

4. Conclusion

Teachers get to know themselves through their interactions with their pupils and colleagues and reflecting upon these interactions. Their self-knowledge is thus mediated; it is not direct as in the case of contemplation or other methods. The studied teachers look into an imaginary mirror where they do not see themselves, but merely their image mediated by other people and their "another self". As follows from the above-stated, the teacher's identity is a result of a long-term effort. It is a creation of a rational behaviour and a result of self-reflection, rather than a set of given or innate qualities.⁷ Snow & Anderson (1987) call the process of identity management and creation **identity work**.⁸

The studied teachers gradually begin to develop new strategies of work on their identity, but they stick to two directions of their intentional behaviour: first, they increase teaching efficiency (a strategy directed towards the classroom) and second, they improve the conditions at school (a strategy directed towards the school). Teachers, thus, establish friendly relationships, form other teachers with similar ideological profiles, protect their group, and primarily put forward their fundamental, ideological, and personal interests. The studied teachers have developed various strategies of gaining power at school (verbal distancing and open conflicts) and they become targets of strategies applied by various other teachers (gossip). The research shows that in the heterogeneous institution, teachers use verbal and visual strategies of identity work so that they can establish friendly relationships, form teachers with a similar ideological profile, protect their opinion group, and put forward their own or their group's interests.

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⁷ Cf. Snow, & Anderson (1987); Pollett, & Jasper (2001).

⁸ Pittard (2003).

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