Factors Affecting the Brokering of Specialist Leaders of Education by Teaching School Alliances

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Abstract

In recent years in England, the political shift towards decentralisation of government has manifested, within the field of education, in the advocating of the school-led, self-improving system. The emerging policy was crystallised in the 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (Department for Education, 2010). The Paper called for those leaders and schools who were most effective to 'narrow the gap' between the outcomes of pupils in neighbouring schools through the formation of Teaching Schools (TS). It was intended that these Teaching Schools would to form local networks to meet local need, known as Teaching School Alliances (TSAs). This study will explore the implementation of one strand of the 2010 policy, which stipulated that TSAs should recruit and deploy a new type of consultant, Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs), to engage in the school-to-school support.

However, through personal experience and anecdotal evidence, I became aware that SLEs were frustrated that their TSA was unable to engage, or 'broker', them as frequently as they had anticipated, so they were not being deployed into schools to support improvements. Consequently, I was compelled to investigate if other TSAs were brokering their SLEs more frequently or, if not, identify the factors inhibiting the process. This study will identify three case study TSAs and investigate the factors affecting the brokering of their SLEs. I will address the issue of SLE brokering through three key research questions: the extent to which SLEs are being brokered by each TSA; the organisational factors which affect the brokering of SLEs; the individual characteristics of the SLEs, their brokers or client schools which affect brokering.

In order to gather data from participants in each case study Teaching School Alliance, I requested the Teaching School's records of deployments undertaken by all SLEs during the scope of my research, the timeframe for which is explained in Chapter 3, and I also carried out interviews with the school leader responsible for overseeing the brokering of the SLEs who were designated to carry out school-to-school support. From then, I triangulated the deployment data I had collated and analysed and the broker interviews with two further, concurrent waves of interviews: I interviewed two SLEs from each TSA, 6 in total, gathering the views of an SLE who had been deployed more frequently, and an SLE who had been deployed less frequently in each case. I also interviewed those operating at a more strategic level, namely the Schools Commissioner for the Department of Education, Frank Green, and a senior member of the then recently-formed Teaching Schools Council; the roles of these educational leaders will be defined in Chapters 2 and 5.

The study will find that the lack of a clear blueprint, coupled with the pace of change in the school system, has given rise to great variance and complexity in this school-led system, and that none of the three TSAs where deploying the SLEs to extent intended by the policy, thereby not comprehensively addressing the local need to improve schools. A key factor was that, due to this lack of blueprint and clear commissioning protocols in the early stages, SLEs were recruited and designated who would not be in demand; from the macro-level, increased pressure of accountability, coupled with a lack of funding, was causing schools to narrow their priorities. In addition, issues pertaining to finance, capacity, geography, local and National political issues, the recognition of the role of SLEs, as well as the organisation and governance of TSAs, all presented barriers to broking in all three case study TSAs. Essentially, the complexity and diversity in the new school-led system, for some TSAs, had resulted in a tension between competition and collaboration that prevented SLEs from being brokered as frequently as the policy had anticipated.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

1 Introduction

My research is concerned with a particular element of the educational policies for schools and academies in England that came into being with the publication of the Conservative-led Coalition Government's 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (Department for Education, 2010). This study investigates the success of one aspect of this complex reform package, namely the deployment of expert middle leaders, Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) to professionally develop their peers in less successful schools. As a practitioner involved in the implementation of this policy, my key motive is to illuminate my experiences through social scientific insight.

In relation to this study, the most pertinent of the policies heralded by the White Paper centred on the way in which schools were to support each other to effect school improvement, as opposed to strategy for improvement being a promoted by top-down initiatives. This school of thought was not a new one: academics, such as David Hargreaves, and school leaders had, through the previous decade, advocated the value of collaborative networks within the education system, the leaders of which networks would promote improvements and policy change from within. The theories he expounded in *Education Epidemic* gave rise to the meta-language of the self-improving school systems, or SISS:

> "… we need complex systems of organisation and provision to be capable of adapting as systems to new demands and new possibilities. And if they are to be embedded permanently in communities, and be genuinely responsive to them, they must be able to sustain this process of adaptation on their own." (2003, p.10)

The evolution of thinking and of policy, in relation to these SISS, will be explored more fully in Chapter 2. My research will explore, in part, how the English school system has responded to the challenge of self-adaptation within a context of complex and fast-paced reform.

In practice, the 2010 White Paper served as a catalyst for the creation of supportive networks of schools. In short, for the policy and practice will be detailed in ensuing chapters, these were to have a Teaching School at the centre, or 'hub', of a network. A school deemed Outstanding by Ofsted could apply to become a Teaching School and, if successful, its Headteacher would be designated a National Leader of Education (NLE). As detailed in Chapter 2, this drew on the roles and practice established prior to the 2010 White Paper, with the National Support Schools (NSS) programme, under the previous Labour government, a programme that was directed by the then National College for Leadership. The Teaching

School would be encouraged to establish an Alliance, or network, of schools, which would work together to raise the standards of local schools whose outcomes were less strong. A key distinction in the Coalition Government's policy, from those pertaining to school-to-school support under the previous Labour government, was a severance from Local Authority control. The Government's agenda for increasing decentralisation is very significant to the context of this research study.

In 2010, I had recently been appointed as a Deputy Head of a secondary school, and therefore held a keen interest as to how the new policies would impact upon schools like my own, an inner-city comprehensive which had held Academy status since 2006. My school was, by this stage, designated a National Support School (NSS) but did not fulfil one of the criteria to be designated as a Teaching School. However, my school's NLE had a remit to support other schools with whom we had then formed a 'federation', or of whom we had assumed strategic leadership and sponsorship. From this platform of school-to-school support, my school was keen to work collaboratively with a more extensive range of schools and so joined the Teaching School Alliance (TSA) of another school in the region. In turn, I was keen to take a lead role in this collaboration, and so applied for and was designated in the role of Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) in the first wave of recruits, in May 2012. SLEs were to be deployed by TSAs to support other schools by coaching other leaders, thus building sustainable leadership capacity (see Chapter 2). The deployment of SLEs, and School-to-school Support in general, are two of the 'Big 6' of a Teaching School's responsibilities, with the others being Initial Teacher Training, Continued Professional Development, Leadership & Talent Management and Research & Development (The National College for School Leadership, 2013b).

The origin of this research study stems from my personal experiences as a designated SLE. At the outset, I was eager to reach beyond the pupils in my own school and to work collaboratively to 'narrow the gap' in outcomes for those pupils whose life-chances were disadvantaged as a result of the schools which they attended. However, I was not 'brokered' to be 'deployed' as an SLE, and I quickly became frustrated. Anecdotal conversations with colleagues who were also SLEs revealed that many of them felt similarly frustrated because the policy was not being effectively implemented 'on the ground'; they were being deployed for only a fraction of the "up to 15 days" intended (The National College for School Leadership, 2013b), if they were being deployed at all. By early 2013, these reflections prompted some initial reading, and I discovered there was a gap in detailed research in this area. Broad case

studies of good practice had been commissioned and published by the National College[1] but these only evaluated some of the SLE deployments that were taking place, rather than investigating the frequency of deployments and the factors which might be affecting deployment rates.

Therefore, I elected to carry out a research project, the aim of which was to ascertain the extent to which SLEs were being deployed in a number of TSAs, and to identify factors which affected the brokering – or lack of brokering – which was taking place. Having conducted a review of recent and current literature and policy, I engaged three TSAs to participate as case studies. In each case, I was able to collate and analyse deployment data for the scope of the project[2], which ran from May 2012to April 2014, to identify the structures and systems which governed each TSA, to interview the school leaders responsible for brokering and deploying the Alliance's SLEs, and to interview some of the SLEs themselves. I also gathered secondary data, such as the Ofsted grading of schools in the region, to provide further context to and to aid evaluation of the primary data collected. In the summer of 2014, I became acquainted with the extensive research project undertaken, *The Evaluation of Teaching Schools*, led by Qing Gu (Gu, Rea, Hill, Smethem, & Dunford, 2014). The report of the findings was eventually published on the National College website in early 2015. It offered some interesting evaluation of factors affecting SLE deployment in its 18 case study schools; however, since the report covered the whole spectrum Teaching Schools' responsibilities, the report published only a selection of overview findings, which will be referred to further in due course. Most notably, the report suggested that SLE deployment was the most difficult aspect of 'The Big 6' to achieve. I intend to report, in this thesis, the extent to which my three case study TSAs were able to respond to the remit to recruit and deploy SLEs, and to provide depth of detail regarding the factors affecting this very narrow tranche of the TSAs' outreach work.

The literature and policy review of Chapter 2 is organised into three broad areas: firstly, the policy, research and issues pertinent to TSAs, collaborative networks and SLEs at the national, macro-level; secondly, the meso-level issues which relate to the organization of TSAs and the brokering of SLEs to client schools at the organizational or regional level; finally,

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[1] See Glossary for a summary of, and Chapter 2 for further detail of, the evolution of the National
[2] As detailed in Chapter 3, the scope of the action research, with regard to gathering the data which detailed the deployments undertaken by each SLE designated, or appointed, by each TSA ran from May 2012 to April 2014: the first wave of SLEs were trained and available for deployments by in May 2012; since TSAs are required to submit evidence of their outreach work at the end of each financial year, I had anticipated that TSAs would have produced sets of deployment data for this purpose and that the end of the financial years, therefore, would provide clear parameters to the scope of this phase of research. Chapter 4 includes reflections on the complications challenges encountered regarding this.

consideration is given to theories which will illuminate the degree to which individual, or micro-level factors, such as resistance to change, might impact upon the brokering of SLEs. To add cohesion the thesis, overall, I will shape its subsequent chapters, where relevant, into the three tiers of macro-, meso- and micro-level considerations and findings.

In Chapter 3, on Research Methods, I distill those issues for investigation, as established at the end of the previous chapter, into a set of three research questions. I then present the research design and methods that were adopted to investigate those questions in an attempt to identify and understand the factors affecting the brokering of SLEs. The approach to the action research phases of the project is described, such as how the SLE deployment data was collated and analysed and how and why the semi-structured interview schedules were devised. The chapter also explores why a face-to-face channel was favoured for interviewing Headteachers and other school leaders in charge of the brokering of SLEs, whereas the channel of telephone interviews was utilized to conduct the subsequent interviews with two SLEs from each case study TSA. The chapter also explores how the opportunity arose to conduct two 'elite' interviews with the DfE's Schools Commissioner and with a senior leader in recently-formed Teaching Schools Council, and how the original research design was adapted to capitalise on the opportunity to triangulate my findings with primary data from those operating at the macro-level of education.

Those findings from primary data is presented over two chapters. Chapter 4 covers the research findings from my contextual research and from deployment data, and contains quantitative data regarding the frequency of SLE deployment in each TSA, and the characteristics of the SLEs deployed and of the client schools who have been in receipt of support. As aforementioned, this primary data is illuminated by secondary data, such as the profile of schools' performance in the region. Further analysis is then be presented, such as the geographical activity pertaining to deployments at the meso-level, or the relative frequency of deployment of SLEs by specialism, at the micro-level. The qualitative research findings from interview data is then be presented in Chapter 5. The findings reveal that approach to, frequency of, and nature of the deployment of SLEs varies widely across the three case study TSAs. Appendix 2 includes detailed fact files of the characteristics of each case study TSA, and a hierarchical diagram to illustrate how the responsibility for the brokering of SLEs is appointed in each; since these differences are quite pronounced, it is intended that Appendix 2 be reviewed in conjunction with Chapters 4 and 5 to aid clarification for those readers unaccustomed to the organisation of TSAs.

Finally, Chapter 6 brings together the findings from the different stages of the research study that aim to identify the factors affecting the brokering of SLEs during the initial years of practice. I evaluate the extent to which my research supports or departs from existing research in the field of collaborative school networks, and the extent to which the pertinent policies of the 2010 White Paper are being implemented in the everyday practice of TSAs. This is followed by reflections upon the challenges and issues encountered during the research journey. To conclude, recommendations for best practice to enhance the frequency and appropriateness of SLE deployment are offered.

2 Literature Review and Context

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, my focus is upon the deployment of Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) by National Leaders of Education (NLEs) for the purpose of school-to-school support, within the framework of system leadership. A review of current policy, at a national, macro-level, will form a useful starting point to contextualise the parameters and nature of such support, through an outline of the intended roles and functions of Teaching School Alliances (TSAs), NLEs and SLEs. The role of the National College of School Leaders, and, in its latest incarnation, The National College for Teaching and Leadership, in managing these people and processes is another important piece of context to consider. These policies and procedures can be illuminated by a review of research and thinking which underpins them, both in terms of educational thinkers in the UK and overseas, and those lessons that can be drawn from the deployment of similar policies in other sectors, namely business and health.

A review of other aspects of educational reform in recent decades will provide a platform from which to consider the potential challenges to system leaders, and school leaders more broadly, in the successful establishment of alliances. Alongside this, recognition of those organisations and personnel, such as those in the Local Authority, who operate beyond and, perhaps, in opposition to, the system leaders of TSAs, will further inform the study. At a meso-level, an examination of emerging models and competencies for effective alliances, proposed by key educational thinkers, should illuminate a review of some current barriers and complicating factors in practice. The action research aspect of this study will then explore the issues impacting upon school-to-school support at both an organisational and an individual, or micro-, level.

2. 1 Macro-level: National Policy and Context

2.1.1 The Educational Landscape: a Retrospective

2.1.1.1 Governance Reforms

In order to appreciate the challenges presented to those at the forefront of system leadership, it is essential to recognise the rapid and at times contradictory reforms in governance, accountability and curriculum which have been directed by a succession of governments in recent decades; these impact upon the potential for effective strategic alliances to be formed

and sustained, as will be explored by examining the research of Hargreaves and others in due course.

To first consider Ball's perspective on the changes of governance in state education, the Education Reform Act was fundamental in opening the gate to "privatisation(s)" (Ball, 2007) and decentralisation from local government which underpin the self-improving school system which is currently in demand by policy makers. However, with his focus on the "discursive-strategic shifts" (2007, p. 171) from the Keynesian Welfare State in the latter stages of the twentieth century, Ball, drawing on Jessop, does not acknowledge that a state-led comprehensive system had only come to pass a century before, with the landmark 1870 Elementary Education Act. Therefore, he exaggerates the permanence and stability of a comprehensive system which had actually only existed in the form he applauds for a few post-war decades.

Through their research, Abbott, Rathbone and Whitehead explore similar themes to Ball (Abbott, Rathbone, & Whitehead, 2013). They indicate that Britain's economic problems of the 1970s reached a climax in the "breakdown of consensus" by 1979 (pp.54-79), and that Thatcher's succession to power prompted a move towards marketisation and competition in education which can be seen as the precursor to the current policies of decentralisation in which educational system leaders, such as NLEs and SLEs, attempt to offer school-to-school support. A key sea-change in educational policy in the last century, and one which bookends the professional memory of many senior leaders today, is the Educational Reform Act (Department for Education and Science, 1988). The 1988 *Grant Maintained Status and the Local Management of Schools* policy announced the power of governing bodies to entirely remove a school from the control of the local authority, and into the direct hands of central government (Abbott, Rathbone, et al., 2013). With more "private actors" governing City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and Academies, the power of the local authority is reduced (Ball, 2009, p26, p85 ff). The changing balance between public and private sectors, will be explored more fully at a meso-level; as Abbott et al reflect: "..the rapid pace and amount of reform continued with the introduction of a range of landmark policies..." (Abbott, Rathbone, et al., 2013p.152).

Stephen Machin and colleagues have explored the statistical challenges in demonstrating any improvement in student performance in the various incarnations of the Academies movement, under different governments (Machin & Silva, 2013; Machin & Vernoit, 2010; Machin & Vernoit, 2011). His overarching argument is that "coalition academies" do

not, unlike the previous wave of academies created during the Labour Government, serve the most disadvantaged students in England (2010, p.21). Furthermore, his analysis concludes that, even in those academies that converted pre-2010, there is no impact evidence of less able students improving their performance at the end of Key Stage 4 (2013, p.9).

However, perpetuating distrust of the Academies movement will perhaps be a contributing factor to the challenges facing those who wish to establish successful school-to-school support networks. Furthermore, the expansion of the Academies movement could be seen to have prompted an influx of "private actors" whose planning and capacity are less well-considered than those of their forerunners. Section 1.3 of this chapter gives a brief consideration to the accountability pressures that are designed to offset the freedoms of the current educational landscape.

Finally, in the vein of governance of the school system, Ball's otherwise illuminating examination of the issues of privatisation of state education seems to exclude consideration of the historic existence of Britain's public school and grammar school systems. This aspect of privatisation is considered, however, by Walford in his book, *Privatisation and Privilege,* which describes the "strong opinions" which private, fee-paying schools can incite. Walford goes on to draw some parallels between the CTC/Academy movements and private schools in his study (2011, p.85-102). It will be fruitful for this study to consider perceptions of elitism in the Academy movement, which sits on the boundary between state and independent schooling, when exploring issues of identity and trust within the field of school-to-school support, at the meso- and micro-level. Those "nodal" schools (Hargreaves, 2010, p.17, drawing on Hamel & Prahalad, 1994) at the centre of Teaching School Alliances are likely to be privately-sponsored academies, or former grammar school converter-academies; if the schools who are potential clients for school-to-school support remain in the control of the local authority, this could give rise to political conflict at the meso-level which, in turn, could be a barrier to the brokering of SLEs.

2.1.1.2 Curriculum and Assessment Redesign

While I have touched on curriculum specialisms when considering governance, it is worth briefly considering the contribution of curriculum and assessment redesign to the challenges presented to school leaders. Swiftly following the introduction of GCSEs in 1986, The Education Reform Act (Department for Education and Science, 1988) gave birth to the National

Curriculum and much-maligned Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs). Since then, with hindsight, school leaders and their staff enjoyed a period of relative stability until the plethora of reforms which were triggered by the Coalition Government's rapid publication of the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (Department for Education, 2010). While school leaders might welcome aspects, the sheer volume and pace of curriculum and assessment redesign is a challenge to any institution – whether Outstanding or in Special Measures – with significant changes across all key stages and phases, within three years. The potential impact on the focus of this research study, on School-to-School Support, is that school leaders are forced to turn inwards, rather than outwards, as they lead all of the school's stakeholders through this period of change.

2.1.1.3 Accountability Reforms

The nature of accountability in other countries deemed to have progressive SISS networks will be compared later in this chapter. Within England, the *Education (Schools) Act* (Department for Education, 1992) heralded the arrival of the Office for Standard in Education (Ofsted); teacher morale plummeted (Abbott, 2013, p.119). 1994 saw the launch of the other key toolkit in the endeavour to raise standards, the Performance Tables, which, in her ministerial *Foreword*, Shephard claims are in the spirit of informing parental choice (Shephard, 1994). The current Coalition Government have changed and increased the complexity of performance tables via their *Statement of Intent* on an annual basis. The decentralisation which is claimed to be a key element in the White Paper (Department for Education, 2010), does indeed equip those who embrace the Academy or Free School movements with freedom to determine aspects of school life, such as academic year and daily structures, pay and conditions, and certain flexibilities regarding the delivery of the National Curriculum. These institutions, which are often the key players in any Teaching School Alliance, are cut adrift from the Local Authority, whose changing role will be considered later in this chapter.

The perception of freedom requires the Government to be seen to be holding schools to account; as Abbott reflects: "A crucial part of giving more autonomy to schools is the need to prove they are accountable." (Abbott, Rathbone, et al., 2013, p.184). Thus the increasing pressure of performance-table accountability, along with the direct funding from central government's Education Funding Agency, could be perceived as a re-centring of control from central government, rather than the converse. As well as the compulsion to turn inwards when under accountability pressure, there is also increasing likelihood for leaders of Alliance

partnerships to be less inclined to support the growth of neighbouring schools when DfE and Ofsted rationale measures all schools against the national average, with an obviously impossible expectation for all schools to be "better than average" (Gove, 2013). This is a far cry from Hopkins' vision for "Every school a great school" (Hopkins, 2007) and caused indignant responses from the teaching community[3]. Fearful Headteachers need only look to the fate of the Wellington Academy Head, Andy Schofield, who had his employment terminated by the trustees at his Academy's independent school sponsor, Wellington College, reported by the TES as "football manager syndrome" (Vaughan, 2013b). This research study hopes to explore the validity of Gilbert's view that accountability, in itself, is a tool to promote collaborative self-improvement (Gilbert, 2012) or whether, to the contrary, the fear it generates erects barriers of competition.

2.1.1.4 English Educational Reform in an International Context

Finally, the review of the landscape in which educational system leaders are currently operating must consider the preoccupation of the current government with how the performance of students in UK schools compares to those on the international stage, as measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). While the debate regarding their validity is beyond the parameters of this research study, the ambition of politicians for England to be deemed 'world class' in the education stakes is very central to the self-improving school system desired by the 2010 White Paper. The OECD and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust published a broad, two-volume study on the policy and practice in regard to school leadership (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008), in response to the 21st-century climate of "rapid economic and social change" with "a greater emphasis on the relative performance of different schools and education systems, between schools, school systems and countries." (2008, p.3; p.9) The study calls for a change in how school leaders are supported to work collaboratively; the work of the National College for School Leadership, and the formation of Teaching Schools and their Alliances can be seen as an emerging response to this need.

In the third of his recent series of thinkpieces, *A self-improving system in an international context*, Hargreaves lays aside the issue of the validity of the PISA tests. Instead,

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[3] Educational forums and blogs captured the mood of ennui, such as the website Left Foot Forward (Bloodworth, 2013)

he reflects on what can be drawn from the "Confucian" ideology of China, which promotes a collaborative culture, albeit a narrow one with barriers to institutional or public trust, or the decentralised system of Finland (D. Hargreaves, 2012b). He raises the question of how successful policy transfer can be if policies are only partially transferred, or if we attempt to transfer processes without a transfer of culture. Pasi Sahlberg more overtly outlines the key issues that separate the policies of Finnish Education and those nations that would wish to emulate them – or, as he would put it, those "infected by the GERM (Global Education Reform Movement)": Finland's education system is based on cooperation, not competition; it does not have diverse choice of schooling, or believe that diversity in itself will bring improvement, as each school is focused on achieving the best for every child; nor does it currently have the pressures of standardised testing and complex performance-table accountability (Sahlberg, 2011). Alexander's critique of the 2010 McKinsey Report on world-leading schools (Mourshed, Chijoke, & Barber, 2010) is illuminating: "The McKinsey report does not say that the best performing school systems come out on top because they are small and rich, but if you play the game of educational cause and consequence at this simple level that is what you might conclude." (Alexander, 2010, p.814) While this is a self-confessed generalisation, Alexander corroborates Sahlberg's and Hargreave's concerns that aspects of other nation's policies are being selected for transfer without appropriate consideration of the context that grew those successful systems.

2.2 Macro-level: the Context of Teaching School Alliances

2.2.1 The Context of Self-Improving School Systems

The most significant of all policy reforms to the focus of this research study is, of course, the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, of 2010. As mention in my Introduction, prior to this Hargreaves had established the discourse on self-improving school systems (SISS) in his 2003 text, *Education Epidemic*; the self-improving school system would see effective schools support other schools to improve, rather than the system being reliant on top-down initiatives to promote improvements.

The 2013 publication by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, *Teaching schools: first among equals?* conveyed how Berwick himself, had been instrumental in the drive for teaching schools in England. 2004 saw his *Proposals for a national network of teaching schools: submitted to the Cabinet Office* (Matthews & Berwick, 2013) These ideas

were further honed in his paper, *The teaching school concept* in 2007, and are reflected in the TSA initiative we have today. His use of the term 'concept' has been translated to 'model' by the time of 2010 White Paper; reflections on the interview phase of this study will argue that the 'model' was not sufficiently developed to offer appropriate guidance to support efficient realisation of TSA policy.

The Teaching School concept drew from a number of partnering projects from within England, as well as from overseas, as briefly explored through the ideas of Hargreaves. Within England, some of these forerunners have ceased, such as Education Action Zones and the London Challenge. Others continue to overlap with TSAs, such as the regional Thames Valley Schools Partnership. In addition, there are national partnerships, of which the most pertinent to this study is the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT).

It was while working with the London Leadership Challenge of London Challenge that Berwick honed his ideas for a teaching school network, drawing on medical precedents, which will be explored later, and the best practice championed by the UCLA Lab School in the USA. In particular, the fusion of research, innovation and teaching practice "have been shared with schools around the globe."(Matthews & Berwick, 2013, p.11) At the time, he was head of Ravens Wood School, which became the first pilot Teaching School.

Hill and Matthews (2008; 2010) have extensively reviewed the impact of those designated as NLEs, a role which pre-dates the White Paper and will be discussed in detail in section 2.4 of this chapter. In the 2010 report, their analyses of Ofsted and performance data, as well as 'softer' impact such as the development and progression of school leaders, was overwhelmingly positive. (2008, p.88) However, they conclude that NLEs are being under-used on a strategic level, need to be commissioned to "develop and implement an improvement strategy throughout the local authority area or subregion" (p.116).

In his role as a key figurehead for the TSA initiative, Hargreaves' values and vision were embraced by school leaders during keynote speeches, and he authored several thinkpieces for the National College of School Leaders on the topic of collaborative networks (2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). A more detailed review of the partnership competences proposed by Hargreaves, and other key thinkers, will be explored more fully when considering roles at the meso-level.

2.2.2 The Teaching School and Teaching School Alliance

As discussed, the Teaching School model had been emerging over several years, from the time of Blair's Labour government, and School-to-School Support (S2SS), and the augmentation of school leaders' capacity to lead a self-improving system, were key features of the current Coalition government's initial White Paper on education (HM Government, 2010, p.68-74). Emphasis was placed on "increased authority" and "greater autonomy" for schools to:

> …make it easier for schools to learn from one another... The network of Teaching Schools... are best placed to lead system-wide improvement in the area… We will look to these schools to brigade together and broker as necessary the different form of support that other schools might need. (2010, p.23)

The ensuing pledge was to: "… make sure that *every school* has access to the support it needs through National and Local Leaders of Education, Teaching Schools and leading teachers, or by working in partnership with a strong school. "(2010, p.74, my emphasis) The first round of teaching school applications subsequently opened to schools who were judged to be outstanding by Ofsted, with the first wave of 100 Teaching Schools being designated in 2011 (The National College for School Leadership, 2011). By April 2013, 360 Teaching Schools had been designated, with a target of 500 teaching schools to be designated by 2014-5 (The National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2013b). Hargreave's vision was that a TS should not be: "the positional, topdog type of leader, but rather the leader who has the right knowledge and skills (competence) to engage in the right kind of processes that produce the intended results of the partnership (2011, p.5). Similarly, Matthews and Berwick state that teaching schools are "emphatically not intended as elitist 'lone rangers'" (Matthews & Berwick, 2013, p.5); however, the interview findings will explore that leaders of neighbouring schools may hold contrary views.

Another potential challenge to a self-improving school system is that of competition. Ball identifies the "privatisation of decision making" as a key driver in the tension between the emergence of competition culture and moral imperative to collaborate (2007, p.9). It may be important to consider to what degree the Teaching School may themselves be reluctant to enter into collaborative projects, in the light of the context of the other policy reforms outlined at the start of this chapter.

2.2.3 The Evolution and Roles of the National College

It is useful to briefly discuss, here, the evolution of The National College, as this may have some bearing on the profession's response to its initiatives, including my focus of School-to-School Support.

The National College for School Leadership was formed in 2000, as a non-departmental public body. In 2009, its remit was broadened in 2009, when it became The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, remaining as a non-departmental public body until 1 April 2012, when it became an executive agency of the Department for Education. Its most recent evolution was on 1 April 2013, when merged with the Teaching Agency to become The National College for Teaching and Leadership (The National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2013a).

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that this transition from an organisation for the profession and of the profession, to a government agency was not well-received. As one *tesconnect* forum contributor posted: "Another stick to beat you with" (lexus300, 2013). It could be that the alignment of the National College - and with it, TSAs – to central government is a factor in any mistrust associated with the leaders who are to be brokered in school-to-school support.

2.2.4 The Roles of National Leaders of Education and Local Leaders of Education

The first National Leaders of Education (NLEs) were designated in 2007-8, prior to the launch of the Teaching School initiative:

> The National Leaders are outstanding head teachers of outstanding schools who commit to supporting other schools. Their schools are designated National Support Schools, because as head teachers working with other schools which may be struggling, they are expected to draw on the established strengths of their own school in order to support improvement. Local Leaders of Education are successful head teachers who offer support to head teachers of other schools through coaching and mentoring. (Department for Education, 2010, pp27-8)

In terms of distinguishing the two roles, NLE applicants will have a proven track record of leading schools to 'Outstanding', as judged by Ofsted; Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) could

have led schools to a judgement of at least Good. Since it is NLEs who broker SLE support, I will focus on the NLE role, here, but, for the sake of clarity, an LLE would work more flexibly and within local partnerships (The National College for School Leadership, 2013b)

The government committed to continue to recruit towards its target of 1,000 NLEs by 2014-15, with 800 already in operation. By 2010-11, 870 schools had been supported by an NLE in a formal capacity; Hill and Matthew's review of this work was briefly discussed earlier in this chapter. (Hill & Matthews, 2010). In brief, an NLE could operate via different models. Firstly, an SLE could commit to a temporary project in which s/he would, at the request of Ofsted via the National College, work with a client school in need of improvement for an agreed timeframe, from approximately 6 to 18 months. The second model by which an NLE could fulfil their obligations is to lead school improvement through permanently federating with a school in challenging circumstances. From 2010, the third model was to champion system improvement through leading TSA. At the time of writing, an NLE could work independently from a TSA, following either model one or, if an academy leader, model two, or work within the scope of a TSA and follow model three and also possibly model 2. NLEs are registered on a central database with the National College and any NLE can request deployment of SLEs, although the SLE lead at the TSA would be required to approve the brokering.

2.2.5 Advisers and Consultants: a Brief Context

Before the role of the SLE is consider more fully, it is pertinent, here, to consider other advisory roles, past and present, which may impact upon the success of the initiative. Historically, the role of a specialist advisory visitor to a school would have been filled by the LA Advisor. Now, though, as Waterman reflects, the role of the LA in education is "much narrower", stating that the 2010 White Paper is "...recasting the role of the of the local authority as an advocate and champion for parents, schools and families...The de facto disappearance of the local authority as a major player in school education could also see a quickening of the move for schools in a geographical areas to form federations..." (Waterman, 2013, p.952). Prior to the shrinking of local government budgets and the redundancy of the LA due to Gove's Academies boom, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the LA Advisor had lost his or her lustre. However personable or experienced, they could be perceived as 'out of

touch' with current practice. In this vein, the Guardian captured a Headteacher's perception of bureaucracy, during the Labour government's last term of office:

> 'On my gravestone will be written, "He died of consultancy,"' says one headteacher. 'In any one week, I'm taking around and explaining the circumstances of my school to a small army of advisers.' (Shepherd, 2008)

Of course, such a value-laden description, much-cherished by the Guardian, of invading forces might reveal this Headteacher's reluctance to change, and attempt to conceal his misconceptions of what the root issues at the heart of his school's performance indeed are; however, further consideration of the psychological models of change – and resistance to it – will be explored at the micro-level. However, for leaders of less successful schools, reluctance to engage with external support could be a product of the either the volume or the rapid evolution of advisors, and could be a barrier to engagement with NLEs or their SLEs.

To consider current competitors to the services provided via TSAs, anecdotal evidence suggests that one-off training courses, such as 'The Year 8 Dilemma', are rapidly declining in popularity, with the teaching profession satirically reworking the critical saying that once had them as the source of derision: "Those who can't, *train*." However, the Headteachers' unions offer an extensive pricelist for CPD courses, and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is a subscription – not a not-for profit – organisation, whose collaborative approach to networking is of potential interest as a national competitor to the more localised work of the TSA. For example, SSAT consultants, who can be hired for £750 (members), or £1,125 (non-members), plus VAT, for four days' work, might be seen as director competitors, as it were, to Specialist Leaders in Education. In a similar vein, Ball describes the rise in the sale of support and improvement by consultants and advisors (2009, p.140). Whatever their effectiveness, the intention is more far-reaching, namely to enhance the performance of the organisation, and therefore the quality of provision of all students in it, rather than charging for an off-the-shelf set of worksheets.

Ball might fear the consequences of the shift from a state-/local-authority-driven support network: "They [schools] are spaces in which new kinds of policy actors can act out their ideas about education and personal commitments (social, moral and religious)." (2007, p.190) However, it could be argued to be more sustainable and effective for our young people that these actors are NLEs and SLEs – many of whom will be from the privatised sector of Academies – whose moral imperative to support others, at no financial gain to themselves, fill the space the nurture emerging leadership capacity in other schools' spaces, as they do in their

own. Conversely, it could be argued that the competition *between* TSAs will inhibit the embedding of open and altruistic networks. The issues competition and identity in partnerships will be more fully considered alongside lessons from the business sector.

2.2.6 The Role of Specialist Leaders of Education

To support the work of NLEs, the role of the Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) was created for outstanding middle and senior leaders, with a successful track record of school improvement, such as Assistant Headteachers, key stage leaders or subject leaders, who can offer a leadership specialism in a priority area, as deemed by the government. These specialist areas include curriculum leadership, CPD, academy conversion and phonics, along with achievement in a range of subject areas or phases (The National College for School Leadership, 2013a). While the exact nature of deployment may vary (see below), in essence, an SLE will work with a middle leader in a school who is need of support to enhance their leadership of the specialist area through coaching and action planning. Evidence of the impact of the support must be gathered, with the intention that the leader in the supported school will sustain improvements once the support of the SLE is withdrawn.

While the individual must be 'Outstanding'[4], his or her school might not necessarily be deemed so by Ofsted, since all SLEs must be recruited and brokered by a Teaching School. The term Outstanding, when applied to the SLE applicant, refers to the Ofsted *Inspection Framework* for Leadership and Management (Ofsted, 2013, p.19-20), which focuses on accurate self-evaluation to support a vision for improvement. Each TSA must successfully bid to recruit a specified number of SLEs; initially, these were recruited in SLE 'cohort' recruitment round, but in Spring 2014 the recruitment model was adapted so SLEs were only recruited on an ad-hoc, needs-led basis. After an assessment day, an applicant would hope to be designated upon the completion of core training modules, which are delivered by a number of the TSs. The *System Leadership Prospectus* for the NC declares the aim for "national coverage" of SLEs, and states:

> Models and types of deployment will vary. For example, one deployment might be a
> two-day diagnostic exercise, whilst another might require a three-month full-time
> support role. Time may be taken as a block of consecutive days or spread over a longer

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[4] The application form and assessment day serve to gather evidence of a broader range of criteria, which are detailed in Appendix 1, along with evidence of communication and interpersonal skills.

period. There is no minimum or maximum time commitment. SLEs and schools will need to think carefully about their capacity and negotiate their availability together… It is important that SLEs are actively deployed... [and] provide evidence that their work has had a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people by developing leadership capacity in other schools (The National College for School Leadership, 2013b, p.5).

This research study will examine the issues presented by the shifting landscape, from a Local Authority-centred system to a 'free market' of school-school support brokered by Teaching School Alliances, for those five cohorts of SLEs who will have been recruited and designated by May 2014. If NLEs and SLEs are not fully and effectively deployed, the SLE initiative is failing in its mission to 'narrow the gap' through building leadership capacity by working directly with leaders in other schools.

To return to *The System Leadership Prospectus (*NCTL, 2013), exactly who is responsible for paying for the services of an SLE is an intentionally grey area:

There may be payment for specific SLE deployments, either from schools receiving support or from their commissioning bodies, to reimburse the SLE's school for backfill or supply cover. Any such payment will be agreed and managed by the teaching school and/or other schools involved. (2013, p.4)

TSAs' charges for an SLE vary, but average £400 per day; in a world of shrinking budgets, it is probable that such fees will be prohibitive for any kind of sustained relationship, especially for those institutions who 'Require Improvement' or are in Special Measures - namely, the very schools whom the system most needs to support in the improvement of educational outcomes for children. For those who can afford the fees, each TSA is responsible for developing its own brokering and evaluation systems. For example, a TSA might require a Headteacher, NLE or LLE to contact the Head of School-to-School Support for an initial discussion of needs, with the 'client school' having identified which specialisms are offered by a particular TS from a list of SLEs on the NC's website; however, I would argue that a potential client would need to be aware of the existence of this directory. Even then, political sensitivities, such as affiliation to, or mistrust of, particular Academy chains and sponsors, could be a deterrent to appropriate support being sought. If appropriate, an SLE will then be briefed and delegated, and conduct initial research prior to meeting with the middle or senior leader in the client school. If the SLE brokering has progressed to this stage, there are a variety of additional barriers to be

overcome if leadership capacity is to be effectively built, and leadership sustained, but evaluation of the procedures and impact of SLE work go beyond the parameters of this study.

Clear and effective marketing of the role of the SLE is another challenging area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in Local Authorities such as Peterborough, where LA advisors are still comparatively active, the 'unknown entity' of an SLE could be a less attractive prospect. There is a need for those TSAs involved in the early recruitment waves need to promote SLEs within - and, indeed across - Teaching School Alliances, and then to those struggling institutions who are not, due geographical or political circumstances, involved in effective collaboration with the colleagues, the system leaders, who have the moral imperative to support them. School leaders who would like to request support can do so online via the National College's *School to school support directory* (2013) but those schools who are not currently members of an alliance are unlikely to be aware of this process.

2.2.7 The Missing Middle: School Commissioners

In his paper, *The Missing Middle: the Case for School Commissioners*, Robert Hill proposes the need for a "middle-tier" of commissioners. In some ways filling the void left by diminished role of the LA, aforementioned, they would operate at a regional, or meso-level, to promote the brokering of appropriate school-to-school support, among other duties: "[They] would be high-calibre individuals who would command the confidence and respect of school leaders... The role would be as much about the exercise of influence and soft power as executive responsibilities." (Hill, 2012, p.4)

In December 2013, the government decided to appoint eight Regional Schools Commissioners from September 2014, but their role is more limited than Hill's proposal. They will make decisions on applications from schools wishing to become academies, or from sponsors. In addition, the DfE website states: "They will also be responsible for taking action when an academy is underperforming. The commissioners will not be involved with academies that are performing well or with local authority-maintained schools." (Department for Education, 2013b, 2013d; Education, 2013) Frank Green, NLE and director of the Independent Academies Association, took over the existing national post of Schools Commissioner in September 2013. Key challenges to his two-year tenure are to prompt more primary schools

to convert to academy status, as well as to encourage "school-to-school collaboration and support" (Department for Education, 2013c).

It is in some ways a perverse notion that the system would need a leader to lead its systems leaders, especially as it is within The National College's remit to facilitate appropriate school-to-school support via its NLEs and LLEs. However, consideration of the capacity of NLEs at a meso- and micro-level will reveal the challenges to them to deliver the vision of a SISS.

2.3 Meso-level: Organisational Systems and Challenges

2.3.1 The Model of the Teaching School Alliance

The 2010 White Paper (Department for Education, 2010) draws a parallel between the proposed Teaching School Alliance model and that of teaching Hospitals, but does not evidence or reference this in any way. The aptness and limitations of such a parallel will be discussed later in this chapter. In reality, there is no set model for a Teaching School Alliance, although all must have an executive board at the centre of the 'hub', and must have lead personnel who deliver on the 'Big 6' elements of initial teacher training (ITT), continued professional development (CPD), leadership development and succession planning, research and development (R&D), and School-to-School Support, to include SLEs. It is typical that a single teaching school will be at the centre of the hub, although other models are permitted, such as 'job-share' or 'multiple' Teaching Schools leading the Alliance (Leadership, 2012).

Each TSA is usually made up of a number of primary and secondary school partners and will often include special schools and universities; the TS will determine which of these partners are 'strategic' or key partners at the point of applying to the NC to become a TS. Each TS will also determine the financial model for its operation at the time of application. Typically, an alliance partner will pay a subscription which will entitle them to a number of CPD sessions, as well as attendance at one or more of the hub meetings. Other local schools who have not chosen to become an alliance partner are able to pay for CPD courses on an ad hoc basis. Figure 2.1, below, illustrates how, in the spirit of distributed leadership, responsibility for each element is shared between the teaching school and one or more strategic partners. The theorists who promote distributed leadership will be explored later in this chapter.

Figure 2.1 Matthews and Berwick's TSA Model: Radial organisational structure: schematic example involving a teaching school (TS) and five strategic partners (SP1-5) (Matthews & Berwick, 2013)
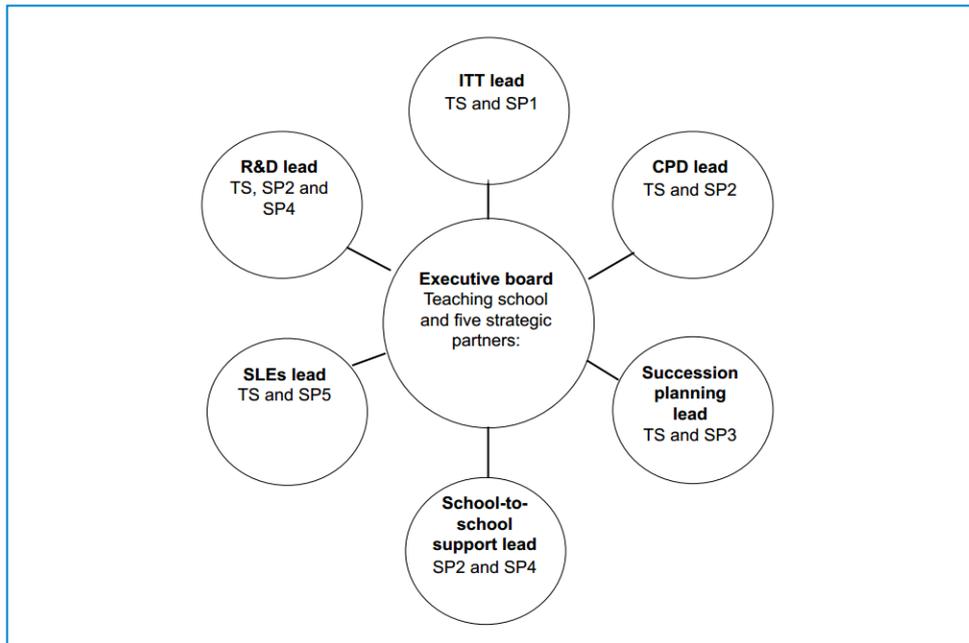
In reality, a teaching school may choose to combine some of these elements to be led by a particular strategic partner, as illustrated in the example below.

Figure 2.2 Alliance Mode of TSA1
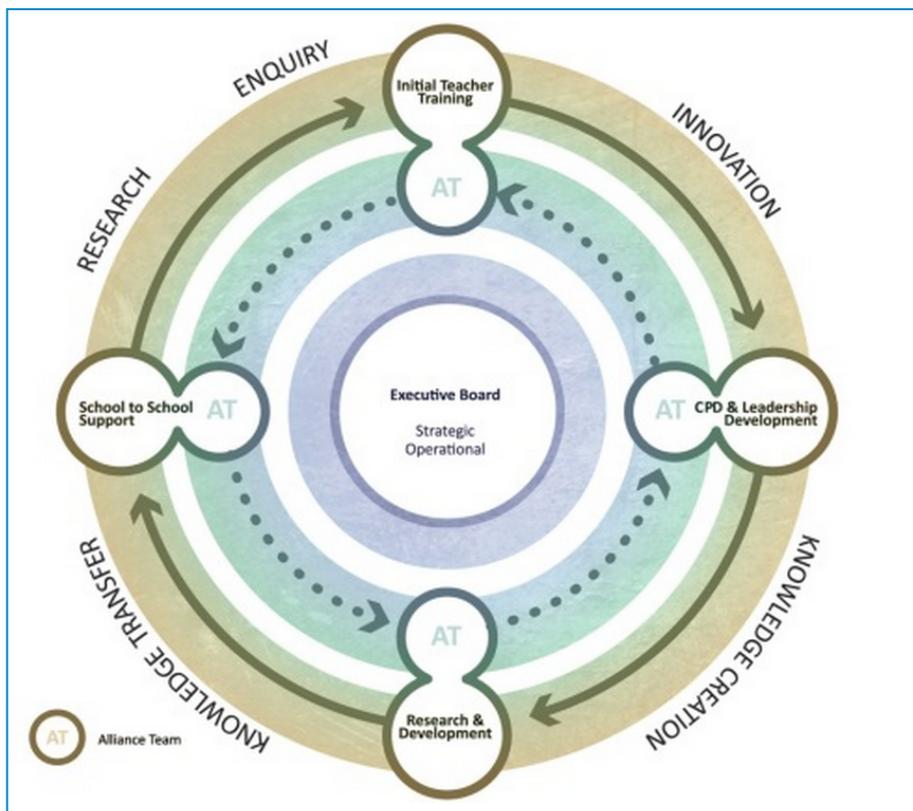
As is evident in both of these models, distributed leadership means that a leader other than the alliance leader may be responsible for co-ordinating school-to-school support and the brokering of SLEs. While this can be seen to be building capacity within the alliance, it heightens the importance of what Hargreaves terms "fit governance" (2012b, p.6 ff; see 3.4 below). West-Burnham highlights key issues in this respect: systems leaders "generally will not have the same positional authority that is associated with headship". He also predicts that there will be "increasing uncertainty and ambiguity", as well as "increasingly vague accountability" for school leaders in terms of their alliance responsibilities. (West-Burnham, 2011).

It would seem that there is no national data to illustrate how many of the schools which are most in need of support – namely those who are not judged to be good or better – are members of a teaching school alliance. However, it would seem likely that there are a number who are not alliance members and who, therefore, may not be mindful of the support and services which can be offered by a TSA - should they be able to afford them; the action research phase of this study explores the context of the schools supported by each case study TSA. In essence, the leader in charge of School-to-School support may need to reach across and beyond the Alliance, which may be an added barrier to brokerage.

2.3.2 The Regional Picture

To appreciate the complexity to the picture of school-to-school support on this meso-level, it is important to recognise any geographical and political issues that need to be overcome. While Matthews and Burgess have designed clear structures for individual TSAs, there is a notable lack of clarity in the co-existing networks in any given LA area. My diagram, Figure 2.3, below, is a representation of the nature of networks and autonomous institutions in such an area. While the remaining LA schools fall within the regional boundary, the alliance members of teaching schools can stretch beyond that boundary into neighbouring counties. 'Satellite' alliance members may even be located at the opposing end of a larger regional area, such as the East Midlands or Yorkshire.

Chris Husbands' *Foreword: A view from higher education* (Matthews & Berwick, 2013) voices natural concerns regarding growing decentralisation: "As schools become increasingly autonomous, there are fears that schools will turn inwards, protective of the secrets of success or defensive about shortcomings or weaknesses... the teaching school alliance is a counter-

balance: a reminder that collaboration and co-operation are essential..." (2013, p.3) However, with alliance membership very much optional, unless a school is federated to a school within it, the fragmentary nature, the balkanisation, will not be diminished. Moreover, in areas where several TSAs exist in close proximity, competition between TSAs could cause affiliations to become politically fraught. Abbott et al's case study of Birmingham's Primary School Improvement Group also utilises hostile imagery to depict the current educational climate at a meso-level: "There is the equivalent of a 'Wild West' grab for territory with new and existing providers scrambling for a role in the new educational landscape." (Abbott, Middlewood, & Robinson, 2013, p.1). In Birmingham, the LA was tasked with developing "a more formal approach to working with NLEs and LLEs" (2013, p.1). The research concluded that the relationship between the two Headteachers – supporter and client – is "most effectively seen as a professional working partnership" (p.12).

Figure 2.3 A Representation of Schools' Organisation in a LA Region
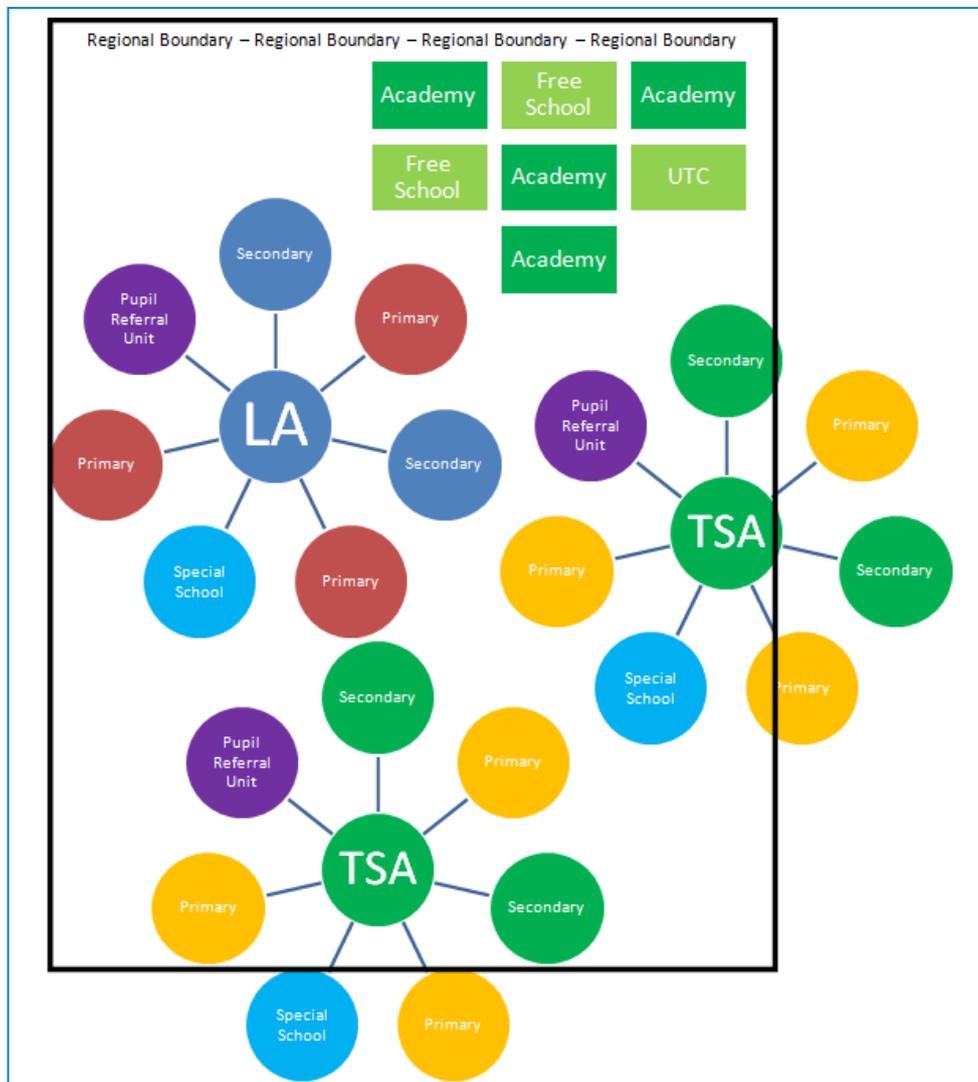
Ball (2007) also expressed concerns regarding the complexity of new networks, versus the 'hierarchical' systems prior to decentralisation (p. 12). Looking forward to my own research, it may be fruitful to investigate how many non-academy schools are members of TSAs. And how many non-academy schools have engaged with a TSA in the arena of school-to-school support. It may be that leaders in some regions are more frequently crossing LA-academy boundaries. For example, Alan Lee, Executive Principal of a federation in Bedfordshire, conducted his own research into the essential qualities of what he terms "the boundary spanners" (Lee, 2012, subtitle). The noun spanners, here, has dual connotations: firstly, spanning clusters or geographical distances and, secondly, being a tool to fix collaborative partnerships.

On a final note, West-Burnham draws on Buonfino and Mulgan's *Porcupines in Winter* metaphor for modern British communities (2006) to illustrate how schools might naturally keep a distance from their neighbours, with the quills enforcing that distance. The metaphor extends to illustrate how they only come together in times of need, when the discomfort of each other's quills must be endured for the sake of warmth. (West-Burnham, 2011). Unless schools can overcome suspicion and divisive competition to shed their quills, and become comfortable in partnerships and networks, then the potential benefits of school-to-school support will not be realised. In order to promote collaboration between each TSA, and to promote "an inclusive school-led system", the Teaching Schools Council (TSC) was launched in 2014 (Teaching Schools Council, 2014); the need for such a set of regional TSC leaders to be appointed, four years later, suggests that the policy of the 2010 White Paper, aforementioned, of schools "brigading together", was flawed in its lack of steer and blueprint for a coherently organised system of networks.

2.3.3 Partnership Competencies

The papers of both Hargreaves, and Matthews and Berwick, have presented a detailed and reflective set of criteria that they believe a TSA should embody. These diagrammatic representations reflect both the complex nature of these organisations and also what might be considered the appropriate level of abstract vagueness to permit each TSA for the "self-adaptation" necessary to match the needs of its local context (D. Hargreaves, 2003, p.7). My research action will explore whether the lack of instructional 'blueprint', which permits local solutions, results in a lack of coherence or efficiency in the work of those at the leading edge of the self-improving system.

Figure 2.4 Emerging Model for Teaching Schools (Matthews & Berwick, 2013)
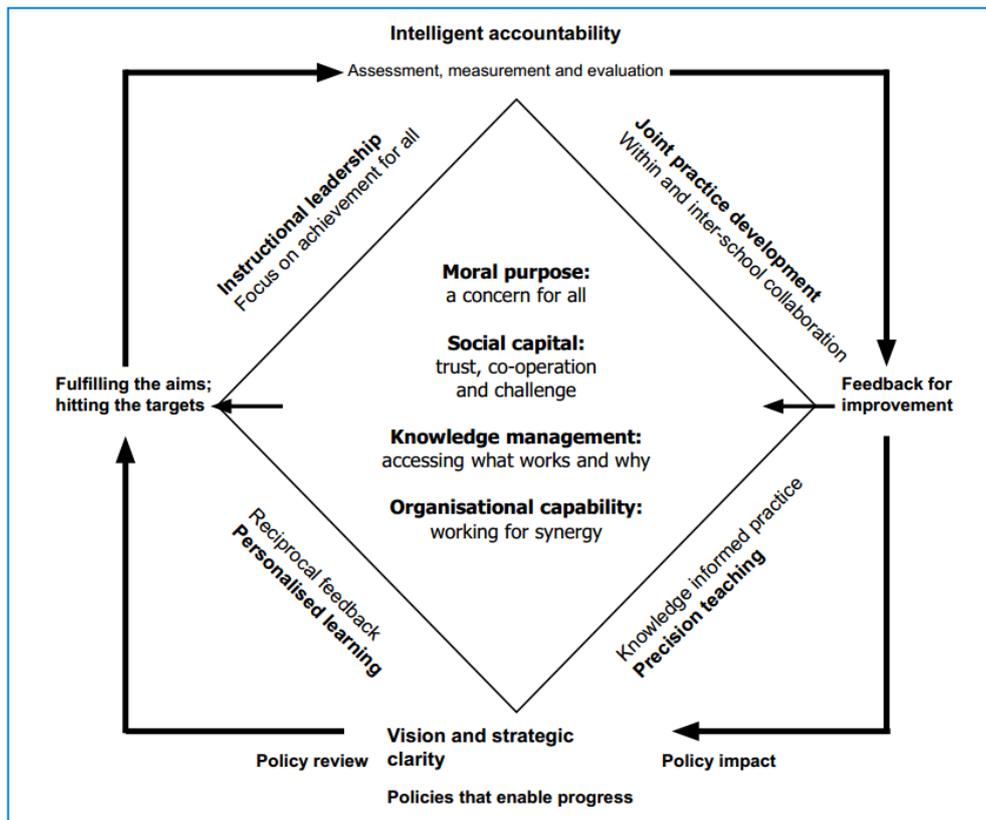
Figure 2.5 Hargreaves' TSA Model (D. H. Hargreaves, 2012b)
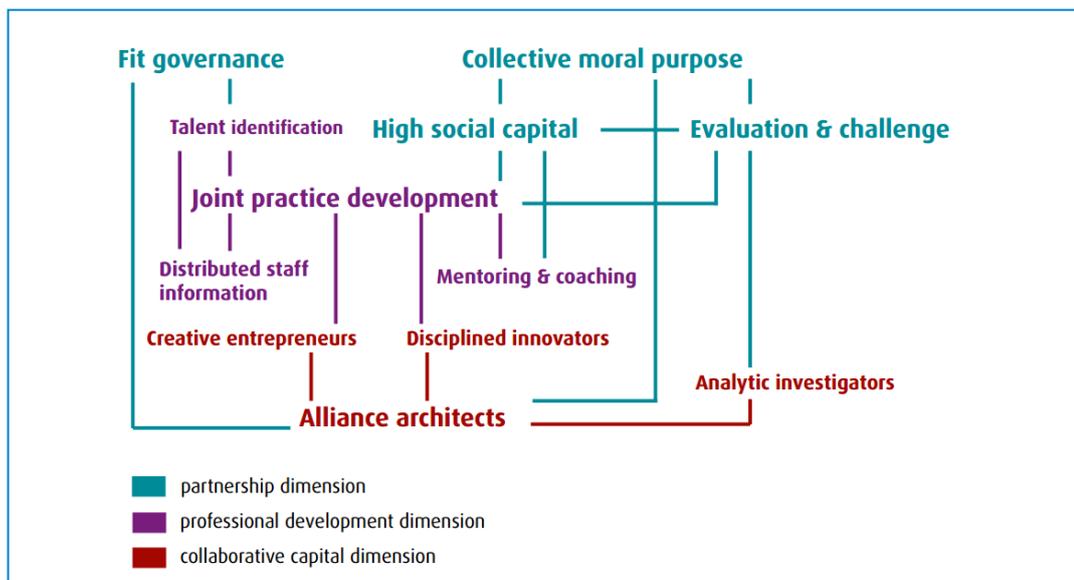
The establishment of these competences may well be further inhibited by the diversity of players in these networks, and in the diversity of these networks themselves, in terms of their own organisation and financial management: not all Academies are Teaching Schools, or even

are part of an Academy Chain or a Teaching School Alliance (TSA); TSAs currently co-exist alongside their previous incarnation of National Support Schools; not all leaders of TSAs are NLEs (although they must have one in the Alliance) and not all NLEs are in a TSA. Furthermore, the geographical context of the TSA and its partners, as discussed previously, could add further complexity to the challenge.

Hargreaves identifies an important aspect that is a crucial consideration for the "alliance architects" who need to build and maintain networks: "Much school-led innovation fails to prosper because it lacks a *distribution system* in which people are motivated to share, as both givers and receivers of innovation." (2012b, p.30, my emphasis). He goes on to expound on the need for alliance leaders to be "creative entrepreneurs" (p.31) in order to market themselves positively and create a climate of trust in which social capital can take root. The management-based theories that underpin this thinking will be further explored later in the chapter. While such "architecture" is challenging in itself, there are potentially more complex chasms to be bridged when school-to-school support crosses these alliance boundaries. Therefore, Hargreaves and others have turned to the world of business to draw on the vital professional qualities that can inform the necessary evolution of school leaders into system leaders. These will be summarised later in the chapter.

2.3.4 Recent Research on Specialist Leaders in Education

A recently circulated report evaluates the experience of schools that took part in the pilot of the SLE role in 2010-11. (HOST Policy Research, 2012; Research, 2012) While it was published in 2012, it was not circulated to TSAs via the National College's online Teaching School Community until late in 2013. Its intention is to provide practical recommendations to support the recruitment and deployment of SLEs. However, the vast majority of its focus is upon best practice *after* support has been brokered, while the focus of my study is on the issues that prevent the brokering from actually taking place. A few of the recommendations made are nonetheless pertinent to my study:

- The broker must know all SLEs well, to ensure appropriate matching to clients (p.9)
- 'Pen portraits' of SLEs experience and specialisms are useful to support the above, and also as a marketing aid (p.9)
- Financial procedures need to be as transparent as possible, and published on the TSA's website (pp.20-21)

- A pro-forma, available on the website should not be 'off-putting' in its complexity to any 'local authorities, diocesan body, individual schools or another teaching alliance' who wish to request support. (Annex B, p.iii)

When proceeding with my own research, I hope to determine whether these "practical suggestions" have had an impact on deployment of SLEs, or whether system, social or psychological barriers to engagement outweigh the benefits of these operational procedures.

Subsequent to the HOST report, the findings of a large research project was published in April 2014 and available more widely, via the National College's website, in early 2015, after I had completed the action research stages of my own small project. Entitled *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Emerging Issues from the Early Development of Case Study Teaching School Alliances*, this research spanned 18 case study TSAs and all six of the 'Big Six' responsibilities which TSAs are tasked to deliver (Gu et al., 2014). As alluded to in my introduction, the published report, totalling only 62 pages, provides an illuminating overview of key findings; however, the format of the report does not permit the publication of any detailed evidence of the research which underpinned these findings. Nonetheless, several of the findings of Qing Gu and her team are particularly relevant to my study:

- The TSAs' management of finances varies notably (p.29) and the sustainability of these 'quasi-business models' (p.5) is an emerging priority;
- Prospective client schools "appeared to be wary of seeking help" from a TSA, or rejected National College funding, due to fears that "'they might take us over'" and convert them into a sponsored Academy (p.46). This also bears weight for micro-level reflections;
- Lack of understanding of the role of an SLE, and how it differed from that of the former Advanced Skills Teacher (AST), could be problematic (p.40-41)
- A "positive relationship" with the LA aided "efficient co-ordination between the LA and the TSA" on the designation and deployment of SLEs was important, as was the need for SLEs to be "deployed in a way that reflects a school's strategic needs, as part of a wider team." (p. 41-42)
- The "strengths of individuals are becoming known" (p.44), which I believe is both significant in the marketing of the SLE role and the need for a client school to be confident that they are getting 'value for money'.
- In particular, primary schools were found to lack the financial resources to engage the support of SLEs (p.7), or to establish an Alliance themselves (p.30).

2.4 Case Studies of System Leadership and SISS on the Global Stage

With a fairly narrow field of relevant research in the UK, there may be useful lessons to be learned from international studies. The clear recommendation of the OECD's *Improving School Leadership Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership* (Pont et al., 2008) is simply this: "Let school leaders lead." (p.11). Highlights of the findings of particular case studies are summarised below.

2.4.1 Finland

Of especial interest to this study are the reflections of Hargreaves et al on the Finnish culture of 'trust, co-operation and responsibility" which were voiced as cornerstones to Finland's education success by professionals at all levels of the system, from ministry to chalkface (A. Hargreaves, Halasz, & Pont, 2008) They continue: "Problems are solved through co-operation... If people in a school are not leading well, the strategy is not to fire them but, in the words of a Tampere administrator, 'to try to develop them, actually'"(p.82). The study did reveal, however, that Finland needed to work towards true collaboration within schools, and that a concern in sustainability of system leadership was a future priority. However, in summary: "Finland exhibits a pattern of system leadership in strong cultural and vertical teamwork, networking, participation, target setting and self-evaluation. Hierarchies are not feared, and interventions (as compared to co-operative problem solving) are virtually unknown." (p.84)

Considering the diverse types of network that currently operate across the UK, the authors warn against "loose and geographically dispersed" networks. It will be of interest to determine whether TSAs in England are more prolific in their school-to-school support are those whose geographical contexts are most conducive to this. Other conclusions regarding the 'Finnish success story' of interest here form a stark contrast to the rapid policy reforms in England which were outlined earlier in this chapter: "Building a future by wedding it to the past; supporting not only pedagogical change but also continuity." (p.92) Finally, other nations who wish to emulate Finland's success would need to implement "widespread social and economic reform" rather that expecting, as is perhaps the case in England, that the education system alone is responsible for revitalising our economy and society.

2.4.2 Victoria, Australia

As a densely-populated and urbanised state, Victoria presents certain contextual parallels to England. Akin to England and Finland, championing emerging leaders is a priority for sustainable leadership within its *Blueprint* framework. (Matthews, Moorman, & Nusche, 2008). The authors ascribe the regular communications of the deputy secretary to principles as a contributing factor in the "culture of reflective leadership" which is established (p.189); in England, perhaps the regular communications of Bill Watkin, Operational Director of the SSAT, bridge the gap in communications between government and academy leaders, rather than leaders feeling fully briefed by government offices themselves.

Another key difference between England and Victoria which can be drawn is in the nature of accountability frameworks, which could impact upon the receptiveness of leaders who require support to the support on offer. Of Victoria's "intelligent" accountability framework, the authors note:

> The differing requirements of schools are accommodated by a flexible accountability arrangement. Rather than using accountability as a mechanism to distribute sanctions and rewards, the Victorian government uses performance data as a basis for decisions on intervention and support strategies... [which] include: coaching; mentoring; ... expert consultants; ... co-operative arrangements between schools... (2008, p.202)

The similarities in the policy and approaches of the support to be offered by TSAs is evident. As with the Finnish case, however, it could be envisaged that the practices of school-to-school support of Victoria cannot be successfully transferred to England while the accountability culture is so markedly different. In addition, the authors report on the "carefully calibrated sequence" of reforms in Victoria (p.208), which again differs considerably to the rapid and multifarious policy reforms actioned in England in recent decades.

Finally, the "multi-layered system-wide leadership" of Victoria flourishes in a culture where "communication is continuous and consultation embedded." Notably, too, the authors relay that all schools belong to one of 64 networks, in addition to partnerships or clusters with special foci (p.190). In contrast, as I have discussed, England is currently in a state of great fragmentation, with a balkanisation of diverse TSA or LA affiliations or, indeed, no affiliation at all for those academies that operate in autonomous isolation.

2.5 Collaborative Lessons from other Sectors

2.5.1 Lessons Learned from System Leadership in Healthcare

Hargreaves has carried out studies on the importance of collaborative training *cultures* in surgery and medicine (D. H. Hargreaves, 1996), but there does not appear to be much extended research as to comparable organisational *structures* between education and healthcare. In Hargreaves' paper, he emphasises the importance of training cultures, and the reciprocal benefits to the exemplary surgeon and those learning best practice. Anecdotally, the number of delegates attending a wide range of CPD courses delivered by teaching schools or their alliance partners would indicate that this aspect of training culture has transferred to TSAs. However, there is no discussion here of the network *model* on which such collaboration should take place.

Matthews and Berwick similarly advocate the parallels of the "*concept*" of teaching schools and teaching hospitals, as centres and conduits of excellence (p.9, my emphasis). It is interesting to reflect on a point they raise: "there are many hospitals that have one or more areas of recognised excellence" (p.9) It is true that TSAs have a responsibility to recruit SLEs with specialisms which match local needs. As aforementioned, permitted SLE specialisms are those deemed a priority by the NC. However, for a school to be judged as outstanding, it needs to be striving for excellence in *all* areas, so the medical parallel has further limitations.

Furthermore, the context and scope of the Teaching Hospital and the TSA differ in another significant way. From a lay perspective, it would appear that 'underperforming' surgeons or health leaders are not targeted for support by the Teaching Hospital, in the way that the National College hopes to deploy NLEs and SLEs as an intervention mechanism.

2.5.2 Lessons Learned from Partnerships and Alliances in Business

Hargreaves (2012a) draws some illuminating lessons from the world of business that outline the importance of "collaborative capital" in "complex collaboration". Consideration is given to both the characteristics of organisation on the meso-level, as well as the attributes required of leaders on a micro-level. His view is that alliance systems - and, this would include the SLE brokers who are leading on school-to-school support - need "magnets, glue and drivers" (p.6-7) if the TSA vision is to be realised. Hargreaves (2010) provides a compelling case on the benefits of collaborative working by summarising the relative successes of IT companies in the

USA. Silicon Valley achieve greater success than a rival region by embracing collaborative working and knowledge sharing, while each company within Silicon Valley was still competing with its immediate neighbours.

However, Deering and Murphy (2007), in their study on partnerships in the business sector, raise some potential issues in partnering. They cite the research of Blake and Ernst, who found that "80% of joint ventures end in a sale by one partner to the other" (p.29). The threat of 'takeover' in the business world has some currency if we apply this to the educational sector. Do those school leaders who would benefit from the support of a TSA feel threatened by a potential 'takeover' by an academy or chain? Could this threatened loss of power and identity be a barrier to them engaging in school-to-school support? Deering and Murphy advise that, to counter such perceived threat, "...leadership in a distributed organisation is not a matter of commanding, but of providing suitable containment in the form of rules, conventions and support systems." (p.124) Also, akin to Hargreaves' emphasis for trust and social capital, Deering and Murphy frequently return to the importance of an alliance leader in the business sector "winning hearts and minds" (p.141).

Fullan (2005) presented an extensive summary of key thinkers in the business world and how their recommendations must be transferred to education sector if we are to have sustainable leadership and a self-improving system. Reflecting on Ouchi's 2001-2 study in the USA and Canada, he is concerned that Ouchi's "seven keys to success" are rooted in decentralisation and distributed leadership. Fullan states: "There is a growing problem in large-scale reform; namely the *terms* travel well, but the underlying *conceptualization and thinking* do not". A further concern raised by Fullan in this respect is that without sufficient "capacity building", the system cannot be sustained (p.9-10). Of Fullan's 'Eight Elements of Sustainability', a "Commitment to changing context *at all levels"* through "lateral capacity building" are most pertinent to this study. (p.14, my emphasis). It is perhaps due to fragmentation of English schools and school networks that a comprehensive commitment is difficult to attain. As Fullan also states: "Networks are potentially powerful but can have their downsides. First, there may come to be too many of them, adding clutter instead of focus..." (p.19)

Fullan believes that the "many inertial forces pulling us back to the status quo" requires a "critical mass of sophisticated leaders." He cites Perkins' (2003) evaluations that, in the process of leading a system "key information gets lost". This results in a "regressive

interaction [which] constitutes a kind of centrifugal force, pushing people apart through dissatisfactions, rivalries and lack of vision." (Perkins 2003 p29, cited in Fullan 2005, pp. 46-47)

2.6 Micro-level: Individual Players in Educational Partnerships

2.6.1 System Leadership Competencies

Drawing on these transferrable lessons from the world of business, West-Burnham has produced a useful summary of the qualities, behaviour and knowledge required of a systems leader. His taxonomy, below, will be a useful evaluative tool to apply to future research into the strengths and limitations of SLE brokers.

Figure 2.6 West-Burnham's Taxonomy of System Leadership (2011, p.27)

Qualities	Behaviours	Knowledge
Moral-confidence/inclusivity	Consensus building/ Networking Team-development/ Building coalitions	School-improvement strategies Closing the gap Systems thinking
Trust Integrity/consistency		
	Conflict management/risk-taking	Sensitivity to context Systems thinking Political insights
Courage/ Entrepreneurship Imagination/creativity Challenge	Analytical thinking Problem-solving	Policy initiatives
Empathy/emotional intelligence Diplomacy/sensitivity	Effective communication Negotiation/Listening	Leading change/ Consultancy skills
Optimism/resilience		
Humility		HR strategies

In a similar vein, the 2014 study of Teaching Schools led by Qing Gu identified that all of leaders in their sample demonstrated that "their leadership is driven by a strong altruistic mission to support other schools…" (Gu et al., 2014)

2.6.2 Resistance to Change

The requisite qualities, skills and capacities of a system leader were explored through earlier sections of this chapter. Through my action research, I hope to identify the barriers to engagement in school-to-school support on a micro-level, through consideration of barriers to

brokering SLEs that might be presented by the Headteacher of the school requiring support, other leaders at the school requiring support, the NLE brokering the support, the SLEs Headteacher, or, indeed, the SLE themselves.

The work by researchers such as Matthews and Hill (2010) has highlighted the barriers to change that might by encountered by SLEs or NLEs once involved with a client school: "The biggest challenges faced by teachers who engage in work to support their colleagues in other schools is... resistance by those unwilling to change." (2010, p. 16) My interest, however, focuses on those barriers to carrying out School-to-School Support that prevent any support from being brokered at all. It is plausible that similar attitudes are prevalent, but to a greater degree or at a more senior level of school leadership. These attitudes could be a contributing factor in preventing a school seeking or agreeing to engage with appropriate support. These barriers are summarised by Fullan (2005), citing Heifetz's 'properties of an adaptive challenge (2004): "The people with the problem are the problem, and they are the solution." (2005, p.45) The synthesis, below, of the widely-utilised theories and models for examining resistance to change should illuminate future findings. Akin to this, Kotter's notion of "change fatigue" may also illuminate resistance to change on the part of some school leaders, as seen in the Headteacher who "died of consultancy" in the Guardian article aforementioned.

Figure 2.7 A Synthesis of Change Models[5]
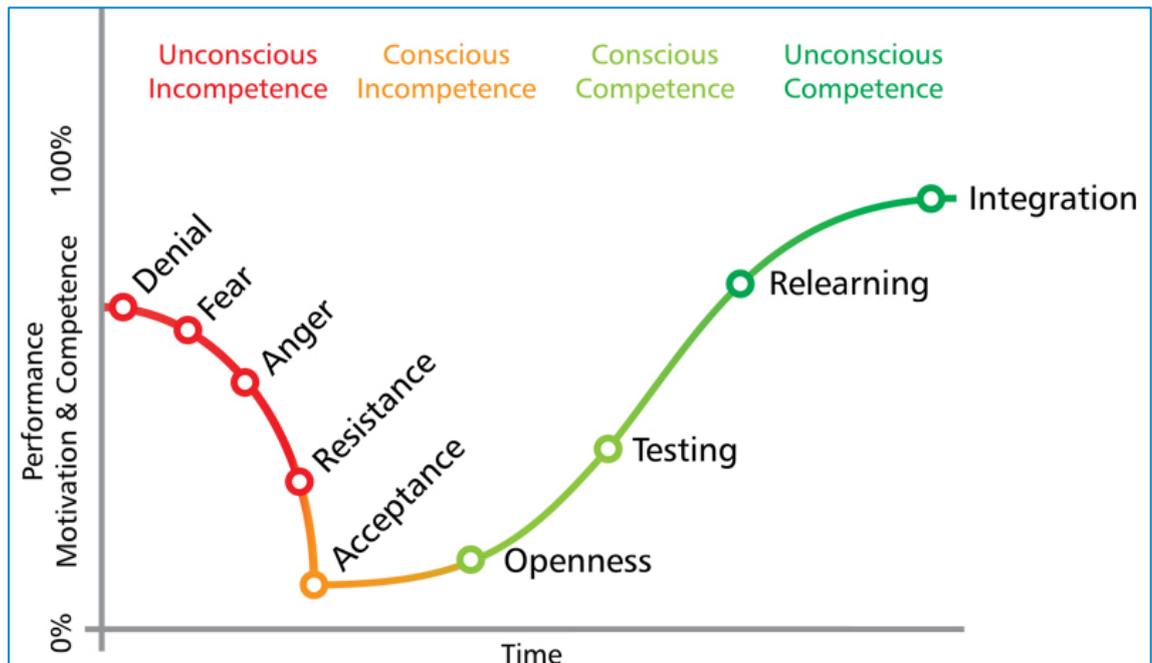
[5] Reproduced from The Silent Edge Transition Model is developed from three key psychological processes relating to change: the Kubler Ross (grief curve), the Kotter (change curve) and the Conscious Competence Model (US Gordon Training International). (Silent (Edge, 2014)

Finally, the research of Kegan and Lahey (2001) proposes that for changes in the individual behaviour, the leader must also change. It can be that a leader's "immunity to change" prevents the desired change in an employee's performance from taking place (p.3).

2.7 Summary and Research Priorities

The review of far-reaching reforms, the discussion of the successes of the predecessors to TSAs and system leadership in other nations, along with lessons drawn from the sectors of business and, in part, of healthcare, suggests several major issues to be considered:

- Accountability pressures and the pace of reform as possible inhibitors of collaboration
- The geographical context of TSAs, and the need to overcome fragmentation of the system
- The need, therefore, for local solutions which manage the collaboration-competition balance
- The importance of social capital to nurture a culture of trust to overcome stigma, as evidenced in successful international contexts.

Much of the literature focuses upon the requisite characteristics of alliance leaders to lead an alliance in general terms, with little focus on system and individual characteristic required for the commissioning or brokering or school-to-school support, nor, indeed, the characteristics required of the client head for them to engage in support.

The key issues which present themselves for further research are the frequency of the deployment of SLEs, and whether some TSAs are brokering SLEs more frequently than others. Where SLEs are being brokered, it would be useful if the characteristics of client schools could be identified, so that an evaluation regarding the relationships between TSAs and those schools most in need can begun to be explored. By extension, identification of the factors at the meso- and micro-level which are affecting the brokering of SLEs can give rise to recommendations regarding the efficacy of SLE brokering.

3 Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Research Questions and Rationale

The lines of enquiry prompted by the Literature Review, as recorded at the end of the previous chapter, can be distilled in the following three key research questions:

> **Research Questions**
>
> 1. To what extent are SLEs being brokered by their TSA to engage in school-to-school support? Are some TSAs brokering their SLEs more frequently than others?
> 2. What factors are determining the frequency of brokering, on a meso-level? What contextual issues, characteristics, or organisational structures and processes?
> 3. On a micro-level, are the characteristics of individual SLEs within a TSA impacting upon the deployment rate?

The research study was designed to determine answers to these questions, all of which focused upon the implementation of the policy of school-to-school support which was launched by the government White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010). The first question to be addressed was a 'descriptive' one, whose answer might go some way to establishing the extent of any barriers to the implementation of policy, as well as highlighting examples of effective practice; the remaining questions were 'explanatory', as they hoped to establish causal factors for the success, or otherwise, of policy implementation. As Andrews points out, there may not be a "clear answer" to a question, but the research will be successful if "you have tried to answer it." (Andrews, 2003,p.3)

In essence, the research topic was summarised as 'Factors Affecting the Deployment of SLEs'. To cite Andrews again, the answers to these questions could have been "multi-factored" and it was essential to design the research correspondingly (2003, P.4). Moreover, it could be that there were crucial factors to be discovered which were not suggested by the literature review or my anecdotal experience; through researching the answers to these questions, I hoped to gain a fuller understanding of the ways in which the policy of school-to-school support was being implemented in a selected number of cases during a defined period of time. While broad generalisations would not be possible within the limitations of the research design, as outlined below, I hoped it would be possible to draw out some

recommendations as to how the policy could be more effectively implemented in order to increase SLE deployment rates, where required, to heighten the possibility that they might build leadership capacity and, by extension, 'narrow the gap' of student achievement between and within schools.

3.1.2 Paradigms and Practicalities

Since the policy and practice of School-to-School Support were and remain national issues, various paradigms to underpin the nature of the research could be considered. While a positivist approach could potentially have determined an objective, representative national picture and set of rules, the parameters of this research study precluded this approach. As a single researcher completing a part-time study within a two-year timeframe, attempting to gain a national, objective view was infeasible. Furthermore, when I approached them at the outset of my study, the National College declined to release any deployment data to anyone 'external' to the College, which further precluded any attempt at determining a universal view. Therefore, while the practicalities demanded that the study subscribed to a post-positivist, or subjectivist, paradigm, this approach lent itself to outcomes where the knowledge gained would be "personal, subjective and unique" (Cohen et al, 2011, p.6, citing Burrell & Morgan, 1979). I thereby acknowledged that the post-positivist approach could provide richer, more personal responses from school leaders implementing the White Paper at the meso- and micro-level.

Hakim's view, which she aligns to that of Yin (1994:3) is that there should be no hierarchy of design:

> Each does a particular job and should be selected according to the nature of the issues or questions to be addressed; the extent of the existing knowledge and previous research; the resources and time available; and the availability of suitably experienced staff to implement the design. (2000, p.12-13)

As a single researcher implementing the design, I needed to consider the practicalities of the time available to me and to any participants, which will be further guided by the term-structures of academic years, which may vary from school to school and so impact upon the timeframe for data collection. Any sample would need to be narrow in its scope, and focus on the experience of NLEs and SLEs in schools. As Cohen et al summarise, "opponents of positivism...agree that the social world can only be understood from the viewpoint of

individuals who are part of the on-going action being investigated", namely at the micro-level (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Bell, 2011) p.15

I determined that it would be helpful to commence the study of each case by reference to any pre-existing secondary data held by the teaching school alliances themselves, but this would need to be supplemented by other approaches. Cohen et al draw on several authors who value the potential of "integrating different approaches, ways of viewing a problem" (2011, p.22) from a "pragmatist paradigm" (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005a; Johnson *et al.*, 2007: 113; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009: 4) utilising quantitative data as well as "narrative approaches."

Adopting such a pragmatic and idiographic approach, I created a case-based research design which focused on the "explanation and understanding of the unique and the particular case, rather than the general and the universal" and conducted "both confirmatory and exploratory research, induction and deduction, in answering research questions." (Cohen et al, 2011, p.6; p.22). By utilising a comparative case study design, I still hoped to draw out some useful insights which could support enhancements in the system leadership of education. As Hakim states, "*statistical significance* is often confused or conflated with the *substantive* or *practical* importance" of research findings. (2000, p.7, original italics)

3.1.3 Research Design

Having heeded Hakim's advice (2000, p.3) on the importance of careful research design, I acknowledged that my design would require flexibility and a "sequential mixed design" (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2006, cited in Cohen et al, 2011, p.25) Such a design entails qualitative and/or quantitative approaches that: "run one after the other, as the research requires, and in which one strand of the research or research approach determines the subsequent strand or approach and in which the major findings from all strands are subsequently synthesized." (Cohen, 2011, p,25)

Furthermore, the design would be a comparative one (Bryman, 2012, p.53), with the same broad research design being applied to each case within the study. In practice, having established the sampling approach as to which teaching school alliances will feature as case studies, which will be addressed later in this chapter, the research consisted of the stages of action outlined below. An expedient approach to timescales was important, as the study hoped to capture issues concurrent to the implementation of policy; "situations are fluid and

changing rather than fixed and static; events and behaviour evolve over time and are richly affected by context – they are 'situated activities'" (Cohen, 2011, p. 17).

Of additional consideration to which were followed at stage 3, was any potential to triangulate what is suggested by the data and the SLE broker, and thereby draw out possible reasons for or against engagement in the White Paper's policy (DfE, 2010). The potential for triangulation can be seen as a strength of "multi-method research", as proposed by Bryman. The flexibility of the design allowed for the testing possible issues of causation which the literature review of policy suggests in the previous chapter, while being open to others, in what Cohen terms a "*combined inductive-deductive* approach" (2011, p.4, original italics).

While Bryan also emphasises the importance of the "transferability" of any research design (2012, p.30), such a quality is weakened by the need to tailor the qualitative stages of my design to meet the context-specific issues presented in any one of the cases which form the basis of my study. However, the general principles of my proposed design could be transferred if the scope of research was broadened to encompass other teaching school alliances. Indeed, the requirement for flexibility in design is determined by the very need to "understand the behaviour and the meaning of that behaviour in its specific social context" (Bryman, 2012, p.27). I hoped that the three elements of the design would provide triangulation of perspectives, and therefore highlight responses, particularly in the qualitative strands, which might reveal self-censoring or bias by the respondents.

3.2 Sampling

As previously stated, this study was of a comparative case study design, and of a sequential mixed approach, drawing upon qualitative and quantitative methods as appropriate, as per a pragmatist paradigm. Since the National College were unable to release the SLE deployment data of any TSA to external sources, then a feasible number of TSAs had to be approached for inclusion in the study. When analysing and evaluating the collected data in due course, it would be important to recognise that the Teaching Schools, SLE brokers or SLEs who chose to participate may hold different a value position, or, in this case, success in deployment rates, than those who declined.

3.2.1 Sampling Method for Selecting Cases

It was pragmatic to begin the process of selecting cases by drawing upon my existing professional contacts, in the manner of "convenience or opportunity sampling". From practical considerations, there will need to be a compromise in terms of the number of cases to be incorporated in to the sample; within the time available, a total of three cases is a feasible number from which to collect data as outlined in the design section of this chapter. The first case (TSA1) was the teaching school to which I am designated, since verbal consent to participate in the study has already been obtained. Although appropriate consideration must be given to the issues reflexivity, the inclusion of TSA1 provided some guarantee that relevant data can be collected.

Regarding the selection of the two other cases, these were purposively sampled in that selection of cases was "on the basis of [the researcher's] judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought" (Cohen, 2011, p.156). As Cohen et al judge, such a method supports "less breadth" than probability sampling, but "greater depth" (2011, p.156). In terms of the specific typologies of purposive sampling outlined by Cohen et al, "critical case sampling" would usefully require that I select each case, each Teaching School Alliance, on the grounds of a particular set of characteristics.

I next reviewed the directory of Teaching Schools already established by the spring of the first year of my study (Leadership, 2014) and determined that, in terms of travel cost and time, the two other cases would need to also be based within the Central Region, namely East Midlands, West Midlands or Yorkshire & The Humber regions. At this stage, I planned to select the other two Teaching School Alliances based on the Teaching School's own school type: whether an academy, maintained by the local authority, or independent fee-paying; primary, secondary, or special school; and so forth. However, it was evident that I would not be able to cover all of the variables of characteristics within the parameters of this study, so a compromise on this range would be essential.

With TSA1 already engaged, I next approached four Teaching Schools in the above regions, with whom I or my school had an existing contact, via both e-mail and then a follow-up letter which was printed on the letter-headed paper of my current school, along with the Informed Consent Form, which will be mentioned later in this chapter, to hopefully assure prospective participants of the ethical integrity of the study. From this wave, only TSA2 agreed to participate; it swiftly became evident that I would need to compromise on the intended

approach of purposive sampling. Meanwhile, I revised the recruitment approach to request participation by letters printed on The University of York's headed paper, to remove any antipathy towards my school, should there be any, that might inhibit participation; by the same strategy, the positive reputation and credibility of the University might encourage participation. In this second wave, I wrote to another eleven Teaching Schools from my selected regions, targeting a range of characteristics as outlined above, but no participation agreement was immediate. Using the same approach, I then contacted a further five Teaching Schools within these regions; from this wave, three Teaching Schools agreed to participate. One of these was TSA3, who had very limited SLE experience to date, but who did participate in the first two stages of the research design, I did not proceed with this case to the third stage of the research design. Another school did not actually engage in the study due to long-term illness and subsequent restructuring. The final school was TSA4, who participated fully in the study.

Coincidentally, all four of the TSAs who participated in the research study were located in the East Midlands region of the National College, giving the study some organisational cohesion, as all Teaching Schools are members of the East Midlands Teaching School Alliance, a body which has been established to "deliver the vision of the self-improving school system" across the region ("Introduction - EMTSA," 2015). The four participant TSAs possessed a varied range of characteristics which would hopefully provide a platform for fruitful exploration of the factors affecting SLE deployment.

In addition to the school, aforementioned, who engaged in participation but later withdrew, only one other school returned a response to indicate that they were unable to participate in the study due to leadership capacity. To summarise, therefore, of the 21 Teaching Schools that were approached, four engaged, one engaged and later withdrew, one declined to participate due to capacity, and 15 (71%) did not respond to the participation request.

3.2.2 Piloting

Since I wished to complete all of the initial interviews, with SLE Brokers, before the end of the summer term, I elected to not engage in a formal pilot. However, since Broker 1.1 was a former colleague, I approached this case study as a potential pilot, of a sort. I was able to gain access to the TSA's SLE deployment data prior to interviews; initial analysis of this data allowed

me to identify emerging issues which formed the basis of the interviews with TSA1 and the subsequent case study TSAs. Since the deployment and interview data gained from TSA1 was illuminating, it was imperative that TSA1 was included in the thesis findings as a full case study.

The data provided by TSA1 allowed me to devise the spreadsheet template I would use to analyse the data for the other TSAs. As I explain later in this chapter, I was able to trace the source of funding for each TSA1 deployment; however, the varying fullness of detail in the deployment data released by TSA2 and TSA3 meant that I was compelled to abandon this line of inquiry from the quantitative research, for the sake of parity. However, the interview data provided illumination with regard to this strand of the findings.

3.2.3 Sampling Methods for Interviewees

With regard to the second stage of the research design, interviewing the SLE broker in each case study, the Teaching School leader who was responsible for SLE deployment consented to participate in a research interview. However, the actual leadership role of each SLE broker varied in each case: in two cases, the broker was the Teaching School Director at the hub Teaching School; in another, the broker was an Assistant Headteacher at an alliance member school, who was Lead SLE; in the other, the SLE broker was a Headteacher and an NLE at an alliance member school, but not the NLE who was in charge of the hub Teaching School. In this last case, the responsibility for SLE brokering was reassigned during the period of action research. To gain a perspective on this organisational restructuring, I was able to also interview the new SLE Co-ordinator and the Teaching School Director in this case.

I then used my initial analysis of my synthesis of the Teaching Schools' SLE deployment data as I proceeded to the third stage of my research design, where I aimed to triangulate what the SLE broker and the deployment data might suggest with views from the SLEs themselves. I elected to interview only two SLEs per case study as I felt this would be feasible to achieve within the timeframe of the second autumn of my study, but hoped that they would share differing views on their experience of the SLE role. I employed a simple method, identifying an SLE in each case who had been deployed more frequently, and an SLE who had been deployed less frequently.

As I was concluding my second stage interviews, with the SLE brokers, an opportunity arose to engage the DfE's Schools Commissioner, Frank Green, in an interview that I envisaged might offer an overarching perspective at the macro-level. As a consequence of this interview,

I was prompted to engage a representative of the then recently-formed Teaching Schools Council in the study. I capitalised on the contact with the Schools Commissioner when engaging the interview participant from the Teaching Schools Council, who was able to share perspectives from macro-, meso- and micro-levels.

3.3 Action Research and Data Collection Methods

Before commencing the action research, I built up a contextual understanding of each Teaching School Alliance by accessing the information which was available in the public domain, via their website, and which included biographies of key staff, system leadership prospectuses or directories, details of Alliance members, memorandums of understanding and guidance on how to broker the SLEs which were designated to that TSA.

As I planned my research design, it was my intention to begin the research action, in the field, by requesting from each TSA the SLE deployment data, i.e. the record of all the school-to-school support in which each SLE had been engaged. I believed that this would be centrally held by the TSA. For my first case study, where there were pre-existing professional relationships, and therefore rapport and trust were already established, this is how I proceeded. Challenges presented by the data will be explored later in the chapter. However, initial analysis of this data confirmed that the issues which had emerged from the literature review were very relevant and, therefore, crystallised the direction of the interview agenda for the SLE broker(s).

For the other TSAs, where there were no pre-existing professional relationships and, therefore, rapport and trust needed to be established, I elected to reverse the first two stages of the research design. By visiting these Teaching Schools and building the relationship via the medium of the semi-structured interview, I believed that the SLE broker would be more inclined to share their deployment data with me. This approach was successful.

3.3.1 Collecting Quantitative Data

From each case study TSA, I gathered the deployment data for each SLE up to and including Cohort 4 of the National College's recruitment waves, namely those who had been appointed as SLEs in the first months of the calendar year in which I commenced my action research. As I

believed, through my own experience, that Teaching Schools were required to submit reports on their activity in line with the end of the financial year, and therefore would have collated their own records in line with this deadline, I anticipated that it would be relatively straightforward to collect this data from the Teaching School's or the SLE broker's administrator in each case. A deductive approach would be applied to this data, testing my assumption that SLEs are not being brokered as much as the policy anticipated, namely up to 15 days per year. This assumption was based on what Cohen et al term "common-sense knowing" through personal experience. (Cohen, 2011) p. 3. I hoped that the data would reflect what was happening 'on the ground' in each TSA, and provide an indication as to any successes or barriers.

The deployment data was entered into Excel and was then augmented through further research, such as the use of Google Maps to calculate geographical distances, as travelled by car, between an SLE's school and the TSA, between the SLE and the client school, and so forth. In addition, the characteristics of the SLE's school or the client school were researched via each of their websites. Data on their performance, in terms of an Ofsted rating, was gathered from inspection reports on the Osfted website ("Find an inspection report," 2014). Where the performance grading of a client school had changed during the scope of the action research, this was also recorded.

3.3.2 Collecting Qualitative Data

I elected to action the second element of the research design, collecting qualitative data from those leaders in each TSA who were responsible for the brokering and deployment of SLEs, via the method of semi-structured interviews. Drawing up an interview 'schedule', rather than a tightly pre-determined script of questions, would provide scope for more "depth" (Hakim, 2000, p.12) and the sharing of factors I had not envisaged (Robson, 2002). However, by having a more fluid approach to the questioning, the reliability of the data would be diminished, as on a different day or time I may have marshalled the responses to the scheduled questions in a different manner, or expressed them in a more or less neutral or influential manner. By extension, another interviewer would be highly unlikely to elicit the same responses, even before other issues of character and "face" are considered. I was also mindful that, especially as a fellow professional, an interview could prompt "respondents [to] construct replies that place them in a better light" (Newby, 2010). However, from the depth and candid nature of

the vast majority of interview respondents, I would deem the approach to be successful in drawing out strong personal views and reflections.

As previously mentioned, by visiting the SLE broker's school to conduct the semi-structured interviews, I hoped to establish rapport and build trust, to support the sharing of deployment data. An exception to this was TSA3, where the interview was conducted by telephone due to travel considerations; this was the least full and fluid of all the broker interviews, perhaps due to the medium by which it was conducted; however, the limited nature of SLE deployment by the TSA meant that I did not proceed with this Alliance in the next stage of the research design.

From Cohen, drawing on Argyle (1978), I was mindful that critics of post-positivists declare that "less controlled interviews carry even greater risks of inaccuracy" (2011, p.21); however, I decided to proceed with semi-structured interviews as my method of data collection since subjective depth, and not generalizable responses, was sought. All of the SLE broker interviews were lengthy, ranging from 38 to 76 minutes. The longest interview was my first, with the SLE broker with whom I had a pre-existing relationship. This interviewee had anticipated areas of knowledge which would have been valuable to me in this study, and therefore had brought a number of information sources regarding the funding of NLE-led school support packages, in particular, which extended the duration of the interview. The issue of reliability is an interesting one, and I will reflect on the validity of responses in particular cases, most notably the "elite interviews" with the Schools Commissioner and with a leader of the Teaching Schools Council, in a later chapter, and reflect on how the "language of habitus" and the "position of the speaker in the policy process" must be evaluated in the interview data. (Ball, 1994, pp.88-9)

When considering a range of possible data collection methods with regard to SLEs' views, I rejected the method of focus group interview due to possible self-censorship by respondents when other colleagues were present. I also deemed that an online survey, while it might provide a platform for more participants and therefore more "generalised truths" in analysis, might not provide opportunity for subjective depth. I elected to proceed with the same method of data collection, semi-structured interviews, which had proved successful with SLE brokers; however, these interviews were conducted via telephone for the ease of both the participants and the interviewer. Time was very much a limiting factor: with the SLE interviews, I promised participants to limit the interviews to a maximum of 15-20 minutes in order to try and encourage participation of teachers and/or leaders with hectic

schedules. While all of the SLE interviews provided very interesting responses, had more time have been available, then either more detailed or fuller responses may have been given, as rapport was further established; conversely, though, the pressure of a notional, or at times actual, time limit may have prompted more salient and robust responses.

Each interview was recorded, using an iPad application which date-stamped the recording, as well as providing a GPS location for the recording. Both the application and the device were password protected for safeguarding of data. Similarly, when I transcribed each interview, they were stored on a password-protected device

3.4 Ethical Considerations

It was determined that the planned research presented negligible risk of harm to any of the participants. Professional reputations were a key consideration, and the anonymity assured in the Informed Consent form (see Appendix 3) was a measure to protect the professional reputation and relationships of each participant. An exception to the pledge of anonymity was Frank Green, Schools Commissioner, who agreed to the conditions of an amended Informed Consent form (see Appendix 3), whereby his comments could be ascribed to him as a public figure.

Heeding the advice of Cohen (2011, Chapter 5), engagement in my study did not require any intrusion into usual educational practice; I ensured that meetings or telephone interviews took place at times which did not impact upon the teaching or prior professional commitments of participants. As a consequence, breakfast meetings or evening telephone calls were offered. On a few occasions, interview participants emphasised that comments were "off the record" so I have been especially careful to not include these as individual comments in the chapters detailing my research findings.

3.5 Problems Encountered

The deployment data and complementary organisational data provided by TSA1 had some unclear or missing elements, such as the exact start/end dates for some of the deployments. However, it did provide a very useful starting point for analysis and I decided that I could decipher which deployments had taken place during the agreed window, and must

rely on the duration of deployment data which had been shared, as it would be infeasible and insensitive to verify each set of dates. In the other cases, the data did not exist in the format I had anticipated, or there were gaps in the data as compared with the data provided by TSA1; I had been incorrect in my assumption that a comprehensive set of deployment data would need to be submitted at each financial year end. Therefore, the collation and analysis of this data was delayed, as I liaised with these TSs' administrator or broker in order to rectify any missing elements in the data, so I could compile the same set of data fields for the sake of parity. In particular, I needed to request further detail regarding the recruitment cohort in which each SLEs was recruited. This was essential in comparing the deployment frequency of each SLE and thereby identifying which SLEs to target for participation in stage three of the research design.

In terms of sampling, the statistics included in 3.2.1 demonstrated that 71%, 15 out of 21, of Teaching Schools who were sent a participation request did not engage. For many of these schools, I had sent duplicate copies of the request to two of the SLE Broker/Teaching School Director/NLE or Headteacher, in an attempt to increase the response rate. I might surmise that that the low response rate was due to a lack of capacity, or a concern that engagement might expose a weakness in the TSA's delivery of the SLE policy; as research findings will evidence, both of these areas were raised as concerns by those who did participate, and experienced leaders shared that, of the 'Big 6' roles, the delivery of school-to-school support and the deployment of SLEs are proving the most challenging to TSAs nationally.

The engagement of interviewees in stages 2 and 3 of the research design also presented a few barriers. Two SLE interview participants had not responded to me two weeks after requests were sent, but re-sending the invitation e-mail and copying in their SLE broker prompted positive engagement. When the telephone interviews took place, each shared their reservations regarding participation: for both, time was an issue; one of these SLEs was worried she would "say the wrong thing' and had conferred with her Headteacher before consenting to the interview; the second was concerned he would have little to contribute due to his limited experience. Staffing changes, including the maternity leave of a Teaching Schools' administrator, caused relatively minor delays in gathering data.

Due to personal reasons, the Schools Commissioner was unable to be in London on the scheduled date for my interview. Since my travel plans were already in place, it was agreed that I would meet his team leader at the DfE offices at Sanctuary Buildings, and then conduct

the interview via telephone from a private meeting room. Both the additional meeting with his team leader and the interview with the Commissioner were very illuminating.

3.6 Collation of Data

3.6.1 Quantitative Data

Having responded to the challenges of inconsistent incomplete sets of deployment data, as described in section 3.5 above, I used an Excel workbook on which to collate the data. With a separate tab for each TSA, I then created an identifier for each SLE for the purpose of anonymity. Those SLEs who were to be interviewed became, for example, SLE1.1 – the first SLE of TSA1, or SLE3.2 – the second SLE of TSA3.

For the purpose of evaluating of the frequency of deployment activity for each SLE, I approximated the number of months an SLE had been available for SLE work, which would be upon the completion of the SLE Core Training for their cohort, until the end of the scope of the study, the end of the financial year in early April 2014. I employed that same approach across all case study TSAs in the interests of parity; although there could have been some slight variance in the date the training was completed, all TSAs in the study typically use the same SLE training centre. Therefore, the maximum number of days in scope in which an SLE could have been deployed can be calculated as:

$$\frac{Maximum\ days\ avail\ for\ deployment\ per\ year}{Months\ in\ year}\ x\ Total\ number\ of\ months\ designated$$

Or, for example, as it would be termed in Excel:

=SUM(15/12)*22.5 = 28

where 15 days per year is the maximum deployment commitment per SLE (The National College for School Leadership, 2013b). I have averaged 'available for deployment' days across whole 12 months, as term dates vary between schools, but total teaching weeks are similar. Results are rounded to the nearest day or half day, as these are the units in which the deployment data reported the SLEs to be deployed by. From this starting point, I calculated the total number of days – expressed in days and half days – that each SLE had been deployed. I then utilized the Excel functions of filters, pivot tables and charts to process the data sets that are presented in Chapter 4.

I investigated the amount of time each SLE, if deployed at all, had been deployed in actual school-to-school outreach work, versus the amount of time the SLE had been utilised to deliver training sessions. As discussed in Chapter 2, the role of the SLE should be to be deployed in school-to-school support, rather than in the delivery of a training session. For all further calculations presented in Chapter 4, I analysed only the deployments to a client school to carry out school-to-school support.

In addition to calculations via Excel, the geographical aspects of deployments, such as the journeys made by each SLE in relation to Teaching School and the client school, were manually plotted using Digimaps for Schools. To aid anonymity as per the Informed Consent (Appendix 3), I then manually faded the background of each map using iPaint for Mac. The maps offered pictorial representations of network activity which further supported the identification of patterns, as per Babbie's 'grounded theory' referred to below.

3.6.2 Qualitative Data

Following the completion of Phase 2 of the Research Design, the interviews with the SLE broker(s) of each TSA, the interviews were transcribed. Initial observations of trends regarding the factors affecting the brokering of SLE deployments, along with obvious trends in deployment data, provided a platform for the semi-structured interview schedule for Phase 3, the interviews with two of the SLEs designated by each TSA. These interviews, along with those with the 'elite' participants, were then transcribed. For all interviews, any paralinguistic features, such as laughter or emphasis, which would aid understanding of the interviewee's perceptions or values were detailed in the transcription.

While the analysis of Qualitative Data as promoted by Lewins (Lewins, 2007) on CAQDAS software would be pertinent to a larger collection of interview data, I decided to use a more simplistic approach to analysis. I identified a series of key strands from an initial rereading of the brokers' interview transcripts from Phase 2 of the research design, then highlighted where these strands emerged in any of the interview transcripts using a colour code that was assigned to an initial letter of the alphabet. The usefulness of such a "grounded theory" approach, as outlined by Babbie, is that it allows theories to evolve as data is analysed, and some additional strands for analysis emerged as reviewed the transcripts (Babbie, 2013). I then compiled key quotations from each interview, organizing them by the initial letter assigned to the strand for analysis and by the strata for analysis (at the macro-, meso- or

micro-level). This allowed me to derive an understanding of the key factors affecting brokering of SLEs "from an analysis of the patterns, themes, and common categories discovered in observational data…" and thus fuse a "naturalist" approach with a "systematic set of procedures" (Babbie, 2013) With an extensive set of data assembled, I then synthesised and paraphrased the interview findings as appropriate; however, by beginning Chapter 5 with an extensive set of data, I was able to avoid the over-simplification and embrace the "thick descriptions which Cohen promotes (Cohen et al, 2011) p. 17

I also heeded another of Cohen's warnings when processing and analyzing the data collected during the additional phase of 'elite interviews': that "inequalities of power are frequently imposed upon unequal participants" through flaws in pheno- and ethno-methodologies (Cohen, 2011). While the expertise of those interviewed will be acknowledged, I was mindful to ensure that pertinent interview data from all participants, regardless of their power position, was included in the findings chapters.

The findings are presented over the next two chapters. Chapter 4 provides a context for each case study TSA, and presents some interesting findings from the deployment data; the variety and complexity of these findings illustrate the stark differences between each TSA in terms of operation at the meso-level. Chapter 5 presents the findings from the interview phases of the research; despite the differences in operation aforementioned, some overarching factors which affect SLE brokering will be identified.

4 Research Findings: Context and Deployment Data

4.1 Contextual Findings

The contexts of the three case study TSAs are detailed Appendix 2, *The Characteristics of Case Study Teaching School Alliances.* The hierarchical charts in Appendix 2 illustrate that the organisational structure of each TSA is complicated and that this small sample of three TSAs differ from each other significantly; how this impacts upon the factors affecting the brokering of SLEs will be evidenced in this chapter and in Chapter 5, where these findings will be triangulated by the interview data. While the White Paper (Department for Education, 2010)and ensuing think pieces, such as Hargreaves' aforementioned, promote sufficient vagueness in the Self-Improving School System (SISS) for Alliances to adapt to local need, the findings of this study will suggest that the lack of 'blueprint' and commissioning bodies have significantly contributed to inefficiencies which impact on the brokering of SLEs.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the brokers and SLEs are identified by the TSA for which they work. Of particular relevance to contextualising the findings at meso-level is the reorganisation of the responsibility for SLE brokering in TSA1, which took place after the window for analysis of the deployment data, but prior to the phase of the research design in which the interviews took place. Therefore, findings from the interviews that were conducted with all three TSA1 leaders are included, here, as they offer complementary perspectives on the challenges presented at the meso-level, in the systems of the TSA, and the rationale for restructuring. Broker 1.1 held the strategic lead for SLE brokering during the timespan of the deployment data collection; she was an NLE and Headteacher of an Alliance member school, 10 miles' distance from the TS. She was also a member of the NLE Fellowship, thus was an instrumental driver in the move to a school-led system, from the time of Ed Balls' role as Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families in 2007-10. She was a 'lone NLE' prior to becoming member of TSA1, of which another NLE is the executive lead of the Teaching School at the centre of the Alliance. Broker 1.2 took up a newly-created role of SLE Co-ordinator around Easter 2014, taking on the day-to-day running of this element from Broker 1.1. Broker 1.2 was semi-retired and part-time and had previously worked at Assistant Head level at the TS; she was also leading on the quality assurance for the SCITT of another TSA in the region, so had broad experience at strategic level. In the revised system, Broker 1.2 worked directly to Broker 1.3, the Director of the TS, a role at Deputy-Head level, while Broker 1.3 worked directly to the NLE of the hub TS.

The Broker of TSA2 (Broker 2) fulfilled the SLE brokering responsibility as part of her role as Director of the TS, working directly to the NLE at the hub Teaching School. LA and Challenge Partners are strategic partners – the deployment data suggests that this particular arrangement had considerable impact on meso-level systems and the ensuing deployment of SLEs. The organisational structure of TSA3, meanwhile, placed responsibility for SLE brokering with a non-teaching Assistant Head (Broker 3) at a strategic member school, who became 'Lead SLE' for TSA3 in the academic year 2013-14. Broker 3 reported to the Director of the TS, who in turn reported to the NLE at the hub TS. After a slow start to SLE recruitment and deployment – with only three SLEs recruited in the first three cohorts – the TSA now planned rapid expansion of the School-to-School Support and SLE strategic arms of the TSA. Broker 3 was to become a full-time, non-teaching lead for TSA3, and technically leave the employment of his current school, in September 2014, prompted by the scale of the expansion: 15 new SLEs had been recruited to join the existing three SLEs by the end of the timeframe for the deployment data study, with a total of 41 recruited by the time of the interview with Broker 3. The key vision of the TSA centred on immersive, project-based learning, fuelled by the work of a trend-setting partner in California. It also prompted a close collaboration with the University of Durham on a pilot for project-based-learning.

With regard to the scale and pace of SLE recruitment in the other case study TSAs, both became TSs in the first Wave of designation and began their SLE recruitment more immediately than TSA3. TSA1 had designated 15 SLEs by the end of the scope of the study, the majority in the first two recruitment rounds. TSA2 recruited 10 SLEs in the first round, then slowed the pace of recruitment before expanding the number of SLEs to 23 by the end of recruitment Cohort 4. As with other aspects of the early evolution of TSAs, the variety of approaches adds both complexity and potential confusion to the system.

4.2 Findings from Deployment Data: Meso-level

Analysis of the deployment data provided by each TSA provides illuminating answers to the three key research questions of this study:

4.2.1 Frequency of SLE Deployment

The deployment data, as summarised in *Table 4.1,* reveals that all three TSAs have deployed SLEs for considerably less time than the policy of 'up to 15 days per year' suggested by the *System Leadership Prospectus* (NCTL, 2013). TSAs 1, 2 and 3 deployed their SLEs for 37%, 33% and 16%, respectively, of the total time available. We know that TSA3 was in the early stages of expanding the SLE element of its outreach work, TSA1 and TSA2 were more established in the respect at this juncture. This then raises the question of whether the SLEs in each TSA were not being brokered to capacity due to a lack of local need, or whether there were other factors which posed barriers to their being brokered and, by extension, the frequency of their deployment. Further discussion of the data in *Table 4.1* will follow in this chapter.

Table 4.1 Summary of Analysis of Deployment Data: Meso-level 1

	TSA1	TSA2	TSA3
Total no. of SLE days available in scope	263.1	392.3	95.4
% of available days used in any type of deployment	36.9	33.0	16.1
% of days SLEs deployed spent in SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL SUPPORT	88.6	97.6	3.3
% of days SLEs deployed spent in CPD events	11.4	2.4	96.7
% of days SLEs deployed to primary clients	79	57	100
% of days SLEs deployed to secondary clients	21	43	0
Weighted average Ofsted grading of client schools [6]	2.3	1.31	3.7
% of deployment days to schools with Grade 3/4/Special Measures	66.8	13.9	100

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[6] Since the duration of deployment to each client school varied, the average calculations in this table are weighted to reflect this duration. For example, the average Ofsted grading was calculated:

4.2.2 Targeting Schools in Need of Support

To frame the findings regarding the frequency of SLE deployment, it is useful to identify the degree of need for school-to-school support in the region of the case study teaching schools, since the rationale of a self-improving school system is to provide support at a local level. (DfE 2010; Hargreaves 2003). Within the timeframe of the research study, May 2012 to March 2014, there were a total of 23 Teaching School Alliances in the East Midlands region, of whom 10 were very recently formed in the spring of 2014.

Ofsted's official statistics (Ofsted, 2013; Ofsted , 2014) provide a context for estimating the number of school in the East Midlands region who required significant support to improve during this timeframe:

Table 4.2 Ofsted Inspection Grading of Maintained Schools and Academies in the East Midlands, 2012-14

Academic Year	Total Schools Inspected	3: Requires Improvement	4: Inadequate	Total 3+4
2012-13	1,983	411	53	464
2013-14	1,985	350	62	412

Since those schools that were graded 3 or 4 during 2012-13 will have been re-inspected during 2013-14, then it does not necessarily follow that there were in excess of 800 schools graded 3 or 4 within the two academic years. However, a conservative estimate, presuming very few of those schools graded 3 or 4 in 2012-13 made the journey to a grading of 2 (Good) the following year, would suggest that upwards of 500 schools in the East Midlands region would have potentially benefitted from the support of a TSA. Such a support package, led by a NLE or Local Leader in Education (LLE), should include SLE deployments where appropriate, to boost leadership capacity at middle leader level.

$$\frac{Ofsted\ grading\ per\ deployment\ x\ number\ of\ days\ per\ deployment}{Total\ number\ of\ days\ deployed\ in\ scope}$$

As outlined above, analysis of the deployment data provided by each case study TSA, representing three of the 23 TSAs in the region, suggests that a very small proportion of these potential client schools were receiving support from a deployed SLE during this time. TSA1 deployed SLEs to a total of 17 schools during the scope of the project; TSA2 deployed SLEs to 16 schools; TSA3 deployed TSAs to two schools; thus, 35 schools in the East Midlands were supported by three of the 23 TSAs. Acknowledging, but dismissing for the sake of conjecture, the possibility that support might be being provided by private consultants, Ball's "private actors" (Ball, 2007), or directly by a LA with dwindling resources, a very rough calculation would indicate that each of the region's TSAs would need to be supporting an average of 22 of these schools most in need of improvement, so 66 across the three case study TSAs. However, the collated deployment data details that, of the schools that received SLE support from the three case study TSAs during the scope of the study, only four of these had been graded at 4 (Inadequate) by Ofsted during the scope of the study, with a further 20 schools supported who had been graded at 3 (Requires Improvement). Therefore, the three case study TSAs could be said to have supported less than half of the schools that, on average, we might have expected them to target; yet, on average, their SLEs were brokered for only 29% of the deployment days that the policy intended

As *Table 4.1* illustrates, the TSA1, which has two NLEs, supported schools most in need for 67% of the days in which they deployed SLEs. While TSA2 was more active in the deployment of its SLEs than TSA3, the two TSAs supported the same number of school most in need, namely three each.

4.2.3 Organisation, Local Politics and Funding

The data in *Table 4.3,* below, clearly illustrates that hub TSs of differing status interact with other local schools in differing ways, in terms of support offered.   Firstly, the data suggests that TSA2 and TSA3 have endeavoured to organise SLE deployments that are in keeping with the intended nature of the SLE role as outlined in Chapter 2: within each organisation, 97% of SLE deployment days were to carry out school-to-school support with middle leaders.

Table 4.3 Summary Analysis of Deployment Data: Meso-level 2

	TSA1	TSA2	TSA3
% of deployment days by school type: Academy	52.7	0	0
LA Maintained	47.4	100	100
Of which, LA Maintained Church Schools	23.7	3.5	0
% of deployment days to client: Alliance member	47.9	65.8	0
Non-member	52.1	34.2	100
Weighted average distance of client school from TS per day's deployment (miles)	11.9	1.6	13.4
Weighted average distance of client school from broker per day's deployment (miles)	13.8	1.6	12.6
% SLE dep. days by home school by type: Academy	37.1	6.2	100
LA	62.9	97.8	0
% SLE dep. days by home school: Alliance member	73.2	82.2	89.7
Alliance non-member	6.8	17.8	10.3

On the other hand, 11% of SLE deployments days in TSA1 were for the delivery of CPD or conference presentations. TSA1 did deploy SLEs for the greatest percentage of available days, compared to the other TSAs in the study, so actual school-to-school support work took place at a rate only slightly below that of TSA2; interview data will detail that the intention of Broker 1.1 to deploy SLEs in CPD work was an attempt to establish and market the 'brand' of SLEs in the local educational community and, thereby, increase the frequency of deployment in School-to-School Support.

In terms of local politics, and the 'balkanisation' of educational territory as explored in Chapter 2, the data suggests that allegiances vary greatly: TSA1, whose hub TS is an Academy, has fairly equal proportion of deployments to both Academies and LA schools; TSA2, whose hub TS is a LA school, has no deployments to Academies, even though there were a number of Academies in Leicester. As a senior member of the School Commissioner's office revealed during in September 2014, 60% of secondary and 17% of primary schools were academies at that point. As referenced in Chapter 5, interview data revealed that TSA2 receives direct funding from its LA to support the work of SLEs, which may account for the bias towards LA schools since any financial barrier is removed for LA client schools. Interview data will demonstrate that TSA3's relationship with its local LA is very fraught; it has, in its small number of deployments, only worked with two LA schools. However, one of these two projects was with another LA at some distance from the TS. The geographical factors of deployment will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

As evidenced in *Table 4.3* above*, TSA1, meanwhile, has carried out a notable proportion of its work with client schools who are both primary schools and also Church of England voluntary aided/foundation schools which are members of the local diocese. That Broker1.1 is Headteacher of C of E secondary school suggests a natural bias to support Church schools due the context and networks within which this leader operates.[7]

4.2.4 Alliance Membership and Collaboration with Others

A review of key features of the Alliance membership of each case study TSA reveal the relationship between the characteristics of the schools who belong to each Alliance and the characteristics of the schools who receive SLE support from the TSA. TSA3 had brokered a very small number of deployments within the scope of the project; however, it is worth noting that these deployments are to non-member schools who are in significant need of improvement, which, coupled with the interview findings of the next chapter, suggest that Broker 3 represents a very outward-looking team of "alliance architects" (D. Hargreaves, 2012b, p.5). TSA1, meanwhile, brokered approximately equal number of days' deployment to Alliance member and non-member client schools. Interestingly, TSA1 has recruited SLEs almost exclusively from its Alliance members, yet the data reveals diversity in client school characteristics and, by extension, greater diversity than the client schools of TSA2.

It was noted above that TSA2 has deployed SLEs exclusively to LA schools; the organisational context data, collated in Appendix 2, details that only 18% of Alliance member schools are Academies. Similarly, 17% of SLEs designated by TSA2 are employed by a 'home' school that is an Academy.   It is interesting to note, therefore, that TSA2 has the highest percentage of deployment days to its own Alliance member schools, at 66%. While this could be a consequence of the LA funding of SLE deployment, the Alliance does market its SLEs to all schools in the area through the LA's support directory. It might suggest, therefore, that, in addition to the Academies who may not be drawing on the support of TSA2, there are a number of non-member LA schools that are likewise not drawing on its support. The possible contribution of the geographical range of each TSA's outreach network, as a factor impacting on SLE deployment, will be discussed later in the chapter.

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[7] Further reasons for this emphasis are detailed in the findings from the interview with Broker1.1 in the next chapter.

4.2.5 Phase of Client Schools

One of the most overwhelming trends suggested by the data, contrary to the findings of Qing Gu shared in Chapter 2 (Gu et al., 2014), is that schools in the primary phase brokered the support of SLEs more frequently than secondary schools. All of TSA3's deployments were to primary clients; however, this might be a result of the TSA being led by a TS in the primary phase, and the Alliance being primary-focused in terms of its membership[8]. Moving on to consider TSA1 and TSA2, though, each of which have a secondary school as the hub TS, the predominance of primary clients is evident. TSA1 has approximately equal number of primary and secondary SLEs, yet 79% of deployment days were to primary clients; TSA2 has 16 secondary SLEs compared to six in the primary phase, yet still 57% of deployments days were to the primary sector. Both TSA1 and TSA2 deployed secondary SLEs to support primary clients, but there was no evidence of cross-phase brokerage occurring to the converse. The brokers' reflections on the causes for this trend are detailed in the next chapter.

4.2.6 Geographical Factors

Through analysis of the geographical spread of each TSA itself, as well as the distance of client schools from the TS, an understanding can be gained of the ways in which the cohesion of an Alliance might impact upon the frequency of SLE brokering. Furthermore, analysis of the distance of a SLE's home school from the broker[9], who is at the heart of brokering deployments to client schools, offers useful insights.

In broad terms, the graph for each TSA in *Figures 4.1.1-4.1.3* demonstrate that SLEs whose home school is located closer to their broker's school are deployed more frequently, and that very little or no deployment takes place where an SLE is located in excess of 40 miles away from the broker. Figure 4.1.1 shows that TSA1 has a spike of deployment activity for SLEs located at 30-40 miles distance from Broker1.1; however, my collated deployment data demonstrates 3 of these SLEs are based at a home school which has its own 'lone wolf' NLE, who, according to Broker1.1 during interview, is brokering work for these SLEs in addition to the requests for, or targeting of, support which are brokered via the TSA1's hub school NLE or Broker1.1 herself.

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[8] See Appendix 2.5

[9] From the collected deployment data, I initially extracted two sets of scatter graphs, one plotting the deployment activity relative to distance from the hub TS, one relative to distance from broker, where this is different (TSA1 and 3). Since both sets of data suggested very similar findings, I have included only the graphs pertaining to distance from Broker to aid concision, as I believe the perception of the Broker is key when SLEs are being identified for S2SS.

A more visual understanding of the range of network activity, and the geographical relationship between the TS, Broker, SLE home schools and client schools can be gained from a review of *Figures 4.2.1 to 4.2.3*. These scale-comparable overviews clearly display that the activity of TSA2 is confined well within the 20-mile radius from Broker 2's school; there is one outlying deployment, of 4+ days, but all others are tightly centred round its urban base. This raises the question of whether other TSAs are supporting those schools that are beyond the city boundaries, or whether TSA2 is, consciously or unconsciously, operating within the historical barrier of the LA's boundaries.

Figure 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 - Total days' deployment per SLE, by distance from Broker (in miles)

TSA1

TSA2

TSA3
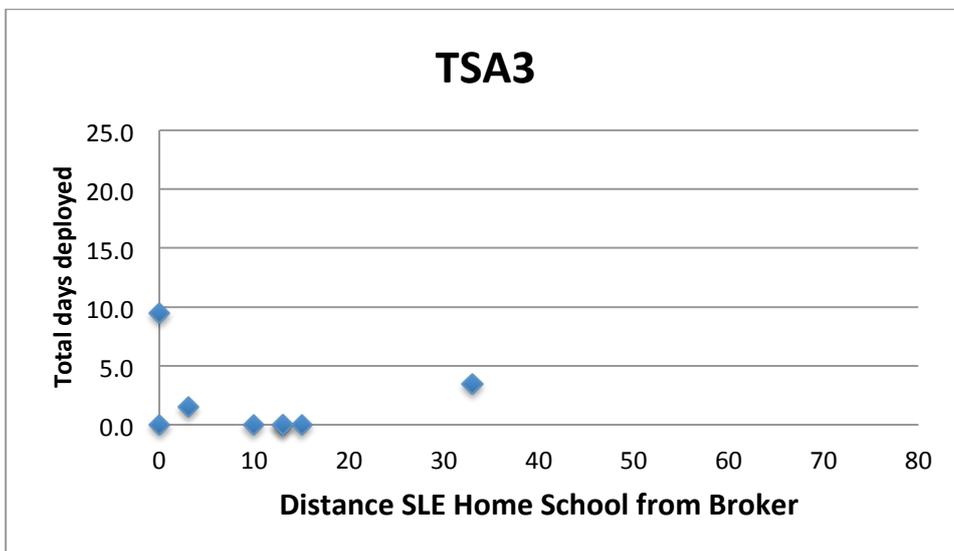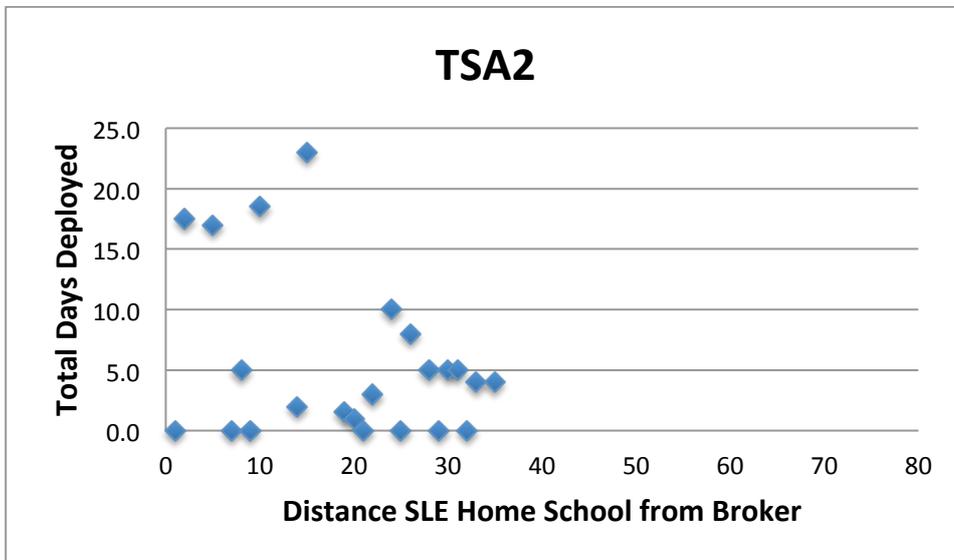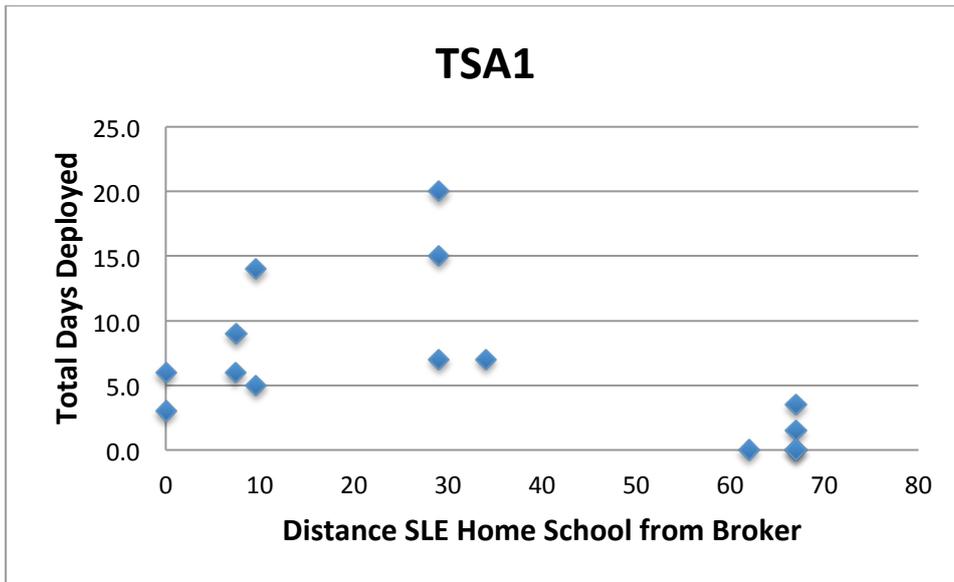
Table 4.4 - Key to Figures 4.2.1 to 4.5.2, Network Maps of SLE Deployment Activity

⭐	Teaching School	🔶	Broker's School
🔵	SLE Home School	📍	Client School
⚫⚫⚫	20 mile radius from Broker's School	🟠🟠🟠	50 mile radius from Broker's School
━━	Journey by SLE to Primary Client School	- - -	Deployment of Less than 1 Day
━━	Journey by SLE to Secondary Client School	╱	Deployment of 1 to 1.5 Days
Traces of the faded map layer show: yellow circles for towns and villages; blue rectangles for motorways.		━━	Deployment of 2-3 Days
		━━	Deployment of 4+ Days
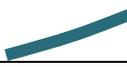
TSA1 and TSA3 each have activity reaching in excess of 20 miles. Although TSA3's deployments are, as aforementioned, more limited in number, they are more ambitious in terms of scope. As well as noting a longer journey by an SLE whose home school is at/close to the centre, the close-up in *Figure 4.5.1* details that one of the lengthier deployments SLE travelling into centre from a more outlying home school. It would seem that TSA3's location, in a semi-urban rather than the city-centre location of TSA2, prompts a greater inclination to travel to support other schools. TSA1's maps show it to have to widest geographical outreach, with one journey extending in excess of the 50-mile radius boundary. However, its longest journeys are associated with deployments of shorter duration, suggesting that longer travel times are, or are perceived to be, a barrier to frequent brokering in this Alliance.[10] A review of *Figures 4.3.1-4.3.3* shows that SLEs from the home school to the SW of the Broker 1.1's school, which has its own SLE as discussed earlier, make regular journeys, and some for longer deployments, to clients who are both centred around the Broker's school and around the hub TS, as well to a client to the NE. This provides further evidence that an Alliance with multiple NLEs can be an effective basis for collaborative outreach.

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[10] This topic will be explored further in Chapter 5.

Figures 4.2.1 to 4.2.3, Overview of Network Maps of SLE Deployment Activity *(1:800000)*
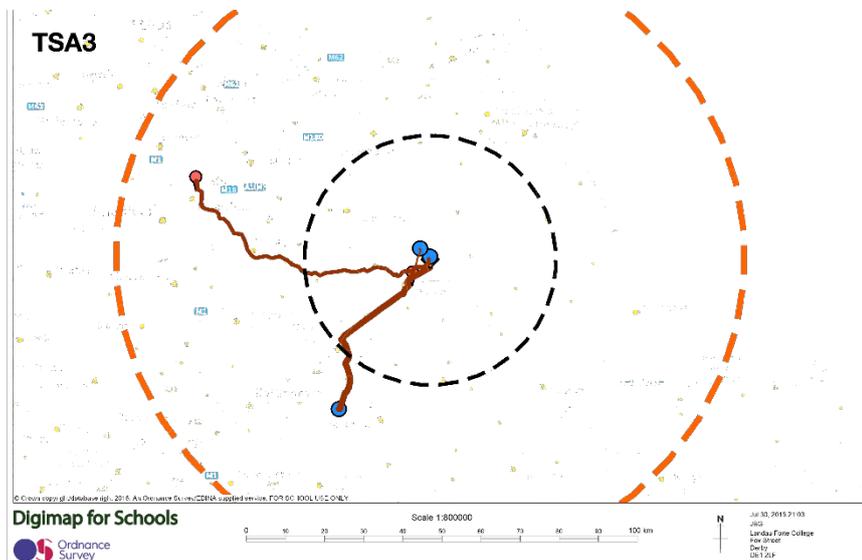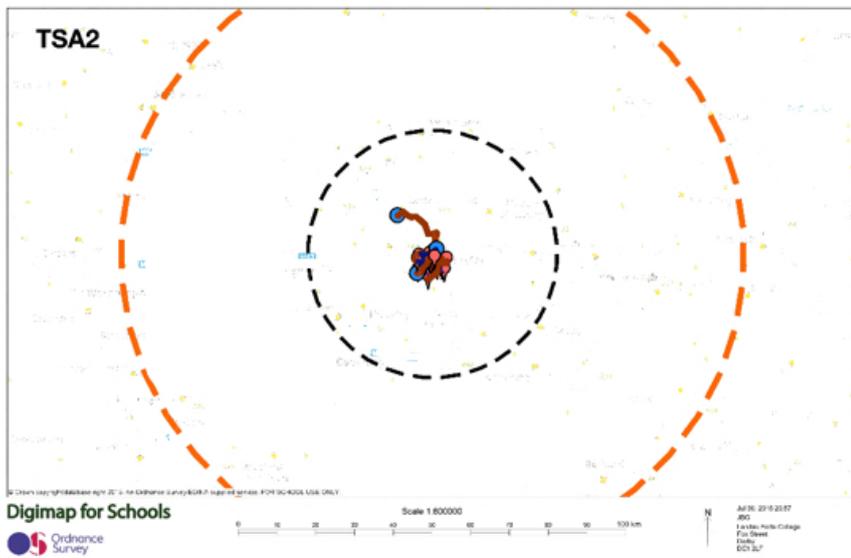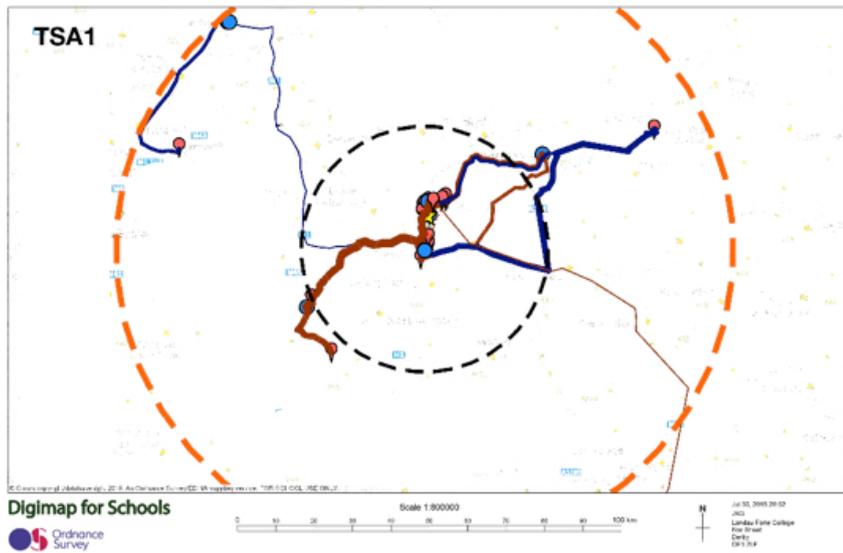
Figures 4.3.1 to 4.3.3 - Detailed views of Deployment Activity for TSA1
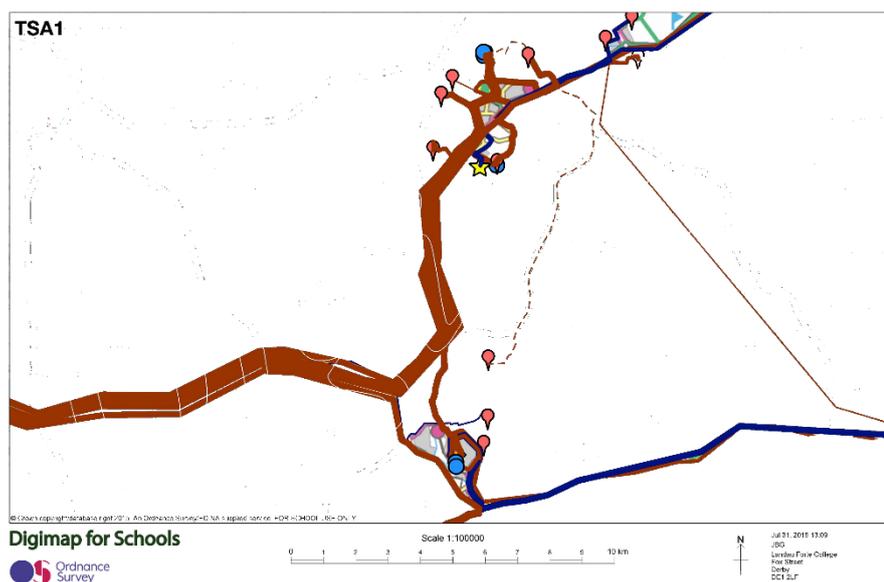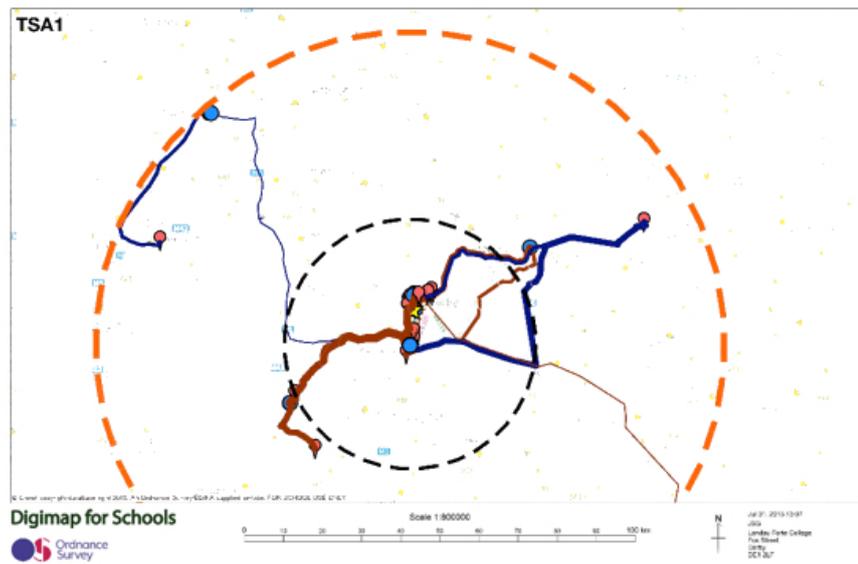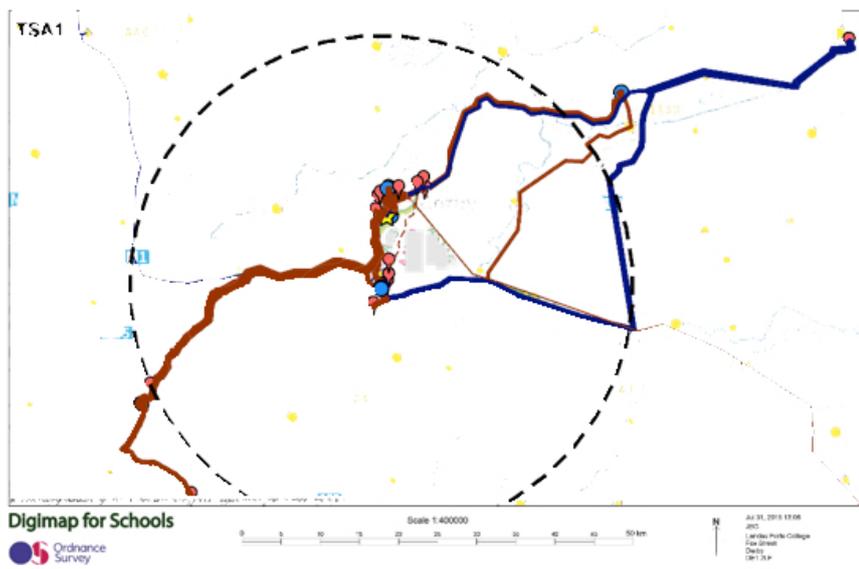
Figures 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 - Detailed views of Deployment Activity for TSA2
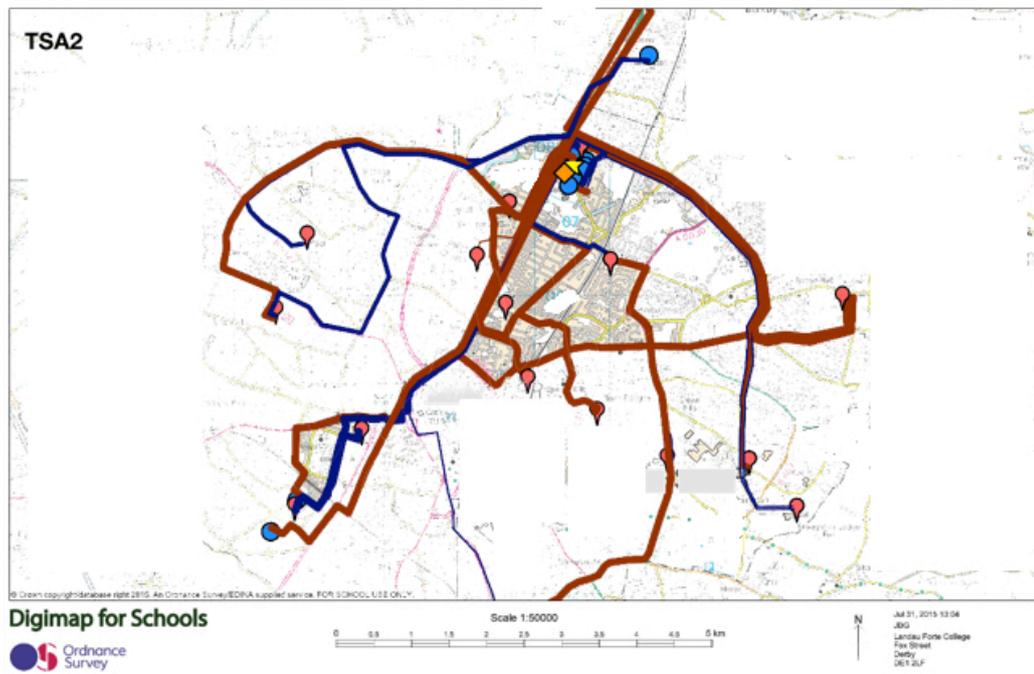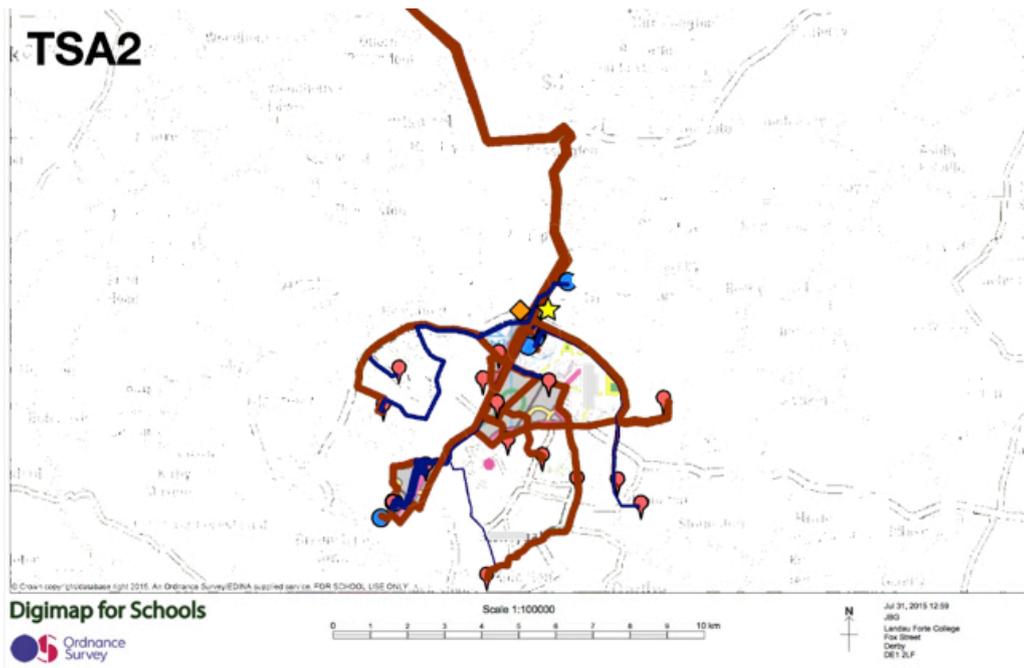
Figures 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 - Detailed views of Deployment Activity for TSA3
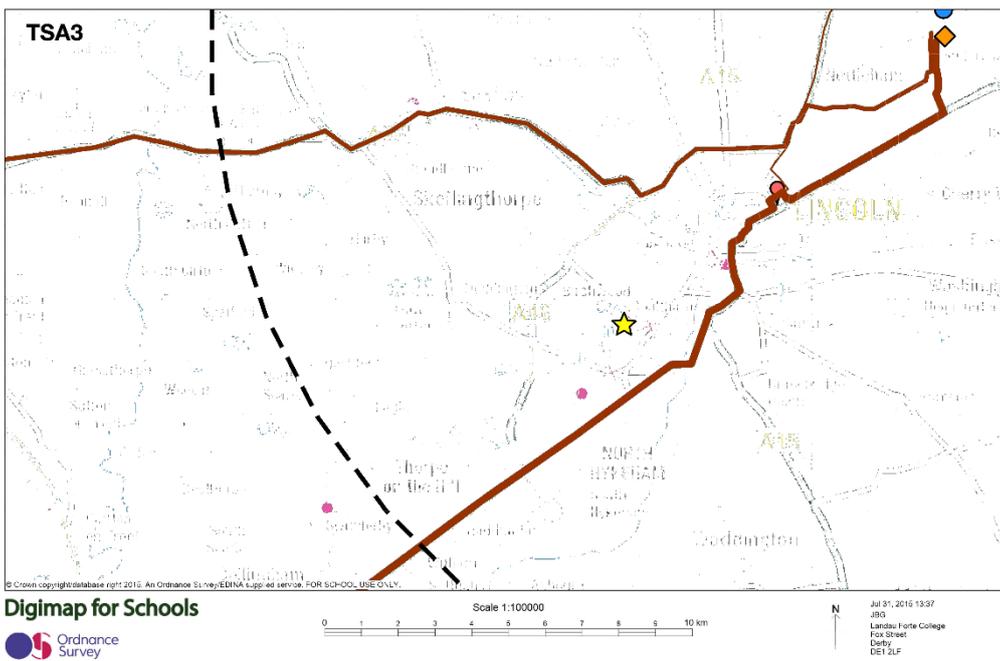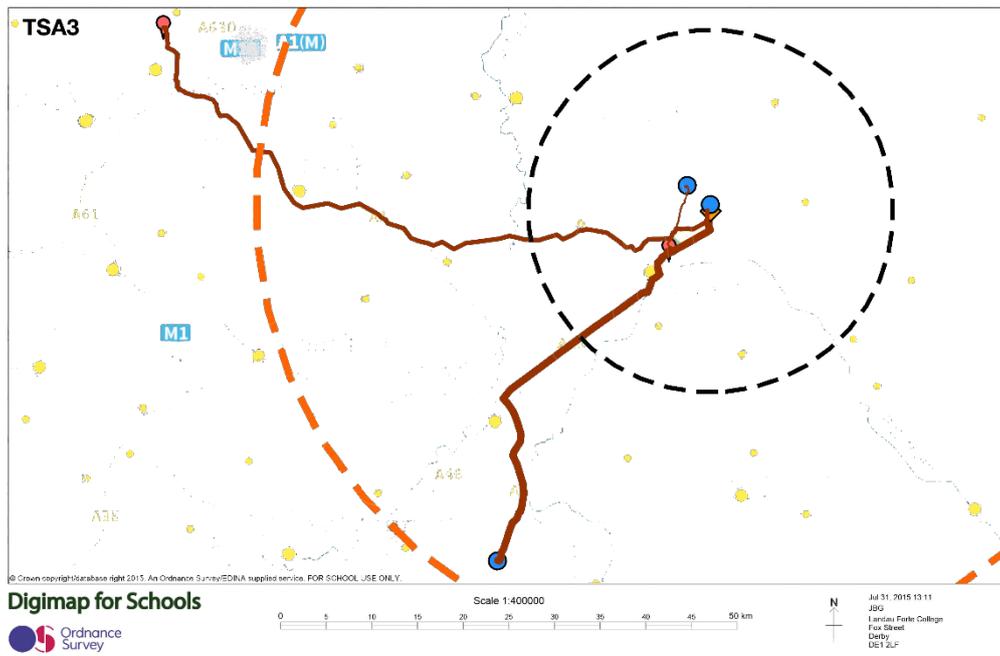
4.3   Findings from Deployment Data: Micro-level

The interview data will prove a richer source for identifying how individual characteristics within schools can impact upon the brokering of SLEs. However, certain factors can be identified through further analysis of the deployment data, in addition to the geographical location of individuals within Alliances, as explored above.

4.3.1   Phase and Specialism of SLE

The predominance of deployments to primary clients was discussed earlier in the chapter and can be viewed in the dark red networks of *Figures 4.4 to 4.5* above.   Analysis of School-to-School Support by specialism can illuminate the degree to which the specialism(s) offered by an SLE can impact on their likelihood of being brokered for deployment. If we consider that 'Primary Assessment' incorporates the appropriate assessment, moderation and monitoring of those aspects of the primary curriculum which are nationally reported, then we can infer that an SLE providing support in Primary Assessment is providing support in English and/or Mathematics. Those SLEs in TSA1 and TSA3 who offer support in primary English, Mathematics or Assessment, therefore, were deployed for 58% and 90%, respectively, of the total days available. Within TSA2, SLE deployments to primary schools had a different focus, with over a third of clients requesting support in Early Years provision, which would include the current preoccupation with the teaching of phonics, or with the delivery of MFL. With regard to the latter, it could be argued that one of the factors resulting in a primary leader more readily accepting the support of a secondary SLE is that the primary practitioner does not consider themselves to be experts in a field such as MFL, so perceptions of stigma from asking for 'help' are minimal and, by extension, barriers to change are diminished (Kotter, 1996).   Conversely, it is perhaps surprising to see that SLEs specialising in English and Mathematics in the Secondary sector are not being deployed as frequently, if at all, despite the pressure on accountability for this phase which was outlined in Chapter 2.[11] The data cannot reveal whether the barriers to brokerage are on the part of a school's Headteacher or its middle leaders – or, indeed, to entirely separate factors – but this phenomenon will be discussed further in the interview findings.

       One further evaluation of some interest, at the micro-level, is the frequency of SLE deployment by gender, as detailed in *Table 4.5*. With the exception of TSA3, there were

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[11] The combined brokerage for Secondary Mathematics and English within each TSA are: 17% TSA1; 12% TSA2, although this is all for Maths as none for English; 0% for the primary-centered TSA3.

significantly more males than females designated at the time of the study and, moreover, the female SLEs were brokered for significantly more of the deployment days.

Figures 4.6.1 to 4.6.3 - Percentage of Total Days' Deployment by Specialism

TSA1

TSA2

TSA3
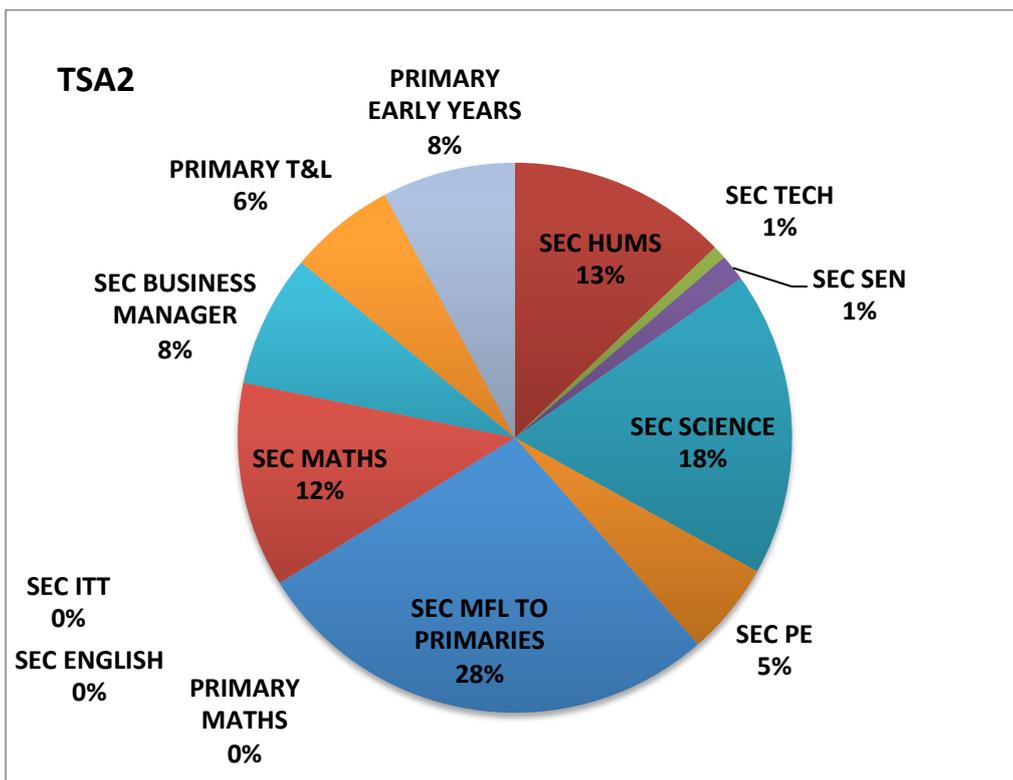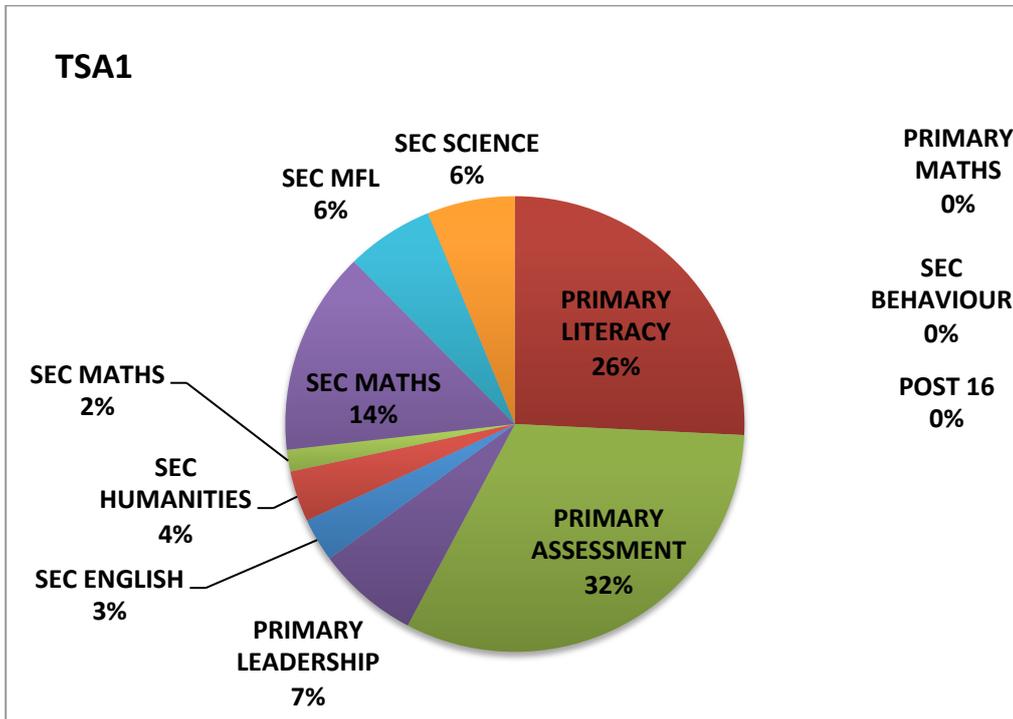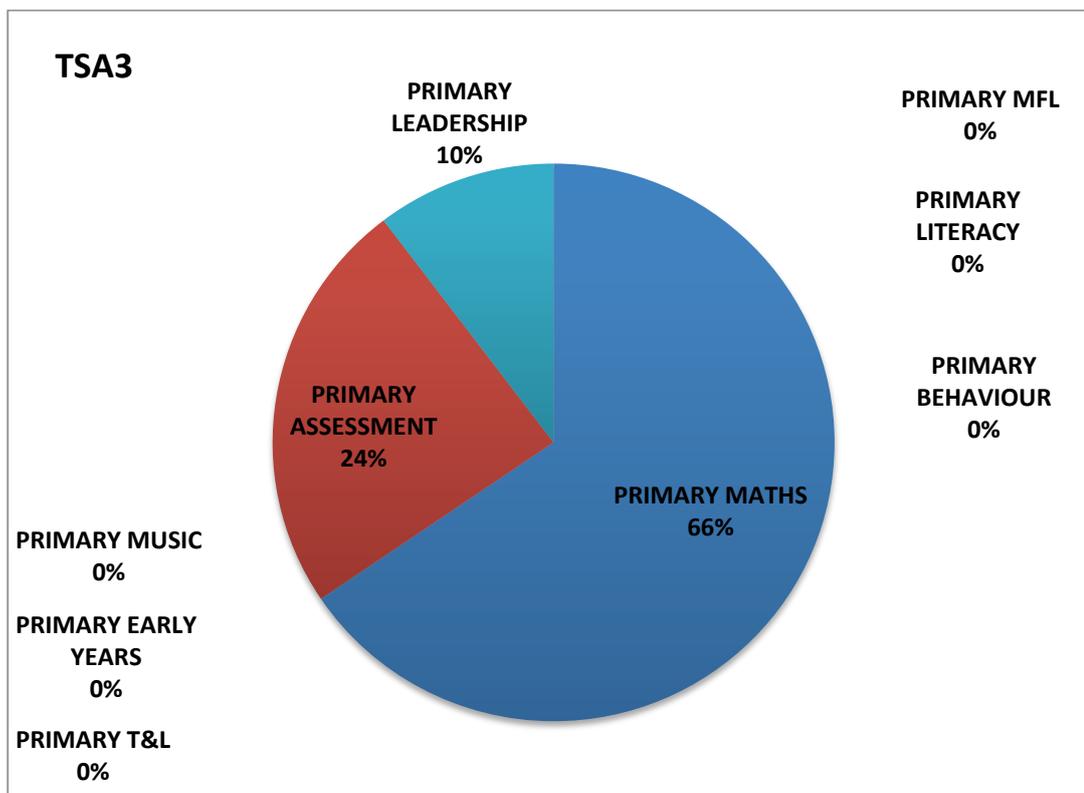
On a simple level, this could be said to correlate with the higher levels of deployment of primary SLEs, who are predominantly female; however, it might be argued that the personal drive to engage in system leadership is a contributing factor to the frequency of deployment in this phase, of which gender could be key element, as opposed to the openness of primary leaders to engage and clients and be open to change.

Table 4.5 - Summary of Analysis of Deployment Data: Gender

	TSA1	TSA2	TSA3
% of SLEs designated by TS by gender: male	31.0	13.0	12.0
female	69.0	87.0	78.0
% SLE deployment days by gender: male	17.0	6.0	65.5
female	83.0	94.0	34.5

While it has already been acknowledged that the limited volume of deployment data for TSA3 is problematic in terms of statistical comparisons to the other TSAs, it is interesting to note that, in respect of gender, the deployment trend is reversed. As the interview data reveals, this is due Broker 3 brokering himself to carry out most of the deployments due to his perception of his greater capacity, in a non-teaching role. There is further discussion of time and capacity at the meso- and micro-levels in the next chapter.

4.3.2 System Leadership Characteristics

Another possible factor to impact on the frequency of deployment, recently alluded to, is the drive of individual leaders who are engaged in the system leadership of School-to-School Support. Analysis of the deployment data has demonstrated that, in those circumstances where the deployment of SLEs is most frequent, there is strong evidence of Matthews and Berwick's system leadership characteristics (Matthews & Berwick, 2013) discussed in Chapter 2; most notably, these include the motivation of a Broker to arrange collaborative support, such as the drive of Broker 1.1 to broker support to Church of England school, or the sense of moral purpose suggested by the comparative busyness of primary SLEs.

4.4 Summary

In short, the analysis of the deployment data has provided a clear answer to my first research question: during the scope of the study, SLEs were being deployed for only a fraction of the capacity which policy intended. Further discussion of the data has provided some insights into the factors which may have affected this, largely at the meso-level; it could be argued that the diversity, which the policy intended to facility an organic growth of the system in order to match local need, is in itself preventing a clear identification of that local need. Frequency of support for secondary schools in need of improvement is overwhelmingly low. Analysis of the interview data, in the next chapter, will present an opportunity to both triangulate with and to expand upon my findings thus far.

Chapter 5   Findings from Interview Data

Having identified lower than anticipated levels of deployment in response to Research Question 1, analysis of the interview data in this chapter will provide fruitful insights into the two other key elements of this study:

Research Questions

2.   What factors are determining the frequency of brokering, on a meso-level? What contextual issues, characteristics, or organisational structures and processes are impacting at this meso-level?

3.   On a micro-level, are the characteristics of individual SLEs or brokers within a TSA impacting upon the deployment rate?

The findings from all stages of the interviews, with brokers and SLEs within each Alliance, and the elite interviews with members of the DfE and the TSC, are synthesised and presented according to the macro-, meso- and micro-level factors they convey.

Having outlined the nature of the roles and responsibilities of each TSA's broker(s) in Chapter 4.1, above, a contextual portrait of each of the SLEs who participated in the interviews is included in *Appendix 2.7* to inform perceptions of the interview findings. In addition, the role of each interviewee within the organisation of their respective TSA is outlined in *Appendices 2.1-2.3*.   While the context and deployment activity of each case study TSA varies widely, as discussed in Chapter 4, the interview data reveals a high level of corroboration with regard to the factors which are determining the frequency of deployment and, by extension, the barriers which are inhibiting full and efficient implementation of the policy for SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL SUPPORT launched in the White Paper (Department for Education, 2010).

5.1 Findings from Interview Data: Macro-level

On reviewing the interviews, the majority of participants felt strongly that the lack of a clear "blueprint" from the policy-makers, the DfE and the National College, for setting up the TSA at meso-level, impacted directly and adversely on the brokering of SLEs. This was expressed by the regional leader of the Teaching Schools Council (TSC), brokers from all of the TS, and several of the SLEs themselves. Broker1.1 felt that, unlike the predecessors of TS, London Challenge and Manchester Challenge, there was a lack of money to appropriately build up the

"central infrastructure", and that the national expansion of the programme was being done "on the cheap". Broker1.1 expressed her concerns that the vision of a self-improving school system in the White Paper (DfE, 2010) "is… just happening in a non-strategic way." Moreover, with the scale and "complexity" of all the strands, she feels it is "unhelpful" to try and deliver on all of the "Big 6" at once. In a similar vein, Broker3 reflected that the formation of new TSA networks is based on "who you know" and seems "haphazard".   SLE1.1 states that his evaluation of the situation is more "stoical" as: "…great ideas are always followed by a period of ups and downs… it's just a shame things weren't sorted out enough originally…as an embryonic position." Broker2 commented on the difficulties presented by the "odd and complex" process for designating SLEs via the NC, and also the "money wasted" on what she deemed to be a very complicated and inefficient NC online community, intended to support leader in TSAs, which was withdrawn and replaced and further cost.

Broker1.1 still felt that, while improved, the complexity in the variety of the ways in which the work flow of deployments can be commissioned by those operating at the macro-level - the National College, the DfE's Minister of State for Schools and/or Ofsted - still brought confusion to the meso-level. Broker1.1 was getting NLE deployments, for which she would typically broker one or more SLEs, directly, not via the TSA; the NLE at the hub TS of TSA1 was also getting direct deployments and brokering support from SLEs.

When discussing the role of the newly-formed Regional Schools Commissioners, a senior member of Frank Green's office shared that he:

> will be managing… the <u>right</u> level of consistency, because we're not looking for <u>a</u> consistent approach. The whole purpose is that there will different certain regional variations.

While the remit of this office only includes academies and free schools, and not TSAs directly, the political momentum for decentralisation at a macro-level is evident. Frank Green, Schools Commissioner, reflected on the impact of the Scottish Independence debate in the House of Lords the previous week:

> The debate about regionalisation and decentralisation has really hotted up and gone to the <u>top</u> of the political agenda…. I'm absolutely delighted about that, because the regionalisation of education is a really, really important driver… One of the reasons we've gone down this path, the pathway to academies and now the self-managing system… is because of the long-term failure of large parts of the local authority to

improve many of their schools…. The majority of the first 200 academies were schools

who had had failure for… at least two generations of children.

However, as echoed by SLE1.1, he concedes: "I don't think there's enough understanding in most Teaching School Alliances of their role in the new system because when they asked to become Teaching Schools, … the system had not been <u>created</u> in a sense."

Being at the forefront of systemic change brought many frustrations to Broker1.1 in the early days of the NLE role. She and other NLEs expressed to the Fellowship Commission meetings, with the DfE, the need for an infrastructure "to enable you to be deployed into schools <u>through</u> a local authority, with clear terms of reference, and with <u>clear criteria</u> and some sort of overview of what is happening." Further reflections on the relationships with LAs, at the meso-level, will be distilled later in this chapter.

It is clear to the TSC representative that the lack of "intelligence" and "guidance" at a macro-level impacted upon his management, as an NLE, of a newly-established TS and on the deployment of SLEs. With hindsight, this meant that SLEs were recruited who did not, as it transpired, match local need, but he now feels that they are getting better at matching recruitment to "the needs of the schools that we serve." He felt strongly that the Government wanted to devolve responsibility for the "Big 6" areas of school improvement, "but we're not going to tell you how to do it." However, he was keen to "use this system" to get the "lookout" he needed, as well as believing only existing teachers could credibly give the support that others needed, at the meso-level of the SISS. This pioneering perspective is shared by Broker2:

> When we first applied to be a Teaching School [*laughs*] I don't think any of us <u>really</u>
> knew what it was going to look like… it was a leap of <u>faith</u>… But…if you get in early
> enough, you can make sure it's really good because it's not developed until you've had
> a say in it.

Broker2 remained unclear, however, as to how those at the macro-level would hold TSs to account with regards to school-to-school support: if the focus will be on effectiveness, "in which case we'll be able to maintain our purist view", or if they will "look at the number" of deployments. "And if they look at the number we will, like everybody else, be forced to dilute the way that we use them." Further views on the nature of the role of SLEs will be explored in due course.

The tension between financial accountability, at meso-level, and the drive to serve others, at micro-level, will colour many of the ensuing factors that participants believe affect

the brokering of SLEs. Frank Green remained confident that the system could find a way to evolve:

> I'm quite convinced there's enough money in the system…I'm not sure we're using it as efficiently as we could…. The <u>amount</u> of money in education today is 40% more, in real terms, more than in the year 2000. And I do think there's enough <u>will</u> in the system at the moment, there's enough <u>enthusiasm</u>.

5.2 Findings from Interview Data: Meso-level

5.2.1 Organisation, Local Politics and Funding

All of the brokers interviewed attributed the aforementioned lack of a clear "blueprint" to support organisational processes and priorities for early waves of TSAs to a lack of strategic efficiency on their own part. Broker2 summarised: "I don't think there has been that level of joined-up-ness: NLE; LLE; SLE…" Akin to Broker1.1 previously, she then referred to predecessors of the Teaching School model, stating that because the NC's exemplar school for SLE deployments was a part of Greater Manchester Challenge it meant they've had "more time to get it right".   Broker1.1 felt that communication between the NC and NLEs /TSAs had been very fractured, because policy was evolving rapidly: "And then, <u>gradually</u>, they start catching up with what's happening on the ground."

In terms of the reality of what was 'happening on the ground', the actual alliance make-up was in a state of flux in all three TSAs studied. As Broker2 shared: "We've got endless diagrams which change, almost daily," and added, "It's been a learning curve for us, to get into the admin mind-set." Of particular relevance, each TSA was required to develop systems for monitoring SLE deployments. "…As schools, we've never used those systems, ritualistically." Each school having to expand its own administration team, and develop its own administrative systems, which, as my collation of SLE deployment data demonstrated, all varied and thus varied in the robustness of data held.

Broker2, also the Teaching School Director at TSA2, reflected that there were many "overlays" in the system at meso-level, and their Local Authority's Education Improvement Partnership (EIP), which had been operating successfully for around eight years, could have been the "mechanism" for delivering the school improvement agenda of the Teaching Schools initiative. TSA2 was the most intricate of systems in terms of the model for alliance membership; only the most successful schools, in terms of Ofsted grading and peer reviews,

are permitted to join the layer of strategic membership, with those schools who are drawing on the support electing to join a layer of membership, either subscription-based or "pay as you go", depending on their circumstances. Adding to the "overlays", all of TSA2's strategic members are also members of the national network of Challenge Partners. Whether because of the "overlays", or despite them, and because of the effervescent, micro-level drive of Broker 2, SLE 2.2 feels that TSA2's organisation and day-to-day management has been "fantastic; the problem has been getting other schools to engage."

Frank Green, Schools Commissioner, firmly stated that different alliance strategic member schools should share the responsibilities of the 'Big 6', rather than the hub school attempting to lead on all six. For TSA1, however, delegating the SLE brokering to an alliance member school caused fragmented communication, as key decisions were sometimes made at meetings when Broker1.1 was not present, so she later felt she was "not in on the way you see this developing" and that she missed out on the more informal, continual communication that took place at the hub TS "because they're all there, but they need to communicate to other people what's happening… And then there's this huge lag… I'm not apportioning any blame, here, but I think the structure's overly complex… although done with the best possible intentions" to involve strategic member schools so they "buy in". Brokers1.1 and 1.2 both acknowledged the impact that staff relocation or change of role resulted in complications to the structures and, by extension, the efficiency of communication across the alliance. Both also felt that such changes, including alliance members who had been designated as TSs in their own right and so were about to leave the Alliance, influenced whether SLEs had the capacity to be drawn upon for deployments, with the SLE's Headteachers communicating a lack of capacity to TSA1's NLEs.

Continuing the review of distributed leadership at TSA1, Broker1.3 recognised the challenge to Broker1.1 of "trying to balance headship" with the brokering role, and recognised that the co-ordination of school-to-school support had grown to become "a job in its own right". Also Broker1.1 shared that her school did not fully have the capacity to manage the administrative tasks, as there was no funding for her to increase administration hours; she hoped that the reorganisation of brokering, to be managed by the hub Teaching School, would improve communication and therefore brokering systems. Brokers1.2 and 1.3 feel that "fragmentation" in record keeping and SLE deployment procedures has made it a challenge to demonstrate impact, which in turn inhibits effective marketing. SLE1.1's view draws together several key factors which were felt to impact on the frequency of SLE brokering:

As is the case with an idea that's maybe revolutionary… I didn't feel there was a great deal of forethought given to exactly how the brokerage would take place…. The administrative detail… but also the physical detail behind it. It was almost: "Let's shove a whole load of cash and a whole load of ideas into the pot," but no-one had actually done a great deal of planning to make sure it was particularly successful at the beginning. The original Teaching Schools were very much left to their own devices to make things up as they went along.

SLE1.1 does not blame TSA1 for the perceived inefficiencies, instead sharing that he recognised the "guilty" reactions of NC representatives at the first SLE Core Training "of not having put a structure in place to support the Teaching Schools."

Restructuring in a converse manner to TSA1, TSA3 moved the brokering of the SLEs to a strategic partner school prior to the expansion of their SLE team, with Broker3 jovially commenting: "Maybe it was a political move to draw us in." The organisational decision also made strategic sense in terms of the Broker3's capacity, as a non-teaching Assistant Headteacher. That said, TSA3 were about to appoint a full time Operations Manager to commence September 2014, to allow Broker3 to focus on brokering and supporting schools "rather than the amount of admin we've had to do." The key leaders of the TSA3 would soon be based in "an office space", central to their region, rather than in one of the schools. Frank Green's view is that, while some local authorities "still provide excellent self-improvement services" and the services of separate companies, such as CfBT and Cambridge Education, can be purchased, "I think that the core, the backbone of it, has got to be, in the future, Teaching School Alliances." Now 600 Teaching Schools and 452 Alliances, the NC's Teaching School Advisers need to liaise with the Teaching School Council which has "great people" on it, "with perception, vision and… system leadership skills." The collaboration between TSs and their respective LA's, however, was a moot point for most of the brokers who were interviewed. Broker 1.1 shared: "In the early days of NLE it was very dependent on your local authority… there was not, as far as I was concerned, proper brokerage of NLEs." This was deemed to be because there was not the level of collaborative "buy in" between the LA and the NC as there had been, for example, in a friend's experience in Tower Hamlets, for London Challenge. Mirroring Frank Green's view, she felt it took a strong Regional Adviser from the NC who "took over… and worked with the local authority."

The TSC representative feels there is still a journey to collaboration with his LA, caused by the Teaching Schools being "given" the school improvement responsibilities that had previously been the role of the LA.

> So, at first, I would say that was a lot of people trying their best to catch us out really, or trying to make it hard for us, rather than actually embracing the future and seeing how it could work. Er, that is only a personal feeling that I have – other authorities were brilliant – but personally we found it, initially, very much a battle… Cos, if you think about it, you've got a self-improving school system that, in essence, will work brilliantly, that they're all looking out for each other… what you are therefore suggesting, if that works, that you don't need the middle tier, so you don't need… any-any school improvement from [the LA], so the people who you are asking, to be sharing with you the future direction of schools, it's like turkeys voting for Christmas, isn't it? So that is the elephant in the room.

He also emphasised the need for all parties to "play the game" and move things forward for children. However, he reiterated that the lack of blueprint and the conflict with the LA were the two key barriers to school-to-school support: "you've got people, whether they know they are doing it or not, are… putting themselves out of a job if the school-led system works." Ultimately, the TSC representative distilled this dilemma as "Collaboration versus Competition" and questioned the extent to which system leaders are "really collaborating to make an extremely school-led system, or are you letting your own needs, your competitive urge, get in the way of a fair, school-led system." Further reflections of the impact of micro-level tensions will be covered at the end of the chapter.

TSA2 differs from the other case study TSAs, and believes their relationship is quite unusual, in having its LA as a strategic partner. Broker2 shared that, "…because X is such a political city… if we didn't take people with us, they'd be against us." However, she has had "quite a battle" with some of those people due to "an ideological resistance", where she felt they were "exhausting" themselves debating a potential, philosophical issue which had not actually manifested itself.   However, the collaboration has had a discernible impact on the brokering of SLEs. All of TSA2's SLEs feature in the LA's school-to-school support directory, which is circulated to all LA schools and to academies, thus aiding the marketing of SLEs. SLE2.1 became frustrated, however, at having invested much effort into a regional History conference that then "broke down due to lack of interest", perhaps due to "lack of advertisement and promotion" by the LA. He feels the "LA has been… something of an

albatross around the necks for some schools for some time." He feels that the LA previously put a lot of money into deploying ASTs, like himself, without necessarily measuring impact. He senses that there are mixed motives in the LA's intentions to collaborate with the TS:

> When the AST funding went, the people who would co-ordinate that at the LA were still in post, but had nobody to deploy, and very quickly latched onto the Teaching School as a way of plugging the gap left by the ASTs.

Another barrier to brokering raised by SLE 2.1 was the lack of clarity in the brokering requested from the LA, and "lines of communication were shut" by both the school and the LA, so the deployment did not take place. He calls for for greater clarity and consistency in the brokering system, as "often… I [was] not sure whose tune I was dancing to."

Although commissioned by a LA in another county, Broker 3 feels that it is "very political" in his own LA and county. He stated that "you need to claw them [client schools] away from the LA" but it would be "a very brave step" for LA schools to allocate some of their budget to get support from teaching schools due to the "safety net" of having worked alongside the LA for a number of years. TSA3's aim is to "softly build up the client base" of members as they "don't want to put people off" with too strong a steer from the TSA. Broker 2 believes, as do all of the brokers, that reputation is important, but hoped that the "security blanket" of knowing the TSA is accountable for the impact of the SLEs would encourage their deployment.

5.2.2 Alliance Membership, Targeting Support and Collaboration with Others

As well as these complications regarding organisation and local politics, a common concern for all of the brokers was how to target the SLE support to those schools who most needed it, both within and without the Alliance. Broker 1.1 felt the appointment of a regional leader of the NC, a few years previously, had had an impact on collaborating with her LA to help target the commissioning of NLE and SLE support, but that the multiplicity of funding streams meant that the macro-to-meso system was still complex and inhibited clear strategy at a meso-level. She suggested that Improvement Partners or similar need to be available to broker support from the TSA, to those outside the Alliance, which is in tune with the notably collaborative nature of TSA2's relationship with its LA and EIP. The TSC representative raised the complication of:

> a potential double-funding issue… if you've got, say, a school who's been identified by the local authority as needing support, so they're putting people in, and the teaching school, you've identified a school that needs support, and it's the same school, so- so

you've got your SLEs going in and then some consultants from the local authority, so it's taken quite a bit of working out to get it sorted strategically. And, in turn, I've got examples where we've done that brilliantly with the local authority, but I've also got examples where it hadn't worked very well.

Contrary to the current policy of schools managing their own output of support, Broker 3 raised the issue of "how people can distribute or apportion that fairly so the right school is supported and by the right school – It's got to be controlled, somehow, from up above." He felt that all schools knowing about the support that is available from SLEs would be a vital step. Several brokers hoped that the formation of East Midlands Teaching School Alliance would underpin collaboration between TSAs in the region. The TSC representative also emphasised the need for a co-ordinated approach:

… getting the Teaching Schools together and almost pool all the SLEs together, if we're being very strategic…everybody, instead of thinking for themselves,… who is the best group to support this school. And it may be me, it may not be me.

His perceived problem with this approach was that "it may turn into a bun fight" with competition, rather than "what's best for the school. So the role of the Teaching School Council is to bring some strategy to the process…. Checks and balances." One of the brokers felt that the TS had made an error of judgement by having a client school, in need of support, as a strategic member: an SLE was trying to "hammer down the door" to provide support, but the school was not receptive to that support, perhaps not recognising their own need. The broker reflected that, "If we're doing anything with anybody, it should be with them, surely?... I don't understand it at all."

Meanwhile, TSA1 originally agreed that SLE work would only be done for alliance members, so there was no impetus to market SLEs to potential client schools outside of the group, hence limiting the frequency of deployments. SLE1.2 was perplexed that he had not received any deployments directly from the TS, per se; he had been deployed through Broker1.1's independent work as an NLE, or through his own contacts, "even through church. I get the impression that this is a relatively light touch, that it's not necessarily… the most important thing on the mind of these people [the TSA]." SLE1.2 felt "more used" as an AST because requests for SLE support are "just not really happening"; this view was shared by all three of the SLEs who were previously ASTs. SLE3.2 was previously an AST and reflected that he was paid an enhanced salary, and "things worked more smoothly… whereas now money is

the big factor" which impinges on the brokering of support. Also, SLE3.2 represented the views of many of the SLEs in that he was not coming into contact with schools that need support, so felt it was not feasible for SLEs to do their own brokering, a suggestion of the revised System Leadership Prospectus.

The issue of finance is one that was voiced by all interview respondents in some way. Broker3 was concerned about the issue of "blurred lines" between academies and non-academies and "where the support is coming from." He questions whether LA schools, who may still be buying into LA support, can afford to come to teaching schools for support?" Due to the aforementioned "political" situation, TSA3 is not being commissioned by their neighbouring LA, but have carried out a number of sustained NLE and SLE deployments in five schools for a LA which is centred 45 miles away. The broker described this as a "brilliant project" which was both enjoyable in its longevity and provided a "guaranteed income." Broker .1 felt that the move to a financially strategic way of thinking was a problem in planning the SLE deployment processes, and stressed the importance of a TS having a business manager who clearly sees how the "funding model would work". The presence of "conflicting messages" at meetings for alliance members, with SLE support originally free to members, but the becoming chargeable from September 2013, may not have aided brokering. Moreover, for TSA1, the monitoring of financial transactions, with payment passing from client school directly to SLE's home school, made it difficult to TSA to monitor.

Frank Green believes that all TSAs need to have "a good school improvement business going", whether or not it charges for that business.[12] For Broker1.1, however, it costs "quite a lot of money" for secondary schools to subscribe to TSA1 to "subsidise" it. She adds: "The primary schools are getting this cheaply, actually, "cos a lot of it we're doing for the primary schools." Different funding streams for deployments further complicate the financial systems. For example, Broker1.1, as an individual NLE, and the local Diocese successfully applied for money from the NC to support SLE deployment to diocesan primary schools; Broker1.1 secured a NC bursary to support a primary school local to the broker's school. In terms of targeting support, this was largely subjective, as letters inviting Expressions of Interest to apply for NC Funding were circulated to "NLEs and probably local authorities and dioceses" and not directly to schools, so schools need to be identified by someone at a meso-level to draw down the funding to draw on the support of NLEs and SLEs. In respect of this, SLE1.1 cited "lack of

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[12] The barrier posed by the discomfort of educational professionals with regard to discussing the fees involved in S2SS is discussed in the micro-level section of this chapter.

clear directive over the actual funding and payment", and the systems and responsibility for this, as a barrier to cementing a potential deployment.

Due to their collaborative relationship with the LA, TSA2 attempted to remove the financial barriers to SLE deployment. Therefore, in addition to the TSA's Collaborative Fund and the NLE Deployment fund common to all TSAs, the LA's EIP funded up to £70,000 for SLE deployments for the year 2013-14. However, Broker2 was surprised that "even when it was free there were struggling schools that didn't take it on board." The broker of TSA2 had hoped that, "like Sainsbury's" they would "buy believers" in the potential of SLEs: by subsidising the cost via the LA, "then people really love it" and would pay for it once the brand had been established. SLE2.1 and SLE2.2 both concede that the LA's SLE funding has benefitted brokering, but not to the level either of them would have anticipated; all of SLE2.1's deployments have been commissioned by the LA.

While additional funding may not have impacted on TSA2 to the extent envisaged, TSA1 has lost potential deployments due to the cost to the school. Broker1.2 stated that they had had "some" speculative approaches from schools, via phone or e-mail, to request SLE support. Of these, four of the requests for deployment were withdrawn due to financial barriers, and all four were primary schools. SLE2.2 expressed his exasperation with the SLE funding issue, which is unlike the AST system, where the funding was directly by the LA:

> With school-to-school support now being a budgetary consideration for the school, I think it's just had such a massive impact. A lot of schools simply can't afford it unless they go into special measures, and there's extra funding coming in, at which point it's too late. You know the damage has been done, and people are just on catch up… People are very keen until the aspect of finance comes up.

Broker3 similarly acknowledged that, with the exception of those commissions for SLEs from a LA or the NC, there were not "a huge amount of requests coming in." SLE2.2 thinks that schools would rather spend the money they do have on resources than on an individual. To improve uptake in SLE deployments, his advice was simple: "Don't charge schools. I was used a lot more as an AST. I had time in order to actually do it."

In terms of marketing methods, SLE2.2 reflected:

> You send out endless flyers and information and e-mails to primary schools, and they just don't seem to get through to the right person… we've not had the take up that we would have anticipated, considering it is an areas that really needs developing.

However, she felt confident that, after an initial contact had "got through", those schools were always "keen to be supported". She suggested that they could use LA Network Meetings to promote SLEs, but schools "now have to pay to attend, and those who attend are probably not the ones who need the support anyway."

5.2.3 Phase of Client Schools

As aforementioned, Broker1.2 found that speculative approaches from primary schools were withdrawn due to lack of financial capacity. However, it is evident from the deployment data, detailed in the previous chapter, that a substantial amount of School-to-School support was funded by the NC to support primary clients; with regard to this, Broker1 opined that political priorities at the macro-level directly impact on the flow of funding to NLEs at the meso-level. She shared that the "academisation" of primary schools, as a political agenda, is "fairly explicit in some of the NLE stuff".

Where the financial barrier to brokering has been removed, Broker1.2 firmly stated that primary schools are more welcoming of the support than secondaries, as "being smaller, tend not to have a pool of expertise from which they can draw internally." Whereas, she thinks secondary schools will prefer to draw on internal strengths if they can; Broker1.1 added that this is a cheaper option for them, as well as sensing "the fear of letting someone from outside in" to expose any weaknesses. On a more pragmatic, micro-level, Broker1.1 noted that primary leaders had better attendance at meetings where SLE deployments were made, due to "keenness" which may contribute to the increased deployment of SLEs from the primary phase. SLE2.2 feels secondaries perhaps don't engage in support due to "lack of time", or a perception of this, which might be due to the pace and pressures of reform in this phase, detailed in Chapter 2.

5.2.4 Geographical Factors

Finally, the perceived impact of the geographical span of the TSAs can be explored. Broker1.1 believed that geographically-close networks and outreach are important and, as will be further explored in the micro-level findings below, believes that distances between SLE and client have presented some notable barriers. TSA2, having the close collaboration with the LA as detailed above, has a relatively focused geographical span. However, TSA3 is founded on a powerful vision of immersive learning conceived on a global scale, with collaborative partners in the

USA; India; and Australia. While acknowledging that the recently designated secondary SLEs in East Anglia will pose marketing and procedural challenges, the broker is "excited" by this development; moreover, planning TSA "hubs in Cornwall and Newcastle", eschewing collaboration on a more local level because "it's political" in their own county. SLE3.1 is geographically distant from TSA3 (33 miles), and feels this is "an issue but not a barrier." She was receiving deployments direct from them, but noted there were also those that are coming "word of mouth" from her own LA.

5.3 Findings from Interview Data: Micro-level

5.3.1 Location, Phase and Specialism of SLE

Further to the discussions of the impact of geographical context the organisation of each TSA at the meso-level, Broker1.1 felt "geographical proximity matters" when selecting which SLE to deploy, thus limiting which SLEs it was appropriate to broker to a particular school. She added: "in order to get the regular meeting, the regular checks on impact, so that you're not wasting hours travelling and, actually, all the time you're giving is in the discussions with the people at the school…. It just becomes a logistical nightmare, if you're not careful." She stated that SLE1.2's proximity to a particular client school allows regularity of contact, by phone as well as in person, and therefore fosters a positive relationship with the middle leader being supported. This opinion is triangulated by the interview data for SLE1.1, who felt that the distance, in excess of an hour's drive added to the challenge of carrying out a deployment that had been brokered to support a secondary colleague. Having persevered to establish a relationship, however, the school then decided to internally restructure instead of engaging with the SLE, and the middle leader in need of support was absolved of their responsibility. Broker1.1 reflected that the accountability pressure placed upon NLEs to demonstrate value for money might be a factor for only deploying those SLEs who are 'known quantities': "You want to deploy somebody you know is going to give you rapid impact on that project… a bit unfair because, sometimes, there may be people you haven't tested yet." The consequence of this is that those SLEs who are based at other schools, especially those that are geographically distant from the Broker, are not brokered.

The apparent prioritising of a narrow set of needs for which SLE support would be purchased was discussed in Chapter 4. In the same vein, SLE1.2 opined that History is not a particular area of need, but has been deployed by his broker, instead, to offer Teaching and Learning support in the primary phase. This adaptability requires Broker 1 to be well-

acquainted with the SLE's strengths, or this SLE would have been deployed less; it could be argued, therefore, that this SLE is favoured in terms of deployments because his home school is the broker's school. This is an interesting example of a primary client receiving support from a secondary colleague when, as mentioned previously, no cross-phase deployments took place where primary SLEs supported secondary colleagues. Meanwhile, Broker3 attributes the frequency of his deployment, unlike his other SLEs who have a very specific specialism, to the flexibility of his specialism of Leadership. His view is that his flexibility, as a primary leader, allows him to offer more generic "cheap leadership support" by building capacity in a struggling school.

5.3.2 System Leadership Characteristics

One of the most revealing aspects of the interview analysis was the insight it provided into the characteristics and motivations of individuals within the system; as the system leadership literature reiterates, it is essential for individuals to share a moral and social purpose which promotes healthy collaboration. To this end, when selecting which SLE to broker, Broker3's key criteria are "a best fit of skills and personalities [to] underpin the deployments" which he brokers. He believes that matching SLEs to deployments in this way will minimise barriers to engagement and, therefore, reduce the barriers which may cause a potential deployment to break down. Frank Green, Schools Commissioner, opined that: "There are certainly cultural barriers to deal with… for a lot of people, admission of weakness is an issue, whereas, in my book, admission of weakness is, to me, a strength." Mr Green believes that all leaders need to be working towards what Jim Collins terms "Level 5 Leadership" (Collins, 2001), which Mr Green paraphrases as "abnegation of self"; however, he believes, through experience, that many leaders are good at "hiding the holes", but need "personal strength of skill… being open when things are tough, and sharing difficulty." Therefore, it could be argued that a key barrier to brokering could be attributed to lack of 'Level 5 Leadership' at Headteacher level, which inhibits Headteachers from "being open" to support. Broker2's experience gives further weight to this hypothesis; she found it surprising that "it's been individuals within schools requesting us; we imagined that it would be much more strategic – that headteachers would be approaching us." In these cases, the Heads did then support the brokering of the SLE "in all cases", but it was the middle leaders who had reached out for support. Conversely, when the support had been requested by a Head, the middle leader appeared to sabotage the deployment, and the SLE used the "entire deployment time… just trying to get a meeting; they're clearly not engaged." This SLE always cited lack of availability as a reason; it is feasible

that the Head, while requesting the support, has not ensured that the struggling middle leader has the time that is essential to engage in the process. Similar experiences were shared by Broker1.1, who stated that the most significant barriers to brokerage are raised by client Heads who "pay lip service" to the offer of support but are "not actually releasing the staff to do things".

Considering the reputation of individual SLEs, Broker1.1 does not believe that the cost of an SLE would be inhibitive to Headteachers, but "somebody I've never heard of" would be. Therefore, she believes it is important for testimonials to underpin the marketing. In her own experience, request for SLE deployment has never been at a Headteacher's behest, and enforcement "in a nice way" from an external source, such as Ofsted or the NC, empowers the NLE to put in a support package, including SLEs, with a "more robust frame of reference". Furthermore, central "external brokerage" from NC or Ofsted forces the support that she believes would have been declined. She has encountered a range of reactions from Headteachers, but, akin to Broker3, identified that personal rapport and "mutual understanding" with the client Head is vital to a successful collaborative relationship. An example was given, where the client Head has been "extremely antipathetic [*wry laugh*] and has said it's worse than Ofsted… <u>clearly </u>the head doesn't think she needs it. She does, clearly." In this case, the school was "taken over" as a sponsored academy; this might suggest that fears of loss of control and of identity might be driving the barriers to engagement.

SLE3.1 shared details of two contrasting experiences which emphasise how perceptions of power can impact on deployments at the micro-level. A very positive deployment saw her supporting newly or recently qualified colleagues with fewer than two years of teaching, who were "extremely receptive" to the support offered. Conversely, the brokering of a another deployment would have broken down had the SLE been less tenacious; this was to provide support to a more experienced colleague, with an age difference of 20+ years, who was far more "negative" and felt this was the "single barrier", although "staff ethos was very low" as they were in special measures "with Ofsted looming."

Finally, a key characteristic which is shared by many individuals within the education sector is a reluctance to talk about SLE brokering fees. Broker1.3 reflected on "this <u>unwillingness</u> for teachers to talk about <u>finances</u>. It's a little bit <u>taboo</u>, we don't like to sell ourselves in that way, as products – that's not why we became teachers." Similarly, the broker of TSA3 finds it "crude" to talk about business models, and feels that this is "a whole new world" that will require considerable adjustment in outlook. Several of the SLE's clearly

communicated that they were too uncomfortable to broker their own deployments due to this taboo; SLE2.1 jovially remarked: "I stay well out of those conversations, when it comes to the commercial nitty-gritty and what my mother would have called, "The crass side of the conversation."" This sentiment is echoed by SLE1.2, for whom the financial aspect of brokering is a conflict of ethos and personal politics: the emphasis on support being a "fiscal responsibility" he sees as a "a very retrograde step"; he is not prepared to go out, and abandon his own students to be "basically applying for trade and finding only those that could afford me. It goes against every fundamental value of why I did this job."

5.4 Summary

While it is evident that all the key players in the system communicate a strong sense of commitment to the moral imperative that needs to drive a SISS, there are many barriers to brokering SLEs at all levels of the system. Notably, the lack of a 'blueprint', which was intended to permit adaptation to local need has, instead, caused many organisational and political barriers to efficient brokering. Haphazard organisation from the a macro-level has resulted in a lack of geographical cohesion at the meso-level; despite the variety in organisation, transparency and strategy in targeting and financing NLE and SLE support emerge as critical issues.

Chapter 6 Reflections and Conclusions

This chapter will reviews and reflects on the findings of the research. The response to Research Question 1 (RQ1) will be summarised in 6.2.1, below, while responses to the remaining 2 (RQ2 and RQ3) questions are proposed throughout conclusions at the macro-, meso- and micro-level. A critique of the success and limitaitons of the research project will then be offered, along with some recommendations which can be drawn from the study.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are SLEs being brokered by their TSA to engage in school-to-school support? Are some TSAs brokering their SLEs more frequently than others?
2. What factors are determining the frequency of brokering, on a meso-level? What contextual issues, characteristics, or organisational structures and processes are impacting at this meso-level?
3. On a micro-level, are the characteristics of individual SLEs or brokers within a TSA impacting upon the deployment rate?

6.1   Macro-level Conclusions

The rapid and pronounced nature of reforms in the state education system in recent decades, the "discursive-strategic shifts" commented upon by Ball (Ball, 2007), has resulted in a decentralised education system, commencing in 1988 with Educational Reform Act (Department for Education and Science, 1988). This, according to policy (Department for Education, 2010), should have allowed schools to adapt and to forge their own local networks to build a school-led SISS. However, this findings of this study shows that the resulting balkanisation of the education sector, and the barriers of competition, perpetuated a distrust of the academies movement, perhaps grounded in perceptions of elitism (Walford, 2011). The ensuing marketisation and competition (Abbott, Middlewood, & Robinson, 2013b) resulted in distrust of TSAs, and a fear of 'being taken over' at meso- and micro-level, which is further compounded by school leaders' sense of taboo when 'talking money', due to a conflict of ethos at micro-level. Furthermore, this study found, in only three case studies, great variance in approach which, it could be argued, add obscuring complexity to the system. These issues are fundamental factors which have impacted upon the brokering of SLEs by these TSAs.

Furthermore, the senior figure of the TSC and all brokers who were interviewed clearly identified the vagueness of the original policy, specifically the lack of 'blueprint' in how the pioneering elements of the new policy should be implemented, to be a key weakness. This was said to have resulted in considerable organisational inefficiency at the meso-level, and errors in judgement, such as recruiting SLEs who do not match local need in terms of specialism. Furthermore, several TSA leaders opined that the requirement to deliver on all aspects of the 'Big 6' at once was too great a challenge. This reinforces my interpretation of the literature presented in Chapter 2, that Hargreaves' and Berwick's 'concept' of hospital-inspired teaching school (Matthews & Berwick, 2013) was not well-considered nor prescriptive enough to allow the policy to be effectively rolled out. Along with the pace of change, several interviewees shared the view of Abbott that the pressure of accountability could cause potential client Heads to resist collaboration (Abbott, Rathbone, & Whitehead, 2013a), and cited this is a factor which prevented brokering of SLEs. This finding directly challenges the view expressed by Gilbert that accountability pressures promote collaboration(Gilbert, 2012). When reflecting on the strengths of the educational systems in, for example, Finland and Victoria, Australia, it could be said that the policy adopted for schools in English schools selects only those elements of international policy that reflect its broader political motives, while failing to recognise that the policies must be adopted more comprehensively, and with due consideration of socio-economic contexts if they are to be successfully transferred.

To consider another factor at the macro-level, it is evident from the research findings that the funding of SLE support is a crucial factor affecting the frequency of brokering, with the vast majority of SLE deployments taking place only when additional funds, via the NC or the LA, were made available to the school in need of support. Broker1.1 firmly held the view that the direction of government funding streams for NLE and SLE support was being heavily influenced by the Government's agenda to increase the number of primary schools which are converting to Academy status. The TSC's Regional Leaders, or another commissioning body, perhaps working with the Educational Improvement Partnerships already in existence, will need to have a mandate, supported by the DfE and NC, to strategically plan target support where most needed, regardless of the school's status.

6.2 Meso-level Conclusions

6.2.1 Frequency of SLE Deployment

In response to RQ1, findings demonstrated that across the three case study schools, the SLEs were deployed, on average for less than a quarter of the time outlined in the policy and procedures regarding the designation and brokering of SLEs. The factors that could be deemed to be contributing to this under-use are summarised throughout this chapter. The findings from the case study TSAs, albeit a small sample, would suggest that, indeed, some TSAs are deploying their SLEs more than others: TSA1 and TSA2 are deploying SLEs for around a third of the time intended by the policy, while TSA3, at the early stage of its expansion, is deploying its larger number of SLEs for only 16% of the time. Later in this chapter, I will reflect that these levels of deployment might not be typical of the SLE brokering by other TSAs.

6.2.2 Targeting Schools in Need of Support

In addition to the required shift with regard to funding streams, the research findings indicate that there must be greater consistency in determining how SLE deployment is funded across TSAs. Discussion must take place, at Government level, if it is an appropriate use of public funds to broker SLE support to Good or Outstanding schools. Frank Green, schools commissioner opined that there is enough capacity and "good will' in the system, but it needs to marshalled more efficiently. It could be argued that improving areas of weakness in a successful school, in order to maintain its overall effectiveness, is as important as raising standards in those schools who have been awarded Ofsted grades 3 and 4. However, with limited financial and time resources, and the vast majority of struggling schools in the East Midlands not engaging with SLEs during the scope of the study, I would argue that they must take priority. Machin has expressed concern that "coalition academies" do not engender improvements in the most disadvantaged pupils (Machin & Vernoit, 2010). By extension, the evidence of this project's case studies suggests that the TSA system is not yet brokering SLEs to their full capacity to narrow the performance gap between schools, thus levelling the prospects of pupils regardless of which school they are able to attend.

However, while TSA1 was found to be less 'pure' in its approach to deployment than TSA2 and 3, in that more of its deployment days were utilised to deliver CPD rather than

School-to-School Support, approximately 70% of its deployment days targeted support to schools most in need of support to improve.; Therefore, it could be said that they have carried out the greatest volume of work with appropriately-targeted schools. In terms of context, TSA1 has the greatest number of NLEs associated with brokering client schools: the NLE based at the TS, the NLE at in a neighbouring town (Broker1.1), and a third NLE based some 33 miles further away. It could be deduced that these NLEs, who span educational phases, have collaborated together to form an outward-facing network.

6.2.3 Organisation, Local Politics and Funding

As discussed in the macro-level conclusions, the TSA-led SISS and the broader educational landscape are in a state of flux; without clear organisational systems, and while relying on key individual drivers of the self-improving school system, the organic approach adopted by the DfE results in instability and inconsistency at the meso-level. In particular, having each TSA grow its systems in isolation and without a clear 'blueprint' has resulted in a cottage industry, with each case study TSA having to invest in increased administrative and non-teaching leadership capacity. Despite the relative success of TSA1, as defined in 6.2.2 above, the TSA faced difficulty in communication and workflow that was felt to impact on efficiency of SLE brokering; in part, this was due to extra administrative capacity being built into the TS itself, but not the broker's school.

6.2.4 Alliance Membership and Collaboration with Others

With the lack of strategic planning regarding which schools join a particular Alliance, this study raises two key questions: are the right schools in each Alliance? And what happens to those schools which are not members? While the cost of subscribing to Alliance membership may be inhibitive to some schools – perhaps, ironically, to those in greatest need of that collaboration – I would argue that it is vital that TSAs span the boundary of membership to engage with non-member neighbours. The interview findings reported that fewer secondary schools were "on board" in TSA1 because the cost of subscription is calculated per pupil, so the total cost is deemed to be prohibitive.

Notably, TSA1 had an equal number of member and non-member clients and the interview with Broker3 demonstrated an ambitious geographical scope for its network. In

differing ways these "alliance architects" (D. Hargreaves, 2012b-b) are demonstrating the micro-level characteristics required of "boundary spanners" (Lee, 2012).

6.2.5 Phase of Client Schools

From analysis of deployment and interview data, it would seem that primary colleagues who are delegated as SLEs with TSA1 are being brokered more frequently than those of us who are specialists in the secondary phase. I would suggest that pressures of performance-table accountability for secondary schools, especially in the landscape shaped by recent Conservative Secretaries of State for Education[13], might make schools and academies less inclined to collaborate across boundaries. Even in TSA2, where the cost of SLE deployment was met by the LA, and the hub TSA was a LA school and not an Academy, secondary schools were still not engaging with SLE support. In respect to phase, my findings were contrary to those of Qing Gu (Gu et al., 2014); mine proposed that, as primary schools are often smaller they are, therefore, more naturally outward-looking and possess greater inclinations for networking, qualities deemed by Hargreaves to be essential in a maturing SISS (D. Hargreaves, 2012b-b).

6.2.6 Geographical Factors

In many respects, the findings overwhelmingly support the conclusion that efficient SLE deployments take place when the journey time, from home to client school, is not inhibitive. The aforementioned national and global vision of Broker3 could suggest that the geographical concerns of Broker1.1 are psychological; however, within the scope of this project's data collection, TSA3 was yet to demonstrate that their SLEs would effectively be brokered across a wide geographical context. Since many TSAs are now well-established, some, such as TSA1, with alliance members and, therefore, SLEs, at some geographical remove from the broker, I propose, in 6.5, that action needs to be taken to minimise the degree to which geography is a barrier to deployment.

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[13] Those Principal Secretaries of State for Education pertinent to scope of study: Michael Gove (2010-2014); Nicky Morgan (2014-present) (Department for Education, 2014b)

6.3 Micro-level Conclusions

6.3.1 Location, Phase and Specialism of SLE

To continue in a similar vein, the data clearly demonstrates that some SLEs are being deployed less frequently, or not at all, because they are based in a home school at some distance from the broker. As well some SLEs not being well-known to the broker, perceived concerns regarding 'value for money' raise the issue of too much of the daily fee being spent on the SLEs travel time. Furthermore, there are many SLEs who were designated with a specialism which appears to not be in demand. In some cases, I would argue there must be a local need, such as in secondary English, but those with the need are not engaging with SLEs; in other cases, interview data suggests that the Government may have not sufficiently guided TSAs to only recruit and designate SLEs whose specialism is in demand in the local context. Much has already been detailed regarding the less frequent brokering of secondary SLEs; I would just add, here, that there is also professional identity to be considered: the leaders and teachers of secondary education may be less amenable to support than primary colleagues as they are expected to be specialists, and therefore present greater resistance to change as proposed by scholars cited in Chapter 2 (Fullan, 2005a; Kegan & Laskow-Lahey, 2001; Kotter, 1996). Further research with potential clients could perhaps identify whether denial or fear are the overwhelming micro-level barriers

6.3.2 System Leadership Characteristics

Managing the psychological stages of change is naturally a key issue; however, interview data revealed that the pressures of time and ineffective communication responses from individuals at the client school can prevent the mentoring conversations from taking place at all. While this could be a practical issue of time capacity, the excuse could be raised as a barrier to setting up a SLE deployment, at the point of brokering, as a product of the 'change fatigue' (Kotter, 2014) brought on by the breadth and pace of reform, as detailed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 discussed the threats to professional identity and a fear of stigma that all brokers perceived, largely in the Headteachers of potential client schools. Unlike the brokers in this study, it could be argued that potential client heads who are resistant to change are not "Level 5" leaders (Collins, 2001), in that they are afraid to admit weakness, by extension, it

could be said that, if they were stronger leaders, they might not be in need of support in the first place. It is vital, therefore, that the SISS has a strategic commissioning force to overcome barriers at the micro-level. It should be acknowledged that the reluctance to welcome SLEs into their schools is interwoven with a threat to the headteachers' own job security; this could be akin to key personnel in LAs being perceived to work against the SISS, and, by extension, the brokering of SLEs, as a fully-developed SISS would make the LA, and its staff redundant.

6.4 Reflections and Critique of Study

As detailed in Chapter 3, it was not the intention of this study to provide a nationwide, comprehensive set of quantitative findings, nor would this be pragmatically possible as a single researcher conducting a study of this size; instead the grounded theory approach sought to gain a qualitative depth of insight into the factors affecting the frequency of brokering. I believe that my original rationale for enquiry - if and why other SLEs were being brokered more frequently – has been satisfied through the research with the three case study TSAs who engaged in the study. I believe that the three Research Questions, reiterated at the head of this chapter have been answered to the extent and reliability that the study could permit, and the findings of this study are relevant and useful to those involved in the leadership of TSAs.

There are, of course, a number of issues which could have impacted upon the validity of the data gathered and the findings drawn. Notably, Chapter 3 documents the number of TSAs who were approached in relation to this study but who did not participate. While there could be myriad reasons for the lack of engagement, it could be argued that those TSA brokers are more outward-looking as system leaders, at the micro-level, willing to engage reflectively and self-critically in the research process to promote future improvements. Or, it could be argued they believed their track record, with regards to SLE deployment, to be relatively positive and therefore able to withstand scrutiny. Either way, it could be inferred that those TSAs who did not agree to participate have not developed the SLE arm of their hub, focusing on other aspects of the 'Big Six' first and/or they would be professionally embarrassed by their deployment rates; it could follow that the attitudinal barriers that prevent collaborative networks are more prevalent in the majority of TSAs. Therefore, the deployments rates (RQ1) of SLEs across the region could be much lower than those averages reported for the case study TSAs, and the barriers to deployment of SLEs more entrenched at the meso- (RQ2) and micro-levels (RQ3).

Moving on from the participation issue to the validity of data, the problems encountered with regard to the collection of deployment data are covered in Chapter 3. While the collated data cannot be deemed entirely reliable, a small number of omissions or inaccuracies in the collected data would not significantly alter the findings drawn. It is also important, here to reflect on the variety of the contexts surrounding the interviews. Broker1.1 is a former senior colleague with whom trust was already established; as a consequence, some lines of questioning were more leading than intended, the interview was very long, and some humour, tones of collusion and collaborative over-lap were evident when I transcribed the interview. It was essential, therefore, to recognise any potential bias in my interpretation. However, a positive outcome of this prior relationship was the interviewee's willingness to share both bold opinions and information regarding the NC's funding streams for NLE and SLE work, information that was not available to me otherwise. Other issues surrounded my planned interview with Broker1.2: at the outset, Broker1.3 offered to join the meeting and, while I was mindful of possible self-censorship of both sides, I agreed to establish trust and build rapport. However, responses seemed fluid and lines of questioning were responded to in, at time self-critical, depth; the complementary insights offered provided useful interview data across many key analysis strands. The interview with Broker2 was interrupted at one stage, with the colleague remaining present in the room for some time; however, I did not detect any self-censorship, as the interviewee's responses remained full and candid. Due to time constraints and some challenge to engage SLEs as interviewees, it was not possible to select participants to provide a balanced representation of phase, location, specialism, gender, etc. Instead, the approach adopted, as detailed in Chapter 3, was to gather perspectives from those SLEs who had been brokered more or less frequently, but other personal characteristics, rather than simply deployment frequency, could have coloured their perceptions. Since the SLE interviews were conducted via telephone, with much shorter time allowed, at 20 minutes, there was less opportunity to probe for responses than in the broker interviews; furthermore, it was more challenging to establish rapport without face-to-face contact. In one case, an SLE who had been reluctant to engage expressed her concern of "saying the wrong thing", which I interpreted as a reluctance to criticise the TSA or other colleagues; however, once rapport was established, the interviewee did provide some candid responses regarding barriers she had faced.

Reviewing the study more broadly, if time parameters had allowed, I would have liked to extend the action research phase to identify nearby schools who were graded 3 or 4 by Ofsted, so deemed in most need of support from SLEs. This would then present the possibility

of surveying the Heads of those potential client schools to explore, from their perspective, the factors which have prevented brokering from taking place. Of course, it must be acknowledged that, if the factors include reluctance to change and a sense of stigma in needing help, then it could be argued that these school leaders are unlikely to have engaged as participants in the research study. It would have been contextually illuminating, also, to plot all schools and TSAs in the geographical regions surrounding my case study TSAs, noting which are members of or working with Alliances, in order to reveal where there are 'gaps' in the collaborative SISS which was envisaged in the 2010 White Paper (Department for Education, 2010). However, as a single researcher, without access to the data held by the NC, such an audit was not possible within this study.

Most significantly, however, this study does not attempt to analyse the effectiveness of SLE deployments, once they have actually been brokered; it must be acknowledged that the impact of SLEs, to build the intended capacity at middle leader level and to improve outcomes for children, will impact upon the frequency of the brokering of SLEs.

6.5 Recommendations

Reflecting on the findings within this narrow study, therefore, there are key recommendations that can be drawn.

At the macro-level:

1. The Government need to provide a period of stability within the education system: it is imperative that the pace of reform is halted, to allow new systems – including the SISS, curricula and qualification redesigns to become embedded.
2. It is essential to acknowledge that, if we wish to have educational outcomes on a par with countries such as Finland and China, we need to adopt other aspects of their educational culture. It must be recognise that the accountability pressures, especially but not exclusively on the secondary phase, prevent the collaborative ideologies of Finland in that they damage the moral and social fabric of a mutually trusting SISS.
3. TSAs should be permitted to implement the 'Big 6' in a phased approach, to allow them to build capacity and effectively plan for the delivery of each in turn.
4. There needs to be clearer guidance on effective systems for brokering, coupled with greater transparency with regard to funding streams, to promote fairness and equality of opportunity for all schools in need of support.
5. To recover inefficiencies caused by lack of clarity or imprecision in the early stages of policy implementation, the NC needs to either de-designate SLEs whose specialism is not matched to local need, or to adopt a less specific approach to the labelling of secondary SLEs, recognising that, like primary colleagues, they could offer support in a number of areas, through their transferrable leadership experiences.

At the meso-level:

6. There must be a strategic overview and commissioning force of the brokering of SLEs to be deployed in school-to-school support. The body responsible for this might be the recently-formed TSC, but there is a need to eradicate confusion over the roles and geographical accountability of new agencies such as TSC and RSC. An expansion of, or heightened activity of existing, NLEs or similar should result in the appropriate targeting schools in need of support.

7. To overcome the inconsistency in the national coverage of TSAs, these need to be mapped, as does the membership of them. Targeted action is required to support those schools who are isolated from collaborative networks, so all are brought into the SISS.

8. The commissioning force would need to diminish the degree of competition between TSAs, and between TSAs and their LA. This should result in a pooling of resources, such as SLEs, so that the most efficient support solution for a local school can be actioned. This would then allow SLEs to be deployed to home schools within a reasonable distance to their home school, even if they are designated by a TSA that is based further away.

9. In addition, to rationalise the factors of travel and communication, it might be pertinent for some SLEs to have the designation transferred to a more local TSA, one that might have been formed since they became an SLE.

10. Available funding should be used to deploy SLEs to support schools most in need. While that could be a currently Outstanding or Good school that has a serious area of concern that would result in deterioration of standards, priority must be given to those schools who have an Ofsted grading of Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

11. Best practice in and effective outcomes of SLE deployments need to be shared with all school leaders; over time, this should allow the concept to be established and mistrust of the Academy movement, and thereby TSAs and SLEs, to be diminished.

At the micro-level:

12. A review of the process for the financial aspects of brokering should seek to appease the conflict of ideologies that finds SLEs uncomfortable with the concept of charging for their services.

13. There must be a system in place to ensure that Headteachers who are reluctant to engage in School-to-School Support, and receive support from a NLE and SLEs, are required to engage with the support and provide the time capacity for their middle leaders to do so. While enforcement will not be likely to diminish resistance to change or a sense of stigma, deployment of SLEs will take place and thereby build capacity and enhance the leadership potential of the middle leaders who are the Headteachers and system leaders of tomorrow.

Appendix 1: SLE Application Form and Criteria

National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Specialist leaders of education (SLE)

Application and reference form

General guidance

This form is set out in two sections. Section 1 is completed by you, the applicant and section 2 is completed by your headteacher (referee). There is a 300 word limit for each answer. Once you have completed section 1, the form should be emailed to your headteacher to complete the reference section and submit the document on your behalf. This will complete the application process.

It is strongly advised that applicants read the full SLE application guidance before completing their application.

Headteacher reference

It is important that headteachers endorse the applicant's intention to apply for the role of an SLE. You are therefore required to provide a reference from your headteacher that supports your application and validates both your eligibility and capacity to perform the role.

Once your headteacher has completed the reference section of this form, he or she will need to return the whole document using the instructions provided by the teaching school. Your application will not be fully submitted and therefore cannot be considered until this has been completed.

Section 1

Application form *(to be completed by the SLE applicant)*

Applicant details

Title	
Surname	
First name	
Role	
School	
School URN	
School phase	
Address	
Phone	
Email	

Teaching schools will use this information to contact you.

Teaching School Alliance you wish to consider your application.	*(Teaching School to insert alliance name)*

Eligibility criteria confirmation

a) Do you hold a leadership role or responsibility **within your school**?

Yes ☐   No ☐

b) Please indicate how long you have been in this role. If less than two years, please provide details of your previous leadership role or responsibility. Please include the name of the school where the role was held.

<table>
<tr><td>

</td></tr>
</table>

Your specialism

Please indicate the specialist area(s) that you wish to be designated for.

Specialism	Mark your specialism(s) with a cross (X)	Length of time in role (this should be at least two years)
Leadership and management		
Academies and academy transition		
Assessment		
Leadership of continuing professional development (CPD)		
School business management and financial management		
Leadership of curriculum		
Pupil achievement		
Art		
Closing the gap		
Drama		
Design and technology		
Early years		
English		
Geography		
History		
Information and communications technology (ICT)		
Maths		
Music		
Modern foreign languages (MfL)		
Personal, social and health		

education (PSHE)		
Phonics		
Physical Education (PE)		
Science		
Special educational needs (SEN)		
Support for most able pupils		
Religious Education (RE)		
Quality of teaching		
Initial teacher training (ITT) and newly qualified teacher (NQT) development		
Behaviour and safety		
Behaviour and discipline		
Attendance		

Question 1

What **motivates** you to participate in system leadership?

Word limit: 300 words

Question 2

Please outline the **significant impact of your contribution** as a leader to supporting leaders in other schools or to your own school's performance. Please detail the impact and demonstrate clear evidence of your outstanding practice within your area(s) of expertise or specialism.

Question 3

Please provide examples of where you have worked sensitively and collaboratively with peer colleagues using **coaching or facilitation skills** to grow leadership capacity in others leading to sustainable improvements.

Question 4

Please provide a clear example of a time when you have significantly **challenged, collaborated, motivated and/or inspired** your colleagues to establish new, innovative working practices. What was the impact?

Question 5

Please give excerpts from Ofsted reports if your practice has been cited there and/or performance results/outcomes you have been accountable for in your area of work have been commented on. Please reference clearly the Ofsted report(s) where these comments are made as these may be verified.

Additional information

Please provide any other information that demonstrates your expert knowledge in your field of expertise in support of your application.

Additional requirements

If you are successful, you will be invited to a face-to-face assessment by the teaching school alliance you have selected. If you have any special requirements that they should be aware of, please state these below.

Section 2

Reference *(to be completed by the headteacher referee)*

SLEs are outstanding leaders, with at least two years' experience and excellent knowledge in a particular field of expertise. They work to support individuals and teams in other schools by providing high-level coaching, mentoring and support, drawing on their knowledge and expertise in their specialist area.

All applicants must meet the essential criteria to be accepted as an SLE. Each application is rigorously assessed against the eligibility criteria. We therefore ask referees to take this into account when making a decision to recommend an applicant for the role.

Headteacher details

Name	
Confirmation of role	
School name	
Email address	

How long have you known the applicant?	

1a. Please confirm the applicant's current role.

1b. Does the applicant hold leadership responsibility within your school?

Yes ☐   No ☐

2. Please provide a supporting statement in the box below on how you consider the applicant meets the following criteria:

- The applicant is an outstanding middle or senior leader with at least two years' experience and excellent knowledge in a particular field of expertise.
- The applicant has a successful track record supported by substantial evidence of impact of working effectively within his or her own school and/or across a group of schools, or working with a range of leaders within a single school.
- The applicant has a commitment to outreach work and the capacity to undertake such work.
- You support their application and the applicant can be released from school for a mutually agreed allocation of time.
- The applicant understands what constitutes 'outstanding' in his or her field of expertise.
- The applicant has an appreciation of how his or her specialism and skills can contribute to the wider school improvement agenda.
- The applicant has an analytical approach to identifying needs and can prioritise accordingly.

3. Do you support this application and agree to the applicant being released from the school for a mutually agreed allocation of time?

Yes ☐   No ☐

4. Please provide evidence to confirm that the applicant has supported a middle or senior leader or group of leaders from another school or academy.

Alternatively, please provide details demonstrated with colleagues from within the applicant's own school.

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5. Please tick a box below to indicate which statement matches your support for the applicant:

a. I recommend this person unreservedly to undertake the role of an SLE
☐

b. I recommend this person for the role of SLE, but have some reservations
☐

c. I am unable to recommend this person for the role of SLE
☐

6. Additional comments

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. If you have indicated that you have reservations in recommending or feel unable to recommend this applicant, the teaching school alliance may contact you to discuss the position.

Please return this form to:

Name: *(Teaching School to insert contact details for application return)*

Email:

The application will not be considered until this process has been completed.

Should you need assistance, please contact the helpdesk on 0345 609 0009.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, the applicant you are providing a reference for has the right to view the reference, should he or she ask to do so. Please do not include any information that you would not be happy to discuss with the applicant as part of a professional conversation.

If you have any queries regarding this application, please refer to the guidance for further help and support.

- [Guidance for applicants](#)

(Press control and click to view documents)

Appendix 2: Characteristics of Case Study Teaching School Alliances

All data pertains to the timeframe of the SLE deployment data, May 2012 to March 2014.

2.1 TSA1: *Characteristics of Hub Teaching School*

Location	East Midlands, suburban
Phase	Secondary, 11-18
Status	Sponsored Academy since 2008, formerly a CTC
Ofsted grading	Outstanding
TS Wave	1
Designated SLEs	Total 15, of whom:

	Cohort 1 = 5	(May 2012)
	Cohort 2 = 8	(Feb 2013)
	Cohort 3 = 0	(Sep 2013)
	Cohort 4 = 2	(Feb 2014)

Notable features	The hub TS has its own NLE, in addition to a second NLE who was SLE broker during scope of research; Church of England Diocese is Strategic Member of TSA

Characteristics of SLE Broker and Broker's School

Other Roles	NLE; Headteacher of Alliance Strategic Member School
Location	10 miles from Teaching School, suburban
Phase	Secondary, 11-18
Status	Converter Academy since 2011, formerly Church of England Voluntary

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TSA1 Hierarchical Chart

118
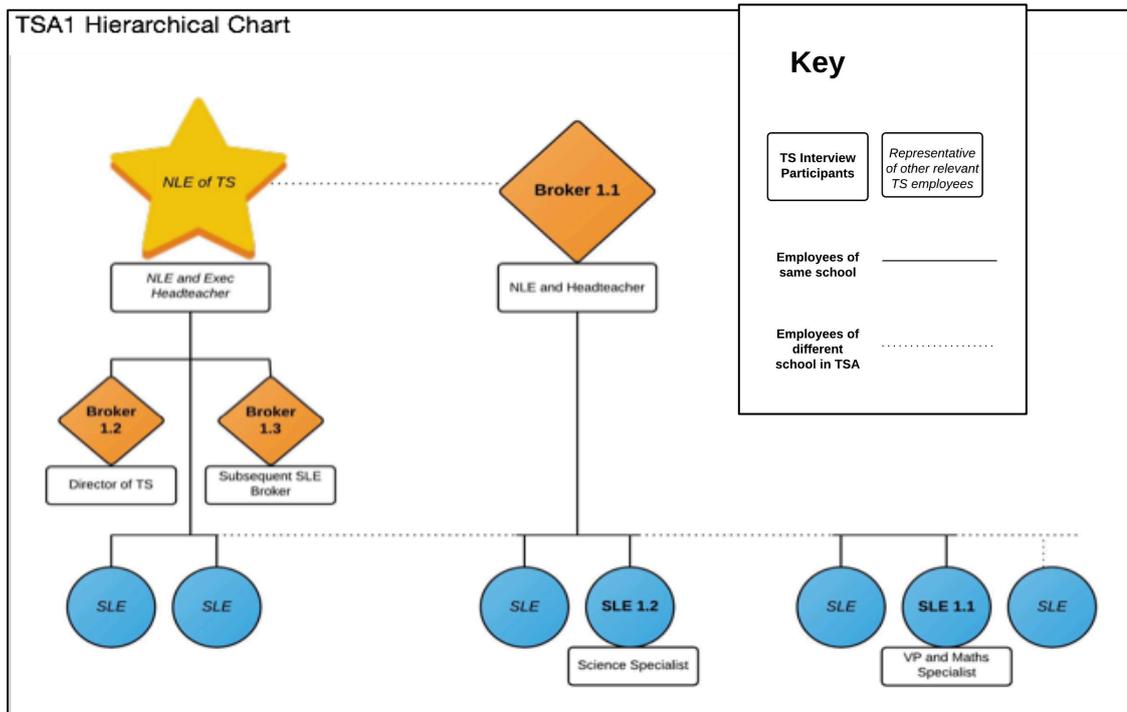
2.2 TSA2

Characteristics of Hub Teaching School

Location	East Midlands, urban
Phase	Secondary, 11-18
Status	LA, awaiting Academy Conversion at time of writing
Ofsted grading	Outstanding
TS Wave	1
Designated SLEs	Total 23, of whom:
	Cohort 1 =10
	Cohort 2 = 1
	Cohort 3 = 7
	Cohort 4 = 5
Notable features	Local Authority and its Education Improvement Partnership are Strategic Members of TSA

Characteristics of SLE Broker and Broker's School

Other Roles	Deputy Head; Director of Teaching School

TSA2 Hierarchical Chart
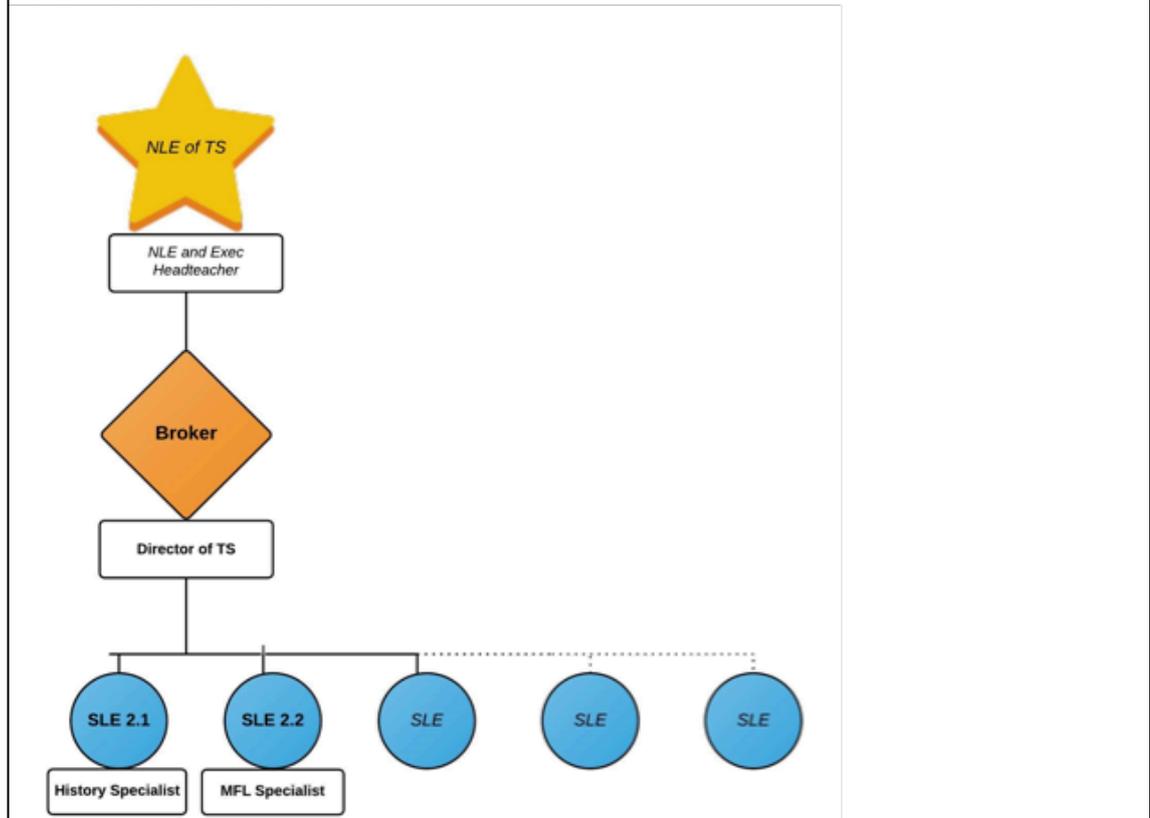
2.3 TSA3

Characteristics of Hub Teaching School

Location	East Midlands, urban
Phase	Primary, 3-11
Status	Academy Converter since 2012, formerly LA
Ofsted grading	Outstanding
TS Wave	2
Designated SLEs	Total 18, of whom:
	Cohort 1 = 1
	Cohort 2 = 1
	Cohort 3 = 1
	Cohort 4 = 15
Notable features	Alliance members include 1 school in USA and 4 in India, and UK schools up to
	365 miles' distance from TS.

Characteristics of SLE Broker and Broker's School

Other Roles	Lead SLE; Assistant Head of Alliance Strategic Member School
Location	10 miles from Teaching School, semi-rural
Phase	Primary
Status	Academy

TSA3 Hierarchical Chart
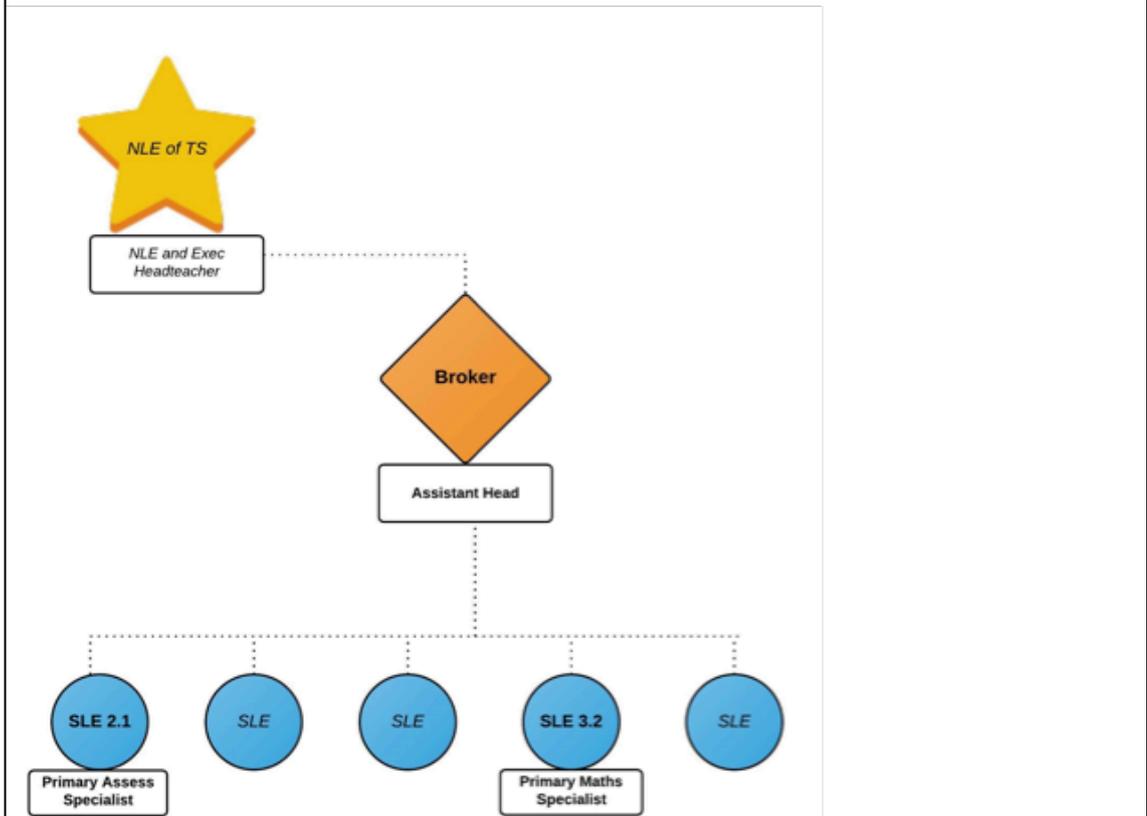
2.4 Profile of Alliance Members, number *and percentage*								
TSA	Primary Phase		Secondary Phase		Other Schools		Others		Total
1	7	*37*	7	37	1	*5*	4	*21*	19
2	15	*43*	11	30	2	*6*	7	*20*	35
3	40	*67*	14	23	6*	*10*	0	*0*	60

*1 Special School England; 1 school USA, 4 schools India

2.5 Profile of Alliance Member Schools by Phase and Status**											
TSA	Primary Phase				Secondary Phase				Special Schools		
	Academy/FS		LA M/VA/C		Academy/FS		LA M/VA/C		Academy/FS		LA M/VA/C
1	4	*27 %*	3	*20 %*	7	*47 %*	0	*0 %*	0	*0 %*	1	*7 %*
2	1	*4 %*	14	*50 %*	4	*14 %*	7	*25 %*	0	*0 %*	2	*4 %*
3	18	*33 %*	21	*38 %*	11	*20 %*	4	*7 %*	0	*0 %*	1	*2 %*

** UK Schools only, as only these have SLEs operating in the region

2.6 Number of SLEs by Phase and Alliance Membership												
TSA	Primary Phase				Secondary Phase				Other Schools			
	Total n	*Total %*	Mem n	*Mem % of total*	Total n	*Total %*	Mem n	*Mem % of total*	Total n	*Total %*	Mem n	*Mem % of total*
1	8	*53*	7	*47*	7	*47*	7	*47*	0	*0*	0	*0*
2	6	*26*	1	*4*	16	*70*	14	*61*	1	*4*	1	*4*
3	17	*94*	14	*78*	1	*6*	1	*6*	0	*0*	0	*0*

2.7 Characteristics of SLE Interview Participants			
TSA	Identifier	Phase and Specialism	Other Contextual Factors
1	**SLE1.1**	Secondary Mathematics	Male; SLE home school is 67 miles from TS; senior leader in home school
	SLE1.2	Secondary Science	Male; SLE home school is Broker1.1's school, 10 miles from TS; middle leader in home school; former AST
2	**SLE2.1**	Secondary History	Male; SLE home school is the TS; middle leader in home school; former AST
	SLE2.2	Secondary MFL	Female; SLE home school is the TS; in SLE job-share
3	**SLE3.1**	Primary KS1 Curriculum and Assessment	Female; SLE home school is 31 miles from TS; in middle leadership role in home school
	SLE3.2	Primary KS2 Mathematics	Male; SLE home school is 13 miles from TS; in middle leadership role in home school; former AST

Appendix 3

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Informed Consent Form

Title: Factors affecting the brokering of Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs)

I understand that I am being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Julie Grant (the researcher). I understand that the purpose of this research study is to explore and identify factors which influence the brokering of SLEs, such as the characteristics of the teaching school and the SLEs, as well as the characteristics of client – or potential client – schools.

I understand that I will be providing information through a single interview in which I will be asked questions about factors affecting the brokering of SLEs, such as practical, geographical, financial or other matters.

I understand that I may decline to answer any questions and that I may withdraw my agreement to participate at any time during the interview or for up to seven days after the completion of the interview, whichever is the latest. At that time, I know that I may indicate whether or not the data collected up to that point can be used in the study, and that any information I do not want used will be destroyed immediately.

I understand that the interview will be audio recorded, and this recording may later be transcribed. I understand that I will have an opportunity to comment on the written record once it has been produced. I understand that the interview data will be handled and stored in a manner which ensures that only the researcher can identify me as their source. I understand that I am being offered confidentiality in any written report or oral presentation that draws upon data from this research study, and that none of my comments, opinions, or responses will be attributed to me, nor to any other person discussed in the interview. I understand that the researcher will do everything possible to ensure that my identity, or that of the institution for which I work, cannot be deduced by a reader; however, the geographical position of a school, or other of its characteristics, could possibly result in identification of the school and, by extension, its staff.

I understand that, upon completion of the MA thesis in Autumn 2015, the raw primary interview data will be destroyed. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and received ethics approval following the procedures of the Department of Educational Studies, University of York. In case of query I should contact, at The University of York, either the researcher's supervisor, Dr Paul Wakeling, Department for Education (paul.wakeling@york.ac.uk) or the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Dr Emma Marsden (emma.marsden@york.ac.uk).

Do you agree to participate in the study? Yes ____ No ____

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4

4.1 Semi-structured Interview Schedule 1

Used as a basis for all interviews with Brokers and SLEs:

- View of 2010-White Paper? Motivation for system leadership? Its potential, in general terms?
- Views on organisation of TSA: successes? Challenges?
- S2S Support systems/organisation- views? Views on restructuring of systems?
- Successes and challenges of SLEs in S2S support?
    - TRENDS in specialism/gender/phase of support?
    - Brokering from/to a particular school?
    - Any schools reluctant/refused offers of support?
- Which deployments have been free/chargeable?
- How build on successes/overcome barriers to improve system?
    - Time? Capacity? Governance? Comms and marketing?
- Other thoughts?

4.2 Semi-structured Interview Schedule 2

Used as a basis for interview with the Schools Commissioner:

- View of 2010-White Paper? Motivation for system leadership?
- Role of Schools Commissioner? Where fit in politically and organizationally within DfE? Capacity to promote SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL SUPPORT?
- S2S support systems/organization? Why are RSC regions different to those of NC?
- Successes and challenges of SLEs in S2S support? How can deliver on White Paper?
- How build on successes/overcome barriers to improve system?
    - Time? Capacity? Governance? Comms and marketing?
- Other thoughts?

Glossary

'Big 6'	The key responsibilities of a Teaching School :

          1. Continued Professional Development (CPD);
          2. Initial Teacher Training (ITT);
          3. School-to-school support (S2SS);
          4. Deployment of SLEs;
          5. Research and Development;
          6. Talent Management and Leadership Development.

Broker	Senior leader responsible for brokering the deployment of a Specialist Leader of Education to support a client school
Broker1.1, etc	The brokers from the case study Teaching School Alliances – see Appendix 2 for hierarchical diagrams
Client school	A school receiving support from a Teaching School, NLE, LLE or SLE
Designation	Appointment as a Teaching School, or as an NLE, SLE, etc
DfE	Department for Education[14]
Home school	The school by which a Specialist Leader of Education is employed, which may or may not be the Teaching School
LLE	Local Leader of Education
NC	National College for Teaching and Leadership[15]
School	For ease of reference, this term is used to collectively refer to all state schools, Free Schools and Academies
SLE	Specialist Leader of Education
SLE1.1, etc	SLEs who participated in interviews
S2SS	School-to-school support
SCITT	School-centred Initial Teacher Training
SISS	Self-improving school system
TS	Teaching School; this usually forms an Alliance with other schools
TSA	Teaching School Alliance
TSA1, TSA2, TSA3	The three TSAs who participated as case studies
TSC	Teaching Schools Council

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[14] For ease of reference, this acronym is used to represent the different names of the Government Responsible for Education during the scope of policy research which underpins this study:

    2001 – 2007   Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
    2007 – 2010   Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
    2010 – present   Department for Education (DfE)

[15] NC is used as an acronym both for the National College for Teaching and Leadership, the executive agency of the Government formed in April 2013 as a result of a merge with the Teacher Training Agency, and for its previous identity, the National College of School Leadership, the non-departmental government body formed in 2000. In both guides, the National College has been responsible for implementing policies pertaining to NLEs, SLEs, and Teaching Schools, as well as talent management programmes to promote the growth of school leaders and Headteachers.

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