The mediation of Further Education

professionalisation policies

at the meso-level of policy-making

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DECLARATION

I, Sabrina Poma confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

Using a case study composed of meso-level organisations, with a particular emphasis on Higher Education institutions, the thesis focuses on the mediation of Further Education professionalisation policies during and following the 2012 Lingfield review. The literature reflects a 'top down' application of Further Education professionalisation policies but there is theoretical evidence that policy-making is a 'messy' process. Drawing on a hybrid theoretical and analytical framework, which suggests that the organisations studied mirror 'issue' networks' practices, the study examines the processes and levels of agency exercised by players whilst mediating policies. The level of agency is of importance in a sector described as the Cinderella of education. Central to the argument of this thesis is thus the current and potential agency of the policy players.

The findings confirm that the mediation is a 'messy' and complex process. They reveal that the network's meso-level policy-players are not all equal and that they mediate policies through an exchange of resources, interactions and 'playing games'. As a resource, funding has the most currency but professional expertise has been undermined. Players struggle with their relationship with government but also with their peers, particularly in the case of Higher Education, whose policy-making behaviour is perceived as protectionist. The findings identify two specific games operated 'below the radar'; one of connivance and the other of avoidance, and stress the need for the Further Education sector to evolve from its current 'Cinderella' image. The case study shows that the meso-level policy mediation practices have little impact and that the players react to the policy-making process. The study concludes that the players need to progress from a reactive to a proactive level of mediation to increase agency over policy-making. It suggests the adoption of a 'nibble and nudge' strategy embedded within a triple professionalism framework.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS
AND
ABBREVIATIONS

AoC   Association of Colleges

AELP   Association of Employment and Learning Providers

BIS   Department of Business Innovation and Skills

CBI   Confederation of British Industry

CETT   Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training

CoP   Community of Practice

CPD   Continuing Professional Development

DfE   Department for Education

DFEE   Department for Education and Employment

DfES   Department for Education and Skills

DIUS   Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills

EBP   Evidence Based Policy

EBR   Evidence Based Research

ETF   Education and Training Foundation

FE   Further Education

FEC   Further Education College

FEDA   Further Education Development Agency

FEFC   Further Education Funding Council

FENTO   Further Education National Training Organisation

FEPPMN   Further Education Professionalisation Policy Network

HE   Higher Education

HEFCE   Higher Education Funding for England

HEI   Higher Education Institution

IfL   Institute for Learning

ITE   Initial Teacher Education

ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LLUK	Lifelong Learning United Kingdom
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NIACE	National Institute for Adult and Community Education
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PCET	Post Compulsory Education and Training
QTLS	Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills
Quango	Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation
RL	Research-led
SCETT	Standing Committee for the Education and Training of Teachers
SVUK	Standard Verification United Kingdom
TEd	Teacher Educator
TELL	Teacher Education in Lifelong Learning
TL	Teaching-led
UCET	University Council for the Education of Teachers
UCU	University and College Union

APPENDICES

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STATEMENT

I initially enrolled on the Doctor in Education (EdD) programme at the Institute of Education (IoE) for several reasons. My then new role as a senior lecturer in post-compulsory initial teacher education (ITE) required the uptake of doctoral studies in order to a. develop as a researcher and academic, b. gain a doctoral qualification, which was expected at my level of work, mostly for professional recognition purposes. My institution did offer such a programme, either in the form of an EdD or a Doctor in Philosophy (PhD). However, whilst my university had much experience in the delivery of ITE in Post-Compulsory Education, it lacked theoretical and research credentials in this context. I had previously attended a series of continuing professional development (CPD) workshops and conferences at the IoE and realised it was best equipped to support me with doctoral research and the completion of a research degree. I thought that the progressive nature of the EdD part-time programme would provide a structure and support, which seemed beneficial for a full-time early-career academic but would also give me time to identify the right area of research and progress as a researcher.

At the time of application, I was involved in the development of teacher education programmes and had contributed to the writing of a book aimed at professionals teaching within the 14-19 education phase. My initial proposal thus emerged from this involvement but also from an interest in the 14-19 hybrid sector. But, as I was to discover at a later date, government policies concerning 14-19 education led to the withdrawal of funding for related teaching programmes. The interest in the sector was thus in decline and it became obvious that researching this area may not only be challenging in terms of evidence-gathering but also may not benefit my future career prospects. During the first EdD module, Foundations of Professionalism (FoP), I realised that the notion of professionalism in Further Education (FE) was clearly engrained in my role as a teacher educator and deserved to be explored in more depth in subsequent papers. I will now summarise and synthesise my learning experience on the programme and indicate the significant learning points.

I will first address the learning in terms of knowledge acquisition, which constructed not only my current understanding of professionalism but also the role of policy-making within the FE professionalisation process. Initially, I first approached the notion of professionalism (FoP) from a FE-centric perspective; I was aware of most of the literature regarding the current arguments in the education sector such as marketisation, managerialism and performativity impacting on professionals. The Specialist, the Institution Focused Study (IFS) and the Thesis enabled me to explore professionalism in more depth and from a more theoretical viewpoint. The main learning points related to the diversity of categorisation and also the use of professionalism as a political and activist identity in education and the role of policies and ideology as pivotal to the development and implementation of ITE programmes.

Overall, the new knowledge and understanding gained enabled me to revise some of my views with regard to professionalism. For instance, the FoP, the Methods of Enquiry 1 (MoE1), the IFS and the Thesis paper mentioned the teacher training versus teacher education debate and argued the importance of including Higher Education (HE) within the professionalisation process. Whilst I still hold the view that the recent government's teacher training agenda is closely linked to the technicisation of the professional and may lead to the de-professionalisation of teachers, I am less inclined to consider HE's current professionalisation epistemological and pedagogical approaches as the most suitable for FE professional formation (see discussion in thesis on Goodson's (2003) 'devil's bargain' in 2.4.1).

But, the most significant aspect of the EdD programme was the focus on policy-making. As briefly discussed in my thesis's introduction (1.1), my initial view was that a 'top-down' structure was characteristic of policy-making in English FE ITE. The discussions as part of the Specialist sessions, the interviews undertaken for my thesis and my subsequent reading revealed a much more complex process, which involved policies being interpreted at various levels of mediation. Whilst my thesis focuses mostly on the meso-level of mediation, the literature enabled me to grasp that enactment if not agency was very much part of this process. Furthermore, researching policy networks as part of my thesis's analytical framework not only provided a useful structure

but also knowledge about potential interactions within the policy-making process. It is fair to say that the theoretical literature on policy-making is, at times, confusing and/or contradictory but this allowed me to construct my own stance on the process. Overall, my thesis's findings challenged my understanding of policy-making and provided a much richer picture of the process.

As a researcher, the learning has focused both on a technical and a more academic level. Both the MoE (1 and 2) papers and the IFS enabled me to examine a range of methodologies such as action research and mixed-methods but mostly to consider the role of a theoretical framework to develop an argument and identify the appropriate research design and tools. This became particularly evident for the articulation of how policies were being mediated in the thesis. With regard to a more technical aspect, the IFS was an opportunity to undertake a larger research project, which could be of use to my institution as a piece of course evaluation and to practise the incorporation of all of the elements (concepts, theoretical framework, research tools and discussion of the argument) I had seen from FoP to the Specialist module. Following on from MoE2, I deliberately decided to carry out a mixed-methods approach to gain further experience in survey design skills. As Gorard (2002) states, many education researchers tend to display a 'I do not do numbers' attitude but I wanted to ensure that I would not limit myself to qualitative studies, which may be restrictive in terms of data gathering and also opportunities for future research. The learning point resided in the design of the e-questionnaire and the efforts taken to formulate, balance and measure the questions. This is a skill that I clearly need to develop further but I found the use of a mixed-methods approach best suited to a pragmatic stance in research. In addition, my supervisor's advice encouraged me to conceptualise my thinking through the use of graphs and figures. This was not innate in the first instance as I had previously tended to use these mostly for aesthetic purposes, but the IFS, and particularly the Thesis show some development in abstract reflection and the ability to present results and concepts in a more visual manner.

As a writer, the need for rigour was highlighted in my feedback from the first submission. For instance, whilst my FoP paper was of good quality, it did not answer the question fully and the use of language was at times inappropriate and/or vague. I have learnt that writing at a doctoral level involves focus, accuracy and the need for clarity. This is perhaps a confidence issue commonly found with 'English as a foreign language' speakers who tend to compensate for their language skills by employing complex terminology in order to gain greater credibility. The initial and subsequent feedback received by the examiners, my critical friend but mostly my supervisor was pivotal to my efforts to develop a more precise writing 'voice' for further papers.

In summary, the EdD programme has contributed to my professional development in the following ways:

- The gaining of some authority on the subject matter e.g. professionalism and policy-making
- The ability to design the study from a theoretical perspective
- The ability to select the appropriate research design and tools to answer the research question
- The ability to progress my papers and ideas from the feedback given
- The gaining of greater confidence in my writing and researcher skills
- The ability to assert my views in a critical manner following a thorough literature research and evaluation
- The realisation that I can be creative and 'brave' with my arguments and concepts

Within my own professional role, the learning on the EdD programme has enabled me to increase my research and academic profile. For instance, I have published and presented several individual and co-papers and I was invited as a keynote speaker to a conference in June 2016. I have also progressed within my own faculty and engaged in more knowledge-exchange schemes as well as devising a series of professionalism and policy modules based on my papers' readings and findings. It has also given me the confidence to progress from my previous position and be appointed to a new role within a London University centre for HE research and practice.

It is clear that my new professional environment will enable me to continue developing my research and academic skills. I have identified that the synthesising of my thesis and its adaption and dissemination to various audiences such as academic journals, is perhaps central to a post-doctoral experience. I will seek to discuss this point with my supervisor and explore ways in which the connections made as part of the EdD programme could facilitate and enhance my future academic career.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research rationale and aim

In 2012, the then Further Education (FE) and Skills minister John Hayes announced that he was to commission a report into FE professionalism to review the current professionalism processes in England. The independent review was initiated as a result of the concerns expressed in the Wolf report (DfE, 2011) regarding vocational education and the lack of outstanding teaching and learning in FE underlined in 'New challenges, new chances' (BIS, 2011). In parallel, it also aimed to settle the dispute between the Institute for Learning (IfL) and FE lecturers and unions regarding the compulsory nature of professional membership. Yet, the chair of the review, Lord Lingfield, was given a much wider remit, in which he would investigate the FE workforce regulations 2007, which required FE lecturers to be qualified and complete a series of continuing professional development (CPD). Following a period of consultation, the Lingfield review concluded that the current professionalisation of FE lecturers was inadequate due to there being too much centralised interference. The final recommendations proposed instead a discretionary model of professionalisation, which would remove the need for regulation, compulsory teacher qualification and CPD (BIS, 2012b, 2012c). The 2007 FE workforce regulations were subsequently revoked.

Key debates on FE professionalism[1] and professionalisation can be traced back to the 1990s following the incorporation of English FE Colleges. During that time, the increasing marketisation of FE led to a period of de-professionalisation (Lucas, 2004a; Smith, 2007). However, the election of the New Labour government in 1997 marked a cycle of re-professionalisation underpinned by the design of professional standards and the mandatory

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[1] Prior to the incorporation of colleges in 1993, there had been a steady increase of FE teachers being professionalised through DfE designated ITE qualifications. CertEd and/or PGCE qualifications were mostly undertaken in HE teacher training centres. Lucas (2004a) notes the domination of Huddersfield, Bolton, Wolverhampton and Garnet College although a franchise system between HEIs and FECs delivering ITE qualifications was also common practice. However, a majority of FE colleges and other training providers also offered Awarding Bodies' teaching qualifications e.g. City and Guilds 730 series certificates.

requirement for FE teachers to hold a teaching qualification (DfES, 2006). But, according to the Lingfield review, attempts to professionalise the sector through government regulations have been largely unsuccessful and the latest deregulation proposals only confirm the fragility of FE professionalism (BIS, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c; LSIS, 2012).

I have been involved in the FE sector as a lecturer and a teacher educator since 1993. I am currently a senior lecturer in Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) in a large teaching-led university in the South East of England, which mostly provides FE pre-service and in-service initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in partnership with FE colleges. The impact of the Lingfield review was thus of importance for my present role. Initially, my research interest was focused on the potential impact of the review as the publication coincided with my planning for my thesis on the Doctor in Education programme. But the emphasis eventually shifted towards examining the FE professionalisation policy-making process at the meso-level for the following reasons:

First, during the Lingfield review consultation process, I attended a meeting in which the HE post-16 ITE community (this concept is discussed further during the thesis and in particular in Chapter 5), represented by the University Council for Education of Teachers (UCET), embarked on a mission to convince the review panel of the benefits of a regulatory model. But UCET had no doubt that this was very much a 'salvage exercise' with little hope of success. In UCET's view, the proposal in the interim review to remove the compulsory nature of a teacher training qualification seemed to be driven by political ideology rather than evidence and only emphasised the lack of understanding or even interest in the sector's professionalism needs. However, I was also shocked by the ITE community's resignation to the outcome. I was brought up in France where policies are often made and unmade 'in the streets', particularly in education, as reforms are notoriously unpopular in the unified and heavily unionised French teaching sector. To date, teachers in France are still a powerful lobby and limited changes in French education have been effected since my departure for the United

Kingdom in 1989. Given the striking differences in attitudes and processes, I was therefore curious to investigate the background and mechanisms of FE policy-making in England, which affected my current professional role.

Second, as I progressed with my reading on FE professionalism and policy-making, I encountered literature that increasingly promoted an active engagement with policy: for Ozga researching education policy is a 'professional obligation and an entitlement for the educationalist' (2000, p7), for Gale (2003), it is part of a democratic process, whilst Hodgson and Spours (2006) also consider the researcher's role to form part of the improvement of systems. My role as a researcher could then perhaps be part of this engagement and make a small contribution towards the advancement of FE professionalisation policy-making.

Third, I was and, to a certain extent, I still am convinced of the ability of communities to drive change. At the time of writing my proposal, my 'community' was very much HE focused e.g. HEIs, HE in FE partner colleges, UCET and Teacher Education Lifelong Learning (TELL). But my initial literature research and conversations with colleagues and my supervisor revealed that this community could be extended to represent the various groups that had a direct interest and influence in FE professionalisation policy-making such as the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), The University and College Union (UCU), the 157 group (representing the largest FE colleges in England) and the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). These groups can be placed at the meso-level in an analysis of policy-making because of their mediation role between the wider influences on policy at the macro level and its application at the micro level or 'at the point in time when it is finally delivered' (Hudson and Lowe, 2009, p9). The meso-level organisations (or players as they are later identified) are also relevant insofar as they can act as a 'buffer-zone' or 'filter' (Hudson and Lowe, 2009, p11) between broad issues such as the marketisation of education, the government's agenda and FE professionals at 'ground' level. Therefore, they have a significant influence over policy-making and contribute to the construction of policies (Bowe et al., 1992; Ozga, 2000; Hodgson and Spours, 2006).

The aim of the study was to research the ways in which meso-level players mediated these policies and exercised agency over policy-making in relation to FE professionalisation. The research questions are addressed in Chapter 2 as they emerged as a result of the discussion of the literature search and the identification of the conceptual framework. Within this thesis, the term 'mediation' is understood to be more than the 'passing on' of polices. It is used to describe the intervention in which policies are shaped, enacted and interacted and as such, it forms an integral part of policy-making. Agency is seen not only as 'an ability to exert control over and give direction to one's life, including one's professional practice' (Lawy and Tedder, 2009, p54) but also as an 'achievement' via interaction and within a temporal context (Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Lawy and Tedder, 2009). The development of agency is discussed in more depth in Chapter 5. The use of 'FE' has been selected to combine the terms 'post-compulsory education and training' and 'Lifelong Learning'. When these are mentioned interchangeably within the thesis, it is done to reflect the literature and the various changes with regard to the sector's labelling.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters and four appendices. This introduction is Chapter One.

Chapter Two reviews the background and existing literature on the notion professionalism and professionalisation as an overall concept and the various forms of professionalism found in education. It moves on to explore models of professionalisation and introduces the teacher training-teacher education dichotomy and how this has influenced professionalisation policy-making. It then narrows its focus down to FE professionalisation and relates to the different phases of policy-making since 1993. Finally, the chapter indicates the conceptual framework that informs the research questions for the thesis.

Chapter Three introduces the theoretical and methodological frameworks that underpin this thesis. It first discusses the policy-making process on which it is based and then proposes a hybrid analytical framework to respond to and re-organise the 'messiness' of policy-making at the meso-level based on the

concept of network analysis. It justifies the case study as the research design, defines the case and discusses the use of semi-structured interviews as a tool to gather the data. It also addresses the processes used to analyse the data. It goes on to discuss the Further Education Professionalisation Policy Network as the chosen meso-level sample for the study and rationalises the selection of individual policy-players. Finally, the chapter reviews the ethical dimensions for the study and confirms the role of the case study in exploring the mediation of Further Education Policies at the meso-level of policy-making.

Chapter Four presents the findings from the interviews, divided into four sections identified from the hybrid analytical framework. The sections identify and discuss the positions, resources exchanged, interactions and games being played within the network. From the data gathered, the chapter argues that the network's mediation of policy has been mostly fragmented and limited in terms of agency. It concludes that the network has been reactive to policy-making. As a result, it introduces a proactive strategy to develop the Further Education Professionalisation Policy Network's agency over policy-making informed by the players' data.

Chapter Five first addresses the findings in relation to the theoretical framework. It reviews a range of frameworks that could support the development of the Further Education Professionalisation Policy Network's agency. It then discusses the proactive strategy to policy-making by integrating it within a wider perspective of professionalism. In particular, it considers the use of an ecological framework to unite the players but argues that democratic and ethical dimensions must be included in order to reach out not only to benefit players but also to improve Further Education professionalisation policies, processes and practices.

Chapter Six concludes the thesis by revisiting and answering the research questions, the contribution of the thesis to educational research and areas of development based on the findings of the thesis. It also evaluates the research process, underlines some limitations and proposes ways to disseminate the study.

Chapter Two: The literature review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review explores the notions of professionalism and professionalisation and their interpretation within the education, teacher education and further education (FE) contexts in England. In 2.2, the concept of professionalism is defined and discussed broadly before section 2.3 provides a closer examination of its characteristics and significance within education. Section 2.4 considers the current models of teacher professionalisation with a particular focus on initial teacher education and 2.5 contextualises the previous discussions within FE settings and reviews the various stages of FE professionalisation in chronological order. It analyses professionalisation policies, identifying the pertinent shifting points in policy whilst underlining the impact of 'top down' policies on FE professionalism and the roles of policy players within the process. Finally, the review suggests that FE professionalisation has occurred via a linear form of policymaking fostering a compliance culture amongst teacher education professionals. However, section 2.6 presents a conceptual framework that challenges the 'top down' process and informs the research questions for the study.

2.2 The notion of professionalism within education

The plethora of literature covering the concept of professionalism suggests its significance within western society. Professionalism has been used as a label to display expertise and the quality of a service or product (Fournier, 1999; Swailes, 2003) but the concept is also used for regulation purposes (Evetts, 2012). Indeed, if a group offers specific skills and knowledge that are of interest to society, the state can impose or at least request that this group establishes clear parameters of practice. Initially associated with traditional vocations such as doctors or lawyers, professionalism is nowadays a pervasive notion attached to a wide variety of occupations from plumbers to footballers. But Freidson refutes the casualisation of the term by emphasising that professionalism:

> 'cannot exist unless it is believed that the particular tasks they [professionals] perform are so different from those of most

workers that self-control is essential (…) The two most general ideas underlying professionalism are the belief that certain work is so specialized as to be inaccessible to those lacking the required training and experience, and the belief that it cannot be standardized, rationalized or commodified.'

(2001, p17)

The above definition sets out the concept of professionalism as an ideal type, establishing the principle of 'divisions of labour' (Freidson, 2001) but also the importance of agency over one's specialism. But the acquisition of a monopoly of knowledge and practice has not escaped criticism since the gain of privilege, self-protection and exclusivity (Compton, 1990; Freidson, 2001) may be considered elitist and undemocratic, or even unethical (Hoyle and John, 1995; Lunt, 2008) and may be considered to contribute to the perpetuation of workforce and social inequalities (Freidson, 2001; Crook, 2008). However, Freidson argues that most criticisms can be traced to 'market and bureaucratic forces' (2001, p220) wishing to undermine professionals and assert their hegemony over professional knowledge and occupations, whilst Evetts (2012) remarks that professionalisation can be used as a defence against managerialist practices. Overall, professionalism prevails as a positive notion in its intention to serve society at large (Freidson, 2001).

Yet, a hierarchy operates within the professions (Hoyle and John, 1995; Perkin, 2002). In his preface, Etzioni (1969) acknowledges the unequal status of the 'semi-professions' including nurses, social workers and teachers. He states that, in comparison with doctors and lawyers, 'their training is shorter, their status is less legitimised, their right to privileged communication is less established, there is less of a specialised body of knowledge, and they have less autonomy from supervision or social control than "the" professions' (1969, p1). By the same token, when discussing the need for a solid knowledge base to qualify as a 'professional', Goode refers to the body of teacher knowledge as 'relatively small in amount and shallow intellectually' (in Etzioni, 1969, p286). This statement clearly exposes 'knowledge' as central to the argument of professional legitimacy.

Indeed, specialised or formal knowledge (Freidson, 2001, p18) is often cited as a founding principle of professionalism. Freidson underlines that formal

knowledge, defined by the ability to understand and form abstract concepts and theories, differs from tacit knowledge and expertise gained via 'trial and error' or 'bricolage' practices (2001, p28). The notion of 'bricolage' describes an action undertaken with instinct and proficiency but working within a restrictive or 'ad hoc' framework and lacking in a solid body of knowledge and theoretical perspectives (Hatton, 1988). Eraut (1994) argues for the need for a specific body of knowledge when claiming professionalism, but points out that 'professional knowledge' consists of a multiplicity/variety of knowledge types, ranging from the processual (skill) and the personal (experiential) to the propositional (theories).

In his discussions on education, Eraut (1994; 1997) contests the idea that teaching should rest on the sole transmission of propositional knowledge. Professional knowledge, he argues, cannot be simply transmitted or applied as a closed set of propositional statements because it is constructed through the understanding of one's practice, which includes working contexts, interactions and reflection. Similarly, Hoyle and John (1995) argue that the use of social science disciplines as overarching sources of knowledge and the academisation of education research have contributed to the creation of a gap between theory and practice. In order to narrow this theory-practice divide, the use of research-validated knowledge and reflective practice have been assumed as logical means to develop teacher knowledge despite the confinement of knowledge within the 'four walls' of a classroom (Schön, 1987; Hoyle and John, 1995).

Overall, the notions of autonomy and specialised knowledge prevail within the traditional definitions but it is clear that professionalism, as Fox puts it, 'means different things to different people' (1992, cited in Evans, 2008, p22). The concept of plurality in professionalism will be examined in the next section.

2.3 Forms of professionalism in Education

Much of the argument about teacher professionalism seems to occur on a spectrum from not being viewed as a profession via semi-professionalism to full professionalism. But, a linear categorisation of professionalism is perhaps not representative of teacher professionalism and professionalisation in

England in the 21st century. The forms of professionalism cited below are not to be considered in isolation. They must be seen not only as overlapping and/or merging according to contexts, sectors and policies but also in relation to the increasing influence of marketisation and managerialism in education. Forms of professionalism in education are manifold and this section focuses on a sample supporting the argument of this thesis in terms of activism.

2.3.1 Towards a more agentic form of professionalism

Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) identify no less than six forms of professionalism or 'discourses': 'classical', 'flexible', 'practical', 'new or extended', 'complex' and 'post-modern'. The 'classical' discourse strives to emulate the traditional model of professions mentioned in 1.1 with a strong focus on autonomy, uniqueness and specialism but is criticised for its pursuit of 'scientific certainty' and lack of contextualised or practical knowledge (1996, p6). In contrast, 'flexible' professionalism relies on a collaborative culture in the sharing of techniques and experience mirroring the concept of Wenger's (1998) community of practice. This pragmatic approach is appealing insofar as it enables teachers to address issues of education at a local level but such confinement also entails various threats such as a detachment from the overall teaching community and identity. Indeed, the investment at the local level is such that it may dilute the sense of belonging, which is deemed necessary for collective actions and 'social missions of justice, equity' (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, p11).

The focus on experience and context is also apparent in 'practical' professionalism. Central to this approach is the concept of reflective practice. In this case reflective practice is used as an articulation and interpretation of own practice into theory. It puts the teacher at the heart of pedagogical knowledge, liberating him/her from the 'intellectual pretensions of university-based, scientific knowledge as a basis for teacher professionalisation' (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, p12). Whilst the emancipatory promises of this school of thought are attractive, they may also foster a construction of superficial knowledge and practice made in isolation from the wider teaching community. Indeed, there is some concern that reflective practice is now

devoid of criticality and applied in a mechanical way to satisfy an instrumentalist model of education (Brookfield, 1995; Boud and Walker, 1998; Boud in Bradbury et al., 2010). The technicisation of education echoes government policies that aim to distance higher education from the professionalisation of teachers, which will be tackled in the forthcoming section.

The gap between practice, theory and community is established in new or 'extended' professionalism, which requires the teacher to engage with broader forms of education, stakeholders and agencies beyond the limitations of the classroom (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996). But the notion of 'extended' professionalism, whilst providing a more rounded appreciation of the teaching role, is not without its concerns. Indeed, according to Hargreaves and Goodson, 'extended' could easily lead to 'distended' (1996, p17) overloading an already demanding occupation. What is certain is that, in a post-modern world, the teacher's role has increasingly become more complex partly because of the focus of policymaking on a knowledge economy (Hargreaves, 2003). Hargreaves argues that recent policies have been characterised by a drive towards technicisation and standardisation, preventing the development of a knowledge society. Whilst Hargreaves acknowledges the need for both forms of knowledge, he also calls for professional teachers to reclaim their professionalism by creating professional learning communities where learning is not confined to mere delivery (Hargreaves, 2003).

Evetts (in Gewirtz et al., 2009) argues that the discourse of professionalism is used as an occupational promotional tool and a disciplinary logic to control identities, conducts and practices. She places professionalism in two categories: organisational and occupational. Organisational professionalism is a product of managerialism and is used to control the workforce by setting standards, quality assurance mechanisms and performance indicators. Using McClelland's categorisation (1990), she suggests that it involves the construction and transmission of professional normative values 'from above'. In contrast, the occupational model echoes a more traditional form of professionalism based on collegial authority, self-regulation and trust, which is first and foremost initiated by the professional group itself or 'from within'

(Evetts, 2003, 2009, 2012). Evetts acknowledges the changes, such as the measurement of outputs and auditing, implemented from above, which may redirect priorities towards achieving these goals and thus affect quality (Evetts, 2012).

That said, Evetts (2009, 2012) highlights the ambiguities found in the occupational model with regard to protectionism and resistance to change, which have, at times, affected public trust. She also accepts the possibility of 'hybridity' between the two models. If professionalism has become synonymous with 'quality assurance' then it is, inevitably, to be subject to scrutiny and commodification (in direct opposition to Freidson's 2001 definition). She further suggests that standards can increase transparency (Evetts, 2012). The concept of 'hybridity' or even 'fluidity' between the two models is further supported by Whitty (2002; in Cunningham, 2008), who argues that engaging with managerial or government policies enhances teachers' control over their own professionalism and allows them to move from 'victims' to 'agents' (Whitty in Cunningham, 2008, p45).

In both arguments, there is no doubt that we are considering a pragmatic evolution of discourse towards a more 'collaborative' or 'democratic' model of professionalism (Whitty in Cunningham, 2008) but there may be a danger that these stances are somewhat too accepting of education's status quo. On the other hand, Sachs (2003) has developed the above model further by adding a transformative element of 'activism', which is used as one of the main arguments for this thesis and is discussed further in Chapter 5. Central to the idea of activist professionalism is the creation of 'political spaces in which to act' (Sachs, 2003, p146). This, she argues, can only be undertaken via collaborative and collective practices, which may challenge current hegemonic practices within not only the teaching but also the teacher education profession (Sachs, 2012). However, Avis highlights the limitations of such dialogue due to society's 'social antagonism and conflicts' (2005, p216). In his view, the 'questions of power are under-emphasised' (2005, p217) and Sachs' transformation of professionalism could thus be 'reduced to a change of professional practice' (2005, p216). Means of increasing agency whilst retaining the notion of activism are discussed in Chapter 5.

2.3.2 Professionalism in FE

FE professionalism is not distinct from the forms of professionalism cited in 2.3.1 but most of the definitions and debates raised above have largely been elaborated within the compulsory sector. However, due to its unique context, which is discussed in 2.5, FE professionalism has striven to reconcile the vocational with the professional aspect to create 'dual' professionalism. Central to FE professionalisation is the notion of dual professionalism, which recognises the role of the former vocational and/or occupational profession in shaping teacher identity and stresses the acquisition of pedagogical skills enabling the 'specialist' to teach (Robson, 1998; Clow, 2001; Robson et al., 2004). Dual professionalism demands that:

> 'Professional teachers and trainers have deep knowledge, conceptual understanding and expertise in teaching and learning processes which they can apply in a diverse range of contexts for a diverse population of learners' (IfL, 2012b, www.ifl.ac.uk).

It is also worth noting that the notion of dual professionalism remains, to this day, disputed, not only in terms of the need for pedagogical skills but also in terms of the form of training in which they are meant to be acquired (this is examined in more depth in the forthcoming sections). Furthermore, the complexity of FE teaching goes far beyond the duality of expertise. For instance, Hodgson and Spours (2013) argue for extending dual to triple professionalism. This would not only entail extending collaborative practices to local and/or regional and employer level but also developing a more expansive model of education, which would cater for both the knowledge economy and the knowledge society. The concept of triple professionalism is further discussed in Chapter 5.

This section has established that the definitions and forms of professionalism in education are multiple and contested notions, whether in the compulsory or post-compulsory education sector. It has, nevertheless, identified the importance of knowledge specialism and the yearning for autonomy in order to enact professional status. At the same time, it has highlighted the need to depart from traditional forms of professionalism. The review now turns to the role of teacher education in the professionalisation process.

2.4 Models of professionalisation in education

Whilst this section discusses professionalisation in education, it focuses more precisely on English teacher education models as a way of becoming a professional. The initial education of teachers is by no means the end of the professionalisation process, but it is most relevant in this thesis due to my own professional background and focus as well as being of primary interest to governments who wish to control the quality of teachers and the scope for government policy application once teachers are fully qualified. The close link between policies and professionalisation within the FE context is explored in greater depth in 2.5. Initial teacher education is also of importance because it is a ground for ideological arguments about the skills, knowledge, attitude and pedagogy that a teacher should have when entering the profession (MacBeath, 2011). From this, two schools of thought about the model of teacher education seem to emerge. The first is a combination of theory and practice provided by Higher Education, while the second is fully embedded within practice with HE supervision. The differences reflect the on-going ideological and political debate concerning the professionalisation of teachers. For consistency, and in line with many of the policy documents and much of the literature, the term 'initial teacher education' is used instead of 'teacher education'. The use of sources such as the SCETT (2011) paper, which is primarily a response to a DfE White paper, is relevant in this thesis, as it is a unified response from both the compulsory and post-compulsory sectors to support the role of 'education' and HE within the professionalisation of all teachers.

2.4.1 Teacher education or teacher training?

A distinction between initial teacher education (ITE) and initial teacher training (ITT) is difficult to establish, mostly due to the terminologies being used interchangeably by the teaching profession (SCETT, 2011). However, the debate has recently been reignited by the Department for Education (DfE) White paper 'The importance of teaching', which puts an emphasis on practical teaching skills gained whilst training 'on the job'. The paper endorses an 'open classroom' culture where trainees 'plan, prepare, reflect and teach

with other teachers' (DfE, 2010, p19). The paper indicates the need to: 'reform initial teacher training so that more training is on the job (…) and create a new national network of teaching schools, (…) giving outstanding schools the role of leading the training and professional development of teachers' (SCETT, p20), clearly removing HE from its traditional position as primary ITE provider. The DfE website is also quite explicit in its reference to HE as merely a validating body of ITE qualifications.

In a response to the 2010 White paper, McCulloch recalls the contribution of HE in educating teachers and enabling them to articulate their practice by providing educational theory (in SCETT, 2011, p 22). In the same document, Young indicates that pedagogic knowledge covers three distinct but complementary elements for an overall professional formation: the interrogation of the application of specialist knowledge, reflection on practical teaching aspects and a more theoretical dimension, which involves science subjects and the study of wider issues linked to professionalism and policies (Young in SCETT, 2011, p26). This is reiterated by Zukas et al., who also suggest that:

> 'Pedagogy is more than teaching and learning. We assume that it incorporates a critical understanding of the social, policy and institutional context, as well as a critical approach to the content and process of the educational/training transaction.'
>
> (2002, p215)

Young's use of 'interrogation' as a base for specialist teaching is pertinent here as it marks the element of criticality that is commonly associated with HE (Pring in Furlong and Smith, 1996; Furlong et al., 2000; Collini, 2012). HE has been involved with teacher education since the late 19th century in the primary system; this was extended to secondary school teaching in the 20th century (MacBeath, 2011) and reinforced post-war with the assumption that the involvement of academia would give teachers greater credibility (Pring, in Furlong and Smith, 1996). On the other hand, as Furlong et al. (2000) suggest, the involvement of universities in the education of teachers has also attracted the distrust of neoliberal politicians, who view HE as 'at best of secondary importance; at worst (…) positively harmful' (p11). This allegation is partly based around faculties' tradition of promoting 'Dewey child-centred practices'

suggestive of leftist political values that are hostile to managerialist and marketisation practices (Furlong et al., 2000; Pring in Furlong and Smith, 1996). But the issue is also grounded within the dissociation of theory and practice mentioned earlier. For Goodson (2003), there are some within the profession who feel that faculties of education have entered into a 'devil's bargain' by focusing on the production of respectable but perhaps irrelevant knowledge for practitioners on the ground. This rift has clearly fed the advocates of the apprenticeship model and was apparent in the Coalition government's rhetoric on the promotion of a craft school-based model (Browne and Reid, 2012) and the justification for a discretional teaching qualification option in free schools and academies (Howson and McNamara, 2012; Childs, 2013).

The concept of a bridge between the practical (schools/colleges) and the theoretical (universities) is perhaps the solution needed to alleviate some of the criticisms cited above. Whilst partnership ITE delivery was forced by policies in the 1990s, the distinct but valuable contributions of both approaches and institutions have been recognised within the profession and across the education sector (McBride, 1996; Furlong and Smith, 1996; Furlong et al., 2000; Furlong et al., 2009). Furlong et al. (2000) identify two types of partnership: complementary and collaborative. The former recognises the distinct input made by each institution in terms of practice and theory but with a tendency to reinforce the split discussed above. The latter is more ambitious in its approach in assuming joint responsibilities for the various parts of the ITE programme. The ITE partnership in the past 20 years has been located within the complementary model. The rise of marketisation and reductions in funding are most likely responsible for the reluctance of all parties to embrace an 'integrated' model fully and for HE to give up its central role within the ITE process (Childs, 2013). Indeed, there is a strong indication that partnership has been imposed by the government as a means to control HE if not eventually remove it altogether from the professionalisation of teachers (Furlong et al., 2009; Childs, 2013).

Yet, McNicholl and Blake (2013) suggest that ITE is also undermined within HE itself because of the hybrid teacher-researcher position that teacher educators (TEds) occupy. A focus on teaching, juggling government policies and the application of stringent quality assurance procedures have made the HE TEds less involved and confident regarding the construction of a solid research-based pedagogy and thus more vulnerable professionally within an institution that regards research as central to its identity (McNicholl and Blake, 2013). It is thus feared that the current trend of school/apprenticeship-led models and performance-led allocation of funding could result in universities withdrawing from an activity they may feel unworthy of pursuing (Childs, 2013). The point here is even more pertinent within FE, where, after a period of relentless policies aimed at professionalising the sector, the sector has recently been affected by measures that could make teachers' qualification altogether redundant. These policies and issues are examined in the next section.

2.4.2 FE Professionalisation

The debate underlined in 2.4.1 is not confined to the compulsory sector and seemingly also applies to the FE sector. However, Davies (in SCETT, 2011) suggests that many have been dismissive of the need for FE professionalisation and this has affected the parity of esteem with the compulsory sector. Because of the nature of FE, which is perceived as mostly vocational, there have been some assumptions that the FE teacher is only to be equipped with a set of 'survival kits' (Hafez in SCETT, 2011, p21). But Hafez also argues that the role of HE at ITE level has led to the development of a 'hidden curriculum' examining education at the macro-level. This, she claims, enables the FE teacher to evolve beyond the 'vocational expert' and embrace his/her role as an educator (Hafez in SCETT, 2011). At the micro-level of professionalisation, the process is complex, as it mirrors the FE sector's diversity and idiosyncrasies (Hafez in SCETT, 2011) and is 'tailored to the needs of the highly skilled professionals' (Davies in SCETT, 2011, p16). But the evolution of FE professionalisation has been largely reflected in the changes of policies affecting the sector and is perhaps best understood within a context of policy-making, a point I will now turn to.

2.5 A cycle of professionalisation policies: the case of Further Education

> 'Persuasive rhetorics of professionalisation all too often seem to be accompanied by conditions where professionalisation is actually being dismantled.'
>
> (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, p4)

It is fair to say that FE professional formation has suffered from a 'history of benign neglect' (Young et al, 1995 cited in Lucas, 2004a, p77) although the forthcoming periodisation (see pp18-34) shows that, despite being chaotic and somewhat misconceived, there has been much interest in the concept and ways of professionalising the sector. The periodisation provides an account of FE professionalism issues and the policies and measures undertaken to professionalise the sector. The periodisation extends from 1992 to the present. I take 1992 as my start date because of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which transferred FE colleges' responsibility in terms of assets, staff and management from local education authorities to governing bodies or 'corporations' (Ainley and Bailey,1997).The corporations have a rather hybrid-status. They were set up as charitable organisations and receive state funding but, as private businesses, they are entitled to dispose of their staff, assets and funding in enterprising ways as they see fit, as long as these benefit the overall delivery of education, although this is clearly controlled by the complex funding system (Lucas, 2004a).

As the periodisation shows, the incorporation of colleges is most relevant with regard to the impact it has had on professionalism and measures taken to professionalise the sector. This is not to say that the pre-1992 period is not of importance. For instance, Robson (2006) points out that the requirement for a qualification or training in the sector was raised as far as the 1944 McNair and the 1966 Russell reports but it did not materialise due to recruitment needs and cost. Lucas (2004a) confirms that, whilst there had been attempt to professionalise the FE workforce between 1944 and 1993, ITE qualifications varied in terms of comparability and quality (see footnote 1, p1).

The approach to FE professionalisation up to 1992 is thus often described as inconsistent and 'fragmented' (Simmons, 2008). This is mostly due to the fact that colleges displayed a strong academic/liberal studies and vocational

cultures divide (Gleeson and Mardle, 1980; Robson, 1998; Lucas, 2004a). Despite some efforts to professionalise the sector, vocational teachers were not systematically required to gain a teaching qualification as it was believed that training would discourage them from joining the profession (Lucas, 2004a). In addition, it was also argued that, in vocational education, subject knowledge and occupational identity were more relevant than pedagogy (Lucas, 2004a; Simmons, 2008). This is perhaps the reason why the requirement for professional formation has not been previously addressed. Interestingly, the debates surrounding the need for a professionalisation process in FE in the first place, in particular for vocational teachers, have prevailed to this day, although they are not the sole factors surrounding the difficulties in professionalising the sector. In any case, the change of context and the incorporation of colleges marked a new era for FE. It is thus from this date that the professionalisation of FE teachers and its policies is to be examined in more depth.

2.5.1 Period 1: *De-professionalisation* (1993-1997)

In reflecting upon the impact of the incorporation of colleges, Robson declared that the further education teaching profession was 'in a state of crisis' (Robson, 1998, p585). The incorporation of colleges clearly defines a period of change with regard to culture, practices and identity (Smith, 2007). This has been largely attributed to an outcome-based funding regime underpinned by a belief that economic principles can be applied to education and thus students can be treated as customers and learning as a commodity (Lucas, 2004a). Indeed, funding was allocated in terms of targets (recruitment, retention, results) to be met and evidenced (Ainley and Bailey, 1997). The shift was further evident in the way in which these targets were put into practice. Derived from the private sector, new managerialism is defined by the application of a set of practices to increase efficiency and effectiveness and maximise staff output (Randle and Brady, 1997; Ainley and Bailey, 2000; Avis, 2007a; Avis et al., 2011; Lucas, 2004a; Robson, 2006). This included the employment of more flexible staff, in particular with regard to temporary or hourly-paid contracts, regular appraisals, the reconfiguration of the teaching role, the setting of targets for individual courses and the use of a business-like

discourse (Hyland and Merrill, 2003; Robson, 2006; Huddlestone and Unwin, 2008). This new managerialist ethos increased the surveillance of staff performance and the standardisation of teaching practices (Avis, 2007a), which seemed at odds with public service professionalism values and ethos based on autonomy, collegiality and expertise (Randle and Brady, 1997; Shain and Gleeson, 1999). FE lecturers complained of a loss of control of teaching, from design to output, and a move towards a 'customer/supplier relationship' with students (Randle and Brady, 1997, p132).

It is perhaps a mistake to consider the pre-incorporation period as the golden years of FE (Simmons, 2008). In fact, there is evidence that the incorporation brought some improvement with regard to the overall student service and experience (Hyland and Merrill, 2003; Lucas, 2004a). For instance, FECs had to adopt a more student-centred and innovative approach to respond to students' needs (Lucas, 2004a). But as a whole, this new order of management and more specifically the 'efficiency savings' measures are thought to have had a significant negative impact on professionalism. One example is, in line with financial savings, the use of largely unqualified part-time and agency teachers, whose numbers increased to represent 62 per cent of the teaching population by 1999. This is deemed to have directly contributed to the de-skilling of staff in FE (Randle and Brady, 1997; Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Lucas, 2004a). It is worth noting that the systematic casualisation of staff, largely imposed as a cost-saving exercise, contributed to the decline in working conditions already affected by the new stringent contracts for full-time staff (Ainley and Bailey, 1997, 2000; Lucas, 2004a; Robson, 2006). Whilst this meant greater flexibility for colleges, it also created a hierarchy of teachers whereby 'casual' staff were sometimes only hired to 'deliver' or 'assess' curriculum (Lucas, 2004a; Smith, 2007). The use of two-tier systems in education has been criticised for contributing to the de-professionalisation of teachers (Whitty, 2006) and reducing teachers' engagement with professional formation and development (Lucas, 2004a). Indeed, by 1997, the great majority of part-time teachers remained unqualified or part-qualified (Lucas, 2004a; Robson, 2006). Given the lack of formal qualification requirements in the sector and the precariousness of contracts, it is unsurprising that most

teachers employed on this basis would have felt reticent about completing certified training.

The consequence of the above for professionalisation is as follows: if, according to MacBeath (2011), a professional qualification in teaching is deemed essential, then the absence of initial ITE is likely to dilute the quality of teachers entering the profession (Robson, 2006) and therefore, there will be a further impact on teaching and learning. Indeed, concerns about the quality of teaching and staff development in FE were identified in a Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) report in 1999 (Lucas, 2004a), which highlighted that the casualisation of staff had become 'institutionalised' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p451). Shain and Gleeson use the term to describe 'Incorporation professionalism', or a discourse of compliance revolving around the notions of 'flexibility, reliability and competence' (1999, p459). Interestingly, whilst many critics agree on the de-skilling/de-professionalisation agenda in the early years of incorporation, some also underline the opportunity to re-work teachers' notions of professionalism to adapt to the new working conditions and identity. Shain and Gleeson (1999) and Robson (1998) and Smith (2007) for example, identify a clash between old and new staff who became pragmatic in their approach or 'strategic compliers' (Avis, 2007a), but also suggest an emergence of new forms of professionalism as mentioned previously. Using the impact of the incorporation/marketisation of FE as a window of opportunity also echoes Evetts' (2012), Whitty's (2008) and Sachs' (2003) points regarding reconfiguring one's professionalism and achieving 'active' status. In other words, professionals are encouraged to construct a community/network of educators and engage with policy-making to retain some agency over their work. But as a whole, the opportunity was not taken and that the incorporation years fell short of implementing FE professionalisation.

2.5.2 Period 2: *Re-professionalisation* (1997-2003)

The arrival in power of New Labour in 1997 marked a turning point for FE professionalisation. As part of an employer-led standard-setting agenda, it empowered the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO),

to oversee the training and development of FE staff together with the publication of a myriad of policy papers aiming at professionalising the sector (Lucas, 2004a). It has been recognised that the nature of FE made it the ideal ground to carry out New Labour's third way ideology, a reconciliation between market and social justice principles (Giddens, 1998), but also to support the formation of a skilled workforce (Gleeson et al., 2005; Furlong, 2005). Avis (2007a) and Keep (2011) stress that the propagation of skills policies by the New Labour government emerged as a result of a fear that the UK was under-performing at a global level due to a shortage of skills supply. The latter further argues that New Labour created a policy narrative through which the creation of skills was presented as a lever to improve both economic performance and social justice/mobility (Keep, 2011).

Indeed, 'Learning Works' (Kennedy, 1997) and two key New Labour papers 'The Learning Age' (DfEE, 1998) and 'Learning to succeed' (DfEE, 1999) identified the role that FE had to play in terms of upgrading the UK's knowledge economy and enhancing its social cohesion by widening the participation of individuals to include those from disadvantaged backgrounds. These papers responded to concerns regarding FE professionalism, which attributed FE's poor performance to FE teaching (Wallace, 2002, 2013). Wallace identifies Blunkett's 1998 speech, in which the then education minister openly describes FE teaching as 'too poor or inadequate' (Wallace, 2002, p88) as significant in New Labour's effort to commit to FE professionalism through ITE reform. In the same vein, at a Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) conference in 2000, the minister for education and employment, Tessa Blackstone, declared that 'for too long there has been too much variation in the standards of teaching in FE colleges' and that all unqualified FE lecturers should work towards a teaching qualification (DfES, 2001). Setting standards for the sector represented the first steps towards a professionalisation framework (Robson, 2006), and subsequently a consultation paper on 'Compulsory Teaching Qualifications for Teachers in Further Education' (DfEE, 2000) was published.

What is interesting in this instance is the nature of the organisations involved in the design of the standards and qualifications since 1997. FENTO, for instance, is an employer-led body and it could be argued that it has a distinct professionalisation agenda based on the demands of FE management but there was a strong desire from the teaching community, including teaching unions, to support FENTO's input in FE professionalisation (Lucas, 2004b). But this also indicates the endorsement of a top-down process and perhaps an expectation from FE professionals that only the government and/or a government funded body could realise the project. Although there is evidence of consultation between the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), publicly funded bodies such as FENTO, the Further Education development agency (FEDA) and various partners including HEIs and FE staff, it is described as 'patchy' or 'fast-moving' (Scott and Hyland, 2001), undermining professionals' input, whilst Clow (2001) noted the absence of a professional body representing FE professionals. However, the overall sector responded positively to the proposal for a set of standards and a compulsory teaching qualification (Steward, 2009, p14). For instance, FEDA (2000) clearly supported both initiatives as a way of raising FE teachers' professional status. At the same time, it critiqued the FENTO standards' focus on competence as opposed to professional knowledge and recommended the creation of an independent professional body, which would boast both developmental and regulatory powers. This suggests a lack of confidence not only in FENTO's role but also in its ability to design meaningful standards for the profession.

There is perhaps an assumption that setting teaching standards is beneficial since they claim to translate the intricacy of teaching and learning by codifying the knowledge into an accessible form and can act as a means to build professional identity given that they 'reconcile the interest of different communities of practice and competing models of practice' (Nasta, 2007, p5). But critics have raised a number of issues regarding standards: as the previous section showed, teaching requires an understanding and appreciation of formal and tacit knowledge and the context in which learning occurs. Wallace argues that standards lead to a simple set of competencies, which makes the process of teaching 'instrumentalist, descriptive and prescriptive' (2013, p33).

Nasta (2007) agrees that with standards, knowledge may appear 'transparent and accessible' but teaching, in particular teaching for FE teachers, is a complex affair that cannot be reduced to set sentences. In fact, the FENTO standards proved to be rather intricate. Within the eight teaching areas covered, 26 sub-standards emerged, which were broken down into activities. Besides the sheer volume of descriptors, it is clear that the translation of standards is thus likely to become a mere 'tick box' exercise or to be interpreted in a very open-ended manner (Nasta, 2007; Lucas and Nasta, 2010). Lucas and Nasta (2010) recognised that such an interpretation was inevitable, but the notion of a common multi-specialism practice and professional knowledge crucial to teachers' development was consequently 'lost in translation'. In addition, the FENTO standards did not distinguish between new and experienced teachers and were rather 'FE-centric', denying the diversity of teaching practice and professionals within the sector (Robson, 2006; Nasta, 2007).

For HEIs, the integration of the standards into a compulsory teaching qualification proved to be equally complex. Since the FENTO standards had been designed for occupational, not professional purposes, the 'mapping' against HE qualifications resulted in a 'mechanical and inconsistent exercise' (Lucas, 2004a, p103). The FENTO standards' impact on ITE was eventually evaluated as 'limited' (Lucas, 2004b). However, there seemed to be a consensus amongst educationalists that a regulatory approach in FE was of importance if only to bring some coherence to a chaotic sector (Lucas, 2002; Nasta, 2007). Consequently, the requirement for new FE teachers to hold a recognised teaching qualification validated by FENTO came into force in September 2001 with little resistance from the sector.

However, the regulation applied mostly to new teachers and included various considerations for part-time and fractional teachers according to their teaching responsibilities. Again, the qualification could be obtained at various levels: either undergraduate or post-graduate, or 'stages' in the case of City and Guilds awards, which did not clarify or improve the pre-2001 offer (Lucas, 2004a). But given that the DfES (2002) launched its 'Success for all' initiative aiming at qualifying 90 per cent of full-time and 60 per cent of part-time PCET

teachers by 2006 with a 100 per cent target to be reached by 2010, it seemed reasonable to devise a more flexible approach to the regulation of qualifications. Yet, the 2003 Ofsted inspection of PCET ITE provision confirmed that the existing qualifications structure was inconsistent and confusing and did not provide 'a satisfactory foundation of professional development for FE teachers at the start of their careers' (Ofsted, 2003, p5).

The Ofsted report specifically condemned the lack of subject-specific knowledge and a pedagogical approach taught on ITE courses (Lucas, 2004a). In a TES article, Lucas (2004c) claimed that in FE 'there has traditionally been a belief that subject knowledge alone is sufficient to teach (…) in some areas, subject knowledge resides in a teacher who could be seeking training themselves'. As underlined in section 2.5, the transmission of professional experience had been largely accepted as FE pedagogy. In addition, during the incorporation period, a path towards generalisation and uniformity of learning was progressively adopted, partly for efficiency savings but also in response to the constant policy changes affecting FE (Avis, 2007b). In other words, the employment of a teacher was not necessarily reliant on a subject but was dependent on his/her ability to apply the policy initiative of the time. On the other hand, Fisher and Webb suggest that the generic approach to ITE was due to the atomisation of the FE curriculum, which rendered specialist pedagogy input difficult (Fisher and Webb, 2006). The question of subject specialism is significant in FE due to the multiplicity of subjects being taught, which constrains ITE providers to a generic approach relying on mentors to deal with the subject specialism. That said, both the DfES and Ofsted seemed to adopt a 'somewhat traditionalist secondary school informed perception of curriculum issues' (Fisher and Webb, 2006, p341), which perhaps demonstrates a deficit in their understanding of the nature and forms of FE college teaching. Interestingly, the Ofsted report did not deem the FENTO standards to be effective with regard to differentiation of practice and subject pedagogy, confirming the initial concerns expressed by FE educationalists. Responding to the report, the DfES initiated a consultation within the lifelong learning (LLL) sector to address some of the issues underlined by Ofsted. Looking back on this occasion, Holloway (2009)

remarks that the DfES involved a network of LLL organisations, including HEIs, suggesting a more participative and constructive attitude towards, and strategy for, policymaking. At the end of the consultation, in the *Agenda for Reform* (2003), the DfES put forward their vision regarding the future of qualified PCET teachers, which would include a new Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) professional formation.

2.5.3 Period 3: *Reforming professionalisation* (2004-2012)

In 2004, the White Paper, 'Equipping our teachers for the future'*,* set out to reform the sector by officially introducing the QTLS process, which broadly consisted of the acquisition of an ITE qualification and a post-qualification commitment to CPD. It appointed the Institute for Learning (IfL) as a regulatory and professional body and initiated the HE-led Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs) whose remit was to 'act as beacons for quality training' (DfES, 2004, p4). Although the description was rather vague and did not give much indication of the type of activities they were meant to provide, the policy paper also mentioned the development of new standards by the new sector skills council, Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). Its FENTO predecessor was seen as too FE focused and was criticised for describing the role of an experienced teacher, which seemed inappropriate in ITE settings (DfES, 2004). However, there were similarities between the organisations in terms of their narrow focus given that LLUK represented the sector's employers, not the employees/teachers, which, as Lucas (2004) and Holloway (2009) underlined, may have constituted a conflict of interest with regard to professionalism. Indeed, it is fair to assume that an employer body would assume a managerialist and instrumentalist vision of training in line with colleges' practices and in opposition to a more developmental and expansive professional formation. That said, LLUK built a 'policy network' of professionals involved in the ITE sector and also engaged with external research consultants to support the development of standards and a qualification framework (Holloway, 2009). Whilst the creation of a network was of importance to give a voice to the sector, the use of external consultants embodied a more marketised approach to policymaking, which may have lessened, if not undermined, the contribution of ITE professionals.

Similarly, a loss of agency is also highly visible in the context of the new standards, which had to be firmly rooted within the ITE qualification (Nasta, 2007, p11). The mandatory module titles and HE credit value were dictated in a given structure (LLUK, 2007, p22), which could not be altered (Lucas et al., 2012) and the endorsement of the qualification was effected by LLUK's parallel organisation, Standards Verification UK (SVUK). It is thus unsurprising that HEIs perceived the ITE design and endorsement process as too prescriptive (Harkin, 2008; Holloway, 2009). In fact, whilst Lucas and Nasta (2010) openly described the reform process as 'indirect state control', Thompson and Robinson (2007, p176) claimed that it led to an 'unprecedented degree of control and compliance' from government over ITE. But Avis and colleagues (2012) remind us that English FE ITE is anchored within a neoliberal agenda based on standards and inspections. Indeed, following another ITE inspection, which still identified some weaknesses (Ofsted, 2006) and a further White paper entitled 'Raising skills, improving life chances' (DfES, 2006), which reiterated the terms of 'Equipping our teachers for the future', the reform was finally enshrined in law in 2007 as the Further Education Teachers' Continuing Professional Development and Registration (England) Regulations and the Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations.

Despite the high level of regulation and prescription, the professionalisation initiative was positively received by ITE professionals. Besides the fact that the reform would obviously benefit the HEIs involved in ITE (Simmons and Thompson, 2007), there seemed to be a common agreement within the profession that it would contribute to the raising of FE professional status (Harkin, 2008). However, a few practical concerns remained with regard to the content and levels of ITE courses, the implementation of CPD, and the application of standards (Harkin, 2008; Thompson and Robinson, 2008; Lucas et al., 2012; Lucas, 2013). In addition, the QTLS framework displayed characteristics of a 'two-speed' system whereby some professionals acquire a 'full' role whereas others have a 'lesser' or 'associate' role in teaching. This is demonstrated clearly in the regulation:

'Associate teaching role means a teaching role that carries significantly less than the full range of teaching responsibilities ordinarily carried out in a full teaching role (…) and does not require the teacher to demonstrate an extensive range of knowledge, understanding and application of curriculum development, curriculum innovation or curriculum delivery strategies.'

(LLUK, 2007, p11)

At first glance, the associate role could be seen as progress as it indicates some form of recognition previously denied to many employed in the sector (Thompson and Robinson, 2008). However, the expectation that some teachers may not display 'extensive' skills and knowledge raises a number of concerns. Firstly, the reform process was undertaken to remedy issues linked to teaching and learning. The 2003 Ofsted inspection clearly identified a lack of subject specialism in terms of knowledge and pedagogical approach, which was at the forefront of their criticism of ITE. Given this, anything less than an 'extensive' role might imply that some learners were not being taught by 'real' teachers. The 'Associate Teacher' could be 'teaching from packs and pre-prepared material with limited responsibility for curriculum design' (LSIS, 2013). Again, the issues of 'genericism' discussed by Avis (2007a) and restrictive practice (Orr and Simmons, 2011) emerge. It could be argued that the 'associate role' was at odds with Eraut's (1994), Hoyle and John's (1995), and Freidson's (2001) notions of professionalism, which require expansive if not 'extensive' levels of reflection and criticality. The attempt to divide the teaching role disregards the complexity of teaching and increases the drive towards the technicisation of practice and thus the de-skilling of professionals (Spenceley, 2006; Gleeson and James, 2007). Finally, Broad (2010) demonstrated that the structure was confusing and/or misunderstood and the 'associate' role was largely unrecognised by FE organisations.

The application of the LLUK framework revealed further concerns. For many new universities involved in ITE, whether as validating or delivery partners with FE colleges, regulated professionalisation had become a source of income that was far too significant to be ignored (Simmonds and Thompson, 2007). But the funding was closely dependent on compliance with the framework, which might compromise the integrity of teacher education values,

as discussed in 1.3. Thus, the systematic standardisation of teaching and learning approaches has become a direct threat to teachers' professional judgement (Whitty, 2008, p38), and even makes questionable demands of teacher educators:

> 'many teacher educators have been placed in an invidious position, aware that they are engaging with and even complicit in sanctioning activities and practices that represent an affront to their professional values and identities. For these individuals, the shift towards targeted skills training, action planning and skills mapping has been achieved at the expense of analytic and critical skills development amongst the next generation of lecturers.'

> (Lawy and Tedder, 2009, p59)

Yet, besides the financial reasons, HE TEds seemed to concede a regulatory reform process although this may be explained by the application of 'principled infidelity', which defines 'a process where teachers mediate policy and pressures in order to provide best for the needs of learners by adapting and subverting policies while giving the appearance of implementing them' (Lucas and Nasta, 2010, p448-449). The concept echoes what Shain and Gleeson (1999) described as 'strategic compliance'. Strategic compliance is a way of expressing resistance by interpreting policies and managerialist demands without compromising the quality of teaching and the student experience. But surprisingly, 'resistance' to the professionalisation reform was not undertaken by TEds and did not concern ITE directly but emerged at the 'micro' level of the policymaking process following a disagreement concerning professional registration.

The 2007 CPD regulations stressed that: 'every (FE) teacher must (a) register with the Institute for Learning (IfL) and (b) maintain that registration continuously thereafter' (DIUS, 2007a, p3). In 2009, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), in their effort to 'streamline the skills landscape' (BIS, 2009, p62), recommended that the IfL become self-financing. Up to that point, IfL membership had been subsidised by government funding but self-financing came into effect in 2011 with all members required to pay a fee of £68 a year (which was eventually reduced to £38). It is fair to say that the fee was, in itself, not onerous and in line, if not cheaper than, other

professional organisations' requirements, but membership renewal was accompanied by a threat to 'lapse' members, thus preventing them from teaching and leading to dismissal (Mourant, 2011). The main argument revolved around the 'value for money' aspect of the IfL, which the members were questioning, but there was also outrage that the IfL could enforce membership in such manner. After ballots that showed members' unwillingness to renew their membership and pay the fee, the University and College Union (UCU), threatened IfL with legal action on the grounds of a breach of Human Rights (Article 6 of the European Convention) (UCU, 2011). In fact, this was not an isolated incident, as there was growing criticism within the ITE community concerning not only the IfL but also the overall outcome of the 2004 reform.

For instance, Orr (2009) claimed that the IfL's CPD requirements were inefficient, as they were dealt with in mechanical ways in order to 'tick boxes'; Plowright and Barr (2012) accused the IfL of simply encouraging compliance; and Lucas (2013) suggested that the aims and structure of the Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) award were not fully grasped by professionals, especially college managers, who did not provide adequate support for implementation. Furthermore, the 2011 Ofsted inspection revealed that there was not enough outstanding and good teaching and learning in colleges, calling the effectiveness of the overall professionalisation reform policies in question.

2.5.4 Period 4: *De-professionalisation by deregulation or the creation of a new form of professionalism?* (2012- Present)

In the light of the IfL/UCU dispute and a less than favourable Ofsted report, BIS (2011) declared in 'New challenges, new chances' that they would commission an independent review of professionalism in the FE and skills workforce. In March 2012, the interim report on professionalism in education was published. The report, led by Lord Lingfield, aimed to consider the IfL/UCU dispute and review the impact of 'Equipping our teachers for the future'. In its remit to ease the tension between the IfL and the UCU, the 'Lingfield' review, as it is most commonly known, clearly blamed the IfL for not

providing 'good value for money' to convince 'employees' of its professional worth and challenged its legitimacy as a regulatory body (BIS, 2012b, p15). The review thus announced the withdrawal of all government backing and funding. The second part of the review focused on criticising the professional formation for FE staff (ITE and QTLS), which was described as 'inappropriate', 'inconsistent', and even 'ineffective' and it recommended a revocation from September 2012 of both regulations as they were 'no longer fit-for-purpose' (BIS, 2012b, p22).

Interestingly, the interim report bases most of its evidence on the paper by Lucas and colleagues (2012) and the 2003 Ofsted inspection but it uses information rather selectively. For instance, whilst Lucas and colleagues (2012) highlight some of the problems that FE professionalisation has experienced, they do so in the context of the 'fragmented and impoverished professional identity of FE teachers' (2012, p688) as a result of years of market-led, managerialist and restrictive professional practices. But perhaps most surprising is that at no point does the review refer to the BIS (2012a) 'Evaluation of FE Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007' report published simultaneously, which states that 'there is evidence that good progress has been made towards ensuring a qualified and expert teaching profession' (BIS, 2012a, p7), thus clearly sanctioning the regulatory process. Crawley notes that:

> 'in taking such an anti-teacher education, market-led approach, Lingfield's recommendations closely align to the managerial, restrictive and limited version of professionalism which the workforce reforms of 2001 and 2007 were seeking to move away from.'

> (Crawley, 2012, p7)

Predictably, the ITE community reacted overwhelmingly against revocation as there is evidence that the introduction of formal ITE qualifications has enhanced the identity of FE teachers (Fletcher et al., 2015). The IfL protested strongly against deregulation due to concerns about FE professionals being 'deskilled' and 'relegated to the 90s' (IfL, 2012a). UCET presented some empirical and qualitative evidence of the overall positive impact of professional formation in writing and as part of a consultation panel and called for a

minimum of one-year part time mandatory formation at level 5. Clearly, HEIs have a vested interest in the continuation of a compulsory qualification at HE level. But, as Crawley (2012) argues, the combination of the loss of bursaries, the rise of HE fees and the revocation of a compulsory qualification could lead to the disappearance of HE ITE altogether. This point is of importance if we are to consider the critical role of HE within the ITE process as discussed in 2.3: HE ensures a critical tradition privileging education over mere training and thus acts as a buffer-zone between professionals and the state (Furlong and Smith, 1996; SCETT, 2011). The potential removal of HE-led ITE in FE has 'profound implications for the quality of provision and, indeed, the professional status of FE teachers' (Lucas, 2013, p 400).

Despite the consultation exercise, the existence of contemporary texts presenting contrary evidence and the feedback from various organisations involved in FE ITE, the final Lingfield review (BIS, 2012b) declared the professionalisation of FE lecturers to be inadequate due to too much centralised interference and announced a revocation of both 2007 regulations. In the report's introduction Lord Lingfield declares:

> 'The two sets of statutory regulations from 2007 had been overtaken by events in many respects. If they had been enforced against the tens of thousands of further education lecturers who had withdrawn from the IfL, it would have led to their dismissal. To defend such regulations, or organizations of any kind, against the interests of the lecturers and students at the core of further education would have been absurd.'

(BIS, 2012c, i)

The above paragraph clearly establishes the 2007 regulations as two interlinked issues. The statement implies that ITE regulation was somehow involved in the IfL/UCU incident. Whilst the question of enforcement of the regulations is valid, the amalgamation is rather surprising, as there is no evidence that the enforcement of the ITE regulation was part of the IfL/UCU dispute. It also seems to deal with the matter early on in order to address the rest of the report, which goes far beyond the initial remit and the scope of the consultation document. In fact, the report tackles wider issues concerning professionalism as well as FE as a whole, which was unexpected. For example, it mentions the need for FE to focus on vocational and community

work leaving 'remedial' work to schools. The report goes on to recommend a single post-compulsory body merging FE and HE based on an American adviser's experience but this is not supported by any tangible literature. Interestingly, whilst there is evidence of wider consultation with various bodies, including many FE colleges, there is no representation from HEIs apart from the UCL Institute of Education. UCET, which represents 98 ITE HE providers (although not all are involved in FE ITE), is not included in the 'Visits and witnesses' appendix. It is thus pertinent to question the absence of such an important group and the stance of the report with regard to HEIs and ITE in general.

Concerning professionalism, the report undeniably conveys the belief that FE professionalism is 'broken' by stating that it suffers from 'a confidence as well as a structural deficit' (BIS, 2012c, p13). The proposed model of professionalism rested on 'autonomy' through the creation of an 'FE Guild' fostering professional 'consensus' and 'aspirations' (BIS, 2012c, p10) and a covenant or contract between employers and employees 'setting out their obligations and duties to one another in relation at least to fostering professionalism and continuing professional development' (BIS, 2012, p24). Although the report insists that it does not wish to be prescriptive, it nonetheless cites at least six recommendations of the covenant's content. The report also trusts that:

> 'Employers must share responsibility for encouraging professionalism by offering their moral and tangible support to their staff. Both employers and employees will flourish in an atmosphere of flexibility and autonomy. It is the task of the former to ensure that this new 'freedom to excel' is enjoyed by the latter and we hope that the opportunity to explore and decide how lecturers may do so will be taken up enthusiastically.'

> (BIS, 2012b, p23)

Whilst these comments are commendable, they either misjudge or disregard the managerialism/professionalism culture shift discussed previously. In short, Lingfield appears to believe that a harmonious contract can exist between FE teachers and College management even though the evidence from the interim report suggests that the professionalisation relationship between employers

and employees is restrictive and 'patchy' (2012b, p20). Indeed, as Crawley notes, any idea of a covenant is problematic, as employers 'have regularly failed to effectively support their teachers in getting qualified' (2012, p6). On the whole, the report's recommendations do not differ much from the 2004 professionalisation structure. It stills recommends a three-stage structure for ITE qualifications (see Appendix 1 for the current provision), the design of new standards and the overseeing of these operations by an overarching body. In fact, the core modification is the removal of 'compulsion' (as cited several times in the report) attached to the professionalisation process. But the report is at odds with its initial lines of argument; no sooner does it claim 'autonomy', 'flexibility' or 'de-regulation' for FE professionalism than it proposes another form of compliance.

In 2012, the FE Guild was awarded to the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) with the IfL as a key but not a leading partner (FE week, 2012). In 2014 the FE Guild became the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), as a sector owned but still employer-led body funded by BIS (www.et-foundation.co.uk). The ETF has a wide remit to promote and support FE but has also been given responsibility for the development of the 'professional workforce' (BIS, 2014), which includes the distribution of funding for specific projects and the design and implementation of professional standards. The latter were developed through a wide consultation with the sector, including teachers and HEIs (NIACE, 2013). The guidance document states that the standards aim to establish a 'dialogue' between FE professionals and employers and cannot be used for the assessment of performance. As such, they are not 'occupational' but 'aspirational' (ETF, 2014).

Central to the mediation of ETF standards is the concept of 'ownership' by both the sector and individuals, which resonates with Hodgson and Spours' (2012) 'democratic localism'. This form of professionalism would require the strong involvement of, and networking and power from, regional/local colleges and social partners within agreed priorities. Instead, a more market-led 'laissez-faire localism' (Hodgson and Spours, 2012) is likely to emerge whereby local engagement with a view to empowerment is encouraged but

with funding used as a policy lever or Ofsted regulation in the case of ITE. Despite the Lingfield review deregulation agenda, the role of Ofsted in monitoring the acquisition of an ITE qualification by FE professionals (BIS, 2012b) and the integration of the ETF professional standards in trainees' practice (Ofsted, 2014) can be considered a new form of regulation.

At the time of writing it may be too early to comment in more depth on the ETF professional standards' role within FE professionalisation. Research has consistently shown that the FENTO and LLUK standards have not, overall, improved FE professionalism (Lucas, 2004, 2007; Nasta, 2007; Lucas and Unwin, 2009; Lucas and Nasta, 2009; Lucas et al., 2012). There is no doubt that the implementation of various policies and regulations has attempted to raise professional standards, but given that there has been no alteration of the overall FE architecture since incorporation, we can only assume, at this stage, that the new ETF professional standards are unlikely to make profound changes to FE professionalism. What is particularly striking in the exploration of nearly 25 years of FE professionalisation policy-making is the iteration of the measures and policies taken (fig 1) and also the 'top down' manner by which these seem to have been mediated within the profession. Figure 1 below illustrates the cycle of professionalisation experienced by the FE sector since incorporation. The cycle summarises the professionalisation status and context of the time and the triggers (arrows) that led to a change of policy.
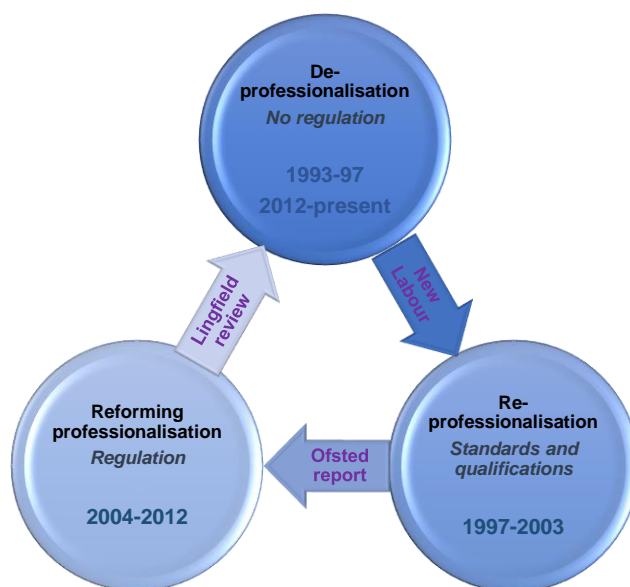
Figure 1: The FE professionalisation policy cycle

2.6 Conclusion

2.6.1 The conceptual framework

In summary, the literature review has established that FE professionalism is still a contested notion and that FE professionalisation, in particular ITE, is strongly desired by the sector but has so far failed to convince the government and regulatory bodies of its efficiency. The periodisation has highlighted a cyclical process of professionalisation policy-making aimed at 'fixing' FE professionalism. Based on the literary evidence, at first sight, FE professionalisation seems to have been driven by 'top-down' government policies. This linear form of policy-making (Bell and Stevenson, 2006) is usually perceived as something that 'gets done to people' (Bowe et al., 1992, p7), denying the 'receivers' of policies any agency. However, it has been increasingly recognised that policy-making is a process that involves interaction between various 'players' who contribute to the construction of policies (Bowe et al., 2012; Ozga, 2000; Hodgson and Spours, 2006). Parsons (1995) argues that much of the shaping of policy agendas is exercised by organisations or networks at the meso-level of policy-making. The literature has identified 'players' who seem pivotal to FE professional formation and who act as intermediaries between government and FE professionals on the ground and have some influence over policy-making. These players do not appear to constitute an organised group but a complex or even haphazard network composed of various government-led or funded organisations as well as teacher unions, HEIs and FECs representatives (Table 2, p55). But the impact of the incorporation and marketisation of FE has had a significant impact on some of the network-players' ability to contribute to or resist macro-level policies. The review of the literature shows that there is evidence of a reaction to policy-making and scattered 'activity' but the network does not seem to respond in a consistent, collective and collaborative manner.

2.6.2 The research questions

Using the 2012-present cycle of the FE professionalisation process identified within the literature review (fig 1 p34), the thesis aims to examine the nature of the mediation, the level of engagement of meso-level players and their agency with regard to policy-making**:**

What is the role of the meso-level players in the policy-making process with regard to FE professional formation?

1. How do those in the meso-level policy network mediate policies on FE professionalisation?
2. What is the specific role of HE ITE players in this process and how much agency do they have?
3. Should meso-level policy-players have greater agency and, if so, what might facilitate this process?

Chapter Three: Theoretical and Methodological perspectives

3.1 The Policy-making process

The analysis of the literature initially concluded that FE professionalisation policy-making appeared to follow a 'top-down' process. However, this process was questioned in the conclusion with regard to theoretical perspectives, which contest a linear approach to policy-making. The consensus of contemporary opinion suggests that policy-making is a dynamic process involving a variety of players (e.g. Bowe et al., 1992; Ball, 1994a; Rhodes, 1997; Trowler, 2003; Hudson and Lowe, 2009; Garratt and Forrester, 2012). This view challenges the traditional 'top-down' model of policy-making, which emphasises policy as a product but disregards the role of context and the multi-level aspect of policy-making (Jenkins, 1997). Indeed, linear policy-making models say little about the unpredictability or 'messiness' of the process and the actors involved within it (Bates et al., 2011; Cairney, 2012). Instead, Bowe and colleagues consider policy-making a continual process from production to implementation in which policies are re-formed and re-interpreted because of the 'plurality of readers' (1992, p13). They identify a cycle of three contexts in which policy is made: the context of influence, which is the initial point of policy-making where interested parties contend for representation; the context of policy text, which is the demonstration of the government's concepts and ideologies or more broadly 'the policy' translated for the general public; and the context of practice in which policy is interpreted (Bowe et al., 1992). Ball (1994a) goes further by adding two contexts of outcomes and political strategies, which are more concerned with the impact of policies on social inequalities and strategies to be used to contest these.

Ball (1994a) views policy in terms of text and discourse. Policy as text has a number of features: it can be understood as the way in which policy is encoded and decoded and it recognises the plurality not only of writers but also of readers whose interpretations help to shape policies. For Ball, producers of texts have no control over their application or contextualisation, and policy becomes a 'cannibalized product of multiple (but circumscribed) influences and agendas' (Ball, 1994a, p16). Hence policy as text is not to be considered

in isolation. Over time, the different voices, contexts and interests form, what Ball calls, a 'policy sediment' (1994a, p17). As a result, the layers of understanding and interpretations at the implementation level can sometimes differ from the initial aim of the policy. Actors' agency over policy is thus established through a process where actors 'are making meaning, being influential, contesting, constructing responses, dealing with contradictions, attempting representations of policy' (Ball, 1994a, p21). However, Ball (1994a) also acknowledges that wider structural and societal factors affect agency and thus require a further analytical lens, which he calls 'policy as discourse'. Policy as discourse examines the constraints and effect of discourse on social practices and considers how power and agency are exerted through the production of 'truth' and 'knowledge' (Bacchi, 2000). It is worth noting that discourses do not operate within a level playing field but as part of a pre-established power-relation framework where some voices have more legitimacy or power than others. In effect, discourses are instruments of both 'power' and 'resistance' (Ball, 1994a).

Ball's analysis is helpful for examining policy from two distinctive angles but his approach to policy analysis is not without its critics. Lall (2007) and Vidovich (2007) note that, overall, critics have underlined Ball's excessive attribution of agency to teachers. For Hatcher and Troyna (1994), Ball's attempt to reconcile agency at both the macro and micro levels fails to convince because of the lack of emphasis on the dominant position of the state and its ability to control the outcomes of policies. They also question the efficiency of resistance at the micro level through the re-interpretation of policies:

> 'we would argue that, to be effective, opposition to government education policy has to extend beyond the level of pragmatic micro-political action at the level of the individual and the school and take more collective, active and strategic forms.'

> (Hatcher and Troyna, 1994, p168)

Ball's response acknowledged some of the critiques by arguing that his analytical framework attempted to address the complexity of the real world by rejecting a 'hierarchy, [which] portrays social roles and social actors as

structurally determined and historically static, and is insensitive to circumstances' (1994b, p174). Ball defended his 'underplaying of state coercion' (1994b, p176) pinpointing that policies varied in 'form and forcefulness' (1994b, p180) and that resistance at the local/micro level could be just as effective as political and organised actions. In his view, undermining local actors' actions and voices would involve a 'systematic disempowerment of ordinary actors and submerged and subjugated voices, and empowerment of the theorist, the analyst, the (P)olitical actor' (1994b, p176). In the same vein, Bacchi (2000) argues that the focus on discourse of domination is in itself a discourse disregarding the input and power of actors involved in the policy-making process. On the other hand, Ozga maintains that contemporary policy analysis is far too focused on details of implementation as opposed to examining the nature of policy and the role of the hegemonic state's agenda as an overarching framework or 'the bigger picture' (1990, 2000, p76).

The theoretical 'micro versus macro' dispute is yet to be settled but it has, nevertheless, enabled researchers to gain a greater understanding of what is meant by 'policy' and the various agents, levers and contexts that contribute to its making (Vidovich, 2007). In fact, there has been an increasing interest in the study of the dynamics between policy-making actors, which confirms that academics are perhaps moving away from a debate taking place within a strict macro-micro dichotomy (Vidovich, 2003).

3.2 The analytical framework

3.2.1 Towards a hybrid framework of policy-making

> 'The intention of this framework is to begin to depict the messiness of the policy process (a post-modern perspective), but not to be so overwhelmed by the messiness that the policy process is rendered beyond systematic analysis. The 'bigger picture' (modernist perspective) should not be lost. The balance of power between macro constraint and micro agency would be expected to vary with different policies, but it is always important to consider the way in which they interact; that is, the dynamics of the policy process.'

> (Vidovich, 2007, p292)

In her framework (figure 2), Vidovich (2007) acknowledges Ball's attempt to broaden the terrain of education policy studies from the macro to the micro level, but also recognises the difficulties in resolving the rift between 'top down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to policy-making analysis. Vidovich (2003, 2007) bases her hybrid framework argument on Bowe and colleagues' concepts of policy-making and Ozga's democratisation of policy-making by removing 'policy from its pedestal' (Ozga, 2000, p2). This means that policy research should not be the preserve of policy-makers at the macro level or be confined to a strict methodological stance. The hybrid framework strives to link the 'bigger' to the 'smaller pictures' in order to gain a 'more complete picture' of policy-making (Vidovich, 2007, p285-290).

Influences
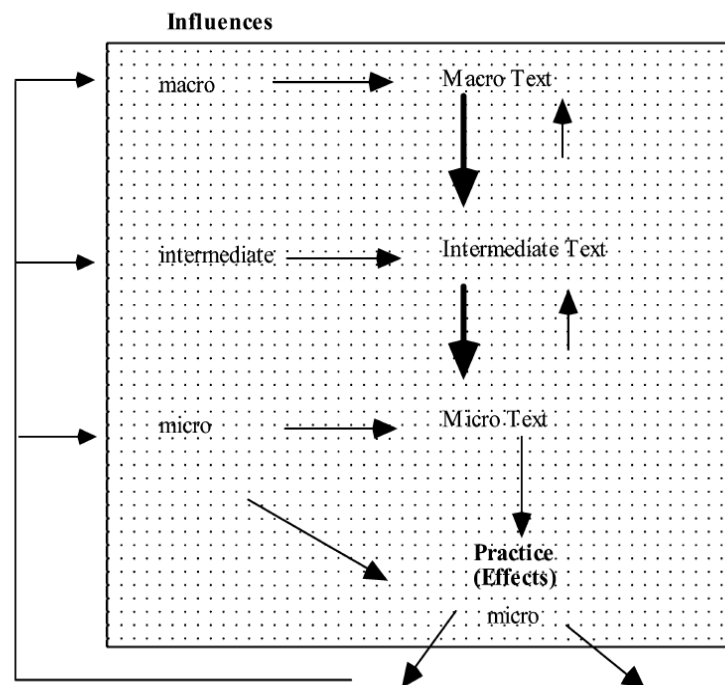
Figure 2: Vidovich's hybridised framework for policy analysis (2007, p291)

Vidovich validates her hybrid approach further by underlining the need to adapt to the 'increasingly complex global-national-local dynamics of education policy in new times' (2007, p290). Building on Bowe and colleagues' policy cycle, Vidovich (2003, 2007) reviews the model by adding three further dimensions: consideration of the role of globalisation, state-centred

constraints and an examination of the interrelationships or dynamics between
the levels of policy-making (figure 3).
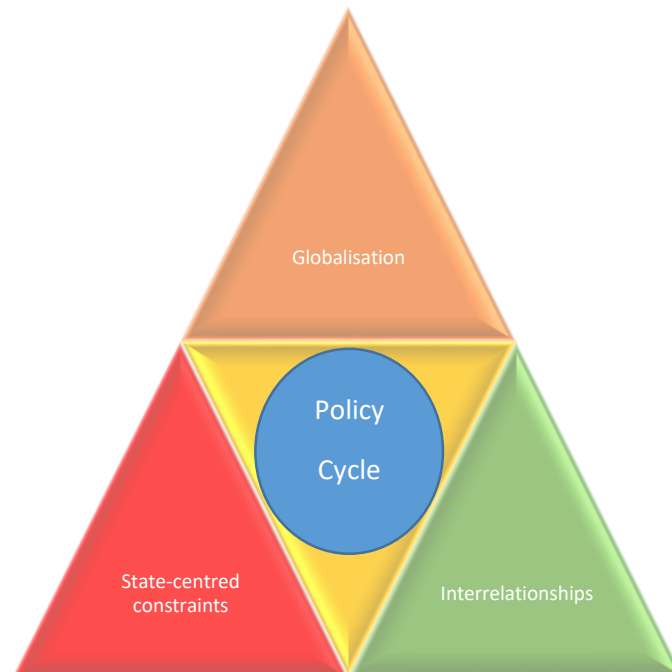
Figure 3: A hybridised policy cycle (adapted from Vidovich, 2007)

Vidovich's state-centred approach emphasises the 'key role often taken by
governments in policy, but not state-controlled to the extent that other policy
participants are totally excluded' (2007, p290). The difference between 'state-
controlled' and' state-centred' is of importance if only to bring the practice of
compromise of theoretical stances to the fore; the state is clearly involved but
some agency is retained by other actors. This is a point made by Ball, who
argues that network policy-making is by no means a 'hollowing out' of the state
but constitutes a new modality of the state, power, agency and social action
(2008, p748).

The hybridity is further evident in the analysis of the interrelationships between
the levels of policy-making. For instance, Vidovich (2007) identifies the
dynamics as two-way interactions from the production to the interpretation of
policy at the macro, meso or micro level. She views the exchange not as an
equal relationship but as a dialectic, recognising the issue of balance and level
of power within the dynamics. In this way, she emphasises the importance of
the state in the transmission of policy without undermining the role of various

actors in the process. Vidovich identifies her interrelationship model as a form of policy network, a concept we now turn to.

3.2.2 Policy networks

According to Vidovich (2007), the policy network concept acts as a link between policy-making theories, clearly contrasting with the linear 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' versions of policy-making. A policy network is typically situated at the meso-level of analysis (Hudson and Lowe, 2012). In terms of decision-making, the meso-level is where key actors make or struggle for representation (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999). In terms of analysis the meso-level is 'the middle of the policy process sandwich', bridging the macro and micro gap, and is concerned with the 'who' and the 'how' of the policy-making process (Hudson and Lowe, 2012, p11). Within this process, all actors are relevant and interdependent even though Vidovich (2007) argues that some may have more power than others. According to Klijn (1997), the interdependency of actors is necessary for the construction of policy because policy-makers require their resources for the policy to be mediated. There have been many attempts to define and categorise policy networks, but based on the work of Rhodes (1997) they can be commonly defined as 'clusters of different kinds of actor who are linked together in political, social or economic life' (Peterson, 2003, p1). Initially, Rhodes (1997) identified several types of networks on a continuum based on the number of participants, as well as their dependency on one another, stability, resources, exclusiveness and also interests. This typology was later revised by Marsh and Rhodes (1992) to concentrate on the community and issue networks, which were placed at opposite ends of the continuum.

Dimension	Policy community	Issue network
Membership **Number of participants**	Very limited number, some groups consciously excluded	Large
Type of interest	Economic and/or professional interests dominate	Encompasses range of affected interests
Integration **Frequency of interaction**	Frequent, high-quality, interaction of all groups on all matters related to policy issue	Contacts fluctuate in frequency and intensity
Continuity	Membership, values, and outcomes persistent over time	Access fluctuates significantly
Consensus	All participants share basic values and accept the legitimacy of the outcome	A measure of agreement exists, but conflict is ever present
Resources **Distribution of resources (within network)**	All participants have resources; basic relationship is an exchange relationship	Some participants may have resources, but they are limited, and basic relationship is consultative
Distribution of resources (within participating organisations)	Hierarchical	Varied and variable distribution and capacity to regulate members
Power	There is a balance of power among members. Although one group may dominate, it must be a positive-sum game if community is to persist	Unequal powers, reflecting unequal resources and unequal access. It is a zero-sum game

Table 1: Types of policy networks: characteristics of policy communities and issue networks (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992, p 251)

The typology (table 1) highlights some distinctions, primarily in terms of membership, hierarchy, continuity and agency, between the two networks. This does not mean that they are necessarily mutually exclusive and cannot co-exist or become complementary during a particular policy process (Hudson and Lowe, 2004). But, whilst in both cases the interrelationship is based on the deployment of resources, Smith (1993) suggests that community networks have influential and formalised relationships. In contrast, issue networks tend to have more conflictual interactions and exchange their resources in a

competitive and/or bargaining manner or in a game-like interaction, manoeuvring for advantage in order to achieve goals (Rhodes, 1997; Hudson and Lowe, 2004). Ultimately, the power of an actor is dependent on the access or currency of the resource to be mediated but this is largely determined by the interest that the government has in the policy matter (Cairney, 2012). This means that some actors may have limited or little influence and be restricted to consultation and lobbying activities (Smith, 1993). The competition aspect of the mediation, Vidovich argues, reinforces the 'economist discourse' in education, which she views as highly detrimental to the democratisation of the policy process (2007, p294).

However, Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997a) underline that the power of the state may appear less significant if it is dependent on other players for policy implementation. Similarly, Ball views networks as a 'new form of the state's management of policy-making' (2008, p757). Marsh and Smith (2000) place networks within a dialectical relationship where policy and networks influence each other. On the other hand, Vidovich (2007) argues that the state 'retains considerable power relative to many other policy actors' (2007, p294). But Vidovich is also critical of the meso-level organisation focus with regard to the study of policy networks when a micro focus would give 'more voice to teachers, parents and students at the 'grassroots', contributing to the democratisation of education' (2007, p294). Whilst a study at the macro/meso and micro level would benefit a wider understanding of FE professionalisation policy-making, Bates and colleagues point out that micro level representatives are 'often absent from the deliberation process' (2011, p43). This does not justify the lack of policy network studies at the micro level but may explain why researchers tend to concentrate on meso-level networks. Yet, it is clear that Vidovich (2007) recognises the value of the policy network as a way of bridging the theoretical gap by integrating the concept within her own interrogation of policy process. In this thesis, the use of the policy network concept does not intend to be rigid theory but is used to act as a guide towards understanding the dialectic and agency between actors and policy within the policy-making process. It also serves as a basis for analysis in conjunction with Vidovich's policy-making process framework.

Consequently, in order to acknowledge the 'messiness' of policy-making and reconcile the various theoretical stances available, a hybrid form of policy-making analysis based on Vidovich (2007) and the policy network concepts has been selected to examine the English FE professionalisation policy-making context.

The concept of the issue network (Table 1, p43) is deemed most relevant to describe the group of actors involved in FE professionalisation policy-making. Whilst some actors share common values such as the promotion of professionalism and professionalisation reflected in the community network, the 'interests' in relation to the issue are multiple and vary from one actor to another. For example, Higher Education institutions (HEIs), Further Education Colleges (FECs) and Ofsted have very different vested interests in the matter. Following the discussion in chapter 2 (2.5.4 and 2.6.1), it is evident that the resources available are uneven amongst members. More importantly, the actors depicted in this thesis seem to be mostly 'policy-active' at the emergence of an 'issue'. In this case, the 'issue' is the FE professionalisation policy-making process within a review of professionalisation and/or de-professionalisation and the deregulation agenda. Furthermore, the actors are inconsistent in their interactions and their influence seems largely restricted to consultation, which relates best to the concept of issue networks. However, there is little evidence at this stage of a consensus with regard to forming a network to respond to the issue, which makes it somewhat 'accidental'. For this reason, the concept of issue networks is utilised but only as a reference point, leaving open the possibility that more specific characteristics of the FE Professionalisation policy-making network (FEPPMN) actors may emerge from the data analysis.

3.2.3 The analytical approach

Drawing on the work of Vidovich (2007) and the concept of policy networks, the hybridised framework for this thesis analyses the policy-making process with the aim of identifying the struggles and dynamics occurring in Bowe and colleagues' (1992) 'context of influence'. As stated previously, the context of influence is the initial point of policy-making where the interested parties

(policy networks) contend for representation. As Bowe and colleagues' (1992) concept implies the enactment of policy-making by different actors, Vidovich's hybridised policy cycle (fig 3, p41) has been adjusted to contain the notion of a policy network and examines policy-making given the dynamics between the players but keeping in mind the state-centred constraints. The policy-making cycle has thus been adapted to reflect the context of the English FE professionalisation policy-making process (fig 4). The cycle provides the context in which the FEPPMN sits and the dimensions to consider when examining its role and activities. The arrows represent the two-way interaction within and between these dimensions.
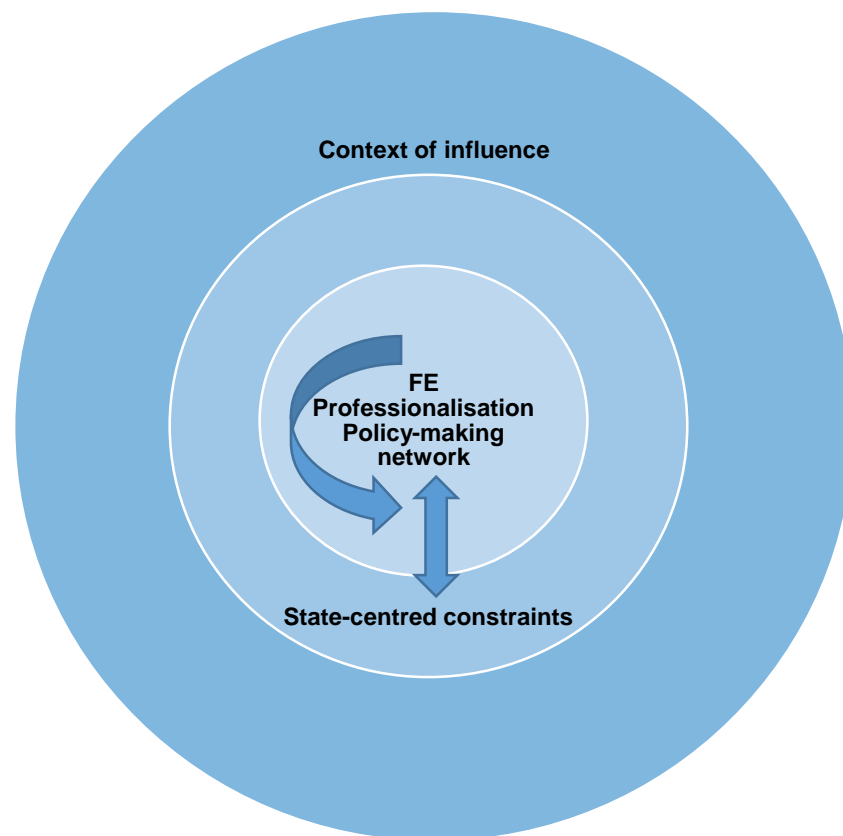
Figure 4: The hybridised FE professionalisation policy's context of influence (adapted from Vidovich (2007)

3.2.4 The analytical tools

Goodwin argues that the power of actors within a network relies on their capacity to 'effect desired outcomes and affect the behaviour of other actors where those actors do not have reciprocal powers' (2009, p682). This, in his

view, can only be undertaken by examining the networks' 'differential distributions of resources and capacities' in a more systematic and empirical manner (Goodwin, 2009, p684). However, an empirical approach to network analysis has been contested by Ball (2009), who challenges the existence of adequate research methods to map the structured relationships of power cited by Goodwin (2009, p682). He poses the following questions:

> 'How do we access and then 'measure' or calculate differential resources and capabilities embedded within the asymmetries in power relations? How do we relate these to the use of power and the different interests and goals of participants? How do we capture changes in participation, capabilities and asymmetries over time?'

> (Ball, 2009, p688-89)

Ball attributes the difficulties in measuring the distribution of power to the formless and unstable nature of networks and the opacity of the activities (negotiations, compromises, and informal discussions), which go on 'behind the scenes' (2009, p688). He calls for a formal conceptualisation of networks and the design of a set of tools that will enable researchers to examine these power interrelationships. A focus on 'specific events or crises' to gather further network practices would facilitate the design of such tools (Ball, 2009, p688). Whilst the overall aim of the thesis is to examine the policy-making process with regard to FE professional formation at the meso level, it may also, tentatively, contribute to the development of this set of tools.

Bearing in mind the analytical issues raised by Ball, but also the reality of hybridisation, the thesis utilises the tools that best address the research questions. Vidovich's questions (Appendix 2) are useful insofar as they provide an initial guide to interrogate the policy process. Importantly, Vidovich recommends that her questions only be 'offered as a 'menu' from which the researcher might select depending upon the specifics of the policy process under investigation' (2007, p292). For instance, for this thesis, the global dimension has not been considered crucial for the analysis of the policy process. This is not to say that it is not influential: it is clear from the literature review that economics and market forces are at the heart of the British government's focus on FE. But the insular and unique nature of English FE

professionalisation (given the history of 'benign neglect', mentioned in 2.5) must also be taken into consideration and the globalisation aspect was not deemed appropriate for the explanation of the policy-making process at the meso-level (this is perhaps a line that could be followed at a macro analysis level). Indeed, whilst some questions serve as a basis to establish the influence and power differentials within FE professionalisation policy-making, a more detailed focus is needed in order to identify the mediation of policy.

The mediation of policies within the FEPPMN is analysed in relation to the dynamics and state-centred constraints dimensions. The mediation of policies can be summarised as an exchange of information, goals and resources (Kickert et al., 2007a), which occurs as a result of negotiations, struggles and compromises amongst the various actors in policy-making (Garratt and Forrester, 2012). In brief, the 2012-present FE professionalisation policy cycle (fig 1, p34) is used to define patterns of relationships, which shape policy-making, and scrutinises the level(s) of engagement and agency of actors within the process:

Dynamics

- Interdependency (exchange of resources such as expertise) as described by Marsh and Rhodes (1992), Rhodes (1997) and Kickert et al. (1997).
- Interaction (struggles and compromises amongst actors and, in particular within the government/policy elite) (Rhodes, 1997 and 2006; Kickert et al., 1997).
- Processes and strategies (games played to achieve goals) (Rhodes, 2006; Klijn and Teisman, 1997).

State-centred constraints dimension

- Agency (impact of interaction/effectiveness of contribution; capacity for action as detailed by Cairney, (2012) or position of power within the network as described by Goodwin (2009).
- Development of agency (ideas and actions that would contribute to an increase of power within the network and/or influence policy-making as a result) as defined by Biesta and Tedder (2007) (see 4.2.5, p93).

The terms of analysis within the research refer back to the original line of enquiry or research questions (Hillier and Jameson, 2003) and the work of Vidovich (2009), which includes the concept of and debates around policy cycles and networks.

3.3 The methodological framework

Consequently, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon as well as acknowledging an emancipatory agenda, this research strives to reduce the dichotomy between 'policy makers' and 'policy receivers' (Bowe et al., 1992) by capturing the perspectives of the diversity of 'actors' within the policy network in the interpretation of the FE professionalism policy-making cycle. This falls in line with policy network theories where all actors have a 'voice' (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992; Rhodes, 1997), as advocated by Vidovich (2007).

Therefore, the study adopts a constructivist approach to allow for multiple realities to be expressed (Robson, 2002) and for the various policy players to engage and make sense of their 'world' (Crotty, 1998, p42). Meaning is not created; it is constructed as 'we already have something to work with' (Crotty, 1998, p44). The dialectical interchange between the participants and the researcher is also part of the construction of meaning-making (Arthur et al., 2012). Within this framework, the researcher is depicted as a 'bricoleur' whose inventive skills and ability to 're-vision bits and pieces' enables him/her to go beyond the preconceptions of the research (Crotty, 1998, p51).

3.4 The research design and methods

3.4.1 A case study approach

A case study approach has been selected in order to examine the FE professionalisation policy-making process at the meso-level, in particular the role of HE ITE. The choice of a case study approach for this study can be justified at several levels: First, a flexible design that advocates a focus on the multiplicity of methods and the participants' views was identified to adapt to the on-going research context, for example, findings that require redirection or the addition of data collection tools etc. (Robson, 2002). One of the

advantages of the case study approach is that it enables the researcher to reconsider and reconfigure the phenomenon being studied in the light of the findings (Merriam, 2009). This point is significant for the study as I was primarily interested in the engagement with policies of professionals involved in FE professionalisation but lacked precise direction. My literature review had also revealed a 'top down' model of mediation/policy-making. However, the first round of interviews and further reading of the literature were to challenge my initial assumptions and emphasise the 'messiness' of policy-making and the policy network concepts.

Whilst VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) argue that case studies are not a method, a research design or a methodology, they agree on the flexible nature of the case study as 'a transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic' that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected (event, concept, programme, process, etc.). In effect, they suggest that the case study is 'not exclusively about the case revealing itself as it is about the unit of analysis being discovered or constructed' (VanWynsberghe and Khan, 2009, p9). This, they go on to argue, implies that the researchers 'cannot definitively state the unit of analysis at the outset of the research; it must come into focus as the research progresses' (VanWynsberghe and Khan, 2009, p9). The units of analysis of my case study were thus constructed organically through my interviewing, reading and analysis of the data and critical reflections. The evolution of the case study clarified for me that the unit of analysis was the mediation of these policies and the focus on a particular group of professionals involved in FE professionalisation policy-making.

Second, the case study was identified as particularly pertinent for this research, as its aim is to focus on a particular issue occurring in a small group/institution/organisation or a few individuals' perceptions of events and perspectives (Cohen et al., 2000; Yin, 2009; Arthur et al., 2012). Since the case study is concerned with the study of the 'particular' or a specific case (Robson, 2002, p179), it is thus best suited to address the singularity of the FE professionalisation policy-making process.

3.4.2 Defining the case

It is commonly agreed that a case study approach can be used to undertake an in-depth study of a particular phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2009; Denscombe, 2010; Swanborn, 2010). Swanborn (2010) advises the clarification of the study by distinguishing the phenomenon from the case. In this study, the phenomenon is identified as the mediation of FE professionalisation policies and the case as the Further Education professionalisation policy-making network (FEPPMN).

Creswell states that a case is a 'bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals' (2002, p61). Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) elaborate the notion of 'boundness' as key to the identification of a case with reference to:

a. temporal, geographical, organisational, institutional and other contexts that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case.
b. characteristics defined by the individuals and groups involved.
c. participants' roles and functions in the case bound by context

Within the study, the boundaries are established at organisational, characterisation and functional levels meeting the definition of policy networks as 'clusters of different kinds of actor who are linked together in political, social or economic life' (Peterson, 2003, p1). Swanborn (2010) confirms that a case study is not necessarily confined to a sole actor but can extend to a collective. In this case, the network's organisations taking part in the research can be defined as a collection of actors. In addition, the network displays many of the characteristics of an issue network (Table 1, p43) and lastly, the network's actors are involved in the function and process of FE professionalisation policy-making.

3.4.3 Validity and reliability

Case studies are often criticised for their lack of reliability as a research design (Robson, 2002), in particular in policy research (Deem and Brehony, 1994), with the issue of generalisation of findings most commonly cited as a matter of debate (Bassey, 1999; Cohen et al., 2000; Pring, 2000; Arthur et al., 2012).

It is often argued that case studies do not bring sufficient evidence of a particular phenomenon as they may not be generalised (Swanborn, 2010). Flyvberg (2006) attributes the 'misunderstanding' of case studies' validity and reliability to the esteem and value given to theoretical over the practical/concrete knowledge. But Merriam posits that the 'validity, reliability and generalisation' case study debate is a false argument that 'misses the point' as it strives to address these from a positivist and universal perspective that cannot apply to 'human affairs' (2009, p52-53). This study has been designed from a constructivist perspective, which rests on multiple realities where there are 'no true or valid reality but only useful interpretations' (Crotty, 1998, p47).

This study does not attempt to make generalisations but merely to examine 'a process as it develops within one case' (Swanborn, 2010, p9) refuting the need for duplication of the findings. Despite the case of FE professionalisation constituting an 'autonomous' or single case study (Swanborn, 2010), this does not mean that the findings cannot be used to inform other studies (Arthur et al., 2012). Stake (1995) advises the researcher to turn the conclusions drawn into 'smaller' generalisations or 'assertions' about both the case and the phenomenon. The validity of this research design does not rely on generalisation of the findings but on its ability to explore what is happening within the instance of the case. It does not exclude the possibility that further or different results could be found in future policy-making.

3.4.4 Interviews

Robson states that case studies are empirical in nature 'in the sense of relying on the collection of evidence about what is going on' and that multiple methods can be used to do this (2002, p179). As the case study relies on policy players to 'discuss interpretations of the world they live in, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view' (Cohen et al., 2011, p409), interviews were selected as the data collection method. For this thesis, the interviews adopted a semi-structured approach following the initial line of enquiry (research questions) but also to explore interesting or relevant points that may emerge from the interaction, which contributes to the construction of

knowledge (Mason, 1996). The semi-structured approach provides flexibility to adapt to the context of the interview or interviewee as well as to the research theme (Robson, 2002). This is particularly relevant for the FE professionalisation case study, which contains a variety of participants and organisations with distinct experiences of the policy-making process. The limitation of this stance is the value of the information provided in relation to 'reality'. However, it can be argued that this research does not pretend to seek the 'truth' but rather participants' interpretations of the truth (Pring, 2000).

Fifteen face-to-face interviews were undertaken and digitally recorded. Participants were initially contacted via email with an explanation of the study, which included a consent form (Appendix 3). Each interview lasted between 60 and 80 minutes to provide sufficient time for questioning but also the opportunity for participants to expand on interesting or new insights that emerged as part of the conversation.

3.4.5 The FEPPMN sampling

The case study strives to portray the FE professionalisation community; thus I chose to adopt purposive sampling, which applies in relation to typicality or interest in the topic (Robson, 2002). In this case study, the participants are typical of the FE professionalisation policy network's main organisations who sit at the meso-level of policy-making between the issuing of policy papers by government and their application at ground level. The main policy players were identified following the literature review: relevant organisations such as the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), the University Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) and the Institute for Learning (IfL) were targeted specifically for their influence on FE professionalisation policy-making.

Brennen (in Baker and Edwards, 2012, p12) states that the number of participants for interviews is not prescriptive and depends on the purpose of the case. As the thesis has a particular interest in the role of HEIs within the process, an over-representation of HE ITE participants was deemed appropriate for the study. HEIs were selected for their level of involvement in policy-making but also their influence within the ITE context. Other

organisations, such as the 157 group, were included for their multi-level perspective on policy-making. Ofsted for instance participates in both the macro and meso-levels of policy-making and although further education colleges (FECs) tend to have a more micro level focus, it could be argued that they still contribute to the mediation of policies at the meso-level given their partnership with HEIs.

Access to participants was gained through professional networking, for instance through colleagues from other HEIs encountered at various UCET or Teacher Educator in Lifelong Learning (TELL) meetings and the support of my supervisor, who introduced me to a couple of interviewees thanks to her research connections. HEI participants were selected with regard to the type of university they worked for. A simplification of Browne and Reid's (2012) classification of HEIs was used to categorise the participants' universities into two groups: research-led (RL) and teaching-led (TL). This differentiation was deemed necessary to underline the focus as well as the status of each institution within the research, which proved relevant for the analysis of the findings in chapter 4. The labelling was determined by both reputation and the body of research produced by the institutions within the fields of policy-making and teacher education. When asked to allocate a label to their HEI, participants clearly identified themselves according to one of the two categories.

Name	Organisation	Position	Rationale for selection
Scott	College of FE & HE	ITE manager	FEC works in partnership with an HEI for ITE delivery
Adam	RL HE	PCET ITE director and lecturer	Institution is proactive and influential in terms of ITE research. Adam is involved in research on professional development
Carlos	TL HE	PCET ITE Head of school	Large ITE partnership with FECs. HEI has had close links with LLUK and ETF. The ITE faculty is teaching-focused. Carlos has been part of the working party on the new ETF professional standards
Harry	TL HE	PCET ITE director	HEI has had a long tradition of ITE
Sarah	ETF	Official representative	The organisation is now responsible for the FE professional standards and the IfL legacy
Odile	Ofsted	ITE inspector + HEI senior lecturer	Ofsted is responsible for ITE quality. Odile has a unique and dual perspective as inspector and ITE lecturer. She is also involved in research in ITE
John	RL HE	Principal lecturer	HEI is developing a research focus agenda. John is a prominent researcher in FE and FE ITE
Jill	TL HE & CETT	Senior lecturer	The HEI is leading on one of the CETT's initiative. Jill is also involved in ITE research
Bob	UCET	Official representative	UCET is the organisation representing ITE HEIs. Bob has been closely involved with the Lingfield review
Keith	157 group	Official representative	The organisation represents a consortium of the largest FECs in the UK and provides an employers' perspective
Colin	UCU	Former policy official representative	The UCU is the main FE and HE teaching union and has been involved at all the stages of FE professionalisation
Richard	TELL research network	Official representative	TELL has grown 'from within' the FE and HE teacher educator context. The network is research-focused. Richard has also been involved with UCET and was an ITE director within a TL university
Kate	IfL	Former official representative	Former professional body for FE. First hand contribution to the FE professionalisation policy-making process
Stephen	RL HE & UCET	Principal lecturer	Stephen has been involved with UCET post-16 research committee as well as ITE programmes
Catarina	TL HE	Senior lecturer	Involved with prominent ITE ETF projects

Table 2: The FE professionalisation policy-making network (FEPPMN)

3.4.6 Data analysis

At the analysis stage of the research it is acknowledged that the results can only be 'translated' from the researcher's or interpreter's reality and therefore, complete objectivity cannot be obtained in social research (Scott and Usher, 1999). The data produced by the case study was examined in relation to the overall research and Vidovich's questions (Appendix 2) and related to the analytical tools or categories defined in 3.2.4. The information collected was analysed following Miles and Huberman's approach (1994), which caters not only for the data but also the context of the case (Robson, 2002). The method follows a 'quantitative-like' approach to analysis (Swanborn, 2010) by employing the use of a matrix (Miles et al., 2014) or in this case a table displaying the categories identified in 3.2.4 (Appendix 4). Following on from the analytical approach described in 3.2.3, the use of the matrix was chosen to organise the data and provide some order within the 'messiness' of policy-making. Each transcript was initially scrutinised for its lexical association as well as its overall meaning and connotation across the given categories. The coded wording was then transferred to the table for clarity and the identification of common themes. Direct and indirect quotations have been used to illustrate the identified themes and represent the various participants' 'voices' within the network. The interviews were transcribed by a third party for the purposes of efficiency and accuracy. The transcripts (Appendix 5) were analysed and coded in line with the descriptors mentioned in 3.2.4.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The theoretical and methodological framework implies that my involvement as a researcher is contributing to the building of knowledge. Consequently, through the choice of the study and literature as well as the methodology, I acknowledged my 'positionality' (Greenbank, 2003) in Chapter 1, with regard to the research themes and the impact of my own ontological views on the interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2009; Ozga, 2000). But I also revealed that my initial assumptions about the policy-making process were challenged through my involvement with the research.

The research design is of importance insofar as case studies scrutinise a particular instance, individuals or a group of people whose anonymity must be respected. Anonymity can be total, as in the case of teacher educators, due to the generic nature of their community, but the issue is more complex when it concerns single organisations such as UCET or the IfL. In this instance, I believe that the naming of some organisations is relevant but I strived to apply all necessary measures to protect the participants' identities. Strategies such as a clear explanation of the aim of the research, informed consent, sending the transcription to the participants and mid-term analysis feedback facilitated a 'respect for truth and persons' (Bassey, 1999, p74). The interview process also required some ethical scrutiny. In addition to the issues and approach cited above, the interpersonal interaction and the notion of the insider-researcher, for some interviews, was reviewed (Cohen et al., 2009).

The insider-researcher position in this case can be considered an advantage as she/he is better placed to gain access to participants (Robson, 2002) and to understand the educational context (Mercer, 2007), although 'this does not automatically attach special authority' (Bridges, 2001, p374). In fact, there is a risk that this 'proximity' may result in the researcher's inability to develop a necessary 'degree of distance and detachment from the subjects of the research' (Mercer, 2007, p5). In order to resolve this, systematic care was taken to explain the research. Considering Robson's point (2002) that no research can ever be value-fee, I highlighted my initial assumption about FE professionalisation policy-making to the participants but ensured that the line of questioning revolved around the participants' experiences (Appendix 5). It is also fair to say that all of the participants involved in this research are experienced educationalists and have been or are involved in research themselves, which gives them confidence in their ability to state their opinions on the matter being discussed.

The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in relation to the usage and storage of the data and they were informed of their right to withdraw their participation at any stage of the research (Appendix 3). The transcripts were sent to the participants giving them the opportunity to ensure that the content was still representative of their views or to comment further if

required. The participants were required to fill in a consent form (Appendix 3). The form was adapted from a document that was initially designed by Dr Ann Lahiff, from the UCL Institute of Education, who kindly allowed the use and alteration of the form for the purpose of this thesis.

3.6 Conclusion

The study relies on a hybrid theoretical framework, which illustrates the concept of Ball's and Vidovich's 'messiness' of policy-making and a methodological framework, which is used as a means to deconstruct and organise it in a clearer manner. The case study design aims to frame and explore the FE professionalisation policy-making at the meso-level. Central to this case are the mediation of FE professionalisation policies and the role of the players involved in the process. The concept of the policy network analytical framework is used to identify the nature of the mediation, the level of engagement of the players and their agency with regard to policy-making. The next chapter identifies and analyses the research findings and suggests the main and developmental points, which are subsequently discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter Four: Presentation of findings

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings from the interviews undertaken with the 15 FEPPMN participants or 'players'. This section is organised according to the descriptors defined in 3.2.4. Section 4.1.1 recollects the 'identity' of the individual players and the organisations that participated in the study. Section 4.2.1 displays the players' individual position of power within the FEPPMN and underlines FE's lack of currency as a sector and policy-maker. Section 4.2.2 considers the interdependency factor and highlights the resources exchanged within the FEPPMN. It notes the complexity of the 'transactions' between the players and confirms the primary role of funding in the exchange process. Section 4.2.3 provides an account of the types of interactions and relationships established and negotiated within the network. It describes a series of struggles and compromises amongst players, in particular in the case of HEIs, whose policy-making behaviour is clearly perceived as protectionist by others. It also stresses the need for the FE sector to evolve from the currently projected 'Cinderella' image. Section 4.2.4 examines the games played within the FEPPMN in relation to policy-making. It identifies two specific games that operate 'below the radar': one of connivance and the other of avoidance. It concludes that the players have largely been reactive to policy-making. Section 4.2.5 proposes a series of activities that could contribute to the development of the FEPPMN's agency. It concludes by suggesting the adoption of a 'nibble and nudge' approach at the meso-level to progress from a reactive to a proactive approach to policy-making. Each section starts with a definition of the concept identified as part of the analysis, a summary of the main findings through a figure or a narrative followed by the presentation of the qualitative evidence on which the argument is based.

4.1.1 The FEPPMN players

In this study, the FE Professionalisation policy-making network (FEPPMN) comprises various players from HEIs, FECs, a union and a professional body as well as FE representatives and professionals involved in government funded organisations and inspection services. As discussed in 2.6.1, although the FEPPMN is not a homogenous group, during this study, players showed some cohesion around the concept of FE. This was evidenced by players often referring to themselves as 'we in FE'. This sense of belonging is not entirely surprising given that the majority of players have previously worked or work in the sector in one capacity or another and view themselves as 'vehicles' of FE professionalisation. In the following analysis, participants or policy-actors are termed 'players'. This is partly for consistency but also to recognise the notion of 'play' within policy-making, which is developed within this study. The players were introduced in 3.4.5 (Table 2, p55) but an overview is included below for clarity.
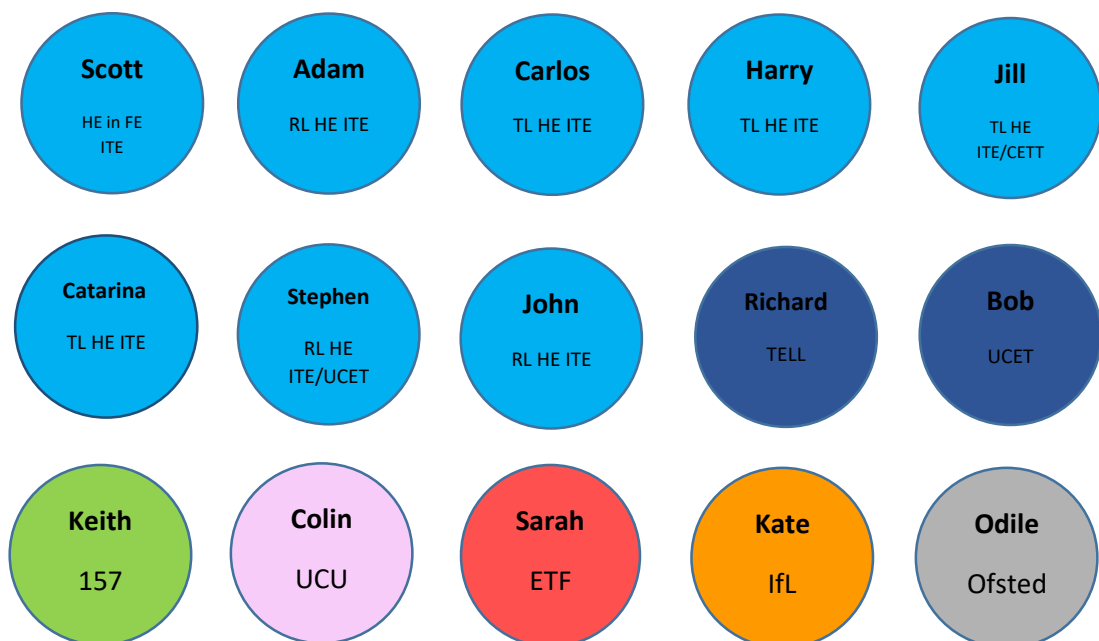
Figure 5: Overview of the FEPPMN players

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Agency within the FEPPMN

In critiquing the work of Ball (2008a) on policy networks, Goodwin suggests that the discussion needs expanding beyond Ball's descriptive stage to 'decide which networks and which network actors matter in education governance' (2009, p680). Goodwin's (2009) development seeks to identify the differential distributions of resources and capacities, in other words, the power held by players within the network and their ability to effect the outcomes of policy. To a certain extent, his definition covers most of the analytical tools identified in 3.2.4, but the following category emphasises the power and the positioning or hierarchy of the players within the network.

However, as Cairney argues, power is most visible when exercised; when it is reduced or 'set behind the scenes', it limits public debate (2012, p47) and makes the analysis problematic. For this study, acknowledging the concept of 'invisibility' in policy-making is of importance as FE has commonly been known as the 'forgotten' or 'Cinderella' sector, but Cairney (2012) concedes that it is difficult to observe and measure. Nevertheless, he suggests that an actor's agency or 'capacity for action' can be multiple: 'the ability to get what you want; the ability to affect the behaviour of others; and, the ability to alter the decision-making environment' (2012, p66). The following diagram (fig 6, p62), which has been informed by the analysed data, shows the current 'visibility' or agency of the FEPPMN players within the policy-making process. The 'system' reflects the position of players within the FEPPMN and in relation to BIS. The closer players are to BIS, the more policy-making agency they hold. The 'agency system', including individual 'positions', is explained and developed in the forthcoming narrative.
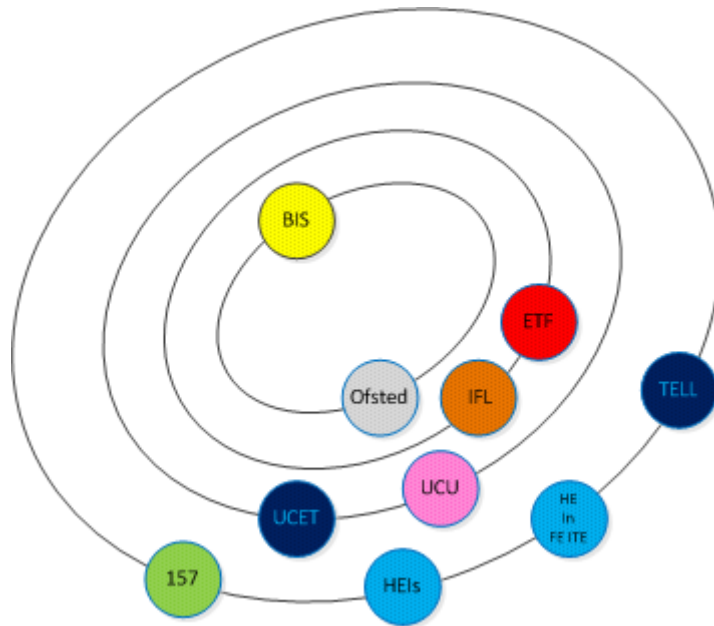
Figure 6: FEPPMN agency system

"Their children don't go to FE" (Jill, TL HE)

According to the FEPPMN players, FE occupies a crucial place within education but its influence on policy-making is largely 'invisible'. The players explained that this is due to the lack of a clear definition of what FE is and does, the absence of regulation and the lack of knowledge of the sector at civil service and government level.

The feeling of FE being 'misunderstood' and not being 'valued' was frequently expressed:

> *"They've* [government] *never experienced it. The fact that it is education for other people's children means that they are allowed to tinker in a way they simply would not be if it were schools or higher education, because we are not as powerful – when I say 'we', the sector; we can't even agree what the sector is called, can we? The sector is not as powerful"* (John, RL HE).

The notion of FE being for 'other people's children' was echoed by Jill (TL HE):

> "*Government would never dare do that to a university, or to a whole set of schools. They just wouldn't, because their children go to schools, their children go to universities; FE, people don't really understand FE"*.

For Carlos (TL HE), the misunderstanding of FE was only too obvious because of the absence of connection with the sector:

> "*Government ministers are highly unlikely to know anything about further education, or technical training, because most of them have gone through a public school, Oxbridge route. I think there's a demonstrable ignorance about what's there on the ground*".

The common perception amongst the players was that the academic/vocational divide is still current, given that, traditionally, FE seldom contributes to the formation of the elite (Hodkinson, 1989), resulting in its influence being both weak and vulnerable to 'political whims' (Colin, UCU; Keith,157).

In the same vein, Keith highlighted the ephemeral nature of politics as a barrier to influential and sustainable policy-making:

> "*Anybody calling for stability is going to have trouble when you've got a bunch of politicians who only have five years in which to achieve lots of things and make their name. And further education is more vulnerable to that because we are the part of the education sector that is most clearly responding to changes in the labour market, changes in the economy (…) FE is more malleable because we are more responsive and therefore it becomes harder for organisations like ours* [157 group] *to influence anything other than on a short term basis*".

Adam (RL HE) suggested that the government was 'letting go' of the ITE issue, and using quango-like agencies such as the ETF to manage issues of professionalisation in FE. But the ETF is a relatively new organisation and many of the participants were rather uncertain of its position within the professionalisation process and with regard to its representation of teachers or feared its potential as a top-down, managerial organisation: *"a professional body run by the employers – I mean, you don't need to be a genius to see that's a bad idea"* (Harry, TL HE). However, the majority of the participants expected that the ETF's influence on policy-making would be 'short-lived' and restricted if the organisation were to follow the fate of similar quangos such as IfL or LLUK. There were also questions surrounding the ETF's effectiveness in sharing the decision-making process on policies with other players. Carlos (RL HE), who had been involved in two of the consultancy groups tasked to

set up the new professional standards, related that despite inviting parties from across the sector:

> "*The agenda was already set, I think. We were presented with stuff rather than coming up with it ourselves (…) In the end, we turned out to be a kind of sounding board, rather than a creative, developmental group*".

This partly contradicted Sarah's (ETF) assertion that the ETF's aim and policy were to involve 'experts' from the sector to get "*nearer to the frontline*". She qualified the design of the standards as a "*complete success story*" for being a "*very democratic and collective project*". But whilst the consultation was wide in terms of participation, taking part did not necessarily mean impact on outcome or, ultimately, a change of government policy. Sarah recognised the ETF's limitations in influencing policy-making partly because of its close links with government:

> "*It's one of the tensions that's there, is that policy is done to the sector, historically, and the shift is to try to get the sector to do it for itself, so this sector-owned, sector-led is very, very important, and that's quite tricky when most of your funding is Government funding*".

Indeed, the compromise of agency was reiterated when discussing the government 'interference' with the ETF's mission:

> "*They're* [BIS] *saying, "Well, have you done it?" So there's a lot of, "Right, have you done this; have you done that?" because they've* [BIS] *got to report up to their policy lead (…) That's a tension that we're grappling with, and it's quite overt*" (Sarah).

However, this could confirm Scott's (FE ITE) point that the ETF was "*too close to government to be representative of FE*" but its impact on professionalisation policies would be minimal due to quangos' short lifespan within the sector: "*You just think, well, if I take a deep breath, it'll* [ETF] *go away*" (Scott)*.* The absence of a regulatory body, due to the revocation of FE workforce regulations and the handing over of the IfL legacy to the ETF, has created a vacuum within the sector. Odile (Ofsted) suggested that the ITE deregulation policies had, unexpectedly, led Ofsted to increase its power within the network by taking on "*a quasi-unofficial regulatory role*".

In short, the ETF's focus on employers' representation and the connection of Ofsted to the professionalisation process was leading, as Jill put it, to the "*voice of the practitioner being lost*". Whilst some participants (Scott and Jill, TL HE) had some understanding of what the IfL had tried to achieve for FE professionalism, others were less sympathetic or felt its closure had been inevitable partly because: "*professionalism cannot be imposed from above in any meaningful way. Professionalism, in a meaningful sense, has to evolve from the profession*" (John, RL HE).

Both John (RL HE) and Adam (RL HE) felt that the IfL's ability to mediate policies on behalf of its members within the network had been automatically compromised because of its role as a regulatory body. Kate (IfL) recognised the drawbacks of her organisation accepting such a role but it was:

> "*A powerful position, it would've been foolish to turn down. But, it really did change our position, and I think it changed our position so that some people saw us as a mediator between policy and practice, and were very happy about that, so some members really saw that as a way to get their voice heard, and some never did; they always saw us as a barrier between their own sense of professionalism and what the Government wanted*".

Colin, as a UCU official, strongly questioned the IfL's agency as it "*took a very uncritical stance vis-à-vis government policies and management policies*". Many believed that the UCU contributed to the 'fall' of the IfL and, inadvertently the 2012 deregulation of FE ITE, but Colin insisted on the prominent role of the UCU (previously NATFHE) in enabling the professionalisation of the sector. For instance:

> "*In 2001, we* [UCU/NATFHE] *had recognised that we needed a professional body, and we had called for a professional body, we supported a professional body, we argued in LLUK, we argued with civil servants and ministers. I mean, not brutal arguments but we pushed for a professional body, and IfL was formed*".

Equally, UCET has been a voice for HEIs within the network to help guide the government with policies. Bob (UCET) mentioned the use of development boards and strategy groups where various interested parties help guide the government or government agencies in the initial discussion and

implementation of policies. Whilst UCET seems to have retained a strong position within the network, its efforts to influence the government and wider policies during the Lingfield review had been 'pointless': "*it could be seen to be an ideological agenda. You know, it's employer-driven, individual employers, deregulation, which we take to be de-professionalisation, so we haven't had any success in shifting them* [BIS] *on that"* (Bob). There is no doubt that UCET helped the representation of HEIs during the Lingfield review and consultation but the unification and balance of power was clearly unequal amongst universities. For instance, John (RL HE) underlined the impact of the fragmentation and hierarchy of HE on policy-making agency:

> "*Well, our present role, all too often, is to slavishly follow policy, and as policy changes, so do HEIs, and I suppose perhaps that's because so much teaching takes place within new universities, within post-92 universities, and that perhaps they don't have the confidence that, let's say, for argument's sake, Russell Group were involved in post-compulsory education training, which they're not, then I just cannot believe that they would jump as often as the institutions we work in jump. I just don't believe it. So, I think that unfortunately, HEIs are not quite as confident as they should be*".

However, Adam (RL HE) pinpointed a '*deficit of leadership*' in FE ITE policy-making, which, consequently, puts HEIs into an 'interesting situation' because despite being an "*unpleasant irritant for many people in the political frame*", "*they still have some credibility in the world generally*". But John's argument that not all universities have similar currency within the network was still reflected in Adam's interview. Adam's university was in a 'privileged' position within the FEPPMN "*only because it's got a reputation, because we're closely connected with research, more closely than other places maybe*". Adam's university's prime research status meant that it could perhaps take a "*more overt and loud leadership on things*" (Adam), which could increase the agency of HEIs within the network.

That said, and aside from a few collaborative initiatives, HEIs involved in FE ITE were largely perceived to work in isolation from FE (Keith, 157; Sarah, ETF). Sarah suggested that HEIs' agency was threatened by their own rhetoric on ITE because they kept arguing for a HE led approach on teacher

education, which argued for a strong academic input to the work-based training model favoured by the coalition government. Keith felt that HEIs still had an important part to play in policy-making but were guilty of approaching the professionalisation agenda using HE 'lenses':

> *"I think there is a role insofar as HEIs can and want to engage with influencing policy in the FE space but there is a role for trying to understand how the FE community works and understand that it might not work in quite the same way as an HE community works"*.

Initially, the CETTs were identified as a logical platform for active representation of both FE and HE ITE but the organisations had gone '*moribund'* (Jill, TL HE) due to a lack of funding from government as well as poor planning (Stephen, RL HE/UCET). However, the Teacher Educator Lifelong Learning network (TELL) has contributed by gathering TEds from both sides of HE and FE and focusing on sharing good practice, ideas, sector news and research. Richard (TELL), who initiated the network, described the TELL network as an independent organisation and a "*no-one is telling me what to do*" space. Unlike UCET, TELL does not operate solely on a policy level but its potential influence within the FEPPMN is not to be undermined even though as a rule:

> *"Teacher educators don't engage very much in outward facing activities on their own behalf as professionals. They tend to be doing that for their trainees all the time, which is one of the reasons why the professional identity of teacher educators is so vague and amorphous"* (Richard).

But TELL seems to have emerged from within the ITE profession as a response to "*the incredibly excessive controlling influence of whoever is regulating and managing teacher education, either at a national or a local level*" (Richard). The emergence of a teacher educator network from 'within' is perhaps a sign of readiness towards 'facing outwards' and attaining greater agency over one's profession (Evetts, 2012). But, when asked about a potential lobbying or wider role for TELL, Richard felt ambivalent about the possibility because a more formal commitment to policy-making could lead to TELL becoming a 'hostage to fortune': "*the trouble is with something like TELL is if you start thinking oh maybe we could influence beyond the network of*

professionals, you then get into all the other problems that you are trying to escape". In other words, the attraction of TELL seems to be its ability to network but remain independent from other organisations or the government. Richard also remained unconvinced of the overall ITE professionals' influence, due to his 'first hand' experience of mediation during the Lingfield review:

> "*I gave evidence to the Lingfield report and they didn't pay attention to a single word we said. He* [Lord Lingfield] *wasn't interested at all, you could tell in the lift on the way to the room we had the interview in with him you could tell he wasn't interested in anything we were going to say*" (Richard).

In conclusion, the data gathered from the interviews shows that some players have more 'clout' than others in terms of status but the FE professionalisation policy-making network's position of influence remains fragile. For instance, HE players appear stronger when organised and engaged with other players. The agency of the players within the FE professionalisation policy-making network is variable and reliant on the importance of the FE and ITE agenda for the government at the time, compliance with, or resistance, to the government's ideology with regard to FE ITE, their dependence on government funding, the links established with the government and other agencies such as the ETF and in the case of HEIs, the position occupied within their own network or the HE hierarchy. But, overall, the Lingfield review example has shown that the FEPPMN had little agency when faced by strong political and ideological directions with regard to ITE.

4.2.2 Interdependency

According to Klijn (1997) and Rhodes (2006), interdependency constitutes a precondition for networks as players need each other's resources to achieve their goals. The term interdependency requires some interaction and co-operation between players towards a common cause (Klijn, 1997) but Rhodes notes that within the network players 'deploy their resources, whether constitutional-legal, organizational, financial, political or informational, to maximize influence over outcomes while trying to avoid becoming dependent on the other `players' (2006, p431). This implies some degree of autonomy and control over the resources to be exchanged (Smith, 1993). However, within an 'issue network' such as the FEPPMN, 'some participants may have

resources, but they are limited, and the basic relationship is consultative'
(Marsh and Rhodes, 1992, p 251) or confined to lobbying (Smith, 1993). This
statement is consistent with the data analysed in the study, which reveals that,
within the FE professionalisation policy-making network, the resources and
connections between players are uneven. During the analysis, a classification
was deemed necessary to differentiate the various resources exchanged. The
analysis found that the resources exchanged by the FEPPMN could be
characterised in terms of expertise, values and services, and then refined into
sub-categories to underline the specific features displayed by each resource.
The figure below (fig 7) shows the categorisation of these resources.
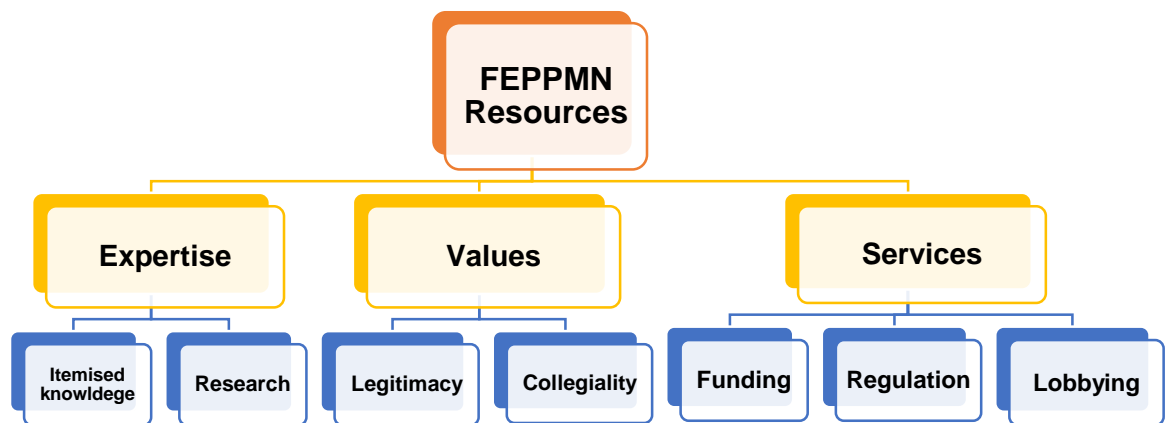
Figure 7: Taxonomy of FEPPMN resources

The first level of analysis identified 'who' exchanged 'what' (fig 8, p70) and
revealed that some players exchange resources regularly with various co-
players within the network, whereas others have little or no obvious connection
with one another. This does not mean that contact is non-existent but the data
collected indicates that it was not significant or consistent enough to constitute
a level of interdependency/dependency at the time of the data collection.
Figure 8 illustrates the exchanges of resources between the players. Some
exchanges are mutual (double arrows), whilst single arrows show a one-way
exchange, which could indicate a dependency between two players. The
diagram clearly shows the players revolving around BIS, which represents the
state constraints.

Figure 8: The FEPPM interdependency exchange

The data also revealed that the resources are not equal in terms of impact on policy-making. The figure below (fig 9) below shows the graded currency of resources within the FEPPMN; the lowest being at the bottom, whilst the most valuable perform at the top of the pyramid.

Figure 9: Hierarchy of resources

Resources such as funding and regulation display a high influence on policy-making, whilst others, for instance, itemised knowledge and legitimacy, appear to have some impact on the actual outcome of the policy (although the forthcoming discussion shows that this is, in fact, limited). Lobbying, research

and collegiality make an indirect contribution, but the influence exercised by these resources on government is insignificant. The resources exchanged within the FEPPMN will now be discussed individually and illustrated with qualitative evidence.

<u>Expertise</u>

Expertise is perhaps an obvious resource to be exchanged for any professional organisation within the network, given that it forms part of the prerequisites of professionalism (Fournier, 1999; Freidson, 2001; Swailes, 2003). Nonetheless, it is still a rather large concept (Mieg, 2009) and there has been much debate with regard to what constitutes expertise (see Kotzee in Young and Muller, 2014). It is agreed that professional knowledge forms part of expertise (Ericsson and Smith, 1991; Young and Muller, 2014). But expertise is not only about knowledge; it is also about the ability to codify and contextualise it (Kennedy, 1987). Similarly, Eraut (1994) argues that the term knowledge remains contentious as it conceals multiple connotations when applied in a professional context; for instance, it requires the ability to take deliberative action, and undertake decision making and problem solving.

One of the issues highlighted in sections 2.5 and 4.2.1 is governments' lack of knowledge and understanding of the FE sector. This was partly remedied, in the late 1990s, by the government's appointment of quangos, working parties and advisory groups, which, according to Colin (UCU), contributed to improving FE professionalisation. Colin observed that, in contrast with the Conservatives, the New Labour government was receptive to the union's input:

> *"I started in January 94. From January 94 to May 97, under the Conservatives, I think I went to the Department something like three times. I mean, I was practically living in the Department after 97/98".*

During the New Labour years, Colin explained that expertise was circulated by various players within and across the network towards a common goal to professionalise the sector. However, the tone changed rapidly when the coalition government took office in 2010. Indeed, Bob (UCET) raised the issue of BIS's lack of knowledge of the sector and went on to state that the

UCET/HEIs had to exchange basic information to "*educate*" BIS about the nature of FE professionalisation. He added that BIS held stereotypical views about HEIs and teacher education:

> "*They* [BIS] *don't understand, a lot of them don't understand the nature of the profession. They don't understand the university involvement, they think it's universities provide theory, it's all sociology or whatever or equalities stuff or something like that*".

Within the study, the type of expertise exchanged within the network has been narrowed down to two specific forms of professional knowledge: what I would term 'itemised knowledge' and research. I consider that 'itemised knowledge' is not full knowledge. It is specific and does not require the consideration of the full context. It is a type of fragmented knowledge that can be isolated from the overall expertise and packaged to be traded. Itemised knowledge is exchanged between HEIs, the government and government agencies, whereas research tends to be exchanged only between meso-level players (figure 8, p70). The identification of both types of expertise emerged directly from the data collected from the HE players, who provided precise examples of exchange.

In the first instance, the concept of itemised knowledge was highlighted by Jill (TL HE), Adam (RL HE) , Richard (TELL) and Carlos (TL HE), who reported that the UCET/HEIs' involvement with the government and government-based organisations in policy-making had been reduced to the 'detail', the 'practicalities' of the application of the reform: "*basically they* [BIS] *didn't listen, you know, Lingfield wise, in terms of the deregulation argument, but they did after for very, very small things, such as bursaries*" (Adam). Bob (UCET) mentioned that BIS, who used to involve UCET within policy discussions, was now acting in a more *'pragmatic'* way, by again asking for 'bits' of knowledge:

> "*Until recently, Government or Government agencies such as LSIS had what they called workforce development boards or strategy groups, where people from across the sector, unions, representative bodies like us, the Institute for Learning, the employers and people like that came together and would discuss policy and how it should be implemented and that was quite fruitful and helped to guide them (…) Now they'll* [BIS and ETF] *call us into one to one meetings or send us something in draft by email for us to look at, before they send it out and if we are*

content with it, we will actually also send it out on their behalf to make sure that our members actually get it" (Bob).

Expertise from HEIs was still being exchanged but it seemed limited to a set of itemised knowledge about FE professionalisation and teacher education instead of being shared as a coherent body of professional knowledge. Indeed, HEI/UCET players stressed that their full expert knowledge of teacher education had been undermined during and since the Lingfield review. An example of this related to the HE input during the ETF working party to create new professional standards as recommended by the Lingfield review: "*We could've started with a blank sheet of paper, couldn't we? We could've come together as a group of, say, 25, and really started from scratch, but there was a sense in which that agenda had already been set"* (Carlos, TL HE).

This point is pertinent as professional expertise involves the display of creativity (Ericsson, 1998; Reilly, 2008). During the ETF professional standards design activity, it seems that the role of the working party was merely one of endorsement or the transmission of limited expertise such as itemised knowledge. Partly because of events such as this, some players perceived that the coalition exercised an ideological agenda and this had become the main barrier to the demand of HE full expertise in policy-making:

> "*Within the broad, overarching policy they've* [BIS] *been less receptive to recently than previously (…) it could be seen to be an ideological agenda. You know, it's employer-driven, individual employers, deregulation, which we take to be de-professionalisation*" (Bob, UCET).

On the matter of deregulation, there was much disbelief that the initial review did not initially mention the issue:

> "*it wasn't foreshadowed either in the preliminary documentation or when people gave evidence to Lingfield (…) Lingfield never asked us about those issues when we were interviewed by him. It was all the IFL issues.*" (Bob).

Bob reiterated the supremacy of ideology in the policy-making process as a force; in this case, that could not be challenged. There was also an indication that the review was selective regarding the research produced by HEIs, by ignoring findings that sustained the positive impact of ITE on teaching and

learning, or by interpreting papers from academics to fit the 'FE professionalisation is broken' argument (see 2.5.4). The latter point was confirmed by Stephen (RL HE), who indicated that some of the academic literature, which raised concerns over the overregulation of ITE during the New Labour years, may have influenced the deregulation argument. This could be interpreted as a sign of the impact of academia but for the fact that the review chose deregulation to address the issue of overregulation; a radical solution that was contested by all of the FEPPMN participants. It was clear, at the time of the review, that all of the interviewees very much disagreed that FE was suffering from a 'professional deficit' and felt that the Lingfield review was, as Keith (157) put it, a *"bit of a hammer to crack a nut"* activity. The evidence thus shows that, during the review, FEPPMN and, more precisely, HE professional knowledge on FE professionalisation and ITE regulation, was largely ignored.

Traditionally, HEIs are expected to be involved in the creation of knowledge (Eraut, 2005; Collini, 2012). Research is thus a 'natural' resource to be exchanged within a network but, whilst it has much esteem within academia, its value and impact within the network during the Lingfield review was weak. Richard (TELL), who had collected individual evidence from HEIs of the positive ITE impact on education as a response to the Lingfield review, commented that he did not have much faith in the current level of the FEPPMN's influence over macro-level policy-making. This may mean that there is a need for more targeted research on the evidence of the ITE impact, presenting HE players with a conundrum with regard to the type of research to be undertaken. Within the network, HE players were perceived to pursue research that was "*sometimes difficult to translate into reality for people working in a college*" (Keith). Similarly, Harry (TL HE) claimed that research in HE ITE was:

> "*Often divorced from practice; there are too many people teaching on PGCEs who haven't been in a proper classroom for 15, 20 years. (…) The problem is, if you look at the research, as well, that's done by teacher trainers, myself included, when I was in teacher training, none of it was relevant to teacher training; none of it was. Most of the research is not concerned with the classroom (…) People aren't researching the right things, because there's no strategy for research on FE".*

Harry suggested that this was due to the lack of co-ordination amongst HEIs, and TEds' and HEIs' preoccupation with the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which, he felt, privileged the quality of journals in which articles were published over the quality of the educational impact of the paper:

> "*Look at what HE is judged by: if you're an HE academic, it's about getting in the right publications, writing about what? Writing about anything – it doesn't matter. What you're going to be judged on is the quality of the journal that you're publishing in".*

Whilst trying to establish impact in his last REF, Harry revealed that the task was undertaken as a 'tick the box' activity:

> "*Someone mentioned one of my papers over in China; let's have that as an impact statement'. The actual impact was negligible for all of the education return from our university, and I would guess a lot of other universities".*

Leathwood and Read (2012) confirm Harry's point that the REF is influential in determining the focus and nature of the knowledge being produced by HE researchers. But academics in post-92 HEIs felt that applied research and publications, which had a 'genuine impact on research participants and service users' (Leathwood and Read, 2012, p10), were not being valued. This point stresses the gap between pre- and post-1992 HEIs' research focus, which is particularly relevant in the case of FE professionalisation as the great majority of the HEIs involved in FE ITE are 'new' universities. But, since the 'what works' of the New Labour agenda, there has been growing support for a more pragmatic and 'impacting' approach to research in education (Slavin, 2008). John (RL HE), Adam (RL HE) and Harry (TL HE) expressed the necessity for HE researchers to adopt a more '*contemporary*' strategy, as Harry put it, or evidence based research (EBR), and participate in enquiries informing policymaking. EBR is of importance insofar as it is often assumed that the government is more susceptible to influence if tangible evidence is submitted (The LSE GV314 group). But the LSE research also indicated that the Coalition government had a reputation for 'turning its back on evidence-based policy' (no date, p1), which would support the lack of interest in the data presented by UCET at the Lingfield review.

The support for EBR in the FEPPMN is not confined to HE players. Keith (157) explained that that his organisation had striven to work with the IfL and a prominent research-led university to interpret what was happening 'on the ground', whilst the ETF now states that 'the foundation will be championing evidence-based practice and innovation as fundamental to the professional identity of the sector workforce' (http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/our-priorities/research-innovation/). It is one thing for players to argue for EBR, research that has educational 'value and impact', but I would argue that it is quite another to render it 'eligible' on the traditional research market, which is largely dominated by academic enquiries. However, the findings show that in spite of this, FEPPMN players remain strongly committed to undertaking strategic research that will feed into policy-making. On the one hand we can conclude that relevance and impact are crucial for research to be considered an influential resource but on the other it seems clear that its currency cannot be sustained when faced with government funding or an ideology with other priorities.

Values

At first glance, values may not seem obvious resources to exchange but the interviews revealed that some players relied on resources beyond 'commodities' or 'products' (fig 7, p69). In the same vein as expertise, values are not exchanged in an organised or even manner. For instance, collegiality appeared to be the most common resource primarily amongst the teacher education players, whilst legitimacy extends across the network. Legitimacy will be addressed first with some examples of where it is being conveyed within the FEPPMN.

Legitimacy is based upon the congruence of values between two organisations and legitimatisation is the process by which trust and credibility are added to an organisation and resources exchanged in order to achieve a goal (Suchman, 1995). Suchman (1995) states that organisations can adopt various types of legitimatisation strategies: general, which are dependent on the environment; pragmatic, which respond to needs; moral, which conform to ideals/beliefs; and cognitive, which formalise operations. We can argue that

legitimisation is part of the professionalisation process where organisations often seek to gain legitimacy by codifying informal procedures, for example standards, and linking activities to external authorities and competence (Scott,1991, cited in Suchman, 1995, p589).

Within the FEPPMN, it is clear that the IfL legacy enabled the ETF to depart from an 'employer-led body' image but it may also have helped the new organisation gain legitimacy amongst the teaching community. But Sarah (ETF) asserted that greater representation from the community had already been granted by inviting expert panels and the unions onto the ETF board. No details were given in terms of which union had participated (at the time of the data collection, the UCU were not part of the conversation) but with regard to the expert panels, previous feedback from Carlos (TL HE) on expertise put the effectiveness of this contribution into question. However, Kate (IfL) was optimistic that the IfL legacy would have a significant impact on taking the professionalisation agenda forward to form a "*proper collective*" (Kate). To date, this has yet to be ascertained, but the former IfL president recently declared that, due to a lack of democratic representation within the ETF, 'the legacy that was passed on to the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has since become laughably bland and inconsequential' (Groves, 2015). The statement clearly questions the impact of the IfL legacy on the professionalisation process.

When legitimisation seems to have been more significant, it has occurred within a regulatory process. For instance, Ofsted's support of teacher education has been used as a means to maintain HEIs' position as the main ITE providers since the revocation of FE teachers' qualification regulations in September 2013 (see 2.5.4). In discussing the effects of the revocation on HE ITE, Jill (TL HE) confirmed that "*there are drivers and levers, one of which is Ofsted*". Odile (Ofsted) added:

> "They've [Ofsted] *made the deregulation have less of an impact, because what's happened is that organisations know, or most of them do, that they now can't legally require teachers to be qualified, but they know in the back of their minds that if they don't, that they're more likely to not get a good grade in an Ofsted inspection*".

However, Odile emphasised that Ofsted's support of ITE did not manifest itself in an overt manner:

> *"I think the feeling was that teaching qualifications are actually good, a good thing to have, but they couldn't say, 'You have to have them'. But obviously, what you can do is, you can say, 'Teaching and learning is poor; what do you do to make teachers better? Are they qualified?' So, you would never have an inspection team that would make a recommendation that you have to have all your teachers qualified, or that you go to the university and set up some initial teacher education, but you would have them saying, 'Something needs to be done at a college level to improve teaching and learning', and then it's up to the college to do that".*

This was corroborated by Jill (TL HE), who believed that BIS's FE ITE deregulation strategy was to *"shift the power to the employers, and get Ofsted to sort of bark at the edges"*. Odile explained why Ofsted was falling short of denouncing the potential negative impact of deregulation on ITE:

> "*They* [Ofsted] *could not put in a recommendation in an Ofsted report saying, 'You must have all your teachers qualified', because that would be against the Government. But, they could say, 'Teaching and learning is poor; you need to do something about it".*

Undeniably, most of the players interviewed believed that, after the deregulation, the Ofsted 'lever' had been instrumental in the preservation of ITE in FE. But Ofsted did not explicitly endorse or promote HEIs' involvement in the process; universities just happened to be the main providers and consequently were most likely to deliver and validate ITE courses. But whilst the legitimisation of HEIs by Ofsted seems incidental, it nonetheless sustains an otherwise uneasy relationship between the two players. Indeed, throughout the study, I often questioned Ofsted's right to inspect ITE courses run by HEIs in a deregulated and unfunded context. Most HE players were reluctant to uphold the argument given this new level of dependency. For instance, when asked how or if Ofsted could be resisted, Harry (TL HE) responded: "*There isn't the bravery to do it, because they're* [HEIs] *worried, the concern is, it may be deregulated, but if Ofsted come in and don't like what they see, they could give us a three. The impact of that, catastrophic".* Therefore, the level of

dependency on Ofsted is high, but it is also possible that Ofsted are at least partly reliant on HEIs 'playing the game' to maintain their authority. The issue is that HE legitimacy through regulation tends to result in more accountability, less autonomy and a reduced ability to be creative (Bloland, 2001).

The relationships between the players in a network can also be influenced by one player withdrawing the resource it had previously provided. For example, there is no doubt that the UCU challenge to the IfL played a primary role in the government's decision to review FE professionalisation, leading to a modification of policy. But according to Colin (UCU), the union merely responded to members' increasing discontent with regard to IfL membership issues and indicated the polarisation between the IfL rhetoric and its members' experience of FE: "*The language was just so… you know, everything was 'brilliant', everything was 'wonderful', and you think 'God, this is not how FE lecturers, FE staff are experiencing this*". But Colin did not fully hold the UCU responsible for the IfL's demise:

> *"When it came down to it, it was something like 70,000 people renewed membership, it must have been March/April 2011, and 120,000 didn't; now that's a damn sight more than the 40,000 UCU members in FE, so it was widespread"*.

Colin soon realised that, due to the influence of Michael Gove's policies and his adverse stance on teacher qualification (SCETT, 2011), *"deregulation was the name of the game".* Interestingly, from the IfL point of view, Kate (IfL) was rather discreet about the UCU dispute. She stressed that the union had always been a "*great supporter*" of the IfL but admitted that the UCU had got "*more than they bargained for*" as a result of the conflict. Still, it is evident that the withdrawal of support and the "*hard line*", as Colin put it, taken by the UCU both affected the legitimacy of the IfL and contributed to a change in the FE professionalisation landscape. Other examples of legitimacy can be found in the relationships between HE in FE TEds and HEIs (as appraisers of ITE courses), HEIs and UCET (although the latter is implied by its representation of HEIs' ITE interests) but these were not overly explicit within the research.

Outside government bodies and/or quangos, collegiality is the most frequently exchanged value between players and it is demonstrated in the following ways:

HEIs bring "*enormous knowledge, experience and skill to teacher education*" (Carlos, TL HE). They provide a "*space for questioning*" (John, RL HE) and the opportunity to network, exchange knowledge and research (Scott, FE ITE; Jill, TL HE; Richard, TELL). For instance, in Scott's view:

> *"There's a, kind of, faith in my professional expertise, because it's not forged on my own; it's forged through talking to colleagues. That's where the HEIs are really important, working in isolation, that would be deeply worrying, but I don't. I am part of a collegial network, and the HEIs are an important part of that".*

Collegiality is obvious within ITE as it is at the core of HE practices and values (Weigart, 2008). HE collegiality is characterised by the integration of communities or 'the fusion of intellectual forces' (Tapper and Palfreyman, 1998, p146). Scott's comments confirmed the centrality of HEIs within ITE but also challenged the assumption that FE ITE providers did not engage on a meaningful level with collegiality (Murray, 2005). Scott went on to mention the notion of 'cross-fertilisation' between the two institutions:

> *"So, you want that balance. You want the academic underpinning the research, the know-how that universities can bring, but also, a practical knowledge, a lot of FE practitioners can bring, and you want the two to come together and to help improve each other, don't you? (…) we produce something richer, more complex, and better quality"* (Scott).

Richard viewed collegiality as a natural occurrence within the FEPPMN: *"I think partly because teacher education is about connecting things as far as I understand it from various research and from doing it for quite a long time for other teachers".*

But Keith (157), whose organisation had worked on several collegial activities with the IfL and a research-led HEI, did not rule out misunderstandings within the network or the potential competition amongst players (Tapper and Palfreyman, 1998) (The tensions and struggles between players are mentioned further in the forthcoming section on 'Interaction'). As stated in

4.2.1, Keith, Kate (IfL) and Sarah (ETF) observed that HEIs had a tendency to work in isolation, a point confirmed by John (RL HE) and Adam (RL HE) who underlined the fragmentation within the sector due to the pressures of the marketisation culture and agenda (Collini, 2012).

Therefore, whilst HEIs seem to be 'driving' collegiality, the exchanges mostly occur amongst teacher education players (HE and FE TEds, TELL and UCET). There is evidence of 'looser' collegiality between the UCU, IfL/ETF and 157 group and HEIs but it is not systematic. It is often localised to specific research-centred universities and seems highly dependent on individuals' motivation. Consequently, because collegiality is mainly exchanged by players who do not have a strong influential position within the FEPPMN, the currency is weak for the mediation of policies (fig 9, p70). Yet, the data indicate a strong need for all players to work as and within a community, which is of importance when considering common goals and actions. Therefore, values, as a resource, play a sustainable role within the FEPPMN but they appear to confirm positions of authority and identity rather than having a measurable impact on policy-making within the network. Services, however, provided a clearer example of how resources can be used concretely to mediate and influence policies.

Services

 "Deregulation… we still have to jump when they fire bullets at our feet". (John, RL HE)

Black posits that regulation is increasingly being 'decentred from the state' (2002, p2). Since the deregulation of the teaching qualifications in the FE sector in 2013 and in the absence of statutory instruments, Ofsted was often seen by players as the primary agent of regulation. However, the IfL and ETF had a significant part to play in the process in relation to professional memberships and the design of standards. But within a 'decentred' perspective, regulation is a two-way process involving both regulator and regulatee, leading to regulation being 'co-produced' (Black, 2002, p7). For instance, the earlier argument on legitimacy concluded that both Ofsted and HEIs could now be locked in an interdependent relationship where HEIs'

acceptance of and compliance with the inspection regime in exchange for support of ITE qualifications reinforced Ofsted's position as a regulator. This is also true of the contribution of HEIs to the design of professional standards with the ETF. Since 2001, standards have been part of the FE professionalisation regulation but their mediation has often been described as a prescriptive process (Lucas et al., 2012). However, Sarah (ETF) argued that her organisation had departed from a top down to a *"bottom-up"* practice, which empowered employers and practitioners by framing:

> *"Professional standards, not national occupational standards; they are not going to be measurable standards; they had to be aspirational, part of being proud to be part of the profession meant subscribing to these standards. So, that was in the design from the outset, as was the idea, straightforward, easy to understand, something everyone can... generic, not time-bound".*

Whilst the above aim is commendable for its developmental intention, there is nonetheless a risk of standards either being taken literally as assessment criteria (Nasta, 2007, p13) or being 'interpreted' in a very open-ended manner (Lucas and Nasta, 2009).

In the case of a 'literal translation', Keith (157) highlighted that FE management did not need to rely on regulation such as standards to ensure the professionalisation of staff. If the standards can provide *"a helpful check list for a discussion with a teacher then that is a good thing. It starts to get a big dodgy when it becomes a 'have you met standard 3.5? (…)* Keith expressed that he *"would like not to think that anybody is turning them into a check list for appraisal".* On the other hand, when asked whether the ETF standards could be 'lost in translation', Sarah responded:

> *"If you look across any kind of profession, a statement which is so values-led, you have a basis for the discussion. So, Ofsted are going to be using them, not to inspect, but to have the basis for discussion with whomever they're inspecting (…).The voice of Ofsted helps. It helps us give a push start, but the really important thing is making sure, in all the ITE improvement projects, they've got them; anyone who interacts with us, start building it into our tenders and contracts, so you're starting spreading the word, as not top down, but actually, how do these...to make people engage with the standards".*

This statement indicates some flexibility in the use of the standards but I would argue that the involvement of Ofsted is always problematic insofar as the inspection focus is judgmental rather than developmental (Fletcher et al., 2015 in Hodgson, 2015). Consequently, standards are more likely to be used as a lever for regulation. Sarah's account also suggests the need for organisations to endorse the standards for any 'interactions' or resource exchange with the ETF, which could imply a form of coerced regulation. This point is discussed further with reference to 'funding' as a resource.

Overall, the support for the ETF standards was ambivalent across the FEPPMN. This was partly due to the previous LLUK standards experience, which was rated by most HEIs as a complicated and sometimes controversial exercise:

> "*The* [LLUK] *standards were so atomised; it was about the minutiae, and they thought if you collect all the minutiae together, and you've ticked it all off, that's a teacher, but it's not*" (Harry, TL HE).

> "*The application of the LLUK standards really held back the curriculum on teacher education for at least two or three years*" (Richard, TELL).

> "*People were too busy trying to match learning outcomes to standards, rather than look at what they were actually doing on the programmes*" (Odile, Ofsted).

Some doubted the impact that the ETF standards in a deregulated context may have on ITE. For example, Carlos (TL HE), during the working party, pinpointed that:

> "*There was a real uncertainty that remained to the end of the whole process, (…) the standards didn't have any bite, because they weren't going to be used as gatekeepers to the sector, and there was a real sense, right to the end of the process of, 'So, what is their point?' ".*

Scott (FE ITE) questioned their influence in a critical manner, underlining the role of funding*:*

> "*I think it just makes the Government feel slightly more secure that there is some basic control, which there isn't. The ETF standards, anyway, and it has money, so it has leverage via its*

access to government funds, and it makes decisions. So, in a way, it's a typical little quango, isn't it? It's using money as an arm's length government organisation, to try and steer the sector in a particular way".

In conclusion, it appears that, within the FEPPMN, the exchange of regulations as a resource, operates on a 'you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours' basis. However, in the interviews, the players expressed the view that funding seems to be the most exchangeable and powerful currency within the network. The concern is that their dependency on funding may alter some players' goals or attitudes towards policymaking.

Globally, there has been a trend towards the privatisation of universities (Altbach et al., 2009) and a decline in state HE funding (Hayes and Wynyard, 2002; Barr and Crawford, 2005). But the players involved in English HE and ITE have been particularly affected by the withdrawal of Higher Education Funding for England (HEFCE) funding since the revocation of the 2007 regulations. To counteract the funding shortage, HEIs have been compelled to charge trainee teachers and consider different sources of income to contribute to the delivery of their programmes. To that effect, the ETF has played a significant role in the allocation of government funding to HE players through a tendering system. Whilst this seemed to provide an alternative to direct government funding, the arrangement was not without its critics:

> *"Right now, it seems that it's evolving around bids, and that's my concern about this whole ETF stuff; once the money is there, there is activity. It was the same, what you mentioned with CETT, and then the money dries up and then nothing happens, and we're left with nothing. There's no backbone"* (Jill).

Jill had had first-hand experience of the impact of the withdrawal of funding for CETTs but the IfL was perhaps the most obvious 'casualty' of the Lingfield review and the 2007 deregulation. However, some players remarked that the IfL had contributed to its own demise; *"they* [IfL] *tied themselves too tightly to the Government and to policy makers, and therefore, they were vulnerable to policy change"* (John, RL HE). But the bidding system makes the reliance on government funding a 'double-edged sword'. On the one hand it enables activities to occur, but on the other it constrains the players to the mediation

of a policy. As Richard (TELL) noted, *"the difficulty is as soon as you get funded work there is a direction (…) those constraints are bound into that funded work"*. For example, Sarah (ETF) was clear on the ETF's position as a policy lever. She stated that the ETF makes successful bidders demonstrate how their project *"would be helping teachers achieve the standards, or maintain the standards"*.

Within a research context, the HE players were only too aware of the market oriented system (Scott, 2013) and the importance of applying for ITE funded projects. Otherwise:

> *"Governmental bodies know that they can save themselves a lot of problems by going to management consultants, whose staff are under far less pressure, in fact, if any pressure at all, to publish papers out of it. They just produce the report as required. So, the research will go there, rather than to the academic institutions"* (Stephen, RL HE).

To sum up, funding clearly determines the current ITE activities within the FEPPMN but raises the following issues: firstly, the current funding and bidding system is fragile due to its dependence on policies and the government's goodwill to finance ETF. Secondly, the competitive aspect of the current bidding system can only amplify the fragmentation of the sector mentioned by John (RL HE) in 4.2.1. Thirdly, applications for funded research could result in academic research being 'compromised by the dictates of outside policy consideration' (Hayes and Wynyard, 2002, p40). The overall conclusion is that funding is used as a steering instrument to embed government policies and can be safely considered a prime exchange resource to facilitate policy-making within the FEPPMN.

Lobbying is the last resource to be addressed but it is clear from the previous literature, discussed in 2.5.4 and the data examined so far, that its efficiency with regard to the outcome of the Lingfield review and deregulation, has been weak. For instance, the great majority of the HE players interviewed manifested their support for a regulatory system in FE professionalisation by participating in the consultation (as discussed in 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). Both Richard (TELL) and Bob (UCET) had gathered evidence of ITE effectiveness on learning and for UCET to influence BIS on the matter. For them, the outcome

of the Lingfield review has proved that all attempts have failed to retain ITE within a statutory domain and that lobbying, in its current format, is ineffective. Furthermore, Keith mentioned how the 157 group has striven to attend party conferences in order to emphasise the message that FE is not 'broken' but admitted that they were seldom believed (this point is discussed in more depth in the forthcoming section on 'Interaction'). Again, we could conclude that when confronted by the primacy of ideology and funding within policy-making, the attempts to lobby BIS regarding the issues of deregulation within the FEPPMN have been all but powerless. However, given the right 'political space' (Hodgson and Spours, 2006) (deregulation and anti-ITE ideologies as discussed in 2.5.4), and the 'window of opportunity' (Cairney, 2012, p223) (recession, the Coalition government's saving measures), Colin (UCU) showed that lobbying for the union members' rights could have an impact on the outcome. Potential successful lobbying is examined in the forthcoming section 4.2.5 'Development of agency', which discusses its potential within the FEPPMN's future policy-making development.

4.2.3 Interaction

> 'Focusing on the relation pattern between actors also entails focusing on the question of institutionalization. If actors interact with each other over a long period, they create rules which regulate their behaviour and resource divisions which influence their strategic options'
>
> (Klijn, 1997, p33).

Interactions within the FEPPMN can be expressed in terms of struggles but also compromises made. To a certain extent, sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 have pinpointed the challenges for the FEPPMN in interacting not only with the government but also amongst players. The UCU-IfL dispute is perhaps a prime example of failed communication but there was also an overwhelming feeling amongst the players that the government/BIS was not 'listening' to HEIs or their representatives such as UCET. Richard (TELL) noted in 4.2.1 that the fragmentation of HE meant that TEds interacted more with their trainees than with their professional communities. HEIs were criticised for their inward-looking focus and their lack of support for other players. Indeed, Kate (IfL) pinpointed that during the IfL crisis, HEIs were not "*as vocal as they*

could've been" and that there was *"a bit of a deafening silence"*. But she nonetheless recognised that HEIs' involvement might have been restricted because:

> "*They* [HEIs] *were fighting their own battles about funding, and* [it's] *hard to get involved in someone else's fight, in that sense; a kind of distance, as well, between FE and HE – there's always been that kind of distance*" (Kate).

The 'distance' between HE and FE was confirmed by Keith (157):

> "*Certainly it is more problematic for 157 to form meaningful relationships with HE bodies, whether that be individual HEIs or representative bodies, than it is for us to form meaningful relationships with bodies representing schools or other parts of the FE sector and that's not to say that there aren't any, but they tend to take quite a lot of hard work and some of that, I think, comes from the kind of perception of competition (…) I would be reluctant to say that HE is guilty or FE, I'm just not entirely sure we've been terribly good at talking to one another".*

Despite some of the exchanges described in 4.2.2, HEIs seem to be mostly regarded as 'lone' players 'fighting their own battles' for the preservation of ITE in their sector. Previous findings have revealed that HEIs had little impact on the outcome of the Lingfield review. Richard (TELL), who had previously chaired UCET, was unequivocal about the type of relationship established with government: "*You get the chance to go and talk to ministers, but you know they are not going to pay any attention".* But Kate implied that universities were perhaps not prepared to compromise enough with the government on ITE policies and this had created a vicious circle because: *"The protest always comes from the same place, and you'll always know what the protestors are going to say. So, I don't know how much real listening is going on on both sides".*

But the feeling of being 'ignored' or 'misunderstood', as discussed in 4.2.1, is perhaps most revealing in the interview extract below, which depicts the interaction between FE and government:

> Keith: *"I sometimes characterise further education as being in a bit of a parent/child relationship with policymakers"*
> Interviewer: *"Compliant child?"*

> Keith: *"until it gets too much, at which point you become recalcitrant".*
> Interviewer*: "Recalcitrant?"*
> Keith: *"Further education is the recalcitrant child of the education system".*

The use of Berne's (1961) Parent/Child crossed transaction is perhaps obvious to describe the relationship FE entertains with government and policy-makers that is related in this interview. But I would argue that it is mostly part of a wider discourse of despondency surrounding the sector. In fact, there is a trend in FE literature to portray the sector as either the 'Cinderella' (Randle and Brady, 1997) or the 'forgotten middle child' (Foster, 2005). This was acknowledged by Keith, who went on to say:

> "*My chief executive, at a fringe event at the Tory Party Conference only four weeks ago said, "We really don't want to hear any more of this discourse that further education is broken, it's not, there are 1.8 million going through it every year. If it was so dreadful there wouldn't be 1.8 million people going through it every year". And the response from the minister was to suggest that we ourselves are somehow guilty of a negative discourse around further education and that it wasn't his problem.*"

Drawing on Foucault's notion of subjectification, Schaap and vanTwist claim that network players are not 'weak-willed' (1997, p72) but they undergo a process of classification, which can eventually 'become internalized by the subject and may start to determine their self-image' (1997, p74). Keith agreed that FE had often contributed to its own invisibility by not being confrontational enough with policy-makers at the macro level but there was a clear sense that the sector wanted to 'break free' from the current predicament:

> "*We just ran some fringe events at the party conferences in conjunction with the Association of Colleges and with NIACE, the adult learning organisation, and we chose as our theme to debate whether the school curriculum was preparing young people adequately for life and work in the 21st Century. Five years ago we wouldn't have even gone near the topic. How dare the Further Education people question what's going on in our schools, so it's a small step towards trying to be an adult*" (Keith).

He went on to describe how the sector was trying to modify how it portrayed itself:

"I think the language we are now beginning to use is actually we are the ones who are focused on the real outcomes of education and we're doing the employability and we're doing the dual professionalism and we're doing, you know… we may not be doing it perfectly but actually we're the one bit of the education system that is actually going some way towards worrying about what happens to people when they leave us. So maybe it's about time that schools and dare I say universities caught up with us rather than the other way around" (Keith).

Thus a change of discourse and attitude appears to constitute the only option for FE to alter its relationships with other players and gain influence in policy-making. Similarly, it seems clear that HEIs need to change their position from 'inward' to 'outward'-facing players within the network. Only then may the FEPPMN create the cohesion needed for greater mediation of policies. But ultimately, this remains within a context where 'relationships are a 'game' in which organisations manoeuvre for advantage' (Rhodes, 2006, p431).

4.2.4 Processes and strategies: Games

"There are certain boxes that need to be ticked and games to be played, but you play them and you do what you think is best for trainees" (Scott, FE ITE).

According to Rhodes, players 'employ strategies within known rules of the game to regulate the process of exchange' (2006, p431). Klijn and Teisman explain that games are socially constructed based on the interactions between players, the perceived realities of those involved and the resources being exchanged (1997, p102). They further argue that games are not static and that perceptions can change during the game, modifying their outcome(s), and thus the policy (Klijn and Teisman, 1997).

As previously discussed in 4.2.2, the ETF uses the funded projects tendering system as a lever for policy mediation and Ofsted 'manoeuvres' around deregulation by emphasising the quality of 'teaching and learning' within a college. During the Lingfield review, the evidence shows that HE players had their resources limited to consultation with little impact on policy outcome. As the thesis has a specific interest in the role of HE in the mediation of polices, it now turns to some of the games being played by HEI players (including HE

in FE and in particular TEds) within the FEPPMN. The players' own words have been used as titles to describe these 'games' (fig 10):
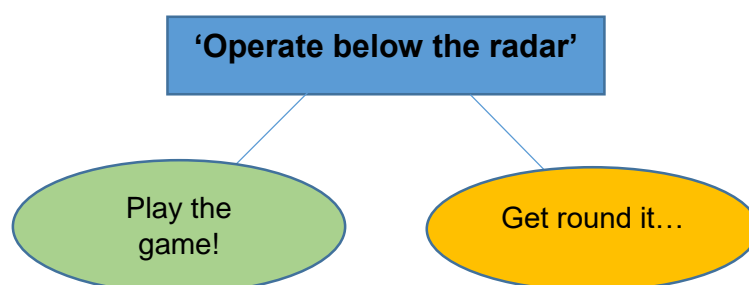
Figure 10: 'Operate below the radar…': FEPPMN HE players' games

Richard (TELL) felt that HE players' position within ITE was unique because it operated "*below the radar*". 'Operating below the radar' is distinct from an exchange of resources because it employs tactics that are not clearly defined, explicit or organised and the activities are not necessarily aimed and recognised as being influential. But if we consider policy-making as a 'messy' process then they can form an integral part of policy-making. The data collected pointed to the application of two distinct strategies; 'play the game' and 'get round it'.

Game 1: *'Play the game!'*

In this case study, 'play the game!' represents the full engagement of players with the mediation of policy. The game appears to be a form of endorsement whereby players both contribute to and benefit from the policy. HE and HE in FE players have long been accustomed to playing games around regulation. For instance, in this case study, obtaining a grade one from an ITE Ofsted inspection was often cited as the priority not only "*because that buys you more autonomy, and it buys you less scrutiny*" (Scott, FE ITE) but also because it develops or upholds a reputation of 'excellence', which is of importance for marketing in a deregulated ITE context.

Some HEIs have thus adopted pragmatic strategies in order to overcome the 'post Lingfield' context, which has left the sector "*in disarray*" and "*up in the air*" (Catarina, TL HE). Beyond Ofsted, the implementation or the piloting of

policy initiatives, such as the Science, Technology, English and Maths (STEM) ETF teaching projects, were seen by some players as a means to *"make a name for ourselves and be at the forefront of things"* (Catarina). Not only did the tactic ensure some say in the design of programmes but it also 'bought' loyalty from the ETF for future projects to ensure a continuity of funding: *"You have to keep being prominent and make yourself indispensable so that they keep coming back to you"* (Catarina). Catarina had had extensive experience of bidding for ETF projects since the Lingfield review and conceded that the process was a pragmatic survival response in the current deregulation. However, as discussed earlier, such an engagement is subject to the demonstration and promotion of ETF standards within the projects as well as the 'rebranding' of a traditional HE image: *"We had to show that we were not all about research, or the type of research, which is not relevant, well in FE that is, that we're not this 'hot bed of radicalism', that we are not in this ivory tower"* (Catarina).

The issues that Catarina raised in this statement are threefold: On the one hand, HE research is seen as detached from the 'real world' of FE (this point was addressed by Harry when discussing the expertise resource in 4.2.2). On the other, HEIs are seen as inflexible with policies and resistant to change. Finally, it confirms the earlier discussion on HE's isolation within the FEPPMN, which was demonstrated by the limited evidence of partnership between the players within FEPPMN: *"You bump into them* [other HE players and meso-level organisations] *at meetings and that's about that (…) and no sense we would get together… not on the horizon"* (Catarina). In other words, you 'play the game' but you play on your own.

The lack of collaboration between players is perhaps characteristic of the marketised environment in which HEIs now operate. But the funding and bidding system fosters individualistic behaviours, which are not conducive to the formation of collaborative arrangements, and is thus detrimental to the development of a professional community. In addition, whilst the engagement with ETF projects appears to give players a say, it is also restrictive, as control and autonomy are 'earned' in exchange for working within the 'state strictures' (Avis, 2005, p218). Catarina remained sceptical about her HEI's overall

influence: *"I'd love to say that we can shape policies, we can make a difference in our own small sphere, do what's best for students and perhaps flex them to an end but I doubt it".* In her view, the current focus on projects was *"all about BIS' private empire building and pet projects. Some people want to push their own agenda then that person goes",* which questions the sustainability and coherence of ITE policy-making at the macro level. 'Play the game!' may therefore be beneficial to HEIs in terms of funding and reputation, but there is still little evidence that it has any impact on policy-making.

Game 2: *'Get round it…'*

That said, Jill (TL HE) felt very strongly about the impact that ITE professionals could have on policymaking: *"teacher educators' role is to mediate policy. How to get round it – it's a polite way of saying, how to avoid it!"*. This game is underpinned by Hoyle and Wallace's (2007) concept of 'principled infidelity' and Shain and Gleeson's (1999) 'strategic compliance' mentioned in 2.5.3, which empowers professionals by 'working round' educational reforms (Hoyle and Wallace, 2007, p19). As Ball et al. (1992) remind us, policy-makers cannot control the meaning of their texts, as they are interpreted and re-contextualised by practitioners and ITE players are perhaps in an interesting place because they are operating at both the meso and micro-level of policy-making.

To temper some policies, which could be harmful to ITE, Richard (TELL) affirmed that TEds have the ability to: "*Find ways of doing things on behalf of their trainees and with others, that help at least mediate all those oppressive government and organisational focus things".* Some examples of mediation were purely pragmatic and based on the TEd's own professional judgment: *"If you find there's something which you think is ridiculous, you leave it out, or it's diluted, or you give emphasis to what you think is important, and which will carry the most impact"* (Scott, FE ITE). Jill (TL HE) felt that TEds had no alternative but to respond to policy mediation in a covert manner because *"their professionalism and their own ethical stance were constantly compromised".* But, as Richard explained, the 'get round it' game meant that TEds did not engage much in outward-facing activities and this would certainly

restrict their circle of influence. It could also mean that the outcomes might be inconsistent overall within the network and only have a short-term impact on policy-making.

In summary, TEds manipulate ITE policy-making by playing either opportunistic or covert games. However, these games do not seem to be mutually exclusive and can be played in parallel. Operating 'below the radar' provides an opportunity to apply some control over their own practice and the mediation of policies. But there is still a question with regard to the level of influence actually exercised and the outcomes of the games appear to be short term and precarious. One of the problems is that successful networks display a common and organised game-playing structure (Klijn and Teisman, 1997), which is not reflected within the FEPPMN. Another, as Ball et al. (2011) argue, is that 'imperative/disciplinary' policies, such as the deregulation, produce passive policy subjects, reducing them to behaving in a reactive manner. Therefore, HEI players may not be 'playing' after all but only reacting to policies to ensure survival. The figure (fig 11) below illustrates the current FEPPMN policy mediation status.
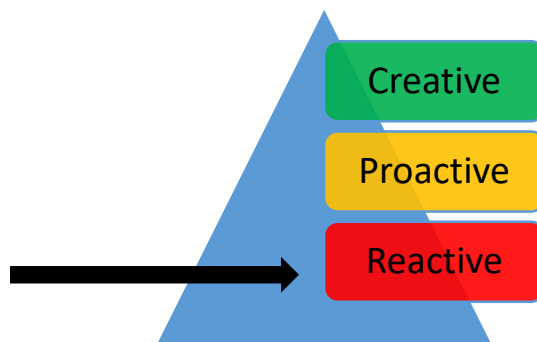
Figure 11: The FEPPMN mediation level

4.2.5 Development of agency: 'Nibble and nudge'

> 'Agency is not some kind of 'power' that individuals possess and can utilize in any situation they encounter. Agency should rather be understood as something that has to be *achieved* in and through engagement with particular temporal-relational contexts for action. Agency, in other words, is not something that people *have;* it is something that people *do'*

> (Biesta and Tedder, 2007, p136)

Contributing actively to policy-making is a sign of professional agency (Ozga, 2000; Sachs, 2003). But the data analysis has so far established that agency within the FEPPMN was weak overall and that the players mostly reacted to policies as opposed to shaping them. The following section defines the 'activities' identified by the players in order to increase agency within the FEPPMN and to evolve from a reactive to a proactive policy-making status. Some of the players' own statements have inspired or been used literally to designate the suggested 'activities', which are recorded in Figure 12.
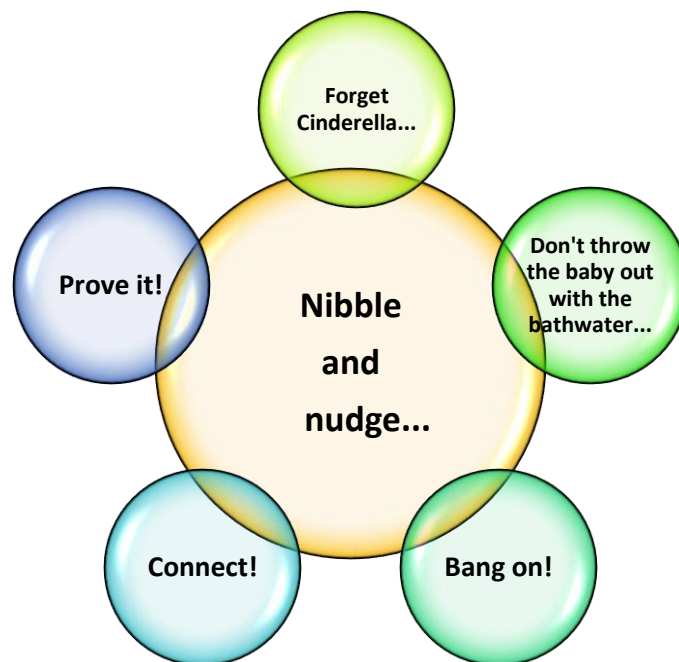
Figure 12: Development of agency activities

The five activities in the above figure form part of a progressive strategy to influence highly centralised policy formulation and implementation. A progressive strategy was initially reflected in Richard's (TELL) testimony:

> "I'm very sceptical about the degree, at the moment, that you can influence on a large scale. I'm very positive about the degree to which you can influence on a small scale, and lots of small scale can add up into large scale".

Indeed, Colin (UCU) captured the notion of progression through small actions in a vivid manner: "*You try and build alliances around what you can agree on, and then you then try and work on civil servants and, if you're lucky, ministers (…) so you nibble away, you nudge…*".

A progressive 'nibble and nudge' strategy to policymaking would thus involve a series of activities initiated by the FEPPMN players in order to place their agency in a more convincing position. The five activities are as follows:

1. 'Forget Cinderella…'

"*As PCET departments, or PCET provision, we present ourselves a little bit as victims in comparison with secondary and primary*" (Carlos, TL HE).

Grubb (2005) argues that successive incoherent government policies have contributed to the instability of FE. As per the points made in 4.2.1 and as Keith's (157) testimony (4.2.3) revealed, FE often displays either a 'neglected middle child' (Foster, 2005) or a Cinderella image, emphasising its invisibility. It acts as a 'toxic and dead' metaphor for the sector, which needs to be 'killed off' (Petrie, in Daley et al., 2015, p4). Despite the Minister of State's encouraging statement that FE was 'no longer the neglected middle child between schools and HE, but the prodigal son' of education (Hayes, 2011), Norton notes that the overall Cinderella image has weakened the FE 'brand' (2012, p1), which may have left it vulnerable to policy-makers at the macro level.

Jill (TL HE) felt particularly strongly about the Cinderella syndrome: "*We have to be careful, because if you keep presenting yourself as... Cinderella, Cinderella, I'm the victim, this is very bad news…*". This was perhaps partly sustained by what Odile (Ofsted) called 'the victimhood research' interest in the sector, in other words research that keeps focusing on "*how badly treated the sector is*" (Odile). This issue is of importance if we consider that this kind of rhetoric can consistently be used as evidence and an excuse to issue top-down reforms to the sector. Keith (157) felt strongly that a shift was needed:

> "*It's clearly a virtuous circle isn't it, because at national level if organisations like ours start to be taken seriously as an 'adult' then inevitably the people who are delivering things on the*

ground will also be seen in a more professional light and therefore there might be a sense that there needs to be less legislation and less regulation in order to make that happen".

Keith's view was that positive language and a change of attitude towards an 'adult state' would place FE in a more respected position in terms of policy-making. In his view, FE was growing in confidence "*I place my hope on our bravado to improve our influence*". (Keith)

2. 'Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater…'

Previous players' accounts and research have suggested that HEIs have been rather reluctant to accept government policies aimed at reforming ITE (SCETT, 2011). Sarah (ETF) alluded to the fact that HEIs may appear inflexible at times. An example of this is illustrated in her response when she was asked whether or not the ETF supported the deregulation of ITE in FE:

> "*That flexibility is actually quite important for the sector, so I can kind of see it* [benefits of the deregulation]. *I don't know whether I'd go so far as to say I'd support it, but I can see it. But, I think, in that space, the teacher educators ought to be getting together and saying, 'What's the message behind this? Does that mean that somehow we've lost the plot on teacher education, and we haven't made it a no-no for the government to interfere with?*".

This statement insinuates that somehow, the profession's inability to accept changes is partly responsible for the constant government interference. The underlying issue for HEIs is that an academic-centred ITE is regarded as problematic to governments who support an apprenticeship model (2.4.1). But Bob (UCET) suggested that HEIs were perhaps more flexible and accepting of government policies than was first thought: "*All right, this is your broad policy agenda, let's try and help you meet it in a way that doesn't throw the baby out with the bathwater, meets your needs, but protects what works already*" (Bob).

In fact, both Bob and Sarah mentioned that players needed to become less reactive and more 'tactical' when dealing with ITE policies. Stephen (RL HE) underlined the need to '*choose your battles wisely*' if only to "*try to persuade the ministers of the points you are trying to make*", which perhaps refutes the notion that HEIs are not able to adapt to changing times or the policies

presented. Interestingly, Keith (157) mentioned that there were already signs of flexibility in the joint work undertaken by some players (157 Group, the most prominent RL HE and the then IfL) to:

> "*rise above that level of nonsense and start to ask some more interesting questions about what it really feels like to be a professional, how you actually define your professionalism in your relationship with your managers in whatever that might be*".

The sharing of ideas and critical questions amongst players in the sector about professionalisation was, undoubtedly, seen as a way forward to gain greater agency and as a result be "*in a place where we were trying to lead the thought beyond, you know, the thinking of the sector beyond expecting to be told what to do and just doing it*" (Keith).

3. 'Bang on!'

"*If I have to hear another thing about how FE is in a dire straits, it's whiskey and a revolver*" (Jill, TL HE).

The sector's reputation is of importance if it is to gain a voice at the policy-making level. Jill felt that the overall sector (implying in this case ITE) was:

> "*Poor at advertising what works well. We should be out there to promote what is being done, in the Telegraph/Spectator and have links with the mayor's office. We need to be savvier about how we present ourselves*".

The notion of being 'out there' or lobbying was echoed in Bob's (UCET) testimony. As the director of UCET, Bob had no doubt that the role of his organisation was to "*re-educate decision makers about what's actually involved*" with regard to FE professional formation. One of the successful tactics for other policies had been to "*just keep banging on*" by hiring a public relations company, which showed positive examples of what universities did in teacher education. The result was "*quite a lot of coverage and it did seem to start shifting ministerial attitudes to what universities did*". But Harry (TL HE) commented on the need to think 'beyond the box' in order to raise the FE ITE profile:

"*There needs to be an association with a think-tank. That's what I think is missing. The former special advisors to Gove, etc. these think-tanks produce research report after research report, and they always get in the press*".

The increase in visibility by promoting the positive aspects and the role of FE/ITE within education may: first, encourage FEPPMN players' to get actively involved in policy-making; and second, force policy-makers at the macro-level to reconsider the players' place within policy-making.

4. 'Connect!'

"Look, this is how we want to do things, working together," so it's not just seen as universities saying this, it's universities and school and college leaders both saying this to Government and to ministers and being proactive in that way" (Bob, UCET).

It is clear from the accounts gathered within the FEPPMN that the networking between players has been sparse and haphazard in terms of policy-making. As previously discussed, HEIs were not only accused of 'playing on their own' but also struggling to 'reach out' to the whole education community. The FEPPMN players suggested several means to 'connect' in order to increase their influence on policy-making by fostering relationships and forming allegiances with other players, who may be of political influence. These 'ways' have been translated into four networking models:

Model 1: The research-led HEI network

In this instance, all or most HEIs delivering FE ITE are represented but the RL HEIs are identified as the most powerful and perhaps best placed HEIs to take the lead on research to inform and influence policy-making.
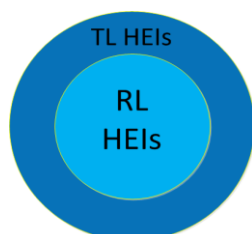
Figure 13: The research-led HEI network

Model 2: The consortium of HEIs network

In this case, all or most HEIs are represented but they may act together as one to impact directly on policymakers at the macro level.

Figure 14: The consortium of HEI network

Model 3: The '6' group network

Following the concept of the 157 group, the 6 largest and most influential HEIs providing FE ITE form a network. One of the selection criteria could be based on individual Ofsted grading.
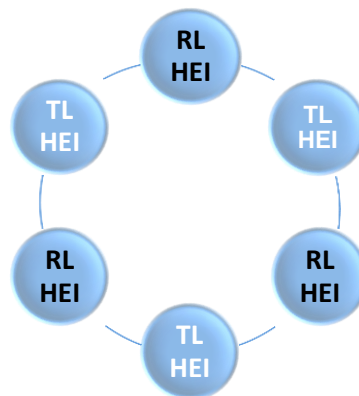
Figure 15: The '6' group network

Model 4: The FE professionalisation community network

All players involved in FE professionalisation policy-making are included. This is more democratic and reflects the diversity of the FE community as well as HEIs and the 'state constraints'.
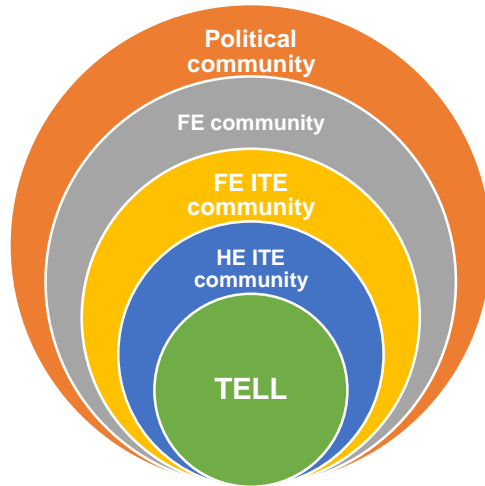
Figure 16: The FE professionalisation community network

So far, the study has suggested that the FEPPMN fitted the issue network model best, mostly because of its inconsistent and 'incidental' nature. The Policy Community model is more organised and proportionate in terms of resources and power and implies a coherent approach to policy-making. Models 1, 2 and 3 seem to fit the Policy Community network model presented in 3.2.2 and reproduced below (Table 3).

Dimension	*Policy community*
Membership	Very limited number, some groups consciously excluded
Type of interest	Economic and/or professional interests dominate
Frequency of interaction	Frequent, high-quality, interaction of all groups on all matters related to policy issues
Continuity	Membership, values, and outcomes persistent over time
Consensus	All participants share basic values and accept the legitimacy of the outcome
Resources	All participants have resources
Distribution of resources	Hierarchical
Power	There is a balance of power among members. Although one group may dominate, it must be a positive-sum game if community is to persist

Table 3: Policy community network (extracted from Table 1: Types of policy networks)

However, the issues associated with the first three proposed models are threefold: First, they are mostly composed of HEIs and are thus exclusive of other players, a characteristic which was deemed detrimental to the FEPPMN's agency. Second, they do not seem to offer any flexibility in terms of values and outcomes, which again, was considered a significant problem with regard to how HEIs were perceived by non HEI players and policymakers at the macro level. Finally, there is a question with regard to their validity and viability; the first model implies a hierarchy within the network, which may threaten some players' market interests, the second model is already implemented by UCET and the third model implies membership based on either Ofsted rating or student numbers, which may be contested as well as appearing undemocratic to the remaining HEIs.

Model 4, however, seems to be the only model that would reject the notion of exclusivity of membership and interests. The model would encompass all players involved in policy-making, whether it be at the micro, meso or macro level. TELL is placed at the centre as the group that emerged from within the profession and was suggested as a 'point of departure' for weaving connections and facilitating the representation of FE professionalisation across the whole of education. This is, of course, an ambitious model. But as Richard (TELL) put it:

> *"TELL engaging everybody across the sector in it is really important to make sure that all voices are taken account of (…) Whether or not TELL actually ends up doing anything will be very interesting, because the idea of trying to get collaborations across 200 people is quite a big idea, and it may or may not work when it comes to doing things".*

The concept of a collaborative community network is discussed further in Chapter 5.

5. 'Prove it!'

> *"I think that research should inform policy. I don't think that's always the case, but when I look at the likes of Ken Spours and Ann Hodgson* [Institute of Education], *and others, who make every effort to inform policy makers, I think it's a good thing"* (John, RL HE).

The research has so far underlined that despite some evidence of the impact of ITE on teaching (including the publication of the annual 2011 Ofsted report) being presented to the Lingfield review, this was largely ignored (2.5.4; 4.2.1; 4.2.2). It has also concluded that this was mostly due to the ideological and political context of the time but, in the light of the players' data, I would add that the presentation of evidence was perhaps too scattered to be fully considered by the review.

The key to change could come from an organised group of researchers that would undertake research to inform practice, which may, in time, be evidence for policy change. As previously discussed in 4.2.2, Harry's (TL HE) view was that HEIs were too preoccupied with producing research that had currency in terms of status for both the HEI and the individual but no value in terms of teaching and learning. This is a concern because it leaves "*Ofsted to define what good teaching and learning is*" (Harry). To inform policy Harry was convinced that HEIs had to produce education research that is seen as having an impact:

> "*Governments like positivism. They do. Positivism's great; you can throw out a few statistics; it's fantastic. It's easy for people to understand. It's less complicated, in some ways. You can try and say, 'This works', and that's what governments want. It's not, 'Well, some people say this, some people that, and this might be the case', it's 'This is what works'. It's much more digestible for the Government and for the public*".

Sarah (ETF) confirmed the role of evidence-based research in convincing policy-makers at the macro level:

> "*There are two things research can do. The one thing is that they can produce this incontrovertible evidence that if, for example, you're running a college with an unqualified workforce, eventually it will fail. So, it's the thing about collecting the longitudinal data, and looking at the long term behaviour of institutions, of teachers, and the performance of learners, and mapping that together, and that's a huge ask. So, not looking at hundreds of little research projects, but looking at major performance data performance*".

According to Richard (TELL), the appeal of funding makes this type of project irresistible to HEIs. The problem is that it is not uncommon for an evaluation of impact to be requested within a few months, and this was considered unrealistic and questionable in terms of validity of evidence. To date, HEIs have no robust and common methods of evaluating the impact of ITE on FE professionals. During the interviews, most of the players recognised that creating a more cohesive research approach not only amongst HEIs but also across the FE community would enable them to produce the evidence showing the valuable contribution of ITE in the formation of FE professionals. This is no simple task, as it can be difficult to find causal links and it would involve the co-ordination of all parties and a solid and common research methodology, but as Bob put it "*someone ought to bite the bullet…*". This is a role that the ETF seemed only too happy to assume:

> *"We're doing the data capture on ITE at the moment. So, I think we're in a pole position to make sure it's done. I think, when Government does it, they commission an outfit. I've just been looking at a review of a programme done by a Government-commissioned outfit, and it's all... It's fine, but it's all really flabby. It's a commitment to something long term. Ofsted could do that. Don't know how angled they could be, but a joint Ofsted, us, or an organization similar to us"* (Sarah, ETF);

Sarah justified the involvement of Ofsted further:

> *"From the point of view of what we heard; it would be very difficult if Ofsted said, 'Actually, every organisation that we go in that doesn't have qualified or trained teachers, eventually it all peters out, it's going to fail, da-da-da-da-da'; that would be a very difficult message for Government to ignore, because Ofsted is so crucial in Government landscape".*

However, she did not disregard the participation of HEIs:

> *"Or, you go for the longer term, ground up, which means HEIs doing it together and sharing across their boundaries, talking about it, getting something together, and then they have to do the politics on what they've found, and that politics might be just direct to Government to Ofsted".*

What is interesting in this instance is not only the suggestion that players could collaborate in order to become more politically influential but that they could also consider unlikely partners such as Ofsted. At first glance, a partnership with Ofsted perhaps seems unrealistic, but it underlines the need for players

to play across and beyond the 'usual field'. In fact, Richard felt that TELL's remit would be favourable to pursue such a collaborative project:

"I think if some of TELL would be prepared to actually look at that against a standard brief that we produce, I think that might be a really good start in terms of testing out the power of a collaborative network. Collating from them [HEIs and FECs] *what the best practice is".*

Richard felt that the current TELL network was perhaps too informal to support such a project:

"I would really like to try something a little more structured, just to see if we can galvanise the power of the network, and probably something about evidence and the impact might capture people's imaginations to start with".

He also gave an insight into how this could be executed:

"Now if we started a project, of course, and people took responsibility for different bits of it, and you gave timescales and so on, that is different. You would have something like a steering group for a project and they could then nudge people along if needed".

Stephen (RL HE), Bob (UCET) and Richard (TELL) suggested two methods of collecting evidence: the first would be based on the collation, synthesis and analysis of all Ofsted and other official or significant reports on FE ITE. The second strategy would involve observing trainees/staff before and after ITE training and identifying progress. Certain conditions would, however, be required: Richard insisted on the project being independent from government funded bodies to prevent it from being compromised. Bob highlighted the need to have both skilled researchers and practitioners to increase the credibility of the research, given that, as discussed earlier by Sarah and Harry, HE researchers tend to be seen as 'detached' from teaching practice. Currently, formal research in ITE is largely undertaken by HE TEds, whilst FE practitioners, which include FE TEds, tend to be restricted to classroom practice (Weatherald and Moseley, 2003; Connolly et al., 2007; HEFCE, 2009). The project could thus begin to bridge the current research gap and connect practitioners from both HE and FE but it may still be limited in terms of the widening participation of other players.

However, the evidence based claim is not without its criticisms and was contested by Colin (UCU), who undermined the impact of evidence based research on government policies: "*what's the evidence free schools work? Academies? It's all about ideology and to a certain extent bloody ministerial whim*". There were also concerns with regard to evidencing the impact of ITE. For example, Carlos (TL HE) suggested compiling a national university benchmark to inform the government about teacher education outcomes. But he also acknowledged that a national benchmark based on results could also be divisive as it would create an official hierarchy; a point highly sensitive in an already fragmented sector. But as a whole, the EBR was seen as a solution not only to inform policymakers of the impact of ITE on teaching and learning but also in terms of policy-making itself, by becoming a point of departure for reform or to ensure continuity. The potential role of EBR in policymaking is further discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3 Conclusion

The FEPPMN players argued for the need to present a more positive image of the FE sector by increasing its visibility and providing evidence of the benefits of ITE for teaching and learning whilst being receptive to changes and establishing a dialogue with all of the parties involved in professional formation. As Ball argues that players' agency over policy is established by 'creative social action, not robotic reactivity' (1994a, p19), a collaborative and progressive strategy, as discussed in the forthcoming chapter, may develop the FEPPMN's agency and enable players to evolve from a reactive to an active state of policy-making.
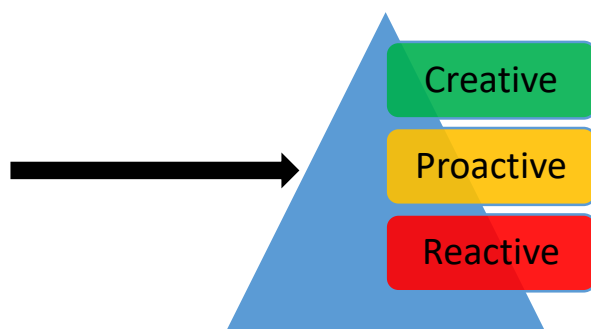
Figure 17: The FEPPMN mediation level following a 'nibble and nudge' strategy to policy-making

Chapter Five: Discussion of main findings

5.1 Introduction

The findings of Chapter 4 concluded that the current model of FE professionalisation policy-making at the meso-level is a 'messy' and complex process, which relies to a large extent on a range of reactive responses and actions from its players. In order to develop agency, FEPPMN players need to become more proactive by adopting a 'nibble and nudge' approach to policy-making, which involves a series of actions aimed at reshaping FE identity, increasing FE visibility and flexibility and producing evidence in order to inform and influence policies. But whilst a 'nibble and nudge' strategy, as suggested by the FEPPMN players, may instigate some development of agency, it also implies some fragmentation of action with limited sustainability.

In this chapter, I first summarise the findings in relation to the policy-making process presented in the theoretical framework in Chapter 3 and then consider a range of frameworks that would enable the development of the FEPPMN's system and agency.

5.2 Discussion of findings in relation to the theoretical framework

5.2.1 The FEPPMN policy-making process

The findings have confirmed that policy is not a product mediated in a linear or 'top down' manner. Policy-making at the context of influence (Ball, 1994a), during and post the Lingfield review, mirrors a 'messy' process that involves a plurality of actors struggling for influence, as advocated by Bowe et al. (1992) and Ball (2008b). However, the study has highlighted that the Lingfield review policy-making context did not enable FEPPMN players to exercise much agency within the process. Instead, the exchange of resources, interactions and games that took place revealed a much more fluid picture of mediation, similar to Bowe et al.'s (1992) and Ball's (1994a) concept of enactment, re-contextualisation and interpretation of policy. This is in line with Ball's point on policy writers losing ownership of their own text once it has left the production stage (Ball, 2008b). As a result, the case study showed that FE professionalisation policy-making resembled the 'cannibalized products of

multiple (but circumscribed) influences and agendas' described by Ball (1994a, p16). The term 'enactment' portrayed within the study is therefore useful to describe the various means or plurality of the policy-making process.

But I would argue that enactment, whilst forming part of policy-making, falls short of influencing the core of the policy. The agency within the context of influence (Bowe et al., 1992) is thus limited. Ball (1993, 1994a) mentions that policies result from a series of compromises involving various actors and interest groups but also acknowledges that 'only certain influences and agendas are recognised as legitimate, only certain voices are heard at any point in time' (Ball, 1994a, p16). In the case of the Lingfield review and from the data collected, there is evidence of interactions and negotiations amongst players but these are unequally weighted and there is little in terms of compromise or influence on government that altered significantly or impacted on the initial consultation. Instead, the case study identified a range of reactive strategies during and post-consultation to cope with the ITE deregulation agenda.

5.2.2 Developing agency through a policy network?

The study has acknowledged that the FEPPMN was an 'accidental' network composed of meso-level organisations that operated in a disorganised and reactive manner at the policy-making interface. Chapter 4 concluded that in order to gain some agency over the process, the FEPPMN needed to evolve from a reactive to a proactive state of policy-making. It is thus pertinent to consider whether the implementation of a 'nibble and nudge' strategy within an 'official' organised network would benefit the development of agency.

As part of an Australian Curriculum Framework consultation, Griffiths et al. (2009) examined the macro to micro-level policy-making of an education network conferred by the Western Australian state. The findings of their study are of particular interest as they display similar results to those of this thesis. For instance, they found that, at the meso-level, power dynamics, differentials, rivalry and lack of trust amongst players had a significant effect on policy-making. As the participants put it, 'some [players] are more equal than others' (Griffiths et al., 2009, p198). They highlighted that the collaboration amongst

the meso-level players was weak due to the lack of consideration for pre-existing relationships and the different agendas and philosophies that characterised individual organisations (ibid). The ability to navigate policy rhetoric was seen as an asset but led to the exclusion of players who lacked expertise on policy discourse. The players also criticised the initial selective process for ensuring 'political correctness' i.e. agreement with the policy/reform (ibid). The consultation was overall deemed 'insincere and tokenistic' (ibid, p203).

The above study therefore shows that being 'official' or 'organised' does not necessarily increase agency in policy-making. It echoes the fragmented context observed in the case study and the argument put forward by some FEPPMN players, in particular HEIs being accused of 'individualistic' policy-making practices. But it mostly draws attention to the efficiency and influence of collaborative practices, as the literature suggests that a 'policy partnerships' discourse is often used as legitimisation and a rhetorical instrument by the state 'to obscure the dominant position of the state in policy processes' (Griffiths et al., 2009, p198). Indeed, Griffiths and colleagues assert that despite a neo-liberal discourse based on 'decentralisation', the state retains 'vertical' power over policy-making:

> 'There is an inherent tension between discourses of 'policy partnerships' and 'communities of practice' that highlight collaboration and consultation, and the mechanisms by which the state may continue to exert centralised control over both the processes and outcomes of policy'

> (2009, p204)

This is confirmed by Ball (2008a), who argues that despite the capacity for some community networks to influence policy-making and thus become 'policy devices', the state uses networks to 'fill in' rather than 'hollowing out' policy-making. However, Ball (2008a) recognises that some networks can be successful but highlights that this is largely when they comprise those with powerful interests applying commercial pressure and/or concurring with the government ideology e.g. academy networks and academisation policies. The creation of an 'official' network for the FEPPMN would thus be undermined by the lack of currency of the resources exchanged and the agentic position of

FE within the education sector. In addition, and given the 'history' of FE, (as per 2.5) a framework initiated by the state would only reiterate previous policy failures. The emergence of a framework from 'within' is thus of importance to ensure the development of agency

5.3 The FEPPMN as a Community of Practice

It is clear from the findings that the FEPPMN has been acting as an issue network, without a clear identity and direction and with limited influence over policy-making. The 'nibble and nudge' strategy is a proposal aimed at concretising a series of actions that could increase the players' agency. But I would argue that without the FEPPMN developing a core identity and common practices, these suggested actions may remain sporadic. The study has revealed a network with a tendency for individual players to focus on serving their own individual interests, thus isolating themselves from the wider FE professional community. The building of a community is thus of primary importance to the implementation and success of the FEPPMN's 'nibble and nudge' policy-making strategy.

Initially used as an alternative to traditional theories of learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991), the concept of a Community of Practice (CoP) has evolved to become a developmental tool used by organisations and educators alike. The word 'community' in itself is synonymous with positivity, harmony and co-operation (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002) and the CoP has become an aspirational concept (Hughes et al., 2007). The CoP is described as an association of people displaying 'mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire', binding its members together through collections of actions in a shared common practice (Wenger, 1998, p73). The practice is specific to that community although it is expected that members may have multiple community 'memberships' (Wenger, 1998). At this stage, we could claim that some elements of the FEPPMN correspond to the CoP model in terms of association, not just in terms of the activities outlined in the exchanges of resources (4.2.2, fig 7, p69), but also in that its members belong to other interlocked or independent communities (4.2.2, fig 8, p70). Wenger (1998) stresses that any form of participation is acceptable to form a CoP, regardless

of its nature, value or inclination, but this suggests, as Engeström puts it in his critique that '[a CoP] may be practically anything' (2007, p43). Therefore, in order to be useful for the FEPPMN as a concept or model, the CoP needs to provide some value beyond the ability to 'exist'.

The notion of 'intentional cultivation' (Wenger et al., 2002) implies that there is value in developing CoPs. Wenger et al. (2002) posit that knowledge is an asset, which can be managed to 'create value in multiple and complex ways, both for their members and for the organization' (2002, p15). Swan et al. (2002) sanction the CoP's value by arguing that, when used as a rhetorical strategy, it encourages the production of knowledge and innovation. This thesis has argued, so far, that the FEPPMN operates on an ad hoc basis and, therefore, that its activities are isolated, fragmented and, at times, self-serving. The CoP concept could be used to respond to this insofar as such a rhetorical device could promote a sense of belonging and the possibility of turning pro-activity into creativity through the production of knowledge. CoPs are organic, and therefore the key is to design a catalyst that would enable the community to evolve. Wenger et al. (2002) recognise that the various layers of the community lead to fluctuating degrees of participation. They also suggest that: 'to draw members into more active participation, successful communities build a fire in the centre of the community that will draw people to its heat' (2002, p58). Organising and designing opportunities and activities, such as those involved in 'nibble and nudge', would create a 'rhythm for the community' (Wenger et al., 2002, p62), which is essential to keep it 'upbeat'.

There is so much optimism emerging from the CoP concept that it can be difficult to refute. But there are still significant gaps and contradictions attached to the concept. First, Wenger does not question the quality and effectiveness of the learning as a result of the exchange, a point raised by Fullan, who pinpoints that some communities may 'reinforce each other's ineffective practice' (2003, p45). Second, Wenger seems to assume that CoPs result from interactions but, whilst he acknowledges that they may be hierarchical, he does not address the issue of power relations within them (Fox, 2000; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004; Jewson, 2007). Jewson (2007) argues that the CoP offers little in term of analytical tools to differentiate relationships,

positions and functions and identify power struggles within communities. Wenger acknowledges that tensions and conflicts exist but these can also constitute 'a form of participation' (1998, p77). The recognition of a struggle for power is of importance if only to appreciate the unequal positions occupied within the FEPPMN (fig 6, p62 in 4.2.1) and to address the limited agency exercised by some members of the network. Third, the CoP never establishes visible boundaries between the various communities (Fuller, 2007). This permeability is both beneficial and problematic for the FEPPMN. In the first instance, it enables the FEPPMN to connect with players outside their own communities (as discussed in 4.2.5) but the lack of boundaries may blur the focus required to 'act'. The CoP is thus useful as a metaphor but cannot fully describe, explain and, more importantly, enable the FEPPMN to develop as an agentic community.

5.4 Using an ecological framework to develop FE professionalisation policy-making

Communities are often seen as closed, homogenous or even static groups of people (Nardi and O'Day, 1999). An ecological framework is more appropriate than a CoP perspective because it invokes order, diversity, and continual evolution as well as principles of interdependence and sustainability (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994; Nardi and O'Day, 1999; Hodgson and Spours, 2009, 2012; Barnett, 2011). What is interesting in this framework is that ecology has the power to define our environment on a much wider scale in ways that communities cannot. CoPs may have the ability to evolve but they remain disconnected from the overall architecture of policy-making. Weaver-Hightower employs an ecology metaphor to describe a fluid policy process where 'each factor and organism has influence on the others and many complex inter-relationships among them are required to sustain the system' (2008, p155). The ecological metaphor underlines the urgency in addressing environmental destruction to preserve its ecosystem. This resonates with the current disruption of the FE professionalisation context following the Lingfield review. The ecology metaphor is useful insofar as it enables us to discuss the sustainability for FE professionalisation policy-making to develop new ways of progressing the overall system. As argued by Weaver-Hightower, a policy

ecology metaphor in education research 'sheds light on strategy for advocates and activists. It forces one to think about tactics in policy processes in a new multifocal way' (2008, p162). But Weaver-Hightower's (2008) use of the metaphor is focused on the analysis of policy-making and does not provide a clear map for evolutive strategies. In response to this kind of problem, in their reflections on the governance of lifelong learning in England, Hodgson and Spours (2009, p17) apply three required elements of Finegold's (1999, p66) eco-system analysis to discuss the development and sustainability of collaborative local ecologies: a catalyst, which triggers the following reaction(s)/action(s); nurturing or fuel/nourishment as a tool for sustainability; and a supportive external environment/host environment or conditions for growth. Their structure is thus borrowed as a basis for the discussion of the 'nibble and nudge' tactics but Finegold's (1999) last requirement, 'a high degree of interdependence' is also included to reflect the findings (Chapter 4).

5.4.1 Catalyst: 'don't throw out the baby with the bathwater'

Following the 2012 revocation of the FE Workforce Regulations (2.5.4), the FEPPMN has had the opportunity to re-conceptualise and restructure FE professionalisation policy-making. The absence of regulatory instruments, initiatives and institutions (e.g. SVUK and IfL) now enables FEPPMN players, in particular HEIs, to review the type of professional formation and professionalism required for the sector. As the thesis has so far focused on the ITE context, it is of interest to consider not only alternative models but also relationships between the various elements (or players) that constitute the FE professional formation ecosystem.

As discussed in 2.4.1, Goodson's (2003) 'devil's bargain' underlines the enshrined academisation of ITE programmes, which has partly led to recent and current governments' 'anti-HE' ITE policies. Goodson's perspective may be focused on discourses of professional knowledge and how these can be mediated at and through various levels (Goodson uses Bourdieu's notion of 'field' instead of a macro-meso-micro structure) to empower teaching practices, but his argument is not dissimilar to that of this thesis. One of the issues is that the production of knowledge, Goodson argues, has been

confined to the 'ivory towers' (2003, p18) and divorced from practice. Yet, he also cautions a narrow 'practice-based' ITE research agenda, as endorsed by the latest ITE policies, which would emphasise the technicisation of teaching. A 'wider lens type of enquiry' (Goodson, 2003, p20), based on collaborative research between HEIs and practitioners, may restore some equilibrium between theory, critique and practical matters. Goodson's views echo some of the issues raised by some FEPPMN players in 4.2.2 and 4.2.3: protectionism of HE ITE professional practice, lack of collaboration amongst players and dissonance between HE research and FE practice. The common argument here is that collaboration for the seeking and transmission of knowledge is prominent within the 'nibble and nudge' approach.

In the same vein, Goodson sees professionalisation as the promotion of the occupational group's sole interests (2003, p126), a point from which, the findings above suggest, the sector and players should depart. In the practice of 'principled professionalism', Goodson claims that a form of professionalism that stands for moral and social purposes and extends beyond the 'contradictory and narrow concerns of professionalisation' (2003, p132) is of importance in order to comprise the interests of all of the parties included in the process. As discussed in 2.4.1, the marketisation of education has contributed to the isolation of players, in particular HEIs, who have been competing against one another in terms of ITE recruitment. But the findings also show a tendency towards a 'HE-centric' FE professionalisation policy-making following the Lingfield review in order to preserve its authority over ITE qualifications and delivery. HEIs can act as a group but actions (or reactions according to the findings) have largely been assumed through UCET or TELL.

A new configuration of FE professionalisation policy-making would consider extending the interface to FE colleges and their representatives, the ETF and even Ofsted. For Barnett, the notion of ethics forms an integral part of the preservation and advancement of the ecology for the professional who is 'minded to work so as to improve the wellbeing of her [his] environment, in all its network complexity' (2011, p35).

For Sachs (2003), a restructure and reconceptualisation in the ITE context are required to address the demands of a 'super-complex' world. The development of new forms of interface is required not only to design but also to reform professionalisation programmes to fit FE teachers as opposed to HEIs' needs. In departing from protectionist practices by being inclusive rather than exclusive, players thus become active professionals towards the common good (Nardi and O'Day, 1999; Sachs, 2003; Barnett, 2011; Taubman, 2013, 2015).

5.4.2 Nurturing: fuel and nourishment: 'prove it!'

Nardi and O'Day argue that co-evolution is not static and results from an adjustment and interconnections between people and their tools in 'shared and valued activities' (1999, p57). The leverage point for the development of an ecological system is, they claim, in 'acting within the spheres where we have knowledge and authority' (Nardi and O'Day, 1999, p56). The FEPPMN is not short of expertise but, in the Lingfield review case, it became obvious that the debate was politically and ideologically influenced by the coalition government's drive towards deregulation. But it could be argued that, despite the best efforts of some players (e.g. Richard and Bob in 4.2), the evidence to support the impact of FE professionalisation presented at the review was not sufficiently robust. Some of the players justified this weakness in 4.2.2 by highlighting the limited time consultation allocated to respond to the review but also the lack of co-ordination within the FEPPMN in terms of producing convincing evidence. It is fair to say that the issue is not confined to the FEPPMN and extends to the ITE community as a whole. In fact, the evidence produced by the education sector is considered weak (Davies et al., 2000; Clegg, 2005; Bridges et al., 2009; Fitzgibbon, 2009). In addition, when there is evidence of capacity building in ITE (Menter and Murray, 2009), it is largely within the primary and secondary sector. In her systematic review of teacher education international journals, Sleeter (2001) found that only six percent of these focused on the impact of ITE in the classroom and/or on students. The lack of evidence of the impact of ITE on professional learning, she argues, has partly allowed for ideology to shape policy-making (Sleeter, 2001). Some of the factors behind such paucity of ITE impact research are as follows: the

absence of a research design aimed at measuring the impact of ITE on trainees' and their students' learning; education researchers tend to write for each other, not for practitioners and policy-makers; as a result, there is too much focus on their own interests and finding a 'gap' in their area of research (Sleeter, 2001). Such factors have contributed to fragmentation in the ITE research approach and have led to a perception that ITE has had a limited impact on students' learning.

Some of the cited points were clearly identified by some of the FEPPMN players, who felt that HEIs, where most of the research takes place, were perhaps disconnected from the realities of practice. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that HE TEds tend to be perceived as 'practitioners' and are therefore isolated from the rest of the HE academic community (Loughran, 2011). Consequently, as 'early' researchers, they use research as a means to create an individual academic identity (Murray and Male, 2005).The development of an ecological system where research is used as 'fuel' (Finegold, 1999) may enable researchers to encourage collective actions and emphasise the validity of a teaching and learning impact research strategy. One of the keys to nurturing such a system relies on asking uncomfortable but strategic questions (Nardi and O'Day, 1999) through the use of systematic enquiry (Sachs, 2003).

The 'what works' movement has grown as a result of New Labour's focus on pragmatic politics (Oancea and Pring, 2009). 'What works' 'defines the values and sets the standards against which research evidence is to be judged' (Oancea and Pring, 2009, p17), thus adopting a 'means to an end' approach to research (Biesta, 2007, p19). Pawson (2006) states that much evidence-based policy (EBP) is underpinned by systematic reviews that synthesise research findings. Pawson argues that systematic reviews have more 'research power' (2009, p9) than simple evaluations of programmes because they operate on a larger scale and focus on impact. A systematic review of the impact of ITE on professionalisation and learning is thus desirable but it would present a number of challenges. First, it would rely on the identification and scanning of research papers. As previously stated, Sleeter (2001) mentions that little research is being undertaken on the impact of ITE.

Whilst her paper was issued in 2001, the evidence of impact within the field of FE professionalisation research is still limited. Second, the organisation of a systematic review, due to the research profile needed to undertake such a task, would more than likely be the responsibility of HEIs, in particular research-led or active universities. This would mean the continuation of isolated or fragmented practices within the FEPPMN. Fourth, the success of such a review is uncertain. As discussed in chapter 4, Richard's attempt to compile some research findings at the Lingfield review consultation was ignored. But this was largely due to a reactive engagement, which did not leave room for many co-ordinated actions and the application of systematic enquiry.

On an epistemological level, there has been much criticism of the concept of EBP from academics. As Oancea and Pring assert, 'the state of knowledge is always provisional' (2009, p28). Biesta (2007) argues that there is something fundamentally wrong with a concept that can show ''what worked' but not what works or will work' (2007, p18); these criticisms question the EBP's capacity to inform future programmes and/or policies. The notions of 'effectiveness and efficiency' are also contentious, as they assume direct and clear causal links and the ability to measure learning. They reduce researchers to the role of technician, undermining the cultural role of research i.e. the desirability of a better education (Avis, 2007a; Ball, 1998; Biesta, 2007). Hammersley (2001) indicates that 'what works' implies a form of perfectionism, which may be suitable for public scrutiny and accountability but plays to managerialist approaches and governments, which use it as a way to justify reforms. This would lead to 'academics' emasculation' (Bottery, 2000, p123) and weaken professionalism (Hammersley, 2001). Another aspect worthy of consideration is the reliance on producing research that fits the government agenda in order to secure funding (Pawson, 2006). The normalisation of marketisation in HE and the scarcity of funding mean that researchers may be more inclined to produce 'desirable' impact research. This issue was discussed in 4.2.4 with regard to the dependency of some HEIs on ETF funding for projects. Governmental organisations and quangos may thus be selective in their tendering of contracts. The FEPPMN clearly needs to operate beyond the

simple exchange of funding for evidence if it is to develop agency. The issue with EBP is that it derives from a defensive 'something to prove' stance. It leaves little room for the exploration of concepts, ideas and practices within the FEPPMN, which may be disregarded if they do not serve the overall purpose of influencing policy-making. There is a risk that becoming 'aware' (as opposed to its current 'accidental' status) may transform the FEPPMN into a strategic and instrumentalist network, which would affect the notion of 'common good' reflected earlier.

The remaining question is whether or not an evidence-based approach to research has any impact on policy-making. Clegg refutes a linear 'evidence-to-policy chain' (2005, p418) and claims that evidence-based practice 'serves an ideological function that is disguised through the rhetoric of independence and the idea that policy is disinterested and objectively informed' (2005, p419). Bridges et al. reiterate that policy-makers are not 'empty vessels' (2009, p4) and research only adds to the sedimentation of ideology and already known information. But in their view, policy-making is not a vacuum to be filled' (Bridges et al., 2004, p4) but an 'on-going' process. This thesis has so far shown that government officials have been resistant to, if not ignorant of the evidence presented to them and that the current reactive approach has not been effective. The concept of an 'on-going process' argued by Bridges et al. (2004) echoes the ecological perspective of 'nibble and nudge' and presents an opportunity to accommodate a strategic EBP within a more 'thoughtful' approach to research. As Sleeter suggests, education research most likely to influence policy:

> '(a) provides systematic evidence of the classroom impact of teacher education, particularly on student learning, (b) is of sufficiently large scale to suggest that the impact is not too idiosyncratic or localized to be of use elsewhere, and (c) combines methodologies that include both quantitative and qualitative data, enabling policymakers to "see" how a program or practice might interface with local realities, while also enabling them to assess its impact in clear terms'

> (2014, 147).

Sleeter (2014) recommends a model based on developing an 'ITE impact' agenda, which could consist of collaborative large- and small-scale enquiries

to establish causal links between ITE and learning as well as to create a firm ITE knowledge base. But this, she argues, requires encouragement by creating a reward culture for individual contributions to the agenda through professional recognition, progression and the currency of publication. The FEPPMN could perhaps adopt a mixed-approach by selecting a research group encompassing the FE Professionalisation community (a role currently held by TELL) and identifying a broad research question evaluating the impact of ITE, such as 'To what extent does ITE contribute to students' learning?'. Figure 18 below displays some mixed research activities that could contribute to the evaluation. The shapes evoke the notion of 'triangulation', which is necessary for the robust collection and interpretation of evidence (Cohen et al., 2000).
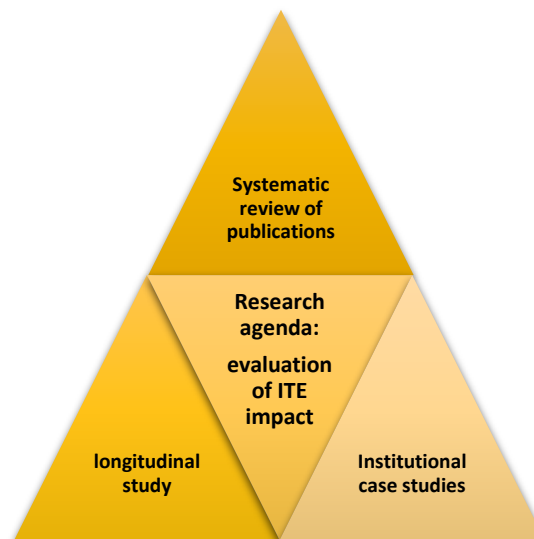
Figure 18 'Prove it': a mixed approach to the evaluation of FE ITE impact on learning

As discussed in 4.2.2, the exchange of knowledge within policy-making has been used tactically or as ammunition but, in fact, it may play a more active role in the development of networks (Jones, 2009). The collaborative aspects could be developed by TELL who could assign each aspect of 'prove it' to mixed teams of researchers composed of various FEPPMN players. For instance, it seems logical that FE practitioners would lead on institutional case studies but they could be supported by HE researchers and TEds and FE management support (this could be discussed at 157 group or AoC level). Large-scale - across England - longitudinal studies could be RI HE-led and

follow FE teachers during and after their ITE formation, but this would still require the contribution of FE practitioners, UCU, ETF and Ofsted literature or even co-operation. The systematic review could be allocated to various mixed practitioner teams with the aim of feeding into the other two facets of the research agenda. The teams would be expected to report on their progress and disseminate their findings at meetings, conferences and events on a regular basis. The use of the ETF and UCET to 'publicise' these may be central to facilitating access to various organisations within the overall FE community.

An EBP approach concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of ITE (Bridges et al., 2009), would thus enable the FEPPMN to 'prove it' by building a much-needed ITE knowledge-base in order to inform policy-making. The use of a 'tool' (Nardi and O'Day, 1999) may also develop the interdependence of the FEPPMN with the aim of addressing the ethical concerns and meeting the requirements discussed in 5.4.1.

5.4.3 Interdependence: 'connect!'

> 'The modern professional is embedded in overlapping networks, some of his or her choosing and some inadvertently. The networks are intra-professional (with one's own profession) and inter-professional (increasingly with other professions); they are with clients and with the state; and they are with discourses and understandings. Many of these networks have degrees of formality attaching to them but others involve largely informal and ephemeral interactions'
>
> (Barnett, 2011, p29)

In line with Barnett's quotation, the current players' 'informal' and 'ephemeral' relationships have led to partial effectiveness and limited agency, but also to fragmentation. An ecology relies on species not only using resources but also performing to maintain the ecology. As Nardi and O'Day put it, 'change in an ecology is systemic. When one element is changed, effects can be felt throughout the whole system' (1999, p51). This is particularly true in the context of the Lingfield review, which eventually led to the revocation of compulsory ITE and CPD, as well as the disappearance of the IfL and several HEI's FE ITE departments. These changes have had strong repercussions for

FE professionalisation as a whole. The system of interdependence within the FEPPMN is thus of importance for the development of a sustainable ecology beyond the survival of the fittest (Finegold, 1999).

The findings (see 4.2.3) underlined unequal and at times, unsupportive relationships within the FEPPMN. For instance, HEIs were criticised for being 'lone players'; the IfL felt unsupported by HEIs in a time of crisis; some HEIs have nurtured 'privileged' partnerships with the ETF, revolving around the allocation of project grants that only seem to serve their self-interests. Other universities have gained an Ofsted 'outstanding' grading with little evidence of sharing good practice with other institutions. But there are examples, in the development of TELL for example, where relationships have been mutually beneficial for FEPPMN players. In the case of TELL, there seems to have been a clear recognition of the expertise of all of the parties involved as advocated by Sachs in a plea for a 'two-way reciprocity' model (2003, p66). And whilst it may be desirable to envisage a totally equal partnership, it may be realistic to consider what the role of 'keystone species' might be in stabilising the network and acting in a manner that supports the development of others (Nardi and O'Day. 1999). These 'keystone species' are not necessarily the most powerful within the ecology, but they have the ability to 'build bridges across institutional boundaries and translate across disciplines' (Nardi and O'Day, 1999, p54). The role of TELL is thus particularly interesting as it has emerged from within the network but appears, at first glance, to have limited agency over policy-making. However, it is composed of diverse institutions and players who are attracted by the notion of sharing good practice and research. The notion of diversity may denote disorganisation or even fragmentation but, within an ecology, it recognises the complementarity of various players and their functions, which enables the system to thrive (Nardi and O'Day, 1999). It remains to be seen whether TELL can expand beyond its current remit and whether it is willing to undertake a more strategic role within the FEPPMN (see Richard's doubts over the matter in 4.2.1).

But it currently represents what can be achieved when players widen their notion of professionalism. Indeed, a 'networked professional' (Barnett, 2011, p31) connects with others in the ecology, thus gaining wider identities and

responsibilities to support and nurture beyond the self (Barnett, 2011), but this type of interconnection still needs to be underpinned by auspicious conditions.

5.4.4 Supportive environment/conditions: 'Forget Cinderella', 'Bang on!' and 'don't throw out the baby with the bathwater'

The findings have shown that the 'Cinderella' self-fulfilling prophecy syndrome has partly inhibited the sector from resisting relentless policy changes. A change in self-image may result from a collaborative research focus, but I would argue that the sector needs to initially banish the Cinderella analogy and focus on achieving a positive image. Some players mentioned their belief that 'banging on' about the positive achievements of FE will eventually infiltrate wider policy contexts and enable policy-makers at macro levels to consider the worth of the sector. At a time when ITE is highly contested in political circles, the use of a 'prove it' research approach may contribute to showing the benefits of ITE for FE professionals and learners.

A change of image requires confidence as well as trust amongst the players. Avis (2003) states that trust is conditional for the sharing and creation of knowledge. But this could be problematic in a marketised environment that has emphasised individualistic goals and values. In order to reach the level of mutual respect and trust required to go beyond individual institutional interests (Sachs, 2003), the FEPPMN needs to 'move towards reflexive modernization' (Avis, 2003, p316) and 'pay attention' (Nardi and O'Day, 1999, p68) to the assumptions we have made about the profession. Indeed, 'paying attention means deliberately evaluating the merits of a practice' (Nardi and O'Day, 1999, p69) and considering the benefits of improvement or the changes suggested by all of the parties within and outside the FEPPM. Indeed, the literature and findings have shown that there was much resistance from HEIs to departing from the current ITE stance and practices but Bob's comments with regard to compromising by not 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater' echo Barnett's (2011) and Taubman's (2015) arguments about the importance of having ethical and democratic dimensions in the overall profession and sector. Such conditions may constitute ideal grounds for the development of

professional formation but also instil a new notion of professionalism in the sector.

5.5 Towards a 'triple' professionalism?

Hodgson and Spours argue that ecological perspectives 'point to areas of action, in particular the development of new forms of collaboration - popular, professional and institutional – that create spaces for local deliberation of innovation and capacity building' (2009, p11). An ecological 'nibble and nudge' strategy has much potential not only to progress the players' current policy-agency from 'reactive' to 'proactive', but also to address wider issues with regard to professional formation and professionalism as a whole. In itself, an ecological approach may not be enough as it does not necessarily concede the need for democratic representation and ethical behaviour within the FEPPMN.

In order to become truly sustainable, 'nibble and nudge' needs consideration within a broader agenda of professionalism. According to Hodgson (2016) the current dual professionalism definition adopted in the FE sector is narrow, isolates the professional within his/her own practice and is far too dependent on organisations. The findings of this study have revealed that players within the FEPPMN lack collaborative practices, are reactive to policies and have not evolved within a system within which they could potentially thrive. A triple professionalism model would recognise the need for the FEPPMN to expand beyond what Sachs (2003) describes as 'restrictive practices'. Referring to the works of Sachs (2003), Whitty and Wisby (2007), Hodgson and Spours (2013) and Barnett (2012), Spours (2014) defines triple professionalism as ethical, democratic, activist and ecological. Hodgson (2016) further underlines the need to: understand the mediation of policies at different levels of the system; collaborate across the system; and build a research culture and capacity leading to positive change. But realising such a perspective on professionalism cannot occur within the current reactive system in which the FEPPMN currently stands. Barnett (2011) argues that professionals have a responsibility for sustaining and advancing the ecological system in which they find themselves (which he defines as wider than one's own professional remit).

Through a 'nibble and nudge' approach, players have a framework to transform their professionalism and gain what Hodgson and Spours, referring to Pratchett's (2004) work on top-down policy-making systems, call 'freedom from' to 'freedom to' (2009, p8). This 'freedom to' is an opportunity for the FEPPMN to 'create new political spaces in which to act' (Sachs, 2003, p146) and evolve from 'game' players to agentic actors of meso-level policy making.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has established that the mediation of FE professionalisation policies at the meso-level was in line with Bowe et al.'s (1992) and Ball's (2008b) 'messy' and complex policy-making process and that, during and after the Lingfield review, players struggled to exercise agency within the context of influence (Ball, 1993, 1994). As fragmentation and individualistic practices have been identified as some of the causes of the lack of influence on the core of professionalisation policies, it then examined potential frameworks for the realisation of a 'nibble and nudge' strategy to develop the FEPPMN's agency in policy-making. First, the creation of an official network was rejected on the grounds of research that showed that organised consultation was mostly rhetorical and could be used as a legitimisation device by the state. The need for a professional group of policy-players emerging from 'within' (as per discussion in 2.3.1) was thus cited as key to the pursuit of agency in policy-making. To that effect, a CoP was considered, but I argued that, whilst the organic nature of the concept could provide some sense of belonging, it failed to recognise power struggles and was too permeable to focus on influential strategies and the development of agency. The discussion then contextualised the 'nibble and nudge' strategy within an ecological framework, which would provide not only a structure but also sustainability and interdependency of players within the system. The chapter finally argued the need to reconsider the current FE professionalisation policy-making agenda by applying ecological, democratic, activist and ethical principles, which form part of the concept of triple professionalism. It concluded that triple professionalism could transform meso-level players' system and policy-making agency.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter concludes the thesis by answering the research questions, stating the contribution to education research and knowledge, evaluating the research process, considering improvements, implications for further studies and the professional context and finally identifying ways of disseminating the findings.

6.2 The research questions

At the end of Chapter Two, the research questions were devised to query the dynamics of policy-making and the role of the meso-level players in the policy-making process with regard to FE professional formation. The findings from Chapter Four and the subsequent discussion, which followed in Chapter Five, provide evidence to address the following:

1. How do those in the meso-level policy network mediate policies on FE professionalisation?

The literature review established that the meso-level of policymaking was characterised by a range of organisations that had some level of influence between the macro and micro level of policy-making. Chapters Two and Three discussed that policy-making involved a variety of players from diverse institutions. Within FE professionalisation policy-making, the players represented HEIs, FECs, unions, research networks, and FE sector organisations and regulators but appeared to constitute an 'accidental' issue network.

The findings in Chapter Four showed that during and following the Lingfield review players within the FEPPMN mediated policies through complex interactions, which involved the exchange of resources such as expertise, values and services. The research has found that the exchanges were not always mutual and that the resources were unequal in value. The inequalities in the exchange and resources were linked to the players' level of agency within the network. Funding was deemed the most prized currency.

HE and FE players directly involved in ITE delivery played games by operating 'below the radar'. This was done either through engagement with powerful players such as the ETF to gain and/or sustain a level of influence within policy-making or through the re-interpretation of policies to suit their needs. But the findings concluded that these types of games formed part of a reactive state of policy mediation, which carried little agency in terms of policy-making.

2. What is the specific role of HE ITE players in this process and how much agency do they have?

HE players operate both at the meso and micro levels, which gives them a unique perspective. In addition to 'operating below the radar', HE ITE players exchange a range of resources with other players, which include expertise and values. But the demand from other players and the government for traditional professional expertise has been replaced by a more fragmented model of 'itemised knowledge' focused on details of ITE policies, which had little influence over the overall policy-making process. HE players exchanged mutual collegiality and research with equal players (e.g. TELL) and with more influential players such as the ETF, but the research seemed to be confined to funded projects, which served as endorsement of the government's ITE policies and the FE sector's agenda (this formed part of the 'play the game' strategy discussed in question 1). One of the surprising findings was the role played by HEIs in the legitimisation of Ofsted as a regulatory body. Following the Lingfield review, which revoked the compulsory need for FECs to appoint a qualified workforce, Ofsted, perhaps inadvertently, protected HE ITE from decline by querying the professional formation of FE lecturers as part of their FE colleges' inspection regime. It appears that Ofsted was 'recompensed' by HEIs' acceptance of their regulatory status and co-operation in their inspection process (which they could have argued against within a deregulated context). But, overall these restrictions and 'alliances' indicate that HE ITE players are dependent on funding and regulatory processes and thus exercise limited agency in the mediation of policies. In addition, HEIs were perceived as 'lone' players within the FEPPMN and resistant to change with regard to ITE policies. This attitude appeared detrimental to their capacity to effect policy-making.

3. Should meso-level policy-players have greater agency and, if so, what might facilitate this process?

The FEPPMN players' agency over policy-making is limited due to the current government's deregulation agenda and stance on ITE as well as the lack of understanding of the FE sector and professionalisation needs. Both the literature and the data from the interviews have confirmed the importance of a robust FE professionalisation agenda. The marketisation of FE and HE has led to fragmented practices but the sector's projection of a 'Cinderella' image may also have damaged the FEPPMN's capacity and confidence in its authority over FE professionalisation. As a result, the research confirms that the government is not making full use of some of the players' expertise. An increase of agency in policy-making is thus necessary for players to inform government of their ability to take a greater role in the process.

The FEPPMN players could move from a reactive to a proactive policy mediation status by adopting a 'nibble and nudge' strategy. The 'nibble and nudge' strategy is formed of a series of collaborative activities aimed at transforming the image of the FE sector and creating a policy ecological framework that is able to influence policy-making. Some of the actions necessary to achieve a proactive status involve a change in the sector's image by promoting effective FE practices and the production of research that would prove the positive impact of ITE on learning. The research concludes that a proactive policy mediation level is achievable and sustainable if considered within a triple professionalism model.

6.3 Contribution to education research and knowledge

The contributions of this thesis to education research and knowledge are three-fold:

Whilst there is ample literature on FE professionalisation policies, the large majority of the research is focused on the analysis of policies at the macro level or its impact at the micro-level. Little has been published about the dynamics, processes and mediation of policies at the meso-level of policy-making.

In fact, within the FE sector, the assumption is that professionalisation policies are applied in a top-down manner. Using, in particular, the works of Bowe and colleagues (1992) and Ball (1994a), this thesis has challenged this perception by upholding the concept of 'messiness' in policy-making and using a 'hybrid' methodology based on Vidovich's (2007) work to unravel a richer picture of FE professionalisation. The thesis can thus conclude that mediation is more than a mere transmission of policies. The interactions, exchange of resources and games being played are an integral part of policy-making. The categories utilised to examine the process also show that policy-making is not as 'messy' as is depicted in the theoretical literature. Given Ball's (2009) points regarding the absence of analytical tools to measure network mediation, the thesis has attempted to organise the 'messiness' by gathering existing tools from the policy network literature 'under one roof' (see 3.2.4). I believe that this set of tools can be applied as a generic model for future network analysis regardless of the research context in which they are studied.

Second, it is clear that collaboration, in particular in research, would play a critical part in establishing a triple professionalism policy-making framework. The identification of some of the meso-level players as a network (even though it may be 'accidental', as discussed within the study) is thus of importance if they are to attempt to increase their influence over policy-making. Recognising the pivotal role of some key species such as the research network TELL may initiate a dialogue between players within and beyond the current network.

Third, the thesis has highlighted some of the interdependencies, processes and interactions occurring within the FEPPMN. Whilst some of the findings confirm the conclusions in the existing literature, such as the limited agency within the FE sector, this study has striven to explain and justify these within the policy-making context. The study has also provided both theoretical and practical suggestions such as a 'nibble and nudge' strategy, for potential development of the FEPPMN's policy-making agency.

6.4 Evaluation of the study, improvement and implications for further study

Whilst the thesis has provided a better understanding of FE professionalisation policy-making and devised a strategy, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, with regard to methodological perspectives, the analytical tools are unable to capture the 'unseen and unsaid', which could constitute another form of mediation of policies. The absence of such a tool to undertake network analysis may lead to a partial understanding of policy-making. A different research design, perhaps ethnography-like in its approach, may shed further light on 'what goes on behind the scenes' (Ball, 2009, p688). Second, in relation to the research design, the use of a case study presents several challenges. As 'not all policies are the same' (Ball et al 2011, p611), the issue of generalisation mentioned in 3.4.3 is perhaps obvious in terms of questioning whether the FEPPMN would have reacted in similar ways faced with different policies since the Lingfield review in 2012. Without a repetition of the collection and analysis of the data, it is thus impossible to assert with certainty that the thesis's findings represent a consistent pattern. That said, the interviews have gathered evidence that extends beyond the Lingfield review (in some cases, interviewees insisted on placing their response within a policy context which could be traced back to the incorporation of colleges). But the evidence gathered through the case study nonetheless illustrates examples of policy mediation and can serve as a basis for further studies.

The sample selected for the study is also worth considering in terms of limitations. The FEPPMN is largely representative of some of the groups of interest or organisations at the meso level of policy-making but it may have been useful to consider the involvement of other parties who were mentioned in the Lingfield review consultation document e.g. the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) or individual college principals, the CBI, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education or the Gatsby Foundation. But I was reluctant to select participants who seemed to have been involved at the consultation point only during the Lingfield review (see 5.2.2 point on selective practices by states to prevent being undermined by players) when a wider and perhaps more critical remit was needed to gain a full understanding of policy

mediation. Some were originally considered but in the case of LSIS and FECs' principals, the ETF and the 157 group had similar profiles and experiences or individuals who had previously been part of these organisations. As one of the foci of the thesis was to emphasise the mediation of FE professionalisation policies and the role of HE in this process, priority was allocated to interviewing a good range of players involved in ITE. Lastly, I am aware that the FEPPMN does not operate as an organised 'network' but as a group of players who display 'network-like' characteristics, more precisely similar to 'issue' networks. However, I acknowledged early in the study that the network was constructed for analysis purposes.

In terms of the validity and effectiveness of the research methods, the literature and interviews produced a body of data, which has enabled me to explore FE professionalisation policy-making in depth and to answer the research questions. The first round of interviews did, however, present me with a conundrum. Following the literature review, which appeared to indicate a top-down policy mediation from the macro to the micro level, one interviewee challenged the proposed linear model and oriented me towards a more complex picture of policy-making. Whilst this was disconcerting at first, revisiting my theoretical framework enabled me to widen my understanding of policy-making (including the concepts of 'messiness', 'hybridity' and 'policy-network') and design a much richer study. As a result, I was able to conduct the second round of interviews in a more focused way. I was nevertheless able to utilise the early interview data to discuss the current level and development of agency within the FEPPMN.

In hindsight, it would perhaps have been worthwhile to organise a focus group to gather opinions and suggestions with regard to the 'nibble and nudge' strategy to increase the FEPPMN agency. I could have perhaps recalled some of the interviewees or considered new participants who would represent a wider cross-section of players. However, this could form part of the dissemination of the research and initiate interest in undertaking the research elements of the strategy. As discussed in Chapter 5, I believe that the research group TELL is pivotal to represent interests across the ITE sector. Therefore, the presentation of the 'nibble and nudge' strategy at such a level is of

importance. As I am part of the TELL network, I will have a platform to disseminate my findings. The opportunity to gain feedback on the strategy and further data to develop future research is thus highly conceivable.

As part of the analysis, it has become evident that a closer scrutiny of the differences between research and teaching-led universities could have provided a better understanding of the type and level of agency exercised. The findings revealed that some teaching-led HE players have considerable interaction with organisations such as the ETF and some of their lecturers were involved with Ofsted as ITE inspectors. The research-led universities were not generally represented in research fora such as TELL but seemed to have access to other research networks. These aspects deserve further study if only to ensure greater cohesion within a future triple professionalism community.

Within the findings, I have designated the levels of agency from reactive to proactive but also included the ultimate goal of creativity (fig 11, p93 & fig 17, p105). The creativity aspect of policy-making has not been tackled within the thesis, partly because it is a contested concept. For instance, productivity is assumed to lead to creativity (Beighton, 2015). But, Beighton argues that 'the piling up of new stuff' is not necessarily 'interesting, remarkable or important' (2015, p40). Perhaps we first need to define what counts as creativity or simply ask, is there such a thing as creativity in policy-making? And if there is, how can it be realised? These questions need to be explored further in perhaps a more theoretical piece of research.

Lastly, in the discussion, I attribute the concept of triple professionalism to the success of the 'nibble and nudge' strategy while the concept is still very much in the process of being developed. But, triple professionalism gathers together elements of professionalism, such as activism, ethical and democratic professionalism, which have, even at this stage, much resonance with the study. I will be following the development of the concept in future publications as I believe the concept has much potential to inform further research into FE professionalisation policy-making.

6.5 Implications for my professional role and the wider professional context

As an early career academic researcher, the limitations of and 'gaps' in this thesis provide an opportunity for further research and development. But the implications of this thesis for my professional role are multiple. Within my own institution, which is teaching-led, and in line with some of my findings in Chapter Four, policy-making is seen as a type of research removed from the 'day to day' practice, and therefore interest in policy-making is extremely limited. But, the presentation of a more practical 'nibble and nudge' approach could perhaps initiate a discussion about the role that my institution wishes to take in terms of research (figure 18, p118). The extent of our partnership with FE colleges delivering ITE is such that it would perhaps be best placed to facilitate some institutional case study research with FECs as well as to play a part in the longitudinal study alongside research-led HE partners. These research activities may not only demonstrate the value of policy-making research but also help to reduce the research/teaching-led institution dichotomy.

The implications for the wider professional context are, perhaps, of more importance, as the thesis's remit was to explore policy-making within the current FE meso-level professionalisation community. As stated earlier in Chapter Five, TELL seems pivotal to the nurturing of a community of policy-making and the findings of my thesis may initiate a discussion around the role and activities that various players could undertake in the future. I have been part of the network since 2008 and the increasing attendance from HE and FE ITE players indicates a desire to (a) connect with colleagues across the UK (some Scottish universities are also frequently represented), and (b) make use of the expertise of each institution and player for the advancement of ITE as a whole. The network has so far hosted several research platforms and there is evidence of cross-collaboration amongst institutions and players. But I strongly believe that the application of a more structured research strategy would enhance TELL's remit and create a sense of purpose, which is, at present, confined to individuals' goodwill and efforts. TELL could take advantage of all of the players' connections with other organisations and

gradually construct a much wider community involving a fair representation of meso-level policy players.

6.6 The dissemination of findings

In addition to the discussions to be had at my institution and TELL level, I intend to publish academic papers from this study. The various chapters and the diversity of issues raised within the thesis can form part of a portfolio of journal publications and conference papers. For instance, Chapter Two has the potential to become a review of FE professionalisation policy cycles, in which the notion of policy iteration is brought to the fore. I am also interested in the issue of suitability of the current ITE qualifications for FE professional formation, with Goodson's (2003) 'devil's bargain' as a central argument. Chapter Three has much potential as a stand-alone paper with regard to the network analysis and in particular, the analytical framework design but the paper may need to be supported by a co-writer with some expertise in methodology. The findings can perhaps be divided into different sections. For instance, (the current position and development of) agency could be treated as a sole paper, whilst interdependencies, interactions and processes could constitute another. Processes or games are already the focus of a keynote for a conference 'Nibble and nudge: developing teacher educators' agency in FE professionalisation policy-making' that I presented at the University of Huddersfield in June 2016. The 'nibble and nudge' strategy was added to my conclusion and discussed by delegates during the critical dialogue spaces. With regard to the development of one of the limitations of this thesis, I have already been approached by my current co-author, Dr Christian Beighton, whose expertise would enable us to use the thesis's findings in order to advance the notion of creativity in FE professionalisation policy-making. Finally, Chapter Five is perhaps the most challenging paper to disseminate but it may benefit from consulting with experts in the ecological and triple professionalism perspectives field.

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Appendix 1

Current Initial Teacher Education qualifications provision (ETF, 2016, p8)

Qualification title	Level of learning	Length of the programme in guided learning hours	Teaching practice time in hours
1) Awards			
Award in Education and Training	3 or 4	48-61	1-2
Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector	3 or 4	60	1-2
2) Certificates			
Certificate in Education and Training	4	140-204	30-40
Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector	3 or 4	183-204	80
Certificate in FE Teaching Stage 1	4	40	20
Certificate in FE Teaching Stage 2	4	120	40
Certificate in FE Teaching Stage 3	5	120	60
Certificate in Principles of Teaching and Learning	4	70	30-40
Certificate for Essential Skills Practitioners	3	90	Not stated (NS)
3) Diplomas			
Diploma in Education and Training	5	360-510	100-140
Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector	5	358-535	100-140
4) Higher Diplomas			
Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in the Post-Compulsory Education and Training Sector	6 or 7	1 year full time	100-140
Certificate in Education (CertEd) in the Post-Compulsory Education and Training Sector	6 or 7	1-3 years full time	100-140
5) Literacy/English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) subject specialisms			
PGCE Subject Specialism in Literacy/ESOL	6 or 7	1 year full time	100-140
Subsidiary Diploma in Teaching English (Literacy) in the Lifelong Learning Sector	5	150	NS
Diploma in Education and Training (Literacy)	5	360	100-140
Diploma in Education and Training (ESOL)	5	420	100-140
Certificate for ESOL Subject Specialists	4	130	NS
Certificate for Adult Literacy Subject Specialists	4	120	NS
6) Numeracy subject specialisms			
PGCE Subject Specialism in Numeracy	6 or 7	1 year full time	100-140
Certificate for Adult Numeracy Subject Specialists	4	120	NS
Diploma in Education and Training (Mathematics: Numeracy)	5	360	100-140
PGCE Subject Specialist in Supporting Learners with SEND	6 or 7	1 year full time	100-140
Certificate in Teaching Learners with Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties	5	95	NS
Diploma in Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)	5	240	NS

Appendix 2

Vidovich's (2007) questions

Rhodes, R. (1997) Foreword, in: W. Kickert, E. Klijn & J. Koppenjan (Eds) *Managing complex networks* (London, Sage).

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Appendix: Interrogating a policy process: A possible menu?

'Policy' is conceived in terms of a whole process which incorporates its initial construction as well as subsequent practices, and can extend from macro to micro levels of a policy trajectory. Interrogation involves 'who', 'what', 'why', 'when', 'where', and 'how' questions.

Context of influence

What struggles are occurring to influence the policy?

- Are global (supra-national) influences evident is this policy domain?
- Are there international (bi-lateral or multi-lateral) influences operating? If so, which are the key nation states involved?
- How are global and international influences operating?
- To what extent are global/international level influences mediated within the nation state?
- What are the prevailing ideological, economic and political conditions?
- Who are the policy elite and what interests do they represent?
- Which other interest groups are attempting to influence policy?
- Which interests are most/least powerful?
- Why are these interests so powerful?
- Over what time period did the context of influence evolve before the policy was constructed?

Context of policy text production

What struggles are occurring in the production of the policy text?

- Why is the policy text produced at a particular place and time?
- When did the construction of the policy text begin?
- Which interest (stakeholder) groups are represented in the production of the policy text and which are excluded?
- What processes are used to construct the policy text and why?
- What compromises are made between the different interest (stakeholder) groups and how were they negotiated?

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- Whose interests are the policy intended to serve?
- What are the dominant discourses of the policy text and which discourses are excluded?
- What is the stated intention of the policy?
- Are there any 'hidden' agendas?
- Which values are reflected in the policy?
- What issues constitute the focus of the policy, and do they relate to global/international policy agendas?
- What are the key concepts in the policy?
- What is the format of the policy and why?
- What is the language of the policy and why?
- Are there inconsistencies and contradictions in the policy text?
- Who is the intended audience for the policy text?
- How accessible or understandable is the policy text to the audience?
- Are the steps for implementation set out as part of the policy text?
- Is the implementation funded?
- Is there a pre-specified mechanism to evaluate the policy?

Context of practice/effects

What struggles are occurring over the policy practices/effects?

- Is this policy being practiced in a wide variety of localized contexts?
- How different are the policy practices between, and within, different localized sites?
- Are global/international influences evident in the policy practices at local levels?
- Who can access the policy and who does access it?
- How open is the policy to interpretation by practitioners?
- How well is the policy received?
- Who put the policy into practice?
- What processes are used to put the policy into practice and why?
- To what extent is the policy (actively or passively) resisted?
- Is resistance collective or individual?
- To what extent is the policy transformed within individual institutions?
- How predictable were the policy practices/effects?
- Are practitioners at the local level empowered by the policy?
- Are practitioners at the local level able to respond rapidly to meet localized needs in this policy domain?
- What are the unintended consequences?
- What is the impact of the policy on different localized groupings based on class, gender, ethnicity, rurality and disability?
- Are there winners and losers?
- Is there a disjunction between the original policy intent (macro level) and subsequent practices (micro level), and if so why?

Appendix 3

Participant Information Sheet and consent form

As part of my Doctor in Education (EdD) at the Institute of Education, I am currently undertaking a thesis which examines the role of the meso level policy players in Further Education professional formation. The meso level represents the various groups which have a direct interest in FE professionalism policy making, more specifically, with regards to teacher education. I am researching the ways in which policy players mediate these policies and exercise agency over FE professional formation.

The research strategy has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee at the IOE and is conducted according to strict ethical guidelines. All the information that is collected during the research will be kept strictly confidential. As required by the Data Protection Act, I will not pass on any person-identifiable data to any external agency. Any references to interviews in written research reports and articles will be anonymised to ensure confidentiality although some organisations may be mentioned by name. Finally, I am not funded by any external agency for this research.

I am more than happy to respond to any queries you may have. Just contact me by email: spoma@ioe.ac.uk

Many thanks for your co-operation and participation

Sabrina Poma 1/7/14

- I have read the participant information sheet concerning the proposed research conducted by Sabrina Poma as part of her EdD Thesis.
- I have agreed that, following consultation with me, Sabrina can interview me regarding the role the 'meso' level in FE professional formation.
- I recognise that any data collected through interview recordings will be recorded and then transcribed into anonymised extracts.
- I am aware that I have the right to withdraw from participation in the research at any time

Name: Signature: Date:

Appendix 4

Matrix table sample

Name	Differential/position & resources/power of actors	Interdependency /exchange of resources	Interactions (struggles and compromise)	Processes/games	Forward Agency
Scott	ETF too close to government to be representative of FE	Standards make government feel they have basic control HEIs are really important – not in isolation – part of a collegial network	The IfL did promote some kind of FE identity. made FE professionals interact with the notion of professionalization Identity=we're left now with our only collective voice being the union and that can't be right P10 But lecturers did not feel they were getting anything back – 'an imposition rather than a voice working for them' Quangos= if I take a deep breath, it'll go away **Teacher trainers or the educators are the consistent thread and policy isn't. policy is inconsistent and leads to fragmentation. P12**	'there are certain boxes that need to be ticked and games to be played, but you do what you think them and you do what you think is best for trainees. MANIPULATION of curriculum- p12- when something is ridiculous you leave it out. Or dilute it or give emphasis on what you think is important Ofsted is just a complete charade. It's a reflection of a particular representation that … p12 A grade one buys more autonomy – GAMES we play	forward= HEI-led national consortium (Scott) (no involvement from awarding bodies (they have little influence on the process just use of outcome) not in isolation (with FECs?) = network of HEIs and FECs- reinforce TELL's profile the issue= academia= underpins research, know-how and FE practical knowledge- the relevance for Scott is his 'discretion' the 'space to deliver something which…' p11
John	we follow policy- much of the TE FE is in post 92 unis so do not have the confidence	- TE provides a space for questioning=CRITICALITY IfL's relationship with government+ too close/linked	Relationship between UCU and IfL Lack of understanding of FE by policy-makers because they have never experienced		Professionalism from within Research/ knowledge: more than dissemination=production of p9 as research leads to status (not teaching) p10

Appendix 5

Colour coded transcript sample

<u>**S. Poma - Richard**</u>

<p style="text-align: center">[Start of recorded material]</p>

Interviewer: I'm interviewing Richard, and although I have changed your name, TELL will have to be mentioned. I mean I'll send you the transcript in any case, and if you need to edit things or want me to delete certain things I'll make sure they are. I'm interviewing you in your capacity as dual teacher educator, but as well TELL chairman – I don't know how you want to call yourself.

Respondent: Convener I think. I quite like the title convener.

Interviewer: Would you like to just present yourself and TELL me what role do you have in your university?

Respondent: I have got one main role which is that I actually just teach undergraduate education studies. I no longer run teacher education programmes, so my main role at the moment is teaching on undergraduate education studies programmes. But I guess my research and development area is very much teacher education. And I've got three or four projects which are going to be happening this year probably, as well as finishing off projects from last year, and being the convener of TELL and various other networks. I'm no longer an active teacher educator, but until two years ago I had been involved in post-compulsory teacher education for about 30 years.

Interviewer: Can you TELL me a little bit about TELL. How did it come about?

Respondent: There was a spell when the centres for excellence in teacher training first started, which I think was 2008, 2009, when suddenly quite a large amount of funding started coming to help develop teacher education. Not everybody got that funding because the [unintelligible 00:02:30] weren't national. But that kind of gave a bit of a burst to teacher education, and at the time I was fairly early… no actually I

wasn't fairly early, I was several years into a PHD, but that was about technology in the lifelong learning sector. As soon as I started getting involved in one or two of the projects related to teacher education that were part of the funding that came in then, I realised that what was really at the centre of the work I was doing was teacher education. I actually changed the title of my PhD, so for the next three or four years initially I did various projects as part of the team at South West CETT, quite often leading or co-leading those projects, all around teacher education. Most of those went into part of the data and part of the research for my PhD. As I got towards the end of it I began to start thinking there is now some developing networks, there is the South West Teacher Education Forum that was running quite successfully in the South West. And teacher educators were starting to network more and more research was coming to the public eye from the sector and from teacher educators when there had been precious little that was apparent before that. As I came towards the end of a particular project which was about supporting teacher educators, I thought there just doesn't seem to me to be a network just for lifelong learning teacher educators.

 Now there was, and still is, a network for teacher educators, which is the team the Teacher Educator Advancement Network. It is good, and it tries to include post compulsory, but it is still very much driven by school agendas. So I thought it would be really good if there was a post-compulsory teacher education specific network. It just happened at the time that my university had small amounts of funding, about £12-1,500 available for organising events and activities that might promote the further networking and professional development of people in various areas. So I bid for a small amount of money to have an event to try and start the research network, and at that point it was very much just my idea and I was trying to get it going. I don't mean other people haven't had the idea around the country, but it just hadn't ever happened before. So we had our first event and the demand for it was great, not just from the South West but from all round the country. I think about 60 people came to that one-day event. We were very

fortunate that it was a lovely sunny day and a lovely venue. If you had been organising the day you would have thought I wonder how this day might go, and you couldn't have thought it would go any better. I think what it showed is that teacher educators already were networking when they could and how they could. But the idea of something that they could actually focus on research, try and develop research more and also exchange ideas on a wider basis. There just seemed to be a huge enthusiasm for that.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

Respondent: I think partly because teacher education is about connecting things as far as I understand it from various research and from doing it for quite a long time for other teachers. But you do tend when you are doing it to concentrate on the connections of the people you are teaching and supporting, rather than your own with other people. So teacher educators have tended to concentrate on their trainees, rather than their own professional identity. And that has come out of some research I've done. They do still manage to network when they get the opportunity, and I've been involved in networks before and collaborations with other teacher educators around the country. But somehow when there wasn't any funding for a particular development or a particular network it tended not to happen because of that tendency of the teacher educators almost to cluster on their inner circle of things that they need to do. I think people have this strong interest in research, whether they were working in a college or in a university. They were having some opportunities to network and to do some research and to prioritise it. But that never seemed to go beyond, with a few exceptions, a certain circle. I just think it was an opportunity that seemed to come at the right time, teacher education was under growing pressure, as the rest of education is, and I think people thought I might have the opportunity to actually do something that I'm interested in here, that no-one is telling me what to do. I think that is why it took off so successfully, that it was sufficiently different in terms of the way that it operated, that it was the group of people who came along who decided what the network was going to do. I think there had probably been a need for

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something like that for some time, it just happened that an attempt to establish it did work but the fact that it is still working and it is still growing suggests that it was probably something that was needed anyway, but somehow it actually didn't manage to happen.

Interviewer: Do you think we talk about a response to regulation, over-regulation?

Respondent: Yeah, throughout the research I did talking to teacher educators, the degree to which they were hemmed in by a variety of factors, the forces of managerialism and so on, but mainly the incredibly excessive controlling influence of whoever is regulating and managing teacher education, either at a national or a local level. The thing about teacher, educators, and I'm not saying it is only teacher educators, but it is teacher educators as I have researched – they always seem to find ways of working with, and working round these kind of constraints for their trainees, because the results they get with their trainees are really good. And actually in the current Ofsted phase, [unintelligible 00:08:59] is doing better than it has ever done. I mean I would kind of like to think that there are some of the initiatives that happened over the earlier period that might be helping that, but I think [unintelligible 00:09:10] teacher educators in particular are really good at finding ways of doing things on behalf of their trainees and with others, that help at least mediate all those oppressive government and organisational focus things. But there is always still a desire to maybe free themselves from those constraints a bit more, and TELL seemed to provide that. Whether or not TELL actually ends up doing anything will be very interesting, because the idea of trying to get collaborations across 200 people is quite a big idea, and it may or may not work when it comes to doing things. But as a network that shares ideas, encourages ideas and draws people together and makes them look a bit more outward, it is doing really well as far as that is concerned. I think that helps people in their fight to try and give their trainees what they believe is a more just and equitable teacher education.

Interviewer: So do you think there is a specific rule for TELL, or is it something which is organic and that you would like to see organic, or would you like something more perhaps…?

Respondent: I think when we first started, and every time we discuss it people tend to say let's just let it grow organically, see where it goes and I'm sure there will be opportunities to get involved in funded work. But the difficulty is as soon as you get funded work there is a direction… those constraints are bound into that funded work. So the fact that it is voluntary and there is no real money involved, you could say well that excludes lots of people who can't come to the meetings, but actually the people who have come to the meetings have been right across the sector. Somehow they are finding the time and energy to come, even though it is voluntary. They are not necessarily doing research which is TELL research, but TELL is an encouraging presence if you like where they can test out some of their idea in one of the TELL meetings. In terms of whether or not TELL could have more outward influence, that is a really interesting one because one of the things that came really strongly out of my research, as I said, is that teacher educators don't engage very much in outward facing activities on their own behalf as professionals. They tend to be doing that for their trainees all the time, which is one of the reasons why the professional identity of teacher educators is so vague and amorphous. In order to be more effectively outward facing as a group… effective is not the right word, but to have more influence outward facing, that would need mobilising of certain things and then you would get into who do we want to influence and how? And then you are into doing stuff that you send us.

They do a very good job at trying to influence, but having been the chair for three years in the post-16 UCET committee, great you get the chance to go and talk to ministers, but you know they are not going to pay any attention. I gave evidence to the Lingfield report and they didn't pay attention to a single word we said. He wasn't interested at all, you could TELL in the lift on the way to the room we had the interview in with him you could TELL he wasn't interested in anything we were going to say.

The trouble is with something like TELL is if you start thinking oh maybe

we could influence beyond the network of professionals, you then get into all the other problems that you are trying to escape. ==That is the sort of conundrum there. On the other hand, if you can just help the professionals be more confident about their professional and a bit more assertive in their immediate outer circle of their organisation and so on, maybe that is the way to go.== I don't know really. ==I'm very sceptical about the degree, at the moment, that you can influence on a large scale. I'm very positive about the degree to which you can influence on a small scale, and lots of small scale can add up into large scale.==

Interviewer: It is quite interesting because of all the conversations I've had with HCNFE, well TEds as you coined it…

Respondent: I think you might have been the first person who actually said it in a meeting.

Interviewer: I'm sure it was you, but anyway. What was interesting is that TELL kept coming back, or if not TELL itself the concept of TELL kept coming back and the idea of a pressure group was very attractive. What I have found so far, and obviously because of all the reasons that you have mentioned and the issues between universities and how they see the education… I mean yourself, your university has decided to walk away from it.

Respondent: But that was at my recommendation so I wouldn't say that was managerialism, that was more self-interest on my part.

Interviewer: But some universities [over-talking.] But what is quite interesting is this idea of coming together and that we do a lot of separate research work, but it is separate and it is fragmented. There is no-one to actually go to really, as a whole, who is doing the research in [unintelligible 00:14:32]? UCET may gather the information and then transmit the information but they don't do the research themselves. And every time I've talked to people they were talking about wanting to… people from Huddersfield, major centre, who were quite happy to say it is time for us to do our own research. What would you think about the concept of evidence based research?

Respondent: I've got two or three things I'd like to try. TELL started doing some, I'm not saying TELL isn't doing stuff because TELL is. There is

the blog that Z has started, and I'm sure that C and your other colleagues will get going on the collaborative evidence thing this year. Last year, of course, with inspection and so on that was never really likely to get off the ground. But now you are in a good position as a university to actually encourage that collaborative evidence, especially with Andy as the chair of UCET. But what I'm thinking is as part of the role when I was UCET post-16 chair, and as part of my research, I did gather quite a lot of data about both teacher educators and literature about teacher educators, and some about the impact of teacher education. That wasn't the heart of it, but what I thought was if TELL… and I did produce a document which was for the previous minister, about the impact to teacher education, which included that Biz report and various other things. I did quite an extensive review of evidence. The actual document, which was the main document, was quite a long document, but obviously the one we gave to the minister was a page and a half because they wouldn't read anything more than that. I'm not sure he even read that actually, but that was John Hayes so I quite liked him. At least he was quite amusing when you went to see him.

But I think that for TELL to take on one or two people doing one or two bits of investigating and then bringing them altogether, what evidence actually is there of the impact of lifelong learning teacher education. A lot of people would say well there isn't and it is difficult to capture, but actually there is. There is not much, but even I found more than I thought I would, you know tucked away on a set website somewhere someone says oh we do project observing staff before and after we have been trained in this college, stuff like that. I think if some of TELL would be prepared to actually look at that against a standard brief that we produce as well as TELL, I think that might be a really good start in terms of testing out the power of a collaborative network. I think anything a bit more qualitative and challenging than that in terms of time given to it I think might be quite difficult to start with for TELL. I mean it will depend on what people think and what they choose to do when I suggest it at meetings and on the email circulars. But I have been thinking for some time what might be something that TELL could

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start with to try and do a kind of collaborative network project? I thought looking for evidence of impact might actually be more straight forward to start with and something that is potentially very useful for us all and for the sector and also independent.

Interviewer: Would you gather what has been done and then do, perhaps, a kind of national research? Because we do have some major universities on board and we could do our separate [unintelligible 00:18:16] and large cohorts.

Respondent: I think probably once you have gathered a certain amount together then I guess the next stage will be to test that out further with some more research activity. A bit like with the CETTs, they have to have funding to survive, there is no doubt about that. But they have done a variety of projects where the CETT itself might only do a kind of facilitating and management, but it actually gets filtered down to different institutions who do get some funding to do it. Now that is difficult because you are then talking about bidding for funding. But at least if we got that first stage where the members took it on to gather and evaluate data, and then we all came together to evaluate that, you could see what came out of it I guess and take it from there.

Interviewer: The same research questions, the same systematic ways of doing things.

Respondent: And that has already started in a small way, not via TELL, X, who is from Y University, he has got this further education teacher educators project which has got some similar elements but it is different enough that I don't think it would be a problem if we do this impact thing. But it will depend on the members being interested in doing it and prepared to take part. But I have got a quite substantial document that I did back before ASET at the time, but UCET used it as well, where I did review a lot of stuff. At least that would give people a starting point and they could then branch off anywhere else, or bring forward stuff they have done in their own institution but which might not be in the public domain. Things like someone sitting down and going through all the Ofsted reports about ITE, and collating from them. There is not loads of them.

Collating from them what the best practise is. That is not exactly the world's most thrilling exercise, but it would give some useful analysis.

Interviewer: Do you think it could have impact? Because you have mentioned, and I'll come back to you in [unintelligible 00:20:15].

Respondent: Without a shadow of doubt. If you think about it there is the thing that AS I think it is, produces something called the Good Teacher Education Guide. It is probably funded, it is probably from Oxford or Cambridge or somewhere like that. But actually I can't see why if TELL produces something like this with a variety of outputs from it, obviously some people will want to use them for their own research purposes, or their institutional research purposes. I don't see why maybe you couldn't have something similar to that come up as part of TELL. The difficulty is once it comes to the more time consuming work of drawing it together, and so on, who does it. It will just happen that I will be semi-retired by then so I will be quite into doing a bit more of that kind of stuff than I've got the time to do now. You can't rely on one or two people.

Interviewer: And the influence on [unintelligible 00:21:17]?

Respondent: I genuinely think that despite the massive disaster that we thought was going to happen with teacher education back in 2012, I think it was, with Lingfield and so on. It hasn't been as disastrous. We have certainly lost loads of part time in service numbers, there is no doubt about that. But it hasn't been as disastrous. It has been difficult but actually the sector now, and the Ofsted results, again I haven't done an analysis of it but the teacher training part of the sector is actually it seems to me starting to show that actually it has responded very well to that and is set up well for the future, and there is an Ofsted report just came out this week which I accidentally discovered. Which is about assessment, learning and further education and skills. It explicitly says in there that they visit 14 grade 1 colleges. They said that one of the chief problems was that those running teacher education in the colleges weren't used enough in the college generally to develop the whole college. I thought that is interesting. The trouble is that one of the things with teacher educators, we have said this before at TELL

meetings and other places, you do operate a bit below the radar because you are quite often not part of HR, and actually that is quite nice operating below the radar. The more the profile of teacher education and teacher education grows, the less they will operate under the radar, and probably then even more they will be subject to all of those things. At the moment they are managing to get round most of the time. There is that balance…

Interviewer: Being drawn into quality type teaching which is of course part of CPD, but is also part of whatever college's management's plans are for the actual stuff. Sometimes from talking to colleagues, and having been put in that situation myself, there is a clash of values. Not always, but it depends on the college. Could you TELL me a bit about Lingfield, because that is something I am looking at as an example.

Respondent: It was amazing because the experience of giving evidence, again it is fascinating that you turn up at the House of Lords and in the cloakroom there are pegs with the honourable names on – they won't be honourable if they are Lords, but whatever they are. You hover there, and to give him his due he came and got us Lord Lingfield, he didn't send some Mackie down. We walked back with him and we went in a lift at one point and he was talking about 'when I am at the Apaneum,' and that is some really posh club apparently. He was so posh, and I'm sorry but that is my working class prejudices coming out. We had, what on the face of it, was a very positive interchange. There was myself, JN, AB, and we stood up for ourselves well, we discussed what we wanted to say before we went in and we generally said it. The people on the panel, it was a perfectly reasonable choice of panel other than that he was known as the person who started opt-out schools. So that was part of the agenda. We pointed him at various evidence sources, but he really wasn't listening. You could TELL he wasn't listening, you could TELL he had his own agenda which was to kill off IfL and a few other things.

When the first report came out I think there was generally shock around the people that I spoke to. Not because of what it said, but because it was so terribly badly written. It was one of the worst reports I've ever

seen. His final one was a lot better. And of course the final one came out on the very day that BIS released the most comprehensive report they had ever released on the impact of teacher education. Actually it was pretty positive, but Lingfield wasn't at all. It said some useful things about professionalism, but he said himself that one of the main barriers to developing better quality teachers is the unwillingness of managers in the sector and management in the sector to invest properly in that. Yet what did they do, they have given responsibility now to the employers, not just for teacher education overall, but for the professional body effectively for the sector with the ETF and the IfL going into the ETF. Lingfield was a huge stepping backwards on the face of it, for teacher education and training of staff generally in the sector. But funnily enough, maybe the realisation that it might be sink or swim, and swim in some different directions, maybe that drew out that extra bit of survival instinct from those out in the field, because some really interesting new things have started happening.

Interviewer: I was going to ask you that as the next question. Do you think that the de-regulation has been seen as an opportunity by some people? I personally thought well okay. If then we can do what we want then we need to do what we want.

Respondent: Yeah, you can't really do what you want. There is some additional freedom, but as soon as you get to a point where something might change dramatically that will soon be stopped unless it fits with current government policy. It is true that there appears to be a lessening of the controls, and certainly the degree to which we had to grind our way through the LLUK standards, and that really held back the curriculum on teacher education for at least two or three years when we finally got on top of it, and of course it changed. I think really what is happening now is that amazingly they have not introduced an even more complicated system so people have been able to continue developing the one we had already developed as part of the LLUK. I think people that had got sufficiently confident with what they were doing with the LLUK stuff, to what the new standards came along and there wasn't any disastrous going backwards, as far as that was

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concerned. They thought well we might as well try some new things because we can now. I think it was part of an ongoing process. I have been involved in teacher education for a long time and people are always looking for different, interesting and new ways of doing things. If there is a bit of funding that will help develop that so much the better.

Interviewer: If you could reform something in teacher education what would it be?

Respondent: It would be for the staff who are being trained to have remission. Amazingly still most of them manage to actually complete it. I never know how. And for them to have genuine support, for there to be genuinely positive encouragement for the development of teachers, rather than all the horrible observations and stuff. I think probably to give better quality time and support to the teachers concerned, and for that to be properly funded right across the sector with some decent funding. I think that will probably be the thing I'd like to happen most. For teacher educators, I think actually the teacher education community is in quite a surprisingly healthy state at the moment, despite all the things that have happened. With some notable exceptions. But again, the current round of funding via the ETF, in comparison with the funding that came with the sets, and I know Canterbury didn't get any of that unfortunately because they weren't successful with their bid for a CETT. That really helped move on all sorts of developments and things. The ETF funding that is coming through now will do that, but the timescales and stuff they are operating on are just stupid. There is a bid came round, you might have seen it two days ago, about outstanding teaching, and it is a £500,000 project and they want you to do it in eight months and demonstrate impact of improved inspection grades. How stupid is that? We will probably get involved in bidding for it, but it is stupid.

Interviewer: I interviewed ETF, and I met Sarah again on Monday, obviously names I won't mention. It was quite interesting. We talked about slow professionalism, that was the ID. Learning and really taking our time to reflect upon what we had done. They just said quite clearly that we are not interested in the professionalism.

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Respondent: They are not interested in anything slow because slow is bad business. Which is ridiculous of course. I've got two perspectives on what role teacher educators play in this because it is brilliant being a teacher educator most of the time, despite all the rude words that I might normally say.   But you encounter all the time, from every direction, hopefully not as much from your own university as from the organisations you work with, but you do. Most of the time because you can help people get better as teachers and they make a lot of progress, it is a great thing to do. Most people, maybe that is why they don't push their own professional identity, they are quite happy just doing what they do where they do it. They come out every now and again, come to a TELL meeting, do a bit of research here and there, go to a conference, or go to a CPD event. If you are starting to say let's place teacher educators at the heart of this, because to be honest they are the people who make more difference to teachers than anybody else. I know I'm bound to say that because I am one, but it is true. The facts and the data shows that the thousands and thousands of people who have been very effectively trained and supported by teacher educators is huge. They are probably the most important influence. I could say what I'd like is for them to assume their proper place in the place of professionals. But then they would be subject to all that other rubbish that all those others high up on the list of professionals are. I'd rather promote the idea that they are great professionals and this is why and this is how, than the idea of let's make them more powerful at that. I think it is an illusion any power beyond a certain amount that we will ever get. But what we might well get is more of a kind of feeling of a community amongst ourselves, and if we manage to get that, that is great.

Interviewer: It is quite interesting because I keep in touch with R and interviewed her, thanks to TELL actually, and their own studies looking at teacher educators. We were talking about the idea of this identity which we haven't got, and partly why we are not fighting our corners, we are doing research but we are doing it either for our PhDs or we are doing it for our universities. But there is no great sense of let's do it for

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everyone, not just HE, but FE as well. She said something which was very interesting. She talked about having us promote that sector. She said something along the lines that it is about time, we talk about how Cinderella has gone to the ball and she has got the prince, actually she ditched the prince and she has got somebody else but at least she is doing really well.

Respondent: I agree, and actually having really worked with, or in the post-compulsory sector for my whole work career, I have been constantly and on an ongoing basis infuriated about how other parts of the education sector and beyond view it as this lesser mortal. I always try and get involved in anything I can which will promote the positives of the sector, which are huge, and the achievements of the sector which are huge. And again, teacher educators I think are a very big part of that. Again, getting involved in activities with other teacher educators that promote that I think is a very good thing and probably most of us are doing that one way and another. Whether or not, again, you go up that notch where that turns into organised lobbying, and or other activities I don't know. What I found when I was with Bob at UCET, he is really good at that kind of stuff but I hate it myself. I think Andy will be really good at it actually because he is good at that as well and he has got the connections and so on. I just find it fascinating to get involved in a conversation with people who lobby but I am very cynical about how much it is going to have any effect. If it is not going to have any effect, I don't really want to do it. I'd rather do something with Tel where two other people say 'oh yeah let's do a bit of research.' I'd much rather do that.

Interviewer: Can you see TELL, I mean it is already feeding into UCET to a certain extent, but I think that the important bit for TELL is that it does have everyone, including FE colleges [unintelligible 00:34:45] which is something where FE Teds feel quite isolated as well in that process.

Respondent: Yeah, and there is a South West Teacher Educators Forum, which I am also the convener of. The huge majority of the people who come to that three times a year are FE and other in the sector. I think there is only two HE teacher educators who regularly go. Engaging

everybody across the sector in it is really important to make sure that all voices are taken account of. ==I think TELL could become more influential, almost it eventually gets to the point where perhaps it does put some sort of a stamp on publications and research.== But I think to constitute it any more than it is constituted at the moment might be a mistake. But I don't know really, it is very difficult to TELL because we haven't really gone past that crunch point yet where we move from having meetings and networks and so on, into actually doing something more substantially collaborative. I hope we manage to do that this year, but realistically the reason why people come is because they can find the time to come and they enjoy it. Whether they then can find the time to do other stuff related to TELL when they are not there is another issue altogether. But we will see. I can certainly encourage that. If there are other people in TELL who think well actually we ought to be trying to get more influence then I mean there is just the one of me and I'm not going to turn round and say no that is a bad idea if there are people who want to do that, I think that is what TELL will do.

Interviewer: I think what I am gathering is feeding on the identity theme, if we feel more of a community then we want to do more and have more of an impact to influence policy making, if there is any influence. My past interviews in the past few months have shown that it is scattered, it may happen on a very small basis or it could be on certain things such as bursaries, when you could have impact. But on anything ideological it remains.

Respondent: Maybe, but if we either draw attention to some work that someone else has done in the field of teacher education, or we gather together work or we do our own work, that will provide either perceptions, perspectives, evidence, once it is something that TELL is part of. Again, it doesn't matter if TELL and other organisations, so much the better. It would be nice to see the TELL name start appearing on things. But then if someone says okay well who do we represent at TELL? Then we would have to go back to what we thought of originally, which was to have more of a committee as well. I'm sure that would work because there were plenty of people, it just didn't quite carry on

like that, because the problem is with having a committee you have to try and have meetings.

Interviewer: It is interesting because every time people talk about committee [unintelligible 00:37:57] which is such a lose concept, it keeps coming back. But it is an example of a very organic way of… but we sometimes put, what I have heard a couple of times, some missed opportunities in doing more direct work.

Respondent: When we have meetings and when we communicate with each other, whether it is within the structure of TELL or just informally outside of it, people will always come up with ideas of things to do within whichever concept they come up with those ideas. Whether they will then go ahead and do them is another matter, and there is no capacity within the network to say oh you mentioned this idea of mine but you haven't done anything about it. Now if we started a project, of course, and people took responsibility for different bits of it, and you gave timescales and so on, that is different. You would have something like a steering group for a project and they could then nudge people along if needed. When it is the nicely informal network we have at the moment things will spin off, but at the moment they are spinning off in a quite informal way. I would really like to try something a little more structured, just to see if we can galvanise the power of the network, and probably something about evidence and the impact might capture people's imaginations to start with. Because obviously it is directly useful for all sorts of purposes, whether it is to say to Ofsted inspectors this bit of research shows that I am doing good practice in that way as well.

Interviewer: Or even highlight some of the issues that we have.

Respondent: Yeah, and some of the challenges that do come along with some of the things that have been decided about ideologies, that it will be pretty difficult to find evidence to suggest that the outcomes of teacher education programmes are worse under this government than under the previous one. Because I think people manage to do a good job of it whoever the government is. But on the other hand, at least you bring

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some of the issues about ideology to the fore if there were things which were explicitly published by and for the people doing it, i.e. us.

Interviewer: Okay, well on this note thank you very much.

[End of recorded material]