixth Report published in 1839 reinforced the concepts noted in Stanley’s Letter around teacher conduct and behaviour when discussing the classification system for teachers. This states that, ‘The present classification of the National Teachers is not to be considered permanent; it may be forfeited by misconduct, violation of the rules or inefficiency.’³⁴² Each report of the Commissioners contained some reference to teacher conduct and how this would be regulated. The first comprehensive outline of the rules for teachers appears in the Seventh Report for 1840. This initial presentation contains ten rules. These rules placed strict parameters around the identity of the Irish national teacher, with the most severe consequences resulting in the teacher’s dismissal from their position. Some examples of the rules are offered

³³⁸ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for the year ending 31 March 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C., 4.

³³⁹ CNEI (1837) *The Fourth Report...for the year ending 31 March 1837*, [110-XXVIII], H.C., 3.

³⁴⁰ In the first decade of the national system the term Superintendent was used instead of Inspector.

³⁴¹ CNEI (1837) *The Fourth Report...for the year ending 31 March 1837*, [110-XXVIII], H.C., 4.

³⁴² CNEI (1839) *The Sixth Report...for 1839*, [246-XXVIII], H.C., 84.

here to highlight their intrusive and restrictive nature on the identity of the Irish national teacher.³⁴³ Rule III, for example stated that the teacher had:

To avoid fairs, markets, and meetings---but, above all, POLITICAL (sic) meetings of any kind; to abstain from controversy; and to do nothing either in or out of school which might have a tendency to confine it to any one denomination of children.³⁴⁴

The emphasis here in the original is placed on the word political, which belies the Commissioners' and the Imperial administration's fear that the national teachers might mirror their predecessors, the Hedge School teachers and be 'politically subversive.'³⁴⁵ Along with this was the enjoinder that the teacher would not display favouritism to children based on religious affiliation, which supported Stanley's nondenominational ideal. Other rules concentrated on the maintenance of records, school books and religious instruction. These are not detailed here as their inclusion does not support the focus of the chapter. Among the ten published in 1840, is Rule VI, which states:

To observe themselves, and to impress upon the minds of their Pupils, the great rule of regularity and order- A TIME AND A PLACE FOR EVERY THING AND EVERY THING IN ITS PROPOER TIME AND PLACE (sic).³⁴⁶

This preoccupation with enforcing regimes and near-militarised concepts within the classroom was reflective of the wider precepts which underpinned the Commissioners' vision for elementary education in Ireland and imperial acculturation. The teacher was seen as the role model for inculcating these behaviours in the school and beyond. This was further reinforced by Rules VII to X which required the national teachers, 'To promote, both by precept and example, CLEANLINESS, NEATNESS, AND DECENCY (sic),' as well as promoting good morals among the pupils and 'inculcating the principles of TRUTH AND HONESTY (sic).'³⁴⁷

³⁴³ CNEI (1840) *The Seventh Report...for 1840*, [353-XXIII], H.C., 119-120.

³⁴⁴ CNEI (1840) *The Seventh Report...for 1840*, 119-120.

³⁴⁵ Walsh, *The evolving status of elementary teachers*, 326-345.

³⁴⁶ CNEI (1840) *The Seventh Report...for 1840*, [353-XXIII], H.C., 119-120.

³⁴⁷ CNEI (1844) *The Eleventh Report...for 1844*, [629-XXVI], H.C., Appendix XIV, 105.

The emphasis shown here, as in the original, is clearly designed to impress upon the teacher the import of these values in their practice. These rules were extended in 1844 with regard to teachers, whereby two extra rules were added, first, in relation to the recording of grants made to schools, which the teachers had to document and second, to the care of the school books provided by the Commissioners. From this point forward the rules were appended to the Commissioner's reports as 'Twelve Practical Rules for the Teachers of National Schools.'³⁴⁸

As the decades progressed, the rules and regulations of the Commissioners were maintained and enforced with strict superintendence throughout the national system. As one historian observed they imbued the national schools with a 'distinct character and tenor', becoming *de rigueur* for generations of national teachers to come.³⁴⁹ The importance of the regulatory element of the national system of education from 1831 lay in its proscribing specific characteristics or ways of being for those candidates who would become national teachers. In this regard, these aspects of the system translated into practice the tentative elements of an emerging Irish national teacher identity.

In regulating the lives of the national teachers, the Commissioners were, in essence creating common points of identity which would be shared across the newly emerging teacher 'community' as it were. All national teachers were expected to dress in a certain fashion, be educated to a certain level, distance themselves from politics and their pupils, and pupil's families. In this respect, it was likely that they would gravitate toward their peers, who shared their way of life, thus further developing and entrenching their identity.

³⁴⁸ CNEI (1844) *The Eleventh Report...for 1844*, [629-XXVI], H.C., Appendix XIV, 105.

³⁴⁹ O' Donovan, *Stanley's Letter*, 68.

4.4.5 *Marlborough Street-a new class of schoolmasters...*

The following evidence outlined here considers some of the more unusual and varied routes to national teaching which some of the early entrants took, along with the more desirable traits for the national teachers, as envisioned by the CNEI. Records from the Central Training College at Marlborough Street, available from 1840, assist in identifying some character traits of early teachers. The preoccupation of those in charge of the system with qualities which outwardly indicated serenity, capability and respectability are reflected in character descriptions found in early reports of the teachers who attended the Marlborough Street Training College. The examples chosen here are some of the more fulsome and earlier observations made on the character of the entrants. The Commissioners' desire to attract candidates with specific characteristics is outlined in the second report, published in 1835, which states:

If we are furnished with adequate means by the State, not only for training Schoolmasters but for inducing competent persons to become candidates for teacherships, through a fair prospect of remuneration and advancement, we have no doubt whatever that a new class of Schoolmasters may be trained, whose conduct and influence must be highly beneficial in promoting morality, harmony and good order, in the country parts of Ireland.³⁵⁰

These characteristics were to provide the initial parameters for a construction of national teacher identity. It is also worth noting here the reference to the 'country' parts of Ireland. This is suggestive of the imperial mentality, as noted in the preceding section, that existed in the period around civilising native peoples, as well as indicating that within urban centres the Commissioners believed there was less likelihood of fractious or rebellious behaviour amongst the people.

³⁵⁰ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for the year ending 31 March 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C., 4.

The following early examples reinforce these parameters. The first teacher recorded in the Marlborough Street records is number 525, Andrew Connolly, from Balnalea (sic), Longford. His denominational status is recorded as Roman Catholic and his age given as 32 years. Under the character assignation the tutor writes, ‘A respectable, intelligent and well informed man- was for some time in America.’³⁵¹ He is deemed ‘respectable’ and therefore unlikely to cause trouble for his superiors or the authorities. In doing so it is likely hoped that he will instil the same values in the community where he works. It is noted that he is ‘well-informed’, which might be taken to suggest he understands the benefits of employment within the national school system, along with the governance and broader concepts of empire. The reference to his time in America is also supportive of the type of person desired by the Commissioners to work as national teachers. Here was a man who had travelled and it could be argued, been exposed to all manner of experiences far from the comforts of empire, yet had maintained his composure and was now employed by the CNEI. In direct contrast to Andrew Connolly is John Cunningham, aged 37 years, of Killowen, Co. Down, who is also recorded on the Marlborough Street register in 1840. His character is described as:

Quite unfit for a teacher even of the lower class and should never have been sent up for training. He is ignorant of everything a teacher should know and he is too stupid to learn.³⁵²

While this entry is far from complimentary, it clearly shows the Commissioners and those employed within Marlborough Street Training Institute had no allusions about the type of individual who should staff the national school system, with little accommodations for those who did not meet the required standards.

In 1842, Florence McCarthy, Roman Catholic, aged 29 years, of Spunkane, Co. Kerry is recorded as being, ‘An intelligent man and an excellent teacher but deficient in energy-

³⁵¹ ED/TD/1, Register of Admission and academic record male students- Marlborough Street Teacher Training College Dublin 1840-1848. Dublin: National Archives of Ireland.

³⁵² ED/TD/1, Register of Admission.

Respectable (sic) in his appearance and manner.³⁵³ The reference to McCarthy's energy levels here infers a desire on the Commissioner's behalf for teachers to successfully apply themselves to their work and in turn, inculcate calm and imperial loyalty within communities. Again, the emphasis on respectability as a desired character trait for teachers is recognised. A final entry from the early Marlborough registers in 1840 is that of Andrew Frazer, aged 27, from Ballykeelartifinny (sic), in Co. Down. Frazer's religious denomination is given as Presbyterian and the accompanying comment reads:

A most respectable and intelligent young man and well deserving a second class. He has some acquaintance with Latin and French. He was engaged as private tutor in Col. Somerson's family on my recommendation.³⁵⁴

The emphasis here again on respectability is a recurring theme and appears frequently throughout the early Marlborough Street register. Frazer's ability with Latin and French automatically set him apart from his peers. The recommendation of the Marlborough Street tutor on Frazer's behalf, to a particular family, further proves this teacher's suitability. The reader should note that in respect of the early entrants' denominational status, Marlborough Street was reflecting the tenets of Stanley's Letter and all teachers, regardless of religious affiliation, were being accepted into the national system for training.

As the training college registers continue the observations recorded on the character of the candidates diminish as the decades progress, eventually fading away altogether. Those registers which developed in conjunction with the establishment of the denominational teacher training colleges from the 1870s contain very little in respect of personal attributes or character, indeed, they focus solely on the teacher's ability to complete the prescribed course and the sole

³⁵³ ED/TD/1, Register of Admission.

³⁵⁴ ED/TD/1, Register of Admission.

comment recorded is ‘favourable’ or ‘v. favourable.’³⁵⁵ This indicates that by this time teacher identity and character had become fixed, and observations regarding the suitability of candidates were no longer required. The concepts outlined as key traits for the identity of the national teacher by the Commissioners had become embedded at this time and no longer needed such emphasis. It also is likely that the increased accessibility of printed material and the coalescence of the national teachers themselves into teacher-led movements advocating for change assisted in affixing concepts of national teacher identity at this time. This will be explored further in Chapter Five.

The reports of the CNEI are also available at this time, however, these show little detail regarding the teachers attending Marlborough Street Training Institute or the District Model schools save the systems of instruction they engaged with and noting that the teachers ‘attended their respective places of worship on Sundays.’³⁵⁶ Neither is there sufficient detail on the rules and regulations around the character of the candidates for admission to the Central Training Institute or the District Model Schools, save those observations on the certificates of good character noted earlier in Section 4.4.2 of this chapter. In assessing the Marlborough Street records it is clear that the focus was firmly fixed within the training college on developing a distinctive teacher character. This was rooted in the concept of respectability and a degree of intelligence to accompany this, which in turn it may be argued became a central element and requisite of the early Irish national teacher’s identity.

³⁵⁵ ED/TD/2, Church of Ireland Teacher Training College- ED/TD/3, St. Patrick’s Teacher Training College Register of Admissions, ED/TD/6/1, Mary Immaculate Teacher Training College, Dublin: National Archives of Ireland.

³⁵⁶ CNEI (1846) *The Thirteenth Report...for 1846*, [832-XVII], H.C., 4.

4.4.6 *Character and respectability*

The following evidence largely gleaned from the reports of the Inspectorate to the Commissioners considers those character traits which the Commissioners sought and promoted across the national education system in respect of all those employed as national teachers. This evidence also considers how, as noted earlier, some of the early incumbents within the system occupied a transitory phase from earlier systems of elementary education to the national school system.

The Seventeenth Report of the Commissioners for 1850 records the observations of Head Inspector Edward Butler. On visiting Ballymore School in Co. Longford, he refers to the teacher of the school as ‘A quiet, well-disposed young person; her manners are pleasing and her acquirements tolerably good...she lives with her father, the teacher of the boy’s school.’³⁵⁷ This observation by Butler highlights the desired character of the teacher, which the inspector praises, as well as identifying the familial connection which exists between this teacher and her father, who was also a national teacher.

Inspector Macready, in the same report for 1850, provides some nuanced detail on the teachers he visits. In Coolkinny (sic), he discusses the teacher, as ‘not very able, but quiet and respectful in his manner.’³⁵⁸ It is clear the inspector is not as concerned about the teacher’s abilities in this case, as he is with his ‘respectful’ manner towards the inspector. This was seen as a key character trait for all national teachers. It was important that due recognisance was accorded the varying structures and ranks within all imperial hierarchies. This maintained both the

³⁵⁷ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 125.

³⁵⁸ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 125.

smooth running of the administrative structures and ensured that due deference was given where required. Macready further notes:

the sister of this teacher is mistress of the adjoining girls' school; they live together in a very neat house, built by the brother, and appear very comfortable; they rent a piece of ground sufficient to feed a cow, and to supply them, in part, with meal and potatoes.³⁵⁹

Macready's extract is valuable for several reasons. It establishes the familial link, which was developing as the concept of social reproduction began to embed amongst the national teachers and their families, and it emphasises the value placed on self-sufficiency by the education system. This is also noted later in Subsection of 6.3.5 of Chapter Six. Highlighting the teacher's possession of a 'piece of ground' and their ability to grow crops is indicative of the benefits education, and belonging to the system of national education, could bring. This report on Coolkinny school is in stark contrast to that of Macready's subsequent report on Grange school, where he describes the teacher as 'slovenly and negligent as regards both person and dress', further noting the teacher is 'provided with board and lodging with a neighbouring family, whose children he teaches in the evening after school hours.'³⁶⁰ Again, the focus on character and respectability within the report is enforced by descriptions of the national teacher's personal habits. The teacher's living conditions show little independence in the eyes of the Inspector, yet they echo the practices of the Hedge School teachers of the eighteenth century who routinely lodged with families and provided tuition in return for bed and board.

In the following example, Head Inspector P.J. Keenan, in his report to the Commissioners in 1855, describes the teacher in Letterkenny Male school as:

³⁵⁹ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 125. Note: 'Meal' referred to the use of coarse flour for baking. See Miller, I. (2015) Nutritional decline in post-Famine Ireland, c. 1851–1922. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, 115C, 307-323. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

³⁶⁰ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., Appendix G, 54.

sixty years; a national teacher since 1834; was trained in the establishment of the Kildare Street Society and served for twenty years under that body...his daughter and two of his sons have been teachers of national schools; he is a deserving and respectable man.³⁶¹

The inspector references this national teacher's long service to education, along with his initial training under the KPS, recognising that the early entrants to the national system had in some cases transitioned to the national schools from earlier providers of elementary education. The fact that this teacher's family follow him into the national system supports the socially reproductive element of the new national education system. The desired character trait of respectability concludes Inspector Keenan's assessment of this teacher.

A rare personal insight from a national teacher is noted in correspondence to the newspaper, the *Weekly Telegraph*, in 1855. Such recorded instances of personal correspondence from national teachers are scarce. In the letter, the national teacher, whose name is not recorded, bemoans the inadequacy of his remuneration and his struggles to support his family but perhaps, more relevant in respect of the focus here, is the national teacher's awareness of the importance of their portrayal of respectability in the public sphere. The teacher, referring to the general state of the national teachers, writes:

And how are they to be clothed? I must have a decent appearance myself – a teacher must be respectable looking; he *must* (original emphasis) appear on Sundays at Divine Service a little smooth of course, as, next to the officiating clergyman, he is looked up to, at least by the younger folk; and to strangers there and elsewhere he is the subject of general remark. His everyday clothes must be good, as he must in his own person, set the example to his pupils. At the general examination he must uphold the dignity

³⁶¹ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., Appendix G, 118.

of his position, and a decent exterior will not a little aid his classification. In short, whether a teacher can or not, he 'must contrive' to appear respectable.³⁶²

This extract highlights the national teacher's awareness of the importance of respectability surrounding their role and the influence which their appearance may have. The strength of this teacher's conviction is noted in his emphasising the word 'must' and his justification for this in stating that the younger members of the community will look up to him. He is aware of the influence of the national teachers as potential role models for the youth. This reiterates and reinforces the remit of the CNEI and their efforts to propagate respectability. The conviction this teacher places on the importance of respectability is noted in his recognising that no matter what the case, even in a state of poverty, the national teacher 'must contrive' to be respectable and appearance and promotion of character stood above all else.

Contrastingly, the Twenty-third Report of the Commissioners for 1856 contains the following entry from Dr Newell, Head Inspector. He discusses a teacher encountered in the south of the country, where at Curriglass school, he writes, 'the teacher is one of the few specimens of hedge-school master still in the service of the board. He is very negligent of his personal dress and is in every way uncouth.'³⁶³ The description provided by Newell of the teacher is couched in language that clearly reveals his feelings on the position of teachers such as this within the national system. The use of the word 'specimen' alone, with subhuman inferences, is enough to categorise the teacher as a personage apart and one whose character is unsuitable for employment within the system of national education. Referencing this teacher's former role as

³⁶² ED7/1, *Weekly Telegraph*, 10 Feb 1855. Note the only extant copies of this source are held in the National Archives of Ireland. These take the form of articles excised from the original paper with the name and date of the paper in which they were published. On investigation it was found that a complete copy of the issue for 1855 is unavailable. Copies of this newspaper, the *Weekly Telegraph* (later the *Catholic Telegraph*), are only available from the year 1856 onwards in the National Library of Ireland.

³⁶³ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C. Vol. 1, 61.

a Hedge School teacher is evidence that some of the earlier incumbents in national schools were drawn from existing teachers or those who could profess to some knowledge of education.

Further mention of the importance of teacher character is recognised by Inspector Keenan in the Twenty-fourth Report for 1857, when he discusses the teacher of Bocan national school on the Inishowen peninsula in Co. Donegal who is ‘in the service of the board upwards of twenty-five years’, and whose ‘daughter is the teacher of the female school adjoining...a high position nearly as creditable to her father who taught her and trained her, as to herself.’³⁶⁴ The route by which this teacher acceded to her role was most likely as a monitor under her father’s tutelage, while the father’s capability as a teacher offers assurance to the Inspector regarding the abilities of the daughter. An important point within the Twenty-fourth Report in 1857 is also observed by Inspector Newell, when he notes that ‘hundreds of teachers are appointed because they happen to be known to the managers from childhood, and are of good moral character. Their aptitude for teaching their tastes or habits of business are rarely considered.’³⁶⁵ Newell’s observation is interesting as it both points toward candidates who entered the teaching profession yet also speaks to a wider concern expressed surrounding the nature of those entering the profession.

The following observations from Head Inspector Keenan detail the unusual route to national teaching that some candidates took. Regarding the teacher of Bow (sic) Island, Lough Erne, the Inspector notes:

³⁶⁴ CNEI (1857) *The Twenty-fourth Report...for 1857*, [2456-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., Vol. 1, 151.

³⁶⁵ CNEI (1857) *The Twenty-fourth Report...for 1857*, [2456-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., Vol. 1, 213.

Teacher not trained; age fifty-six; appointed under National Board this year only; has been teaching since the year 1828, under various societies, the “London Hibernian”; the “Church Education” &c.; is utterly incompetent.³⁶⁶

Keenan goes on to write that the teacher was subsequently dismissed by the Commissioners. Clearly, this teacher’s earlier experiences under different educational societies did not lend weight to his position. In Keenagh Female National School, in Donegal, Head Inspector Keenan notes:

Teacher not trained; class 2; an industrious and respectable person; she has been teaching for thirty-five years, having commenced in 1822, under the London Hibernian Society. She was trained in Kildare Place, in the year 1825.³⁶⁷

Again, this teacher was subsumed into the national education system having first worked in the London Hibernian Society and later trained in the Kildare Place Society. Some twelve kilometres north of Donegal is Tory Island where Head Inspector Keenan describes the national teacher and the variety of roles he undertook prior to becoming a national teacher. The teacher, Keenan writes, is:

not trained; a probationer; fifty three years of age; commenced life as a labourer in a lead mine; was for twelve years so employed; was then for two years assistant to an Ordnance party; then became a labourer again, and went regularly to England, for six years to reap the harvest; was appointed, in 1841, to Meenacladdy National School, remained in it for two years; was then dividing (surveying) the country for eight years; in 1851, was appointed for the second time to Meenacladdy National School; remained 2¼ years in it; was dismissed by his manager; in the beginning of 1854, acted as substitute for a female teacher in training, was appointed to this (Tory Island) school in August, 1854. I examined him and found him utterly ignorant of grammar, and in other respects so deficient, as to disqualify him for the lowest class. If, however, he is dismissed, I fear there can be no successor to him obtained; no high classed teacher would expatriate himself and endure the miseries of the island.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ CNEI (1857) *The Twenty-fourth Report...for 1857*, [2456-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., Vol. 1, 150.

³⁶⁷ CNEI (1857) *The Twenty-fourth Report...for 1857*, [2456-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., Vol. 1, 153.

³⁶⁸ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-xx], H.C., Appendix B, Vol.1, 181.

Keenan's description of the teacher on Tory Island, though lengthy, is useful as it speaks to an individual employed in one of the most remote areas of Ireland. The teacher here was perhaps employed based on his literary skills and his past experience with the National Ordnance Surveying Team.³⁶⁹ The skills gleaned through such life experiences, while not ascribing to those which might be learned under the national system, were deemed sufficient to warrant his employment in this instance. The national teacher on Tory could not therefore be characterised as the usual candidate in the role of national teacher, yet in this instance the import of filling the post far outweighed the intellectual capacity of the teacher employed. There is also a clear level of dissatisfaction and perhaps even discomfort evident in the Inspector's observations here regarding the teacher on Tory Island. The teacher is described as 'utterly ignorant' and 'deficient' in his knowledge. The comparison drawn between the lifestyle on Tory and that which 'a high classed teacher' would enjoy are further indication of the negative views of untrained teachers. Ultimately, the determination of the Commissioners to ensure that every corner of Ireland, no matter how remote, was populated by the national system of education surpasses the standards required on this occasion.

It is worth observing here the reluctance of the Commissioners and the underlying ethos within the system to approve teachers who were not a product of either the national schools or the training system in Marlborough Street. An observation by Head Inspector, Dr Newell in 1856 supports this, when he notes the challenge:

To induce well-educated and talented men to take to teaching as a respectable and lucrative profession-
to make it worth the while of parents in easy circumstances, to procure for a portion of their children,

³⁶⁹ See Ó Cionnaith, F. (2024) *The Origins of Ireland's Ordnance Survey*. Dublin: Four Courts Press; Doherty, G.M. (2004) *The Irish Ordnance Survey: history, culture and memory*. Dublin: Four Courts Press; Andrews, J.H. (1975) *A Paper Landscape: The Ordnance Survey in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

the education and training necessary to fit them to become really good and valuable teachers, and thus to raise up a supply from which vacancies in schools could at any time be properly filled up.³⁷⁰

A further observation on island teachers is offered in connection with the teacher on Innisfree Island, again off the northern coast. The inspector describes him as, ‘Not trained; age thirty-six; class 3; manner very good; teaches mechanically; scholarship very humble, but a painstaking and useful man.’³⁷¹ The key phrase here being the inspectors appraisal that the teacher is both ‘painstaking and useful’, indicating a willingness on the teacher’s behalf to undertake the work and apply himself to the task in hand, along with the inspector’s satisfaction that he is ‘useful’ and can contribute to attaining the ultimate aim of civilising the Irish. The Inspector writes:

The schoolmaster’s history is curious: he was born and educated in Doncaster, in England; served his time to the tailoring trade; itinerated to London, Dublin, and Derry; went from Derry to the coast of Donegal; taught private schools for five years in the islands of Inniscarra and Innisail; was appointed to his present school (Innisfree) in 1849; got married in 1853; is worth only £17 a-year, and appears to be very happy and content upon it.³⁷²

The concept of travel or origins in a country outside of Ireland carried a certain level of distinction during this period, with the notion of experiences gained beyond Ireland indicating a degree of competency which might be welcomed within the national system. This may have been a deciding factor in this national teacher’s appointment.

In concluding this section on the selection, character and respectability of the national teacher, it is important to be mindful of a number of points in relation to the evidence discussed thus far. First, the initial outline of teacher identity within the confines of the national schools

³⁷⁰ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C., Vol.1, 41.

³⁷¹ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C., Vol.1, 219.

³⁷² CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C., Vol.1, 219.

originated with Stanley's Letter. Therein, the parameters were drawn and the subsequent development of these points as laid down by Stanley was expanded by the Commissioners. This saw a highly regulated and restrictive model emerge around anyone who became a national teacher. The desire to control the national teacher's identity, while possibly not overt, was twofold. The teacher could not embody or replicate in any fashion earlier iterations of teachers in elementary schools, whether public or more especially private, in Ireland. In tandem with this was the belief and conviction that the national teachers could effect social change among the lower classes in Ireland, which largely consisted of the Roman Catholic poor. Both of these points significantly impacted on the construction of emerging Irish national teacher identity.

It is important to recall here also that elements of contemporary identity theory, as discussed earlier in Chapter Three, such as those concepts of integration as outlined by Adams and Marshall³⁷³ in Section 3.2.1 and presentations of behavioural norms, attitudes, beliefs and values as considered by Stets and Burke,³⁷⁴ concentrated the researcher's foci around the central contributory elements to revealing the identity of the national teacher between 1831 and 1871. Equally so, the reader must note that without the rules and regulations enforced by the system, these characteristics and unique points of identity would not have emerged and coalesced to form the Irish national teacher identity.

As the 1850s were drawing to a close, there is less attention accorded to the national teacher's character within the official reports and a greater level of concentration centred on salary and

³⁷³ Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442.

³⁷⁴ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

living conditions. This is perhaps unsurprising as the national system had been in existence a little under thirty years at this point and it can be understood that those particular desired qualities which the Commissioners sought, and the Inspectors encouraged, were by now largely embedded within the system. In support of this District Inspector Bradford, in his report to Head Inspector Fleming, says, ‘the teachers are persons of good character and, (except a few eccentric masters of the old school) respected in the locality.’³⁷⁵ Therefore, it seems plausible that those who had entered national teaching through a route other than that prescribed by the Commissioners had, at this stage, been largely replaced by those who had received their education within the national education system and that the parameters around national teacher identity by this stage were firmly affixed.

4.5 Conclusion

The social origins, selection and character of the Irish national teacher between 1831 and 1871 have been considered in this chapter. These form core contributory elements within the emerging identity of the national teacher. The chapter commenced by outlining aspects of elementary education and teacher identity prior to the establishment of the national system in Ireland in 1831 to augment the contextual overview provided in Chapter Two of the thesis. This is followed by an examination and discussion of the social origins of the majority of the national teachers. The distinctive elements of Irish national teacher identity were then considered in light of the parameters which governed the selection and training process, and ultimately influenced the national teacher’s emerging identity between 1831 and 1871.

³⁷⁵ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C., Vol.1, 239.

It is clear that the origins of very many of the national teachers in Ireland between 1831 and 1871 were located among the lower classes of Irish society. Following the establishment of the national system, teachers who could be subsumed into the emergent system were likely to have varying educational backgrounds and experiences. While perhaps far from ideal in the view of those tasked with developing this new system, the Commissioners were not so short-sighted as to turn down applicants, unless their competency fell below the minimum requirements. The system could not function without teachers and accordingly, early teachers to the national system came from diverse backgrounds, some with previous experience such as those who had taught in the Hedge Schools or other providers of elementary education, and also some who could profess only literacy ability but little education experience, as some of the examples noted. Whatever the background, the Commissioners ensured through the application of rule and regulation that the identity of these teachers existed within carefully constructed parameters, which to a large extent rendered the national teachers anonymous. The scarcity of source material which directly attests to teacher identity in an individual sense supports this. This invisibility around the Irish national teacher affected both sexes and while the majority of dialogue focuses on the men within the system, women are largely invisible, at least in description. Some references are made but the majority of material which considers female teachers is only present in numerical format.³⁷⁶

It is important to consider that, as O'Donovan writes, while the Irish system of national education was one of the first of its kind within the English-speaking world, it may also have been the first to engender a concept of teacher identity and implement this using a 'top-down'

³⁷⁶ This is primarily available in the findings of the Powis Commission. The returns for 1867 noting that of a total of national teachers in Ireland at this time 56.6% were male and 43.3% were female. Data pertaining to the gender divide between 1831 and that gathered by Powis in 1867, is largely inconsistent. See Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 240.

approach.³⁷⁷ This resulted in the parameters outlined by Stanley being employed and enforced by the CNEI and potential candidates ‘fitted’ to the role of Irish national teacher. Once the national system became embedded in Ireland, it began to act successfully as a socially reproductive mechanism whereby those applicants who sought a position as a national teacher were carefully drawn from within the schools. As the national system of education was envisaged as a system of education for the Roman Catholic poor, it can be no surprise that in the early decades of the system, apart from those teachers who taught in schools before the advent of the national system, the majority of the national teachers emanated from the ranks of the humble farmer, peasant and labouring classes and those of small shopkeepers in urban settings. Such individuals were invisible in the scale and narrative of histories written during this time.

The hierarchical nature of the imperial structure, tried and tested within the empire, was arguably more effective in a covert manner within the sphere of national education in Ireland than any other acculturating or proselytising practices undertaken over previous centuries. Indeed, the potential benefits perceived by those who sought a position as a national teacher outweighed any restrictions on teacher identity, being simply understood as criteria for the post. At a certain level, this engendered compliance, which meant candidates for the role of national teacher were malleable within the new system. As discussed, the initial conditions laid down in Stanley’s Letter around the nature of the teacher’s employment were expanded, entrenched and enforced by the Commissioners in the national education system, through the Inspectors and the school managers. The continual concern with character and suitability is largely a hallmark of the majority of the Inspector’s reports, which presumably strove for high quality

³⁷⁷ O’ Donovan, *Stanley’s Letter*, 358.

entrants but also to replicate the expectations of the Commissioners, the national system and as will be considered later, the churches. While the Head Inspectors tended to be more prolific in their descriptive output regarding the early teachers in the system, it is noted they were largely in agreement regarding the character of the national teacher. This was aligned to the overall tone of the rules and regulations of the CNEI as well as the points noted in Stanley's Letter.

This augmented desired character traits such as 'respectability', which became embedded in the Irish national teacher identity. This is a crucial aspect within the theoretical construct of identity,³⁷⁸ as those individuals who became the national teachers had little to lose and much to gain. Recognising that the initially disparate elements which characterised those who became national teachers in the early decades had begun to coalesce, resonates with those theoretical constructs of identity discussed earlier in Chapter Three. Essentially, Schwartz's articulation of Eriksonian theory which highlights dissonant elements of identity as coalescing to contribute to a fixed representation of identity can be seen here in this chapter.³⁷⁹ This data is further supported by those shared elements of identity outlined by Baumeister and Muraven³⁸⁰ for example, who recognise that when people begin to actively make choices around their presentation and lifestyle they are, in effect, aligning themselves to a discrete group, ultimately resulting in a shared identity. With many originating in humble circumstances, the opportunities for the national teachers social advancement and a better lifestyle were enabled by the national education system. While not all succeeded, the greater part did, giving rise to a unique and

³⁷⁸ See Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

³⁷⁹ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

³⁸⁰ Baumeister and Muraven, *Identity as adaptation*, 405-416.

coherent group with a shared identity within nineteenth century Irish society. The status and social class of the national teacher are examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE STATUS AND SOCIAL CLASS OF THE NATIONAL TEACHER

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the developing status and social class of the national teacher is examined. Again, this aspect of the national teacher's identity is informed by those contemporary theoretical concepts on identity developed initially by Tajfel,³⁸¹ which were later expanded and developed by theorists such as Adams and Marshall,³⁸² and Mollenhauer and Freisen.³⁸³ Adams and Marshall discuss social identity theory where collective or social identity represents aspects of self that have been integrated from the social system—those that identify an individual with the group (or cultural context) to which he or she belongs,³⁸⁴ while Mollenhauer and Freisen note the importance of developing a *habitus*, which is populated by people who hoped to improve their social status.³⁸⁵ The elements of status and social class within Irish communities of the nineteenth century are important aspects in understanding the Irish national teacher's identity.

As in the previous chapter, a brief contextual focus is offered here in Section 5.2 to assist the reader's understanding of teacher status and social class prior to 1831. The chapter then moves to examine these elements of national teacher identity from the inception of the national system to the conclusion of this study in 1871. Both elements are examined simultaneously as in many instances the data presents opportunities to examine the elements in this fashion and to split

³⁸¹ Tajfel, *Intergroup Behavior*, 401-466.

³⁸² Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442.

³⁸³ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten Connections*, 127.

³⁸⁴ Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442:431.

³⁸⁵ Mollenhauer and Friesen, *Forgotten connections*, 127.

them within the data would distort both the data and the narrative. Those precepts of respectability which were envisaged as being a core aspect of the national teacher identity and which were considered in Subsection 4.4.6 of the previous chapter are discussed further here in Section 5.3.1. Evidence which points to the inconstancy of the national teacher's social status during the research period is examined in Section 5.3.2, before moving to Section 5.3.3 to discuss the national teacher's potential influence and visibility in the community at this time.

The issue of remuneration which was a key contributor to the social mobility of the national teacher is examined in Section 5.3.4. This is followed by Section 5.3.5 detailing observations on teacher's alternative employments in the community which supplemented incomes and extended their social reach. The final sections from 5.3.6 to 5.3.8 consider national teacher identity as, arguably, it begins to enter a more assured phase. Examples of this are considered in the development of the national teacher's associations and a platform for the national teacher's voice in the shape of the ITJ. The National Teacher's Association, which later became the INTO is also noted here. The involvement of national teachers in social unrest is discussed in Section 5.3.9, as an example of how the teachers were potentially extending their influence in communities in tandem with the growth of the teacher's associations, before a conclusion is offered in Section 5.4, to summarise the chapter and assess the primary points made here.

The sources utilized to inform this chapter again draw heavily on the reports of the Inspectorate to the Commissioners of National Education, along with excerpts from the findings of the Powis Commission. These are reinforced by extracts from the ITJ and some material from the Irish Crime Records, which references those teachers incarcerated during the Fenian Rising of 1867. These offer some further insights into the status and social class of the national teachers

as perceived through an official lens, while also serving as a barometer for the Irish national teacher's position in wider society at this time.

Finally, the range of material examined here to uncover the status and social class of the Irish national teacher is noticeably broader than that examined in Chapters Four and Six. This is predicated by the availability of material in this regard and also the strength of this discrete element of national teacher identity. It is also arguable that collective identities, especially given the locus of the research, are more easily established as the data recorded at that time concentrates on collective identities and groups. Indeed, at a more conceptual level it can be argued that the retention of such data aligned with imperial narratives and group identities. This certainly appears to be the case when considering the breadth of evidence encountered over the course of this research.

5.2. Contextual overview for this chapter

5.2.1 Teacher status and social class in communities prior to 1831

As noted within Section 2.4 of Chapter Two, elementary education was available in Ireland in varying formats prior to the establishment of the national system in 1831. Voluntary societies and schools grounded in proselytism, along with the ubiquitous Hedge Schools, were present. While earlier analysis focused on the social origins, selection and character of the national teachers, points of interest in relation to teachers' status and social class are discussed here. While as discussed in Sections 2.4 and 2.5 of Chapter Two, prior to the development of the national system the influence of the teacher within communities was recognised and commented on by visitors to Ireland and, accordingly, the importance which the Irish people attached to education was also noted. While this was tempered by the penal restrictions on

education up to the late eighteenth century this desire remained present within Irish communities.³⁸⁶ The teacher was central to the delivery and effectiveness of this education in poorer Irish communities and therefore their social status was recognised.

Within Section 2.5 of Chapter Two, a contextual outline on teachers before 1831 was outlined for the reader. This is worth briefly expanding here in respect of those teachers who taught in the Hedge or pay schools as they were known. The emphasis accorded accounts of the Hedge School teachers is warranted as they best represent those teachers who taught the poorer communities at this time and, arguably, it is important to reiterate this link for the reader prior to examining the social status and class of the national teacher. The work of P.J Dowling on the Irish Hedge Schools was referenced earlier in Section 4.2.1 of Chapter Four. There, Dowling draws on early character assignments for the Hedge School teacher with reference to his standing and influence in the community. Briefly then some further detail from that extract is included here, which positions the Hedge School teacher within the broader context of community. Dowling writes:

He is the scribe, as well as the chronicler and the pedagogue of his little circle; he writes their letters and derives from this no small degree of influence and profit, but he has open to him another source of deeper interest and greater emolument, which he seldom has virtue enough to leave unexplored. He is the centre of mystery of rustic iniquity, the cheap attorney of the neighbourhood, and, furnished with his little book of precedents, the fabricator of false leases and surreptitious deeds and conveyances. Possessed of important secrets and of useful acquirements he is courted and caressed; a cordial reception and the usual allowance of whiskey greets his approach, and he completes his character by adding inebriety to his other accomplishments. Such is frequently the rural schoolmaster...³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ See Chapter Two, Section 2.2.

³⁸⁷ Dowling, *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, 89-90.

The social standing of the Hedge School teacher within the community is reinforced by Dowling's noting that his position affords him 'no small degree of influence', whereby the community turns to him for advice in legal matters and the conveyance of documentation in such matters. Dowling writes that the teacher is valued and his position accorded respect within the community with the people plying him with whiskey in regard of his efforts. An observation from Crofton Croker on his travels in the South of Ireland between 1812 and 1822 notes that 'the village schoolmaster forms a peculiar character; and next to the lord of the manor, the parson, and the priest, he is the most important personage in the parish.'³⁸⁸ Croker continues to discuss the social position of the schoolmaster, stating:

In an evening assembly of village statesmen he holds the most distinguished place, from his historical information, pompous eloquence, and classical erudition. His principles verge very closely indeed on the broadest republicanism.³⁸⁹

This description sees the Hedge School teacher occupying a central role within Irish communities in the period before the establishment of the national schools. These examples serve to reinforce the centrality of the teacher as a persona within the Irish community at this time. Arguably, this status was replicated in the persona of the Irish national teacher, who assumed the role previously occupied by the Hedge School teachers in communities. The desired precepts for the national teacher which were discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.7 and which foreground the analysis in this chapter are reinforced in the following section.

5.2.2 Perceptions of national teacher status

In discussing the origins and selection of the national teachers in Chapter Four, elements of their character were also discussed. Those characteristics outlined as desirable by the

³⁸⁸ Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 326-329.

³⁸⁹ Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, 326-329.

Commissioners were believed central to the impact the national teachers would have on their pupils on a daily basis. This was underpinned by a greater need from the imperial standpoint of developing peaceful communities across Ireland whereby the national teacher as an agent of Empire would be ‘imbued with a spirit of peace, of obedience to the law, and of loyalty to his sovereign.’³⁹⁰ Consequently, this also impacted on the official status of the teacher, although, given the longstanding respect which the poorer communities in Ireland held for education, it is unlikely that the national teacher’s standing within communities was ever reduced to the point where they had little or no influence. This element of teacher social class and status also fortified the contributory elements of Irish national teacher identity.

The Commissioners ensured that candidates for the position of national teacher would instil these values in communities by outlining their requirements for those who wished to become teachers at the outset of the new system, thus adding a further layer to shape the identity of the Irish national teacher identity. Historians of education in Ireland during the twentieth century in assessing the status of the national teacher note:

The teachers were on the lowest rung of the organizational ladder. Although the system could not run without them one would never have surmised this fact from observing the way they were treated... They were not treated as civil servants and were treated as day labourers rather than educated men. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century they remained unrepresented, unappreciated cogs in the system.³⁹¹

The position of the teacher in the early decades of the national system of primary education is characterised by such descriptions. Despite the centrality of the teacher’s role within the

³⁹⁰ CNEI (1853) *The Twentieth Report...for 1853*, [1834-XXX], H.C., 50.

³⁹¹ Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 154.

national education system, this role was seen as functionary. In support of this Coolahan writes that:

At a local level he benefitted from the tradition of the hedge school master, which held the teacher-the man with the knowledge and the learning-in a position of relatively high status. On the other hand, by the world of officialdom, he was treated in a rather perfunctory manner and pains were taken to impress upon him that he ought not to have ideas above his station, which was the giving of elementary education to the children of the common poor.³⁹²

This juxtaposition of role which the Irish teacher assumed between the ‘world of officialdom’ and the ‘tradition of the hedge school master’ placed the early teachers of the national schools in an invidious position between the superintendence and bureaucracy of empire, and the demands of the local community. Whilst education was recognised as valuable by the Irish, the role of the early national teacher initially straddled these two poles, between officialdom and tradition. By instigating a new system of national education across the island of Ireland, the Imperial administration immediately pitched the identity of the early national teachers into a permutational sphere, where all earlier conceptualisations and possible elements of teacher identity could compete for position. By initiating parameters and ideologies which the teachers had to adhere to the Commissioners were contributing to an early dystonic state of identity formation; in essence, adding conditions and regulations to an identity which only existed in a dissonant state. Recalling Schwartz’s theoretical concepts outlined in Chapter Three, this is noted as a necessary precursor to the formation and coalescence of identity in contemporary conceptualisations of identity formation.³⁹³

³⁹² Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 30.

³⁹³ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58; Berman, A.M., Schwartz, S.J., Kurtines, W.M. and Berman, S.L. (2001) The process of exploration in identity formation: the role of style and competence. *Journal of Adolescence (London, England)*, 24(4), 513-528.

The position of the national teacher then at the outset of the national system was an unusual one. In respect of the focus of this chapter, there was a conscious effort to discard earlier iterations of teacher identity, such as that of the Hedge School teacher and develop a new type of teacher within the national system in Ireland. With this in mind the national teacher's social class and status entered a state of flux with the onset of the national system of education. Issues around remuneration, social class, undertaking alternative employment within the community and the teacher's dwellings, and general appearance, which will be discussed here, all contributed to this multi-faceted and nuanced emergence of Irish national teacher identity in the period 1831 to 1871.

The status and social class of the national teacher from differing perspectives are examined here. Numerous examples are offered in support of this. The concept of respectability is noted at the outset of this section and this is followed by examples which attend to aspects of the national teacher's status and their standing in the community. It is important to note that these elements have been isolated here for the purposes of maintaining focus and assisting in the interpretation of the ample material available.

5.3 Status and social class of the national teacher

5.3.1 Precepts of respectability

Accounts of teacher status and social class in the first twenty years following the establishment of the national system are quite scarce within official correspondence, with the focus placed squarely on the development of the system and its administration. Therefore, the national teacher and class attributions for the national teacher are largely invisible at this time. The following reports, commencing here in 1850, allow the reader to consider aspects of the status

and social class of the national teacher within Irish communities where the national schools were located.³⁹⁴ The focus within the extracts utilised here is informed by those contemporary theoretical lens noted in Chapter Three when discussing the methodology. Specifically, these attend to aspects of respectability and shared concepts which would engender the development of a distinctive social group, such as the national teachers.

The Seventeenth Report of the Commissioners of Education then, for the year 1850, includes the following account from Inspector Macready which was discussed earlier in Chapter Four, albeit with a differing focus. Macready observes that ‘the neighbourhood’ around Coolkinny (sic), Co. Antrim, ‘is very poor,’ but when considering the sister and brother who teach in the national school he observes that ‘they seem a very respectable, well conducted pair, and are, I believe, much esteemed for their probity and general moral worth.’³⁹⁵

Macready’s extract positions these teachers within the community as models of decorum and good behaviour, which as noted earlier were key traits desired and prized by the Commissioners. In describing them as ‘very respectable’ and ‘well conducted’, along with possessing ‘general moral worth,’ the Inspector is outlining those elements of character which will have a positive impact in the community. A central premise of the system of national education was the inculcation of loyalty to the British Empire and as discussed earlier, it was hoped the national teachers would be suitable role models for the poorer people across Ireland.

³⁹⁴ See Lougheed, K. (2012) Ireland and the Geography of the National Education System In: Dickson, D., Pyz, J. and Shepard, C., eds. (2012) *Irish Classrooms and British Empire: Imperial Contexts in the Origins of Modern Education*, Dublin: Four Courts Press. Lougheed’s chapter offers a comprehensive outline of the geographical spread of the national schools.

³⁹⁵ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 125.

Dr. Newell, one of the Head Inspectors within the national system of education, writing in 1855, considers the status of the teacher saying:

The National Teacher should hold a social position not inferior to that of a clergyman or a physician: to ensure consideration and respect he must be a person of decent habits, of respectable appearance, and possessed of a large stock of knowledge. His business is not merely to teach the rising generation reading, writing, and the other branches of popular education, but also cleanliness, genteel habits, &c.³⁹⁶

The Inspector's observations here epitomise the perceived role and status of the national teacher in the early decades of the national system. While performing the regular duties of a teacher, the national teacher must also be visible within the community and inculcate those habits amongst the lower classes of obedience to the law and those in authority, which would further engender compliance with imperial administration. It is also likely that the imperial administration recognised the influence which the Hedge School teachers had on Irish communities and were likely anxious to curb any potential for a repetition of similar practices within the new system, whilst at the same time utilising the potential of teachers to influence the Irish.

It is also clear that the UK administration understood the desire for education among the Irish poor could be harnessed and diverted through an imperial framework to create loyal citizens within the Empire, as noted in Section 5.2.1 of this chapter. More nuanced elements of Newell's commentary consider concepts of cleanliness and gentility, recognised here as traits of civilised society, which were societal necessities for the Irish if they were to be successfully assimilated into the British Empire. Dr. Newell reinforces his understanding of the status of the national teacher by noting:

³⁹⁶ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., 42.

Now, it is well known that good example is one of the best means of teaching; and to do this the teacher should be possessed of the means of being suitably dressed, of having a neat respectable dwelling, so that his manner, appearance, and domestic habits, may be a model in his locality.³⁹⁷

The focus here on visible attributes which would influence behaviour and engender perceptions of respectability can be seen in the references to suitable clothing and a well-built house. The Inspector goes on to say:

These, in my mind, are the means of raising the status of the National Teacher; and I know in my own knowledge, that the best classes of society are beginning to respect him, because they see he is fairly educated, and much superior in respectability and mental acquirements to the class of teacher they were formerly acquainted with.³⁹⁸

In drawing comparisons with ‘the best classes of society’, the Inspector is both projecting his desires for the national teacher to ascend in status and society, as well as making the reader aware of the opportunities that the national system of education has created for the Irish people. The veiled reference to the Hedge School teachers intends to heighten the reader’s awareness of the benefits and advantage of being at one with the Empire. Newell continues to explain how this social advancement has been hindered by the inclusion of teachers who had not received their training within the national system of education or who had not been educated within the national schools and had transitioned to the national system from earlier providers of elementary education. Such teachers have been discussed and considered in the earlier chapter on national teacher origins in Section 4.4.2. Head Inspector Dr Newell writes:

The Irish teacher was formerly ill-qualified for his calling, he was badly paid, almost his only remuneration being his board and lodging in the houses of his pupils, his position was only one step removed from that of a beggar, he was looked upon by the people with contempt, and that notion of the teacher’s social position is still retained by several of them.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., 42.

³⁹⁸ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., 42

³⁹⁹ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., 42.

While Newell's commentary here is useful in establishing a provisional class attribution for the national teachers, it cannot be taken as wholly true. While the teachers themselves may have emanated from the poorer classes of society, it is unlikely they were devoid of respect in Irish communities, given the value placed on education among the poorer sections of the population. The numbers of children accounted for within Hedge Schools alone prior to the foundation of the national system would hardly support this.⁴⁰⁰ It is more likely that in promoting the national system as a benefit of empire, it fell to the Inspectors and indeed anyone intimately involved with the new national education system to denigrate all earlier manifestations and conceptualisations of teachers who delivered elementary education. It is also likely that Newell's own bias is reflected in his description here of the early national teachers. In comparing them to near-beggars, Newell is highlighting his own social status and perceptions of the early teachers.

5.3.2 *Inconstant status*

An excerpt from Inspector Craig with responsibility for the Strabane district in the year 1858, considers the status and social class of the national teachers. The Inspector writes:

It is surprising how teachers in a low class, who have families to support, can eke out their slender means; life must be with them a constant struggle. The position of a teacher is, in other respects, a very trying one...(he)...is not considered sufficiently respectable to be admitted in to the society of the middle classes.⁴⁰¹

According to Inspector Craig the national teachers while largely emanating from the lower classes are now in a difficult position due to their undertaking the role of national teacher; being neither of the lower classes nor judged of sufficient standing to be considered middle class. It

⁴⁰⁰ See Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 10.

⁴⁰¹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 111.

can be argued that at this point the identity of the national teacher was fluctuating. However, Inspector Craig's colleague, Mr. Patterson, writing in respect of the Belfast district, contradicts this, noting:

The teachers are, as a class, making improvements to their proper business; they seem to be more devoted to it, they are, with scarcely any exceptions, most respectably conducted; and they seem to be respected in their own localities...it may be expected that teachers will gradually join the ranks from classes that hitherto considered the occupation as rather beneath them.⁴⁰²

Arguably, Patterson's observations on the teacher's devotion to their occupation, are simply reflecting an identity which was developing and becoming embedded in practice. The upward trajectory of the national teacher's social status would serve to affirm and copper-fasten this identity. Yet, this was not always the case and the Inspectors' reports are littered with examples which highlight the juxtaposition of the national teacher's lot. These are underpinned by the recurring theme of respectability as a key elements of the national teacher's position within local communities. The following examples from the Twenty-fifth Report of the Commissioners provide ample evidence to support this. Mr. O' Galligan, a District Inspector, notes that 'the position of the teacher is regarded, if not a remunerative office, at least as a useful and highly respectable one.'⁴⁰³ O' Galligan goes on to write that:

Even under the most favourable circumstances, however, it too rarely happens that the teacher is provided from his school alone with an income adequate for the maintenance of his family, in a manner suitable for a person of his intelligence and education. Hence in such cases he is often forced to devote his leisure hours to other employments; and as tuitions sufficiently remunerative are to be met with rarely, except in the neighbourhood of large towns, the culture of a small farm is generally added to his other occupations.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 112.

⁴⁰³ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 146.

⁴⁰⁴ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 146.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the concept of employment to supplement the income of the national teacher is discussed throughout the reports of the Inspectorate when considering the issues surrounding teacher salaries. The impact of this close link between the remuneration of the national teacher and their social status is a constant undercurrent throughout the observations of the Inspectors at the time. While District Inspector Galligan generalises as to the teacher's lot in this case, not all examples proffered by the reports isolate the teacher to such circumstances and therefore support the dichotomous nature of the existence of many of the national teachers. An observation made by Inspector Quinlan, also in the Twenty-fifth Report, notes that the teacher's social status is 'far, far below the position they ought to occupy in society.'⁴⁰⁵ Quinlan does recognise that 'a fortunate few...are more comfortably situated', whilst concluding that 'the social standing of the teachers appears to rank slightly above that of operative tradesmen, or small farmers, or shopkeepers.'⁴⁰⁶ District Inspector Bradford, who oversaw another district, writes:

Male teachers do not think of leaving the Board's service, but the unmarried schoolmasters (except the old) are dissatisfied with their position and look eagerly for schools in England, or an opportunity to emigrate. All the male teachers consider the salary to which they are likely to attain too small for their labour and acquirements. The social standing of the teachers is generally very low indeed. Their means of living very unsatisfactory; their houses, dress, and the appearance of their wives and children, those of a very unsatisfactory class.⁴⁰⁷

This Inspector considers the social status of the teachers as low, resulting from the varying salaries accompanying the role. It is also interesting to note this Inspector's concentration on the visibility of the teacher, when commenting on their 'house, dress and the appearance of their wives and children.' The suggestion that none of these are presented at a suitable standard to engender emulation in the community must be noted here. It is testament to the endurance

⁴⁰⁵ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 146.

⁴⁰⁶ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 146.

⁴⁰⁷ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 146.

of those employed within the national school system at this time that they continued to persevere within the system.

By 1858, ten years after the conclusion of the Irish Famine and 27 after the national school system was established, the position of the national teacher remained in a state of uncertainty. It is worth reiterating here the theoretical elements of modern identity theory which align with this interpretation of the national teacher's position at this time, as found in Section 3.2 of Chapter Three. There, Schwartz calls attention to the 'ego dystonic' elements of identity, whereby a dissonance exists when the individual cannot realise or inhabit a specific identity. While such concepts are not found historically, they provide a useful point to facilitate an analysis of the fluctuating national teacher identity at this time. As Inspector Craig's earlier reference noted, the national teacher though largely emanating from the humbler classes of society was 'deprived of the society so essential to his comfort as he is by education raised above the common people.'⁴⁰⁸ This is tempered by accounts of national teachers who had attained more lucrative positions in society at the time.

Examples of the inconstancy of national teacher social class and status are noted by Inspector Clarke in the Twenty-fifth Report when discussing the national teachers, where he writes, 'Generally speaking they rank with working tradesmen or the humbler class of farmer,'⁴⁰⁹ thereby reinforcing the understanding that the social status of the national teachers remained ambiguous and open to interpretation. Inspector Simpson, writing in the same year, noted that, 'As a body the teachers are devoted to the service; some conscientiously, others because change

⁴⁰⁸ See Subsection 4.3.1 of Chapter Four.

⁴⁰⁹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 148.

would not better their condition, and the remainder because they aspire to higher classes and hope for increased salaries.’⁴¹⁰ Simpson also states:

Their social standing is somewhat above that of the working farmer; but from their limited means, much below that which those occupying offices so important in their result should occupy. Their mode of living is for the most part frugal; and in poverty they endeavour to maintain the appearance of respectability. Some few have acquired small properties through hoarding; but the majority are dependent on the Board’s salary, and the miserable pittance raised from school fees.⁴¹¹

Simpson, it appears, like his contemporaries, focuses on those points uppermost in the mind of the Inspectors. Chiefly twofold by nature, they are centred primarily on the status of the national teacher within the system and how that status can be furthered, while second, they infer a not inconsiderable element of sympathy with the lot of the national teachers who staff the system. This is apparent in the rich descriptions of the teachers encountered and perhaps it might be argued occasionally, a level of concern around the loss of capable teachers from the system.

Further rich detail which considers the developing status of the national teacher and their social class is offered in the Twenty-fifth report by District Inspector M’Sheehy (sic), writing to Head Inspector Dr. Newell, who, as noted in Section 4.3.1 of Chapter Four had responsibility for the counties of Cork and Kerry, along with parts of Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. The District Inspector outlined the difficulties which were becoming apparent in securing teachers due to the poor levels of remuneration in the following extract:

To this district male teachers, at least, must be brought from other localities, as, owing to the present circumstances of the people, the schoolmaster’s position is too low to be sought by the sons of

⁴¹⁰ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 166.

⁴¹¹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 166.

tradesmen or small farmers...hence the recent vacancies have been filled by strangers to the district, with the significant exceptions of a few young men having physical defects.⁴¹²

M'Sheehy's comments lower the status of the teacher to below that of the small farmer, from among whose ranks it may be understood many of the national teachers had come. To further the gravity of the situation it is noted that some of the applicants were physically disabled or incapable in some fashion, yet they were still retained in the national system. The stigma around physical disability which was characteristic of nineteenth century thinking is worth noting here with one historian pointing out that 'The distinction between able and disabled bodies in Victorian culture was produced partly in terms of the distinction between men and women and beliefs about what "naturally" characterised each gender.'⁴¹³ In expanding this interpretation, the author notes that men who could not work due to a disability were reduced in society's view to that of equal status with the female sex and were accordingly, of lesser value.⁴¹⁴ Clearly, the position of national teacher had not yet reached the point where a societal view had been firmly affixed to the role as those who were physically incapacitated were not excluded from the post of teacher.

In respect of their personal characters in the Twenty-fifth Report, District Inspector M'Sheehy also writes:

Of the teachers, in their character as citizens, I am happily enabled to give the most favourable testimony. There is scarcely an exception to the steadiness and propriety of their conduct. Considering the smallness of their incomes, their social standing is decidedly respectable, and they appear to enjoy a fixedness of position that contrasts very strongly with the unsettled state of their brethren in the poorer

⁴¹² CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 167.

⁴¹³ See Holmes, M.S. and Michigan Publishing (2004) *Fictions of affliction: physical disability in Victorian culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 84.

⁴¹⁴ Holmes and Michigan Publishing, *Fictions of Affliction*, 84.

districts of the south and the west. It is very rarely, however, that they are found to be perfectly contented; and it is a fact worthy of note, that they are by no means anxious to bring up their sons to their own calling.⁴¹⁵

While evidently, the Inspector considers the teacher's personal character to be above reproach, it is the lack of suitable remuneration which he credits for the 'unsettled state' of the teachers in those poorer districts in Ireland. This is further reinforced by Newell's assertion that while initial acceptance and success of the national system saw applicants become national teachers, parental recognition of the low levels of salary which accompanied the post of national teacher would not encourage or sustain the national education system in Ireland. This is in direct contrast to the report provided by Inspector J.G. Fitzgerald in Co. Westmeath, who writes:

Several of the teachers are in occupation of a small quantity of land, in the cultivation of which they are assisted by the parents of the children, who sometimes in lieu of school pence, supply them with fuel, horse labour etc. Other teachers add to their incomes by land surveying, and not a few by tuitions. The teachers are a most respectable body, and no instance of bad conduct has come to my knowledge in reference to any one of them. They seem devoted to their business, as a profession, and are not at all anxious to leave it.⁴¹⁶

This particular commentary supports the contention that the teachers are 'a respectable body,' which reflects favourably on the national teacher within the community. The lowly rates of the national teacher's income can be seen as they engage with payment-in-kind or barter type arrangements such as the use of a horse, perhaps provided by a pupil's family in place of the school fee. What is telling from Fitzgerald's extract is his use of a collective term for the teachers; describing them as a 'body,' who are respectable despite their poverty, which indicates an increasing status among the national teachers. It also suggests that despite the national teacher being a singular figure within communities, a broader conceptualisation of

⁴¹⁵ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 167.

⁴¹⁶ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 167.

their identity was emerging. Reinforcing this is the report of District Inspector Mahony to Head Inspector P.J. Keenan, who writes:

As regards the teachers, I am gratified to state that their circumstances and position seem to be undergoing considerable improvement. Even amongst the poorest of them I am not now pained to witness symptoms which could scarcely escape observation some years ago. The gratuities and allowances to the older and more deserving, and the more general payment of school fees to all, in improving their condition, cannot fail to make them more earnest in their calling.⁴¹⁷

The most valuable insight from this extract is Mahony's use of the word, 'undergoing', which attests to the fluctuating and transitory nature of the national teacher's identity at this stage. In support of this, an observation by District Inspector Adair to the Head Inspector in the same report notes that, 'The National Teachers as a body, are well conducted and respectable. In some cases, however, poverty keeps them low on the social scale.'⁴¹⁸ The point regarding suitable remuneration for the teacher and the impact of this on their social status and class is considered in greater depth later in this chapter.

District Inspector Macauley reinforces this difficulty by commenting on the social standing of the teacher, writing:

Their social standing is a fictitious one, because their inadequate pay will not support a family, and enable a teacher to dress or appear in public as should a man who aspires to be considered superior to his neighbours; and his neighbours are shrewd enough to observe how the physical comforts are sacrificed to appearances; hence they are to be pitied rather than to be respected by those who are intimately acquainted with the reality of their position.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁷ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 205.

⁴¹⁸ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 206.

⁴¹⁹ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C. Appendix C, 292.

It is clear that Macauley recognises that the overall status of the national teacher was very low. However, Macauley's perception of the national teacher appears to see further than his colleague's consensus; that the national teachers are respectable. Macauley judges this as mere fiction when allied with the realities of their situation and salary. Assessing the social characteristics of the national teachers on appearance alone, it is clear that the desire to be seen as 'respectable' and as a separate class is embodied in the teacher's reluctance to be seen in garments that would suggest otherwise. This is also noted earlier in the national teacher's letter to the *Weekly Telegraph* in Subsection 4.4.6 of Chapter Four. This is in clear contrast to the description of the teacher offered later here in Subsection 5.3.4 by Head Inspector Keenan on the female national teacher at Drumbrick in Co. Leitrim whose appearance gave the Inspector cause to comment. A final contribution from District Inspector Currie for Downpatrick firmly positions some of the national teachers as individuals of note within localities:

As a class, the teachers present in their social status a fair example of what superior knowledge and intelligence are sure to obtain, in raising those in whom these qualities are found above their fellows in the same social grade, and by leading those whose pecuniary means would otherwise give them every advantage to regard them with respect and deference.⁴²⁰

Currie's somewhat tangled syntax, when unravelled, simply marries the teacher's level of intelligence to their financial wherewithal in raising their social status. He goes on to note the acceptance of these teachers into the company of the clergy and the doctor, which accompanies this elevated social status:

Hence it is the teacher, while mingling with the parents and friends of his pupils, is at the same time looked up to as one whose superior merits give him just claim to pre-eminence, and if only possessed

⁴²⁰ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C. Appendix D, 284.

of in fair measure of the characteristics of prudence and steadiness, find himself freely admitted into that inner circle of acquaintances that reckons among its members the clergyman and the physician.⁴²¹

Currie provides a caveat for this account by recognising that it is only those teachers who have reached the uppermost level of classification who are admitted in the company of doctors and priests.⁴²² It is worth recalling that not all national teachers were in a position to achieve the higher levels of classification as discussed in Chapter Two, Sections 2.7 and 2.8 and accordingly, could not ascend to a level within the community which would see them categorised in the same manner as the doctor or priest, creating further discord in the formation of their identity.

5.3.3 Influence and visibility in the community

The following observances by P.J. Keenan, Head Inspector, later Chief Inspector, also attend to the status of the national teacher and similar to those of his colleague, Dr. Newell, focus on elevating the teacher through recognition of the teacher's position by more established members of the community. Recognising the influence of the national teachers, Keenan writes:

Such persons as the National Teachers...cannot fulfil the duties of their position without exercising an important influence upon the masses of the people; and the more they are elevated in the social scale the more fruitful will be the moral power which they possess. In a country like this, where men admit none to companionship, unless upon the principle of a nicely balanced equality...⁴²³

Head Inspector Keenan's observances are both considered and perceptive. He recognises the status which teachers have within communities and the discrepancy between the existing status and the 'desired' status, as envisaged by the Commissioners. Nevertheless, he is also

⁴²¹ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C. Appendix D, 284.

⁴²² CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C. Appendix D, 284.

⁴²³ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C. Appendix G, 79.

empathetic towards the position which the national teachers find themselves in. On the one hand, the teacher, by the very dint of their occupation, find themselves set apart from the community in which they work, on the other, they are beginning to attain that identity which the Commissioners have developed, regulated and maintained for the national teacher. Keenan's encouragement of the managers, largely clerical, towards greater collegiality with the national teacher was ambitious in a fashion. While the managerial role was a necessary one, the frictions surrounding patronage and religious instruction as discussed in Chapter Six occasionally caused difficulty for the national teachers.

The manner in which the national teachers conducted themselves within their communities was actively and regularly monitored by the Inspectorate. This of course was reinforced by the Twelve Rules of the CNEI which, as noted in Subsection 4.4.4 of Chapter Four, ensured the national teacher's social activities were strictly curtailed. District Inspector Mr. Porter notes that, 'As a body the teachers maintain themselves with credit, commanding the consideration and respect of the circles and communities in which they move.'⁴²⁴ To expand on the earlier point which noted the national teachers being collectively described 'as a body' and thereby presenting a shared or group identity, it is worth highlighting Porter's point that the national teachers were 'commanding consideration' within communities. Indeed, it can be suggested that the national teachers were further recognised as a growing and distinct group within the local communities and society in which they worked; not alone recognised by their immediate superintending body, such as the Inspectorate, but also by the people in the community. This underpins the early imperial ambitions that the national teachers would engender loyalty to the empire and act as agents for harmony in communities, whilst also acknowledging that those

⁴²⁴ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 243.

elements of identity, initially idealised by the Commissioners, were now becoming entrenched in the identity of the national teacher.

Continuing disparities within the lives of the teachers are illustrated within the Twenty-sixth Report for the year 1859. The following example from District Inspector O' Driscoll reads:

The social standing of the teachers continues, I regret to say, in some parts very low (sic); in others it ranks higher than that of persons of similar means. Their dwellings correspond for the most part with those of the small farmers or tradesmen but are superior to them in the point of cleanliness.⁴²⁵

The inference here from O' Driscoll is that cleanliness is an attribute which may be taken in conjunction with education and its benefits, while his colleague District Inspector McSweeney observes:

The social position of the teachers is too high for the means they can bring to its support; all, or nearly all, are respected in the localities in which the scenes of their daily labours are cast, but few, very few, whose lot is envied.⁴²⁶

The Inspector recognises that the national teacher is respected within the community in which he teaches but is not envied. District Inspector Wilson writes in regard of the national teachers' social status that:

Their social position too, is unsatisfactory. Cut off by education from the society of the peasantry, they are denied access to any more elevated, and are thus isolated from all around. Their meagre salaries (poverty is, in many cases, the proper term) force on them modes of life inconsistent with that respectability which a teacher should always be able to maintain. Their houses are seldom comfortable and scarcely ever afford a suitable place for retirement and study. In some places dwellings are not able to be obtained in the neighbourhood, and they are obliged to walk several miles to and from their

⁴²⁵ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-XXVI], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 110.

⁴²⁶ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-XXVI], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 110.

schools, or are compelled to quarter themselves on the parents of the children, removing from week to week, a course entirely subversive of their influence.⁴²⁷

Wilson's comments on the position of the teacher here do not serve to edify the teacher in their role, rather they highlight the iniquities within the system as a whole. The rigid adherence to concepts of respectability, which is a singular feature of those involved in the administration of the national system, is commonplace throughout the reports of the Inspectors. The Inspectors' observation that education has set the teacher apart from the community is deeply rooted within imperialist values and the notion of education as a means for social advancement. This continually reinforced the idea that in order for the national teachers to have an effective impact on their pupils, they must be located at a slight remove from the community. This both encourages the notion of developing a separate social identity and group, as well as developing the influence of the national teacher, which according to Wilson, is gradually eroded on a weekly basis for those teachers who cohabit with their pupils' families.

The nature of the teacher's social class and status within the community remains a constant theme in the reports of the Inspectors. District Inspector Macauley, in his report to Head Inspector Dr Newell in 1858, draws comparisons with other professions in Irish communities which were recognised as distinctive by their office, writing:

Poorly remunerated with a social position inferior to that of the policeman or the bailiff, it can scarcely be expected that the teacher, whose sensibility is awakened and ideas elevated by even the limited education he receives, would not long for an opportunity of embracing some other avocation in life, which would bring with it the alluring hope of independence in youth, and a suitable competency for declining years. When the social position of the teacher shall have been raised to a par with the unquestioned utility of his office; when his dress, his dwelling, his diet, and his general comforts have

⁴²⁷ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-XXVI], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 111.

been an envy to his neighbour, and an object of ambition to the youth entrusted to his charge; then, and not till then, shall the teachers be what they ought to be—models for the imitation of those around them; earnest and devoted schoolmasters, attached to their schools and the pupils, as is the doctor to his patients, or the lawyer to his clients.⁴²⁸

In this instance, the Inspector looks to figures who occupy what might be described as similar positions to that of the national teacher. These were official positions, appointed by the government and maintained through hierarchical and often local structures, such as the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), or the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. Rather than drawing the comparison with the societal groups from which the national teachers originated, Macauley seeks to position the role of the teacher beyond that of the police, or similar governmental officials, clearly outlining his belief in the benefits and importance of education. This is further supported by the Inspectors' comparison between the national teacher and the doctor, and lawyer, both recognised as being socially superior to the position of not alone teachers but indeed many professions during the nineteenth century. As noted earlier, the import attached to teachers providing a point of reference as models for the imitation of those around them cannot be understated here.

The visibility of the national teacher in the community, as mentioned earlier by District Inspector Bradford, is a further aspect of the teacher's social status which is noted as a concern by the Inspectors. Their influence within communities is noted as being a central element to their effectiveness. The Inspectors note the need for the teacher to occupy a certain level of status in communities and this would be strengthened by the nature of their dwellings. The observations of District Inspector O'Callaghan outlined here in the Twenty-fifth Report also

⁴²⁸ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 206.

considers this visibility which should accompany the teacher's position, but which is hampered by their lack of money which then impacts on their dwellings. O'Callaghan writes:

The homes of the teachers are an evidence of their narrow means, being too effective in the appliance of neatness or convenience. An education superior to that of the labouring and farming population, and a certain amount of intellectual refinement, would, if other circumstances were present tend to elevate the social status, and refine the private habits, of our schoolmasters; but the cases involved in the necessity of trying to economize an income barely sufficient to obtain the necessaries of support, exclude all efforts for objects of mere refinement. The teachers' homes, accordingly, present no features of orderly propriety to distinguish them amidst the ordinary rural dwellings.⁴²⁹

Again, the concept of financial stability, which in the eyes of the administration should naturally result in 'propriety' and refined social habits, are closely tied to social class and upward mobility here by the Inspector. Equally interesting is the concept outlined by the Inspector that teachers, as a group, should live apart, by dint of the style of home they occupied, from the 'ordinary rural dwellings.' This infers that the Inspectors were actively contributing to the development of teacher identity as a separate group within Irish society. District Inspector O' Callaghan further reinforces this by saying:

Every teacher should have a house and garden beside his school; and the residence and the school house should be neatly enclosed, and form one harmonious whole, securing, at once, safety to the school property, and accommodation for the teacher, and presenting to the eye a pleasing object of taste, order, and usefulness.⁴³⁰

This preoccupation with regularity and presentation was a hallmark of the Inspectorate and derived in turn from the ethos which signalled both the essence of the Commissioners of National Education, and at a macro level, the imperial mindset. The tone of O'Callaghan's observation and desire for an element of control which could be exercised through education

⁴²⁹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 272-273.

⁴³⁰ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 272-273.

is amply evident in the adjectives of this extract. The school house and garden should be ‘neatly enclosed’, inferring a safe haven from the supposed haphazardness of the rural Irish communities in which the schools were established. These should be bastions of calm within localities, encouraging ‘harmony’, along with exposing to the rural community the benefits and beauty which accompanied such institutes. This would be evident in the ‘taste, order, and usefulness’ of the school buildings. The imperial mindset, which begat such civilising influences and tactics employed by the British Empire are acutely present in this extract from District Inspector O’ Callaghan. As one observer noted, the physical manifestation of the school buildings and indeed, perhaps residences for the national teachers, ‘symbolized the transformation of the state from an abstract set of power relationships into a physical entity,’ thus ensuring that Irish communities were infiltrated with elements of empire throughout the island.⁴³¹ The presence of the national teacher and their developing identity was closely tied to these practices.

A further observation which considers the status of the national teacher within the community is provided by District Inspector Robinson in 1858, who writes:

The social standing of the teacher is peculiar. Society does not appear to have allotted to him as yet any definite status, so that each teacher makes his own position, among the people with whom he lives. The standing and influence of a National teacher, therefore, are as varied as the characters, manners, appearances etc., of the teachers themselves.⁴³²

Robinsons’ observation is insightful, revealing the character of the national teacher at this point, twenty-seven years after the foundation of the national system of education, as still

⁴³¹ Loughheed, *Ireland and the Geography of the National Education System*, 8.

⁴³² CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 273.

ambiguous and developmental in nature. While the teachers may be described as ‘a body’ in the collective, it is, according to this Inspector, still only in name that they may be classed thus. It is likely that opportunities for teachers were dependent on their geographical location and the nature of the local economy, such as the examples noted on the island teachers in Section 4.4.6 of Chapter Four.

The most valuable points from Robinson’s extract are his noting the national teacher’s social standing as ‘peculiar’ and that ‘each teacher *makes* his own position.’ The emphasis here in respect of the formation of national teacher identity lies on Robinson’s use of the word ‘makes.’ While Robinson considers the peculiarity of the varying personalities and backgrounds which populate the national schools in the personage of the national teacher, he also highlights the crucial point that the national teacher is, in essence, engaged in a process of ‘making’ their identity at this time. The teacher most likely cannot be categorised as inhabiting a fixed identity within the community at this juncture. While this does not allow a conclusive identification of what constitutes national teacher identity at this point, it does facilitate the reader’s understanding that the identity of the national teacher was under development. It is worth recalling the theoretical understanding of identity outlined by Schwartz here,⁴³³ where arguably the ‘ego dystonic’ aspect of identity formation aligns with District Inspector Robinson’s observation, when he points to the peculiarity of the teacher’s social standing and their ‘making’ their own position. In this instance it is clear that the teacher, while occupying an undefined space within the construct of identity, is seeking to establish parameters around their identity. This required certain attributes, such as respectability, or the creation and sharing elements of a shared identity, to be trialled and accentuated. Ultimately, such experimentation

⁴³³ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

within the realm of identity theory lead to more assured presentations of national teacher identity.

The following statement from District Inspector Childs in the Twenty-fifth Report for the year 1858, is an important indicator of the transition of the national teacher identity towards a more assured status. The District Inspector writes, ‘their social standing is on the advance.’⁴³⁴ This, he outlines, is particularly true of teachers in urban areas, where ‘the incomes of good classed teachers are gradually coming to an equality with, and in some cases surpassing, that of clerks and shopmen.’⁴³⁵ The further advancement of the teacher as a distinct personality within these urban centres is reinforced by District Inspector Child’s comment that they now have ‘a position which years ago they did not possess.’⁴³⁶ The position of the national teacher in urban centres has been mentioned briefly in the concluding stage of Subsection 4.3.2 of Chapter Four. This is worth briefly expanding here as the difference and availability of data in respect of both teachers in both urban and rural settings is worth considering. While the researcher notes the majority of the population of Ireland was found in rural settings during the period in question, observations on the status of national teachers within urban settings are largely ignored. This is supported by the original remit of the CNEI which concentrates on the influence of the national teachers in the country parts of Ireland.⁴³⁷ This may be for a number of reasons. First, the numbers of teachers in rural settings outweighed those in urban centres. Second, the vast majority of the teachers in rural and very often isolated areas might be perceived as more susceptible to questionable moralities and loyalties to the Crown. The underlying imperial mindset which envisaged the civilising of peoples in what were considered wild or untamed parts of the country belied the approach of the Commissioners to ensure that those teachers in

⁴³⁴ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 274.

⁴³⁵ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 274.

⁴³⁶ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-xxv], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 274.

⁴³⁷ See Section 4.4.4 in Chapter Four.

the far-flung corners of the country were kept under observation by the Inspectorate. Finally, it may have been the case that because those teachers who were employed in national schools in towns and cities were much more visible to the institutes of authority and administration, commentary on national teachers in urban settings is much scarcer.

As discussed, the Inspectors continually recognised the need for the teachers to occupy a recognised position within the community, in order for them to be effective educators and at a more intrinsic level to impact on the social and moral behaviours of the children they taught. While the Inspectors viewed the teachers ‘as a body’, the teachers themselves were fettered by the desire of the Commissioners and concurrently, the Inspectors, to deliver education throughout Ireland. This was manifest in the classification system. Yet, the low level of remuneration offered to those at the lower end of the classification scale was not sufficiently great to improve these teachers’ social standing. Their status, such as it was, developed from their delivery of education. The general tone of the majority of the reports detailed here present an overview of the position of the national teachers as seen in the eyes of the Inspectorate. These descriptions are for the most part similar in nature, with regard to the observations of the Inspectorate, which are sympathetic to the lot of the national teacher. The reports differ when discussing the economic circumstances of the teachers encountered. This is closely aligned to the classification system employed by the Commissioners and the Inspectorate to encourage improved levels of educational competencies on the teacher’s behalf and resultingly on pupil outcomes. The next section examines this system and its impact on teachers’ salaries and consequently, their status in communities and attendant social class.

5.3.4 Issues of Remuneration

Within the early reports which the Inspectors provided to the Commissioners, there was a continued emphasis on initially the teacher's position, and later, their status. This is chiefly accompanied by a debate on the teacher's salary, which the Inspectors largely argue was insufficient and counter-productive in elevating the national teacher's status. The insufficient rates of pay which the early national teachers received impacted on the teachers in a number of ways. First, the national teachers experienced difficulties due to the tiered nature of the salary system. Male and female teachers were classified according to their abilities, from first to third class, with differing rates of pay at each level. An early record of the national teacher's pay scales for the years 1839-1840 illustrates the disparity between the scales, with a clear delineation also present based on gender.

Table 5.1 National teacher salary scales according to classification 1839.⁴³⁸

Classification	Male national teacher Per annum	Female national teacher Per annum
1 st class	£20	£15
2 nd class	£15	£12
3 rd class	£12	£10

In the Eighth Report for the year 1841, the Commissioners emphatically state, 'Fixed Salaries having been attached to each class, *no applications for a further increase will be hereafter entertained* (emphasis in original).'⁴³⁹ This suggests that applications were being made to the Commissioners for increased levels of remuneration within the first decade of the national

⁴³⁸ CNEI (1839) *The Sixth Report...for 1839*, [246-XXVIII], H.C. Appendix, 84.

⁴³⁹ CNEI (1841) *The Eighth Report...for 1841*, [398-XXIII], H.C. Appendix X, 123.

system. However, there does not appear to be substantial evidence available to support this. The following year sees somewhat of a *volte-face* by the Commissioners and in the appendix to the Ninth Report in 1842 assessment forms are provided for the Superintendent, of the school to ascertain whether or not salary aid should be provided to the teachers.⁴⁴⁰ The salary scale was substantially revised in 1848 and further complicated by the addition of divisions within the classifications. These were in force by 1851 with increases noted. The Commissioner's report for 1851 does not specify if there were separate or further divisions in respect of principalships. As seen below a delineation is made in respect of Assistant teachers.⁴⁴¹ As the national system developed, both the classifications and gendered nature of the salaries paid to the teachers remained in force.⁴⁴²

Table 5.2 National teacher salary scales from 1851.

Classification		Male national teacher	Female national teacher
		Per annum	Per annum
1 st class	1 st division	£35	£24
	2 nd do.	£28	£20
	3 rd do.	£24	£18
2 nd class	1 st division	£21	£16
	2 nd do.	£19	£15
3 rd class	1 st division	£17	£14
	2 nd do.	£15	£13
Probationary teachers		£11	£10

⁴⁴⁰ CNEI (1842) *The Ninth Report...for 1842*, [491-XXVIII], H.C. Appendix V-VI, 27-28.

⁴⁴¹ The varying terminology in respect of the teachers can, at times, be confusing. For example, in cases where there are two teachers in a school, it is generally the case that the principle teacher is the Principal and the second teacher was known as the Assistant teacher. This was nearly always divided along gendered lines as well, with the male teacher as the Principal and the female as the Assistant. Further categories such as those who were Probationers or Monitors are noted in Chapter Two in Section 2.7 on teacher training.

⁴⁴² CNEI (1851) *The Eighteenth Report...for 1851*, [1582-XLII], H.C., 21.

The Inspectorate saw the issues around the salary of the national teacher as a touchstone for teacher status within communities, arguing that insufficient rates of pay prevented the national teachers from attaining a social standing which would effectively influence the pupils they taught. Head Inspector Dr Newell, writing in 1853, noted with regard to the national teacher:

...he wants a position-he wants to be made respectable and respected- he wants social elevation. With few to render him any substantial aid, he has still fewer to whom he can apply for advice or sympathy. It is hard to expect that as a body the National Teachers can rise in the social scale when they receive such little countenance from those whose influence might be so salutarily (sic) exercised.⁴⁴³

Clearly, Newell accorded social mobility as a central element in affirming the status and identity of the national teacher. Noting the concentrated efforts of the system in pursuing training, examinations and qualifications, Newell aligns the social elevation and standing of the national teacher within the community with outward displays of financial success, which it might be argued would elevate the national teacher to the same level as the parish priest or the doctor. Newell appears to castigate these more socially respectable members of the community for their failure to engage with the national teachers and offer them ‘countenance’. As an agent of the Commissioners, it might be argued that Dr. Newell’s observations could be taken as indicative of a wider philosophy of empire, which encouraged improvement among the national teachers as a whole. Encouraging shared characteristics and traits within the body of national teachers would ensure closer ties with the British Empire and resultingly have a greater effect on Irish communities. This was a feature of the Commissioner’s remit from the outset of the system as noted earlier, where the national teachers would act as models for emulation within communities.

⁴⁴³ CNEI (1853) *The Twentieth Report...for 1853*, [1834-XXX], H.C., 545-546.

The development of these desired characteristics of respectability and elevated social status within communities, however, was hampered by the disparate rates of pay which the teachers received. The disparities in the national teacher's pay inhibited a shared national teacher identity and indeed, it was the national teacher's shared concerns around this which eventually contributed to strengthening their collective identity. In considering the links with contemporary identity theory here, the overly complicated classification system, amended in 1851, could be said to reflect the dissonance into which national teacher identity was cast, ultimately hampering efforts at developing and assuring the identity of the Irish national teacher. As a result, a more streamlined approach, if adopted by the Commissioners on behalf of the UK administration, might have resulted in a more effective manifestation of a shared identity. The following examples further highlight the inadequacies and disparities which arose as a result of remuneration and affected the national teacher's social status between the years 1831 and 1871.

Head Inspector J.W. Kavanagh, with responsibility for the districts of Kilkenny, Carlow, Queen's County (Offaly), Galway, Cork and Tipperary, amongst others, offers commentary regarding rates of remuneration shortly after the famine of 1845-48.⁴⁴⁴ This considers the impact of the salary scales on the national teachers and how many have elderly parents and relatives or families depending on them, along with the inadequacy of their salaries. Kavanagh writes:

The Commissioners can scarcely conceive the extreme privation and acute suffering through which the teachers have passed since the failure of the potato crop. In not more than five to eight cases in 100 is there any salary or local stipend granted by the landlord; patron or committee to the teacher...considering all these elements it is quite obvious that the remuneration afforded to the national

⁴⁴⁴ CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix XL, 208.

teacher is utterly inadequate to his social position and requirements, and calculated to restrict the influence of his teaching and example, by degrading him as a citizen and member of the community. I regret to have to state, that some of the teachers were necessitated to have to accept out-door relief from the Union; many died from fever caught in their schools; several of the unmarried have emigrated to America and at this moment there are many schools vacant...⁴⁴⁵

The Inspector's allusion to the Union here is referencing the Poor Law Unions which were established in 1838 to provide for the poor of Ireland.⁴⁴⁶ There is the understanding that in many cases there were dependents such as family members who survived due to the national teacher's employment. There is also an undercurrent of concern surrounding the social position of the teacher as understood by Head Inspector Kavanagh in this early extract following the Great Famine. It is likely that he recognised that the low levels of salary which the teachers received humiliated them in a fashion in the communities where they worked and ultimately this would not best serve the aims of the Commissioners, who envisaged the national teachers as role models.

As noted in Section 2.8 of Chapter Two, the establishment of the ITJ in 1868 provided a platform for national teachers to air grievances and issues surrounding the remuneration of the national teachers were highlighted in the ITJ in the very first issue published in January of 1868 with the editor writing:

many of them are paid considerably less than the wages of a laborer (sic)...The National Board does not, perhaps cannot, allow to the highest class of its teachers—men who would have to stand an

⁴⁴⁵ CNEI (1848) *The Fifteenth Report...for 1848*, [1066-XXIII], H.C. Appendix XL, 211.

⁴⁴⁶ Poor Law Ireland Act (1838). Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1838/act/56/enacted/en/print.html>

examination that would bother a bishop, and leave a cabinet minister dumbfounded--the wages of a carpenter.⁴⁴⁷

The issue of adequate remuneration pervaded all aspects of debate and discussion regarding the national teacher. The editorial in the first issue of the ITJ for January 1868, observes, 'And as is the payment, so is the position of the teacher', reflecting the consequences for the national teacher's position within society, which falls short of that which the local clergy enjoy, and results in the teacher being, 'despised by those who should venerate him.'⁴⁴⁸

Correspondence from the Strabane Teacher's Association dated October 7th 1867, is included in the first issue of the ITJ in January 1868, where the respective secretaries of that organisation outline their support for founding teachers' associations to further the position of the national teacher and address issues around salaries, among other issues.⁴⁴⁹ Chief among these concerns was to facilitate teachers with 'a more independent position in these schools and, emoluments which will enable them to maintain a state in society suitable to their office.'⁴⁵⁰ This is a notable statement within the construct of Irish teacher identity, as using the vocabulary of 'independence', indicates a desire for autonomy on the national teacher's behalf. Not alone does this articulate the desire by the national teachers for recognition but it also illustrates their awareness of their unique identity, within education and at a broader level in society.

As noted above, the low rates of salary received by the national teachers and the marginal increases over the early decades of the system impacted their social status and, accordingly, their class. Some issues remained which continually hampered the overall assertion of a fixed

⁴⁴⁷ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) January issue, 2. Dublin: National Library of Ireland.

⁴⁴⁸ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) January issue, 2.

⁴⁴⁹ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) January issue, 6.

⁴⁵⁰ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) January issue, 6.

national teacher identity. The obdurate nature of the classification system, for example, which required teachers to engage in extensive study to advance their classification, hampered social mobility. This was a long-standing aspect of the reports of the Inspectorate which continually considered the teacher's position in society and their 'respectability'. Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward writes:

The present rates of payment not only depress the teacher's life; they also affect his position, by putting him in unfavourable contrast with mechanics, the Constabulary, and even with agricultural labourers...The disproportion between the remuneration of the National teachers and others less well educated, tends to bring them into contempt...there is absent in the teachers the circumstances of good manners and proper dress, which go a great way toward civilising children.⁴⁵¹

Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward's observation here is not dissimilar to those offered over the previous thirty years by many of the Inspectors who recorded and returned their observations on the national schools. The concern around public perception of the national teachers and the subsequent consequences of this on their impact in communities echoes earlier submissions. That preoccupation with the imperial rhetoric of 'civilising' children and communities is still to the fore here.

A further difficulty which compounded the uncertainty around the teacher's social standing was the lack of pension or provision for old age and the Assistant Commissioner writes that, 'the workhouse registers are not without records of National teachers whose lives were ended within their walls'.⁴⁵² This, allied with the low scale of remuneration, was reflected in the public

⁴⁵¹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 129.

⁴⁵² Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 130.

perception of the teacher according to Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward, who writes, ‘the bulk of the teachers do not appear to stand high in public esteem.’⁴⁵³

The inadequate rates of salary also led to teachers supplementing their pay with other forms of employment. This has already been encountered in extracts and is noted in the Inspectors’ reports as a means of castigation for insufficient attention to duty on the national teachers’ behalf, as well as a *cause célèbre* by the Inspectors for improving the teachers’ salary. The following examples show both national teachers’ efforts to supplement their finances, as well as illustrating for the reader their engagement in activities beyond the classroom as well contributing to their identity within a broader sphere.

5.3.5 *Alternative employments and supplementing salaries*

Within the Seventeenth report of the CNEI, Head Inspector Butler recalls a principal teacher in Tullamore, who ‘gives private tuitions in the town, which he states to be worth about £20 a year to him.’⁴⁵⁴ Butler also comments on a teacher in Longford Boys’ National school who, ‘besides his five hours a day in this school...teaches an evening class for two hours and also attends a daily tutorial of one hour’.⁴⁵⁵ Inspector Kavanagh, writing about the teacher of Mallow Boys’ school, notes ‘he is also clerk of the chapel’, with an income of ‘six pounds and eight shillings.’⁴⁵⁶ Clerical duties undertaken by national teachers were not uncommon in communities where the school manager was the parish priest and for reasons of economy and strengthening relationships, the national teacher was a suitable candidate for this role.

⁴⁵³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 130.

⁴⁵⁴ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 89.

⁴⁵⁵ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 89.

⁴⁵⁶ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 175.

The teacher of Rathmore Boys' School in Co. Kerry is recorded as maintaining a 'farm of thirty acres, at a rent of £25.'⁴⁵⁷ Clonmillane Boys' and Girls' School, 'a very wretched thatched mud cabin in bad repair', is taught by a mistress, whose husband is a carpenter and clerk of the church.⁴⁵⁸ In Tiernaboul School near Killarney, the Inspector writes, 'the teachers holds a farm of 28 acres, from Mr. Herbert of Mucross' (sic).⁴⁵⁹ In Slieveradaragh, Co. Kerry, the 'teacher gives instruction, at his own house, on the violin, at 4s per quarter.'⁴⁶⁰ Each of these observations are indicative of both the precarious financial position which some early teachers experienced, but also of aspects of identity and interactions within the community. A number of those discussed have taken on farming to supplement their income, while others are engaged in church related duties. One national teacher offers music lessons outside of his daily teaching life and there is a female teacher whose husband is a carpenter. An entry from Head Inspector Newell, discussing the teacher of a school in Ballinspittle, Co. Cork, notes:

He appears to me to be distracted from his duties as a schoolmaster, by, at least, one of the two situations he holds. He is clerk of the petty sessions, postmaster and a National Teacher—a pluralist without much advantage, as the proceeds of the three situations do not average £35 per annum.⁴⁶¹

The teacher Newell refers to here in essence is at the very heart of the local community, with the role of postmaster being a prominent position. Attending to the legal affairs of the locality, collating and disseminating information along with educating the children of the area, could position the national teacher as high as the doctor or local clergy in status. What is abundantly clear from these extracts is the teachers' use of their skills in attaining as well as maintaining these positions, each of which demand the abilities of a literate individual. An excerpt from the

⁴⁵⁷ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 178.

⁴⁵⁸ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 187.

⁴⁵⁹ CNEI (1850) *The Seventeenth Report...for 1850*, [1405-XXIV], H.C., 188.

⁴⁶⁰ CNEI (1850) *The Twentieth Report...for 1853*, [1834-XXX], H.C., Vol. II. Appendix G, 184-185.

⁴⁶¹ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-XXVII], H.C. Vol. II. Appendix G, 46.

report of Head Inspector Keenan in 1855 considers a teacher's alternate means of income in Drumbrick, Co. Leitrim, where he notes:

Teacher well suited for her business; she is intelligent and skilful, but evidently greedy to make money, by farming, turf making, &c., for her hands were quite black with the dye of weeds, and rough from hard work in the field or the bog; her dress too was slovenly and unbecoming.⁴⁶²

Again, while it appears the teacher is supplementing her income by farming and turf making, Keenan notes the teacher's classification as 'first division of third', which would indicate her salary was only £13 per annum, yet he is unsympathetic to her supplementing this meagre salary by farming and turf making. This is likely due to her unappealing dress and outward appearance, quite at odds with the appearance the Commissioners desired. It may also be the case that the ideals of the Commissioners required national teachers to meet a certain threshold around what constituted suitable activities and appearances for the national teacher. While there are no specific parameters documented, beyond the Twelve Rules of the Commissioners, as to undertaking such external employments or as to how a teacher should dress, the reports show a continual preoccupation with respectability and engendering this among the national teachers as a cohort. Keenan's attributing the teacher's desire to supplement her salary as greed is also worth noting here. It suggests that in the Head Inspector's eyes, the role of national teacher and especially that of the female national teacher, should concentrate on more lofty ideals than greed. Couched within the inspector's observation is perhaps a religious undertone as greed is recognised as one of the seven deadly sins within the Catholic religion. In labelling the teacher at Drumbrick as greedy the Inspector infers she may be unfit for the role of teacher.

⁴⁶² CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-XXVII], H.C. Vol. II., Appendix E, 114.

As referenced in Subsection 4.3.2 of Chapter Four, one of the Assistant Commissioners tasked with gathering data for the Powis Commission was Mr. Scott-Coward, who also commented on the matter of teachers undertaking employment outside of school hours to supplement their incomes, ‘in which all the male teachers under the Board are more or less engaged to support themselves respectably, or to live at all’.⁴⁶³ He goes on to say that the greater part of this work is ‘private tuition...done of course in the evening, and on Saturday’.⁴⁶⁴ Discussing some of the encounters which supported his opinion, Mr. Scott-Coward writes:

I met a man who made sometimes £10 a year by surveying land, and regularly employed his leisure time in giving lessons in navigation to the captains of merchant vessels preparing to pass the examinations of the Board of Trade, and in other branches of mathematics.⁴⁶⁵

Indeed, it is apparent that even by the late 1860s this practice of extraneous employment was as much to the fore then as it was in the initial years of the national system of education. It is also interesting to note how the capabilities of some national teachers were such that they were able to instruct mariners in navigation. As earlier accounts provided by the Inspectorate show, some teachers were engaged with the postal service and according to Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward this was also the case for a number of national teachers he encountered in Cork. He writes:

It is not very uncommon, I was informed, to find the National teacher, acting as postmaster in out-of-the-way places. I came upon one such instance at Belgooly, a small village near Kinsale, where the teacher of the school is postmaster and receives about £3 a year for his trouble. And at the Cove of Kinsale, I was informed by the young teacher of the school there, that his predecessor had been postmaster for years there previous to his death. An ingenious man may employ himself in

⁴⁶³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii], 128.

⁴⁶⁴ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii], 128.

⁴⁶⁵ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii], 128.

miscellaneous ways, and thus increase his income, like the teacher of the Enniskean school, who makes something by mending the clocks and watches of the neighbourhood.⁴⁶⁶

Undoubtedly, necessity forced many national teachers to undertake employment outside of the school room. Whether to supplement their salaries, or to provide them with a modicum of respectability, it is clear that many national teachers were capable and clever individuals who were able to maximise their abilities to improve their situation. Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward poses the question in his report whether such employments outside of school were ‘a good thing’, and considers ‘are the National school teachers adequately remunerated for the services they render the country in educating its youth?’⁴⁶⁷

A contrasting entry from the Twenty-second Report of the Commissioners references a teacher in William Street school, in Belfast, ‘who has been for twenty-two years a teacher.’⁴⁶⁸ This teacher’s extraneous employment extends beyond his classroom duties to a different role within the community, but one which is facilitated by his educational standing and abilities. The Inspector here writes:

As an instance of his success as a private teacher, the master informs me that all the captains of the port of Derry, (with one exception), have been prepared by him in navigation; he is also a good linguist and has the translation of all the foreign documents that are required to be translated in Derry.⁴⁶⁹

The centrality of this teacher within the community of Derry is noted by the Inspector and while he is not a product of the national system, his skills have allowed him to exercise an

⁴⁶⁶ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii], 128.

⁴⁶⁷ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii], 128.

⁴⁶⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii], 120.

⁴⁶⁹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii], 120.

influence and perhaps, a usefulness within the community. The Inspector has also recognised the national teacher's influence as a possible role model for some of the local mariners. Head Inspector Dr. Newell, writing about the national teacher in Rathmore school, Co. Cork, states that, 'the teacher's attention is divided between the school and a farm he holds,'⁴⁷⁰ while at Drimoleague in West Cork he considers the plight of the teacher who:

appears to have sunk under the difficulties of his situation; He is obliged to walk four miles daily to his school and has to support a family of ten persons on a salary of less than £22 per annum from all sources.⁴⁷¹

The difficulty posed by the demands of a large family for this teacher amplify the Inspector's concerns around teachers engaging in external activities to supplement their income and the subsequent impact on their situation.

5.3.6 *'The position of the teacher is one peculiar to themselves...' 1859 onwards*

Some final extracts from the records are useful in determining the position of the national teacher as their collective identity, and particularly, their social identity began to coalesce. Here, the 'peculiar' and ambiguous nature of the national teacher's position is considered and examples which highlight this are considered. It also highlights some perceptions from Inspector's regarding the national teacher's status such as the following observation. This opinion might be said to contain an element of dissatisfaction on the Inspector's part toward the national teacher's agitating for increased levels of pay. District Inspector Patterson, with responsibility for South Belfast, writes in 1859:

⁴⁷⁰ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C. Appendices, Vol. 1, 47.

⁴⁷¹ CNEI (1856) *The Twenty-third Report...for 1856*, [2304-XX], H.C. Appendices, Vol. 1, 51.

Their position and prospects under the Board are now so much improved that very few seem disposed to leave the service. THEIR SOCIAL STANDING, THEIR MEANS AND MODES OF LIVING, COMPARE ADVANTAGEOUSLY WITH THOSE OF THE CLASS FROM WHICH THEY SPRING (emphasis in original).⁴⁷²

Mr. Patterson's comment is interesting in its presentation, allowing the reader an insight into the mentality which it might be argued was prevalent among agents of empire. There is the understanding that a *certain* level of social status is sufficient for the teacher. This echoes those early sentiments expressed by the Commissioners in their Second Report which required the teachers to be 'living in friendly habits with the people, not greatly elevated above them, but so provided for as to be able to maintain a respectable station.'⁴⁷³ Such sentiments were designed to ensure the national teachers maintained good terms with their neighbours, upheld the law and evinced respectability within the community.

The following submission from District Inspector Dowling in the Twenty-sixth Report for 1859 to Head Inspector Timothy Sheehan provides conclusive detail on the social status of the Irish national teacher at this point. Though lengthy, it provides the reader with key insights into the teacher's identity and interaction on a broad level within the community. The Inspector writes:

The income of schoolmasters has so much improved latterly, and there is still promise of so much more improvement, that the circumstances of the teacher are much more superior to those of the other members of their own families and of their friends. It would be rash to assert that teachers do not still suffer many pecuniary trials and embarrassments, or that their life is one of social ease and comfort. But they live among their friends; almost all teach in their native parishes; every day displays to them the struggles and difficulties those around them have to suffer, and a comparison between the circumstances of their friends and their own is decidedly in favour of the latter. The social standing of

⁴⁷² CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Appendix B, 150.

⁴⁷³ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for the year ending 31 March 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C., 5.

the teachers cannot be defined by instituting a comparison between it and that of any other class. The position of the teachers is one peculiar to themselves. As I have already observed, they come from the peasantry; they still live among them. Their associations and friends are all of that class. But they enjoy much more ease and greater social comfort, and are looked up to with that respect which learning inspires.⁴⁷⁴

Dowling's observations here echo those of Inspector Patterson, which in essence lauds the establishment for providing the national teachers with the opportunity to avail of education and ascend the social scale. An important and central observation here which underpins the thesis as a whole is Dowling's noting, 'the position of the teachers is one peculiar to themselves', recognising that the national teachers are a group apart within Irish society at this juncture. The Inspector recognises that while their origins locate them at the lowest levels of Irish society, their situation has seen them establish a new, shared identity. The Inspector goes on to consider the benefits of this advance for the teacher personally and socially, as he writes:

Their dress, too, is better-much better- than that of the peasantry; indeed, the teachers in general present as decent and respectable appearance, particularly on the Sabbath, as persons of far greater income. Their lives are marked by uniform good conduct. I have not heard of one instance wherein a teacher has offended by any moral or social crime, if I except one case of alleged indulgence in spirituous drink. Nor have I heard that a teacher has forfeited the friendship and good feeling from his neighbours by contention of any kind among them.⁴⁷⁵

It is important to note that Dowling cannot readily draw a comparison with those teachers and any other social group in society at this time. This suggests that not alone were the teachers part of a completely new and distinct social group, but their identity was still fluctuating. They were not poor and because of their education could not be deemed as being at the very lowest end of the social scale, and equally they could not be attributed the same status as those who belong to the clergy, legal or medical classes. The emphasis within Dowling's narrative on

⁴⁷⁴ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-XXVI], H.C. Vol. I, Appendix B, 173.

⁴⁷⁵ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-XXVI], H.C. Vol. I, Appendix B, 173.

‘uniformity’ and ‘good conduct’ serves to reinforce the benefits of belonging to this group within society. It may be also that there is an undertone which bespeaks to benefits of belonging within the British Empire, inferred by comments on peace, stability and morality within local communities. In assessing the temperature of the national teachers as the 1860s proceed, as an example, the Fenian Rising of 1867 provides a useful barometer for this at a broader societal level, which is considered in the following section.

5.3.7 National teachers and social unrest

The involvement of the national teachers in activities which could be taken as political was expressly forbidden under the Rules for teachers.⁴⁷⁶ It is important to note that up to the early 1860s, such dissension amongst national teachers is not recorded in any substantial numbers. However, with the onset of the Fenian Rising, this changed. Entries recorded in the Royal Irish Constabulary’s (RIC) arrest records for the period 1866, preceding the unsuccessful militant uprising by the Fenian Brotherhood, note national teachers as being among the detainees.⁴⁷⁷ The suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act at this time saw 1,100 people interned, of whom 9.1% were clerks or school teachers.⁴⁷⁸ The detail accompanying the arrest records considers the impact of the status of the national teacher in communities. For example, the arrest record for Batt Brien of Leip, Co. Cork, on March 5th 1866, records the following observation from the local Royal Magistrate who states, ‘We do not think that he ought to be released at present

⁴⁷⁶ See Chapter Four, Subsection 4.4.4. Rule III ‘To avoid fairs, markets, and meetings--but, above all, POLITICAL meetings of any kind; to abstain from controversy; and to do nothing either in or out of school which might have a tendency to confine it to any one denomination of children.’

⁴⁷⁷ See Chapter One in Steward, P. and McGovern, B.P. (2013) *The Fenians: Irish rebellion in the North Atlantic world, 1858-1876, 1st ed.*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1-27.

⁴⁷⁸ Campbell, S. (2013) *Loyalty and Disloyalty: The Fenian treason trials 1865-1867, and the evolution of British counter-insurgency policies in nineteenth century Ireland*. Dublin: Oireachtas. [online]. Available at: https://ptfsoireachtas.s3.amazonaws.com/DriveH/AWData/Library3/sarahCampbellLoyalty_and_Disloyalty_Report_112435.pdf (accessed 29 March 2019).

if only to deter other National School Teachers from being seditious.⁴⁷⁹ The official perception here is that the national teachers possessed enough influence which might extend to other teachers in the wider community. This is accompanied by the understanding that the national teachers are seen as a distinct group in Irish society at this time. The entry recorded for Batt Brien also notes the testimony of two members of the local clergy in support of the national teacher. This reads:

Memorial: of Jeremiah Luney, R.C Priest and David Fitzgerald, R.C Curate at Leip; they say they are convinced that Brien was in no way connected with the Fenian conspiracy. He was attentive to his religious duties.⁴⁸⁰

This is evidentiary of the relationship between the Roman Catholic parish priest and curate, the former of which was most likely the manager of the local school at Leip. Taken as a whole, it is clear that the teacher was central to the local community here. In the view of the clergy, the national teacher's attention to his religious duties was sufficient to clear him of any suspicion around his involvement in the Fenian rising.

The arrest of James Leyhane of Dromore, Co. Cork, for singing 'treasonable songs' in a public house is accompanied by the observations of the Senior Police Inspector at Bantry who writes, 'there are no people who have such influence over the ignorant working classes, the clergy excepted, than National teachers.'⁴⁸¹ This statement from a senior member of the RIC positions the national teacher at this juncture as a very influential figure within the local community. The teacher's influence in this instance is accorded the same status as that of the local clergy. It must be remembered that given the circumstances of the time it is likely that a greater degree

⁴⁷⁹ Carroll, *The Irish teacher*, 45-46.

⁴⁸⁰ Irish Crime Records (1866) *Habeas Corpus Suspension Act*. CSO ICR 10. Dublin: National Archives of Ireland, 77.

⁴⁸¹ Irish Crime Records (1866) *Habeas Corpus Suspension Act*. CSO ICR 10. 56.

of suspicion and concern was present amongst the police, and that any individual with the potential to harness the opinion of the people might be considered a threat. However, notwithstanding the conditions in which this Police Inspector's observations were made, the status of the national teacher, it can be argued, had grown considerably at this point from the early days of the national system of education. The terms of Leyhane's discharge from custody are noted by the Senior Police Inspector as contingent on his emigration to America.

References to the impact of the social standing of the national teacher and their potential influence in communities during this time was also noted by Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward, whose evidence for the Powis Commission Inquiry has been considered earlier. The position of the teachers within the country and their recognition as a distinct group within society by 1870 is reinforced by Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward who states:

The influence of the National teachers should not be overlooked. The teachers possess much influence and it is a dangerous thing, therefore, to have them estranged in feeling from the constituted authorities of the country. It is not impossible to win them and it is most important to do it.⁴⁸²

In this instance, the Assistant Commissioner compares the national teacher to the 'constituted authorities,' i.e., the RIC, who, 'taken from the people, remain loyal and faithful in the midst of an infectious atmosphere of popular discontent.'⁴⁸³ Essentially, the Assistant Commissioner is questioning why the national teachers might evince disloyalty when members of the RIC do not. Both groups originate from Irish society, yet the national teacher does not enjoy the same recognition as the RIC.

⁴⁸² Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 130.

⁴⁸³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 130.

Further examples found in the arrest records support the close relationship between the clergy and the national teachers as many offered their support for those teachers arrested. Accounts of relationship between both the RIC and the Commissioners are also noted whereby the Commissioners sought information on the charges preferred against the teachers.⁴⁸⁴ While these are brief examples from the period in question, they assist in expanding the reader's understanding on the social status of the national teacher at the conclusion of the research timeframe.

5.3.8 National teacher's associations and coalescing for change

The first indications of national teachers mobilising as a collective and agitating for improved conditions of pay are documented in the Twenty-sixth Report of the Commissioners in 1859. This represents a pivotal moment in the coalescence of teacher identity in respect of agitation for improved status and recognition, which in turn impacted the teacher's social class. Head Inspector Dr. Patten includes the report of one of the District Inspectors, Mr. Graham, who furnishes some detail on this development, writing:

During the year the teachers of this district have also steadfastly resisted all efforts, even when accompanied by taunts as to their 'slavish subserviency', which have been made by Teachers' Associations, organised in other districts, and sought to be promoted by deputations to the Derry district and teachers, to induce them individually, or in a body, to join in agitation and in a petition to parliament, both 'to inquire into the manner in which the Commissioners of National Education administer the funds placed at their disposal', and to seek for increased grants towards the awarding of larger salaries to the teachers, as a class.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Volume 1 of the abstracts of cases in the Irish Crime Records for 1866, records a letter from the Commissioners on 14th September 1867, to the County Inspector of the RIC at Bantry, seeking information on the grounds for arrest of Michael Cronin of Ahakista, National School teacher, 'before they again recognise him as a National School teacher.' See Irish Crime Records (1866) *Habeas Corpus Suspension Act*. CSO ICR 10. Dublin: National Archives of Ireland, 48.

⁴⁸⁵ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Vol. I, Appendix B, 200.

This is the first acknowledgement by the Inspectors that teacher-led groups were beginning to form, with a view towards improving the circumstances of the national teacher. Efforts to address issues the national teachers faced began as early as 1849 with the establishment of the Irish Teacher's Redress Committee, but detail around the composition and workings of such groups is exceptionally scarce. What is known is that these movements were stymied by lack of engagement on the Commissioner's behalf and, accordingly, little progress was made in addressing the teacher's concerns.⁴⁸⁶

It is noteworthy that Inspector Graham commends the efforts made by teachers within the district he was operating in to resist efforts at inclusion within these groups. The nature of this observation is twofold. While commending the efforts of those teachers who refused to join such movements, there is also the understanding that in a manner these teachers were setting themselves apart from such groups, and on the other hand the very fact that such groups were mobilising points to the development and reinforcement of the teachers, as Graham writes, 'as a class'. This copper-fastens the developing concept of national teacher identity. Here was a group which was large enough and singular enough to warrant coalescing into a single, distinctive, social group, with enough shared characteristics to support this assertion. While the Inspectors commend the efforts of those teachers who resist invitations to join in agitation, they also recognise that a significant problem exists regarding teacher salaries. A further extract from Inspector Craig in the Twenty-sixth Report for 1859 also supports this:

It cannot be concealed, however, that the teachers are not satisfied with their present position, as is proved by the numbers of teachers' associations in the country, which are organised for the purposes of

⁴⁸⁶ Purséil, *Kindling the Flame*, 3-5.

obtaining by means of petitions and other constitutional means, a more adequate scale of remunerations.⁴⁸⁷

The growth of such associations saw an increasing awareness around the issue of sufficient remuneration for the national teachers. The outcome of such developments is discussed in the following section.

5.3.9 *The Irish Teacher's Journal-A platform for the national teacher*

The growth of the Teacher's Associations and the wider social unrest manifest in the Fenian Rising likely contributed to the establishment of the Royal Commission of Inquiry in 1867 to enquire into the state of education in Ireland.⁴⁸⁸ Coincidentally, efforts to develop a publication to highlight the issues national teachers were facing was underway in Dublin at the same time. Vere Foster, a noted philanthropist, along with Jeremiah Henly, a member of the Dublin Teacher's Association established the *Irish Teacher's Journal* (ITJ) in early 1868.⁴⁸⁹ Supported by Vere Foster and published by Robert Chamney, the journal aimed to 'unite our scattered forces by means of Teacher's Associations in connection with a central controlling body.'⁴⁹⁰ The Teacher's Associations were the precursor to the INTO which was founded later in 1868 and which still exists today as a union for Irish primary teachers. The publication of the ITJ chiefly assisted in publicising the voice of the national teacher and providing a hitherto unexplored platform which furthered the coalescence of national teacher identity.

⁴⁸⁷ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-XXVI], H.C. Appendix B, 148.

⁴⁸⁸ See Chapter Two, Section 2.10 on the Powis Commission.

⁴⁸⁹ Purséil, *Kindling the Flame*, 4-7.

⁴⁹⁰ Purséil, *Kindling the Flame*, 4-7.

The ITJ at this time provides some illuminating insights into the situation of the national teachers. Many of the examples provided by the national teachers themselves support the evidence gathered in the Inspector's reports, which were forwarded to the Commissioners. This is important in validating the evidence of the Inspector's, as well as offering first-hand accounts of the national teachers' voice. The following example within the editorial of the first monthly issue, published in January of 1868, includes a piece on the 'Status of the Teacher'. While somewhat dramatic in tone, it is nevertheless worth reproducing here as an example of the underlying sentiment around the Irish national teacher at this time. It reads:

Why is the "schoolmaster abroad"? *Because he is starved at home* (emphasis in original). This we have for years regarded as the only answer to the question, and the real explanation of the quoted phrase—at least in Ireland. The Irish Schoolmaster is abroad—in Canada and the United States, teaching, trading, lumbering, driving or cultivating—in Australia and New Zealand gold-digging, sheep-tending, farming or trading—abroad as a sailor—abroad anywhere—being anything, doing anything that will give him the life and hope denied at home.⁴⁹¹

This extract, while unreservedly emotional and designed to evoke sympathy from the reader, when taken with evidence gleaned from the Commissioner's reports and the subsequent findings of the Powis Commission, support the contention that the national teachers experienced privation and were leaving their positions in search of more lucrative employment elsewhere. This is also noted in the Powis Commission findings where figures for attrition of national teachers in the early to late 1860s can attest to poor pay and working conditions for the national teacher being amongst the chief causes for emigration amongst the national teachers.⁴⁹² The following figures collated by the Powis Commission Inquiry offer an insight into this.

⁴⁹¹ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) January issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1.

⁴⁹² Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 247-248.

Table 5.3 – Illustrating causes of vacancies amongst national teachers from 1863-1867.

Cause of vacancy	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	Total for five years
Death	51	55	42	52	49	249
Old age	8	8	20	12	21	69
Sickness	34	43	60	57	88	282
Removal from one school to another	593	591	626	648	627	3,085
Resignation to follow other pursuits	233	242	287	330	358	1,450
Emigration	77	93	119	113	85	487
Dismissal	160	132	131	130	104	657
Total for each year	1,156	1,164	1,285	1,342	1,332	6,279

As the table above illustrates, there is a gradual increase apparent in the numbers of national teachers leaving the service of the national system in the five-year period shown. Those figures attributable to natural causes such as death, old age and illness remain largely constant over the course of the timeframe illustrated. However, the figures for teachers moving between schools or leaving national teaching altogether to pursue other employments are significantly greater. Both these latter elements suggest dissatisfaction on the national teacher's behalf with their lot. The numbers of those emigrating, while seemingly smaller, may be due to the fact that there was cost associated with emigration and that for many of the national teachers in straitened circumstances this may not have been a viable option.

A further observation noted in the March issue of the ITJ in 1868 is also worth noting here, where the editor writes ‘that a great many of the grievances of the Teachers of Ireland may be traced to their want of cooperation with each other.’⁴⁹³ This indicates that up to the late 1860s, such efforts as were made by the national teachers to agitate for improved payment and on other problems were hampered by their lack of organisation and structure. Again, the theoretical aspect of identity formation which highlights the dystonic elements of identity formation are mirrored here in the comments of the editor of the ITJ. Essentially, the editor is reflecting perhaps on the varying types of national teachers which comprised the whole cohort. Differing routes to the role of national teacher, the disparities accompanying the classification system in regard of remuneration and perhaps the types of individuals who assumed the role in the initial decades, all contributed to a dissonance within national teacher identity. Consequently, the development of the ITJ and the National Teacher’s Associations, realised a greater surety of identity than was previously present among the national teachers of Ireland.

The editor of the ITJ also draws the reader’s attention to the support the national teachers received from the Inspectorate, which has been already noted. He writes:

The Inspectors of the National Schools have spoken out nobly and manfully on behalf of the teachers, and almost without exception have taken advantage of the opportunity afforded them...to call the attention of the Commissioners...to the gross inadequacy of the teacher’s salaries and the position the teacher occupies in society. Coming from gentlemen in their position the exposure has tenfold the weight it would have if it came only from the teachers themselves.⁴⁹⁴

It is important to note the level of appreciation the editor shows in this instance for the Inspector’s recognition of the teacher’s difficulties. The Inspector’s focus and recognition of

⁴⁹³ *Irish Teacher’s Journal* (1868) March issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 22.

⁴⁹⁴ *Irish Teacher’s Journal* (1868) March issue, 23.

the teacher's cause is important as it legitimises the issues the teachers experienced. In noting the Inspector's 'position' and the effect of this, in having 'tenfold the weight', the national school-teacher's difficulties have succeeded in traversing the perceived gap between classes. That their issues were now being articulated by those farther up the hierarchy from them was a sure indicator of their recognition as a separate and legitimate identity.

A teacher writing under the pseudonym of *Hibernicus* compliments the arrival of the ITJ and references the lack of communication between teachers before the arrival of the journal, saying, 'so little intercommunion has there been amongst us and so irregular the training that many have received.'⁴⁹⁵ Indeed, it is fair to say that the ITJ and the formation of the Irish National Teacher's Association in 1868 both facilitated and galvanised the identity of the Irish national teacher.

The ITJ also includes a number of testimonials from newspapers around Ireland supporting its remit. The *Dundalk Express* wrote, 'A real want is supplied by the publication of this very interesting journal. The National School Teachers have been for many years the victims of a false and wretched economy', and the *Carlow Press* wrote, 'we feel the influence of the Irish Teacher's Journal will prove in itself sufficient to remedy the evil which the universal press of Ireland condemns.'⁴⁹⁶ In so far as these publications are indicative of public or popular opinion it would appear that support for the national teachers as a distinctly recognisable group within society existed.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁵ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) April issue, 39.

⁴⁹⁶ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) April issue, 46.

⁴⁹⁷ The National Archives of Ireland hold a collection of newspaper articles specifically relating to educational related matters between the years 1854 and 1922. This material was gathered by the CNEI and accordingly,

A letter from Stephen J. Greene, the national teacher of Clonmellon Boys' School in Co. Westmeath, appears in the June issue of the ITJ for 1868. Mr. Greene writes:

The time is fast approaching when the National Teacher will be recognised in his true character, when the office he performs will not be synonymous with slavery and degradation---when the people will accord him respect for the sacredness of his avocation, and reward him in proportion to their means for the onerousness of his labours.⁴⁹⁸

It would appear that the actualisation of national teacher identity was becoming a reality at this point, given the awareness of the teachers themselves and their advancing status. Mr. Greene also considers the possibilities and benefits from teachers acting together, rather than individually, for the good of all, saying, 'The time has come for Teachers to be as brothers, each assisting the other, in increasing his classifications.'⁴⁹⁹

Another correspondent, who signs himself 'An Irish National Teacher', draws attention to a conversation which took place with this teacher and their manager. The teacher indicates the manager's sympathetic outlook for the teacher, recalling the manager saying:

it is a shame that teachers should be so badly paid by the government. A *footman* is paid a better salary than the average salary paid to teachers; but there will be a change soon and the teachers' salaries *must be increased* (emphasis in original).⁵⁰⁰

The teacher continues to say that this individual was only recently elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) for the county, and they hoped would communicate their feelings when in government.

concentrates on the 'big' questions of the time, largely ignoring the national teachers themselves. A number of volumes between 1854 and 1858 were examined but the availability of content in respect of the national teachers, with the exception of some correspondence from the *Weekly Telegraph* noted in Subsection 4.4.6 of the preceding chapter, is extremely thin.

⁴⁹⁸ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) June issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 67.

⁴⁹⁹ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) June issue, 67.

⁵⁰⁰ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) June issue, 67.

The correspondent, 'Cashelmore', offers an unusual point regarding the lack of success which the national teachers have experienced up to 1868, in regard to increases in salaries and so on. Cashelmore writes, 'I believe these were but relics of the old "Hedge-School master," perpetuated by the isolation of our position...I rejoice to think that at length, we Schoolmasters have practically realised the old truism, "United we stand; divided we fall."' ⁵⁰¹ This is perhaps, a unique assessment of the position of the national teacher within Ireland and communities, that in a fashion, the solitary position of the Hedge School teachers had contributed to the teacher's lack of success as a body up to this point. It could equally be argued that the development of an entirely revised identity, perhaps replacing the Hedge School master with the national teacher in Irish communities, required the passage of time and the acceptance of this new persona. Cashelmore lauds the publication of the *Irish Teachers' Journal*, saying 'its success heralds---tidings of union and fraternity, which are the surest *earnest* (sic-emphasis in original) of the Irish National Schoolmaster ultimately attaining that position in society to which he can justly lay claim.' ⁵⁰² Significantly, the concepts of unity and fraternity, shared identity and brotherhood, which infuse the strongest conceptions of a collective identity, are articulated here by a national teacher.

The editorial for the first issue published in January of 1869 discusses the success of the ITJ since its inception in January of 1868. There are also some useful comments contained within the editorial. For example, the editor writes that, 'As the journal speedily attained a considerable circulation...the teachers of Ireland have been for the first time brought into close and intimate union.' ⁵⁰³ This would support the earlier contention that the publication of the ITJ

⁵⁰¹ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) June issue, 69.

⁵⁰² *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1868) June issue, 69.

⁵⁰³ *Irish Teacher's Journal* (1869) January issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1.

facilitated and accompanied a completion of national teacher identity which had been formulating since the establishment of the national system in 1831.

A final extract from a national teacher, under the pseudonym of *Bono Omne* (in Latin- all good), is also included in the first issue of the ITJ in 1869, which says, ‘When the teachers meet in Congress the great class--- Irish National Teachers--- will be fully represented.’⁵⁰⁴ This also highlights an awareness of identity by the teachers themselves, noting the use of the word, ‘class’, as an indicator of a separate identity and unique group within Irish society at this time. Indeed, the power which the publication of the ITJ brought to the Irish national teachers in facilitating an awareness of how their colleagues stood cannot be underestimated at this juncture. This correspondent, *Bono Omne*, writes, ‘how very few of the National Teachers united in associations till the *Irish Teachers’ Journal* pointed the way and showed them why they should do so.’⁵⁰⁵

The editor continues by saying that, ‘he had reason to believe the teachers had never agitated in real earnest, and that if they had it was only now and again at long intervals’, before concluding that, ‘it was necessary that they should be no longer separated, but brought together, and *feel* (emphasis in original) that sense of power as an organised whole.’⁵⁰⁶ This organisation speaks very much to a collective identity, where the national teachers had recognised that as a group they shared the same problems and difficulties, which in turn underlines a collective identity. The editor concludes ‘They have at last risen as one man.’⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁴ *Irish Teacher’s Journal* (1869) January issue 7. Note the congress in question refers to the annual meeting of the INTO which was first held in August of 1868 and again in December of that year.

⁵⁰⁵ *Irish Teacher’s Journal* (1869) January issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 7.

⁵⁰⁶ *Irish Teacher’s Journal* (1869) January issue, 7.

⁵⁰⁷ *Irish Teacher’s Journal* (1869) January issue, 7.

The tone of the introductory editorial in the first issue of the ITJ in January of 1869 is quite self-laudatory and amplifies the benefits which the publication on the ITJ might bestow on the national teachers. The language used supports the contention that at the close of the 1860s, coinciding with the work of the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland* (Powis Commission), the national teachers had come to inhabit a unique identity and their awareness of this is reflected and supported in the publication that was the *Irish Teachers' Journal*.

The following extract from the January issue of the ITJ in 1869 is reproduced here as it discusses the development of that collective identity into a robust movement. The editor writes:

When the journal first appeared, it found the teachers, at a *critical moment*, without organisation, and consequently, without that power of combined action which is indispensable to the exercise of their proper influence in the councils of empire. *Now* (emphasis in original) the teachers are enrolled in thousands, in a phalanx of nearly one hundred associations, and they possess a central executive machinery, through whose agency they can act in unison for any common object.⁵⁰⁸

This extract informs and supports the researcher's belief that the closing years of the 1860s, in tandem with the establishment of the Powis Commission and the publication of the *Irish Teachers' Journal*, marked a radical change in attitudes and beliefs around the Irish national teacher. It is apparent that the precursor to that change lay in the recognition that organisation and a collective approach would facilitate 'combined action'. The editor does not consider this approach one which strays beyond the bounds of empire, writing of the 'proper influence in the councils of empire'. The sheer numbers and the reference to the Grecian concept of a 'phalanx', infers the strength of the national teachers for the reader, along with highlighting the

⁵⁰⁸ *Irish Teacher's Journal* January (1869) January issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1.

‘agency’ which accompanies this. This is an important and telling passage within the broader history of Irish teacher identity as it marks a watershed moment within the story of the Irish national teacher.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the primary aim of the researcher has been to collate and interrogate material relating to the social class and status of the Irish national teacher between the years 1831 and 1871. In the introduction, the contextual elements around the social status and class of teachers in Irish communities prior to the establishment of the system of national education in 1831 were outlined for the reader. The emphasis lies primarily on the role of Hedge School teachers within these communities and their centrality to community life. Given the availability of information on the Hedge School teachers it is important to highlight the connection between their social status and class, as arguably, it was the national teachers who assumed a similar role to that of the Hedge School teacher within Irish communities.

The teachers who staffed the national system from its inception in 1831 were seen as inhabiting a very different role to those teachers who provided education prior to 1831. This was primarily due to the instigation of the new system through a framework of empire. There can be little doubt that there is perhaps a certain romanticism associated with the Hedge School teachers who ‘kept alive the lamp of learning,’⁵⁰⁹ which is not found in accounts of the national teachers. Whether this is attributable to the national teacher’s official position within an imperially administered education system or due to that system’s efforts to repress the national teacher’s

⁵⁰⁹ Joyce, *English as we speak it in Ireland*, 150.

identity is difficult to say. However, what is certain is that all elements of national teacher identity were strictly monitored and controlled under the Commissioner's remit. This saw the national system operate on the principle that those who would work as teachers in the new national schools were merely occupying a functional role and one which did not require any displays of individuality. This rendered the national teachers largely invisible. Aspects of personality, displays of political leanings or any displays of dissension were guarded against. Unexpectedly, the result of the strictly controlled parameters enforced by the Commissioners saw the emergence of a wholly new identity, in the guise of the Irish national teacher.

In excavating the early national teachers' social class and status, as a central element of their identity, the chapter examined evidence which points to these elements as seen through an official lens, along with opportunities to advance this status. These elements were considered in parallel with identity theories propounded by Adams and Marshall,⁵¹⁰ and Stets and Burke,⁵¹¹ amongst others as discussed in Chapter Three. Throughout this chapter aspects of the teachers' lives as individuals have been encountered and discussed through the available evidence. Adams and Marshall's work highlights the import of recognising these individualistic aspects of the 'self', but, more importantly, how these are 'integrated' within a wider group. Recognising the point where integration occurs within the wider group indicates an assurance of identity. Therefore, those 'peculiar' aspects which the Inspectors highlighted and the efforts of the teachers to appear respectable within communities, along with the formation of the teacher's associations and ultimately, the INTO, indicate that national teacher identity was developing and reaching maturity, at least in the collective sense. Stets and Burkes' work on

⁵¹⁰ Adams and Marshall, *A developmental social psychology of identity*, 429-442.

⁵¹¹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

reflexivity along with Baumeister and Muraven's ⁵¹² understanding of the process of categorisation both reinforce and contribute to understanding national teacher identity in the collective sense within this chapter.

Strangely, while the national system envisaged promotion for the teacher through a series of examinations, the primary avenue through which the national teachers and indeed, the Inspectors saw their social advancement, was in connection with improved salaries and the accompanying classification system. The inference that financial security was a precursor to social advancement during this time cannot be ignored. This aspect of understanding national teacher social class and status is dominated then by debate and discussion in the official correspondence around suitable levels of remuneration for the national teacher and their adherence to what the Commissioners desired for the persona of the national teacher. Essentially, the Commissioners enabled the development of national teacher identity by developing parameters whereby the national teachers might be 'categorised' and categorise themselves into a fixed identity, as noted above in respect of Baumeister and Muraven's theory. Aspects of the evidence examined note the national teachers renting land and engaging in external activities to supplement their income. These range from providing tuition after the school day ended to teaching music, land surveying, running post offices, undertaking clerkships for the local clergy and repairing clocks! These elements of the national teachers' life removed them from the classroom and positioned them as central figures within the community. Accordingly, the individuality of the national teacher was recognised by their ability and skills, and they began to assume a collective identity within the parameters outlined by the Commissioners. This is borne out by the official reports which recognise the national

⁵¹² Baumeister and Muraven, *Identity as adaptation*, 405-416.

teachers ‘as a class’ and ‘as a body’. It is likely that the Commissioners’ preoccupation with developing, enforcing and maintaining the national system of education across the island of Ireland saw them ignore the centrality and importance of the teacher within this system. This led to the teachers coalescing into a collective to articulate their identity. The attempted militant rising in 1867, along with the growth of teacher-led groups agitating for change and the establishment of the ITJ and the INTO, all contributed to the national teachers becoming a recognizable and visibly strengthening presence in Irish society at the close of the 1860s.

As a character within the national system of education, the national teacher’s social class and status were, as one Inspector noted, ‘peculiar to themselves’. At one level they were required to emulate and adhere to imperial values, while at another they were required to propagate these values and act as models for emulation. This positioned the national teacher between worlds, creating a dissonant state as Schwartz proposed⁵¹³ and the ideal conditions for developing a unique identity. The development of this identity was hampered and enabled throughout the early decades by the restrictions which the national teachers operated under.

The primary difficulty for the national teachers in advancing their social status and class lay within the structure of the classification system. This created an unequal system where social mobility could also be hampered by location or opportunities to devote the necessary time to studies. This was also fettered by social ties and marriage as noted in Chapters 4 and 6. Each of these elements, while occurring historically, have been identified contemporaneously as precursors to identity formation, with theorists such as Schwartz highlighting ‘career, romantic preferences, religious ideology and political preferences...’ recognising these contributory

⁵¹³ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

elements.⁵¹⁴ Their application, along with the elements discussed in this chapter, serve to reveal the identity of the Irish national teacher. These contributory elements of the national teacher's identity assisted in their advancing from a position where they were unrecognized and invisible within the national education system, to individuals respected in their own right and with the power of a collective identity. The religious affiliations of the national teacher as a contributory element to their identity between 1831 and 1871 are considered in the next chapter.

⁵¹⁴ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58:9.

CHAPTER 6

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND THE NATIONAL TEACHER

6.1 Introduction

This is the final of the three findings chapters which consider the contributory elements to the Irish national teacher's identity between 1831 and 1871. It considers the religious beliefs and affiliations of the national teachers as a further and final contributory element which aligns with modern theoretical constructs of identity. Such constructions, also noted by Schwartz, highlight 'religious ideology among other facets' which 'come together to form the mosaic that represents who one is.'⁵¹⁵ The availability of evidence which considers the religious beliefs and affiliation of the national teacher is not as plentiful as that which supports the other primary chapters in this research. However, within the archival sources examined to develop this thesis, religious affiliation is regularly noted as a mark of identity. Accordingly, further examination of this element of identity in respect of the Irish national teacher is important.

The impact of this absence of detail on the religious character of the national teacher within the overall research is twofold. First, the absence of data does not allow for the same level of interpretation as might be found for example, in the chapter on social class and status and second, this leads to more inferential treatment of the evidence available. Yet, when aligned with the composite elements of identity theory and assessed in a balanced fashion, conclusions may be drawn which support this research. Evidence from the registers of the Central Training

⁵¹⁵ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory...*7-58:9.

Institute at Marlborough Street,⁵¹⁶ as well as official publications, such as those of the CNEI,⁵¹⁷ the First Report of the Commissioners for Public Instruction,⁵¹⁸ published in 1834 and the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland)*, better known as the Powis Commission, are to the fore again in this chapter.⁵¹⁹

Central to understanding the religious identity of the national teacher within this chapter is its position in the overall construct of Irish national teacher identity. The reader is reminded of the early advent of Christianity to Ireland which was discussed in Chapter Two and, which arguably, presupposed the entrenched nature of identity in respect of religious beliefs and affiliations amongst the Irish people. As will be discussed, the majority of the national teachers were Roman Catholics. In this sense, their religious identity was established and did not develop, *per se*; however, it did *contribute* to their identity as a national teacher and subsequently, can be said to be a singularly identifiable and shared element of Irish national teacher identity. Therefore, the focus of this chapter rests more on how the religious affiliation of the majority of the national teachers contributed to forming the national teacher's identity, rather than its identification as a new or malleable component as might be said of the origins, selection and character of the national teacher as discussed in Chapter Four or the teacher's social status and class considered in Chapter Five.

⁵¹⁶ ED/TD/1, Register of Admission and academic record male students- Marlborough Street Teacher Training College Dublin (1840-1848). Held in the National Archives of Ireland: Dublin.

⁵¹⁷ See Bibliography.

⁵¹⁸ *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction Ireland* (1834), [45-xxxiii], H.C. London: HMSO.

⁵¹⁹ An examination of evidence from the archives of the preeminent prelates of the time, Archbishop Daniel Murray and his successor, Cardinal Paul Cullen was also considered, however, save one example from Archdeacon John Hamilton, who was Murray's personal secretary, these sources offered little to support uncovering the religious identity of the national teachers between 1831 and 1871.

Here, as in Chapters Four and Five, a contextual outline is offered to the reader in Section 6.2. This provides a broad overview of the religious landscape in Ireland at the onset of the national education system in 1831 and the primary events in relation to religion which were topical at that time. The connection between religion and the identity of the Irish national teacher is examined in Section 6.3. This is considered across a number of subsections; initially, examining the religious identity of the candidates for the position of national teacher training in Subsection 6.3.1 before considering the importance and link with the patronage, and structural administration of the national education system in 6.3.2. Examples of the relationship between the managers and national teachers, and how this challenged and impacted national teacher identity are discussed in Subsections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4 respectively. Marriage amongst the national teachers and the socially reproductive element of national teacher identity which emerged as a consequence of this is considered in Subsection 6.3.5, while the denominational status of the national teachers at the end of the research period is noted in Subsection 6.3.6. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and discussion of the importance of religious denomination and affiliation as a contributory element to the identity of the Irish national teacher in Section 6.4.

6.2 Contextual overview for this chapter

6.2.1 Religion and education prior to 1831

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Christian belief systems in Ireland as a whole are recognised as both fundamental and historically divisive in the construction of Irish identity. The arrival of the Normans in 1169 and subsequent efforts to impose a different religious creed on the native Irish presaged centuries of unrest and dissension around religious affiliation, as well as identity in Ireland. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Ireland, under the British

Empire, was home to a number of differing systems of religious beliefs, which included Catholicism, Protestantism and Presbyterianism, along with Methodists, Quakers and members of the Unitarian Church.⁵²⁰

Following the establishment of the national system, the first comprehensive report on the numbers of parishioners affiliated to the dominant religious systems in Ireland was published. This drew on data compiled for the Census of Ireland in 1831.⁵²¹ The report states:

It appears that the population of Ireland...consists of 852,064 of the Established Church, 6,427,712 Roman Catholics, 642,356 Presbyterians, and 21,808 other Protestant Dissenters: making in whole, 7,943,940 persons.⁵²²

The scale of these figures illustrate for the reader the diversity of religious affiliation amongst the Irish population at the time, whilst also illustrating the overwhelming religious identity of the Irish people as Catholicism. This has an important bearing on the reader's understanding of this element of national teacher identity within this chapter.

While Catholicism is noted as the religion of the majority of the population, it did not begin to develop significant political influence until the campaign for emancipation in the early decades of the nineteenth century, led by Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell's agitation for the rescindment of restrictions on Catholics becoming Members of Parliament at Westminster resulted in the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. The removal of the remaining legacy of the Penal Laws of the previous century significantly strengthened Catholicism and the Catholic Church in Ireland

⁵²⁰ Larsen, T. and Ledger-Lomas, M., eds. (2017) *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*, Oxford History Of Dissenting Traditions. Oxford Academic. [online] Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199683710.003.0001>.

⁵²¹ *First Report of the Commissioners for Public Instruction in Ireland* (1834), H.C. [45-XXXIII], London: HMSO, 1-7.

⁵²² *First Report of the Commissioners for Public Instruction in Ireland*, 1-7.

in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁵²³ The establishment then of the national education system two years after the Emancipation Act was a further concession to the Irish people. As the majority of the population were affiliated to the Catholic Church it was natural that many of the candidates who would become teachers would also be Catholic. Primary data is examined in the following section which attests to the religious identity of those candidates who entered the Central Training Institute in the early stages of the national system.

6.3 Religion and the National teacher

6.3.1 Teacher denomination and training

The emphasis placed on the religious identity of the teacher by the Commissioners is primarily found within the structures established for the national teachers. As noted in Subsection 4.4.1 of Chapter Four, the establishment of a training institute at Merrion Street in 1834 and subsequently at Marlborough Street in 1838 along with the Dublin or District Model Schools, oversaw a programme which would educate candidates for the position of national teacher, irrespective of religious identity. The Commissioners outlined six points in relation to the training process in the national teachers in their report for 1838.⁵²⁴ The second of these has particular relevance in relation to the religious aspect of national teacher identity. The Commissioners stipulated that the candidates:

...are boarded and lodged at the establishments provided by the Commissioners; and arrangements are made for their receiving religious instruction from their respective pastors, who may attend at the Normal Establishment at convenient times arranged for the purpose. On Sundays they are expected to

⁵²³ Geoghegan, *King Dan: The Rise of Daniel O'Connell*. See also Dowling, *A History of Irish Education*, 73.

⁵²⁴ CNEI (1838) *The Fifth Report...for the year ending 31 March 1838*, [160-XVI], H.C., 5-6.

attend their respective places of worship; and a vigilant superintendence is at all times exercised over their moral conduct.⁵²⁵

The importance of both moral character and the centrality of religious affiliation are recognised here as core elements of the teacher training process. In making provision for a variety of religious affiliations there was little doubt that the Commissioners hoped that this would be reflected by the national school teacher in the classroom. At a more fundamental level, the centrality of religion at a broader level within the training institute, regardless of the affiliation, can be understood as a core element of identity, both for the national teacher and also at a more conceptual level within early nineteenth century society. In this respect, Schwartz's contention that 'religious ideology' was a central aspect within the construct of identity for the Irish national teacher must be noted here.⁵²⁶ The provision of training for the national teachers which encompassed religious instruction as an aspect of that training highlighted the centrality of religion in the views of the CNEI.

On admission to the training establishment the candidates were lodged within approved accommodation and their conduct was carefully monitored. With regard to the lodgings provided for the teachers, the Powis Commission reflected, 'A boarding house is not an indispensable part of a training institution,'⁵²⁷ while stressing that the education of potential teachers must be considered also at a broader level, beyond their lodgings. The Commission states:

The object of training is not confined to increase of knowledge. The formation of character and of good habits, the regulation of manners and of dress, the cultivation of kindly and honourable feelings, and

⁵²⁵ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 406.

⁵²⁶ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58:9.

⁵²⁷ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 419

the influence of religious motives are largely promoted by constant residence under the eye of persons of superior culture and piety.⁵²⁸

It is clear that the parameters outlined by the Commissioners extended to take account of the national teacher's religious identity. This went beyond the obvious educational aspects and accommodation provided during the student's formal engagement in the training college. The emphasis here on 'formation', 'regulation' and 'cultivation', all embedded within the framework of 'religious motives' and 'piety', reinforced the centrality of religion in the developing identity of the Irish national teacher. Such parameters also speak to the cultural 'symbols' which Stets and Burke considered as necessary in designating status or roles within society.⁵²⁹

The records of the training institutes established by the Commissioners at Merrion Street, and Marlborough Street latterly, note the religious denomination of each teacher who attended the college in the early years of the system. As discussed earlier, the Merrion Street training institute was only in existence from 1834 to 1837 before it was superseded by Marlborough Street. A record of admissions and an overview of the religious denominations at Merrion Street shows that 255 Roman Catholics and 41 Protestants⁵³⁰ were trained as national teachers there over the three years noted here. Whilst the numbers are low, they are prophetic in their representation of the developing shape that the religious identity of the Irish national teacher would assume.⁵³¹ The admittance of potential teaching candidates to any of the training centres, either the institute at Marlborough Street or the Dublin or District Model Schools was also

⁵²⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 419-420.

⁵²⁹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:225.

⁵³⁰ The use of the word 'Protestants' in this case also includes those other branches of Protestantism such as Presbyterianism.

⁵³¹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 43.

prefaced by their supplying testimony from a clergyman, as noted earlier in Subsection 4.4.1 of Chapter Four.

Between the years 1838 and 1867, 7,497 candidates are recorded as having attended Marlborough Street Training College to train as national teachers. The following table outlines the religious denominations of these candidates. It should be noted that on examination there are some marginal discrepancies between the figures recorded from the original registers and the official Commissioners' reports. These can be attributed to those teachers who for one reason or another did not complete the course of study, who became ill or passed away. Therefore, while these data indicate the number of entrants according to denominational status for Marlborough Street, they cannot be taken as wholly accurate.

Table 6.1. Overview of Religious Denominations of National teachers at Marlborough Street 1838-1867.⁵³²

1838-1867	Roman Catholic	Protestant	Presbyterian	Other
	4,441	675	1,204	154

Both the training college registers and the returns furnished later by the Powis Commission in 1870 offer an indication of the varying denominations which applied to become teachers, but more importantly these further the reader's understanding that the vast majority of those applying to become national teachers were Roman Catholic. While this is perhaps evident given

⁵³² Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 43; Registers of the Marlborough Street Training College, 1840-50, ED/TD/1, National Archives of Ireland; Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 43.

the overall religious composition of the Irish population at the time, it nevertheless allows the reader to develop an understanding around this aspect of the identity of the national teacher. It also speaks to the collective aspect of identity as considered through a contemporary theoretical lens, such as that developed by Tajfel⁵³³ in the 1970s and discussed in Chapter Three.⁵³⁴ While many of the ruling classes were Protestant and members of the Established Church, those who professed to Presbyterianism were better represented in the candidacy for teaching. This reinforces the understanding that the national system was indeed aimed at fulfilling the educational needs of the poorer classes of Ireland while those Presbyterians who became teachers, according to the registers, originated primarily from the north of Ireland where they comprised a greater degree of the population. Some outliers within the corpus of those who enrolled in Marlborough Street in the years documented included members of the Unitarian Church, Methodists and one Moravian.⁵³⁵ Whilst such variety might have been expected to cause tension, in the publication of the Thirteenth Report of the Commissioners for the year 1846, the Commissioners write:

Of the teachers trained with us four-fifths are usually Roman Catholics; one-fifth Protestants...These teachers come from every quarter of Ireland; belong to every race and every religious persuasion in the country; arrive strangers to each other, with their habits and opinions fully formed; yet no religious dissension exists among them...⁵³⁶

Of course, the registers of the Marlborough Street Training Institute are not wholly representative of the population at large, as teachers who established or were maintaining existing schools are not represented here and many of those teachers never attended the training institute, having come to the position through those routes discussed earlier such as the

⁵³³ Tajfel, *Intergroup Behavior*, 401-466.

⁵³⁴ See Subsection 3.2.2, Chapter Three.

⁵³⁵ A branch of Protestantism-see Hanna, S. G. (1967) *The Origin and Nature of the Gracehill Moravian Settlement, 1764-1855, with Special Reference to the Work of John Cennick In Ireland, 1746-1755. Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society*, 21(2), i-157.

⁵³⁶ CNEI (1846) *The Thirteenth Report...for 1846*, [832-XVII], H.C., 8.

examination process conducted by the Inspectorate, the monitorial system, the Central, Dublin and District Model Schools or existing sites of elementary education.⁵³⁷

6.3.2 Religious identity and patronage

The foundation of the national system then was accompanied by the installation of a Board of National Education to oversee the process. The constitution of the board was to comprise, ‘men (sic) of high personal character, including individuals of exalted station in the Church...(and)...it should consist of persons professing different religious opinions.’⁵³⁸ Stanley envisaged the composition of the board being reflected ultimately in the management and composition of the national schools. As noted earlier, these men were known as Commissioners and they had a variety of responsibilities within the new system. From the outset the involvement of ‘individuals of exalted station in the Church’ was a feature within national education as Stanley’s letter stipulated the Commissioners, ‘would superintend a system of education from which should be banished even the suspicion of proselytism, and which admitting children of all religious persuasions, should not interfere with the peculiar tenets of any.’⁵³⁹ The composition of the first Board of National Education was to reflect this approach to nondenominational education. Stanley, on writing to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to inform him of his plan, stated:

We must lose no time in naming our Commissioners for our new Board of Education. This will be a task of some delicacy. I propose, however, if you approve, to make them a board of seven, of whom

⁵³⁷ A brief examination of the reports of the Inspectorate on the Model Schools for 1851, for example, does not indicate the religious denominations of the teachers working in the Model Schools. However, Doyle does offer some data on the religious denomination of the pupil-teachers in the Model Schools in 1867 which states that ‘of the 108 resident pupil teachers in 1867, 48 or 44.4 per cent were Roman Catholics.’ Doyle, *Model Schools-Model Teachers?*, 189.

⁵³⁸ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

⁵³⁹ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

three to be of the Established Church, two Catholics and two Protestant Dissenters; this will, I think be a fair distribution. The names which have occurred to me are Dr. Whately and Dr. Sadleir (if they will accept), to whom we must add some liberal layman of the Church of England; for the Catholics, Dr. Murray and some layman. For the Dissenters, only one has occurred to me; I believe Mr. Holmes, the barrister, if he would take the office, would be unexceptionable. I am afraid -----(sic) would not join, as he disapproves the plan. Perhaps you could suggest some additional names, or some which might be substituted for some of them.⁵⁴⁰

Stanley's proposal ultimately saw three members of the Established Church, two Catholics and two Presbyterians assume roles on the Board, under the Chairmanship of the third Duke of Leinster, Augustus Fitzgerald.

The structure of the national education system can be broadly described as encompassing two halves. First, the Board of National Education, comprised of the Commissioners, who oversaw all administrative aspects of the national system, including training and second, the patronage of the schools, which fell to those who established national schools across the island of Ireland. Coolahan notes that the new national schools were to be vested in trustees approved by the Board, with the school patron being the local person or authority who undertook the establishment of the school.⁵⁴¹ This opportunity for involvement within education was not lost on the ecclesiastical authorities in the aftermath of Catholic Emancipation and consequently, many of the national schools came under the patronage of the Catholic Church. This was further enabled by Stanley's recommendation which stated:

⁵⁴⁰ Letter dated 20th October, 1831 from the Right Hon. E.G. Stanley, Chief Secretary of Ireland to the Lord Lieutenant, the Marquess of Anglesea In: Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 20.

⁵⁴¹ Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 14.

The board will look with peculiar favour upon applications proceeding either from-1st, The Protestant and Roman-catholic clergy of the Parish; or 2nd, One of the clergymen, and a certain number of parishioners professing the opposite creed; or 3rd Parishioners of both denominations.⁵⁴²

In all likelihood the favourable status offered towards dual applications envisaged strengthening ties between the differing religious bodies at this time, yet ultimately, it was this aspect of the new national system which enabled the national schools to become increasingly denominational as the decades progressed. Arguably, this also impacted on the identity of those who undertook the position of national teacher, in respect of the denominational aspect of the applications to establish national schools. This is borne out by statistical returns from 1835, regarding the applications to the Commissioners, who note that:

The Protestant clerical signatures are much fewer than the Catholic, but we understand that, according to the late census, taken by the Commissioners of Public Instruction, the number of Protestants of the Established Church in Ireland is about 852,000; the number of Presbyterians about 635,000; the number of protestant Dissenters about 22,000; and the number of Roman Catholics about 6,423,000; therefore it appears that the Protestant clerical signatures to the applications to us, bear to the Roman Catholic clerical signatures about the same proportion that the number of Protestants bears to Roman Catholics in the mass of the population.⁵⁴³

These early statistics presaged the denominational composition of the national system as the decades progressed, with the greater Roman Catholic presence all but engulfing national schools of alternative ethos and strengthening the religious identity of the majority of the national teachers as Catholic. By the time the Powis Commission compiled its findings this was clearly reflected in the patronage of the national schools, as seen in Table 6.2 below.

⁵⁴² Hyland and Milne, *Irish Educational Documents*, 101.

⁵⁴³ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for the year ending 31 March 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C., 3.

Table 6.2 Patronage of National Schools in 1868 according to Powis Commission Report.⁵⁴⁴

Patronage	Roman Catholic	Established Church	Presbyterian	Other management	Joint Roman Catholic and Protestant	Total number of national schools
Number of schools	4,478 71.7%	836 13.3%	807 12.9%	102 1.6%	17 0.2%	6,240

While the focus on the developing system was placed largely on facilitating a nondenominational experience for the pupils in the national system, less emphasis was placed on the teachers who would staff the system. The following exception, detailed in the Fifth Report of the Commissioners published in 1838, includes a passage outlining the desired religious characteristics of the national teacher:

The appointment of teachers rests with the local patrons and committees of the schools. But the Commissioners are to be satisfied as to the fitness of each, both as to character and general qualification. The teacher should be a person of Christian sentiment, of calm temper, and discretion. He should be imbued with a spirit of peace, of obedience to the law, and of loyalty to his sovereign; he should not only possess the art of communicating knowledge, but be capable of moulding the mind of youth, and of giving to the power which education confers a useful direction. These are the qualities of which Patrons of Schools, when making choices of teachers, should anxiously look.⁵⁴⁵

The requirements state that the teacher must, ‘be imbued with a spirit of peace’, which reinforces the religious undertones of the teacher’s identity, as well as positioning the teacher as a role model for pupils and communities. Concurrently, the choice of teacher is left to the patron of the school, with some guidance offered by the CNEI in this regard. The data in the

⁵⁴⁴ These data are condensed here, with greater detail available as to the numbers of schools vested and non-vested, and whether under clerical management or lay management in the Powis Report. See Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 238-239.

⁵⁴⁵ CNEI (1838) *The Fifth Report...for the year ending 31 March 1838*, [160-XVI], H.C., 5-6.

following table illustrate the religious denominations of the those national teachers in training at the Central Training Institute in Marlborough Street working in 1851 and are reflective of the reality of the developing system, with clear delineation along denominational lines for the religious identity of the national teachers.

Table: 6.3 Religious denomination of the National teachers trained in 1851.⁵⁴⁶

Sex of teachers	Teachers trained for national schools					Teachers trained at own expense					Total number trained in 1851
	E.C	Pres.	Diss.	R.C.	Total	E.C	Pres.	Diss.	R.C.	Total	
Males	10	21	-	138	169	2	2	-	3	7	176
Females	5	13	1	69	88	4	3	1	18	26	114
Total	15	34	1	207	257	6	5	1	21	33	290

The returns here are quite low, given the time that has elapsed since the foundation of the system twenty years prior to this. This may be attributed to the growing opposition of the varying church bodies to the interdenominational nature of the Central Training Institute at Marlborough Street, in particular the Catholic Church.⁵⁴⁷ It is also important to note that these statistics only reflect those teachers trained at the Central Training Institute and do not take

⁵⁴⁶ CNEI (1851) *The Eighteenth Report...for 1851*, [1582-XLII], H.C. Vol. 1. Appendix A, 5. Note the table as reproduced here includes the abbreviations found in the original. Therefore, E.C denotes Established Church, R.C. Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Dissenter, with the latter including any of those minority sects noted earlier in Subsection 6.3.1, such as members of the Moravian Church.

⁵⁴⁷ Coolahan notes that the 1840s saw increased tensions around the nature of the multid denominational system, with the development of a charter for the Board of National Education in 1844 amplifying this. The return from Rome of Dr. Paul Cullen in 1849, initially as Archbishop of Armagh and later as Archbishop of Dublin, fortified the opposition of the Catholic Church towards the multid denominational nature of the national schools. See Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 17-18.

account of the District Model Schools which were operating outside of Dublin at this time.⁵⁴⁸ However, the number of those who identify as Catholic clearly remains greater than all the other denominations taken into account.

6.3.3 Reinforcing religious affiliation-managers and teachers

The religious identity of the national teacher in the early decades of the national system developed largely within the parameters established by the CNEI, which allowed the local patron to choose the national teacher and as noted earlier in this chapter, aligned with theoretical constructs of identity, such as that discussed by Stets and Burke.⁵⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier, in Section 2.6 of Chapter Two, subsequent controversies emerged around the provision of religious education within the national schools, which saw tensions developing between the varying religious bodies. However, within these arguments the position and identity of the national teacher remains largely invisible.⁵⁵⁰ Notably, the CNEI maintained its stance regarding the nondenominational aspect of national education, which it appears allowed the churches, most notably the Catholic Church, to increase its foothold within the sphere of national education. An excerpt from an address given by Stanley to a deputation from the Synod of Ulster in 1840 reinforces this, when he notes:

The National schools are not so much the schools of the government as of local patrons and managers, who submit voluntarily to certain regulations in order to entitle them to receive aid from the government.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁸ Doyle writes that only 7 of the initially envisaged 32 Model Schools were in existence by 1849. These were Coleraine, Ballymena, Newry, Bailieborough, Clonmel, Dunmanway and Trim. These did not include the West Dublin Model School and the Central Model School attached to the Central Training Institute at Marlborough Street. He also notes that Limerick, Waterford and Kilkenny were in the planning stages by 1851, with the chief difficulty around the pace of development being funding for the Model Schools. See Doyle, *Model Schools-Model Teachers?*, 76-81.

⁵⁴⁹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

⁵⁵⁰ See Section 2.6 of Chapter Two.

⁵⁵¹ CNEI (1841) *The Eighth Report...for 1841*, [398-XXIII], H.C., 3.

The impact of elements of this managerial control can be seen in the religious identity of the national teachers, which is considered in this section. The management of the schools at ground level was either by the patron, or a local manager who was appointed by the patron. More often than not this was the local cleric. Even though Stanley's Letter had made provision for joint patronage, very few schools were established under the latter. The following table, 6.4, extends the data which are found in Table 6.2 of this chapter, to give a more detailed analysis of the figures pertaining to the varying religious denominations of the national teachers by 1867.⁵⁵²

⁵⁵² The Powis Commission commenced its inquiry in 1867, however, the process of data collection took place from 'midsummer 1868' and was completed 'by November of the same year.' Therefore, the presentation of the findings corresponds with the year of publication, 1870. See Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 14.

Table 6.4. Number of clerical and lay patrons of national schools according to religious denomination in 1870.⁵⁵³

Religious denominations	Number of schools	Vested	Non-vested	Total schools under clerical management	Total schools under lay management
Roman Catholic Management	4,478	1,277	3,201	5,040	1,183
Established Church Management	836	205	631		
Presbyterian Management	807	83	724		
Other management	102	13	89		
Joint management, i.e. Roman Catholic and Established Church	17	10	7		
Total number of national schools	6,240	1,588	4,652		

The table clearly foregrounds the patronage of the national schools as clerical. Within the original table of returns in the Powis Commission Report, the schools are delineated into ‘Vested’ and ‘Non-vested.’ This briefly warrants explanation here as it accounts for the apparent disparity in the returns noted here in Table 6.4. Those schools which are described as ‘Vested’ are those which were directly assigned to the Commissioners, as a result of their having contributed to the initial cost of building the school or having legal ownership of the school.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom 238-239.

⁵⁵⁴ National Schools which were designated ‘Vested’ were due to their being vested in local trustees, vested in the Commissioners themselves or secured by a bond. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 224.

Those which were designated as ‘Non-vested’ were those national schools over which the Commissioners had not contributed financially for their erection, or had no legal control and which were often vested in the patron.⁵⁵⁵

It is clear from the data seen here that the provision offered for dual patronage, as envisaged by Stanley between differing religious denominations, did not succeed, with only 17 of 6,240 schools, or less than 0.2 per cent of the total listed here being identified under the banner of dual patronage. It is also quite clear that whatever the aspirations of Stanley, religious affiliations were deeply rooted and the advent of a new, national education system was not seen as a platform for conciliation between differing denominations.

The impact of managerial and particularly, clerical control, saw the teacher having to fulfil their commitments to the Commissioners but also, more immediately to their local manager, at whose behest they were employed. The following evidence offers examples of interactions documented in the archival sources between the manager and national teacher prior to 1871 which facilitates an insight into interactions between the teacher and manager at ground level. Some of these insights portray the manager in a negative light, however, all are rooted in religious affiliation and illustrate the dynamic between the manager and teacher. It is likely that the majority of teacher and manager relationships were accepted as the *status quo* and resultingly were not recorded, or it is possible that the power dynamic between teacher and manager was so biased in favour of the latter, that fear of dismissal prevented more fulsome accounts being documented. The majority of these accounts are recorded in the evidence of the

⁵⁵⁵ See Chapter Five In: Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, 157-224.

Powis Commission published in 1870 and are infused with moralistic and religious undertones which speak to the religious identity of the national school teacher. While ten Assistant Commissioners were appointed to collect evidence for the Powis Inquiry, it is notable that of these only one expressed particular interest in issues between managers and teachers, and it is his testimony that forms the basis of the following paragraphs.

Regarding the managerial impact on the national teacher, Assistant Commissioner William Jack,⁵⁵⁶ with responsibility for parts of the province of Connaught in the west of Ireland, writes that the ‘arbitrary power, vested in the patron, of doing absolutely as he chooses with his schoolmaster, while the state accepts the subordinate position of paying for him, is the most anomalous feature of the Irish system.’⁵⁵⁷ Assistant Commissioner Jack also states that the ‘largest class of these patrons (60 out of 106)---the Roman Catholic Priests---have their position by virtue of their spiritual office, which procures for them the confidence of the parents.’⁵⁵⁸ It is important to note that generally the patron of the national school is understood historically to be the Bishop of the Diocese, however, in this case the Assistant Commissioner appears to be using the term patron to describe the managers of the national schools in this district. The Assistant Commissioner makes a further observation regarding the power held by the patrons of the schools,⁵⁵⁹ over the national teacher, stating:

⁵⁵⁶ Assistant Commissioner William Jack is recorded as being a Fellow of St. Peter’s College, Cambridge; Professor of Natural Philosophy at St. Owen’s College Manchester and formerly one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools for Scotland. He had responsibility for West-Connaught, including the districts around Castlebar, Ballina, Westport, Belmullet, Clifden, Tuam and Newport.

⁵⁵⁷ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 373.

⁵⁵⁸ Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 373.

⁵⁵⁹ The Assistant Commissioner’s use of the word patron and manager continues to be ambiguous. While ultimately the power of dismissal of a teacher lay with the Commissioners, the local manager exercised this power on the ground.

The State retains in its own hands the power of withdrawing the salary from the schoolmaster, the patron has the power of withdrawing the schoolmaster from the salary. He appoints him, or dismisses him, with or without reason, at a day's notice, or with no notice; he has absolute authority as to all school affairs.⁵⁶⁰

Such references to the power of the manager over the national teacher within official accounts are scarce, yet as later examples began to emerge from those publications such as the *Irish National Teacher's Journal* (ITJ), which is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, these were perhaps more often the case than not. It is likely that the absence of detail around incidents or difficulties which arose between managers and national teachers was due to the teacher's desire to maintain their position. The impact of the manager controlling the national teacher's salary meant an element of subservience and adherence by the national teacher towards the manager, whereby the teacher was beholden to conduct themselves in a manner that was agreeable to the local manager. This aspect of control was amplified by concepts of morality, which the clergy saw as their duty to reinforce. Such traits of morality, highlighted by religious bodies also bespoke to identity formation and further resonate with aspects of Schwartz's⁵⁶¹ and Stets and Burke's work.⁵⁶² Another example offered by Assistant Commissioner Jack highlights the importance attached to concepts of respectability and moral conduct, which far outweighed the teacher's ability to teach. He writes of a Protestant patron who dismissed a teacher in his school on the grounds of:

a complaint lodged against him by a young widow in the town, a tenant and co-religionists of the patron's, the nature of which was that the teacher wrote a scathing letter, on hearing that her friends reported through town that the teacher had proposed marriage to her, or something to that effect. He

⁵⁶⁰ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 373.

⁵⁶¹ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

⁵⁶² Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

had lodged at her place with another young man for some time, but removed to another house in town after a lapse of some weeks.⁵⁶³

Further investigation might have warranted the teacher retaining his place, as he was ‘a most respectable young man and a very clever young man’, but the preoccupation with respectability and morality, along with the potential for reputational damage to the greater Protestant cohort in the area was enough to see this teacher dismissed.

A further example from Assistant Commissioner Jack documents the opinion of a parish priest, one Father Finn of Ballaghaderreen in Co. Roscommon, who it appears dismissed a teacher due to the teacher’s suspected involvement with the Fenian Rising in 1867. The priest’s letter to the Assistant Commissioner is reproduced in full in the Powis report. Some extracts from it provide a flavour of the sentiment in rural Roscommon at this time. Fr. Finn writes:

I beg to say that, at all events, in this part of Ireland, there is, in my opinion, a very general, if not universal feeling of discontent and disaffection prevalent among National Teachers. But, in expressing this opinion, I do not mean to give you to understand that any National teacher is more disaffected than the great bulk of the people among whom he resides, except so far as his superior education makes him feel wrongs and injustices more keenly; or that any National teacher is a Fenian—a few may be so—but all are disaffected.⁵⁶⁴

There is an interesting and insightful dynamic at play here. Rather than corresponding directly with the teacher in question, the Assistant Commissioner makes his enquiry to the manager.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 373.

⁵⁶⁴ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 373.

⁵⁶⁵ This reflected the direction given in the Instructions to the Inspectors in 1855, which stated in Rule XXVII that ‘On entering a district, and during the course of his first tour of inspection, the Inspector is to seek to make himself acquainted with the managers or correspondents, and on all subsequent occasions to call upon them regarding any matters of importance that may come under his notice in their schools.’ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 181.

Thereby, remaining at a remove from the teacher. It may be argued that the teacher is considered as occupying too lowly a position for the Assistant Commissioner to engage with, while also ensuring that the teacher is confined to his position within the hierarchical structure. This adherence to structure was an effective and successful means of ensuring imperial boundaries were maintained and no scope was given which might facilitate the teacher's social advancement beyond their position. In this case, Fr. Finn is seen to support the national teachers in a circuitous fashion, where the priest lays the blame for Fenianism firmly at the door of Empire. He supports this by outlining the 'long-standing grievances' which the national teachers have endured, such as low rates of remuneration, lack of residences and so on.⁵⁶⁶ The priest's support for the teacher may not be unusual either, in so far as the national teacher and local manager worked together and many may have enjoyed a positive relationship.

The low rate of salary as discussed earlier in Chapter Five was a primary source of discontent among national teachers. However, the power of dismissal which the school manager held was also noted by Assistant Commissioner Scott-Coward in Co. Cork. To support this he offers the following example:

As I was passing the door of a national school in Cork, the teacher rushed out and told me he had a case to bring to my notice illustrative of the grievance of which I speak. I went into the school, and there I saw a man who bore all the appearances of want and care and fatigue, and with his clothes fast going into tatters. He was a national schoolmaster who had been summarily dismissed to make room for another person who could combine playing the organ with teaching... This sudden dismissal involved the necessity of sending his wife and children to the workhouse, where they were when I saw him, and he had been walking from place to place in search of work when I saw him.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 383-384.

⁵⁶⁷ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 129.

The difficulties which arose on occasion at local level between the manager and the national teacher are further noted here and there can be little doubt that there were instances where the managers exercised and wielded their control over the national teachers to suppress their development and identity.

A rare example of the voice of the national teacher in relation to religion and its place within the national system is provided in the testimony of Assistant Commissioner Jack. The teacher is recorded as saying, ‘There is sometimes a dislike on the part of the enlightened parents of the present system, which is regarded as somewhat in the light of a *Protestant Government* (emphasis in original) system.’⁵⁶⁸ The teacher goes on to state, ‘this latter view which many respectable well-informed people entertain tends very much to lower the *status* (emphasis in original) of the teacher, who by many of this class of persons are regarded as perhaps a shade better than ‘Jumpers’ or Apostates.’⁵⁶⁹ It appears that the Assistant Commissioner tends towards the belief that the opposite is true and that generally, the people in communities where the national schools had developed had found little within the schools which the clergy could be against.⁵⁷⁰ Indeed, it would appear that the denominational struggles which the Catholic clergy undertook to take charge of the schools impacted more negatively on the teachers and schools at ground level than if they were not seeking to gain denominational control of the schools.

⁵⁶⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 393.

⁵⁶⁹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 393.

⁵⁷⁰ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 393.

The majority of the Assistant Commissioners reports to the Powis Commission examined have referenced the contentions surrounding religion and religious teachings within the national schools, yet very few have referenced the teacher's opinions on this. The examples here focus on the morality and perception of the national teacher according to the manager. However, Assistant Commissioner Jack provides an exception to this, writing:

A decided majority of the National teachers whom I consulted are opposed to denominationalism in any shape. In opposition to them it is often urged that no system of education in the West of Ireland can ever be successful, without the hearty concurrence of the Roman Catholic clergy, and that everything ought to be done to "conciliate them".⁵⁷¹

Tensions between varying religious denominations had long characterised educational provision in Ireland. As discussed earlier, a core tenet of Stanley's letter in 1831 was the provision of nondenominational education for children. This was also reflected in the teacher training course provided under the auspices of the Board of National Education in Dublin. However, as the mid-nineteenth century approached, many of the national schools were under the patronage of the Catholic Church and it began to voice its opposition to issues around the place of religious instruction in the national schools. The national teachers became embroiled in these power struggles; most especially from 1863, when the Roman Catholic hierarchy imposed an outright ban on hiring teachers who had attended the Dublin or District Model Schools or nondenominational training at Marlborough Street in Dublin.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 393.

⁵⁷² Coolahan, J. (2017) *Towards the Era of Lifelong Learning: A History of Irish Education, 1800-2016*. Dublin: IPA, 18-19.

6.3.4 Challenges to the national teacher's religious identity

The following excerpts highlight some of the difficulties which arose between the national teacher and the managers of the national schools. Assistant Commissioner Jack offers the example of a teacher who took charge of Garracloon National School on the north-eastern shore of Lough Conn, in Co. Mayo. The school was established in 1857, by a local, absentee landlord, who instituted two local land holders, Lord Arran and a Mr. Perry, to act as patrons.⁵⁷³ The patrons hired two Catholic teachers, husband and wife. The management of the school, writes Assistant Commissioner Jack, had been offered to the local parish priest who refused to undertake the role, and who subsequently, 'denounced the teacher and the school, his wife, his children and his pupils, their brothers and their sisters, their grandfathers and their grandmothers from the sacraments.'⁵⁷⁴ Some years following this in 1861, the teacher's wife became quite ill and her husband sought the services of the local priest to administer 'the *last rites* (emphasis in original) of the Church to my wife, who is so very ill that she seems past recovery.'⁵⁷⁵ The priest refused. A litany of intimidation and opposition toward the teacher and the school is recorded by Assistant Commissioner Jack in the remaining correspondence. He writes that many of the locals, in order to appease the priest and prior to significant sacramental celebrations, would withdraw their children from the school in order to appease the local clergyman and be considered suitable to receive sacraments, only to return to the school when the ceremonies were concluded.

⁵⁷³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 396.

⁵⁷⁴ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 396.

⁵⁷⁵ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 396.

It is important to consider how church control over the deep-rooted links between the people and their religious beliefs was exercised in this regard. In forbidding members of communities from attending or availing of church services, the church was attempting to influence those in charge of the national education system to their desires. Presenting a choice to the poorer communities between religion and education, the national system or the church, was characteristic of the choices offered by imperialist systems, whereby submission was required for benefit. The desire for national education was such that eventually many communities acceded to church control, with the majority of national schools coming under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church. Such choices between church and education in respect of the national teacher's identity further resonate with theory and earlier points considered around the dystonic state that accompanies identity formation in Subsection 3.2.1 of Chapter Three. Essentially, membership of the church, maintaining a successful relationship with the local manager, fulfilling their duties to the CNEI and teaching all contributed to the dissonance accompanying the early national teacher's emerging identity.

A final example from Assistant Commissioner Jack in respect of this section includes a brief letter from a national teacher, who on being offered a position of teacher, had to withdraw on opposition from the local priest. The letter reads:

Dear Sir, I would have felt happy to go down to _____ (as original) and take charge of your school, but the priest met me yesterday, and said he would anathematize me if I would attempt to go down. Under these circumstances, I deeply regret, but I shall never teach here anymore under him—I shall go to America.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁶ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 400.

This sample is interesting as it shows the absolute authority commanded by the clergy, superseding even the Board of National Education, which also signals the underlying tensions between church and state in respect of national education. The teacher in this case is not considered to have any recourse to authority or any room for appeal. The Assistant Commissioner records that this teacher did emigrate to the United States of America.

A counterpoint to this is a rare example of a letter from a national teacher, J.J. Lawless to Archdeacon Hamilton on January 23rd, 1834, appealing for an audience with the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Daniel Murray, who sat on the Board of National Education as one of the first Commissioners. This is an important and rare example of first-hand correspondence from an early national teacher and is reproduced in full here. Lawless writes:

Most Respected Sir,

Having made four or five ineffectual attempts to see your Reverence these last 3 days, I humbly hope your humane kindness will pardon the liberty of address under the urgency of my rising prospects.

I can now Sir get a country school and encouragement to calculate upon it but as my abounding difficulties render it impossible to get down my family or scarcely to appear decent myself I am animated to obtrude for a moment on your advice, would it be prudent or at all in the bounds of discretion to mention the circumstances to his Excellency, as my condition is so truly helpless and the like opportunity may not probably offer to me again.

I am pained mostly sir beyond expression to be this troublesome but as my great anxiety to get out of want and misery and cannot submit to beg nor ever yield to the commission of crime I humbly beg your good discernment will make allowance for the effervescence of an----- (sic) which has overcome all my heavy scruples and if I should be so fortunate as to succeed, my whole life will be one continued scene of gratitude and faithful prayer to Heaven for the just reward of my deliverers remaining Revd. Sir with the ----- ardour of affectionate ---- to your will.

Your faithful humble servant until death,

J.L. Lawless.⁵⁷⁷

Initially, the teacher articulates his attempts to gain audience with Archdeacon Hamilton. The tone of the letter and persistence with which the teacher writes highlights his sense of urgency. Lawless is aware that he is appealing to Dr. Hamilton to intercede on his behalf with Archbishop Murray and makes his case employing all his literary skills and eloquence. It is clear that the teacher seeks financial aid of some description. This teacher's lack of means and perhaps lack of familial support suggests that the teacher is of low status. It is clear that the teacher displays an awareness of the need to 'appear decent', or well dressed in order to accede to the position on offer. In this example, it is evident that the teacher understands that expectations around respectability, indicating an awareness of what constitutes or contributes to national teacher identity as noted in Chapter Four, Subsection 4.4.6.

It is clear from the examples noted here that the national teachers who corresponded with the Assistant Commissioner more than three decades later were as articulate and intelligent individuals as Mr. J.J. Lawless in 1834. All of the correspondence included in the evidence gathered from the Powis Commission was from men, the majority of whom were figures in authority. Only four national teachers were called to offer evidence and these were representatives of the teacher's associations which had developed during the late 1850s and 1860s.⁵⁷⁸ Only one woman called before the Commission, this was likely due to her being titled.⁵⁷⁹ This is simply reflective of societal attitudes around women and their place in society at the time. Further examples from titled individuals, landholders and clergy are recorded by

⁵⁷⁷ Hamilton, J. (1834) *Hamilton Papers*. File 35/4/104. Held in the Dublin Diocesan Archives: Dublin.

⁵⁷⁸ See Subsection 5.3.9 in Chapter Five on the national teacher's associations and the beginnings of the INTO.

⁵⁷⁹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 417.

Assistant Commissioner William Jack, the vast majority of which echo the sentiments of their peers around managerial control and difficulties between the national teacher and the manager. The impact of religious affiliation on the national teacher at ground level cannot be understated. The control exercised by the manager of the school over the teacher was strengthened by the teacher's belonging to same religious denomination as that of the manager and the challenge for the national teacher was to maintain parity between the terms of their employment, their own religious practices and the demands, if exercised, of the manager.

An extract from the January issue of the ITJ in 1870 also contains some points of interest under the heading of 'Managerial Despotism.'⁵⁸⁰ Highlighting these challenges to the national teacher is the correspondence of one national teacher, who, under the initials of P.A.C., outlines the case of:

a highly respectable female teacher who was dismissed from a school, in which she and her husband had taught for years...to make room for the manager's butler's wife, a lady who possessed not one single literary qualification, and who was removed for incompetency immediately after the inspector's visit.⁵⁸¹

It appears that many such incidents were recalled anecdotally and were only noted in the public consciousness with the incidents noted here being provided by national teachers themselves. For example, 'P.A.C.' also describes an incident in the same issue of the ITJ 'of a teacher who was threatened with dismissal, for subscribing to a newspaper, the politics of which the manager did not approve of!'⁵⁸² These incidents serve to illustrate how temporary the teacher's

⁵⁸⁰ Irish *Teacher's Journal* (1870) January issue. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 14.

⁵⁸¹ Irish *Teacher's Journal* (1870) January issue, 14.

⁵⁸² Irish *Teacher's Journal* (1870) January issue, 14.

tenure was within national schools. Their employment was completely contingent on their proving satisfactory to the manager.

6.3.5 Marriage and national teacher identity

Within the reports of the Inspectors in particular, marriage is regularly mentioned and this emerges as a subtheme to the discussion around religious identity of the national teacher. Connelly writes that ‘church authorities of this period attempted to implement a measure of control on the marriages of Irish Catholics,’ with a particular focus on ‘enforcing regulations governing both choice of partner and the formal procedures to be followed.’⁵⁸³ The same author also notes the lack of control which the clergy could exercise over arranged marriages, known as ‘matches’ with which the population engaged.⁵⁸⁴ Marriage, in many instances, was viewed as an institution which could be advantageous provided it was arranged between partners of similar status. This was important in maintaining the *status quo* and facilitating the social reproduction of the class system.

To all extents and purposes, the control exercised by the Catholic clergy over the institute of marriage complemented the rules and regulations of the Commissioners over the national teachers. While the majority of the national teachers professed to Catholicism, their religious affiliation brought their religious practices under the control of the church. When the patronage and management structures employed in establishing the national schools were instituted, this meant both religious identity and national teacher identity, in the majority of cases, were closely aligned to each other. Therefore, documentary accounts around the marital habits of the

⁵⁸³ Connelly, S.J. (2001) *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845*, 2nd ed. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 175.

⁵⁸⁴ Connelly, *Priests and People*, 188-208.

national teachers and examples of this are important in understanding the religious identity of the national teachers.

Church control over the religious practices of the national teacher fulfilled a number of requirements which both church and the Commissioners desired. First, it promoted stability within the role and community. The teacher was less likely to leave their position within a national school if they had a family to support. Second, in celebrating the sacrament of marriage, not only was the ethos of the Catholic Church reinforced but the element of social reproduction was also advanced. This was dually beneficial for both teacher and Empire; the teacher providing opportunities for advancement for their families and the Empire replicating loyal and stable subjects. The following examples offer an insight into the official view surrounding the national teachers and marriage, as well as an insight into the social element of the early national teachers' lives.

In the Thirteenth Report of the Commissioners for the year 1846, marriage as a stabilising factor in the lives of the national teachers is considered when discussing teachers' engagement with the training colleges. The Commissioners write that 'all of them belonged to existing schools...most of them were married and could not be long removed from their respective families.'⁵⁸⁵ This indicates an awareness of the primacy of family and stability on the Commissioner's behalf in regard to the national teacher. Inspector W.A. Hunter records his perception of the unmarried teacher, saying:

⁵⁸⁵ CNEI (1846) *The Thirteenth Report...for 1846*, [832-XVII], H.C., 8.

The social standing of the married teachers, and their means and modes of living, are improved. The unmarried teachers are generally in these respects, scarcely distinguishable from the people among whom they live.⁵⁸⁶

In this example, the institute of marriage can be aligned with that of the national teacher's wider social status; presumably such teachers had attained sufficient financial independence to allow them to marry, while the 'unmarried' national teacher is seen as somehow lesser, having not advanced within their communities. It could be argued that marriage is seen by the world of officialdom as a benefit which accompanies concepts of respectability and social advancement which many of the perceived lower classes will not have recourse to. This also provides a link with the broader imperial discourse around civilising peoples within the colonies, through emulating the practice of the more 'advanced' classes.⁵⁸⁷

The following observations are recorded in the Twenty-sixth Report of the Commissioners for the year 1859. Data furnished here in respect of marital status are offered by Dr. Newell, Head Inspector, who records 498 male and 336 female teachers in his correspondence, giving their average ages respectively being 33.9 and 25.7 years in 1859.⁵⁸⁸ Dr. Newell observes 'that 47.2% of the males and 26.5% of the females were married, and of the 90 assistant teachers only 6 were married.'⁵⁸⁹ Newell's observations on the marital status of the teachers is interesting. He writes that 'the married teachers are chiefly of the first and second class', while noting that many of these are 'man and wife in charge of double schools.'⁵⁹⁰ Newell furthers this observation by noting that:

⁵⁸⁶ CNEI (1846) *The Thirteenth Report...for 1846*, [832-XVII], H.C., 8.

⁵⁸⁷ Hall, *Making colonial subjects*, 773-787; Hall, *Civilising Subjects*.

⁵⁸⁸ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Vol.1, Appendix B, 97.

⁵⁸⁹ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Vol.1, Appendix B, 97.

⁵⁹⁰ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Vol.1, Appendix B, 97.

Teachers who select teaching as the profession of their lives generally intermarry with teachers; and it will be found that the classification of husband and wife is frequently the same, or nearly so.⁵⁹¹

Highlighting the national teacher's marital status and the concurrent nature of the teacher's employment here indicates a further strengthening of teacher identity. It is also worth pointing out that ascribing marital status to those teachers who were classified as first or second class implies that the security provided by such gradation facilitated marriage among members of the same class, in turn facilitating social reproduction. The emphasis on the national teacher's marital status as an aspect of identity is also reinforced in the report for the following year, 1860, when figures relating to these aspects of the national teacher's life are included in the Commissioner's report. These are reproduced below in Table 6.4.

The numerical returns were provided by the six Head Inspectors at this time, namely Messrs. Patten, Hunter, Sheahan, Newell, Fleming and Sheridan. These Head Inspectors each had responsibility for ten districts across the island of Ireland. The table illustrates 'the classification of 6,337 National School Teachers, Principals and Assistants, in Sixty School Districts, their Ages and Periods of Service under the Board.'⁵⁹²

⁵⁹¹ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Vol.1, Appendix B, 97.

⁵⁹² CNEI (1860) *The Twenty-seventh Report...for 1860*, [2873-XX], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix C,183. The table is presented in condensed format here, with those headings deemed most relevant included. The sub-headings are divided into Male and Female respectively, with each denoted by their respective letters, as it occurs in the original. Only the overall total figures and percentages are shown. The percentage symbol has been included here for clarity. It does not appear in the original.

Table 6.5. Numerical returns pertaining to marital status of National teachers in sixty school districts for 1860.

Number of teachers returned; Principals and Assistants		Married		Not Married	
M	F	M	F	M	F
4,146	2,191	1,751	567	2,395	1,624
-	-	42.2%	25.9%	57.8%	74.1%

As seen here, the numbers of unmarried teachers is greater than those recorded as married across both genders. It is likely that this correlates with the low levels of remuneration which many national teachers received. Along with the challenges which providing financially for a family would bring and the element of control exercised by the Catholic Church and perhaps, local managers, teachers would not have been encouraged to marry without sufficient means. Head Inspector J.G. Fleming notes in relation to this the benefits that a joint income could bring to a household where both husband and wife are teaching:

When married, his wife, if at all fit for the situation, is usually appointed to take charge of the girl's school, an arrangement which adds considerably to his income. In fact, as a general rule, if husband and wife are both engaged as teachers, their joint income amounts, with some rare exceptions, to some £70 per annum.⁵⁹³

While undoubtedly this was the case for those who enjoyed dual employment within a national school, it was largely dependent on the teacher's classification. It is likely that the attractiveness of the joint income accrued by couples who were national teachers furthered the reproduction of this arrangement; whereby male and female teachers married for convenience and stability.

⁵⁹³ CNEI (1860) *The Twenty-seventh Report...for 1860*, [2873-XX], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix C,183.

The Head Inspector notes the arrangement would add considerably to ‘his’ income, reflecting societal attitudes of the era around women as largely second-class citizens.

District Inspector Mr. O’ Galligan, with responsibility for the Ennis district in Co. Clare records an interesting observation regarding the teacher’s own presentation of their image, noting that, ‘the teachers evince a high appreciation of their proper social position. Imprudent marriages are with them of a less frequent occurrence.’⁵⁹⁴ The suggestion that the national teacher is becoming more selective in whom he or she chooses to marry supports the increasing fortification of a distinct social group or class, one which replicates itself from within its own parameters.

A further comment from Mr. O’ Galligan is recorded in the Thirtieth Report for 1863. Discussing the impact that the varying levels of remuneration are having on the national teacher at this time, the Inspector notes the effect this has on teachers marrying and the difficulties this creates:

His income, at the same time, appears to have reached a diminution of 12 per cent. within a space of two years--- a loss to a great degree counterbalanced by the greatly reduced prices of ordinary farm produce, and the circumstance that a larger proportion of our teachers are unmarried than at the former date, and that the others, whose families depend on them for support, derive more profit now from the small farms or vegetable gardens, which the majority of them hold.⁵⁹⁵

It appears that the wider economic difficulties arising from the cost of living, along with the challenges supporting families have also negatively affected marriage at this time. In turn, this

⁵⁹⁴ CNEI (1861) *The Twenty-eighth Report...for 1861*, [3026-xx], H.C. Appendix C, 238.

⁵⁹⁵ CNEI (1863) *The Thirtieth report...for 1863*, [3351-xix], H.C. Appendix D, 248.

can be said to impact on the stability of the national teacher's life. O' Galligan continues, noting:

The position of the female teachers, however, during the same period has become a much less enviable one. While the prospects of becoming "settled in life" have greatly decreased (the Roman Catholic clergymen in most parishes of this county complain that marriages amongst the farming, and, indeed, all classes, have become much less frequent of late years than formerly, owing principally to the mania for emigration), their incomes have fallen off, within a space of two years, not less than 26 per cent. To render this income more distressing, three fourths of them (or nearly so), are at present, unmarried; and living for the most part among strangers, have to pay dearly for their food, lodging, and clothing.⁵⁹⁶

The challenges associated with married life and the attendant responsibilities, it would appear was also affecting the teacher, as the teacher's income drops due to emigration. Statistics provided for the years 1863 to 1867 show emigration as one of the primary causes for teacher attrition, with an initial figure of 26.8% in 1863 rising to 33.2% in 1867.⁵⁹⁷ The clergy's wish to see members of the community become "settled in life" complements the Commissioner's ideal of communities devoid of subversive tendencies, which traditionally have characterised rebellion and unrest in Ireland, and supported the British imperial narrative around the need to civilise peoples. Those national teachers who are noted as 'unmarried' and 'living for the most part among strangers', are not contributing to the desired or developing persona of the national teacher which sees them as married, respectable and influential individuals within Irish society.

Some final detail relating to the concept of marriage within the national teachers is found in the report of the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education in Ireland*, or the Powis Commission as it was colloquially known. Volume I of the report details the numbers of

⁵⁹⁶ CNEI (1863) *The Thirtieth report...for 1863*, [3351-xix], H.C. Appendix D, 248.

⁵⁹⁷ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 247-248.

national teachers who were married or single.⁵⁹⁸ Again, these returns are delineated by province and record whether the teachers were principal or assistant teachers.⁵⁹⁹ The primary focus within these returns centres on salary and the connection between it and marital status. It can be argued that those teachers who were highly classed, for example as a ‘first class’ or principal teacher, generally commanded higher rates of pay and accordingly could afford to marry and raise a family. Those on a gradation of second or third class may have been less inclined to commit to marriage. The following table outlines statistics pertaining to principal teachers marital status in 1867.

Table 6.6. Figures for married and single principal teachers in 1867.⁶⁰⁰

Province	Principal teachers					
	Male			Female		
	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total
Munster	511	412	923	216	302	518
Leinster	363	394	757	167	389	556
Ulster	741	883	1,624	150	364	514
Connaught	287	365	652	104	208	312
Total	1,902	2,054	3,956	637	1,263	1,900

As seen here, in the case of male principal teachers who were single across the four provinces, the figures exceed those who were married, except in the case of Munster. In the case of female principals across Ireland the number of those who were single is, for the most part, nearly

⁵⁹⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 240-241.

⁵⁹⁹ In the terminology of the Commissioners and their officers, the term Principal referred to the principle teacher as in the modern context, while the term Assistant referred to the second teacher. It was generally the case that the Principal taught the senior classes and the Assistant taught the junior classes.

⁶⁰⁰ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-t. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 240-241.

double those who were married. The difference in figures between married male and married female principal teachers cannot be easily explained. It is possible that the availability of external employment for male teachers, such as land surveying or part-time farming, which could supplement their incomes might partly explain the difference in this aspect of marital and teaching status. Again, Munster proves the exception here in respect of the marital status of female principal teachers with 302 single female principal teachers and 216 who were married. The following table considers the returns for those who were Assistant teachers in national schools.

Table 6.7. Figures for married and single Assistant teachers in 1867.⁶⁰¹

Province	Assistant teachers					
	Male			Female		
	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total
Munster	8	313	321	58	451	509
Leinster	5	95	100	39	233	272
Ulster	6	122	128	97	485	582
Connaught	2	53	55	32	159	191
Total	21	583	604	226	1,328	1,554

There are sharp contrasts between the numbers of male and female assistant teachers who are married throughout Ireland, as evidenced by the figures. For example, out of 604 male assistant

⁶⁰¹ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-t. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 240-241.

teachers recorded, only 21 were married. Of 1,554 female assistant teachers, 226 are recorded as married. It is most likely that this was a reflection of the insecurity of tenure these teachers had in their employment and lower rates of salaries. Indeed, the immediate impression wrought by this data is that marital status was reflected in financial security, thus indicating that those who were principals or were highly classed were better placed to commit to marriage.

As noted in Chapter Two at the outset of this research, the data gathered for the Powis Commission was collected by a group of men who were styled ‘Assistant Commissioners’ during their tenure; one of whom was William Scott-Coward, who was an Inspector of schools in England. Mr. Scott-Coward had responsibility for the Cork district and he made the following observation on the marital habits of the Irish national teachers as he assessed their classifications within the national system. Scott-Coward noted that many of the teachers he encountered are lowly classified, which he attributed to the ‘habit which prevails among the Irish of marrying early.’⁶⁰² He writes:

The greater number of the male teachers I met were married, and had married young----comparatively young themselves, many were fathers of grown-up children. They assume the responsibilities of married life just when their resources are slenderest. A young man, with £24 a year, and a wife and young children, has to look alive to keep want outside his door; and he must be ready to do all he can in his leisure time to earn something beyond his official pay.⁶⁰³

It is clear that in the view of the Assistant Commissioner the institution of marriage was one which should not be considered without having the necessary financial wherewithal to support a wife and family. This supports the structure and planning which accompanies the imperial

⁶⁰² Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 124.

⁶⁰³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 124.

narrative and underpins the hierarchical and social structure of empire. Successfully developing an imperial mindset in Ireland would ensure the population were controlled and the hierarchy maintained. It also aligns with the religious practices of the churches which complement the parameters around the national teacher's life. There is perhaps an understanding that in providing opportunities through the system of national education, former practices such as marrying early and rapid population growth would be abandoned, or curbed in favour of new attitudes within the lower classes of Irish society. The clerical views, as noted earlier, supported this control also, thus impacting the religious identity and lives of the national teachers. The institute of marriage as discussed here represents a more nuanced and subtle element of religious beliefs which arguably accompanied the development of Irish national teacher identity during the nineteenth century. This was dually underpinned by church and state.

6.3.6 Teacher denomination in the National system

The records of the Commissioners between 1834 and 1868 do not provide annual returns on the religious affiliations of those employed within the system, instead these data appear sporadically in the reports over the forty year period encompassed in this study. However, the findings of the Powis Commission do provide a comprehensive overview for the reader of the religious persuasions of the national teachers at the conclusion of the study's timeline. Accordingly, rather than extracting singular and varying elements relating to religious affiliation from the reports, it is believed that the Powis findings facilitate a conclusive understanding of the religious identity of the national teacher at the close of this study.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁴ *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners.* H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 250-253.

The religious denominations outlined in the returns are divided into four groups; Roman Catholic, Established Church, Presbyterian and Dissenter.⁶⁰⁵ The outline of the Commission's returns in Volume I of the Powis report is made across the four provinces of Ireland. Divisions are made between male and female national teachers, who are in turn sub-divided into principal and assistant teachers. In discussing the returns for the teachers and the varying denominational affiliations, it is proposed to first examine some of the detail regarding the numbers of teachers who professed to one faith or another within the provinces. It is believed that such numerical detail will furnish the reader with a sense of the extent to which principal denominations the national teachers were affiliated to by the time this study concludes.

The following table in condensed format provides a brief overview of the religious denomination of the principal male and female national teachers across the four provinces of Ireland as outlined in the Powis Report of 1870. The report also details the denominations of the male and female assistant teachers, however, as the figures for those categories largely reflect those of the principal teachers they are not illustrated here.

⁶⁰⁵ A brief explanation of some of the lesser known terms utilised here is considered useful for the reader. The term Established Church, abbreviated to 'E.C'. in the returns, refers to the Church of Ireland, whose members are loosely termed Protestant in Ireland. The term Dissenter can only warrant a cursory explanation here. This is primarily due to the development of religious identities in Ireland since the plantations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which is decidedly complex and beyond the scope of this work. At a basic level the term Dissenter was applied to those members of the Protestant faith, in minority groups, who 'dissented', or professed variations on the Christian Protestant faith. These would include Quakers, Methodists and Evangelists amongst others. While earlier records of religious denominations, such as those discussed for Marlborough Street document the individual names of those who ascribed to a particular construct of Protestantism, at the time in which the Powis returns were being compiled the overarching term of Dissenter was in use.

Table 6.8 Religious denominations of Principal teachers across the four provinces. ⁶⁰⁶

Province	Male Principal teachers				Female Principal teachers			
	R.C.	E.C.	Presb.	Diss.	R.C.	E.C.	Presb.	Diss.
Ulster	863	217	624	43	278	63	184	20
Munster	908	13	4	5	560	5	1	0
Leinster	727	26	7	2	592	21	2	1
Connaught	629	21	7	1	313	7	4	0
Total	3,127	277	642	51	1,743	96	191	21

Beginning with the number of male principal teachers in the province of Munster, the return stands at 908 who professed as Roman Catholic. Ulster shows a return for this group of 863. Leinster and Connaught show similar numbers with 727 and 629 who identified as Roman Catholic.

The number of male principal teachers who identified with the Presbyterian faith in Ulster stands at 624 national teachers. This sharply contrasts with only four teachers found in the province of Munster who identify as Presbyterian and seven each found in Leinster and Connaught. While the returns for those who adhered to the Presbyterian faith in Ulster may be expected, given the long history of plantation in the province, the high number of those who identified as Roman Catholic national teachers within the province of Ulster might not be expected. Equally so, the number of those national teachers who belonged to the Church of Ireland are far lower than either the Presbyterian or Roman Catholic affiliations, with 217 found in Ulster, 13 in Munster and 26, and 21 in Leinster and Connaught respectively.

⁶⁰⁶ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 250-253.

Moving then to consider the returns furnished for female principal teachers it is seen that the greatest number found to profess as Roman Catholic is in Leinster, where 592 women principals are recorded. Munster and Connaught show 560 and 313 women principals as being Roman Catholics, with Ulster the lowest in this denomination at 278. The totals recorded for the Established Church across the four provinces are low. Munster, Leinster and Connaught show five, seven and 21 respectively, with Ulster recording the highest return for this denomination at 63 female national principals. The returns for those women principals who professed as Presbyterian are highest in Ulster, with a figure of 184 being recorded. The figures returned for Connaught, Leinster and Munster show little or no women who profess to the Presbyterian faith. Munster records one woman who identified as Presbyterian. An overview of these data in percentage terms are offered in Table 6.9. It is clear that the majority of the national teachers were affiliated to Catholicism across the island of Ireland by 1871.

Table 6.9 Religious affiliation of the Principal national teachers evidenced in Powis.⁶⁰⁷

Religious affiliation	Roman Catholic	Established Church	Presbyterian	Dissenter
Total of principal teachers	79.2%	6.0%	13.5%	1.1%

A further outline of results relating to religious affiliations is provided by the Powis Commission with regard to the affiliation of the national schools, which also offers an insight into the school patronage at this stage. Primarily it shows that the religious persuasion of the national teachers is reflected in the affiliation of the national schools, with, for example, the

⁶⁰⁷ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 250-253.

number of Catholic schools vested in the Board of National Education showing a return of 79.7 per cent.⁶⁰⁸

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the religious identity of the Irish national teacher from the development of the national system in 1831 to the year 1871, following the publication of the Powis Commission Findings, has been considered. Establishing the national teacher's religious identity is primarily built on the official correspondence and returns of the UK administration at the time. As a result, the teachers themselves are largely anonymous within this correspondence, often appearing in a purely numerical sense. The chapter opened with an outline of data surrounding the differing religious affiliations which predate the establishment of the national schools, offering the reader an overview of the religious landscape in Ireland immediately preceding the national system. This is tempered by noting the rescindment of restrictions arising from the Penal Laws of the century before and the advent of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The returns furnished by the *First Report of the Commissioners for National Education* in 1834 highlight the overwhelming presence of Catholicism as the religion of the majority in Ireland at this time.

As an early sample, the majority of the teachers attending the training institute in Marlborough Street can be seen to reflect this Catholic majority. The composition of the varying religious affiliations attending Marlborough Street may also be taken as a reflection of the religious identity of the teaching population at large, as many more who became national teachers

⁶⁰⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 250-253. Note also that the findings provided by the Commission do show some slight divergence between the proportion of teachers who profess to one faith or another and the proportion of schools who reflect that religious affiliation, however, the figures are not significant enough to warrant investigation here.

through the routes of the monitorial system and the series of examinations conducted by the Inspectorate, were likely to be in the majority Catholics. This initial supposition based on the religious affiliations of the population outlined in 1834 is borne out in the findings of the Powis Commission in 1870, where it is seen that the majority of the national teachers profess as Catholic. This notably impacts on uncovering national teacher identity between 1831 and 1871. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the religious identity of the national teacher was largely established prior to the emergence of the early national teacher identity. This aspect of the identity of the national teacher focuses more on a reinforcement of Catholicism as a contributory element of the national teacher's identity. In this sense, the religious identity of the national teachers, which saw the majority profess to Catholicism was more a result of alignment with the existing *status quo* in respect of the religion of the applicants to the role of national teachers during 1831 and 1871.

The insights furnished by the documentary evidence considered here do more to expand the reader's understanding of the national teacher's identity from the standpoint of personal beliefs than developing wholly new concepts or theories around the nature of the religious affiliation and beliefs of the majority of the national teachers. Elements such as the training colleges, the local administrative structures and the social practices of the people around religious practices such as marriage aligned comfortably with the newly developed system of national education, in turn complimenting the developing national teacher identity.

Whilst it is challenging to construct generalisations around the religious identity of the national teachers at a historical distance, it is possible to infer some primary points. First, the majority of the population professed to Catholicism in the early decades of the national school system

and as Stanley's Letter sought to create a system of education which would provide a basic education for the poor of Ireland, it is unsurprising that many of the candidates who trained as national teachers would be Catholic. While other religious affiliations are noted, their numbers never matched that of those who identified as Catholic. Second, those candidates for the position of national teacher who were Catholics and gained employment under the new system become part of an increasingly denominational system of education as the decades progressed, due to the growing control of the Catholic Church. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, as the majority of the national schools became increasingly vested in the Roman Catholic Church, the identity of the national teacher was strengthened by association, ensuring that after four decades the majority of the Irish national teachers professed as Catholic. The national teacher's status consequently developed to occupy an important and singular position within Irish communities, which was further complemented by their identification with the most powerful religious group in the country at this time. This contributed in no small part to copper-fastening the identity of the Irish national teacher across the island of Ireland by 1871.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This research sought to excavate the identity of the Irish national teacher over the course of a forty-year period between 1831 and 1871. The central premise of the thesis was developed from the overarching question of ‘Who was the Irish national teacher in the early decades of the nineteenth century?’

Quite early in the research stage, it was realised that there were certain aspects of the historical data examined which would require some form of contextual explanation at the outset of the thesis. This was realised in Chapter Two. Essentially, this chapter, following the introduction to the thesis provided the reader with information deemed essential for a complete interpretation of the thesis in its entirety. This saw broad elements of Irish identity as a concept outlined from early Christian Ireland to the Act of Union in 1801. Some notable events were highlighted here as being more impactful on Irish identity. This was balanced by an outline of significant events within the timeframe in which the study was set, where some political, social and religious events were noted. Discrete aspects of the national system of education as it developed were also articulated for the reader, along with background information concerning the provision of education prior to the institution of the national system. Further points relating to teachers prior to 1831, the Inspectors who worked for the CNEI, teacher training, payment and the Powis Commission were presented to the reader, in order to facilitate an overview of the period in question.

The methodological approach employed was outlined in Chapter Three. While the thesis was underpinned by the question of ‘Who was the Irish national teacher in the early decades of the nineteenth century?’, a number of embedded questions were subsequently framed from reading the data and current literature on identity theory. Throughout the course of the research a significant amount of data was analysed to examine and further understanding around Irish teacher identity. Certain aspects of this data were noted as being more prevalent than others. These aspects also resonated with modern identity theory. This allowed the researcher to develop the embedded questions and structure the thesis around three findings chapters. It is worth recalling the three embedded questions here, before discussing the findings and conclusions which arose from each.

- I. What were the social origins and character of the individuals who became national teachers?
- II. What was their social status and class, and how did these develop?
- III. What were their beliefs or religious affiliations and how did these contribute to the national teacher identity?

The data examined across the three findings chapters are considered and discussed in this chapter. When aligned with the three embedded questions noted above, these data contribute to understanding and validating the identity of the Irish national teacher over the course of the forty-year period in question. Within this timeframe the Irish national teacher’s identity emerged and evolved from a position of anonymity to become an intrinsically recognisable persona within Irish elementary education. This chapter comprises several sections. The thesis findings as outlined across chapters four, five and six are discussed in Section 7.2. These aspects of the data support the unique aspects of Irish national teacher identity during the

timeframe under review. First, the selection, character and origins of the national teachers are considered in Subsection 7.2.1 while the national teacher's status and social class and religious identity are discussed in Subsections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 respectively. The importance and implications of this research are considered in Section 7.3 while opportunities for further study in this area are discussed in Section 7.4. A conclusion and discussion is offered in Section 7.5.

7.2 Identifying the Irish National teacher

7.2.1 Selection, character and origins

To answer the primary research question of 'Who was the Irish National teacher of the nineteenth century?', it was necessary to develop embedded questions. As discussed in Chapter Three and in the introduction to this chapter, these questions arose from examining the data and identifying the more prevalent aspects of the data which frequently recurred. The findings from the first of these embedded questions, as examined in Chapter Four, will be discussed here with the following two subsections discussing the findings from Chapters Five and Six.

The research sought to establish a collective point of origin for the majority of those who became national teachers from 1831 to 1871. However, this was not as straightforward as simply establishing occupational status through a census of population or the use of electoral rolls as such documentation no longer exists for the era in question. Therefore, a more nuanced approach was employed and the researcher was largely reliant on those accounts furnished by the Inspectorate to the CNEI. The question of national teacher origin was also accompanied by important points which focused on the selection and character of the individuals who became national teachers and this data further supported establishing origins for the early national teachers. In this regard, concepts of respectability, recognition of this and how this became

manifest in the teacher's presentation in public were noted as being particularly important to developing national teacher identity.

Much of the evidence encountered attributes the social origins of the national teachers to the poorer classes of society. This element of identity is noted within modern theoretical constructions of identity,⁶⁰⁹ whereby individuals share a collective point of origin and this proved useful in identifying examples within the available evidence. A sample of those excerpts within the report of the CNEI for 1855 describes the national teachers as poor and 'in a deplorably isolated situation,' which the Inspector reasons is a result of their education.⁶¹⁰ Commentary offered in 1858 is more succinct with an Inspector noting, 'Their means and modes of living are decidedly superior to those of the class from which they spring...'⁶¹¹ indicating that although these teachers had originated in poorer classes, they had advanced socially. As discussed in Subsections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 of Chapter Four, those who were employed by the CNEI as national teachers appear in the majority to have originated amongst the lower classes and the impact of this on the development of national teacher identity is also worth noting. It was unlikely that those of low social status and class would challenge those who were providing them with the opportunities to improve their social standing. This also may be said to have engendered a certain level of compliance which, ultimately, contributed to the formation of a distinct national teacher identity.

⁶⁰⁹ See Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58; Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*.

⁶¹⁰ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C. Appendix G, 87.

⁶¹¹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Appendix B, 111.

Commentary for the year 1859, from the Inspectors, directly references the origins of the national teachers stating, ‘The class from which the teachers have sprung is that of peasants, small farmers or farm-labourers...’⁶¹² Further examples are offered throughout Chapter Four which reinforce the premise that the Irish national teachers were drawn from the poorer classes of society. However, this hypothesis must also be considered in tandem with the development of the national system. While it has been noted that the national system saw exponential growth in the early decades,⁶¹³ this would not have been possible without the clause in Stanley’s Letter which stated ‘it is not intended that this regulation should prevent the admission of masters or mistresses of schools already established, who may be approved of by the Commissioners.’⁶¹⁴

In many instances, it is almost certain that many of the early teachers transferred to the national system from varying backgrounds. Some may have had experience of teaching in the Hedge Schools, the London Hibernian Society or under the KPS, as discussed in Chapter Four, and while the national system in its nascent phase could not have operated without these teachers, ultimately, theirs was a transitory role before the candidates for teaching began to emerge from within the national school system itself. It is clear that very little recognition is given to these early candidates who may have transitioned from extant systems into the national system. It is likely that the Inspectors and Commissioners were articulate in ensuring that no recognition was to be given to any earlier systems of education in the face of the new national system of education and, accordingly, no references were to be made to any systems which might be seen as challenging or undermining the national system. This also highlights the invisibility of the very early candidates’ origins prior to joining the national system.

⁶¹² CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C. Appendix B, 173.

⁶¹³ CNEI (1851) *The Eighteenth Report...for 1851*, [1582-XLII], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix A, 3.

⁶¹⁴ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

As noted earlier in this section, the national teacher's origins were accompanied by considerations around their selection and character, which determined who was going to be accepted for the role. This allied with those elements of identity theory as discussed by Schwartz in Section 3.2.1 of Chapter Three, which focused on the dissonant state of early identity which precludes an assured identity. In Sections 2.4 and 2.5 of Chapter Two, which offer a contextual overview to education and teachers prior to the establishment of the national system, it is seen that elementary education in its broadest sense was haphazard and unorganized, and this was reflected in the diversity of those who became national teachers, such as Andrew Frazer from Co. Down who was employed as personal tutor to one Colonel Somerson,⁶¹⁵ or the teacher who was trained in the KPS who had 'served for twenty years under that body' and was now teaching in Letterkenny.⁶¹⁶ However, with the establishment of the national system a determined ethos was encouraged which precluded any and all personalities who might be divisive or challenge the new system. Indeed, it appears that there were also noticeable efforts to ignore earlier systems of elementary education as references to such institutes are very scarce. The system of national education also ensured that the rules and ethos of the system, although laid down initially by Stanley, were then elaborated upon and implemented by the Commissioners. This resulted in the formation of a distinct concept of what and who the national teacher should be. Aspects of personal characteristics were then highlighted by the CNEI and in turn, the Inspectorate, which arguably contributed to forming the Irish national teacher identity.

⁶¹⁵ See Chapter Four, Subsection 4.4.5 for the entry relating to Andrew Frazer from the Marlborough Street register for 1840

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

The initial onus on the applicants required they produce a certificate of ‘good character’ from a member of their respective clergy, along with other testimonials of character for those applying for positions in the model schools, as discussed in Subsection 4.4.2 of Chapter Four. This was reinforced by the CNEI which stated that the applicants had to be ‘trained to good habits...identified in interest with the state and...anxious to provide a spirit of lawful obedience to lawful authority...’⁶¹⁷ Crucially, the humble origins of the early national teachers and the parameters surrounding the role were mutually dependent, as one could not succeed without the other. It was likely necessary for the early national teachers to be drawn from the poorer classes of society as they were amenable to the opportunities which might be afforded them by becoming national teachers; equally, the parameters placed on the role would not be as easily enforced on those in society whose identity might be more assured, or more likely to question the rules and regulations of the CNEI. It is certain that this was recognised by the imperial administration and the Commissioners at an intrinsic level, even if this was not clearly articulated or documented as a *modus operandi*. The monitorial system also proved an adept mechanism for replicating those individuals who were deemed most suitable to the role, which coupled with the Inspector’s identification of the most suitable pupils for the role, resulted in candidates who were ambitious and possessed the necessary skills becoming national teachers.

As noted, in the early decades the CNEI’s desire to populate the system and provide national teachers overcame such obstacles around character and those who had previous experience either in Hedge Schools or other sites of education were accepted as national teachers. One Inspector writing in 1858 recalled ‘their slow advancement towards the desired status.’⁶¹⁸ This is important in recognising that as a collective, the early teachers did not subscribe to a single

⁶¹⁷ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for the year ending 31 March 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C., 5.

⁶¹⁸ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-xxvii-pt.1], H.C. Appendix G, 42.

category or identity. Some may have been working as Hedge School teachers, others came to teaching in the early years of the national system and as such the identity of the Irish national teacher was, at least in the first twenty years, in a state of flux. This resonates with those theoretical concepts discussed in Section 3.2.1, which focused on what Tajfel and Turner⁶¹⁹ described as belonging to an ‘ingroup’ and what Stets and Burke later noted as ‘attitudes, beliefs and values, affective reactions, behavioural norms, styles of speech and other properties that are believed to be correlated.’⁶²⁰ However, this also leads to some ambiguity in firmly attributing the origins of all national teachers to those poorer classes of society, or at least in the first two decades while the national system developed. While the national system was envisaged as being ‘a system of National Education for the poorer classes of the community,’⁶²¹ it cannot be wholly true to say that the majority of those employed as national teachers were not from more humble backgrounds.⁶²²

It is important to note also the requirements outlined by the CNEI for admission to the Central Training Institute and the District Model Schools. Along with the rules and regulations of the CNEI, these may have precluded many of those who may have been less desirable and less inclined to assume the role of national teacher under the new system. At the same time there was constant reinforcement of precepts including concepts of ‘cleanliness, neatness and decency...truth and honesty,’⁶²³ along with the underlying ethos for teachers to both imbue and demonstrate respectability. This was encouraged in both the national teachers and the pupils,

⁶¹⁹ Tajfel and Turner, *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior*, 276-293:277.

⁶²⁰ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237:225.

⁶²¹ The Stanley Letter (1831), [online]. Available at: http://irishnationalschoolstrust.org/document_post_type/the-stanley-letter/.

⁶²² For example, the early records for Marlborough Street outlined in Subsection 4.3.5 of Chapter Four note Andrew Connolly from Longford as ‘respectable and intelligent’ and who had been in America. It is unlikely that Connolly’s origins lay at the lower end of the social scale, given this description. Neither could Andrew Frazer’s origins be described as humble. He is recorded as being engaged as a private tutor in one Colonel Somerson’s Family.

⁶²³ CNEI (1844) *The Eleventh Report...for 1844*, [629-XXVI], H.C., Appendix XIV, 105.

and remained central to the development of the Irish national teacher identity from the very outset of the national system.

Importantly, the onset of the national education system also facilitated the creation of a new and distinctive identity through a process of social mobility for those from the lower classes. This proved to be a dually complementary process for those in charge of the system and indeed, those in the lower classes. By providing opportunities for advancement and the possibility to become a teacher under the auspices of the national education system, the UK administration facilitated the development of a singularly identifiable group in Irish society.⁶²⁴ As early as 1835 the CNEI stated that ‘a new class of schoolmasters might be trained’ whose conduct would assist in instilling civility across the rural parts of Ireland.⁶²⁵ The parameters placed around the selection and character of the teachers, such as the rules and regulations of the CNEI as noted previously, ensured that only those who exhibited the desired character traits and ability were allowed to become teachers. While this was initially hampered due to the demands of establishing the system and facilitating its operation, it is clear that by the end of the 1860s, those teachers within the national system were largely upholding the values of the system and replicating the ideals of the Commissioners.

7.2.2 Status and social class

In assessing the social status and class of the national teachers, the second of the embedded questions noted correlations with elements of theory as outlined by Schwartz,⁶²⁶ and Stets and

⁶²⁴ This resonates strongly with imperial practices employed by the British in other countries, whereby the implementation of systems of government envisaged the ‘native’ population being enabled to undertake roles within such systems and become ‘civilised’. See Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony*.

⁶²⁵ CNEI (1835) *The Second Report...for the year ending 31 March 1835*, [300-XXXV], H.C., 4.

⁶²⁶ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and, Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*...7-58.

Burke⁶²⁷ as discussed in Chapter Three, and the data which were examined. These proved useful in establishing the collective identity of the national teachers. This focus on group identity is noted where commentary from the official sources during the period refers to the national teachers ‘as a class’ and ‘a group.’ There is little evidence available in the first two decades in which the national system is in operation which focuses on the identity of the national teacher in the individual sense. Indeed, it is likely that the diverse nature of those early national teachers precluded group, or class attributions. In the first two decades at least such excerpts as are available focus on improving levels of remuneration for the teachers, and a preoccupation with the effectiveness of the national teachers as role models within Irish communities. In this sense, the emphasis was solely focused on the overall influence of the national system rather than the individuals tasked with implementing the system at a local level. One example provided for the year 1855 states the teachers’ ‘business is not merely to teach the rising generation reading, writing, and the other branches of popular education, but also cleanliness, genteel habits, &c.’⁶²⁸ In this respect, the national teachers were seen as agents for social change and acculturation in the eyes of the UK administration. However, this was tempered by the inconstancy of their social class and status, and the lack of attention given to individual status.

The latter was very much bound up in the classification system which predicated the level of remuneration the national teachers received, consequently, impacting social status. In support of this, an excerpt from one Inspector’s report in 1858 states, ‘As a body the teachers are devoted to the service; some conscientiously, others because change would not better their condition, and the remainder because they aspire to higher classes and hope for increased

⁶²⁷ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

⁶²⁸ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.i], H.C., 42.

salaries.’⁶²⁹ The difficulty around sufficient levels of salary, as discussed in Section 5.3.3 of Chapter Five, also led some national teachers to engage in alternative employments such as clerkships in the local church, taking on small farms of land, and managing post offices, amongst others,⁶³⁰ to supplement their incomes and while these may have furthered the national teacher’s involvement in communities, this cannot have aligned comfortably with the CNEI’s vision of the national teacher. It is also likely that some such employments caused tensions at other levels within communities as teachers undertook roles beyond the classroom which would have also influenced their status and likely caused it to rise, whereby their centrality and visibility as an individual of note within the community grew.

Commentary from the Inspectorate which supports the cohesiveness of the national teachers appears in those phrases which speak of their ‘character as citizens’⁶³¹ and their decidedly respectable social standing, whilst another notes they are ‘a respectable body.’⁶³² The collective identity which gives rise to such descriptions is largely underpinned by the national teacher’s adherence to the rules and regulations of the CNEI, along with the desire for social advancement. However, the descriptions furnished by the Inspectorate are not wholly favourable of the national teacher’s social status and there are also examples which castigate the national teacher themselves, although these along with criticisms of the CNEI are notably fewer in number. Such criticisms where they appear focus on the national teacher’s lack of ambition to attain higher classifications, however, the majority of the Inspectors note the challenges which faced the teachers in rural areas with low incomes in finding the time to study.

⁶²⁹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 148.

⁶³⁰ See Subsection 5.3.5 of Chapter Five.

⁶³¹ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 167.

⁶³² CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 167.

Criticisms of the CNEI and the national system itself are rarely found amongst official agents of the CNEI.⁶³³

A further example for the year 1858 considering the social status of the national teacher states, ‘Poorly remunerated with a social position inferior to that of the policeman or the bailiff, it can scarcely be expected that the teacher...would not long for an opportunity of embracing some other avocation in life...’⁶³⁴ It is worth recalling the observations of one Inspector, also in 1858, which considers the social standing of the national teachers as ‘peculiar.’⁶³⁵ This is perhaps the most conclusive point in respect of the national teacher’s social class and status over the course of the research timeline. Whilst recognising the teachers were advancing in society at varying levels and stages, their status could not be affixed in a definitive sense. It remained ‘peculiar’ or to use an alternative term, ambiguous given the disparate nature of the salary scales and indeed, other determining factors such as geographical location, as noted in Chapter Five, Subsection 5.3.2.

The national teacher’s efforts to utilise their identity as a group are noted first in the reports of the CNEI in 1859.⁶³⁶ However, none of these met with any degree of success until the formation of the Irish National Teacher’s Association in 1868. This, ultimately, signals the emergence of an assured collective identity. In the decades that followed, concessions around pensions,

⁶³³ A notable exception is documented in the case of James Kavanagh who resigned as Head Inspector from the CNEI in 1857 following his publication of a work titled *A Treatise on the Principles and Practice of Arithmetic*. See Report of the Committee of the National Board of Education in Ireland, appointed on the 11th September, 1857, to enquire into the Conduct of J.W. Kavanagh, Esq. Head Inspector of National Schools. Available at: <https://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/documents/13813/pages/168521>; See also O’ Donovan, *Stanley’s Letter*, 116-119.

⁶³⁴ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 167.

⁶³⁵ CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B 272-273.

⁶³⁶ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-xxvi], H.C.Vol.1, Appendix B, 200.

teacher's dwellings and salary scales were made by the UK administration to the national teachers and while these were beyond the scope of this study, their occurrence after forty years of the national system had elapsed is significant. The chapter therefore on the social class and status of the national teacher between 1831 and 1871 largely illustrates the inconstancy of these elements of identity during this time. This was a formative period, during which time the national teachers undertook the role of elementary educator and sought to establish a new identity or conceptualisation of what the elementary teacher was in Irish society under the new national education system.

7.2.3 Religious identity

The final element of this triumvirate of national teacher identity which was generated by the data and took form in the third embedded question was that of religious identity, again with those theorists such as Schwartz⁶³⁷ highlighting the import of religious beliefs as a mark of identity. In this, Irish national teacher identity and religious affiliation were recognised as being largely a forgone conclusion. This can be attributed to the strength of religious beliefs as a mark of identity during the nineteenth century and the opportunity for establishing schools under varying denominational sects as outlined by Stanley. As noted in Chapter Six, the vast majority of the population was affiliated to Catholicism. Accordingly, it is little surprise that the religion of the majority of national teachers was Catholicism, with a figure of 79.2% recorded for principal teachers who were Catholics documented in the findings of the Powis Commission in 1870.⁶³⁸ The facility which Stanley's Letter and the national system provided in allowing recognition of all denominations as potential candidates for teaching is significant from the

⁶³⁷ See Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

⁶³⁸ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. I. Report of the Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. i]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 250-253.

standpoint of identity. This was largely facilitated by the power of hiring and dismissal vested in the local managers, who could, at will, employ those whom they preferred for the role of national teacher. Ultimately, this saw the strengthening of the position of the Catholic Church in relation to the provision and delivery of elementary education in the Irish national schools as the managers tended to employ teachers from the same religious affiliation as their own.

The consequence for national teacher identity was the vast majority of the Irish national teachers by 1871 were Catholics and indeed, this became a cornerstone of teacher identity and resulted in the Catholic Church having and maintaining a monopoly on Irish national education for decades to come. The establishment of the Church Education Society in 1839 arising from tensions between the Church of Ireland and the CNEI also led to pupils and teachers who professed as Protestant leaving the national system to attend the schools of the Church Education Society.⁶³⁹ This likely contributed to strengthening the position of the Catholic Church over the national schools also as there was an alternative provider for Protestants until 1869.

In summary then, while there are no absolutes, it is clear that the research has largely fulfilled the remit of the original question through addressing the respective elements discussed in the embedded questions. In answering the overarching research question as to who was the Irish national teacher of the early nineteenth century, it appears the data examined across the three embedded questions and articulated in the core findings of the thesis allow the researcher to

⁶³⁹ Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, 16.

draw firm conclusions in respect of the Irish national teacher's emerging identity between 1831 and 1871.

In respect of the first embedded question, it appears the national teachers were primarily members of the poorer classes in origin; namely small farmers, labourers or those with the necessary acumen to succeed in the role. While the early decades saw a natural intake of those who already worked in earlier providers of elementary education such as Hedge School teachers or teachers who had worked for organisations such as the KPS or the London Hibernian Society, as the system developed the national teachers emanated from within the national schools themselves. This proved crucial in developing their identity as the early incumbents were aspirant and malleable within the role, and it is likely socially ambitious. Naturally, this is tempered by some examples of outliers which were singular enough to be noted in official reports, but for the majority it is more than likely that they were from the lower end of the social scale, as Inspector Dowling noted in 1859 '*The class from which the teachers have sprung is that of peasants, small farmers or farm-labourers (emphasis in original)...* they live among their friends; almost all teach in their native parishes...'⁶⁴⁰

Assessing the second embedded question which examined the teacher's social status and class, it is clear that there can be no clear or fixed attribution of status or class. This was ambiguous and dependent on the teacher's classification and means, primarily fiscal, for social advancement. For example, in 1855 Head Inspector Dr Newell states that the national teachers are 'superior in respectability and mental acquirements to the class of teacher they were

⁶⁴⁰ CNEI (1859) *The Twenty-sixth Report...for 1859*, [2706-XXVI], H.C. Appendix B, 173.

formerly acquainted with,'⁶⁴¹ yet, District Inspector Bradford writing three years later in 1858 opines 'The social standing of the teachers is generally very low indeed. Their means of living very unsatisfactory; their houses, dress, and the appearance of their wives and children, those of a very unsatisfactory class.'⁶⁴² What is most evident is the desire manifest amongst those who sought and secured positions as national teachers to advance their social standing. In a society where opportunities for social advancement were few and predicated by educational attainment, the position of national teacher was within grasp for those with the necessary basic capabilities.

The third and final element of identity considered in embedded question three considered the religious identity of the national teacher and, unusually, it appears this aspect of teacher identity was fixed. There are no accounts of individuals who converted from one religion to another in order to become a national teacher. The importance of religious beliefs in the identity of the Irish national teacher lies in the question of affiliation and in being part of the larger group, in this instance, Catholicism. This was reinforced by their hiring and tenure under Catholic managers which in cases made for an uneasy relationship between the managers and national teachers and reinforced the uncertainty of tenure which surrounded the latter's position. Examples offered firsthand from a national teacher to Assistant Commissioner William Jack in Subsection 6.3.4 of the previous chapter, reinforces this ambiguity which existed for the national teacher, where the teacher states that the priest 'said he would anathemise me', if he took charge of a particular school.⁶⁴³ The whimsical approach with which the managers exercised their control over the national teachers is recalled in episodes outlined in the ITJ

⁶⁴¹ CNEI (1855) *The Twenty-second Report...for 1855*, [2142-1-XXVII-pt.1], H.C., 42.

⁶⁴² CNEI (1858) *The Twenty-fifth Report...for 1858*, [2593-XXV], H.C. Vol. 1, Appendix B, 146.

⁶⁴³ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870, *Vol. II. Reports of the Assistant Commissioners*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. iii]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 400.

where one manager dismisses the national teacher of the school to make way for the ‘manager’s butler’s wife’,⁶⁴⁴ or the manager who threatened to dismiss a national teacher for subscribing to a newspaper with political views at odds contrary to those of the manager!⁶⁴⁵ Such instances arguably reinforced the religious identity of the national school teacher as acquiescence to the manager and the church was required to retain the national teacher’s position. Of course, it is likely that only the more extreme cases were noted and many teachers and managers coexisted with little disagreement, nevertheless, from either standpoint such relationships served to strengthen the identity of the national teacher and this further strengthened the identity of the Irish national teacher, ultimately ensuring that by the close of the 1860s, the religious identity of the majority of the national teachers was Catholic.

Finally, there can be little doubt but the national teachers and their developing identity was crucial in operating and maintaining the system of national education across the island of Ireland from 1831 onwards. The growth of the national schools even by 1870 is testament to this alone. From an initial figure of some 789 schools under the auspices of the Board of National Education in 1831 to 5,496 in 1859, the system grew exponentially.⁶⁴⁶ Each of these schools was staffed at least by one, and in many cases several national teachers. The influence of the national teachers within communities is noted in the many excerpts which point to their status and extraneous employment in communities. While this status was continually contested, the national teachers remained and became as much a part of Irish society as the clergy and police. Their permanence and enduring legacy alone testifies to the final question as to whether or not they established a shared identity across the island of Ireland between 1831 and 1871.

⁶⁴⁴ *Irish Teacher’s Journal*, (1870) January issue, 14.

⁶⁴⁵ *Irish Teacher’s Journal*, (1870) January issue, 14

⁶⁴⁶ Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, (Ireland), 1870, *Vol. VII. Returns furnished by the national board*. H.C. [XXVIII-pt. v]. Dublin: Alexander Thom, 362.

This is evinced in the establishment of the national teacher's associations in the 1860s, culminating in the development of the INTO in 1868. There can be little doubt that this was the case as the identity of the Irish national teacher remains recognisable today, 193 years after the national system was established. In the following section, the importance and contribution of this research is considered within the field of Irish educational history and beyond.

7.3 Import and contribution

The contribution of this research within the field of Irish educational history is unique. To date no other research has been undertaken which concentrates solely on Irish teacher identity following the establishment of the national system from 1831. The development of the Irish national education system some forty years before similar systems emerged in other English speaking domains serves to fortify its pioneering role and further reinforce the importance of this study. As noted in the introductory chapter to the thesis, there are notable histories within the field of Irish educational history which examine the development and antecedents of Irish elementary education but these largely concentrate on the administrative features of the system, with significantly less focus on teachers as individuals. Therefore, this research makes a valuable contribution to Irish educational history.

There are dual aspects of import to be gleaned from this study. First, the methodological approach employed here is singular important for historians of education. It is envisioned that this strategy where discrete elements of identity as a concept can be taken and applied in similar studies which centre on teacher identity in a historical domain. Of course, it is important to reiterate that such theoretical inputs discussed in Chapter Three and referenced throughout the thesis, have been used only to guide the research and have not taken the form of a superimposed

framework through which the data are interpreted. This has proven invaluable in maintaining a focus for the researcher and in both guiding and structuring the data examined and this point would likely also be of future value to researchers in the field. Aspects of the work of Schwartz,⁶⁴⁷ along with that of Tajfel,⁶⁴⁸ Stets and Burke,⁶⁴⁹ amongst others proved central to identifying and concretising the three singular elements of national teacher origins, social status and beliefs in this research which support the identity of the Irish national teacher between 1831 and 1871. Utilising the framework applied here which identifies aspects of historical data which correlate with current theoretical perspectives can reinforce and fortify the relevance of such enquiries for historical studies in education. Second, the application of the findings emanating from such research can be applied in today's world to interrogate modern constructs of teacher identity; be they in Ireland or at international level. In this respect, the research framework has a dual aspect which should prove beneficial in future studies.

The relevance of this research, particularly within the Irish context, is significant. As noted in Chapter One, Ireland's population demographic since the turn of the twenty-first century has altered considerably. Traditionally, the population could be classified as predominantly white and Catholic, with little in the way of racial diversity. However, the most recent figures available from the CSO for 2022 show that 12% of the population of Ireland, or 631,785 people, are not of Irish origin.⁶⁵⁰ Hannigan, Faas and Darmody note that 'Migrants in Ireland are a highly heterogeneous group in terms of countries of origin, languages spoken and faith

⁶⁴⁷ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*, 7-58.

⁶⁴⁸ Tajfel and Turner, *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior*, 276-293.

⁶⁴⁹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

⁶⁵⁰ Press Statement Census 2022 Results Profile 5 - Diversity, Migration, Ethnicity, Irish Travellers & Religion, available:<https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2023pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2022results/profile5-diversitymigrationethnicityirishtravellersreligion/>

groups.⁶⁵¹ While this may appear a small percentage in terms of the overall population,⁶⁵² arguably, people are more aware of cultural differences and diversity arising from controversy over immigration policies in Ireland, and wider world events causing mass migration.⁶⁵³ Consequently, this impacts the nature of school-going populations and entrants to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes, with commentators noting that while teaching on an international stage is not regarded as being amongst the ‘elite’ professions,⁶⁵⁴ in Ireland it remains ‘a profession of choice.’⁶⁵⁵ Historically, the Irish national teaching population has remained primarily homogenous, with this being quite apparent to even the casual observer in the primary education system.

The roots of this homogeneity can be traced to the foundation and development of the national education system in 1831 and the parameters which the CNEI placed on the system. While the national education system in Ireland may be loosely termed an imperial system,⁶⁵⁶ its relevance in terms of the homogeneity of its teachers is clearer. Accordingly, understanding the roots of any imperial system, such as the national school system in Ireland, requires that the reader understands that systems were more often than not controlled and developed by white men.⁶⁵⁷

The imperial interpretation of what represented success within these nascent systems meant

⁶⁵¹ Hannigan, A., Faas, D. and Darmody, M. (2022) Ethno-cultural diversity in initial teacher education courses: the case of Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*, 43(1), 125–140; Herzog-Punzenberger, B. Brown, M., Altrichter, H., and Gardezi, S. (2022) Preparing teachers for diversity: how are teacher education systems responding to cultural diversity – the case of Austria and Ireland. *Teachers and Teaching*, 29(5), 479–496.

⁶⁵²For current figures on population and number of citizens from countries outside of Ireland see Section 1.1 of Chapter One.

⁶⁵³ The most notable of this migration being people from Ukraine, who have been displaced due to the war with Russia. CSO figures for December 2022 put the number of Ukrainians in Ireland at 67,448. See <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/FP/P-AUI/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries8/>. A more recent estimate puts this figure at 104,400 Ukrainians who have arrived in Ireland since the war began in February 2022. See <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2024/03/29/more-ukrainian-refugees-now-leaving-state-accommodation-than-entering-the-country/>.

⁶⁵⁴ Keane, Heinz and McDaid, R., *Diversifying the Teaching Profession*, 5.

⁶⁵⁵ Clarke, L. and O’Doherty, T. (2021) The professional place of teachers on the island of Ireland: truth flourishes where the student’s lamp has shone. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(1), 62-79:63.

⁶⁵⁶ As noted in Section 2.6 of Chapter Two, the attribution of Ireland’s colonial status is contested.

⁶⁵⁷ See Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony*.

that those who administered and worked in the system were also white and members of the dominant culture. As noted, throughout this research, specific traits of character such as respectability and appearance were continually emphasised by the administrative system and their emulation encouraged within the system. It can be argued that the success of the national system, after the first forty years, was such that a revision of its central characters in the form of the teachers, was not and could not be countenanced. The resulting demographic was then embedded to such a degree that it became largely accepted as normal. Interrogating the roots of this homogeneity in the 21st century can prove important for policy makers when addressing diversity within ITE.

Of equal import and contributing to the nineteenth century national teacher homogeneity was the nature of migration at the time, with the trend being toward the outwards movement of people from Ireland. The Great Famine, referenced in Chapter Two, saw cataclysmic emigration from Ireland, with over a million people recorded leaving Ireland between 1845 and 1847.⁶⁵⁸ This also contributed to the homogeneity of the Irish population and ensured that those who partook of their education or worked as teachers in the national schools were white and in the majority of cases, Catholic. The position of religion as a central aspect of the Irish national teacher's identity in the developing system of national education in the nineteenth century and how this contributed to teacher homogeneity is important. As the majority of the population professed as Roman Catholics, this resulted in the overwhelming majority of national teachers being Catholic. The growing strength of the Catholic Church in the forty-year period in which this study is located saw it become increasingly involved in the national system, which as discussed in Chapter Six, resulted in an outright ban on Catholics attending

⁶⁵⁸ Gray, P. (2014) Famine and Land, 1845 – 1880 In: Jackson, A., ed. (2014) *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 544-561; Smyth, *The Story of the Great Irish Famine*, 4-22.

the Central Training Institute in Marlborough Street in 1863 and the subsequent development of the denominational teacher training colleges, which strengthened religious identity amongst the national teachers.⁶⁵⁹ The development of the Catholic Church's patronage of the national schools also had a long-lasting impact on the identity of the national teacher, even up to the present day where the patronage of the majority of the primary schools remains under the auspices of the Catholic Church.

Current debates around the nature of diversity in, and diversification of ITE programmes in Ireland, focus on assessing recurring trends and unravelling the nature of modern and predominant identities, such as that of the 'white-Irish'.⁶⁶⁰ As noted in Chapter One, this focuses on the 'stubbornly mono-ethnic' nature of the Irish primary teaching population.⁶⁶¹ However, this does not attend to the historical roots of Irish teacher identity or how this may have developed. Within the twentieth century, research identified the majority of entrants into ITE as being over-represented with applicants from rural, farming and/or middle class backgrounds.⁶⁶² When considered against the research presented here, there are discrepancies between those who initially became national teachers over the forty year period outlined in this study and those who undertook the role from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The initial cadre of entrants to national teaching from the 1830s, to at least the 1850s, were drawn from a variety of backgrounds, including earlier providers of elementary education. As their identity became more assured, this saw a more concretised presentation of what it meant to be a national teacher manifest. In this, both the upwardly mobile and aspirational nature of the

⁶⁵⁹ See Harford, *The emergence of a national policy on teacher education*, 45–56.

⁶⁶⁰ Keane, E. and Heinz, M. (2016) Excavating an injustice?*: nationality/ies, ethnicity/ies and experiences with diversity of initial teacher education applicants and entrants in Ireland in 2014. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(4), 507–527.

⁶⁶¹ Quoted in: Walsh and McDaid, *Race Discrimination and the Management of Ethnic Diversity*, 82.

⁶⁶² Heinz, M. and Keane, E. (2018) Socio-demographic composition of primary initial teacher education entrants in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*, 37(4), 523–543.

applicants, tempered with the parameters developed by the pre-Independence administration in Ireland resulted in a more established conceptualisation of Irish national teacher identity.

Keane and Heinz, referenced in Chapter One have written extensively on the question of teacher diversity in Ireland and drawn parallels with European data, as discussed in Chapter One. They note the current barriers to ITE programmes in Ireland relate primarily to the gendered nature of the primary teaching profession,⁶⁶³ academic selection criteria, competency in the Irish language, medical requirements, the denominational status of the majority of primary schools,⁶⁶⁴ and finally, the cost of the programmes.⁶⁶⁵ In a recent publication, Keane, Heinz and McDaid propose seven principles to improve diversity and inclusion in ITE, amongst which is a commitment to ‘research informed policy and practice.’⁶⁶⁶ These authors highlight the need for ‘appropriate national and/or regional data collection systems...to provide evidence regarding representational patterns’, thereby complementing the approach employed in this research.⁶⁶⁷ Arguably, there are differences between the requirements for becoming a primary teacher in the twenty-first century and in the nineteenth and while these may be cited as the primary cause for lack of diversity within the profession as it stands presently, there were also challenges to entry for those who became national teachers from 1831 onwards. In essence,

⁶⁶³ See Drudy, S. (2006) Gender differences in entrance patterns and awards in initial teacher education. *Irish Educational Studies*, 25(3), 259-273.

⁶⁶⁴ According to data released by the Irish Government in 2022, the majority of primary schools in Ireland profess a Catholic ethos. This figure stands at 88.9%, even though the data shows some devolution between 2012 and 2022 to a multid denominational status. See Department of Education (2022) *Statistical Bulletin: Enrolments September 2022 – Preliminary Results*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/055810-education-statistics/>.

⁶⁶⁵ Heinz, M. and Keane, E. (2018) Socio-demographic composition of primary initial teacher education entrants in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*, 37(4), 523–543; Keane, E. (2024) Finding Moral Value through Maintaining a Working Class ‘Mentality’: Student Teachers from Working Class Backgrounds (Not) Becoming Middle Class. *Sociology (Oxford)*, 58(2), 454-470; Keane, E. (2023) Chameleoning to fit in? Working class student teachers in Ireland performing differential social class identities in their placement schools. *Educational Review*, Vol. ahead-of-print, Issue ahead-of-print, 1–20; Keane, Heinz and Lynch, *Factors impacting on the retention of students*, 5-23.

⁶⁶⁶ Keane, Heinz and McDaid, *Diversifying the Teaching Profession*, 235.

⁶⁶⁷ Keane, Heinz and McDaid, *Diversifying the Teaching Profession*, 235.

it is the nature of the conditions surrounding the original selection and training process which have perhaps resulted in the continuing homogeneity of the Irish primary teaching profession. While the UK administration, in the form of the CNEI, employed rules and regulations to develop and maintain the system, they found willing participants in those who applied to become national teachers. These early national teachers were predisposed and eager to undertake the role of national teacher if it meant social mobility and a better life. Whilst the challenges for entry have changed for many of those applying for the role in the twenty-first century, at some intrinsic level, the position of national teacher remains embedded in the Irish psyche as a worthy one.

Finally, while there can be little doubt about the centrality of this research in respect of Irish educational history, it also has relevance internationally. In this regard, the research presents a further duality of purpose. Not only does it complement studies such as those discussed in the introductory chapter by authors such as Westberg and Primus,⁶⁶⁸ and Marklund⁶⁶⁹ for example in Sweden but it also supports those approaches outlined by Tröhler,⁶⁷⁰ and Aldrich⁶⁷¹ which seek to develop awareness around and encourage histories of teachers within educational history. As noted earlier in this section, the methodological approach employed here might well be used to structure similar enquiries into historical teacher identity, using this framework, or indeed, an adaptation which seeks resonance between historical events and current issues. The accessibility of archival material which details administrations and events of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century could see the framework utilised here employed in an equally effective fashion to excavate early teacher identity.

⁶⁶⁸ Westberg and Primus, *Rethinking the history of education*, 1-18.

⁶⁶⁹ Marklund, *Who was going to become a teacher?*, 27-49.

⁶⁷⁰ Tröhler, *History and Historiography*, 13-28.

⁶⁷¹ Aldrich, *The three duties of the historian of education*, 133-143.

The implications for such research internationally resonate with enquiries and examinations of policy in the current day, with contributions such as that discussed by Donleavy, Meierkord and Rajania,⁶⁷² on elementary education and teacher identity in Europe, as well as similar studies proffered by Kelly⁶⁷³ in the UK and Schleicher,⁶⁷⁴ writing on behalf of the OECD.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

It is important to note that there were potential elements which might have warranted further exploration. One such element of identity which remains unexplored in this research is that of gender amongst the national teachers. Whilst initially drafting the framework to guide the study, gender was noted as a potential element of national teacher identity. However, the subsequent development of a temporal boundary on the study precluded this as a significant element of the research. This was primarily due to the noticeable absence of data on the gender of the early national teachers between 1831 and 1871. This is not to say that there are not points on which a case for the inclusion of gender might have been developed. Numerical data on the numbers of female verse male teachers are available, along with commentary on training for female teachers. However, the lack of availability of data which could be used to further understanding around the emerging identity of the national teachers ultimately outweighed this. It is noted that opportunities for more nuanced studies relating to female national teachers have

⁶⁷² Donleavy, Meierkord and Rajania, *Study on the diversity within the teaching profession*.

⁶⁷³ Kelly, *Representativeness and diversity*, 1-28.

⁶⁷⁴ Schleicher, *Equity, Excellence and Inclusiveness in education*.

already been pursued by other historians of education, such as Harford,⁶⁷⁵ O' Donoghue and Harford,⁶⁷⁶ and Raftery and Parkes,⁶⁷⁷ amongst others.⁶⁷⁸

In respect of areas for further study, there are ample opportunities to extend this work. The forty formative years encompassed here represent the early stages of development for Irish national teacher identity. The initial phase of this research saw a significant amount of archival material examined which stretched beyond 1871 and into the twentieth century, at which time the Reports of the Commissioners conclude in 1921 with the advent of the Irish Free State. Rich material relating to the social activities and most notably, perceived transgressions by the national teachers, as noted in Chapter Three, are on record in the National Archives of Ireland in the ED/9 files. An extension of this work might include the period from 1871 to 1921, which would greatly complement this research and contribute to deeper understandings of Irish national teacher identity. Possible comparative studies with other professions during the early to mid-nineteenth century might also prove an interesting avenue for study. This could examine teacher's incomes against other types of employment and the impact of this as an example, or indeed, studies which could explore international comparisons between Ireland and other countries might also be considered.

⁶⁷⁵ Harford, *Tracing the Contours of the History of Higher Education for Women*, 4-21.

⁶⁷⁶ O' Donoghue, T. and Harford, J. (2014) The conception, construction, and maintenance of the identity of Roman Catholic female religious teachers: a historical case study from Ireland. *Teachers and Teaching*, 20(4), 410-426.

⁶⁷⁷ Raftery, D. and Parkes, S.M. (2007) *Female education in Ireland 1700-1900: Minerva or Madonna*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press.

⁶⁷⁸ Raftery, D., Harford, J. and Parkes, S.M. (2010) Mapping the terrain of female education in Ireland, 1830-1910. *Gender and education*, 22(5), 565-578; Parkes, S.M. (2004) *A danger to the men: a history of women in Trinity College Dublin 1904-2004*. Dublin: Lilliput Press; O' Connor, A.V. and Parkes, S.M. (1984) *Gladly learn and gladly teach: Alexandra College and School, 1866-1966*. Dublin: Blackwater Press; Raftery, D. (2011) The "mission" of nuns in female education in Ireland, c.1850-1950. *Paedagogica Historica*, 48(2), 299-313.

7.5 Conclusion

In summary, this thesis has examined the emerging identity of the Irish national teacher between the years of 1831 and 1871. Guided by singular points of identity theory from Schwartz,⁶⁷⁹ Tajfel and Turner,⁶⁸⁰ and Stets and Burke,⁶⁸¹ amongst others, the thesis has delved into the social origins, selection and character of the national teachers, along with their social status, class, and religious affiliations to facilitate an overview of the early Irish national teacher's identity. This construct of early Irish national teacher identity is unique in both approach and exposition. Using modern understandings of identity theory to excavate Irish national teacher identity in a retrospective fashion facilitates an understanding which is historically grounded but conclusively linked to the current day. Primary teacher identity in Ireland in the twenty-first century is topical and impactful within education, and at a broader level in society. The evidence examined is largely conclusive in addressing both the primary research and embedded questions. The early national teachers were primarily drawn from the poorer classes of Irish society, albeit with some candidates having worked in varying other providers of elementary education. These early teachers might be described as pioneers in their occupancy of the role. Many were poorly paid and the prospects for advancement within the system were often hampered by the nature of their teaching posts, leading some to turn their skills to other employment to supplement income. This pitched the national teacher into the wider community, beyond the classroom, and we read of national teachers who worked as church clerks and in post offices. In this aspect of their lives and contribution to wider society, the national teacher assumed something of the role of the Hedge School teachers, generally accepted as their predecessors in a fashion.

⁶⁷⁹ Schwartz, *The Evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory*...7-58.

⁶⁸⁰ Tajfel and Turner, *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior*, 276-293.

⁶⁸¹ Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, 224-237.

Examining the social origins of the national teachers and the parameters which surrounded and influenced their developing identities provides opportunities for examining the societal background of those who become primary teachers in twenty-first century Ireland and raises questions about Irish primary teacher identity in the present day. Equally so, while the parameters developed by the CNEI no longer exist, it can be argued they have been replaced by similar, yet more contemporary influences such as technological advances, social media and the challenges around broadening constructs of personal identities in the twenty-first century. Concepts such as status and social class, while perhaps not as overtly evident in twenty-first century Ireland, nevertheless remain in classrooms, schools and society at a broader level. The same is not as true perhaps of the position of the Catholic Church in relation to Irish primary education in twenty-first century Ireland,⁶⁸² and while efforts to devolve the patronage of the Catholic Church over the past twenty years have been articulated, these remain largely moot.⁶⁸³

These early national teachers took on challenging roles and maintained their positions to support families and provide opportunities for their children to advance socially. This, in turn, largely saw the realisation of a new-found status and developing social class which these early national teachers carved out for themselves as representatives of the CNEI and the wider

⁶⁸² Figures published for enrolments in 2022 by the Irish Government state that 88.9% of Irish primary schools are under the patronage of the Catholic Church. See Department of Education (2024) *Statistical Bulletin: Enrolments September 2022 – Preliminary Results* [online] 23 April 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/055810-education-statistics/> (accessed 5 June 2024).

⁶⁸³ In 2011 a forum to enquire into the patronage of the Irish primary schools was established by the Labour/Fine Gael coalition government. The forum published its report in 2012, stating that ‘there is now a mis-match between the inherited pattern of denominational school patronage and the rights of citizens in the much more culturally and religiously diverse contemporary Irish society.’ See Coolahan, J., Hussey, C. and Kilfeather, F. (2012) *The Forum of Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector: Report of the Forum’s Advisory Group*, 1. [online]. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/24715/6739ae1ab8104108af4a0a6bfc418e0c.pdf> (accessed 29 July 2024). Hyland, writing in 2022, notes that there has been some reduction in the number of Irish primary schools under Catholic patronage but the figures remain substantially skewed towards patronage under the Catholic Church. See Hyland, A. (2022) *Forum on Patronage and Pluralism – a 10-Year Review What has been achieved?* [online]. Available at: <https://irelandseducationyearbook.ie/downloads/IEYB2022/YB2022-Primary-02.pdf> (accessed 29 July 2024).

imperial administration. This increased assurance of identity which many of the national teachers inhabited also saw them articulate and agitate for improved wages, pensions and housing as the 1860s began to draw to a close. This was ultimately successful in the formation of the INTO and this is representative of the national teacher's identity reaching maturity in respect of this study. There is little doubt that by 1871 the identity of the Irish national teacher was largely assured and evident in respect of its contribution to Irish society.

This thesis presents a unique insight into the early Irish national school teachers, in terms of the data presented and the approach employed. It is the first of its kind within the field of Irish history of education and will contribute significantly to understanding Irish national teacher identity in the early to midpoint of the nineteenth century in Ireland. The identity of the Irish national teacher between 1831 and 1871 is multi-faceted and the examples discussed throughout this thesis support this. However, there can be little doubt that the forty-year period examined here captures the essence of who the early national teachers were, examining their social origins, character and selection, social status and religious affiliations as contributory elements to their overall identity. Each of these aspects reinforces understandings around the importance of the early Irish national teacher's identity, allowing the historian of education to glean valuable insights into these early pioneers of elementary education in Ireland.

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APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1 Assistant Commissioners and their districts for Powis Commission Report

Ref. in Volume II	District	Containing the following areas	Name of the Assistant Commissioner
D	Dublin	Drogheda, Celbridge, Naas and Wicklow as partial centres Rathfarnham, Drogheda, Naas, Wicklow, Leixlip, Blessington, Bray, Arklow, Tinahely and Baltinglass	Thomas King, Esq., M.A., Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge
E	Cork	City of Cork, Bandon, Skibbereen, Midleton, Mallow, Fermoy, Youghal, Mitchelstown	W. Scott Coward, Esq., H.M.'s Inspector of Schools in England
F	Belfast	Belfast East, West, North, South Newtownards, Portadown, Carrickfergus, Antrim, Armagh	D.C. Richmond Esq., MA, Fellow of St. Peter's College, Cambridge.

G	Londonderry	Londonderry, Maghera, Raphoe, Letterkenny, Coleraine	Thomas Sidgreaves Esq., MA London, Barrister-at-Law
H	Limerick	Limerick City, Ennis, Kilrush, Newcastlewest, Rathkeale and Kilmallock and Kilfinane.	J.S. Laurie Esq., formerly one of H.M.'s Inspectors for Schools England, and now Director of Education in Ceylon.
I	South-eastern	Clonmel, Thurles, Portlaw, Waterford City, Kilkenny, Castlecomer, Wexford, New Ross	P. Le Page Renouf Esq., One of H.M.'s Inspectors of Schools for England.
J	North-western	Killybegs, Glenties, Sligo, Dungloe, Enniskillen, Carrick- on-Shannon	Patrick Cumin Esq., Oxon. Barrister-at-Law, Late Secretary to the Scottish Education Commission
K	West- Connaught	Castlebar, Ballina, Westport, Belmullet, Clifden, Tuam, Newport	William Jack Esq., Fellow of St. Peter's College, Cambridge; Professor of Natural Philosophy at St. Owen's College Manchester; formerly one of

			H.MInspectors of Schools for Scotland
L	Killarney	Killarney, Caherciveen, Kenmare, Dingle, Tralee, Listowel	J. Percival Balmer, M.A., Oxon. Barrister-at-Law
M	Central	Roscrea, Parsonstown, Tullamore, Mountmellick, Maryborough, Fermoy, Mullingar, Longford, Athlone	Thomas Harvey Esq., M.A., Oxon. ; Assistant Commissioner under the Scottish Education Commission

APPENDIX 2

Site	Original source	Format	Result	Data extracted
Enhanced British Parliamentary Papers on Ireland 1801-1922 available online@ https://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi	Commissioners of National Education of Ireland Reports	Scanned original reports as published for the CNEI from First Report published in 1831 to the Eighty-sixth Report in 1921	35,368 pages of material examined	All relevant data extracted totalling 335 pages
	First Report of the Registrar General of Marriages in Ireland	Scanned original	28 pages	Abstracts of marriages registered between 1845 and 1847- details numbers of those registered 'According to the Rites of the Established Church' and those 'Not according to the Rites of the Established Church'
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND	Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1870 (Powis) Some volumes available online @ https://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi	Eight volumes – hard copies available at the NLI Digital format for Volumes 1, 4-8 online	4,000 pages of material examined	All relevant data extracted totalling 62 pages

	<i>Irish Teacher's Journal</i>	Published from 1868-1901 Examined 1868 to 1888	Identified 776 items 235 for 1868-1870	Type of material varies from advertising of teacher aids and materials to early correspondence from teachers. Focused on 1868-1870 following revision of study parameters.
	Minute books of the CNEI 1831-1900	Eleven volumes in total available from 1831 to 1900. Examined Volumes 1-4 covering period 1831 to 1871.	235 items noted and recorded	Minute books are cross referenced in Index- see next entry.
	Index to the Minutes of the CNEI meetings (11 volumes 1831 to 1900) Volume 1-4 1831-1870	4 bound volumes covering the period 1831-1871 Each alphabetized from A to Z Covers the period 1831 To 1847 Contents are alphabetized from A to Z- Photographic record made of everything relating to teacher, or where word 'teacher' is used. 244 images recorded with multiple entries recorded per image.	258 images recorded	Much of the content focuses on administrative details, attendees at meetings and distribution of funds. Occasional references to teachers focus on dismissals or issues around salary. Very little if any detail which supports identity. Handwriting from 1848 to 1865 largely illegible and entries lessen from 1861

	<p>Main catalogue available online. Set temporal parameters using online filters from 1831 to 1871- searched using following keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ national education = 116 results ➤ national teacher= 5 ➤ Irish national/national school teacher= 0 ➤ School master = 6 ➤ Commissioners of National Education = 226 	<p>Some of these take the form of 19th century published works, images and letters. These results also include the Minutes and the Indices to the minutes</p>		<p>Actual information on national teachers is quite thin, apart from the CNEI records.</p>
	<p>The following contemporary works examined:</p>	<p>Nine in total – majority anonymous Material relating to social conditions documented by visitors to Ireland during the early nineteenth century</p>	<p>38 items photographed and recorded</p>	<p>No references to teachers- one account of home schooling in a wealthy family with whom the diarist was lodging. Wider insights into social conditions and state of the country outside Dublin.</p>
	<p>Robert Tidswell Journal 1841</p>			
	<p>John R. Whitley Diary 1865</p>			

	Wakefield, E., (1812) <i>An Account of Ireland Statistical and Political</i> London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Browne, Vol. II, p.397			
	Essays on the Population of Ireland, and the characters of the Irish, (1803) London: C and R Baldwin	Divided into two sections: Section 1 attends to the population of Ireland from the time of the Petty Survey to the Union. The writer comments on the 'salubrious' situation which lends itself to an increasing population and the frequency of early marriages. Section 2 discusses the character of the Irish people with an informative paragraph on educational interests		Author comments on 'the actual necessity of disclosing the <i>real</i> characters of the Irish; in order to their being suitably governed' See pp.42-45. The monograph continues to describe the Irish- tone throughout is infused with a superiority around how 'they' might be improved and are really worthy subjects for reform, 'rendering them...as useful citizens', p.52
	Balch, William Stevens (1850)	<i>Ireland, as I saw it: the character, condition, and prospects of the people</i> , New York, G. P. Putnam		

	O' Driscoll, John (1820)	<i>Thoughts and Suggestions on the Education of the peasantry in Ireland</i> London: T. Cadell	17 pages recorded	Concentrates on the benefits of education to the poor of Ireland- 'who has few good habits' This contains original passage which Dowling includes in his work... 'The country schoolmaster is independent of all system and control...'
	Dewar, Daniel (1812)	<i>Observations on the Character, Customs and Superstitions of the Irish</i>		
	Kildare Place Society	<i>The Schoolmaster's Manual (1825)</i>	11 pages recorded	Best practice in teaching, observations on religion and behaviour of the masters.
	Hime, Charles (1885)	<i>A Schoolmaster's Retrospect of Eighteen and a half years in an Irish School</i> Dublin: Sullivan Bros.	Frontispiece and cover.	Account of what author believes is best practice in Foyle School in Derry.
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND	ED1 Training College Registers	Marlborough Street training college registers 1840-1924	Some early entries recorded	Much of the statistical information recorded here is replicated in the Powis Commission Findings Vol. VII, Section III, p.43.

				Details here cover period 1834 to 1868
	ED4 Salary Books	Salary books 1834-1844	79 items photographed	Occasional notes alongside entries on withholding of teacher's salary or issue with payment
	ED7 Newspaper cuttings relating to education -commencing 1854	26 Bound volumes spanning years 1854 to 1923, averaging 100 pages each.	38 items of some interest identified	38 items of some interest identified focus on the 'big' questions of the time, religious instruction and correspondence relating to this. Very little on individual teachers
	ED 9 National School Commissioners: Registered files	4,640 files covering the period 1877-1887 detailing misdemeanours, offences, issues around payments	548 items of interest	Initial phase of research-data gathered here not used as ultimately beyond research parameters
	Irish Crime Records	Arrest records pertaining to those detained under the suspension of <i>Habeas Corpus</i> from 1866-1867	83 images recorded.	Detailing arrest records for national teachers incarcerated prior to the Fenian Rising of 1867.
DUBLIN DIOCESAN ARCHIVES	Archbishop Daniel Murray (Commissioner) Papers 1823 -1850 Archdeacon John Hamilton papers	1,453 items of correspondence indexed online at Archivium Hibernicum	89 letters with direct reference to national school teachers	The correspondence of these individuals is plentiful but actual examples of interactions between them and laity are scarce enough, given

	1831-1858 Cardinal Paul Cullen papers 1852-1878			the volume of correspondence. Those that I did encounter relate to seeking positions as teachers/retaining the position or occasionally canvassing for posts. Again, a huge amount of material, however few elements of personal teacher correspondence
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Appendix 3 – Letter of Ethical Approval from Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY,
MAYNOOTH, CO. KILDARE, IRELAND



Dr Carol Barrett
Secretary to Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee

17 April 2024

John Michael Carroll
Department of Education
Maynooth University

Re: Application for ethical approval for a Project entitled: The Irish teacher: Origins, Identity and Contribution 1831-1871

Dear John,

The above project has been evaluated under Tier 1 process, rapid review.

As this research involves the use of data already in the public domain it is exempt from requiring ethical approval and may proceed.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol Barrett".

Dr Carol Barrett
Secretary,
Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee
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