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**Catalysing Organisational Change  
Within Complex Networks in the  
English National Health Service  
(NHS): an Ethnographic Account of  
Disciplinary Power**

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PhD

2022

**Catalysing Organisational Change  
Within Complex Networks in the  
English National Health Service  
(NHS): an Ethnographic Account of  
Disciplinary Power**

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of the requirements of the University  
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## Abstract

The English National Health Service (NHS) is a complex system, subject to constant change and organisational turmoil. In order for the NHS to deliver care that meets the needs of patients, it needs to be able to effectively manage organisational change. However, the existing literature emphasises planned approaches to change, which are not always suitable for such a complex environment and often fail to take into account underlying power dynamics. Adopting an explicitly Foucauldian research paradigm, the purpose of this research was therefore to explore how individual change leaders engage with power to facilitate the delivery of organisational change within network environments.

Utilising an insider ethnographic research design, data was gathered from the Researcher's substantive workplace within the English NHS. Taking place over 14 months between 2019 and 2020, the Researcher gathered over 200 hours' worth of data and produced over 3000 pages of transcripts, utilising a combination of participant observation, interviews and document analysis. To support this triangulated approach to data collection, the Researcher established a forum to enable participants to have input into the emerging research in real-time, which provided multiple opportunities for debate and discussion. The Researcher also capitalised upon their status as a member of the community, to engage in deep and sustained reflexive practice, which added to the richness of the data.

When viewed through a Foucauldian lens, the findings suggested that change leaders were able to engage with disciplinary power via the use of

technologies, specific power/knowledge constructs that could be deployed to achieve specific effects. These power effects shaped how individuals worked upon their identities to become productive within a change management context. This complex dynamic, which also included the Researcher shaping themselves as a productive subject, had varying manifestations at the individual, team and network level which shaped how organisational change took place within the network environment. Conceptualising change management as a process of mobilising productive subjectivities therefore has significant implications for how change is approached within healthcare and other public administration settings.

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## Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledge opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this commentary has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted through the Researcher's submission to Northumbria University's Ethics Online System, through engagement with the Health Research Authority and through engagement with the NHS organisations involved in this research.

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 80,761

Name: Sean James McCulloch

Date: 30.11.2022

## Chapter 1: Thesis Introduction

“Midway upon the journey of our life  
I found myself within a forest dark.  
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.

Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say  
What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,  
Which in the very thought renews the fear.”

(Alighieri, 1995, p16)

To be involved in change is a fundamentally disorienting experience. Embarking upon a transformational journey, like the descent of Dante Alighieri’s narrator into the underworld, can illicit feelings of fear and anxiety. Whether it be a change to personal circumstances, employment status, or fluctuations in the wider social and political environment; change is ever-present in modern life. It is essential therefore, to be able to overcome one’s negative reactions to change and find a way to navigate the fluctuating nature of social reality. Because change, like the passing of time, is inevitable.

So, how can one navigate modern complexity and find a way through the path of change? In terms of organisational change, the key to successful navigation is arguably effective coordination of action across individuals, teams, departments and different organisations. This thesis will suggest that the concept of power is key to understanding how this coordination can take place. While the term power can have negative connotations, in this context power was defined as a positive social capacity to drive organisational change. The theoretical bases for studying power are incredibly broad but this thesis

draws primarily from the post-modernist milieu, focusing on the works of Michel Foucault, which is reviewed in Chapter 2.

I first encountered Foucault during my undergraduate studies, in the middle of an English Literature module on the application of post-modernist theories to texts. While most of Foucault's concepts were impenetrable at that point (a common critique of his work) his thoughts on disciplinary power really resonated with me. Rather than power being the capacity of an individual to force another to carry out an action, the concept of disciplinary power critiques the social structures of knowledge and normative standards that frame the context of the exchange between individuals. In Foucault's view no one possesses power, power runs through all social encounters, and it shapes the very ways in which we come to recognise ourselves as individuals. However, as fascinating as these concepts were, they were still fairly abstract and were quickly left by the wayside during my transition into the wider world of post-university employment.

It was not until I began to take up change management roles in the public sector, that Foucault's concepts became more tangible. Between 2013 and 2020, I worked in a variety of change roles within the "forest savage, rough, and stern" (Ibid) of the English National Health Service (NHS), during the period of austerity. I also experienced first-hand the challenges in navigating change within network environments, where groups of semi-autonomous organisations came together to co-operatively pursue common goals. The theory behind organisational change in networks is covered in Chapter 3.

Working within a network context, my role involved supporting operational colleagues to pilot and launch new services within NHS Primary Care (the detail around this complex system is discussed in detail in Section 3.4, with Figure 7 providing a diagrammatic overview). In this cross-organisational and collaborative space; the power dynamics were incredibly complex, the timescales short, and the deliverables extensive but I was able to facilitate a number of successful outcomes. Rather than being satisfied with a job well done, these early successes prompted a period of reflection whereby I asked myself awkward questions, such as: how were the power dynamics of organisational change successfully navigated? How did change leaders establish normative standards that enabled the future state of change? What difference can an individual change facilitator really make? When trying to untangle these questions, and articulate a viable PhD proposal, the works of Foucault sprung immediately to mind. The next step was to design a research approach that drew from post-modernist views of power (which will be explored in chapter 2), while capitalising on my positionality and access to the NHS.

The core unit of analysis for this thesis was my lived experience as a change catalyst, during which I captured approximately 200 hours of data over a fifteen-month period and produced approximately 3000 pages of transcripts. Utilising an ethnographic research design, my aim was to critically engage with how change catalysts actually facilitate change activities within complex networks in the NHS. Using myself as a research instrument presented a number of notable epistemological challenges; one of the most significant being the difficulty in creating an analytical distance between the self and the

research output, which was partially addressed through my deliberate use of the third person perspective throughout the remainder of the thesis (I will only resume the first-person perspective in the conclusion). This example was one aspect of a robust critical ethnographic research design, elaborated upon in Chapters 4,5 and 6, which I used to navigate the challenges of researching my lived environment.

If operational and strategic leaders are like Dante's narrator trying to navigate the dark woods of organisational change; then change catalysts are like the psychopomp Virgil, a guide who is able to help steer the process because of their experience and skillset, but one who is ultimately held separate by virtue of their transitory nature. Examining my lived environment through an ethnographic research design therefore provided a unique opportunity to explore how disciplinary power permeated the change process and set the context for the change catalyst's activities. The primary research question for this thesis was thus designed with that aim in mind:

"How do change catalysts interact with disciplinary power to catalyse organisational change within complex network environments in the NHS?"

The following sub-questions were also developed to help provide focus around specific manifestations of disciplinary power in relation to the change catalyst's activities:

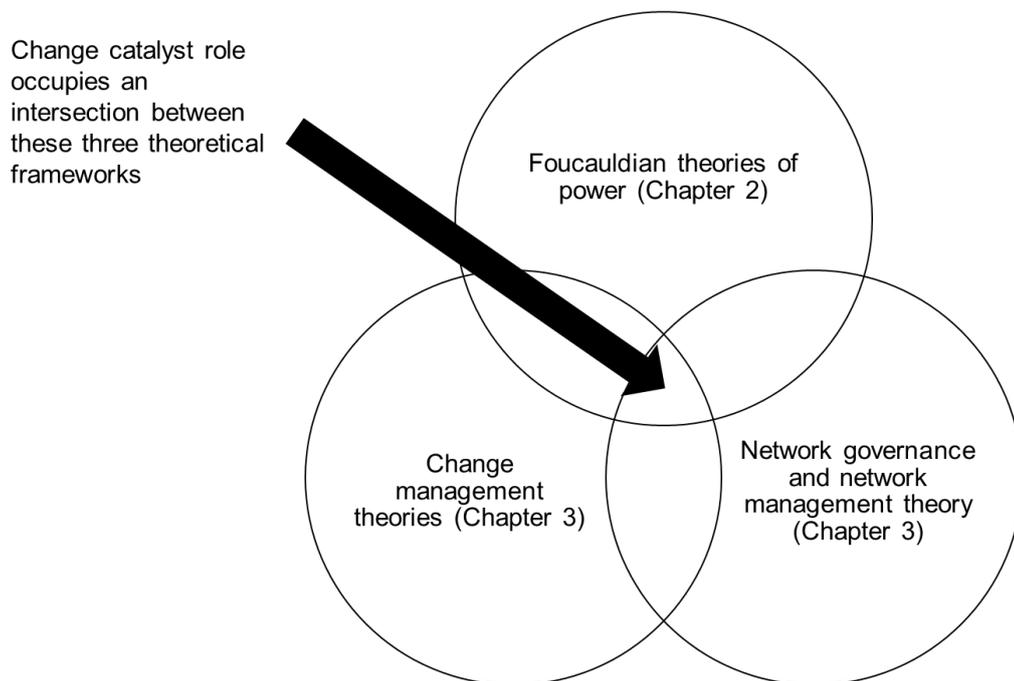
1. How was knowledge produced to identify the optimum path for the change to follow and how was that knowledge utilised to guide conduct within the network?
2. How were normative standards established and embedded to enable participants to travel the path of change autonomously, without the continued presence of the change catalyst?
3. How was the network coordinated and the right people brought along on the path of change?

These three questions were addressed through an examination of how specific Foucauldian technologies, which I used in my role as change catalyst, impacted on the creation of productive subjects. The theory behind Foucauldian technologies is set out in Section 2.5.1 but essentially, they are social tools that can be deployed to achieve specific social effects, which in this case were orientated towards driving organisational change. An analysis for each technology area is presented in Chapters 7,8 and 9, exploring how power influenced and constituted the activities taking place in the change lifecycle. Chapter 10 then brings together the effects of each technology and arranges them into the relevant levels of power, including individual (micro), team (meso) and network (macro), a detailed schema for which is captured in Chapter 2. I was then able to use this aggregated analysis to provide a potential answer to the overarching research question, and provide a view on how disciplinary power comes to create productive subjects, which in turn helps drive organisational change.

In this thesis, my argument is that engaging with disciplinary power, and utilising its manifestations in a change context, impacts on the identity and inner lifeworld of those who interact with it. Disciplinary power shapes the self of the change catalyst, just as it can shape those whom the change catalyst seeks to influence. We are neither passive recipients of disciplinary power, nor are we wholly in control of how we come to be formed as subjects; for as McKinlay and Pezet (2017) suggest, “individuals make themselves but not in a manner of their choosing” (p23). A key aim of this thesis was therefore to develop an understanding of how change leaders self-create productive subjectivities in relation to norms of disciplinary power, and in turn seek to influence the self-constitution of others.

Why is any of this relevant? There are significant gaps about the role of individual change leaders within the change management literature, with the majority of what exists focusing on planned approaches to change. Within the change management field itself, practice is overwhelmingly informed by cookie cutter change toolkits that take a mechanistic view of power and influence (which will be addressed in Chapter 3). The theoretical model produced by this research sets out an alternative perspective on change management, one that considers how dynamic processes of self-constitution enable change catalysts to effectively lead and influence others. To develop this framework, and produce a unique contribution to knowledge, it has been necessary to synthesise a variety of theoretical fields around the fulcrum of the change catalyst role, as set out in the diagram below:

*Figure 1: Theoretical Background to the Change Catalyst Role*



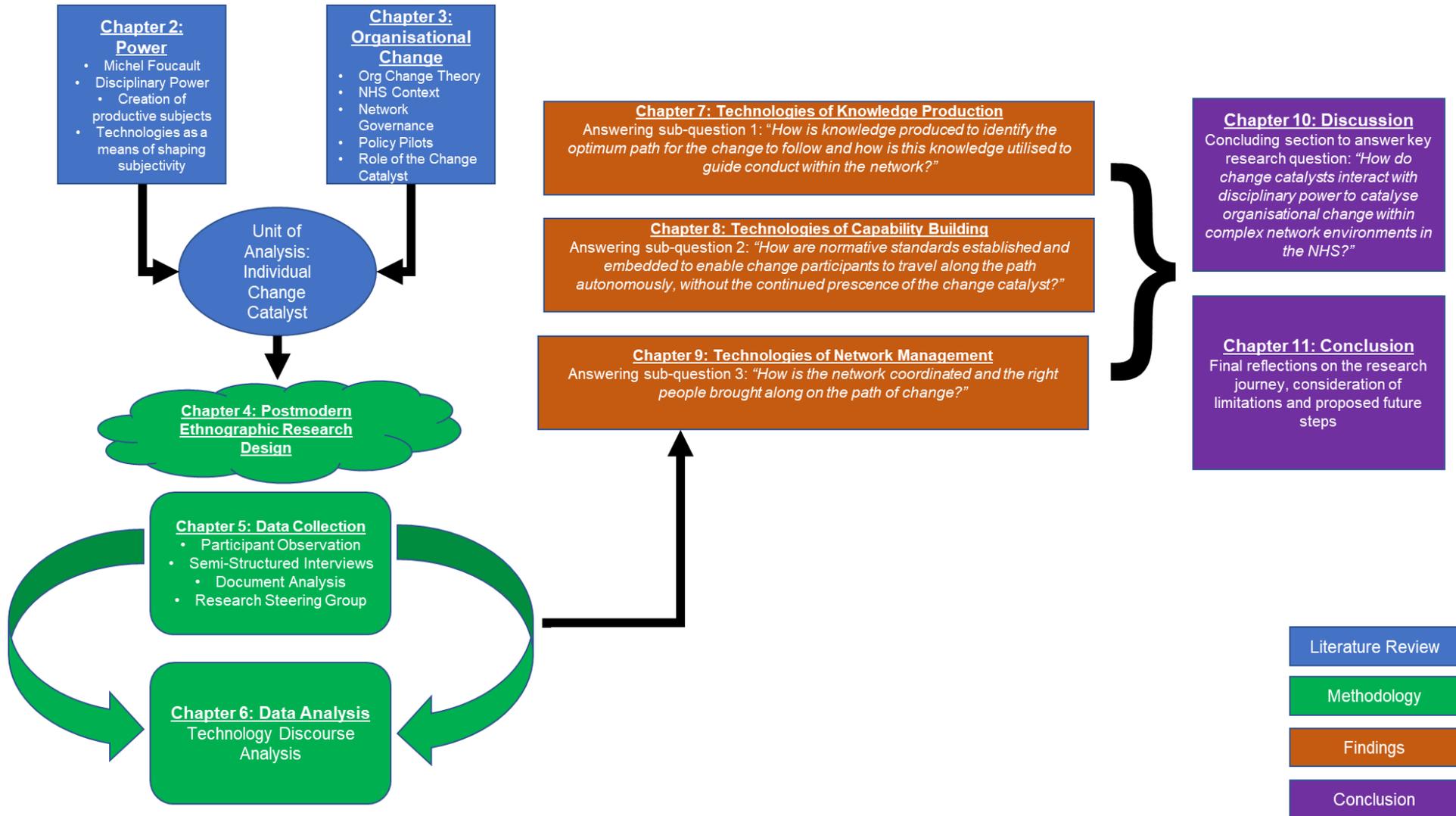
This unusual approach to combining disparate theoretical areas was necessary because my lived experience suggested that the impact of the change catalyst role did not neatly fit into any single theoretical framework. To effectively lay the groundwork for this thesis, it has been necessary therefore to take a multi-disciplinary approach to theory. In order to effectively situate the change catalyst role, I undertook a comprehensive, robust and cross-disciplinary approach to developing a literature review; drawing from Foucauldian theories of power, existing theory around change management and the rich corpus of network governance and network management theory.

The aim of this thesis was never to privilege the position of the change catalyst at the expense of more operational roles, nor was it designed to completely replace existing literature on change management. Rather, the aim

has been to provide a unique perspective on how the dark path of organisational change can be effectively traversed. This approach was also intended to capitalise upon the novel combination of Foucauldian power theories and public sector insight, to help shape practice within the Researcher's lived environment and have a real-world impact on the delivery of complex change.

Please see Figure 2 for a diagram outlining the relationship between the different chapters.

Figure 2: Thesis Structure Overview



## Chapter 2: Power

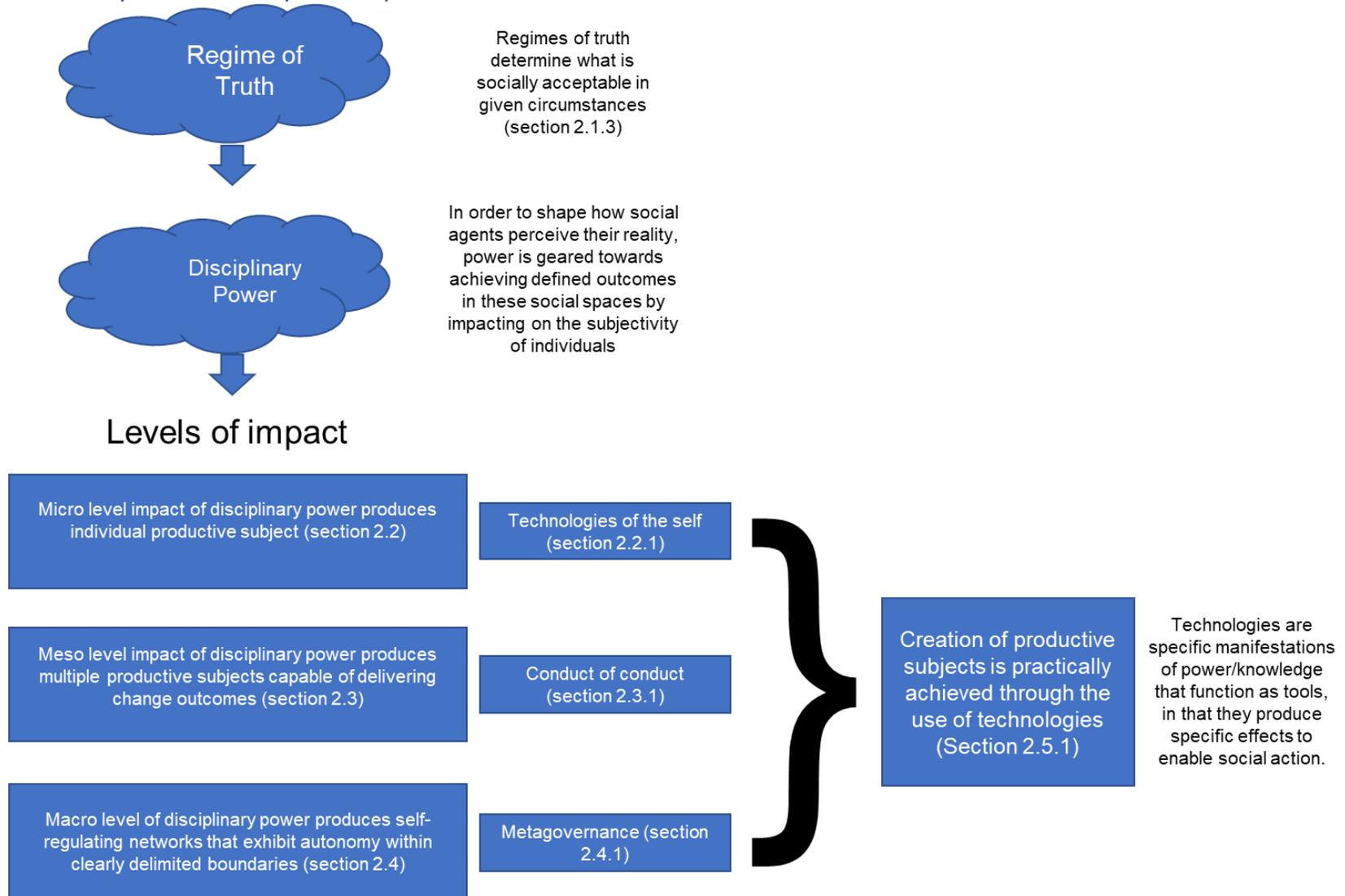
The change catalyst is the theoretical and analytic focus of this thesis. Chapter 2 provides a robust theoretical grounding in terms of how change catalysts engage with power, by becoming productive subjects that can also inculcate productive subjectivity in others and how this impacts network level activity. This chapter will situate Foucauldian theories of power within the wider theoretical milieu, engaging with modernist and postmodernist perspectives (in Section 2.1.1), while also providing an in-depth critical review of Foucault's background and works (in Section 2.1.2). To set out the mode of power used in this thesis, Section 2.1.3 will examine how the purposeful construction of objective truth forms a reified basis for the coordination of social action. This will be followed by a critical engagement with the concept of Disciplinary Power in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5, a complex mode of power that seeks to drive social action by combining contextual discipline with individual internalisation to create bounded autonomy, i.e., a sandbox within which individuals can exercise delimited freedoms.

To understand how change leaders interact with organisational change, it will be necessary to unpack the theory around how disciplinary power impacts at the individual (micro), team (meso) and network (macro) level (Grant and Marshak, 2011). Section 2.2 sets out how individual change leaders come to internalise disciplinary power and through that internalisation shape their own selfhood to become productive, i.e., able to produce the required outputs for their specific context. Once they have become productive, individual leaders must then somehow shape the selfhood of other individuals

at a team level, so that they too become productive, this is explored further in Section 2.3. At the macro level, productive subjectivities must somehow then be harnessed towards driving change outcomes within a network. Section 3.3 combines disciplinary power with network governance theory, to set out a model for exploring how the bounded autonomy of productive subjects contributes towards guiding network-level activities.

The final section will outline a conceptual approach for enabling the empirical investigation of disciplinary power, governmentality theory. Section 2.5 will provide a theoretical grounding for later chapters by engaging with the specific mechanisms by which disciplinary power influences change management practice. This will focus on the concept of Foucauldian technologies; social tools that embody, manifest and enable the convergence between discipline and internalisation (set out in Section 2.5.1). Technologies, being abstract power/knowledge assemblages within organisational contexts, enable change management outcomes by creating productive subjects within a change context, a process facilitated by the change catalyst role when utilising technologies to achieve change outcomes. The outputs from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, which engages with the change management literature, will be combined to produce the theoretical grounding that underpins this thesis. A conceptual map for this chapter can be seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Chapter 3 - Conceptual Map



## 2.1 An Overview of Power

### 2.1.1 Modernist and Post-Modernist Perspectives on Power

Haugaard (2002) suggests that power is a “family resemblance concept” (p1), in that the term has no single meaning and its use changes depending upon the context. For the purposes of this thesis, power is defined as the ability to coordinate and manage change related agency (Simon and Oakes, 2006) which results in collective action (Arendt, 1969) by agents in an organisational setting. Building on Haugaard’s (2002) seminal typology of power, the purpose of this section is to critically engage with modernist and post-modernist understandings of power. This will establish a basis on which to build a definition of disciplinary power and how it comes to be deployed by change catalysts in organisational settings.

Modernism is a broad term for the intellectual tradition, arising in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was geared towards achieving social progress through advancements in culture and technology (Griffin, 2008). Characterised by an emphasis on individualism, positivism and liberalism (Linehan, 2012), the modernist project was underpinned by a sense of inevitable, and desirable, social and scientific progress (Foucault, 1991). A modernist approach to change management would privilege rational, planned and mechanistic interventions (Nugus *et al.*, 2010) and would be predicated on the existence of objective truths that underpin social action (Haugaard, 2002).

Power, within this system of thought, can be viewed as “any chance within a social relation to impose one’s will against the resistance of others”

(Weber, 1978, p28). The three-dimensional model proposed by Lukes (2005) covers the evolution of this perspective in relation to social interaction. The first dimension, or face, of power was an attempt by Dahl (1957) to build on Weber's definition and characterise power as a coercive force; whereby a social agent (A) has the ability to coerce another agent (B) to do something they (B) otherwise would not have done. The second dimension is an iteration of Dahl's approach; where A is able to manipulate the environment and organisational context to limit the choices available to B, thus ensuring compliance and avoiding conflict (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962).

Lukes (2005) conversely suggests that "the supreme exercise of power is to get another [...] to have the desires you want them to have" (p42). A therefore acts upon B so that B's core beliefs are changed, and their pre-existing beliefs/ priorities suppressed. This view presupposes that an individual has a pre-existing essence/ consciousness which organisations can overwhelm and steer in aid of organisational objectives. Lukes' approach also takes as a given that knowledge can be objective and exist outside of power relations (Haugaard, 2002), a view that will be challenged in Section 2.1.3.

These dimensions of power are characterised by an insistence on the subjection of the individual by those who hold more power. The modernist view of power is more nuanced than solely coercive, with Parsons (1963) and Giddens (1984) both presenting perspectives where the individual can also consent to participate in the power dynamic. That being said, a common theme across the modernist milieu is an emphasis on the individual only being able to interact with power dynamics by forming part of a hierarchy (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). In turn, this interaction is underpinned by a collective belief in

the legitimacy of power relations (Courpasson, 2000, Suchman, 1995), which is enabled by a universal acceptance of the sovereignty of social institutions (Dean, 2010).

In a complex change environment however, agents need to be able to respond independently to emerging changes in the environment (Hallsworth, 2011) as it is not always practical or possible for a central authority to steer change (Morçöl and Wachhaus, 2009). Arendt (1969) emphasises that individuals must possess autonomy to be able to take responsibility for their actions, and thus be capable of functioning independently. Modes of power which privilege the suppression of the individual within mechanistic forms of change, are therefore arguably ineffective in a complex context. An example of this is Nugus *et al's* (2010) account of an ill-fated attempt within an NHS emergency department to re-design patient pathways, which failed due to an overly mechanistic approach to change management.

That is not to say that suppressive modes of power do not occur within complex environments, they absolutely do, but as Hallsworth and Nugus *et al* point out; in a complex environment that mode of power would potentially be ineffective and unsustainable. Rather, effective change within complex environments can be best achieved by enabling the bounded autonomy of actors who are then capable of independent action, within certain constraints (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016a). A modernistic view is not wholly compatible with this notion of bounded autonomy.

The Foucauldian mode of post-modernist thought poses a direct contrast to the modernist emphasis on objective truth, inevitable social

progress and the wholly formed, self-contained individual. In this mode; truths are tied to the historical context in which they are utilised (Hoy, 1986) and the stable view of history, which enables a comforting sense of forward social momentum, is viewed as an illusory construct (Scheurich and McKenzie, 2005). Likewise, Foucauldian thought suggests that the 'individual' is a product of historically contingent discourses and complex social interactions (Caldwell, 2007). This view shapes the conceptualisation of power because "individuals are not where power resides but entities within which power is actualised" (Howell, 2013, p176). A Foucauldian study of power is therefore not concerned with how individuals fit within a hierarchy but instead focuses on how individuals come to be formed in the first place, and how they come to control and manage themselves.

A Foucauldian post-modern view emphasises power as a creative and productive, rather than repressive, force (Foucault, 1980a). Power is not a substance but an emergent property of social interaction, an output of "more or less crystallised asymmetries among subjects" (Cremonesi *et al.*, 2016, p2). These social interactions are grounded within specific historical contexts (or epochs) rather than objective and transcendent social rules, and as such Foucauldian analyses focus on specific sites of power rather than overarching theories (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017).

In this view, power dynamics are best approached strategically, where the task of individual agents is to "interpret extant games rather than legitimising their form" (Clegg, 1989, p30). In that sense then, an agent or organisation can be said to utilise power effectively "insofar as it recruits human agency in the service of its agenda" (Simon and Oakes, 2006, p113).

Jackson and Carter (1998) suggest that a Foucauldian view of power is still based on subjection and control of the individual, whereby labour acts as “dressage” (p54) rather than serving a productive purpose. This view is challenged by Smart (1985) who argues that productive power is geared towards specific purposes or goals, rather than blanket control. This research aligns with Smart’s perspective, as change management is by definition “framed in terms of strategies and goals” (Hodgson *et al.*, 2019, p7).

Richter (2017) suggests that the most effective method for deploying productive power is one where “subjects cooperate in their subjection to power” (p190). On the surface, this idea seems similar to Lukes’ (2005) third dimension of power, and the assertion that the exercise of power subverts an innate pre-existing individuality. However Digeser, using a Foucauldian analysis, puts forward a fourth face of power; suggesting that “subjectivity or individuality is not biologically given” (1992, p980). In this view organisational change, and the actions of the individual, is a multi-faceted drive to manipulate identities so they align with organisational objectives (Brauer and Bourhis, 2006) and in doing so create a robust basis for the consensual recruitment of agency (Simon and Oakes, 2006). Rather than suppressing the individual, power determines how the “individual” is actually created and sustained. In this view, A and B both exist in a complex web of power dynamics which determines the field of possible actions by framing their respective identities and way of “being-in-the-world” (Haugaard, 2002, p306). One of the key aims of this research will be to understand how Change Catalysts can enable this process in a change management context.

This research will look to utilise a theory of power that is capable of exploring how productive agents are created and made capable of autonomous action, while also being bound to the aims and objectives of the change initiative and host organisation(s). To enable this, the next section will focus on providing a critical review of Michel Foucault and how his concepts around power can be used to explore the creation of productive agents.

### 2.1.2 Michel Foucault: Background and Works

Foucault himself rejected the common perception that his work was post-modernist in its approach (Burrell, 1998); even as he continually emphasised the local over the global (Sarup, 1993), challenged modernity's insistence on perpetual progress (Dean, 2010) and disputed the existence of objective truths (Caldwell, 2007). A thoroughly divisive yet extremely popular social theorist, Foucault's output was often obscure, and his legacy is complex.

Michel Foucault was a brilliant iconoclast whose approach to research was arguably unsystematic (Haugaard, 2017) and a provocateur who could accurately be described as "the most shallow of empiricists" (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, p8). The volume of critique against Foucault is only balanced by the enduring popularity of his theories, which stems from their potential to be applied to a broad array of organisational contexts (Välikangas and Seeck, 2011). Foucault's deliberately combative approach provided a means of creating what Habermas termed "productive contradictions" (1986, p107), whereby the baroque unravelling of historically grounded discourses can open up alternative perspectives and possibilities around power. To that end, this

thesis will mimic Foucault's own approach to the works of Nietzsche and "use it, deform it and make it groan and protest" (Foucault, 1980b, p54), with the aim of formulating an approach to power that can be systematically applied to analysing the ethnographic context of the NHS Provider Assurance Network.

That said, however, the allegations which emerged in the early 2020s of Foucault engaging in pederastic practices while living in Tunisia in the 1960s (Bendle, 2021) must be acknowledged. Shumway (1992) suggests that researchers can apply Foucault's approach without slavishly adopting all of his political or philosophical positions. It could be argued therefore that one can engage with Foucault's theoretical legacy, without condoning his alleged paedophilia. At the same time, Foucault's popularity and the relevance of his theories should not prevent a rigorous review of his position within the academic pantheon, should those allegations be substantiated. Given the centrality of Foucault and his theories to this thesis, the Researcher felt this issue should be acknowledged.

Foucault's formative years, like many other French intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century, were shaped by the dominant philosophical trends of Existentialism and Marxism (Cutting, 2005). Taught by the existentialist Jean Hyppolite at the Lyceé Henry IV in Paris, Foucault was exposed to Hegelian dialecticism which instilled in him a desire to research power in specific historical contexts (Eribon, 1992). This engagement with dialecticism, when coupled with Foucault's involvement with the structural Marxist Louis Althusser, did lead to an early engagement with Marxism (Smart, 1983). Foucault, however, was always unwilling to engage in totalising theories (Dean, 2015) and his adoption of Marxism was partial at best. The

ultimate failure of the May 1968 social unrest in France, which for a time looked to be a “general insurrection” that would encompass “the whole sphere of social reproduction” (Ross, 2002, p4), had a profound impact on Foucault and led to his disillusionment with Marxism (Sheridan, 1990). In turn this led to Foucault rejecting the possibility of revolutionary change in society (Shumway, 1992).

Arguably Foucault’s most long-lasting influence came from the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who “managed to think of power without having to confine himself to a political theory in order to do so” (Foucault, 1980b, p53). Foucault’s enthusiasm for challenging the perception of objective truths stems directly from Nietzsche’s perspectivist philosophy. In this view, our way of being-in-the-world does not stem from universal truths but rather “our knowledge [...] of reality is enmeshed in a power field” (Burrell, 1998, p17). Nietzsche’s influence was thus a key influence on Foucault’s genealogical phase, which emphasised the role of power in shaping selves and fields of possible actions.

A common critique of Foucault is that his oeuvre was inconsistent, with marked theoretical departures taking place between different works (Hoy, 1986). Sheridan (1990) however argues that, rather than looking for a global theory within Foucault’s work, it is more productive to split his work into three phases: 1) the archaeological, 2) the genealogical and 3) the ethical.

Foucault’s archaeological phase included *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). This early work was concerned with system level discourses and could be said to

stem from his Hegelian pre-occupation with studying philosophy through history (Hacking, 1986). In this phase, Foucault conceived of power as a repressive force that marginalised the individual (Välikangas and Seeck, 2011).

Foucault altered this perspective during his genealogical phase. In this phase, which was heavily influenced by Nietzsche, Foucault was concerned with analysing specific modalities of power to understand how power effects contributed to the formation of the individual subject (Burrell, 1998). Encompassing perhaps his most celebrated work, *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and the *History of Sexuality* vol.1: *The Will to Knowledge* (1978), the aim of the genealogical phase was to unpick the political rationalities that were based upon seemingly objective truths (Haugaard, 2002) and how subjects came to be formed by the impact of those rationalities.

In his final ethical phase, Foucault refined his analytic focus and began to examine how individuals exercise power over themselves (Davidson, 1986). Consisting of the final three volumes of the *History of Sexuality* (published between 1984 and posthumously in 2018) Foucault's ethical phase can be seen as an extension of the genealogical phase. Retaining the genealogical focus on how subjects are created, the ethical phase was also concerned with how subjects internalise the disciplinary power of institutions (Taylor, 1986). For Foucault, shaping the self in relation to the influence of external disciplines and norms was a praiseworthy endeavour (Foucault, 1990) and a key component to living a worthy life (Kelly, 2013). Simultaneously though, he suggests that the self-surveillance of the individual is a vital pre-requisite for "intensifying social relations" (Foucault, 1990, p45) and thus rendering the subject productive in accordance with the disciplinary context.

Foucault's conception of power is rich and multi-faceted; concerned both with how power shapes the actions of the collective and how it forms and shapes the conduct of the individual. The first component in unpicking this complex multi-faceted approach will be to examine Foucault's views on the relationship between power and truth.

### 2.1.3 Power and Truth

Foucauldian thought challenges the idea of objective truths that sit outside of social interaction, suggesting that what we perceive to be inherent truths and social norms are in fact relative to our social setting (Clegg, 1989) and "could perhaps be considered even arbitrary" (Hoy, 1986, p5). Lorenzini (2016) suggests that social truths are better conceived as events, tied to a specific space time. From a Foucauldian perspective therefore, all the transcendental aspects of humanity, i.e. "everything considered immortal in man" (Davidson, 1986, p225), are constructs that are used strategically to produce a range of power-effects. For Foucault, the focus of social research is to determine what effects are produced through the propagation of these "truths" and how they "decide, transmit [...] and extend the effects of power" (Foucault, 1980c, p94). This is especially relevant in the "post-truth world" (Ambrosio, 2022, p1) where the integrity of social discourse is undermined by political populism and the corrosive ubiquity of social media.

Foucault coined the term "Regime of Truth" to describe the conceptual apparatus that enables "a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, circulation, and operation of statements" (Foucault, 1994c, p132).

Foucault conceived Regimes of Truth in relation to specific social fields; such as madness, illness and sexuality (Ibid) rather than at an all-encompassing society level. Given the lack of any objective truths, a Regime of Truth acts as “a solid rock beyond the vicissitudes of the merely conventional, hence arbitrary, world of cultural constructs” (Haugaard, 2002, p306) within those specific fields.

Regimes of Truth create a sense of reification, “where power is regarded as thing-like, as something solid, real and material” (Clegg, 1989, p202) which leads to social constructs being perceived by individuals within a context as non-social and objective (Haugaard, 2017). This reification is vital to the exercise of power because Foucault suggests that “there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth” (Foucault, 1980c, p93). In other words; Regimes of Truth, through language conventions, give a bounded sense of what is reasonable in specific contexts (Haugaard, 2017) which in turn can be used to legitimise certain courses of collective action (Jackson and Carter, 1998). This high-level conceptual structure also establishes boundaries within which individual subjects are formed in a change context (Lorenzini, 2016), as truth “guides subjects’ thinking and self-image in a certain direction” (Välikangas and Seeck, 2011, p816). Regimes of truth therefore establish what is thinkable within a specific context at a high level. The mobilisation of social action within that context, is achieved through the impact of disciplinary power on individual subjects.

#### 2.1.4 Discipline and the Formation of Subjects

Foucault's view of power, hereafter referred to as disciplinary power, drives social action through the mobilisation of counter-balancing forces upon individuals; namely, the external influence of disciplinary forces which balances against the capacity of the individual to alter themselves to better suit the needs of their environment. For Foucault, power was not something that can be possessed by one agent and utilised against another. Rather it is a property that emerges from and simultaneously constitutes social interaction. Foucault suggested that this mode of power is based on discipline, which he described as "modalities for the exercise of power, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques and procedures" (Foucault, 1991, p215). Disciplines are institutional practices that enable agents to increase their "capacity to transform and produce things, acquire skills, develop forms of conduct and ways of acting" (Burchell, 1996, p280). Disciplinary power is thus a complex construct that acts upon the bodies of individuals, while simultaneously enabling the interiorisation of self-monitoring subjectivity (Savage, 1998).

Key to this process of interiorisation is Foucault's concept of the subject. Indeed Foucault stated that the overall aim of his methodological approach was to "create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1994b, p326). Subjects are formed as a consequence of the complex interactions between exterior disciplinary forces and interior methods of self-cultivation, with the state of existing or being formed as a subject referred to as subjectivity. While the external environment directly impacts on the conduct of an individual through exposure to norms and standards (Ibarra-Colado *et al.*, 2006), the individual is also able to actively work upon their own self-constitution (Styhre, 2002). For Foucault

(1991), the individual-as-subject is “carefully fabricated [within our social order] according to a whole technique of forces and bodies” (p217). Crucially however, this is not a process aimed at crushing a pre-existing individual but rather, forming a subject who can be productive in specific organisational contexts (Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996).

In Foucault’s view, human beings do not exist as wholly autonomous individuals; rather our sense of identity is “an effect of cultural constitution” (Richter, 2017, p181). Our formation as a social entity is shaped by social interactions and the impact of disciplinary institutions, such as schools and prisons (Ibarra-Colado *et al.*, 2006) and the norms within those institutions. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) suggest the modern individual is “a historical achievement” (p160) that establishes a stable veneer over an inner-life which is continuously in flux, and which requires “the capacity and tendency to change continuously, indeed to take on different forms at the same time” (Kelly, 2013, p514). The theoretical bases by which individuals come to be formed as productive subjects will be explored in more detail in Section 2.2.

### 2.1.5 Panopticism and Resistance to Discipline

Disciplinary power acts by inculcating an external set of behaviours, standards and acceptable ways of being upon the inner life of the subject. One method by which individuals come to enfold normative external standards is through exposure to a “one-way judgemental dialogue” (Haugaard, 2002, p185), which was expressed via one of Foucault’s more infamous metaphors- the Panopticon. A thought experiment, based on a loose interpretation of

Jeremy Bentham's theoretical design for a prison, Foucault used the concept of the Panopticon to demonstrate his concept of internalisation (Foucault, 1991). Whereby the subject, through constant exposure to normative standards, takes on the ownership of the effects of power; which encourages "the citizen to act as his or her own master" (Cruikshank, 1993, p340).

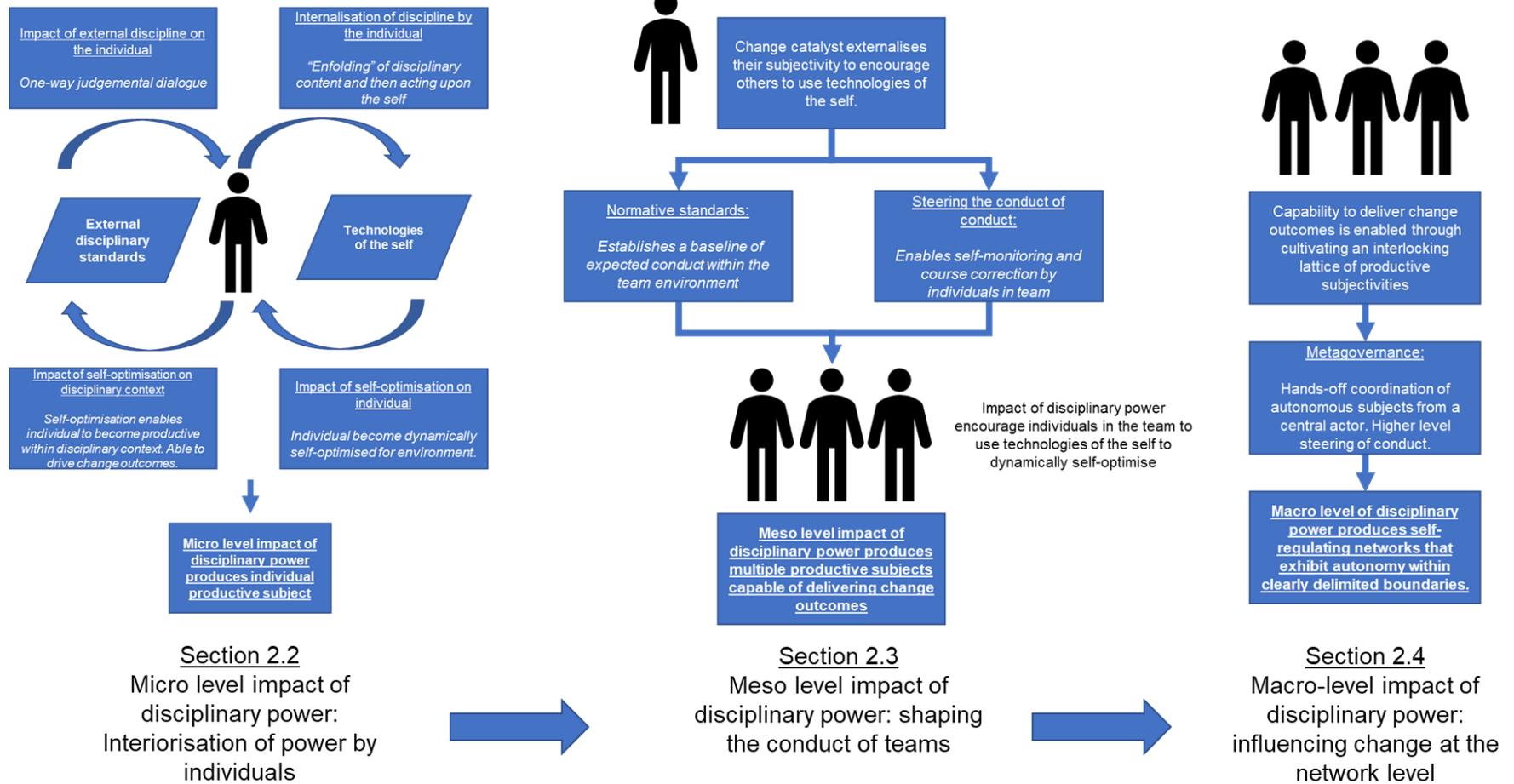
For all its powerful impact as a metaphor, panopticism has been critiqued as a "historically unusual" (Savage, 1998, p89) phenomenon, with Foucault's usage demonstrating a "cavalier disregard for the realities of nineteenth-century penal practice" (McKinlay and Starkey, 1998, p11). Foucault pre-empts these critiques to an extent, by emphasising his view of the panopticon as a political technology, a "diagram for a mechanism of power" (Foucault, 1991, p205), rather than as a physical space. More challenging however is McKinlay and Taylor's (1998) assertion that the inherent pervasiveness of the panopticon metaphor, and Foucault's insistence on the inescapable nature of disciplinary power, creates a "gloomy determinism" with an "authoritarian dystopia latent in every social setting" (p174). This critique is echoed by Scheurich and McKenzie (2005) who assert that Foucault does not leave enough room for resistance in his approach, and Taylor (1986) who insists that any model of power that does not have a prospect of liberation is incoherent.

Foucault's views on resistance to power are complex, as he viewed power as fundamentally inescapable and "everywhere, not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1979, p93). The way we perceive reality and the fields of possibilities that are open to us, are constrained by the regimes of truth and dominant rationalities that

constitute our historical setting. To escape power, in Foucault's view, would be to escape meaning; in other words "the deeper values and norms serving as background conditions" (Digeser, 1992, p981). That is not to say local power dynamics cannot be resisted, and indeed overcome, but the underlying power/knowledge structures will remain in place. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of disciplinary power is its flexibility and capacity to re-align to changing circumstances and social contexts, in that it is "continuously elaborated, transformed and organised" (Foucault, 1994b, p345). Burrell (1998) goes so far as to suggest that resistance actually expedites the effective functioning of disciplinary power, as it allows disciplinary technologies to become concentrated on specific targets.

The following sections will build upon this basis to examine how disciplinary power impacts upon the micro (individual), meso (team) and macro (network) levels of social organisation. This is to provide a conceptual basis for understanding the impact of disciplinary power upon organisational change, and the role played by the change catalyst. The theoretical relationships between these levels is set out in Figure 4.

Figure 4 : Micro, Meso and Macro Level Impacts of Disciplinary Power



## 2.2 Micro Level Impact of Disciplinary Power: Interiorisation of Power by Individuals

Section 2.1.4 set out how the concept of the subject, a mode of individuality which emphasises the formative impact of countervailing external and internal forces, was central to Foucault's views on power. Building on that foundation, the theoretical lynchpin of this conceptual model is the notion of the productive subject, i.e. disciplined individuals that are "politically and economically useful" (Smart, 1985, p75). Productive subjects are able to deliver outputs within their disciplinary contexts by functioning autonomously within delimited parameters. At the micro level then, which focuses on individual action (Eriksson, 2009), disciplinary power is arguably enabled by the subjects engaging in a dynamic process of self-optimisation.

In terms of externally facing forces, it could be argued that subjects are created by disciplinary power. They are then trained within an organisational context to be productive; and in doing so they internalise the dominant rationality of the discipline, which clearly delimits the bounds of acceptable conduct. Subjects therefore conform to disciplinary power, not through coercion, but because their identities have become aligned to the essence of what it means to be productive in that context (Simon and Oakes, 2006). Disciplinary power could thus be said to be the enabler for the fourth face of power (Digeser, 1992) as its focus is the interior life-world of the individual, which is impacted upon by power as "the effect and instrument of a political anatomy" (Foucault, 1991, p30).

Subjects are formed by power relations and arguably cannot escape those relations (le Blanc, 2016) but if subjects can recognise themselves as objects of knowledge, they can define themselves as something to be worked upon (Välikangas and Seeck, 2011). Foucauldian ethics is thus an exhortation to create a self that is optimally suited to their environment, “whose aim is to constitute oneself as the worker of the beauty of one’s own life” (Foucault, 1988, p260). The individual continually works upon themselves, within folds invaginated by the external environment, because they have identified a particular developmental path as “a certain mode of being that will serve as [their] moral good” (Ibarra-Colado *et al.*, 2006, p47). In other words, the individual chooses to become a productive subject because they perceive that there are benefits to doing so. Disciplinary power, in this mode, stops being a case of direct control and instead achieves organisational aims by instilling in subjects “a dynamic form of permanent self-optimisation” (Richter, 2017, p188). By participating in this process of self-optimisation, the productive subject willingly submits to the bounded autonomy of the context.

A surface reading of Foucault’s genealogical phase would therefore support McKinlay and Taylor’s accusation of “gloomy determinism” and the inescapable nature of power. Foucault however, did further develop his thoughts on resistance during his ethical phase, conceding that just because “one can never be ‘outside’ of power does not mean that one is trapped and condemned to defeat no matter what” (Foucault, 1980d, p142). He partially addressed this orientation of the self in relation to power through the concept of “technologies of the self” (Foucault, 1994d, p147).

### 2.2.1 Technologies of the Self

Exterior disciplinary power undoubtedly impacts the formation of the individual-as-subject, but Foucault's later ethical phase was concerned with exploring how "technologies of individual domination" (Foucault, 1988b, p19) are deployed by the self upon the self to achieve specific outcomes. For Foucault, the individual has a duty to respond to the influence of external power by undertaking an "aesthetics of existence" (Foucault, 1988a, p255), a process which involves shaping the self to reach a "desired end-self" (Silva and Quattrone, 2017, p117). In working towards this desired end-state, which is geared towards optimising the subject's position in the environment, the subject undertakes "a reflexive project of the self" (Dean, 1996a, p214) to form a disciplined and productive identity. This process whereby the individual comes to form themselves as a productive subject through the enfolding of disciplinary standards is set out in Figure 4.

In this view, the individual subject is able to act upon themselves to "transform, correct and purify oneself, and find salvation" (Foucault, 1990, p42) and become a version of the self which is optimally suited to navigating the rationalities of their particular setting. In a sense then, freedom for Foucault centres around self-creation and self-optimisation, enabled through the use of technologies, rather than Taylor's (1986) insistence on freedom being exempt from power relations. For Foucault, the subject is "faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are available" (Foucault, 1994b, p341). Freedom is

therefore the ability to choose between options, which are set out by the power/knowledge dynamic of the setting.

Foucault (1991) used the term “docile” (p136) to describe how agents become disciplined and thus capable of autonomous, yet bounded, action. A docile productive subject is therefore one who has internalised and demonstrated the behaviours, beliefs and conduct required to acceptably participate in network life. Freedom thus becomes a process, where the individual engages with external forces of disciplinary power in order to shape themselves, becoming docile and productive.

Giles Deleuze (1988) explored the mechanics behind this process, utilising Foucault as a starting point, by theorising that the impact of external disciplinary power on a subject’s inner life-world creates a “fold” (p100). A fold represents the means by which an individual comes to interiorise standards and norms, as it “doubles the outside with a coextensive inside” (ibid, p118) against which the subject comes to judge itself. The minutiae of disciplinary power can fill the content of a fold, which Rose (1998) suggests consists of “injunctions, advice, techniques, little habits of thought and emotion” (p37). The structure of the fold, however, is constantly in flux and is always responsive to the external environment (Deleuze, 1988).

While folding is undoubtedly a useful concept for understanding how subjects may internalise disciplinary power, Deleuze suggests that the entirety of interior-life is a “moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and folding that make up an inside” (Ibid p97). This insistence that the interior only reflects the exterior, arguably reduces the capacity of the subject to act upon

themselves. However Butler (2016) suggests that the imposition of external power is only successful if the individual binds themselves to the terms of that power, while Skinner (2012) argues that choosing to view the subject as being capable of meaningful choice around self-formation can “avoid an over-deterministic notion of subjectivation in a Foucault-inspired study” (p918). But once the individual subject of a change catalyst is formed, how can they seek to influence the subjectivity of others?

### **2.3 Meso Level Impact of Disciplinary Power: Shaping the Conduct of Teams**

If micro level theorising focuses on individuals, then the meso level focuses on the interactions between individuals at a group or team level (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009a). Change catalysts shape themselves as productive subjects through the interiorisation of disciplinary standards, and by deploying technologies of the self. Once rendered productive themselves, they arguably drive change outcomes by enabling other individuals within change teams to also become productive.

One method of creating an environment conducive to the emergence of productive subjectivities is for leaders of change to establish normative standards within a network environment. Emerging from group processes over time (Deetz, 1998), normative standards set out a broadly understood benchmark for the performance of activities, which when internalised come to influence the behaviour of subjects (Rose, 1998). Gold (2017) claims that this internalisation of acceptable behaviours allows the subject to “embed a sense

of right conduct in order to ‘self-correct’ work behaviours” (p138), which in turn may support the emergence of bounded autonomy within the subject. Building on Cruikshank’s (1993) point about linking personal goals to social order, McKinlay and Starkey (1998) put forward the view that normative standards can cause subjects to internalise organisational goals as their own, which act upon “individual desires and pleasures” (Rose, 1999, p261) to achieve specific effects. In turn this interiorisation helps to steer the nascent productive subject’s self-cultivation.

For normative standards to have an impact, there must be an interplay between their status as a benchmark and the self-knowledge of subjects, in that subjects need to be able to measure themselves against what they perceive to be the needs of the external environment. Foucault uses the metaphor of the Catholic confession ritual to explore this dynamic; suggesting that confession not only represents a desire to change but “produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it [the confession]” (Foucault, 1979, p62). This has the potential to instil in the confessing subject a desire to identify opportunities for self-change.

Normative standards, when established by the change catalyst, have the potential to spark a cascade of productive subjectivities within a network environment, in that their existence encourages actors at the meso level to deploy technologies of the self and make themselves productive. That being said, Baker, Justice and Skelcher (2009) argue that any process of self-governance will invariably be complicated “by dynamics of transformation and resistance” (p77). Similarly Ørberg and Wright (2009) put forward the view that a productive subjectivity is only one aspect of an individual’s inner-life, and

that disciplinary power merely lays a cohesive veneer over “fragmented selves [...] to enable control around the outputs and performance of specific activities” (p130). The play of disciplinary power at a meso level is thus more complicated than solely establishing a normative standard, especially as productive individuals need to be able to self-steer. Rather than solely relying on normative standards, the change catalyst must also find a way of “enabling an increase of individual freedoms, without diminishing the capacity for steering” (Esmark and Triantafillou, 2009, p36). Within the literature, this concept is commonly referred to as steering the conduct of conduct.

### 2.3.1 Steering the Conduct of Conduct

Disciplinary power is characterised by the capacity of productive subjects to self-monitor and course correct their conduct, in relation to normative standards. Understanding how this conduct can be guided without direct intervention, which may compromise the bounded autonomy of the subject, is one of the key concerns of Foucauldian theories of power. To steer the conduct of conduct is to carry out “a management of possibilities [...] and to structure the possible fields of action available to others (Foucault, 1994b, p341), with a view to ensuring that the productive subjects guide themselves in line with external expectations.

Within an organisational setting, normative standards provide a baseline against which “individuals come to build an internal sense of right and wrong” (Gold, 2017, p139), which is supported by specific activities such as training, performance management etc. The ultimate outcome being, the

creation of individuals who are capable of delivering the outputs required by that specific organisational context (Dean, 2010). However, in order for those individuals to become fully productive and self-monitoring, interventions by the change catalyst are only effective “to the extent that they produce self-management” (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, p13). It thus becomes less about policing adherence to an agreed baseline and more about incentivising potential subjects, with Rose (1998) suggesting that change catalysts act as “relays” between organisational objectives “that are economically desirable and those that are personally seductive” (p161). However, in order for the change catalyst to authentically act as that relay, they themselves must be a product of that self-cultivation which they attempt to inculcate in others (Deetz, 1998). Indeed, Ibarra-Colado *et al* (2006) suggest that this process of inculcation acts as a direct link between a “political component”, that is the guiding of teams, and a “subjective component”, the cultivation of the self (p48). This thesis will argue that those two components are mutually dependent and that the interplay between the two has a profound impact on organisational change.

## **2.4 Macro Level Impact of Disciplinary Power: Network Governance**

At a team level, change catalysts interact with disciplinary power to instil productive subjectivities by balancing normative standards with steering the conduct of conduct. There are significant challenges in aggregating micro and meso level analysis to the wider macro level, because macro potentially encapsulates such a broad milieu. However, in the case of this thesis, it is

possible to define the macro level as relating to networks and the Provider Assurance Network in particular. What then is the theoretical basis for examining how productive subjectivities are coordinated at the network level?

Networks are stable groupings of actors, united in purpose and “consisting of multiple interdependent and self-organising actors” (Morçöl and Wachhaus, 2009, p45), whose structure is shaped through the frequent interactions of those actors (Rhodes, 1997). Networks are often, but not always, geared towards the realisation of a specific outcome or policy (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997a). They act as mechanisms for establishing inter-organisational cooperation; in which they simultaneously create the context for organisational change (Iedema *et al.*, 2017) and act as a forum for the engagement of actors with disciplinary power.

Public sector bodies like the NHS frequently encounter ‘wicked problems’ i.e. situations which can be characterised as “unfamiliar, complex and where there is little agreement about what the proposed solution looks like, let alone how to achieve it” (Hallsworth, 2011, p33). To navigate these instances of complexity, organisations need to be flexible and adaptive (Provan and Kenis, 2008), which Scharpf (1994) suggests may be an issue for organisations that rely upon more hierarchical modes of organisation. Fitzgerald (2017a) argues that developing networks in environments such as the NHS are an appropriate means of creating this flexible capability. The flexibility of networks emerges from their gestalt nature, which enables cooperating organisations to explore a variety of different options for policy issues and proactively adapt to fluctuating external environments (Wachhaus, 2012).

The day-to-day operations of networks are coordinated through governance activity, which involves “the horizontal interactions by which public and private actors at various levels [...] coordinate their interdependencies in order to realise public policies” (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2012, p594). If the deployment of disciplinary power is the recruitment of willing human agency in service of an objective (Simon and Oakes, 2006) then network governance could be viewed as the high level coordination of that activity.

In a post-modern view, the freedom to act is constituted through complex webs and relationships of power (Ibarra-Colado *et al.*, 2006). Davies (2011), in an impassioned critique of network governance, argues that a Foucauldian view would condemn networks “as a medium of social control in which individuals are trapped” (p70). This point harks back to McKinlay and Taylor’s (1998) assertions of gloomy determinism but while individual subjects can be entangled in webs of power/knowledge, it is also possible for those individuals to engage with technologies and adapt themselves to the network environment. Within webs of power/knowledge then, the productive subject is arguably one who is able to exercise a regulated freedom based on “effective techniques of self-inspection and self-evaluation” (Rose, 1999, p228) in response to the dominant rationalities of their network.

At its heart, there is a distinct tension within network governance, between the drive to maintain oversight of activity with the hands-off approach necessary to enable effective self-organisation. The conceptual difficulty of this clash is set out eloquently by Hallsworth (2011), who states:

“Throwing a rock is a linear, mechanistic activity: its trajectory can be calculated, and we can ensure that the rock reaches a specific destination. We cannot do the same for the complex adaptive behaviour of the bird. Of course, we could pretty much control the bird’s trajectory if we tied its wings, weighted it and then threw it - but we would destroy the bird’s capabilities in the process” (p24).

The aim of network governance is then to try and drive activity within the network without ‘tying its wings’ and compromising its prized flexibility. However, autonomy without coordination can undermine the responsiveness of networks by creating fragmentation and a lack of direction (Sørensen and Torfing, 2017). A potential means of navigating this theoretical tension is to explore how network governance can harness the interlocking productive subjectivities produced at the micro and meso level.

The freedom to act without deference to a central hierarchy is key for effective network functioning; but a general alignment to the network’s overall goal is essential for its long-term survival. Building on Sections 2.2 and 2.3, this thesis will argue that this tension can be mitigated by creating a critical mass of productive subjects, grounded in disciplinary standards, who drive change activity in a bounded fashion. Network governance, by propagating the creation of productive subject through change technologies, arguably fosters the creation of bounded autonomy at the organisation and network level. One potential mechanism for enabling this balance is the concept of metagovernance.

### 2.4.1 Metagovernance

Metagovernance attempts to overcome the inherent tension in network governance and enable effective oversight without “tying the wings” of the network, or the individuals within it. In a sense then, metagovernance attempts to steer the conduct of conduct, as discussed in Section 2.3.1, on a much larger scale. Metagovernance involves a powerful agent, or group of agents, typically referred to as the metagovernor, who utilise hands-off influence within a network to “mobilise the energies, resources, capabilities and knowledge of the network actors” (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016b, p173) and to enable effective self-organisation of the network. Rather than mandating a clear set of actions, the metagovernor sketches broad principles which are designed to achieve an end-goal (Haveri *et al.*, 2009).

By helping to shape the overarching change rationality, metagovernors are able to create “a self-regulating network of responsible actors” (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016a, p4). This dynamic could be said to be a tangible example of disciplinary power steering the conduct of conduct (as discussed in Section 2.3.1) in order to achieve outcomes by influencing autonomous actors, as opposed to direct control. While NHS England has delegated authority for healthcare provision in England (as outlined in Section 3.4.1), top-down exercise of that power would potentially be ineffective in such a complex and resource constrained environment. If actors are empowered to make independent action, with boundaries clearly established by a robust rationality, then this has the potential to improve the resilience of the network and make

it better able to navigate emerging issues (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997). The role of the change catalyst in this space then, is to facilitate the creation of an interlocking lattice of productive subjectivities, which in turn supports the emergence of a self-regulating network. The theory behind how metagovernors impact on change management is explored in more detail in Section 3.5.1.

## **2.5 Governmentality Theory: A Method for Empirically Investigating how Productive Subjects are Formed**

While the preceding sections have set out a theoretical basis for understanding how disciplinary power is able to form productive subjects through a dynamic interplay of disciplinary standards and individual self-cultivation, there remains a gap in terms of understanding how this process can be practically implemented. This thesis will suggest that the gap can be filled using governmentality theory and the concept of Foucauldian technologies. Governmentality is a Foucauldian neologism, combining government and rationality (Gordon, 1991), which refers to how social agents conceptualise government and the act of governing (Dean, 2010). Foucault defines governmentality as an “ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses [...] that allow the exercise of [a] very specific albeit complex form of power” (Foucault, 1994c, p220). While the concept originated with Foucault, it has been greatly expanded by theorists such as Peter Miller, Nicholas Rose and Mitchell Dean. Governmentality focuses on the empirical, rather than theoretical, study of specific rationalities that have been deployed

to enable power effects (Rose and Miller, 2008) and in doing so “show the messy reality of which lies behind the apparently smoothly functioning system” (McKinlay, 2017, p217).

Governmentality theory is ideally suited to investigating the concept of bounded autonomy, as its principle aim is to investigate the multi-form tools and techniques that lead to the creation of an obedient and productive population (Jackson and Carter, 1998), which Dean (1996b) suggests is often orientated towards an end goal. This orientation, which Foucault believed was to be achieved through the “certain concentrated distribution of bodies” (Foucault, 1991, p202), can be managed by steering the conduct of conduct as discussed in Section 2.3.1. Indeed, Dean describes the individual subject as a “locus of freedom” (Dean 2010, p24) in that they are free to act but it is a delimited freedom; with clear parameters that are created, encapsulated and maintained via particular power/knowledge structures.

Power acts on the fields of possible actions that are available to subjects: at the individual, team, organisational and societal level. The options that are available to the individual are discursively created through a complex interplay of factors; with potential action being made “more probable or less” (Foucault, 1994b, p341). In line with the needs of disciplinary environment. Governmentality offers a potential model for understanding how the shaping of available actions can be enabled within organisational contexts (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016a), which this thesis will argue is a key enabler for effective change management in complex environments.

Governmentality theory builds on Foucault's concept of disciplinary power to explore how productive subjects are formed, how they become self-regulating and how they are then orientated towards a common end-goal. This research will put forward a novel governmentality framework (detailed in Section 6.2), which aims to empirically investigate how the creation of disciplined productive subjects impacts on the change management process. While it may seem antithetical to adapt Foucault's works into a systematic framework, due to the loosely structured nature of his methodological approach, Foucault (1994b) himself was keen to stress that "what I say ought to be taken as "propositions", "game openings" where those who may be interested are invited to join in- they are not meant as dogmatic assertions that have to be taken or left en bloc" (p246). Adopting a rigorous and logical approach is therefore not necessarily incompatible with Foucault's conceptual frameworks, and this thesis will attempt to systematise his views on power by using technologies, a subset of governmentality theory, to explore how disciplinary power is translated into social action.

### 2.5.1 Technologies: Mechanisms for the Creation of Productive Subjects

Technologies are a key element of governmentality theory, and they provide researchers with a conceptual toolkit for unpicking how productive subjectivities are practically created. The Foucauldian use of the term "technologies" takes the concept of a tool, something used to achieve a specific purpose, and applies it to modes of social interaction. Foucault defines technologies as "material elements and techniques that serve as weapons,

relays, communication routes and supports for power and knowledge relations” (Foucault, 1991, p28). In other words, a Foucauldian technology is a social tool “that enables the production, transformation and manipulations of things” (Townley, 1998, p199) within a change context. Technologies are practical texts that impact on the formation of subjects at key sites (Foucault, 1990) and which are wielded in response to specific problematisations (Bacchi, 2015). In this research context, data collection and analysis focused on how the change catalyst engaged with technologies to produce specific power effects, which in turn influenced the creation of productive subjectivities.

Dean (1996b) suggests that technologies, as a term, can suffer from indeterminacy, with it being so broad a concept as to be potentially meaningless. Clarity around how the term will be used in this thesis is therefore key. The usage in this research will relate to instances of social interaction, grounded within specific power/knowledge structures, where the change catalyst has sought to influence the conduct of groups and individuals. Particular emphasis will be placed on how technologies have led to the creation of productive subjectivities, which in turn enabled effective change management within the network environment.

Another critique is raised by Behrent (2013) who suggests that Foucault’s use of the term is paradoxical, and that there is an inherent conflict between the connotations of control and the productive possibilities of technologies, specifically with regards to how subjects are formed. However, a counterpoint to that perspective would be that technologies do not directly control, but rather they facilitate the social interactions which are essential for the effective navigation of change. The process by which Technology

Discourse Analysis was used to uncover these power relations is set out in Section 6.2, while the specific analytical outputs are examined in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

## **2.6 Power Chapter Summary**

The conceptual model outlined in this chapter puts forward a view of power that is productive rather than repressive, and which focuses on understanding how individual subjects are rendered productive, specifically in terms of driving organisational change. Productive subjects being individuals who are able to function autonomously, while still complying with the disciplinary standards of their specific context. Figure 4 outlines how this process works across different social levels; where, at the micro level, the individual change catalyst is formed as a productive subject by the countervailing forces of discipline and interiorisation. Change catalysts then externalise their subjectivity to influence other individuals at the meso/team level, with normative standards and conduct steering being used to encourage those individuals to undertake their own journey of self-optimisation. These interlocking subjectivities then aggregate at the macro level to enable networks to self-regulate and self-organise; all the while bound by the predominant Regime of Truth. In an effort to set out how this process will be empirically explored, a governmentality framework was proposed to set out how technologies practically impact on the subjectivity of individuals. Chapters 7,8 and 9 set out the detail of these technologies, while Chapter 10 will

segment these analyses to understand the impact of disciplinary power at a micro, meso and macro level.

The unit of analysis in this research is the role of the change catalyst, and the key research question revolves around how can change catalysts influence change management outcomes. Setting out a critical theoretical engagement with disciplinary power therefore provides a solid basis for understanding how the change catalyst role was able to impact on the subjectivities of other individuals involved in organisational change. In order to understand how the dynamic process of mutual self-constitution impacted on change management outcomes it will be necessary to critically engage with change management theory. The next chapter will outline a conceptual map for the theory of change management, which when combined with the power model outlined here will provide a holistic theoretical grounding for this thesis.

### **Chapter 3: Organisational Change Within Complex Healthcare Networks**

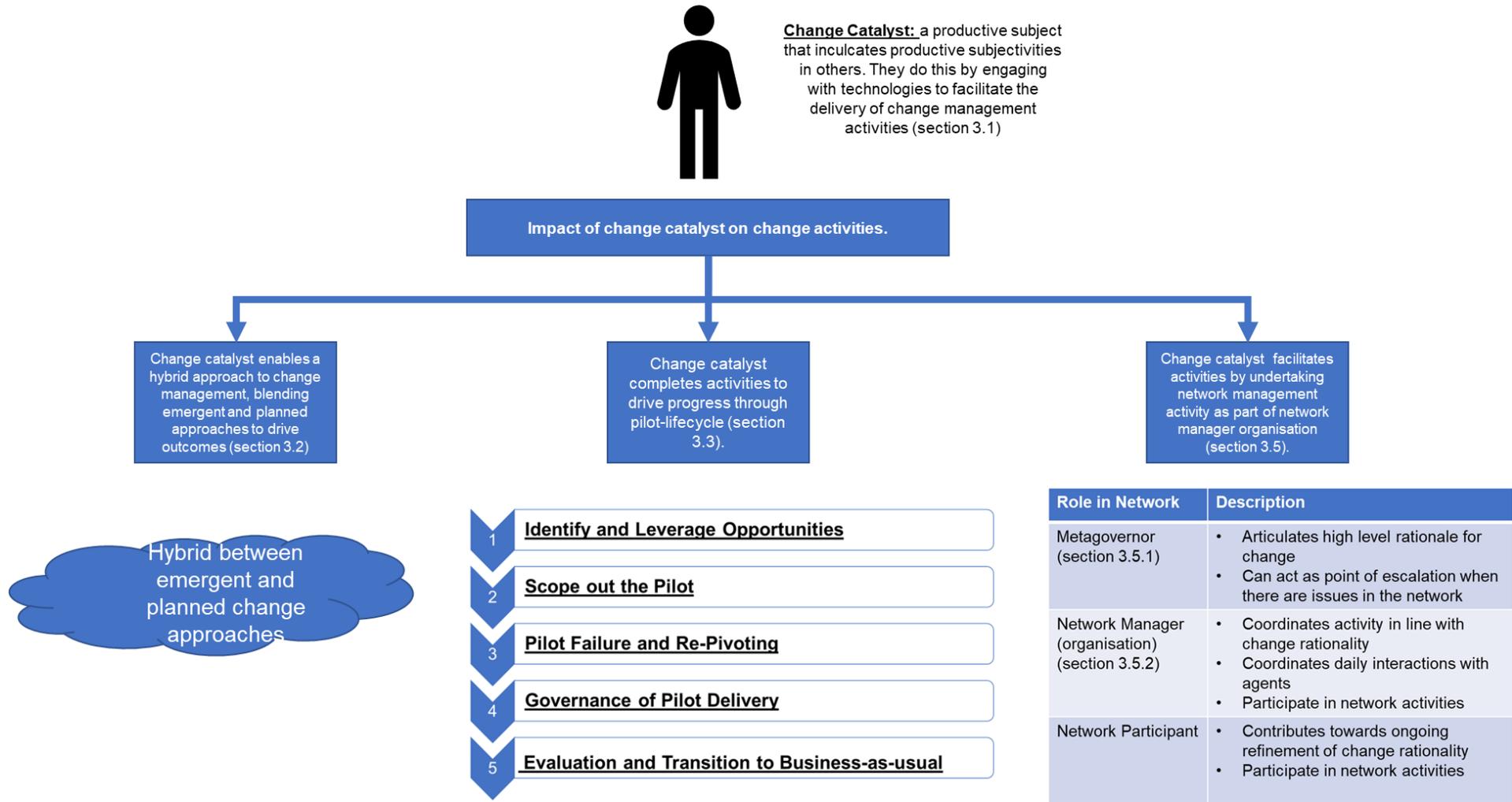
Chapter 2 provided a theoretical view on how disciplinary power comes to impact on individual subjects, to make them productive and docile within specific contexts. Chapter 3 builds on this view to set out the theory for how productive subjects, focusing on the role of the change catalyst, utilise their positionality to inculcate productive subjectivities in others and achieve change management outcomes. To achieve this, the chapter will ground the abstract theory of disciplinary power in relation to change management practices, focusing on the specific context of complex networks within the English National Health Service (NHS).

The change catalyst role, as a disciplined and productive subject, will be the prism through which change management theory is reviewed, Section 3.1 provides a theoretical basis for this role. Section 3.2 sets out how change catalysts can help navigate the contrasting perceptions of planned and emergent change, so as to create a hybrid perspective that drives social action. This is followed by Section 3.3, where the change catalyst's role in progressing policy pilots is situated within a wider theoretical context. It also proposes a novel framework for exploring the lifecycle of policy pilots, which was used to organise the ethnographic data as part of data collection and analysis.

The final element to explore is how change catalysts can enable change by coordinating activity within a network environment. Section 3.4 establishes the background to the NHS Provider Assurance Network, situating the research environment within the wider context of the healthcare system.

Section 3.5 builds upon the outline of network governance theory produced in Section 2.4 to expand the relationship between the network metagovernor and network manager, a relationship facilitated by the change catalyst role. The outputs from Chapters 2 and 3 will be synthesised in Section 3.6 to provide a holistic conceptual framework for this thesis. A conceptual map for this chapter can be seen in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Chapter 3 - Conceptual Map



### 3.1 Role of the Change Catalyst

Individual leaders play a key role in scoping and delivering change initiatives, such as policy pilots. Burnes (2009) argues that, irrespective of the change context and format, “change has to be managed; someone has to take responsibility for the change taking place” (p389). Kempster *et al* (2014) posit a contrasting view that it may be ineffective to rely upon a single individual to maintain the momentum of change. However, given the analytical focus of this thesis, it is appropriate to focus on the role of the individual change leader; which in the literature is commonly referred to as a change agent (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009; Grant and Marshak, 2011; Jabri, 2012; Massingham, 2014; Sørensen and Torfing, 2016a).

However, the term change agent is not ideal; it is symptomatic of the drive towards creating an impression of objectivity and rationality within a change context, whereby the change agent’s activities are construed as politically neutral and located within “an iron cage of project rationality” (Hodgson *et al.*, 2019, p4). In this view, change agents are members of a technically-orientated project class (Fred and Mukhtar-Landgren, 2019) who coordinate change by “reducing social activity of all kinds to instrumental and rationalised action” (Hodgson *et al.*, 2019, p3). However, when one adopts a postmodern critical perspective focused on exploring power, it becomes apparent that the individuals who coordinate change are never neutral facilitators; they have their own agendas (Burnes, 2009), they are often politically astute (McDermott, Fitzgerald and Buchanan, 2013) and must be able to “shift their positions, maximise personal influence and advantage to

progress the change agenda for which they are responsible” (Buchanan and Badham, 2020, p231). The emphasis thus shifts from a view of impartial agents wielding de-politicised project methodologies, to a productive change subject who is able to engage with the technical rationality of change (Shaw *et al*, 2019) and in doing so catalyse social actions among their peers (Jabri, 2012). This research will therefore suggest that the term change catalyst is more appropriate for examining the impact of the individual change leader, who is able to dynamically self-optimize their subjectivity to effectively drive change management activity within the network environment.

Change catalysts working in complex environments need to act as messengers who come to symbolise the change purpose (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009) and function as “evangelists” who mobilise others in service of a common goal (Suchman, 1995, p591). They also enable the progress of pilots to be monitored against a pre-determined plan (Bailey, Hodgson and Checkland, 2019) while ensuring there is access to the appropriate resources for the pilot to succeed (Cabinet Office, 2003). A key element in this activity is the capability of change catalysts to help shape interpretation because as Flyvbjerg (1998) points out “interpretation is itself a means of becoming master of something” (p227). As such, change catalysts often occupy influential positions within networks and are able to use their communication skills to convince members of the pilot, and the wider network, of the usefulness of the experimental policy and frame it as “an opportunity to think and do differently” (Bailey *et al.*, 2017, p215). Change catalysts also directly support network management activity by working across pilot sites to “foster and support

commitment [...] and sustain their engagement as the pilot develops” (Ettelt and Mays, 2015, p1).

When developing the concept of the change catalyst, it may have been appropriate to incorporate literature around leadership styles as part of this literature review. However rather than approach the concept of leadership in a traditional manner, the Researcher made a conscious decision to explore how disciplinary power surges through individuals to shape their subjectivity and what impact that process has on the progress of organisational change. That is not to say, that this theoretical engagement is incompatible with the wider literature on leadership styles. Indeed, Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 will set out the conceptual framework for this thesis. Following that, chapter 11 will provide a plan for exploring how the research findings could be expanded upon through a future engagement with more traditional theories of leadership.

### 3.1.1 Liminal Nature of Change Catalysts

For all their impact however, change catalysts occupy informal positions of influence rather than formal positions within a standard hierarchy (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012) and often have little positional authority with which to compel other actors in the network (Buchanan and Badham, 2020). Indeed, Fitzgerald (2017a) explicitly suggests that the positionality of some change catalysts working within the NHS could be described as liminal. Originating in anthropology, liminality is a concept that refers to a state of “in-between-ness” (Miller, 2016, p37) whereby actors exist and work in the interstitial spaces between organisations and change states. Change

professionals are necessarily marginal, working with operational colleagues to achieve outcomes, while fundamentally being separate from business-as-usual activities (Fred and Mukhtar-Landgren, 2019). While change catalysts are responsible for facilitating the change activity, they are at the same time free from any “structural obligations” (Czarniawska and Mazza, 2003, p271) as they often don’t have a formal position within the organisational hierarchy. This enables change catalysts to “embrace the role of insider-outsider” (Borg and Soderlund, 2015, p176) and move freely between different teams and organisations within a network, making linkages and strengthening bonds as they go.

Howard-Grenville *et al* (2011) discuss how this flexibility is enabled by the decentred positionality of change catalysts, but they fail to appreciate the inherent stressfulness of such a position. Stress that is driven by the need to balance the sometimes competing need of multiple clients and the home organisation (Wall and Englert, 2016), which can be compounded when the change agent is also a researcher (McCabe and Briody, 2016). Indeed, the transitory nature of such an existence can even impact on the change catalyst’s sense of identity, as they strive to anchor themselves to an ever-changing environment (Borg and Soderlund, 2014).

So, what is the benefit of occupying a liminal space as a change catalyst? The very marginality of being liminal can prove to be an asset when coordinating activity across networks, as it enables the change agent to traverse organisational boundaries (McCabe and Briody, 2016) facilitating interorganisational discourses and embedding technologies of power. In navigating the transitional spaces between change states, change catalysts

are able to use their unique perspective to identify alternative ways of approaching organisational change (Sturdy, Schwarz and Spicer, 2006). This flexibility can also enable the change catalyst to move between discourses as required (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) and, in doing so, help to “modify prevailing collective understandings and social norms” (Söderlund and Borg, 2018, p886). The liminality of change catalysts thus has the potential to impact upon how normative standards emerge to guide conduct within a network environment. In order for this flexibility to emerge however, the change catalyst must be able to alter their subjectivity to meet the needs of their wider environment.

### 3.1.2 Change Catalysts and Technologies of the Self

In order to act as a bridge between the current state and the future state, change catalysts must proactively measure themselves against the disciplinary standards of the change environment (Hodgson, 2002) and begin to act upon themselves to meet those standards (Villadsen, 2007). As discussed in Section 2.3, to become a productive subject the change catalyst must “transform, correct and purify oneself” (Foucault, 1990, p42) in relation to normative standards and in doing so, become optimised for the change context. Self-cultivation enables the change catalyst to build their skillset (Chaib, 2019) which can “produce an ability to deal with an increasingly difficult and fast-moving global economy” (Kotter, 2012, p178).

In a way then, career progression represents a specific kind of disciplinary trajectory; a journey through which the subject progresses and

becomes defined by their environment (Foucault, 1991). If one is successful in following this trajectory, then one's career will progress "as a reward for merit, diligence and hard work" (Savage, 1998, p68). Career progression presents itself as a finite task, a ladder that must be climbed through the judicious training of one's body and positionality. The reality however, as McKinlay (2002) points out, is that the career is a "moral project without hope of completion" (p595) designed to keep the subject in a perpetual state of self-assessment. Nonetheless, it is still a trajectory that many willingly follow.

The change catalyst, in becoming disciplined, assumed a degree of job security and career advancements, based on their ability to "demonstrate high impact" (Buchanan and Badham, 2020, p231). However, as Hodgson (2002) points out this sense of security is achieved "through the objectification and instrumental manipulation of other subjects" (p818). While Hodgson raises a valid point about how change initiatives orders individuals, he arguably goes too far in calling this process conscious manipulation. This research will empirically examine the interplay between how change catalysts and other actors in networks, to determine how disciplinary power impacts upon the interior lifeworld of the change catalyst and other actors, with a specific focus on the role of Foucauldian technologies. As discussed in Section 2.5.1, technologies are practical manifestations of disciplinary power that create a bridge between the intangible realm of rationalities and the interior lifeworld of subjects, functioning as "practices that bury deep, not only into social spaces but into the individual, their notions of individuality and integrity" (Townley, 1998, p207). This research will examine how change catalysts deploy, and are impacted by, these technologies within an organisational change environment.

### 3.2 Emergent Versus Planned Theories of Change Management

The term organisational change refers to any modification or alteration to an organisation's vision, purpose, structure or processes (Aggerholm and Thomsen, 2020). It is important to distinguish between the material and socio-economic circumstances that lead to and constitute the phenomenon known as 'change' and the social response to 'change', which will henceforth be referred to as change management. Change management being a concerted effort to coordinate those modifications and establish a new status quo (Lissack, 2011).

Clegg and Gray (2011) suggest that change management is a reaction to environmental chaos, "a kind of organisational pathology, which must be controlled, organized, brought into line or even eradicated" (p247). This instinctive drive to corral change can lead to the political realities of power dynamics being masked by technical rationalities (Chaib, 2019). Spicer and Levay (2012) also point out that the "change fetish" (p287) of modern organisational life occludes the often forgotten human cost of change, particularly in terms of livelihoods.

Change may be universal, but there is no universal framework on how it should be approached (Beer and Nohria, 2000). While texts from seminal theorists such as Lewin (1947) and Kotter (2012) sketched out high level principles for how planned change can be approached, it could be argued that theories which deal with how to practically engage with change in complex environments "barely exist" (Fitzgerald 2017, p4). This section will therefore

engage with existing change management literature to supplement the overview of power provided in Chapter 2. Combining the two theoretical areas will provide a robust basis for examining manifestations of disciplinary power within complex network environments within the NHS.

Individuals looking to lead change initiatives must engage with two drastically different perspectives on change management: the emergent and the planned. The emergent view emphasises the non-linearity of change (Falconer, 2002), which is continually in motion, unfinalisable (Jabri, 2012) and exacerbated by the complex nature of the wider environment (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009). Emergent change management activities are therefore an “ongoing improvisation” (Burnes, 2009, p363) in an effort to respond and organise boundaries between current and future states of being (Clegg and Gray, 2011). These activities are coordinated via ad-hoc responses to organisational fluctuations, rather than through the prescriptive application of pre-defined methods and processes (Styhre, 2002). In this view, the outputs of change management emerge via the daily interactions of participants (Burnes, 2012) whose self-organisation is shaped by the dominant logic within the complex environment (Blomme, 2012). Management of emergent change is therefore based on orientating empowered actors (Petrie and Swanson, 2018) and coordinating activity across complex organisational forms, such as networks.

The emergent view of change is compatible with a post-modern perspective as it emphasises the constitutive nature of social interaction upon change management, and recognises the impact of power dynamics when coordinating change (Weick, 2000). However this perspective is not without

challenges, as it can be difficult to confidently link the outputs of change to emergent techniques, due to their contingent and ever-adaptive nature (Ibid). This is no doubt exacerbated by the lack of a consistent view around what actually counts as an emergent change management technique (Burnes, 2009).

By way of contrast, the planned perspective on change management emphasises the importance of a clearly defined beginning, middle and end (Aggerholm and Thomsen, 2020) which follows a standardised and “carefully phased approach” (Ghosal and Bartlett, 2000, p196). This approach is dominated by mechanistic models and tools, such as Lean Six Sigma and the PRINCE2 methodology (Fitzgerald and Biddle, 2020), which privilege a clearly delimited set of supposedly rationalistic actions (Jabri, 2012). However this emphasis on “market logic and instrumental rationality” (Shaw, Hughes and Greenlagh, 2019, p245) is arguably incompatible with complex public sector organisations. Indeed, Falconer (2002) suggests that mechanistic approaches to complex change are inherently flawed, as the drive to overlay mechanisms of control over areas “largely antithetical to control must be wholly inefficient” (p119). Hodgson (2002) takes this critique further and suggests that standard project management tools and techniques represent an “exhumation of the modernist emphasis on comprehensive planning and strict managerial control” (p810).

The literature is thus clear about questioning the efficacy of the planned response to change, when dealing with complexity. When viewed from a governmentality perspective, however, methods of planned change arguably have a significant impact upon the “conduct of conduct” of agents within

organisations (Dean, 2010, p18). In following a prescriptive sequence of standardised steps, planned change creates a veneer of legitimacy (Buchanan and Badham, 2020) whereby stakeholders are reassured by the technical rationality that the complex change is under control (Löfgren and Allen, 2019). A planned approach creates the impression of a rational programme of activity (Weick, 2000) which is steered using an apparently “politically-neutral toolkit of techniques appropriate for any type of activity in any sector” (Hodgson, 2002, p804). This wilful occlusion of the political realities of change management is a key part of ‘projectification’ theory, the notion that project management terminology reduces social interactions to a series of technical rationalised steps (Hodgson *et al.*, 2019, p3) and which leads to project and change initiatives being “construed as natural and taken for granted” (Chaib, 2019, p8). Planned methods of change thus directly evoke Foucault’s concept of discipline, as discussed in Section 2.1.4, as they set boundaries around potential actions. At the same time however, it could be argued that their inherent rigidity limits their potential effectiveness within complex environments.

From a change catalyst’s perspective then, the challenge lies in combining the two approaches to marry the momentum-driving properties of planned change with the responsiveness of emergent approaches. Pettigrew (2000) recommends that change management researchers should “discard dichotomous concepts such as planned and emergent processes” (p246), while Weick (2015) suggests that emergent approaches lay the groundwork for more planned approaches, and the two are not mutually exclusive. Emergent approaches to change are arguably more aligned to the complex

reality of modern organisations, with planned approaches playing a role in shaping perceptions and the power dynamics within those organisations. This thesis will argue that a key facet of the change catalyst's role is to articulate this hybrid approach, and to drive change related action that is responsive to the complex environment, through engagement the use of Foucauldian technologies. Within the context of this research, the main focus for organisational change management was the policy pilots utilised within the Provider Assurance Network.

### **3.3 Policy Pilots as a Method of Change Management**

A policy pilot is an experiment that is “geographically limited and restricted in time” (Ettelt, Mays and Allen, 2015, p320). Pilots are used to test out a proposed organisational change before any potential wider implementation (Hodgson *et al.*, 2019) and they are commonly used in the NHS and other public sector organisations (Goff *et al.*, 2021). Policy pilots are also a means for network metagovernors to delegate responsibility to local actors (Ettelt and Mays, 2019), which will be explored further in Section 3.5. Pilots embody the hybrid approach to emergent and planned change; they are a flexible response to uncertainty (Bailey *et al.*, 2017) which nonetheless relies upon a highly technical project management approach to drive progress (Bailey, Hodgson and Checkland, 2019). Through pilots, organisations attempt to achieve “manipulated emergence” (Harrison and Wood, 1999, p751) and capitalise upon the inherent flexibility of the pilot approach to drive change. Change catalysts play a key role in coordinating pilots by leveraging their

political properties to achieve change outcomes, tracking progress through the pilot lifecycle and carrying out network management activities.

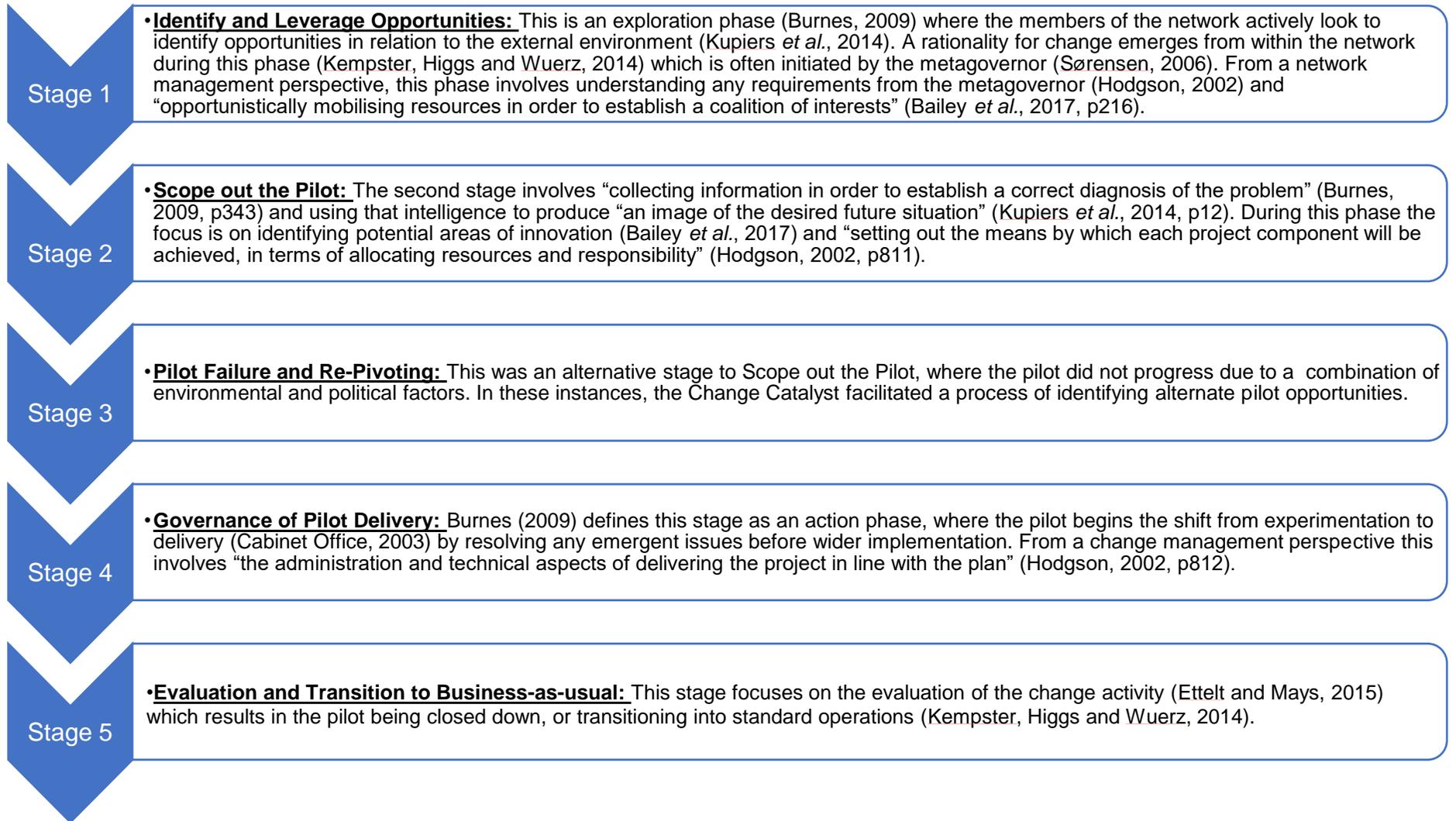
Due to their experimental nature, pilots often lack formal structure and are instead reliant upon cooperation between organisations (Ettelt and Mays, 2019). Individual actors are “responsibilised” (Bailey, Hodgson and Checkland, 2019, p142) to respond to the changing environment, with a certain degree of autonomy. However not everyone involved in the pilot will have the same expectations of its outcomes and in reality, there is a distinct political dimension to managing pilots. Pilots “actively frame or project the future” (Nair and Howlett, 2016, p67) in a way that “is presented as self-evidently rational” (Bailey, Hodgson and Checkland, 2019, p130). Change catalysts utilise their liminal status to move across organisational boundaries to propagate a particular change narrative. However, any pilot narrative that seeks to legitimise a particular policy decision is inevitably “based on upon the perspective of those defining the purpose of the pilot” (Ettelt, Mays and Allen, 2015, p328) which means that the very parameters of the experiment are shaped by vested political interests.

Pilots are ostensibly temporary, in that they exist to test a policy hypothesis, and they are contingent, in that the continuation of the policy beyond the pilot stage is based upon demonstrable success. The reality of piloting, though, is that the process is catalysed by the political will to test a policy position (Bailey *et al.*, 2017) and the spirit of experimentation can instead be used by policymakers to circumnavigate “complex relationships, uncertainties and expectations that they otherwise would have had to deal with more explicitly and laboriously” (Ettelt and Mays, 2019, p32). Change catalysts

purposefully engage in this political process to drive change outcomes, however Bailey, Hodgson and Checkland (2019) argue that the drive for accelerated implementation during pilots masks “questions about what “should” be done which ordinarily might be subject to lengthy deliberation” (p143) in favour of techno-rational queries about what is possible in the project timescales (Nair and Howlett, 2016). This can shape the discourse within a pilot to create a binary rationality of “deliver-not deliver” (Löfgren and Allen, 2019, p108) which privileges questions of ‘how’ the change can be implemented rather than ‘if’ it should be implemented (Hodgson *et al.*, 2019). Although this is a critical view of pilots, they do present unique opportunities for “delivering both controllability and adventure” (Bailey, Hodgson and Checkland, 2019 p133) but this thesis will argue these opportunities need to be investigated to understand what political impact the positionality of the change catalyst has upon the progress of pilots.

In order to explore how the change catalyst’s wielding of technologies impacted upon the delivery of change management activities, it was necessary to develop a theoretical basis for a pilot lifecycle. This lifecycle was used as a frame to analyse the impacts of Foucauldian technologies on change activities that drove the progress of pilots and was synthesised from the literature and an initial analysis of ethnographic data. These stages were used to develop the codebook for categorising all data, for more information please see Appendix A. Please see the below diagram for an overview of the different stages in the lifecycle:

Figure 6: Pilot Lifecycle



These stages were used to structure the analysis of the change analyst's activities. There were four pilots observed during the ethnographic research phase. These were selected for observation because they were explicitly framed as pilots, occurred within the research timeframe and were led by the change catalyst. Covering Ophthalmic and General Practice services, there was significant variation between each pilot in terms of metagovernor involvement, challenges encountered and eventual outcomes. These will be explored in analysis Chapters 7, 8 and 9 but for specific metadata about the pilots please see Appendix B.

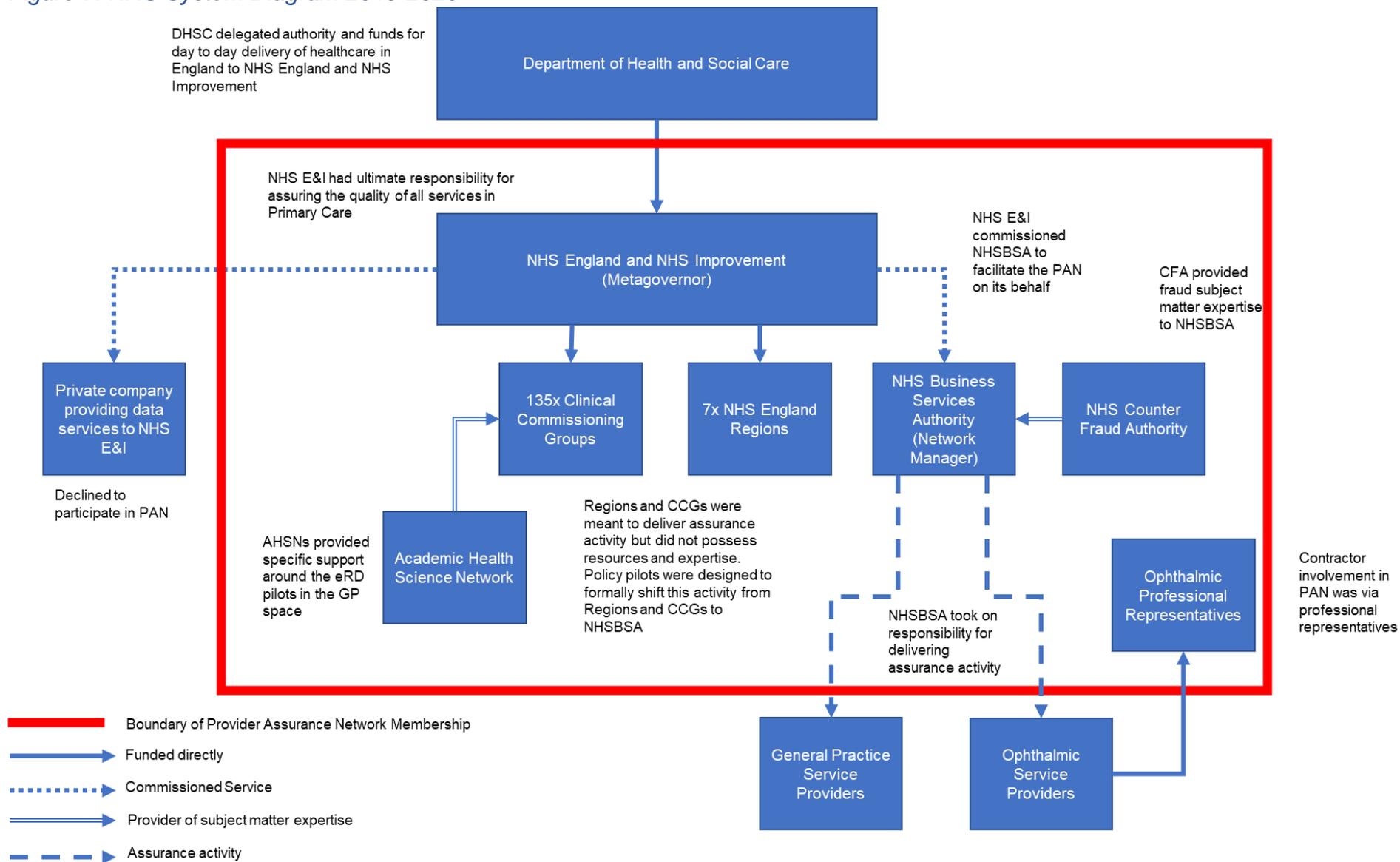
### **3.4 Change Management Within Complex NHS Networks**

van der Voet, Kupiers and Groeneveld (2015) suggest that a “high degree of environmental complexity forces public organisations to adopt a planned, top-down approach to change [...] which is itself limited by the complex environment” (p298). The complexity of public sector organisations like the NHS stems from the ever-increasing demand on services (Rowe and Hogarth, 2005) and entangled power dynamics that are characterised by “checks and balances, shared power, divergent interests and political oversight” (Aggerholm and Thomsen, 2020, p201). In order to understand how this complexity can impact upon the implementation of organisational change, Fitzgerald (2017c) argues that one must appreciate the context of the organisation. The following section will therefore outline the environmental context of the NHS, before focusing specifically on the Provider Assurance

Network. This will establish the specific ethnographic context for examining the change catalyst's interaction with disciplinary technologies.

Formed in 1948, the National Health Service in England (NHS) is the largest healthcare system in Europe. The NHS provides services that are free at the point of contact and has the potential to impact on the daily lives of the 55.98 million people in England. Furthermore, the NHS is currently the fifth largest single employer in the world- employing 1.4 million people in a wide variety of clinical and non-clinical roles (Kingsfund, 2020). For an indication of the sheer complexity of the NHS system, please see Figure 7 below, which sets out the context of the Provider Assurance Network:

Figure 7: NHS System Diagram 2019-2020



While commonly referred to in the singular, in reality the NHS is a complex multi-faceted system comprised of hundreds of organisations. The NHS is nominally led by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), who set overall strategy and allocate funding. As of 2020, the operational structure of the NHS consisted of 218 NHS trusts, legal entities designed to provide a range of specialist and general health services (NHS England, 2019a) and 135 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), clinically-led statutory bodies responsible for the commissioning of GP services at the local level (NHS Clinical Commissioners, 2020). DHSC also had 15 arms-length bodies, or quangos, which provided a range of governance and support functions (Department of Health and Social Care, 2020). The largest of these was NHS England, which had regional teams that worked directly with Trusts and CCGs to ensure effective delivery of services. Patient facing services within Primary Care, consisting of General Practice, Dental, Pharmaceutical and Ophthalmic services, were delivered by independent contractors (National Audit Office, 2019). These contractors were governed by “contractual arrangements that are particularly complex” (NHS England, 2019b, p38). Responsibility for assuring GP services sat with CCGs, while NHS England was responsible for assuring Dental, Pharmaceutical and Ophthalmic services.

This complex structure was created as a direct consequence of the 2012 Health and Social Care act, which has been described as “the single biggest upheaval in the history of the NHS” (Timmins, 2018, p33). By introducing CCGs and replacing Primary Care Trusts, the Act essentially

created an internal market within the NHS whereby any suitable body could vie to provide services. This paradigmatic shift signalled a desire by the Conservative government to improve the sustainability of the NHS, the rationale being that neo-liberal market forces would help foster innovation and bolster growth within the NHS eco-system (Davies, 2014). All of which was ostensibly done in the name of patient care.

Krachler and Greer (2015) however suggest that the effectiveness of this process of marketisation was fatally undermined by the system-wide funding cuts by the Conservative government of the 2010s. This raft of spending cuts, commonly referred to as austerity, resulted in a range of government programmes designed to reduce public sector spend, partly as a response to the 2007 global economic crisis (Pearce, 2019). The Conservative government therefore aimed to “remould state institutions, state agencies and individuals, in ways that were compatible with a market ethos” (Davies, 2014, p7) just as that market ethos was becoming less viable due to the wider global recession. In establishing a neo-liberal “quasi-market” (Timmins, 2018, p10), the reforms of the Health and Social Care Act created a plurality of service provision within the NHS; a plurality that was to be overseen and guided by a new organisation, NHS England.

#### 3.4.1 Governance of the NHS: the Role of NHS England

The NHS operates in a massively complex governance system (Storey, 2011) which is not governed in a top-down fashion (Chaib, 2019). The NHS, like health systems across the world, is under increasing pressure from

“growing and ageing populations” (Fitzgerald and Biddle, 2020, p345) and Hunter *et al* (2015) suggest that health care system must be capable of undertaking transformational change to survive and meet those pressures. The challenge of delivering the complex transformational change agenda in England sat with NHS England.

Formed in 2013 as a direct consequence of the Health and Social Care Act, NHS England was a statutory independent arms-length body of DHSC. NHS England had responsibility for: allocating the majority of healthcare spend across the system, delegating authority and fund to CCGs to support local commissioning, and directly commissioning approximately £20 billion worth of services predominately within Primary Care (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019). In 2019 NHS England published the Long-Term Plan (LTP), which set out the priorities and future operating model of the NHS. A successor to the Five Year Forward View, the LTP was a roadmap used to justify a £20.5 billion increase in the NHS budget by the Conservative government (NHS England, 2019c).

The NHS is an eco-system that exists in a state of continuous flux, marked by “frequent organisational changes, periodic scandals and occasional prophecies of impending collapse” (Klein, 2013, pV). With the LTP, NHS England set out a broad rationality that attempted to steer the course of continuous change within the eco-system. Core to that rationality was a commitment to improving patient care; a commitment that is underpinned by meeting the increased demand for services (NHS England, 2019c) and demonstrating value for money in the age of austerity (Krachler and Greer,

2015). Furthermore, the LTP clearly conveyed a desire to innovate and improve the standards of care for patients (Charles *et al.*, 2019).

Timmins (2018) suggests that NHS England was created in an attempt to de-politicise the NHS by ensuring operational independence from government ministers and thus insulate the NHS from the negative impact of ideological shifts between governments. To that end, NHS England took on a direct legal and moral responsibility to ensure that day-to-day services within the NHS were delivered “effectively, efficiently and economically” (NHS England, 2018, p17). In order to meet this obligation, NHS England formed the NHS Provider Assurance Network (PAN) as a means of “facilitating the effective management of Primary Care contracts and the activity delivered under those contracts” (Ibid, p11). Working in partnership with NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA), the PAN was comprised of dedicated NHSBSA personnel, clinical specialists in NHS England regional teams, senior commissioners from NHS England, fraud specialists from NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA) and professional representatives from Primary Care contractor groups.

NHSBSA facilitated interactions across the network to enable “a risk-based approach to loss and fraud management” (NHSBSA, 2020a, p12). This involved utilising performance data to identify contractors who were statistical outliers in terms of claiming patterns. The dedicated Provider Assurance team at NHSBSA then engaged with the identified contractor to provide education and guidance and recover funds where necessary (NHSBSA, 2020b). The parameters around these interventions were developed collaboratively across the network and appropriate escalations were built into the process. The

intended impact of these interventions was to create a “deterrence effect” whereby the promotion of the network’s activities would reduce the overall levels of fraud among Primary Care contractors (NHS England, 2019d, p104) and meet NHS England’s statutory responsibilities. There was also a tacit understanding that the PAN’s aim was also to “remove variation and inconsistencies of approach to post-payment verification” which was caused by NHS England’s previously resource constrained approach to assurance (NHSBSA, 2018, p1). Between 2018 and 2020, NHS England launched a series of policy pilots to explore the possibility of transferring the responsibility for contract assurance to NHSBSA. The change catalyst’s role in implementing those pilots formed the empirical basis for this research, with data being collected through an ethnographic approach. The next section will provide a theoretical context for exploring how the change catalyst facilitated change management activity within a complex network such as the PAN.

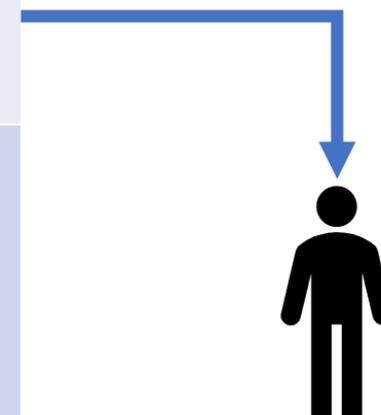
### **3.5 Coordination of Change in Network Environments: Relationship Between the Metagovernor and Network Manager**

Chapter 2 outlined a view of how individuals come to be formed as productive subjects, within a specific organisational setting. From a change management perspective, the question then becomes how can bounded autonomy be inculcated within a network environment, or in Rose’s (1998) terms “how can free individuals be governed so that they enact their freedom appropriately” (p29). However Foucauldian theories on power do not explicitly address how these standards emerge, beyond reference to disciplinary

practices of institutions. Within a network environment though, where there is ostensibly no single dominant actor, how are these standards established? Where does the “dominant logic of change” (Weick, 2000, p228) come from? This thesis will suggest that a key enabler for bounded autonomy to emerge within a network environment is frequent and meaningful interactions between the network’s metagovernor and the network manager. This relationship is represented in Figure 8 below:

Figure 8: Network Roles Overview

Role in Network	Description	Organisations that fulfilled role within Provider Assurance Network
Metagovernor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulates high level rationale for change</li> <li>• Can act as point of escalation when there are issues in the network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS England</li> </ul>
Network Manager (organisation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinates activity in line with change rationality</li> <li>• Coordinates daily interactions with agents</li> <li>• Participate in network activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Business Services Authority</li> </ul>
Network Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes towards ongoing refinement of change rationality</li> <li>• Participate in network activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS England Regional Teams (x7)</li> <li>• Clinical Commissioning Groups (x135)</li> <li>• NHS Counter Fraud Authority</li> <li>• Academic Health Science Network</li> <li>• Ophthalmic Professional Representatives</li> </ul>



Specific facilitation activities were coordinated by the change catalyst role

### 3.5.1 The Network Metagovernor

Section 2.4.1 set out the concept of metagovernance; a mode of governance that aims to enable the self-organisation of networks without the organising body, or metagovernor, directly intervening. Metagovernors act upon their networks from a distance (Torfing, 2022), aim to create a sense of community within the network (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016b) and attempt to clearly establish its context and aims (Sørensen, 2006). The metagovernor cannot directly control the complex process of meaning formation within the network but rather provides a stewardship function and support to other network participants (Hallsworth, 2011).

While metagovernors generally take a non-interventionist stance (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016b), they can also be direct participants in networks (Molin and Masella, 2016). Indeed, Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) suggest that in some cases; the intervention of metagovernors to force agreement between agents in dispute, is vital to the successful coordination of the network. The risk on those occasions is that the metagovernor potentially destabilises the normative framework of the network by being perceived to threaten the autonomy of the other participants. In this view, NHS England can be conceptualised as the Provider Assurance Network's metagovernor; a leading agent who provides non-directive oversight and guidance (Haveri *et al.*, 2009).

For some theorists however the concept of a single actor who steers the network is antithetical; Triantafillou (2007) disputes the influence of a unitary metagovernor while Provan and Kenis (2008) suggest that the concept

of governance facilitated by a lead actor, with its associations of hierarchy and control, may be inappropriate. Scharpf (1994) takes this suggestion further and concludes that even though metagovernors may present themselves as just another agent, in reality they are operating within the “shadow of hierarchy” (p37); in that the positionality of the metagovernor, in terms of legitimacy and resources, inevitably causes network participants to defer to the metagovernor.

Kickert (1997b) however approaches this tension from a different perspective, suggesting that networks occupy an interstitial space where autonomy and governance are not mutually exclusive; instead given the complex nature of the environment it may be possible for meta-governors to influence and steer without directly impacting on the autonomy of other agents. Kickert’s perspective is useful in terms of situating the metagovernor in relation to effects of disciplinary power, as it suggests that the effectiveness of the metagovernor stems not from hierarchical position but from their ability to influence discourse within the network. The metagovernor is supported in promoting the self-regulation of actors through network management activities.

### 3.5.2 The Network Manager

If metagovernance is the organisation of self-organisation, then network management is the quotidian facilitation of agent interactions. Network management is the hands-on administration of activities “aimed at facilitating interactions, exploring [new] content and organising interactions between

actors” (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2012, p591). Network managers, robustly grounded in the change rationality espoused by the metagovernor, help steer the deliberations of the network into concrete actions (Iedema *et al.*, 2017). Within the literature, the term “network manager” is used interchangeably to refer to activities of a leading organisation within the network and the change management activities of an individual agent. For the sake of clarity, this thesis will use the term “network manager” to refer to the NHS Business Services Authority, who led on the facilitation of the Provider Assurance Network. Individual activities were undertaken by the change catalyst role, who was substantively employed by the network manager NHSBSA.

NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) was an arm’s length body of DHSC and was formed in 2006 when five legacy organisations, including the Prescription Pricing Authority, were merged (NHSBSA, 2020c). NHSBSA had historically been directly funded by DHSC and its stated purpose was to become “a catalyst for the better health” (NHSBSA, 2019, p3) by exploiting its organisational capacities to support national initiatives and help deliver the NHS England Long Term Plan (LTP). The LTP had the stated aim of “accelerating the redesign of patient care to future-proof the NHS for the decade ahead” (NHS England, 2019c, p6). In linking itself to the delivery of this monumental undertaking NHSBSA arguably intended to establish itself as “delivery partner of choice” for the health and social care system (Ibid, p7).

NHSBSA’s status as network manager within the NHS Provider Assurance Network stemmed from its ability to deliver “a range of high volume, transactional and business services to support the day to day running of the NHS” (NHSBSA, 2020a, p4) in response to the emerging needs of key

stakeholders such as DHSC and NHS England. The ability of the network manager to anticipate and respond to the needs of the organisations within the network is therefore vital (De Bruijn and Ringeling, 1997). Anticipating these needs in turn allows the network manager to “bind actors and force new solutions that appeals to the various actors whose resources are required to implement solutions” (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2012, p593).

As the metagovernor and network manager of the Provider Assurance Network, NHS England and NHSBSA closely collaborated on policy-setting while NHSBSA managed the day-to-day facilitation of the network. The network manager also played a key role in “promoting and legitimising a particular regime of truth” (Waring and Martin, 2016, p146), for example inculcating a patient-care focused rationality within the Provider Assurance Network. In propagating a regime of truth, the network manager can help create coherence and inform the bounded autonomy of actors by espousing “shared values, sharing knowledge and social imaginaries” (Molin and Masella, 2016, p494).

The concept of network management is not unproblematic, however. The network manager, in this case NHSBSA, will invariably also be an active participant in the network. As such, there is a potential risk that they can use their influence within the network to gain an unfair advantage over other participants (Brujin and Heuvelhof, 1997). However, as Klijn and Edelenbos (2016) point out the activities and competencies associated with network management are under-researched and a key research theme will be exploring how the change catalyst was able to use their positionality to influence change outcomes within the network. The below sections outline

some of the specific network management interventions outlined in the literature.

### 3.5.2.1 Network Management Activity: Managing Consensus and Perceptions

If networks are viewed as a “consensus orientated mode of coordination” (Davies, 2011, p14) then achieving consensus is vital for the effective governing of a network. Establishing consensus between semi-autonomous actors is a key enabler for the exercise of disciplinary power (Haugaard, 2017) and in the absence of a single dominant actor, consensus enables participants within a network to “encourage the mutual adjustment of actor’s behaviours” (Davies, 2011, p13) as a means of achieving the network’s aims. The equitable exchange of ideas and opinions to form a consensus is a key enabler for the effective functioning of networks, creating a sense of cohesion (Koppenjan, 2016), which in turn can give rise to a sense of collective ownership among the network participants (Sehested, 2009). Collective ownership, when viewed as a power-effect, also aids self-organisation in that agents organise in relation to the perceived aims and objectives of the network (Jessop, 2002).

In the absence of hierarchy, the extent of collaboration between participants is determined by the frequency and quality of interaction between those agents (Reagans and Zuckerman, 2001). Network management is thus concerned with facilitating the creation of an environment which is conducive to those interactions taking place (Sørensen and Torfing, 2017). Even so, the requirement for frequent interactions between autonomous actors could be

described as potentially inefficient. Indeed, De Bruijn and Ringeling (1997) caution that this dependence on exchange between autonomous actors can lead to “*stroperigheid*” or “*treacliness*” (p158), in that decision making is vastly slowed down and made sluggish by the necessary collaborations and checkpoints. Sørensen and Torfing (2009) partially support this view by suggesting that facilitating collaboration in this way has high transaction costs for the facilitator, in terms of time and resources required. Meanwhile Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti (1997) pose a challenge to these points by claiming that any increased transaction costs are ultimately offset by the benefits that networks afford over markets and hierarchical models of coordination (p913).

Establishing agreement about a course of action radically alters the fields of possible action, in that any options that fall outside the discourse of consensus are (potentially) discounted. This management of possibilities is further enabled by the network manager as they strive to create a wider harmonisation of perceptions within the network. Indeed, intensive interactions between agents underpins any attempt to manage perceptions (van Hulst and Yanow, 2016) and helps give rise to the social configurations which govern activity within the network. Termeer and Koppenjan (1997) define perceptions “as an image through which the complex ambiguous world which surrounds actors can be made sense of and acted upon” (p82). Rather than directly impacting upon individual perceptions, change catalysts can harmonise perceptions by utilising prior consensus to establish a common goal across the network (Klijn, Koppenjan and Termeer, 1995) and by taking a lead role in facilitating the engagement processes which help identify/construct the overall aims and objectives.

Facilitating the convergence of perceptions is a means of enacting disciplinary power because it directly impacts on the fields of possibilities that are open to actors. Perceptions affect actions and by influencing perceptions through goal intertwining, change catalysts/network managers can “structure the possible fields of action for another” (Foucault, 1994b, p341). Perception harmonisation therefore has the potential to determine “not only whether certain demands come to be expressed and needed but also whether such demands will ever cross people’s minds” (Gordon, Kornberger and Clegg, 2009, p17).

Perception harmonisation is not without its drawbacks however, the issue being that dominant actors within the network have the potential to create a mobilisation of bias (Clegg, 1989), and steer the discursive formation for their purposes. For while the network’s discursive framework can be influenced to enable the facilitation of organisational change, it also has the potential to be harnessed for more nefarious means. This will be addressed in Chapter 9.

#### 3.5.2.2 Network Management Activity: Change Governance of Pilots

One of the primary sites of interaction between the metagovernor and the network manager is through the governing of change. Change governance, which in this context is positioned as a sub-set of network governance, refers to the transparent and accurate monitoring of organisational change against defined goals (Müller, 2009) while simultaneously “providing the required support to change leaders to enable

them to deliver their outcomes” (Volden and Andersen, 2018, p176). As set out in Section 3.3, pilots are experimental instances of change designed to empirically test change hypotheses before wider implementation. In order to evaluate results against that hypothesis, effective visibility of outcomes is essential. Change governance achieves this by creating a central point within the network, which all information must pass through (Rose and Miller, 2008).

Responsibility for coordinating this process typically sits with the network manager, who is responsible for coordinating daily interactions within the network on behalf of the metagovernor. Robust governance enables the network manager to monitor progress, identify any issues and put mitigating actions in place (AXELOS Ltd, 2017). However, it also represents an opportunity for the network manager to showcase progress to the metagovernor (Derakhshan, Turner and Mancini, 2019) by “tactically and strategically” demonstrating the value of the change initiative (Volden and Andersen, 2018, p175).

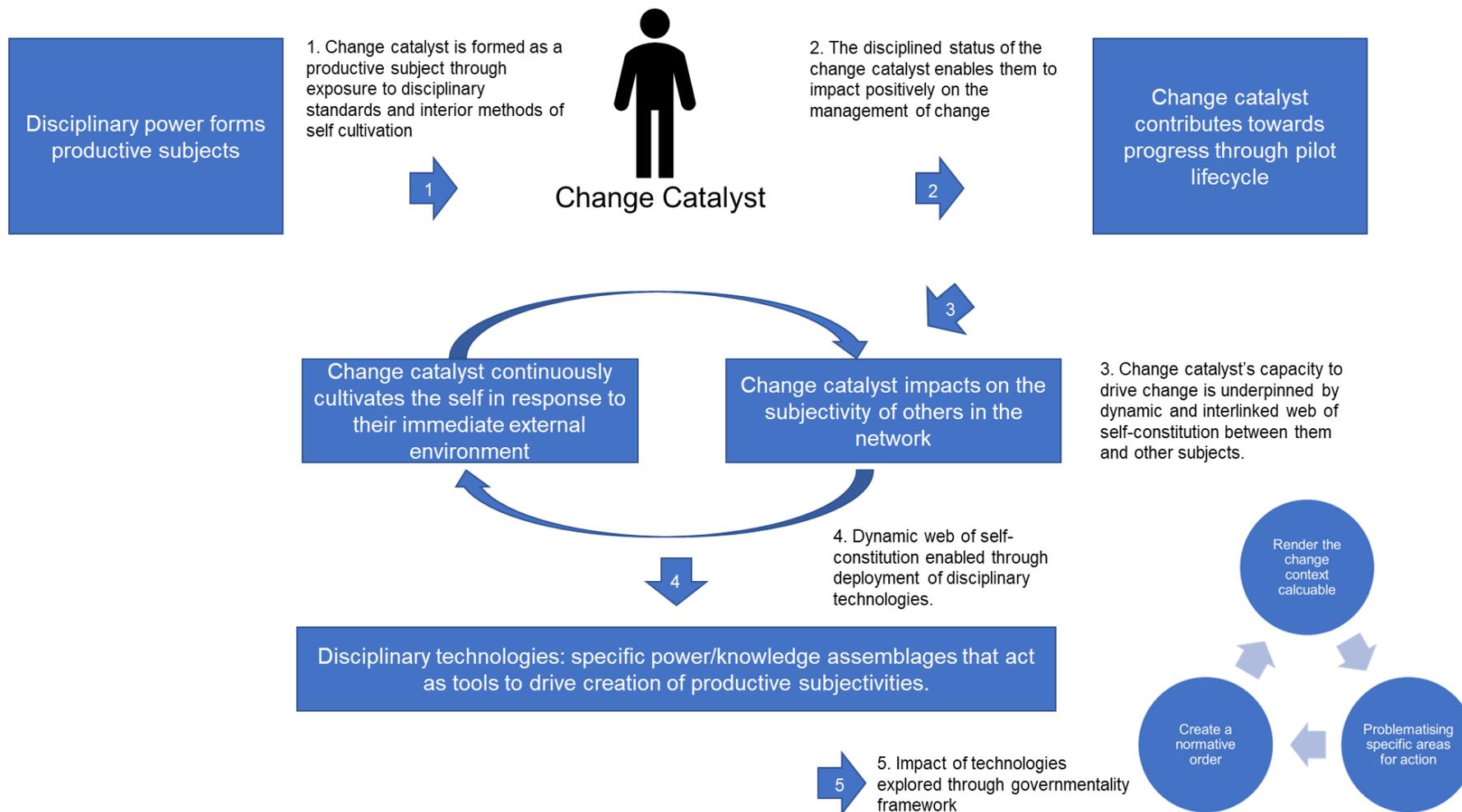
Ostensibly the purpose of change governance is to coordinate activity at an organisational level. At the same time however, governance impacts on individuals by inculcating bounded autonomy (as outlined in Section 2.2). By monitoring an individual’s progress against a defined plan, governance “entails shifting responsibilities for social risks [...] into the domain of which the individual is responsible” (Lemke, 2001, p201). In this view, change governance could be viewed as a method of surveillance that enables “self-supervision to become reflexive” (Clegg *et al.*, 2002, p318). Change governance therefore represents a tangible intersection between governmentality in practice (as defined in Section 2.5) and metagovernance

(set out in Section 3.5.1), as it arguably permeates the boundaries between individual self-cultivation, the cultivation of bounded autonomy in teams and the coordination of change within networks. The methods by which this process is enabled by the change catalyst will be explored in Chapter 9.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary and Holistic Conceptual Model**

The key unit of analysis for this thesis is the role of the change catalyst, and how they contribute towards driving organisational change. A diagram showing the integrated power and change management conceptual model can be seen in Figure 9 below:

Figure 9: Overarching Conceptual Map, Combining Theory on Power and Change Management



Change catalysts are formed as productive subjects through a complex interplay between external disciplinary standards and internal methods of self-cultivation. Chapter 2 established a theoretical basis for understanding how individuals become optimised for their particular context, by becoming enmeshed within disciplinary standards. In the case of the change catalyst, becoming optimised would mean being able to positively impact on social responses to change, also known as change management. In the context of this thesis, change management refers to the specific activities that enabled progress through the pilot lifecycle discussed in Section 3.3.

The purpose of this conceptual model was to establish a theoretical frame which would provide a solid basis for the collection and analysis of ethnographic data. A key element of this framing was the notion that cultivating a disciplined subjectivity was a direct enabler for the change catalyst's capacity to facilitate change activities. Specifically, this led to the idea that the change catalyst's self-cultivation in response to disciplinary standards had an impact on the self-cultivation of other agents in the network. Change activities, as a social response to a complex environment, were thus potentially driven by this complex interdependent web of self-constitution, as productive subjects collaborated and informed one another's subjectivity. This process was also informed by the relationship between the network metagovernor and the network manager, which arguably set the scene for how disciplinary power would come to impact upon the change. But what enabled this process?

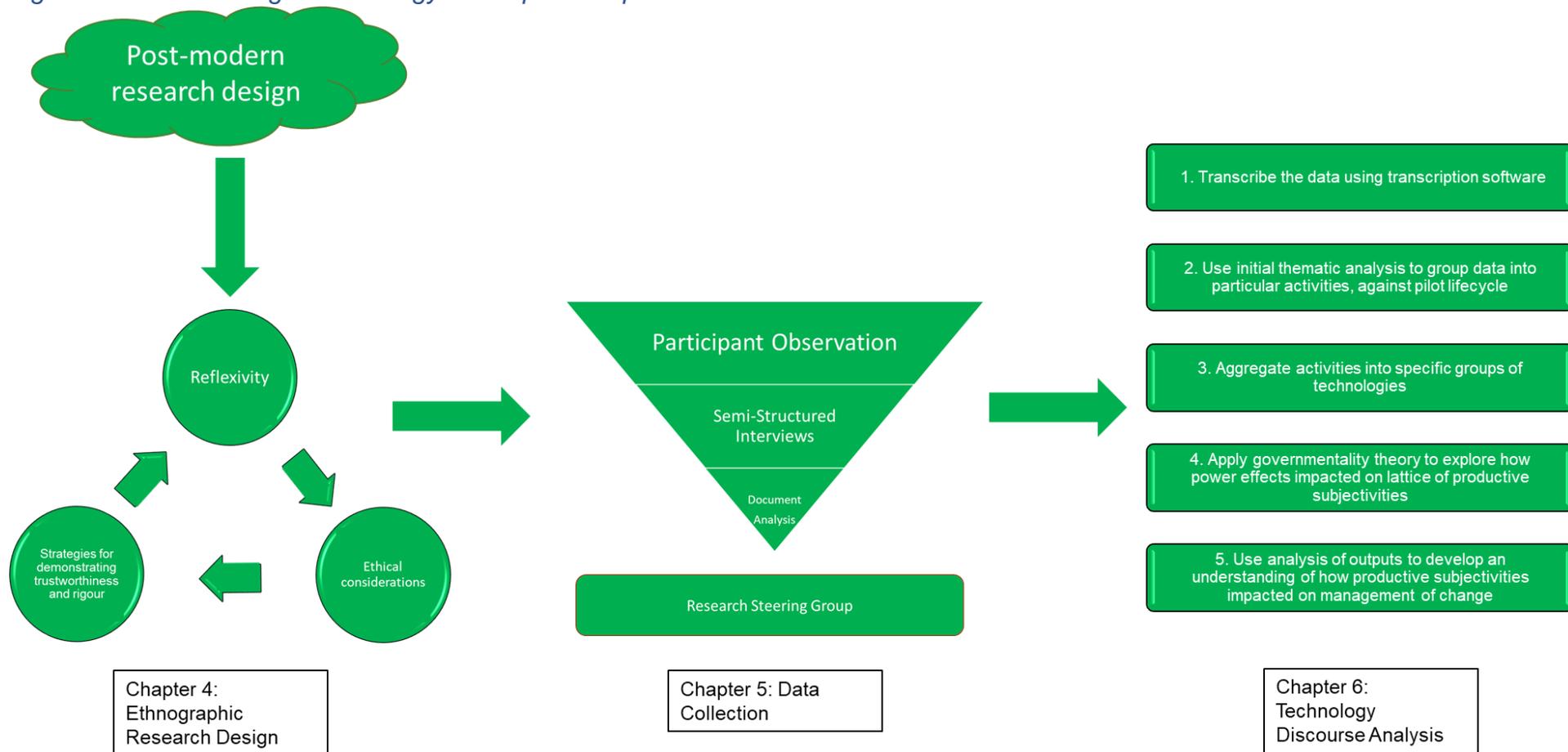
If the key unit of analysis was the activities of the change catalyst, then the specific phenomenon being examined was how Foucauldian technologies gave rise to specific power effects, which in turn nurture productive

subjectivities at the individual, team and network levels. As set out in Section 2.5.1, technologies are specific assemblages of power/knowledge that act as tools, in that they drive specific social actions. The literature is vague on the specific nature of this phenomenon and unpicking how technologies inform and are informed by the change catalyst's subjectivity will be the lens through which the key research questions, set out in Chapter 1, will be answered. The practical steps around how this was achieved are set out in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Post-modern Ethnographic Research Design**

Chapters 4-6 provide an overview of the methodology used to answer the key research question of this thesis. This methodology was used to structure the fifteen months spent by the Researcher carrying out ethnographic research within their substantive workplace, the NHS Provider Assurance network, between 2019 and 2020. Chapter 4 will begin by engaging with Foucauldian postmodernist research philosophy and its implications for insider ethnographic research design, specifically with regards to sustained reflexive practice. Chapter 5 will outline the data collection methods used, namely participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Data collection was supported and supplemented by the facilitation of a Research Steering Group, comprised of members from the Provider Assurance Network, who were able to provide input into theory development and interpretation. Finally, Chapter 6 will suggest a new method of discourse analysis, termed Technology Discourse Analysis, which was designed to provide a robust method for engaging with Foucauldian technologies and disciplinary power. Figure 10 sets out a conceptual map for the overarching methodology of this thesis.

Figure 10: Overarching Methodology Conceptual Map



The primary purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of how change catalysts utilise and internalise disciplinary power to facilitate organisational change within the NHS. In order to critically engage with this question and develop an appreciation for how Foucauldian technologies impact on the self-governing conduct of individuals within complex networks, the Researcher consciously adopted a post-modern research philosophy.

From a methodological perspective, post-modernism questions the truth-seeking aspirations of conventional social science (Alvesson, 2002). Instead, the focus is on analysing how discursive formations within social environments are deployed to achieve specific effects (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2011), with power being diffused across a “world that is fragmented and chaotic” (Ozeum, Howell and Lancaster, 2016, p275). This encourages researchers to pivot away from viewing truth as an objective concept (McWilliam, 2003) and towards viewing truth as a “composite view of how people think about institutions and each other” (Lincoln and Guba, 2001, p88). In this view, it is not possible to produce a definitive account of social phenomena, as there are multiple potential realities (Creswell and Poth, 2018) depending on the positionality of researchers and research participants. Postmodernistically-inspired research methodologies, including ethnographic approaches, therefore focus on “engaging and developing divergent interpretations of the real” (Tamboukou and Ball, 2003, p5). The rationale in adopting a post-modern research philosophy, stems from the Researcher’s desire to unpick how the being-in-the-world of individuals is shaped by power dynamics within a change context.

In this view, subjectivity/individuality is not a biological given (Digeser, 1992) and by focusing on specific instances of power use (in this case within the NHS Provider Assurance network), the aim was to develop an understanding of how the conduct of individuals can be shaped to nurture behaviours that are productive (le Blanc, 2016). This approach involves striking a balance between “endless reflexivity and radical scepticism with a sense of direction” (Alvesson, 2002, p15) in order to produce a robust account. But it is one that also foregrounds the artificial nature of social science research; emphasising the positionality of researchers within the research text and critically engaging with how the “messy research process” is concealed in favour of a “seamless narrative” (Leitch and Palmer, 2010, p1209). This critical reflexivity proved invaluable as it enabled the Researcher to use reflexive practice to enrich the data collection process and make use of positionality to address the key research question.

A common critique of post-modernist social theory is that it can potentially “relapse into moral relativism because of its tendency to dissolve all fixed points of reference” (Clegg, 1989, p151). While an imbalanced wielding of post-modern theories and toolkits can lead down a nihilistic path, Alvesson (2002) suggests a balanced and pragmatic approach can enable researchers to render the familiar unfamiliar. In doing so, it may be possible to remove taken-for-granted assumptions about how individuals come to be formed (Dean, 2010) and potentially reveal that our sense of being-in-the-world is not inevitable, could have been different and could still be changed. The following section will provide an overview of the ethnographic research

design which was used to operationalise this post-modernistically inspired approach.

#### **4.1 Insider Ethnographic Research Design**

Ethnography is a research design originating in anthropology and can be used by researchers to develop an understanding of the values, behaviours and beliefs of a community or group (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Ethnographic practice is defined by long periods of immersion in a research setting (Rachel, 1996), typically requiring hundreds of hours of observation over many months or years (Pearson and Rowe, 2020). While most examples of ethnography involve the insertion of a researcher into a previously unfamiliar setting (van der Waal, 2009), this research was deliberately designed to focus on the then-current workplace and organisational setting of the Researcher. The rationale behind this was to use ethnography's capacity to "[synthesise] theory and practice (praxis)" (Howell, 2013, p119) and explore the lived environment of the Researcher, unpicking how their usage of Foucauldian technologies influenced the progression of policy pilots.

Insider ethnography is known by a number of terms, including at-home ethnography (Alvesson, 2009) and insider research (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007). Essentially, insider ethnography involves a researcher studying their substantive employment setting to draw attention to their cultural context (Alvesson, 2003). Commonly undertaken by part-time PhD students who are "simultaneously situated in the overlapping worlds of public administration and scholarship" (Wessels, 2021,p11), insider ethnography is a fruitful yet

potentially perilous undertaking. The process can feel extremely exposing for researchers as it “involves opening up the intimate details of one’s life to public inspection” (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2013, p253) which can take a psychological toll (Moore, 2007). This is exacerbated by the need to retain the dual perspective of researcher and participant, which can fundamentally change a researcher’s relationship with their environment (Rachel, 1996) and with their sense of self. Insider ethnography is a fundamentally iterative process, and continuous adaptation to the emerging environment was essential.

This blurring of roles aligns to the post-modernist perspective as it challenges many of the dichotomies associated with traditional ethnography; between insider and outsider (Parry and Boyle, 2009) and between research and practice (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2013). The aim in decentring these dichotomies within this thesis stemmed from a desire to uncover how power is discursively deployed (Clegg, 2009) and utilised by agents in an organisational setting (McGibbon, Peter and Gallop, 2010). The rationale for utilising insider ethnography was thus to explore the discursive nature of disciplinary power through the prism of the Researcher’s positionality. Like postmodernism, insider ethnography disputes the possibility of value-free inquiry in the social sciences (Lincoln and Guba, 2001). Rather than aspiring to an objective stance and avoiding subjectivity, insider ethnography strives for a reflexive critical approach that is grounded in a rigorous methodology.

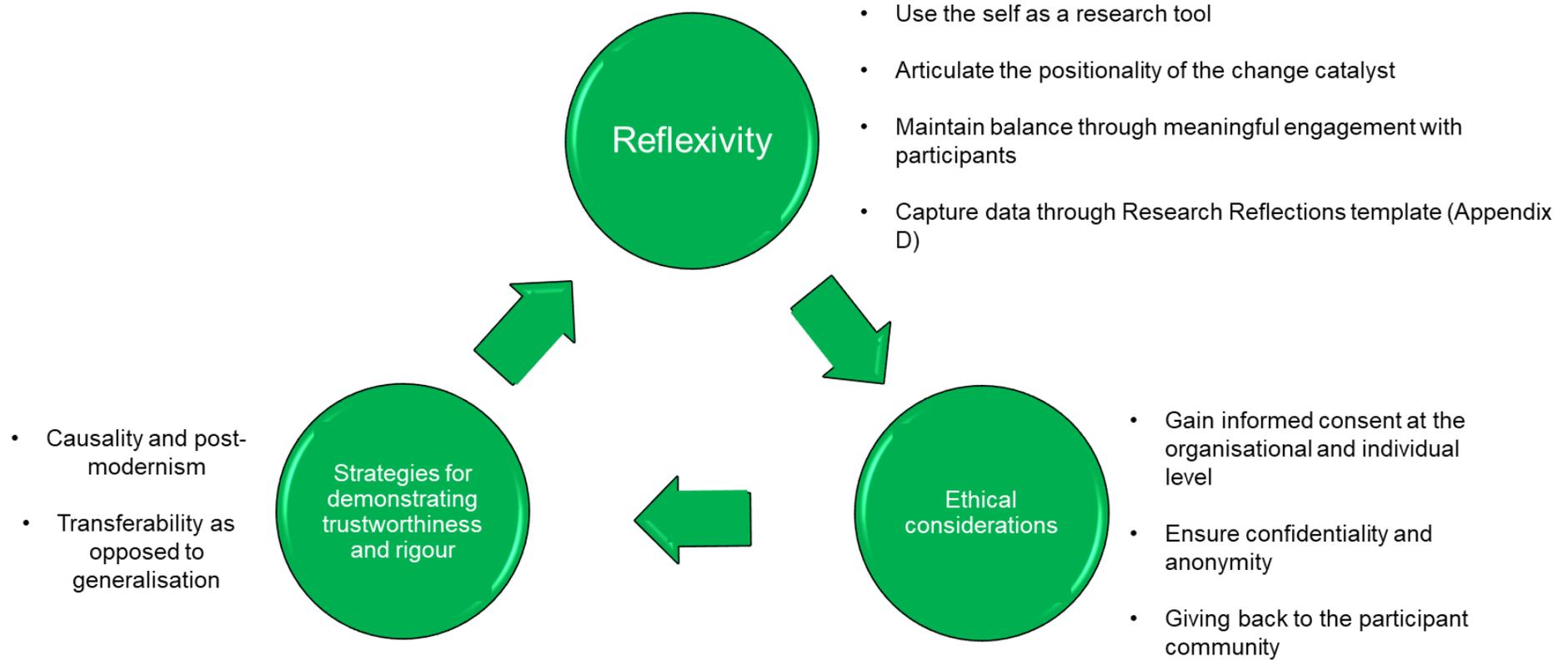
Reframing one’s lived environment as a research setting requires the insider researcher to critically examine taken-for-granted assumptions about their daily experiences (Toren, 1996). This can pose challenges, as Delyser

(2001) suggests that the closeness of the insider researcher to their environment can inhibit their “ability to step back from a situation and fully assess the circumstances” (p441), as total immersion can lead to the researcher being “swept along by the prevailing current and conventions of the organisation” (Moore, 2007, p30). The onus is thus placed on the insider researcher to develop strategies for “turning the exotic familiar and the familiar exotic” (van der Waal, 2009, p23). One strategy outlined by Alvesson (2000) suggests that de-familiarisation can be achieved by using a theoretical framework that is not traditionally used within the lived/research environment; while Marcus and Fischer (1986) advocate the use of frameworks that aim to disrupt notions of common sense. The Researcher would suggest that Foucauldian theories of disciplinary power and subjectivity meet both of these criteria. Another strategy used by the Researcher was a conscious decision to capture data naturalistically and in the first person, but then convert into the third person as part of the writing process (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995). Converting the text in this way laid bare the constructed nature of the research account but also helped to “estrangle” the Researcher from their own “visceral experiences and first-hand accounts” (Wacquant, 2007, p264). This was inspired by Wacquant’s process of converting their manuscript from English to French as part of the writing process. Use of the third person perspective in writing is also more broadly palatable to academic audiences and its use signals a willingness to foster “interconnectedness” with the wider field of public administration (Wessels, 2021, p439).

If the obstacles can be overcome, insider ethnography offers potentially rich rewards. The blend of access, insider knowledge, and critical thinking can

enable researchers to articulate research questions that are culturally relevant for the host organisation (Kawulich, 2005); the answering of which is catalysed through the researcher's "pre-understanding" (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007, p68) of the ethnographic environment. Davies (2008) points out a risk in this approach however, as just because one has access to insider knowledge doesn't mean that the knowledge is "either unquestionably complete or true" (p221). That being said, a familiarity with the environment can help the insider ethnographer navigate the vast amount of data inevitably collected through ethnography (Dahlke *et al*, 2015) and ensure that theory development is grounded in the lived experiences of the participants (Alvesson, 2009). Some of the key considerations when deploying this approach are set out in Figure 11 below:

Figure 11: Key Considerations when Deploying Insider Ethnography



## 4.2 Reflexive Practice in the Context of Insider Ethnography

Actively using one's insider status, and overcoming the inevitable positional awkwardness, allows insider ethnographers to produce "richer, thicker descriptions that are more likely to represent the community" (Paechter, 2013, p75). The key to unlocking these benefits was for the Researcher to deploy reflexive practice in a deep and sustained manner. Reflexivity in ethnographic research is the conscious and systematic effort to view a subject from various possible angles (Cassell, 2009) by creating a "dialogue with the self about our fundamental assumptions" (Cunliffe and Jun, 2005, p228). Interactions between researchers and the research context cannot be avoided, it is the very essence of ethnographic research, so one must "either view it as a risk or an opportunity" (Lincoln and Guba, 2001, p94). To capitalise on the opportunity, insider researchers must engage in a confessional process whereby they acknowledge the self as a research tool (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2009) and use their perspective and positionality as a "means of coming to know, however imperfectly, other aspects of social reality" (Davies, 2008, p255). Reflexivity is thus a vital component in answering this thesis' research question, which focuses on understanding how the Researcher's positionality as a change catalyst influenced the delivery of policy pilots within the NHS Provider Assurance Network. Utilising reflexive practice allowed the Researcher to factor their lived experience into the research and "capture and convey the taste and the ache of action, the sound and fury of the social world" (Wacquant, 2007, pvii).

That is not to say that reflexivity is an excuse to lapse into self-absorption. Rather it allows researchers to view the self as interacting, altering, and being altered by other agents in the research setting (Moore, 2007; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009; Da Silveira E Silva *et al*, 2012). From a Foucauldian perspective, it also presents a crucial opportunity to critically engage with how one shapes the self (McWilliam, 2003) through the internalisation of disciplinary power. Clearly articulating the positionality of the Researcher, foregrounding their particular instance of being-in-the-world (as discussed in section 2.1.1), is a vital pre-requisite for authentic and robust reflexive practice. The insider ethnographer must lay bare their implicit assumptions, values, and existing relationships (King, 1996) and be cognisant of how their “gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach may affect observation, analysis and interpretation” (Kawulich, 2005, p6).

Understanding and addressing power imbalances are a key concern for reflexive practice (Creswell and Poth, 2018) and the Researcher had to actively consider what role they played in those power dynamics. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2013) suggest that reflexivity empowers researchers at the expense of participants; while Nencel (2014), adopting a critical feminist perspective, argues that reflexivity by management figures only re-enforces existing power imbalances. This was a categorical risk for this research that had to be addressed. Due to the privileged position of the Researcher (white, male, educated, financially stable and relatively senior within the ethnographic environment) and the research focus (power as a productive social force) there was a risk that this thesis could have become an apology for exploitative forms of power. Furthermore, it is also possible that reflexive practice may give rise

to an account mired in the “great-man tradition” which is “used to describe individual achievements based on a linear and goal-orientated interpretation of what constitutes a meaningful life” (Davies, 2008, p217). The primary method for mitigating these risks was to carry out meaningful and consistent engagement with research participants through the Research Steering Group. This group acted as a forum for discussing emerging theories and debating potential interpretations with participants, and in doing so enabled the Researcher to ground their interpretations. Engaging others in the research design and interpretation process was a key strategy in aiming for a more egalitarian research relationship (Nencel, 2014). This innovative approach will be explored further in Section 5.1.

Good standards of reflexive practice situate insider ethnographers as co-producers of ethnographic data (Kessl and Maurer, 2012) and foregrounds how research truth claims are situational and co-constructed with research participants (Ybema *et al.*, 2009). This stance is consistent with a post-modern research philosophy, as critical reflexivity enables the creative disturbance of taken-for-granted assumptions about the organisational environment (Pollner, 1991) and provides an opportunity to engage with multiple perspectives (Breuer, 2003) through its decentred use of the self. That being said, it is not easy to adopt and maintain reflexive practice (Cunliffe and Jun, 2005) and requires a robust approach to data gathering and “proper fieldwork habits” (van Maanen, 2011, p74).

Effective note taking is key to ethnographic study. Even when the majority of observations and interviews are recorded, robust field notes help identify salient points and streamline the analysis process. Field notes and

reflexive diaries function as raw data and should capture as much detail as possible about the daily events of the research setting (Toren, 1996; Alvesson, 2003; Coker *et al.*, 2013). Comprehensive note taking allows findings to emerge from the data rather than rely on pre-conceived notions (Kawulich, 2005) and reviewing notes in the field can aid insider ethnographers in re-focusing attention on unanticipated areas of interest (van der Waal, 2009). Traditionally field notes and reflexive diaries are kept separate (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995) but due to the key focus on the Researcher's positionality, the two forms of data collection were merged together. Inspired by Panourgia's (1995) method of simultaneously capturing personal and researcher perspectives, the Researcher designed a template that recorded events, feelings and initial theoretical implications (please see Appendix C for an example template). The rationale being to harness the best of both worlds: capture data around time, place, events and participants (Lincoln and Guba, 2001) while also recording "one's experiences and feelings" (van Maanen, 2011, p31). These reflexive field notes were catalogued alongside recordings and other salient data, such as publicly available documents. They were then incorporated into the data analysis process, adding to the richness of the data by providing a glimpse into the internal dialogue of the Researcher.

### **4.3 Ethical Considerations for Insider Ethnography**

Ethically guided practice is essential for modern ethnographic research, with emphasis being placed on researchers to demonstrate "their sensitivity and commitment to moral issues and action" (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p74).

This research had three main strategies for ensuring an ethical approach: 1) gain informed explicit consent from participants, 2) ensure confidentiality and anonymity, 3) give back to the participant community.

Following approval of the research thesis by the university ethics board, the first step was to obtain organisational-level consent from the different members of the NHS Provider Assurance Network. The Researcher contacted members of the Executive Leadership Teams of NHS Business Services Authority and NHS England to gain written permission to approach members of the organisation to take part in the research. NHS England's only stipulation was that the Researcher engage with the NHS Health Research Authority (HRA) to understand if their involvement was necessary. After discussion with the HRA it became apparent that their approval was not necessary, as the research did not involve patients.

Informed consent was also vital at the individual participant level. Fine and Shulman (2009) highlight the potential for ethnographers to act as manipulative suitors who can unduly influence participants into providing information. It is essential therefore that researchers provide participants with a comprehensive overview of what they are being asked to do. Similarly to Pearson and Rowe (2020), the Researcher provided participants with a two-page information sheet (please see Appendix D) and a consent form (please see Appendix E). Prior to any research activity the Researcher talked participants through the research rationale and methods, answering any questions and explicitly asking the participants if they consented to be part of the study. It was made clear to participants that they could withdraw from the research at any point (Jorgensen, 1989) with no ill effects. The fifty-four

participants who were approached consented to participant observation, however a number did not feel comfortable participating in interviews. Feedback from participants suggests that this was because, while they were happy to participate as part of a group, they did not want to be singled out. Their wishes were respected, and the interview strategy was amended accordingly. No participants withdrew their consent for observation, but some did leave the organisation during the research period. The data collected from those participants who left, remained part of the corpus and was included in the final analysis.

As an insider-ethnographer, and a pre-existing member of the community who were actively involved in daily life, it was necessary for the Researcher to “reiterate [their] identity as a researcher regularly and continuously renegotiate consent” (Goodwin *et al.*, 2003, p571). During the participant observation phase it was not always possible to gain written consent from all the participants in the room, a common occurrence in complex settings in healthcare (Oeye, Bjelland and Skorpen, 2007). In those circumstances where it was not possible to gain explicit consent, any data obtained from that participant was removed from the corpus and the exclusion was recorded in the reflexive field notes to aid future analysis.

Another ethical consideration was around ensuring confidentiality through the anonymisation of data. Knowledge gathered through ethnographic research can prove dangerous to participants, impacting on their mental health and employment status at the host organisation (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Striking a balance between anonymisation and capturing the essence of the researched environment was therefore key (Angrosino, 2005). At the most

basic level, the names of participants should be changed but this is often not enough to prevent identification (Davies, 2008). In some instances additional information such as age, gender and organisational role (McGibbon, Peter and Gallop, 2010) should be altered to prevent an individual being identified. The Researcher made a conscious effort to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of participants over representational accuracy and therefore altered some accounts and merged others to ensure anonymity of participants (Ezeh, 2003).

Once an individual had been identified as a research participant, they were assigned a pseudonym. After obtaining the one hundred most popular baby names in England and Wales (Office of National Statistics, 2019), the Researcher assigned each baby name a number. A random number generator was then used each time a participant was added to the database, and they were assigned a random baby name. A password protected key was created, which only the Researcher had access to, and the whole database was stored on an encrypted hard drive. The original names of participants were excised from the entirety of the corpus and all accounts were pseudonymised as part of the transcription process.

The final consideration for ensuring ethical practice was around giving back to the participant community. van der Waal (2009) suggests that ethnographic research can take on a “predatory character” (p37), as knowledge is potentially pursued at the expense of participants and the host organisation. Kawulich (2005) suggests that this risk can be overcome via a concerted effort to give something back to research participants, a requirement that is arguably even more vital when carrying out insider research. Throughout the research process, the Researcher delivered teaching sessions

on network management and disciplinary power across the Provider Assurance Network. These were followed up with sessions that looked at real-life applications; for example, a series of workshops were held around engaging effectively with network members. These sessions were the Researcher's attempt to demonstrate appreciation for the support of the research participants and were well received. They also provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships with participants which helped support the viability of the research over its long duration. Alongside ensuring ethical practice, an essential component of the research design was articulating clear strategies for demonstrating methodological rigour, with the purpose of creating a research text that would be deemed trustworthy by readers.

#### **4.4 Strategies for Demonstrating Trustworthiness and Rigour**

A postmodern perspective would suggest that “nothing outside the collective process of judgement making [...] can guarantee the reliability and validity of the research process” (Glynos and Howarth, 2019, p120). This is a view shared by Alvesson (2002) who suggests that “notions of validity are too strongly bound up with objective inquiry” (p164) to be of use to a postmodernistically informed researcher. The emphasis instead is on producing a trustworthy account.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is defined as the determination that a study “is deserving of the reader's trust in its representations, analysis and findings” (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2009, p65). Trustworthiness in an ethnographic account emerges from: convincing the reader that the data

collection approach was robust (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009), that reflexive practice was utilised during prolonged engagement in the research setting (Wacquant, 2007), and by ensuring congruity between the methodological and theoretical frameworks deployed in the research (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

A key consideration for ensuring methodological congruence was to address the concept of causality. Within the postmodern paradigm, the “social world cannot be understood in terms of causal relationships or the subsumption of social events under universal laws” (Tamboukou and Ball, 2003, p4). Foucault’s methodological approach actively rejects causality (Kendall and Wickham, 1999) and instead advocates for researchers to become immersed in the “interconnectedness and entanglement of social interaction” (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, p10). Similarly Lincoln and Guba (2001) suggest that qualitative researchers should pivot away from positivistic notions of cause and effect as “everything influences everything else in the here and now” (p151). Therefore while relationships between cause and effect may be inferred and conclusions tentatively suggested, the Researcher placed more emphasis on portraying a vivid account of lived experience (Wacquant, 2007) that resonated with the members of the participant community. This was supported through regular engagement with the Research Steering Group.

Transferability is another concept that needs to be addressed when looking to demonstrate rigour in postmodern research. Universal generalisations are not consistent with postmodern approaches, which typically reject “the normalising and totalising tendencies embodied in claims to universal knowledge” (Starkey and McKinlay, 1998, p234). However, if one produces accounts that are totally idiosyncratic and without potential

relevance to other settings, then this arguably limits the wider potential impact of the research (Alvesson, 2009). A more appropriate concept therefore is transferability, the idea that some outputs of this research may be applicable in another setting provided that the other setting is sufficiently similar (Fine, Morrill and Surianarain, 2009). Ultimately, a sufficiently detailed description and methodological transparency will enable future researchers to judge the transferability of this research.

#### **4.5: Post-modern Ethnographic Research Design Summary**

Researching power is a rewarding but complex task and adopting a postmodern research philosophy was a deliberate decision to tackle that complexity head on. It enabled a paradigmatic view that could accommodate a multiplicity of perspectives, while laying the groundwork for appreciating how truth claims are created to achieve social effects. Ethnography, as a research design, aligns to postmodernism with its focus on understanding cultural norms. However, the use of insider-ethnography, whereby the Researcher observed an environment of which they were an active participant, created a novel approach that aimed to create a new perspective on the internalisation of disciplinary power.

Insider-ethnography utilises reflexive practice to merge the community-focused emphasis of traditional ethnography with a postmodern focus on the positionality of the Researcher, and their role as a co-constructor of knowledge within the Provider Assurance Network. The ultimate aim being to develop a nuanced approach to understanding the impact of Foucauldian technologies

on individual subjectivity and, in particular, the self-constitution of the Researcher. Insider-ethnography is not without risk however, and the use of one's lived environment poses certain ethical challenges, which can only be overcome through obtaining informed consent, ensuring the anonymity of participants, and giving back to the participant community.

## Chapter 5: Data Collection

In line with the post-modernist research philosophy of this thesis, the use of data must be approached critically. While empirical data can provide insight into social reality, it is not a direct representation of that reality (van der Waal, 2009). Data is crafted and produced as part of a research process and is directly informed by the positionality of the researcher (Alvesson, 2002), with methods of data collection and analysis being a sequence of choices made by the researcher (Breuer, 2003). The following section will outline the design choices made by the Researcher and justify how those choices helped to address the key research question. While data collection and data analysis have been separated out to provide a comprehensive theoretical overview, in reality there was significant overlap between the two stages. Figure 12 below sets out the key elements of the data collection approach:

Figure 12: Approach to Data Collection

Section 5.1

1. Access to research setting
2. Scale of observations
3. Methods of recording
4. Saturation
5. Purposive naturalistic sampling

Participant Observation

Semi-Structured Interviews

Section 5.2

1. Power dynamics in interviews
2. Emotional Support

Document Analysis

Section 5.3

1. Unobtrusive support for findings derived from other methods
2. Emphasis on publicly available documentation

Research Steering Group

Section 5.4

Qualitative triangulation is defined as the use of multiple methods of data collection to develop a broad perspective of the research phenomenon, which in turn promotes trustworthiness by establishing a “convergence of information from different sources” (Bowen, 2009, p29). Triangulation in qualitative research is used to demonstrate the interconnectedness of social interaction (Tedlock, 2005), to enable the incorporation of the researcher’s reflexive stance into the data corpus (Cox and Hassard, 2005) and support the crafting of a holistic cultural portrait (Pearson and Rowe, 2020). Ultimately, the trustworthiness of an ethnographic account is reliant upon the “strength and quality of its evidentiary base” (Davies, 2008, p26) and triangulation adds depth and variety to that base. Data collection in this research was triangulated through the methods of participant observations, interviews, document analysis, reflexive field notes and engagement with the Research Steering Group. The aim in collecting data through these methods was to produce “representations of discourse as “texts”” (Bloor and Bloor, 2007, p7) which can then be catalogued and reviewed as part of discourse analysis.

All methods of data collection utilised in this research thesis were piloted with members of the Research Steering Group prior to the beginning of formal data collection. This was to ensure that the methods selected were fit for purpose and worked within the selected research setting. All three methods of triangulation (participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis) were carried out simultaneously, with the outputs from each method helping to shape the design of the others in an iterative fashion. Reflexive field notes were used to identify key occurrences alongside reflexive data. When key themes were identified, the Researcher would test those

themes with the Research Steering Group as part of the theory development process.

### **5.1 Checking with Participants: The Role of the Research Steering Group**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that “meaningful human research is impossible without the full understanding and cooperation of the participants” (p106). This is especially true with regards to insider-research, where researchers are active members of the community being researched. A key tenant of ethnographic research is therefore a commitment to checking emerging findings with members of the community and obtaining their feedback (De Cordova et al, 2013; Nencel, 2014; Pearson and Rowe, 2020). In order to achieve this, the Researcher created a forum called the Research Steering Group (RSG). The RSG was comprised of volunteers from across the Provider Assurance Network (PAN), with members coming from all organisations and with differing levels of seniority. All of the RSG members were active participants in the PAN and were also involved in participant observation and interviews. At its peak, the RSG had between ten and fifteen members, who met on a quarterly basis to review the emerging outputs from the research and discuss their perceptions of those outputs. The primary purpose of the RSG was to sense-check the Researcher’s analyses and findings, with a focus on suggesting corrections for any factual errors or misunderstandings (Lincoln and Guba, 2001). The Researcher presented their findings to the RSG and the resultant conversations were used to explore any gulfs in interpretation (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2009), with an early point

of debate being a disagreement between the Researcher and Ella around the definition of the PAN as a network. The Researcher outlined their theory-based rationale, but Ella felt that the organisational structure of the PAN was more akin to a standard contractual arrangement between organisations. The back-and-forth discussion proved essential in shaping how the Researcher defined the PAN and justified its status as a network.

It is vital from an ethical perspective that participant voices are heard throughout the research process (Creswell and Poth, 2018). However the purpose of the RSG was not to achieve consensus but rather develop an appreciation of the multiple perspectives and viewpoints within the setting (Alvesson, 2003). Final interpretation and analysis inevitably sat with the Researcher (after all, who else would spend hundreds of hours writing up the thesis) but it was key priority to share as much as was practicable with the RSG participants. The RSG was an attempt, however fleetingly, to address the inherent imbalance in ethnographic research. Participants were able to provide the Researcher with insights and feedback that would not have been possible otherwise (Paechter, 2013) and helped guide the Researcher towards unanticipated areas. The RSG was also able to help facilitate research access across the PAN, as senior members were able to use their influence to enable the Researcher's research activity.

That being said, engaging with the RSG did present its own set of challenges. There were some difficulties in explaining some of the theoretical frameworks to the members of the group, especially with regards to Foucauldian and postmodern theories of power. Early in the process, the Researcher's untempered use of academic terminology led to confusion in the

group and inhibited discussion around the empirical themes. Subsequent sessions refrained from abstract discussions of theory and instead focused on specific examples of disciplinary power, couched in actual examples from the network. A more serious challenge was posed by the onset of Covid-19. RSG meetings were intended to take place every three months, but the vast majority of members became involved in Covid-19 related activities and had reduced capacity to participate. Subsequently no RSGs took place between December 2019 and September 2020. A related issue was the decline in membership once the Researcher left the NHSBSA in October 2020, from a peak of fifteen members in May 2019 the final session in April 2021 had reduced down to two. This did not pose an issue from a methodological perspective, as all data had been collected and analysis was already well underway by April 2021, but it does suggest that insider-research is only possible when one still has insider status, and that follow-up activity is more difficult when one has left the host organisation.

Ultimately however, the primary rationale for the RSG was to create a methodological process that would gain “recognition that an ethnographer’s conclusions are plausible reconstructions of the participants’ own experiences” (Fine, Morrill and Surianarain, 2009, p612), by demonstrating a sustained commitment to methodological transparency (Pearson and Rowe, 2020) and meaningful participant involvement (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2009). The outputs from the RSG process were then used to shape the Researcher’s approach to data analysis. A diagram showing where individual research participants were located within the PAN can be found in Appendix

F. Please note, as well as being pseudonymised, the hierarchical positions of these individuals have been altered to prevent identification.

## 5.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation is the research method most commonly associated with ethnography (Moeran, 2009) and involves intensive observation and interaction with research participants as they go about their daily lives (Pearson and Rowe, 2020). This method exists on a spectrum; ranging from complete observer, which aims for impartiality and to minimise the impact of the researcher on the environment, through to participant-as-observer, where the researcher is an active participant in the research setting (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) suggest that an ethnographer can never be a true participant due to their inherently “marginal social standing in the research setting” (p37). Insider research, however, means that the researcher is already a participant in the setting; indeed participation is hardwired into the research approach, for as Alvesson (2009) points out the participation of the insider-ethnographer would be happening regardless of whether they were also observing the social interaction or event.

Explicitly adopting the stance of participant-as-observer thus presents an opportunity to become actively involved in the day-to-day life of participants (Moeran, 2009), which can help create a deeper appreciation of their lived reality (Takyi, 2015). This stance is also closely linked to reflexive practice as it enables researchers to “use the observations of their own understanding to understand and portray the pleasures and sorrow of daily organisational life”

(Tedlock, 2005, p472). In turn this allows access to “backstage” activities (Waddington, 2004, p155) which enables the insider-ethnographer, from a postmodern perspective, to engage critically with how power and discourse come to shape meaning in an organisational context . Unpicking how meaning has been constructed is essential when aiming to understand how disciplinary power comes to shape the subjectivity of network participants, for as Jorgensen (1989) points out “if people define a situation as real, it is real in its consequences” (p14). Perception, and its impact on meaning, play a key role in driving organisational change and participant observation was an essential part of understanding how perceptions were shaped.

The first step in mobilising participant observation was to arrange for research access to the Provider Assurance Network (PAN). Alvesson (2003) suggests that researchers with insider-status possess “natural access” (p175) to the potential setting for observations, however this Researcher’s experience was not that straightforward. Access to the PAN was facilitated through the Research Steering Group, as the Researcher purposefully involved senior colleagues, with whom they had a pre-existing relationship and who could act as gatekeepers (van der Waal, 2009). Once established, access also needed to be continuously reaffirmed with participants (Rachel, 1996) which is especially relevant for insider-ethnography as participants may become acclimatised to the dual role of the researcher (Goodwin *et al.*, 2003). The Researcher’s insider-status also yielded other benefits, such as providing a shortcut to achieving cultural membership (Jorgensen, 1989) and enabling the Researcher to exploit their existing knowledge to identify areas of research focus (Dahlke et al, 2015). For example, a key governance forum for the

Provider Assurance Network was the fortnightly Network Steering Group meeting between NHSBSA and NHS England, but the majority of the agenda was managed and decided at an NHSBSA-only pre-meeting. As an insider the Researcher was thus able to attend the official and unofficial meetings to obtain a more nuanced view of how disciplinary power was shaping the network.

However, there were also significant challenges that stemmed from taking an insider ethnographic approach. In late March 2019, just prior to beginning data collection, an NHSBSA director from a different area of the organisation unexpectedly raised an objection over the proposed research. Fearing a potential negative reputational impact, they initially insisted on editorial control over the research output- which could have potentially led to a flatter and less critical account (Takyi, 2015). The director was appeased when the Researcher talked them through the plans for the Research Steering Group, which would have significant input into shaping the outputs from the research. The reality of Alvesson's (2003) notion of natural access is therefore more complex than might be assumed. Indeed, it would perhaps be more accurate to view insider status as a tool that "strategically oils the wheels of the research process" (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2013, p253) rather than a skeleton key that opens all doors.

Once access was achieved, the Researcher adopted their dual perspective and began the process of immersing themselves in the research setting, so as to "develop an appreciation of the minute and mundane rites of daily life" (Wacquant, 2007, p6). The Researcher spent fifteen months in the Provider Assurance Network between April 2019 and June 2020. The network

was massively disrupted by the impact of Covid-19 and the Researcher decided to excise the data gathered between March and June 2020 as the events observed were radically different from the previous months. However, the data has been retained and will be used to further explore how disciplinary power shapes subjectivities during periods of emergency, as part of the Researcher's post-doctoral activity.

The Researcher predominantly used an electronic recording device to record observations, while simultaneously producing reflexive field notes to capture contextual detail. Reflexive field notes also provided a contingency in the event of the device failing or being accidentally turned off. Recording enabled the Researcher, when coordinated with reflexive field notes, to record "speech in action" (Moeran, 2009, p151). When following natural behaviour patterns, i.e., in location that have not been explicitly convened for research purposes, recording could take place in a variety of physical settings. Meeting rooms, corridors, building lobbies- all have different acoustic properties, and the use of a suitably dynamic recording device was essential. Settings that involved large numbers of participants posed unique challenges as the multiple voices could overlap or be located at varying distances from the recording device. Effective field notes are therefore crucial for disentangling complex recordings during the transcription and coding phases, but insider knowledge also makes it easier to identify specific voices where there are instances of overlap or ambiguity.

Excluding the data that was collected between March and June 2020, the Researcher recorded approximately two hundred hours of participant observations. The data was catalogued and sorted using the reflexive field

notes, which allowed the Researcher to identify specific themes and prioritise the observations captured. Cataloguing and prioritising the data in this way enabled the Researcher to sift the volume of recordings down to approximately eighty hours of data, which equated to approximately three thousand pages of transcripts. This is indicative of the tendency within ethnographic research to gather huge amounts of data because of its immersive nature (De Cordova et al, 2013). Kvale and Brinkman (2009) conversly suggest that this can be symptomatic of “qualitative positivism” and a “quest for scientific respectability” (p191) by producing a sufficiently large corpus. Obviously, ethnographic research does not aim for representative sampling nor make claims on the basis of statistical analysis but, to Kvale and Brinkman’s point, the Researcher did feel a certain amount of pressure to gather large amounts of data. This pressure did not originate from within academia, but instead was symptomatic of the quantative paradigm the Researcher was enmeshed within as part of their substantive role, where the use of data was strictly linked to notions of statistical validity. This pseudo-internalisation had no bearing on the final data collection process, as the size of the corpus was ultimately determined by the research timescales and methods of prioritisation. Nonetheless, it compelled the Researcher to reflexively consider their decision making processes around data collection to make sure they were not being unduly influenced by the dominant paradigm within the Provider Assurance Network. This was a fascinating and entirely unanticipated by-product of the insider/researcher dichotomy.

Rather than being prescriptive about the volume of acceptable data within participant observation, a common refrain is the notion that one

continues data collection until a point of saturation is reached (Lincoln and Guba, 2001; Waddington, 2004; Coker *et al.*, 2013). However, as Pearson and Rowe (2020) point out, while working in a setting that is undergoing rapid change, it can be difficult to define a point of saturation. In the end, the Researcher had to make a pragmatic decision to stop collecting data because of timing conventions associated with the PhD process. While it was complicated somewhat by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the composition of the data corpus was ultimately shaped by a desire to be congruent with the research philosophy and be pragmatic around timescales.

Participant observation is inherently unstructured, as it is not possible to guarantee in advance what events will be observed (Jorgensen, 1989; Mulhall, 2003; Moeran, 2009). An insider-ethnographer therefore needs to be flexible when approaching each observation. The reflexive field note template in Appendix C contained a checklist of phenomenon to watch out for, but a robust strategy for sampling was key.

Once immersed in the research setting, a purposive naturalistic sampling strategy was used (Lincoln and Guba, 2001), which provided an emergent and iterative approach to narrowing down the field of data collection (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Utilising insider knowledge about which groups and individuals were involved in the network, the Researcher utilised typical case sampling (Dahlke *et al.*, 2015) to map out commonly occurring themes and identify where those themes were most likely to be prevalent. Where additional themes or points of interest were found, the Researcher utilised “snowballing” (Fine, Morrill and Surianarain, 2009, p611) to select additional participants and hold additional interviews.

With its focus on naturally occurring speech, Participant Observation relies on researchers being able to establish and sustain long-lasting relationships with participants (Hong and Duff, 2002) which in turn enables them to access and explore the “raw experiences of power relations” (Ybema *et al*, 2009, p7). The long-term nature of participant observation also reduces the reactivity of participants (Kawulich, 2005) which reduces the potential for disingenuous or stage-managed behaviour (Moeran, 2009). Ultimately participant observation does not claim to uncover objective truths, but rather attempts to provide a context sensitive and actor-focused account of social interaction (Ybema, Yanow, 2009). When combined with insider knowledge and robust reflexive practice, participant observation can provide excellent insight into the “heart of the human experience” (Waddington, 2004, p159) and thus help to uncover how power dynamics shape the creation of subjectivity within network environments.

### **5.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

Participant observation was the primary method of data collection, but emergent concepts and themes were further explored through semi-structured interviews. The purpose of an interview is to engage with the interviewee and “attempt to understand the world from the subject’s point of view” (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p1). Interviews are not instances of naturally occurring speech, they are formally bracketed periods of time which are targeted towards collecting information (Davies, 2008). Semi-structured interviews attempt to build flexibility into this exchange by utilising open-ended questions

(King, 2004) and creating a balance between the research themes and the perceptions, anecdotes and relayed life experiences of the interviewee. They can provide an insight into the beliefs, values and behaviours of individuals living in the research setting (Barriball and While, 1994) but it is not an unproblematic process.

Power dynamics within interviews are asymmetrical and they “should not be considered open and free dialogue between individuals” (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p171). This is especially true with insider research, as the roles occupied by the interview participants in the research context can carry over into the interview arena (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006), to the extent that it is debateable whether a non-hierarchical position is even possible in that setting (Nunokoosing, 2005). On the one hand, the interviewer sets the agenda for the exchange and has a privileged position as sole interpreter of the outputs (Cassell, 2009). This can also lead to interviewees self-editing themselves to provide accounts that match what they think the interviewer wants to hear (Barriball and While, 1994). On the other hand, if the interviewee occupies a more senior position in the organisational hierarchy, then they can use their positionality to limit the inquiries of the researcher (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Another challenge is posed by Cassell (2009) who suggests that the interviewee’s outputs are totally shaped by the context of the interview itself and therefore bear little relation to the individual’s lived reality.

Rather than treating interviews as impartial exchanges, a more productive stance may be to view them as a process for co-constructing knowledge between the researcher and interviewee (Nunokoosing, 2005; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Kvale and Brinkman, 2009), and as a site

of social interaction rather than the opening of an unfiltered window into the interviewee's lifeworld (Alvesson, 2002). In this view, interviews can act as a medium for engaging with the discursive structures that impact upon individuals and inform the "unfinished project of the self" (Bauman, 1996, p24), which helps in studying the impact of disciplinary power and technologies on the formation of the self.

There were approximately 20 interviews carried out with participants from across the Provider Assurance Network, with durations lasting between forty-five minutes and two hours. Potential interviewees were identified through the sampling process carried out as part of participant observation; they were also occasionally suggested by the Research Steering Group. The ethical process outlined in Section 4.3 was followed as part of each interview.

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) point out that establishing a rapport with interviewees can be a vital pre-requisite for gathering meaningful information. Insider-ethnography provides a short-cut in that sense, because the Researcher had pre-existing relationships with all of the interviewees through their role in the Provider Assurance Network. As part of rapport building process, Kvale and Brinkman (2009) recommend that interviewers need to be ready to provide emotional support to interviewees should they become upset. Naively, and perhaps over-confidently due to their insider status, the Researcher did not take this into account when piloting interview questions with the Research Steering Group. On a number of occasions in the pilot phase, colleagues became quite upset and it proved to be a deeply unsettling experience. It was also quite confusing because it is often unclear

whether one should provide advice and comfort as a friend/colleague, or is it more appropriate to maintain a certain detachment? In each case, the Researcher provided whatever reassurance seemed most appropriate and offered to terminate the interview, as the safety and wellbeing of the participants was the key consideration at these times. It was a chastening experience, and the Researcher was able to learn from the initial phase and embed improved support protocols into the full interview process. This included holding debriefing sessions with the participants after the recording had stopped, to ensure they had the opportunity to discuss lingering issues or concerns before returning to the working environment.

In terms of the interviews themselves, an interview guide was used rather than a prescriptive list of questions (King, 2004), similar to the participant observation protocol. The interview guide had a standard introductory setting, which focused on general questions about the NHS and the Provider Assurance Network, before moving on to a checklist of key theoretical and thematic areas to explore during the interview (please see Appendix G for an example). Nunkoosing (2005) suggests that good interviewing requires an effective use of the self, and the insider status of the Researcher proved beneficial in this regard. Utilising their insider knowledge, the Researcher was able to consider their understanding of the participant's comments in real-time and ask relevant and considered follow-up questions. All interviews were recorded, and the Researcher used the reflexive field notes template to capture notes and reflexive data.

Interviewing is a flexible approach that allows researchers to explicitly engage with participants in an attempt to develop an understanding of their perspective and views, though it does involve an inherent imbalance in terms of power dynamics. However, as Alvesson (2002) suggests, “the shakiness of interview material should not prevent us from using it as an indication of people’s beliefs and meanings” (p126), provided that we engage with the outputs in a critical manner.

#### **5.4 Document Analysis**

The final element of qualitative triangulation in data collection was document analysis, a method that involved systematically reviewing documents to uncover salient themes (Bowen, 2009). Based upon close reading of documents relevant to the ethnographic context (van der Waal, 2009), document analysis is useful for obtaining “unobtrusive support” for findings derived from other methods (Jorgensen, 1989, p92). As a method it also allows the Researcher to tentatively suggest links between locally observed themes and system-level discursive trends (McGibbon et al 2010), an example from this research being the discourse around counter-fraud initiatives. The truth claims within documents must be treated critically (Bowen, 2009), as with all elements of postmodern research, but sufficiently critical document analysis can help shed light on how social truths within an organisational setting came to be constructed (Ball, 2011).

In this instance, the Researcher decided to utilise documents that were publicly available, as opposed to documents that they could have accessed

by virtue of their insider status (McGibbon et al 2010). This was mainly done out of consideration for the host organisation, as there may have been occasions where utilising privileged information could have been perceived as a breach of trust. Emails, briefings and project documentation were consequently excluded from the document analysis process. Instead, the Researcher focused on reviewing strategies, business plans and press releases from across the Provider Assurance Network to identify any themes that were relevant to the overall analysis of disciplinary power. After an initial review, the scope was broadened to include national policy documents such as the NHS England Long Term Plan (2019) and legislation such as the Health and Social Care Act (2012). A close reading of each text took place and relevant sections were coded using NVivo. These outputs were then used to iteratively inform the interview guide and participant observation protocol; for example, the theme of counter-fraud was identified in the Long-Term Plan, which was then flagged as a key line of enquiry for interviews with NHS England participants.

All three methods of triangulation (participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis) were carried out simultaneously, with the outputs from each method helping to shape the design of the others in an iterative fashion. Reflexive field notes were used to identify key occurrences alongside reflexive data. When key themes were identified, the Researcher would test those themes with the Research Steering Group as part of the theory development process.

## 5.5: Data Collection Summary

This insider ethnographic approach was operationalised through a triangulated approach to data collection: encompassing participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The Researcher was able to capitalise upon their positionality within the research environment to undertake purposive naturalistic sampling with regards to participant observation, with any pilot-related activities initially being in scope. The sampling approach was iteratively refined over time, as reflexive field notes and emerging themes made it possible for the Researcher to identify individuals for in-depth interviews. Document analysis was used alongside participant observation and interviews to add richness to emerging themes.

Deep immersion in the research setting was vital and was unquestionably aided by the Researcher's insider status. The Research Steering Group was introduced as a sense-checking mechanism whereby participants could review, comment upon and debate emerging theoretical outputs with the Researcher. This stemmed from a desire to enhance the plausibility of the Researcher's conclusions by evidencing sustained engagement with the participants. The following chapter will set out how this rich and varied data set was analysed.

## Chapter 6: Data Analysis

Once the data had been transcribed and coded it was analysed using a variant of discourse analysis, an analytical framework that looks at how language and social interaction come to produce specific social effects (Potter, 1996). Discourse is a “fuzzy” term (Phillips and Di Domenico, 2009, p550) and one which can potentially “mean all things to all people” (Kendall and Wickham, 1999, p35). Foucault’s use of the term in particular, changed depending on the phase in which it was used (Caldwell, 2007). For the purposes of this research, discourse is defined as modes of thinking which are tied to ways of existing within organisations (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2009) and which underpin “institutionalised patterns of knowledge that govern the presentation of subjectivity” (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2017 p110).

For Foucault (1980c), discourse was broadly constitutive of social reality, acting as “manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body” (p93). To say that discourse creates social reality is arguably overstating the case, for as Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) point out “the fact that knowledge of reality necessarily is discursive does not mean that the nature of reality is” (p1139). Tangible entities such as people, events and objects exist independently of our experience of them (Lincoln and Guba, 2001) but our knowledge of those entities is arguably socially constructed (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2011). To engage critically with discourse is thus an attempt to understand how certain social realities come to be reified and accepted as true (Phillips and Di Domenico, 2009) and what impact those

reified realities have on how we come to be formed as individuals (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000a). To engage with discourse, one must review texts which provide a record of a communicative event. Texts can come in a broad array of formats, including spoken and written communication (Bloor and Bloor, 2007). In the context of this thesis, discursive texts were produced from organisational documents, social interactions (participant observations and interviews) and reflexive data. Once these texts were codified, they were reviewed using a novel variant developed by the Researcher called Technology Discourse Analysis.

## **6.1 Discourse Analysis: An Overview**

Discourse analysis is not a unified theory or approach (Grant, Keenoy and Oswick, 2001) and possesses few concrete conventions (Phillips and Di Domenico, 2009). The onus is thus placed on the insider-ethnographer to demonstrate explicit and systematic methods of analysis (van Dijk, 2001). The rationale for using discourse analysis in this thesis was to uncover how Foucauldian technologies produce specific power effects that shape network participants into productive subjects. Within the discourse analysis milieu there are three schools of thought that will be discussed in relation to that aim: Critical Discourse Analysis, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and Ethnographic Discourse Analysis. The Researcher drew from each of these approaches to synthesise a new method which aimed to specifically uncover how disciplinary power comes to shape subjectivities through the use of technologies.

The purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to engage with texts to address social problems and generate positive change (Wodak, 2009). CDA is a tool used by scholars to “play an advocating role for groups who suffer from discrimination” (Meyer, 2001, p15) and aims to challenge the status-quo in the interests of “social equality, fairness and justice” (Bloor and Bloor, 2007, p4). This is linked to a trend within CDA to focus on practicable outputs that can be used to address power imbalances (van Dijk, 2001). The critical element of CDA hinges on embedding any analysis in the social and political context of the research (Wodak, 2001) but also on researchers engaging with their positionality to avoid “reproducing their biases unreflexively and uncritically” (Glynos and Howarth, 2019, p121).

However as Fairclough (2009) points out “what is problematic and calls for change is an inherently contested and controversial matter” (p130). Indeed, the social, cultural and economic positionality of the Researcher played a key role in determining the selection of materials and definition of research questions (Leitch and Palmer, 2010). This reflects a prevalent trend within CDA that views power as a negative force, used by a nefarious elite to “control the actions and minds of other groups” (van Dijk, 2001, p355). This research, perhaps inspired by the social, economic and hierarchical status of the Researcher, conversely views power as a productive social force- while acknowledging the existence and ever-present possibility of domination. So, while CDA’s call for social responsibility is commendable, a direct application of its methods would not be congruent with the Researcher’s definition of disciplinary power. That said, the critical nature of the approach and its strong

emphasis on practical outputs were incorporated into the Researcher's hybrid method.

A second perspective is that of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), which engages with texts to understand how power relations and knowledge “play a part in shaping the conduct of individuals in western societies” (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2017, p111). FDA looks to engage with the methods by which structures of truth have been constructed and used to create productive persons (Kendall and Wickham, 1999). The aim then being to develop an appreciation of how power/knowledge structures, such as expert clinical knowledge (Cheetham *et al.*, 2018), can be used to legitimise some interpretations of social reality and occlude others (Buckland, 2016). Engaging with these reified social realities can open up analytic opportunities to appreciate “how individuals problematize and regulate their own conduct in relation to a moral order” (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2017, p117), which was a key research theme in this thesis.

FDA's treatment of power, which centres around this process of creating disciplined individuals, is more in keeping with the aims of this research than the negative view put forward by CDA. However, as an analytical approach, FDA is methodologically vague (Hook, 2001), which Springer and Clinton (2015) suggest is a by-product of Foucault's unwillingness to engage in “totalizing conceptions or grand narratives” (p88). But CDA could potentially mitigate this shortcoming through its emphasis on methodological rigour. Kärreman and Alvesson (2009) also suggest that Foucauldian methods of analysis often fail to address the activity/existence of the subject once it has been shaped through the enfolding of disciplinary

power. The Researcher would therefore suggest that it is also necessary to consider agent-centric approaches to discourse analysis, so as to understand how the being-in-the-world of disciplined subjects can impact on organisational change.

Ethnographic Discourse Analysis (EDA) focuses on texts that originate from within a “target discourse community” (Bloor and Bloor, 2007, p2) and looks to combine the critical analytical tradition with an anthropological approach (Krzyżanowski, 2011). EDA focuses on the impact of discourse upon social action (Phillips and Di Domenico, 2009) and the interplay between social structures and the individual agent (Wodak, 2001). Ethnographic approaches take a “dynamic agent-centred view” of the discursive process (Krzyżanowski, 2017, p181) which focuses on interaction between agents as the unit of analysis (Scollon, 2001). This agent-centric approach was vital for engaging with how social interaction catalysed disciplinary power in the Provider Assurance Network.

Ultimately it was necessary to develop an approach to discourse analysis that combined the criticality and output-focus of CDA, EDA’s emphasis on agent-level interaction, and FDA’s conceptualisation of disciplinary power as a force that shapes the subjectivity of individuals. The Researcher has termed this novel hybrid method Technology Discourse Analysis.

## **6.2 Technology Discourse Analysis**

Technology Discourse Analysis (TDA) is a “hyper-empirical” approach (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b, p146) which pulls from a wide variety of qualitative data sources to critically engage with how technologies (“the material elements that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for power and knowledge relations” (Foucault, 1991, p28)) come to impact upon organisational change. This novel variant of discourse analysis aims to engage with how individuals become disciplined within a specific context (Heaton, 1999) but then also looks to examine how disciplined subjects interact with one another to pursue a common goal. As part of TDA, the Researcher utilised a reasoning style whereby they attempted to make use of “theoretical pre-conceptions as well as an open-mind” (Howell, 2013, p125). This involved reconciling emerging data with existing theory in a continuous iterative cycle, in an effort to develop the theoretical framework outlined in Chapters 7-10.

TDA provided a novel means of exploring how insider-ethnographers experience their environment, but with a specific focus on understanding how technologies come to be practically used in social situations. In essence, TDA enabled triangulation between external events and the perceptions of others, managed through participant observation and interviews, and the internal thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the Researcher. An example of this synergy between different perspectives and methods of data collection can be seen in Section 7.4.1, where reflexive diaries combined with participant observation and interview data to explore how an internalised sense of responsibility influenced overall change activity. TDA, as a method of data analysis, enabled this approach by focusing specifically on how the change

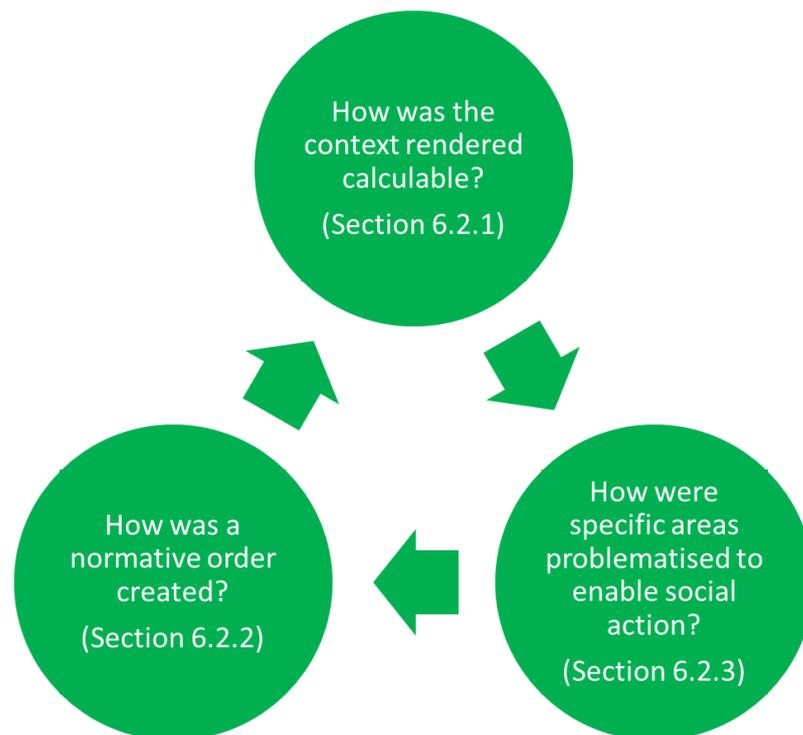
catalyst's subjectivity came to be shaped through interaction with technologies.

As set out in Section 2.5.1, Technologies are power/knowledge structures that enable specific modes of thought, which are geared towards achieving specific outputs (in this case progressing pilots within the Provider Assurance Network). In order to analyse how technologies help to steer “specialist knowledge and expertise to enable the planning of activities” (Dean, 1996b, p64), this chapter will synthesise and evaluate the extant literature to propose a novel framework for analysing how disciplinary power came to be translated into social action. This TDA framework consisted of three interrelated lines of inquiry:

- How was the organisational context rendered calculable?
- How was a normative order created within that context?
- How were specific areas within that context problematised to enable social action?

While these dimensions are represented sequentially, in reality they often occur simultaneously, as set out in Figure 13. These lines of inquiry were inspired by the governmentality theory discussed in Section 2.5.

*Figure 13: Framework for Analysing the Impact of Disciplinary Power Through Foucauldian Technologies*



### 6.2.1 Analysing Technologies 1: Render the Change Context Calculable

Foucault's thought was characterised by what he saw as the intrinsic link between knowledge and power, stating "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge" (Foucault, 1991, p27). In order to understand how technologies come to impact upon social action, it is necessary to unpick how disciplinary power makes it possible to produce knowledge. In turn, this renders visible the quotidian routines and practices associated with organisational life (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017), which makes it possible to identify potential avenues of change.

In a change management context, rendering the environment calculable often pulls from technocratic forms of rationality that use “specific models, procedures and techniques to enhance calculability and increase visibility” (Shaw et al, 2019, p241). Hodgson et al (2019) suggest that the technical nature of these types of interventions, enabled by change management expertise, can provide reassurance and help decision-makers deal with uncertainty. However, this process often has a political dimension to it, in that the technical rendering of the context helps to frame specific truth claims as being objective and based on non-political facts. This in turn poses risks around potential “moral blindness” where seemingly natural activities mask “administrative evil-doing” (Ettelt and Mays, 2019, p245).

Analysing how technologies render a particular context calculable, made it possible to explore how certain types of discourse helped define certain types of actions as being acceptable. Critical engagement with this process exposed how specific aspects of that context were made thinkable, calculable and available for change (Rose and Miller, 2008).

### 6.2.2 Analysing Technologies 2: Establishing a Normative Order

The second element of this TDA framework was focused on understanding how technologies came to facilitate the creation of a normative order within a context. Foucault points out that political and economic management capitalises on the binary distinction between concepts such normal/abnormal, productive/unproductive and legal/illegal (Foucault, 1980d). Disciplinary power relies on these binary dynamics to create normative

standards against which individuals can be judged (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982).

As discussed in Section 2.2, normative standards inform the self-constitution of subjects, as they encourage subjects to adapt their identity to suit the context of the organisation (Deetz, 1998). The subject is thus partially formed by exposure to normative standards but also reproduces and shapes those standards as part of their daily interactions with other subjects (le Blanc, 2016). The origin of these standards are “neither transcendental or emancipatory” (McKinlay and Starkey, 1998, p2) nor are they derived from sovereignty or law (Foucault, 1980c). Rather, normalisation emerges from daily practices which are geared towards achieving a specific purpose, and Taylor (1986) suggests that identities that do not contribute towards that purpose “must be brought back to the normal” (p74). Aligning identities to productive norms undoubtedly has the potential to lead to non-productive identities being suppressed, with Foucault using discrimination against homosexuals as an illustrative example in the History of Sexuality (Foucault, 1979). Townley (1998) also suggests that identities which are formed in relation to a productive norm are inherently vulnerable, as they “present an individual with a way of seeing themselves measured against a transitory ideal” (p208). In turn, not being able to meet this ideal can pose significant risks in terms of mental health, which will be explored further in Chapters 7 and 10.

That being said, Foucault suggests that homogenisation in relation to normalisation is not inevitable. Rather it is possible for heterogenous individuals to be arranged in a normative web of power- whereby they retain

their individuality, but the web of power nonetheless makes it possible “to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them to one another” (Foucault, 1991, p184). Clegg (1989) also supports this view, suggesting that it should be possible for normative orders to encourage dissent, debate and discursive dissonance; provided that subjects are strongly aligned to the organisation’s Regime of Truth. By examining how normative standards were created within a context, this framework was able to critically evaluate methods of creating social cohesion and explore how clear standards of behaviour were articulated to steer productive subjects in pursuit of a common purpose. The TDA framework also provided a means of evaluating how individual identities were created and suppressed, amidst the process of deploying technologies to drive change.

### 6.2.3 Analysing technologies 3: Problematizing Specific Areas for Action

The third component of the TDA framework is problematisation, whereby elements of a social context can be conceptualised as problematic, marking them as requiring intervention (Buchanan, 2018). To create something as a problem is to focus attention upon it (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017) and the act of problematizing is therefore predicated on the belief that the object of thought can be improved (Silva and Quattrone, 2017). For problematisation to be effective, the organisational context needs to have been rendered calculable and normative standards established, so as to make it possible “for the real to be measured against the ideal and found wanting” (Rose and Miller, 2008, p61). To problematize a specific context then, such as

madness, crime, illness etc, is to make possible specific forms of intervention in that space (Foucault, 1988a).

Problematization also impacts on the process of dynamic self-optimisation discussed in Sections 2.2 and 2.3, whereby individuals compare themselves to normative standards and “perpetuate disciplinary practices through our own actions” (Digeser, 1992, p994). If the subject finds themselves wanting through this comparison, they may come to define aspects of their interior lifeworld as problematic and utilise technologies to “seek to reshape their conduct according to the standards of performance by which they evaluate themselves” (Dean, 1996b, p62). A key aim of this thesis was to explore how problematisations at the individual level came to shape conduct at the team and individual level, and the change catalyst’s role in facilitating that interplay.

By studying problematisations it may therefore be possible to “dismantle taken-for-granted fixed essences” (Bacchi, 2012, p2) and reveal how they have been constructed. To do so is to show that the reified rationality for change, and indeed the wider regime of truth, is not as invariable as might be presupposed (Hoy, 1986). Peeling back these taken-for-granted assumptions played a huge part in exploring how productive subjectivities came to be formed through exposure to disciplinary power. Ultimately, applying the TDA framework to the ethnographic dataset played a key role in unpicking how disciplinary power influenced change outcomes. The following section will provide a step-by-step account of how this was practically achieved.

### 6.3 Technology Discourse Analysis Step-by-Step Process

The novelty of TDA stems from its dual perspective on disciplinary technologies; on the one hand it examines how change catalysts can deploy technologies to impact on the conduct of others within a network, while simultaneously engaging with how change catalysts shape themselves through the internalisation of disciplinary power. This is only possible through the use of reflexive practice over a prolonged period of time and was arguably enhanced by the insider status of the Researcher. The steps for carrying out TDA were as follows:

1. The Researcher transcribed data using transcription software. Transcribing large amounts of data takes a significant amount of time (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009) and Otter software was used to produce transcripts of participant observations and interviews. No element of transcribed text was included in the corpus without a full review by the Researcher, this proved necessary as the accuracy rate of the software was somewhere in the region of 60%. This was partially due to the naturalistic setting of the recordings, but Otter also seemed to struggle with the regional accents of Northeast England. In hindsight, this provided an unexpected benefit as it allowed the Researcher to become extremely familiar with the data.
2. As part of the transcription process, an “entry-level thematic analysis” (Krzyżanowski, 2017, p184) was undertaken to identify salient themes and potential codes. This involved the Researcher taking a “flexible systematic approach which identifies, examines and recounts patterns”

(Ozeum, Willis and Howell, 2021, p145) while carrying out transcription. Initial coding focused on sorting change management activities by the pilot lifecycle stage in which they occurred, as discussed in Section 3.3. This was carried out using NVivo software. The pilot-lifecycle code book was developed through a review of the literature and tested with the Research Steering Group to ensure relevancy (see Appendix A for a copy of the codebook). Data, including the Researcher's reflexive diaries, was then coded against the relevant lifecycle stages to develop a qualitatively triangulated view of the change management activity.

3. Each stage of the lifecycle was then assessed in conjunction with the outputs from the literature review to identify three broad groups of technologies:
  - a. Technologies of knowledge production
  - b. Technologies of capability building
  - c. Technologies of network management

Data was then coded against these technologies and then sub-coded according to Grant, Keenoy and Oswick's (2001) discursive schema. This enabled the data to be stratified into micro (Researcher perspective), meso (inter-participant perspective) and macro (network-level perspective) levels, which allowed the Researcher to assess how the different technologies impacted on subjectivity at different levels of discourse. Each datum was given a unique reference consisting of pilot area, date, method of data collection and speaker, for example "OPA:05.2019:PO:Researcher". This example shows that the datum was collected as part of the ophthalmic pilot (OPA), during May 2019

(05.2019), via the Participant Observation method of data collection (PO) and the first speaker was the Researcher. These codes were used to help organise the data, but it was necessary to structure them to avoid accidental identification of participants, as per the ethical considerations discussed in Section 4.3. They were also used to inform the analysis write-up and to enable effective cross-checking of cited data.

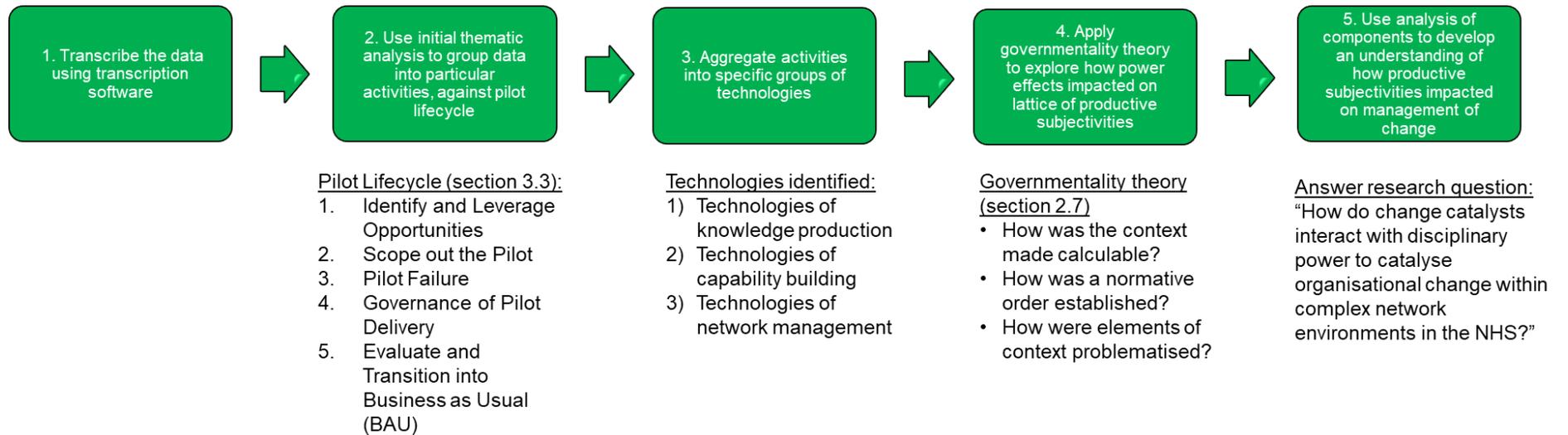
4. Once the data had been stratified, the change catalyst worked through each technology and their components to tease out what specific power effects were being created and determine what impact those effects had on the lattice of productive subjectivities. Taking Chapter 8 as an example, by identifying the technology component “inculcating normative standards”, the Researcher was able to explore how the articulation of normative expectations came to shape conduct at the individual, team and network level. This was enabled through the use of the TDA framework outlined in Section 6.2; which focused on understanding how the context had been made calculable, how a normative standard had been established and how areas of the context had been problematised to enable collective action.
5. These technology components, and their resultant power effects, were then reviewed to develop a holistic understanding of how technologies came to impact upon the management of the policy pilots, via the creation of productive subjectivities. This enabled the Researcher to develop a view on how the creation of disciplined subjects impacted on the progression of the pilots from launch to evaluation. The aim here

was not to suggest a direct causal relationship between the two but to draw lines of inference between the change catalyst's disciplinary journey and the successful progression of the policy pilots. This activity was repeated for each of the technology areas and the outputs were reviewed holistically to answer the key research questions and sub-questions.

The output from discourse analysis is not a claim to objective truth, which would not be possible anyway given the postmodern research design of the thesis, but a warranted and coherent interpretation of a phenomena (Gill, 1996). TDA aims to achieve this through a robust empirical approach wedded to post-modern theory and intensive reflexive practice. The above steps are represented diagrammatically in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14 Technology Discourse Analysis Process

Technologies= “material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for power and knowledge relations” (Foucault, 1991, p28).



## 6.4 Data Analysis Summary

Ethnography is a messy business, insider-ethnography doubly so, and the data collection and analysis phases often happened simultaneously. It became apparent during this process that a new approach to discourse analysis was required. The method proposed here, Technology Discourse Analysis, marries the methodological rigour, theoretical grounding, and agent-level focus of mainstream discourse analysis with intensive reflexive practice to enable a multi-faceted approach to answering the research question. The purpose of this novel approach was to capitalise upon the dual perspectives of researcher and participant, as a means of exploring how subjectivities were formed in relation to disciplinary power. TDA then seeks to build upon the individual perspective, using qualitative triangulation to explore how the creation of interconnected productive subjectivities impacts upon change management at the team and network levels.

Disciplinary power is a complex idea and Foucault's methods are deliberately vague. By combining postmodern theory with insider-ethnography, the Researcher attempted to create a robust vehicle for testing Foucault's theories while harnessing the best of both worlds. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 will now set out the findings from this approach, outlining in detail how the change catalyst engaged with Foucauldian technologies in an attempt to drive organisational change.

## Chapter 7: Technologies of Knowledge Production

### 7.1 Defining Technologies of Knowledge Production

Within Foucauldian thought, power and knowledge are viewed as being mutually constitutive. As Rose and Miller (2008) point out, there exists “intrinsic links between a way of representing and knowing a phenomenon, on the one hand, and a way of acting upon it so as to transform it on the other” (p3). Creating knowledge about a phenomenon enables “certain practical and technical activity” (Dean, 1996b, p51) to take place, which shapes discourse and enables social reification and “which gives us capacity to do things we otherwise couldn’t accomplish” (Haugaard, 2002, p306). The following analysis of knowledge production takes this further, in that it suggests that the effects of technologies of knowledge production play a key role in the formation of individuals as productive subjects.

The following analysis of technologies of knowledge production was structured to answer research sub-question 1: How was knowledge produced to identify the optimum path for the change to follow and how was that knowledge utilised to guide conduct within the network? The activities that constituted technologies of knowledge production within the context of the pilot lifecycle, are set out in the table below:

Figure 15: Technologies of Knowledge Production – Activities

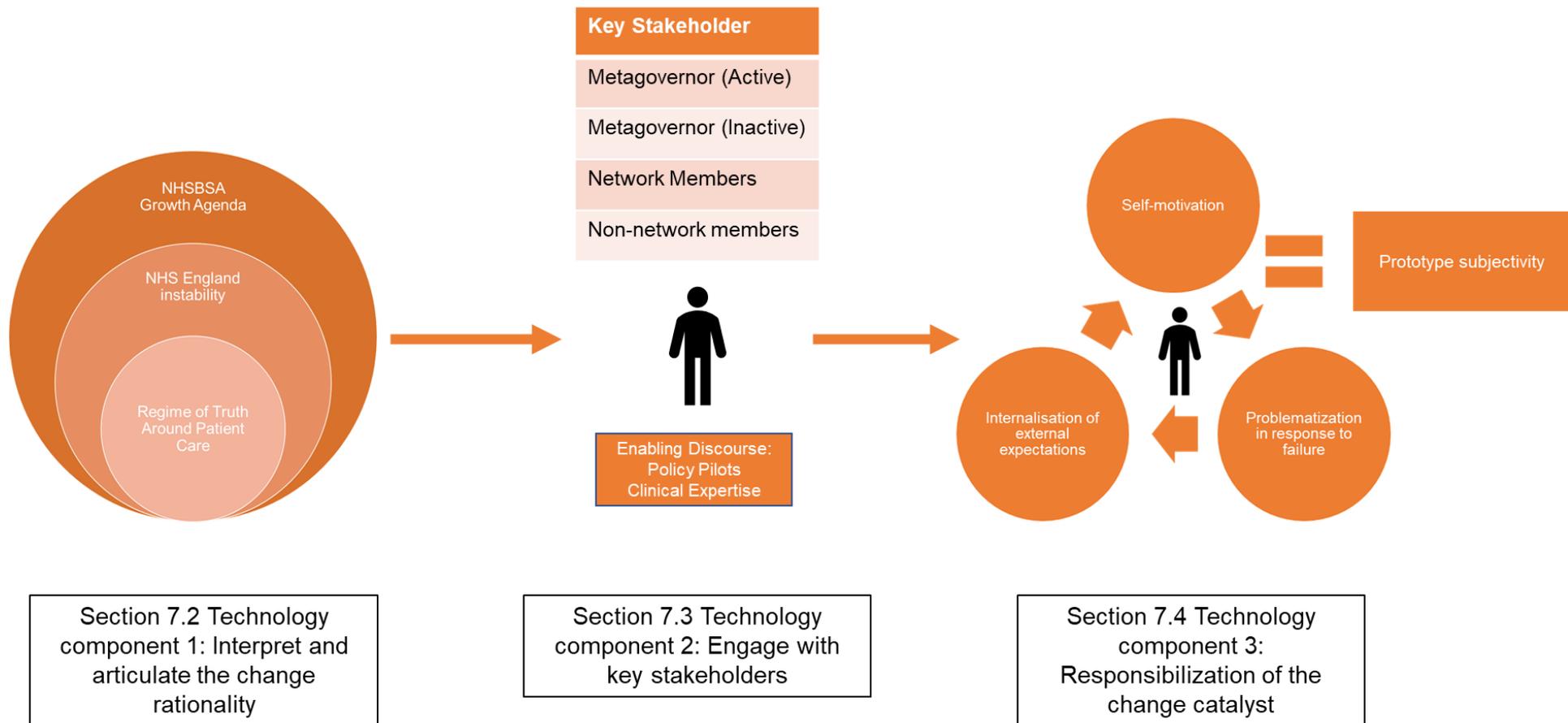
Pilot Stage	Activity Name	Activity Description	Linked activities	In which pilots was the activity observed?	
				Ophthalmic	GP
1. Identify and leverage opportunities	1. Defining the problem	Representing a phenomenon as a problem fundamentally changes the way in which that phenomenon is perceived. To problematise “is to create an object of thought and define a subject” (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, p11) which immediately establishes the phenomenon as unacceptable and thus needing to change (Bacchi, 2015). This process is heavily politicised and saturated with disciplinary power.	N/A	✓	✓
	2. Research Planning	While <i>Defining the problem</i> sets the direction and focus for knowledge production, the actual production of knowledge however began with research planning activities, which was coordinated by the change catalyst.	5. Research delivery	✓	✓
	3. Insight from the Network	A closely linked activity to research planning was <i>Insight from the Network</i> , which involved the change catalyst engaging with existent members of the Provider Assurance Network and feeding their knowledge and insight back into the knowledge production process.	6. Incorporate specialist expertise	✓	✗
	4. Engage with potential pilot members	Where <i>Insight from the Network</i> was not possible, primarily due to the lack of involvement from the metagovernor NHS England, it was necessary for the change catalyst to identify alternative stakeholders who would be able to provide insight into the environmental context. Anticipating the needs of network members is a key activity of network management (De Bruijn and Ringeling, 1997).	7. Secure pilot members	✗	✓
2. Scope out the pilot	5. Research delivery	<i>Research Delivery</i> built directly upon the Research Planning activity from Stage One, and it rendered the context calculable by organising the knowledge produced during the previous stage.	N/A	✓	✓

	6. Incorporate specialist expertise	The activity <i>Incorporate Specialist Expertise</i> took place alongside <i>Research Delivery</i> in Stage Two of the pilot lifecycle. In Stage One <i>Insight from the Network</i> activity enabled the PAN to develop an outline of what knowledge would be required to progress the pilots. In Stage Two it became apparent that, given the clinical nature of the proposed activity, it would be necessary to incorporate clinical expertise into the knowledge development process.	N/A	X	✓
	7. Secure pilot members	In the Stage One activity <i>Engage with Potential Pilot Members</i> , the change catalyst tentatively engaged with organisations to gather insight but also opportunistically initiate conversations about pilot participation. In Stage Two, these overtures were accelerated to achieve tangible outcomes through the <i>Secure Pilot Members</i> activity.	N/A	X	✓
3. Pilot failure and Re-Pivoting	<i>No activities observed for this technology</i>		N/A	NA	NA
4. Governance of pilot delivery	<i>No activities observed for this technology</i>		N/A	NA	NA
5. Evaluation and transition to business-as-usual (BAU)	<i>No activities observed for this technology</i>		N/A	NA	NA

These activities enabled the production of knowledge across the pilot lifecycle and were informed by technology components which helped drive knowledge production in the change setting. Technology components emerged from across different activities and pilot lifecycle stages but have been aggregated for ease of analysis.

Technologies of knowledge production, therefore, aimed to set a direction for organisational change through the application of the following components: 1) articulating a clear change rationality, which in turn 2) enabled dialogue across the network among key stakeholders. The final output drove progress around knowledge production by 3) enmeshing the self-constitution of the change catalyst within that process of knowledge production. Figure 16 below sets out the inter-relationships between these technology components and sets out the conceptual map for this chapter.

Figure 16: Technologies of Knowledge Production: Technology Components Conceptual Map

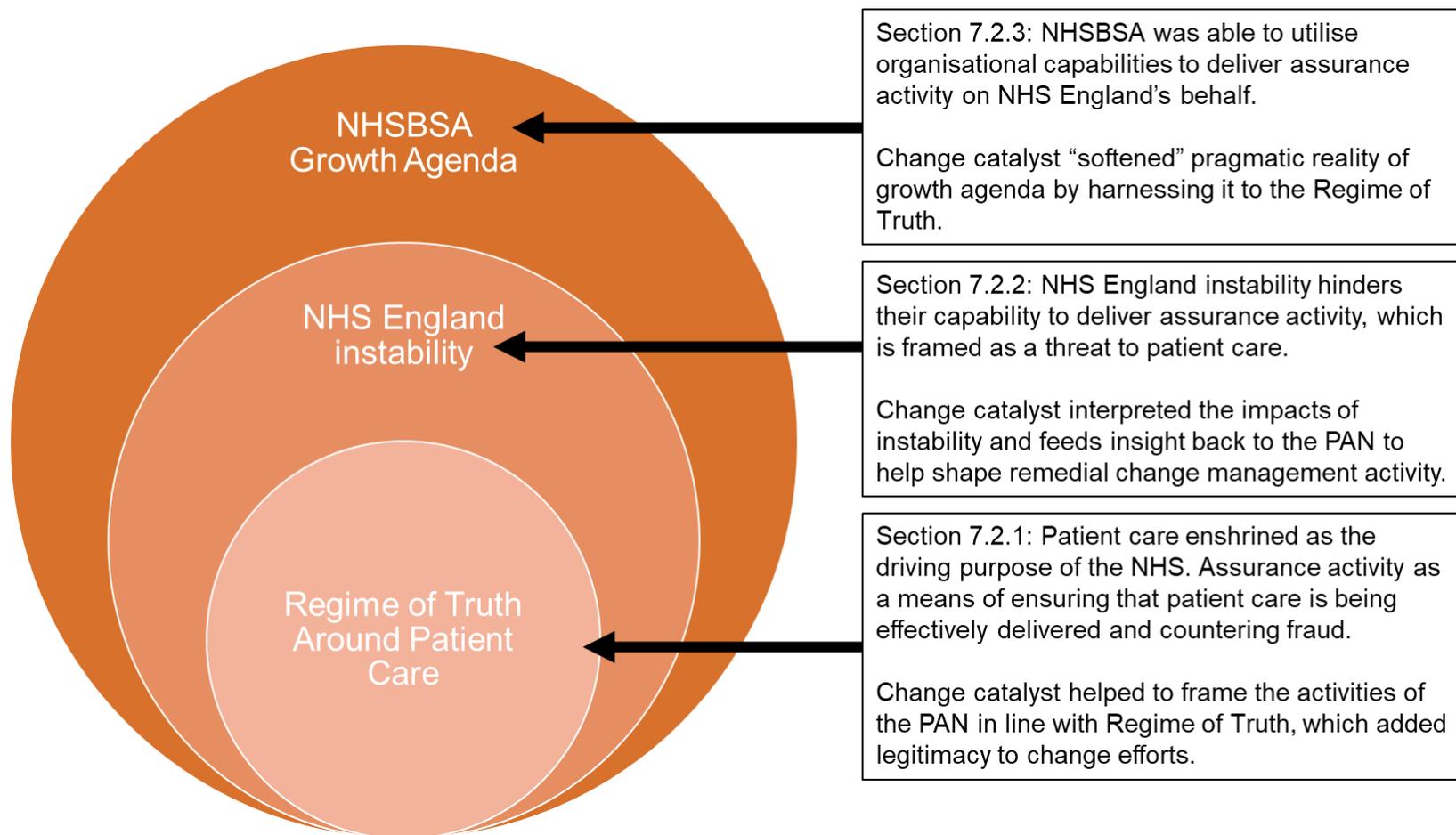


## 7.2 Technologies of Knowledge Production Component 1: Interpret and Articulate the Change Rationality

The NHS is massively complex, with system-level causes driving the reasons for organisational change. It is beyond the scope of any one individual, even politicians and senior leaders, to reliably control how organisational change plays out across the system. That being said, ethnographic data (as set out in Chapter 5) has shown that change catalysts can play a key role in shaping how system-level discourses are interpreted at the network-level. This interpretation activity set the scene for how the knowledge production processes with the PAN were organised.

The change catalyst worked across the PAN to shape how key system-level discursive elements were interpreted, which in turn enabled the change catalyst to frame the change rationale in a way that encouraged participation. The principle discursive elements encountered within the ethnographic setting were the predominant Regime of Truth around patient care, the ongoing instability within NHS England and NHSBSA's growth agenda. The relationship between these elements is set out in the diagram below.

Figure 17: Interpret and Articulate the Change Rationality



### 7.2.1 Change Rationality 1: Patient Care

As discussed in Section 2.1.3, Regimes of Truth are conceptual constructs that shape what is thinkable in any given social scenario. Within the NHS, the Regime of Truth was exemplified in the 2015 NHS Constitution, which set out core principles and values in an attempt to guide the behaviours of NHS employees. It stated:

“The patient will be at the heart of everything the NHS does. It should support individuals to promote and manage their own health. NHS services must reflect, and should be coordinated around and tailored to, the needs and preferences of patients, their families and carers”.

(Department of Health and Social Care, 2015, p3).

The strong emphasis on patient care in this document, and the foregrounding of the rights and wellbeing of the individual, perpetuated the portrayal of the NHS as a fundamentally moral enterprise (Shaw, Hughes and Greenhalgh 2019). Seemingly underpinned by altruistic humanist values, the NHS was viewed by large portions of the British population as a sacrosanct institution (Krachler and Greer, 2015), with anxiety around its future being a recurring refrain within public discourse (Timmins, 2018).

The importance of patient care thus pervaded all aspects of the discourse within Provider Assurance; with Lily, a senior lead in the ophthalmic team, stating “ultimately we’re trying to do this for our patients and the people who are affected by or use the NHS” (OPA:2019:Int:Lily). This rationale was used by the change catalyst during planning sessions for the GP service in 2019, where they emphasised that the guiding principle of the change activity

should be “making things better for patients” (GP:08.2019:PO:Researcher). Using the Regime of Truth as a common point of reference helped to reify the context for problem definition, and helped establish the Provider Assurance Network (PAN) “as a solution that can be lauded as a rational response, as opposed to being explicitly political or ideological” (Chaib, 2019, p76). By situating discourse in relation to the Regime of Truth, the change catalyst enabled members of the PAN to justify their actions as a means of “supporting contractors to do the right thing when it comes to patients” (GP:09.2019:PO:Olive), particularly when it came to avoiding potentially fraudulent claims.

Fraud discourse within the NHS between 2019 and 2020 served as a call to action; it framed the problematisation of the change context by emphasising the scale of the issue and the moral implications of fraud. Document analysis reveals how the NHS portrayed speculative estimated fraud costs of £27billion as fact (NHS Counter Fraud Authority, 2019a), to emphasise the “corrosive influence” of fraud upon the NHS (NHS Counter Fraud Authority, 2019b, p4). Fraud was decried as a direct threat to the sustainability of patient-centric care and was thus “unacceptable and cannot be tolerated” (NHS England, 2019, p6b). Accordingly, the change catalyst deliberately attempted to meld the counter-fraud discourse with rhetoric around patient safety, which helped shape the perceptions of network participants; an example being when ophthalmic caseworker Ava stated her purpose was “bringing back money that’s badly needed within the NHS” (OPA:2019:Int:Ava). By directly aligning the PAN to countering fraud, the change catalyst was able to create a rationality for change that was linked to

improving patient care. Linking fraud and patient care thus had a profound impact on how subjects within the network came to view the organisational change, which will be addressed throughout this chapter. This shaping of the change rationality also enabled the change catalyst to frame the PAN's activities in a way that would be appealing to the wider NHS system.

### 7.2.2 Change Rationality 2: NHS Instability

However, the propagation of the Regime of Truth around patient care was hindered by significant instability within the NHS. Originating with the structural reforms of the Health and Social Care Act, and exacerbated by the ongoing impact of austerity, in the 2010s NHS England experienced a wide scale loss of Primary Care specialist employees (Ettelt and Mays, 2019). Periodic instability and mass restructures occurred through the 2010s and into the early 2020s, with the introduction of regionally based Integrated Care Systems (NHS England, 2019c) further complicating the landscape. The legal quagmire of a merger with NHS Improvement also had a negative impact, with NHS England having to “save a further 20% of our operating costs” (NHS England, 2019d, p13), which had a further impact upon headcount.

This massively compromised NHS England's assurance activities. As metagovernor for the NHS, NHS England had a statutory responsibility to be assured that Primary Care services were being delivered appropriately and to hold contractors to account (National Audit Office, 2019). While the responsibility for assuring GP services was delegated to CCGs; NHS England retained responsibility for assuring dental, pharmaceutical and ophthalmic

services. However, due to a loss of subject matter expertise, and systemic instability, the organisation did not have the capacity to deliver that assurance in-house.

Document analysis alone does not convey the confusion that this destabilising period had on individuals working within the NHS, with significant stress resulting from the fact that “you don’t know what’s going to be happening from one day to the next” (GP:11.2019:PO:Max). A key task for the change catalyst therefore was to engage with key stakeholders, understand their perspectives on what was happening and then relay that back to the Provider Assurance teams to help shape the change management approach. One example of this interpretation exercise saw the change catalyst relaying insight that CCG leads were “expecting to take on a lot more activity because of all the cuts” (GP: 11.2019:PO:Bonnie), with resultant pressures on capacity. The change catalyst was also able to relay to the PAN teams that NHS England were experiencing unexpected push-back from their regions due to “them associating our change activity with the 20% reduction in headcount” (OPA: 06.2019: PO: Alex). These examples were used by the change catalyst to stimulate discussion within the PAN about how specific actions could be taken to support the wider system. So while Spicer and Levay (2012) may decry the ‘change fetish’ (p287) in modern organisations, in this instance change was framed as a key enabler for the maintenance of assurance activities, which in turn were meant to ensure adequate patient care. However, the change catalyst’s motivations were not purely magnanimous, in that their support of the metagovernor was partially driven by an internalisation of the NHS Business Services Authority’s (NHSBSA) growth agenda.

### 7.2.3 Change Rationality 3: NHSBSA's Growth Agenda

During the time period covered by this research, NHSBSA's unique selling point was its ability to deliver "a range of high volume, transactional and business services to support the day to day running of the NHS" (NHSBSA, 2020a, p4) in response to the emerging needs of key stakeholders, such as NHS England. Document analysis of strategy documents revealed that NHSBSA possessed a willingness to take on a disparate portfolio of activities covering, among others; high volume prescription processing, data analytics, workforce and HR services, overseas health-care provision and various counter-fraud initiatives (NHSBSA, 2019a, p5). This willingness originated, in part, from a DHSC directive to achieve a "reduce spend by 40% over the period to March 2020"- a consequence of the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review (Ibid, p17). This directive encouraged a shift to what NHSBSA termed the "commissioner pays" model of funding, whereby NHS England and other commissioners would pay NHSBSA directly for specific services (Ibid, p23). The impact of the 40% cuts were exacerbated by declining volumes of manual prescription processing carried out by NHSBSA, with over 75% of claims coming to be processed automatically (NHSBSA, 2019b). This reduction in demand reduced the need for processing staff and created something of a burning platform for NHSBSA to find alternative employment for those impacted, which involved most of the employees working in the Provider Assurance Network.

Given this shift to a customer-orientated funding model, NHSBSA increasingly emphasised “fostering collaboration and strong relationships between multiple organisations within the health and care system” (NHSBSA, 2019a, p23). To grow its income streams, and thus mitigate the impact of DHSC’s cuts, NHSBSA needed to establish close working relationships with NHS England and truly become “Delivery Partner of Choice” (NHSBSA, 2019c, p24) . NHSBSA’s change rationality was still linked to patient care, but the potential precariousness of its funding situation also led to an increased emphasis on increased collaboration, “reputation building” (NHSBSA, 2019a, p3) and the expansion of services.

When the idea of a growth mentality was discussed at the Research Steering Group (the approach for engaging research participants outlined in Section 5.1), it prompted an extensive debate between the members. The Researcher presented a draft of the above document analysis, which was then challenged by Alex, the NHS England representative, suggesting that “our focus is very much about the patient, rather than the money” (OPA.07.2019:RSG: Alex). This prompted Ella, from NHSBSA, to emphasise that the organisation’s growth was “focused on adding value to the system rather than growing for the sake of it” (OPA.07.2019:RSG:Ella). Reflexive notes suggest there was a palatable sense of unease among the NHSBSA representatives, with Ella afterwards approaching the Researcher to suggest that she felt she’d “put her foot in it with Alex” (OPA.07.2019:RR:Researcher). The Researcher was able to respond that the two perspectives were not mutually exclusive, and that the discourse of prioritising patient care could be used to soften the pragmatic reality of NHSBSA’s business development

agenda. This discussion within the RSG represented a microcosm of the wider dynamic between the two organisations, in that the change catalyst was able to strike a balance in the discourse between the NHSBSA's entrepreneurial drive (necessitated by the organisation's precarious funding situation) and NHS England's laser focus on patient care (hamstrung as it was by resource and expertise constraints). Effectively articulating a mutually agreeable change rationality enabled the change catalyst to establish a robust framework for change, which was enabled by the holistic use of all the components that made up this technology.

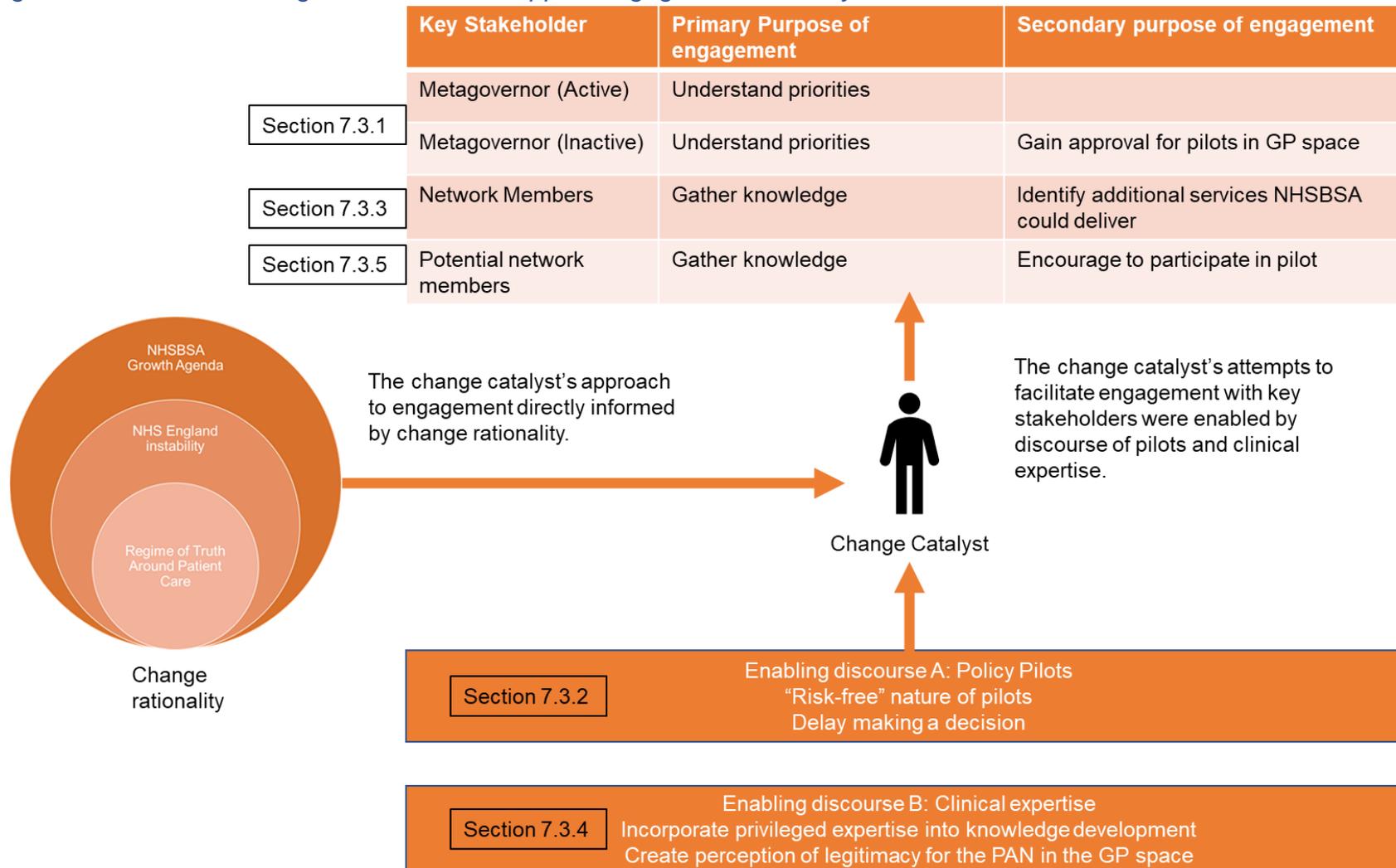
### **7.3 Technologies of Knowledge Production Component 2: Engage with Key Stakeholders Across the Network**

The change catalyst was substantively employed by NHSBSA, who acted as the network manager for the PAN (as discussed in Section 3.5.2). Given the network manager's role in growing the network, a key element of technologies of knowledge production was thus engaging with a variety of stakeholders to gather information and promote the PAN's policy pilots. Wielding an interpretation of the change rationality (as discussed in Section 7.2), the change catalyst was able to work across organisational boundaries to gather insight about the challenges faced by groups within the NHS system. While ostensibly geared towards gathering actionable knowledge, these conversations simultaneously provided an opportunity for the change catalyst to promote the value of the PAN's contribution. Knowledge production therefore played a role in setting the scene for the growth of the network, which

in turn shaped the subjectivities of those working in the network (this will be discussed in more detail in Section 7.4).

The discourse of policy pilots, first discussed in Section 3.3, helped enable this dual-purpose engagement, as the change catalyst was able to encourage participants to get involved by emphasising the consequence-free and experimental nature of pilots, as a form of change. The change catalyst was also able to leverage clinical expertise to lend gravitas to the PAN's engagement efforts, with clinical input helping to create a veneer of legitimacy and competence when engaging with other NHS organisations. Both of these factors acted as distinct power/knowledge formations which the change catalyst was able to use to shape how they engaged with the wider NHS system, in an effort to gather knowledge and grow the influence of the PAN. Figure 18 sets out the complex interplay between the four different groups of stakeholders, the influence of the change rationality, the discourse of policy piloting and the impact of clinical expertise.

Figure 18: Utilise Knowledge Production to Support Engagement with Key Stakeholders Across the Network



### 7.3.1 Key Stakeholder 1: Active Metagovernor vs Inactive Metagovernor

The first key stakeholders were the metagovernors of the Provider Assurance Network. As set out in Section 3.5.1, a network's metagovernor takes a leading role in delivering governance activity, while maintaining a hands-off approach to enable the semi-autonomous functioning of the network's actors. Within the Provider Assurance Network this role was fulfilled by NHS England, however because of the breadth of the PAN's portfolio there were actually two separate divisions that acted as metagovernor for the PAN. Ophthalmic metagovernance was provided by Alex, while General Practice metagovernance was provided by Max (please see Appendix F for a structural chart). The change catalyst had to work closely with both sets of metagovernors to gather insight and promote the PAN, but there was a significant disparity in terms of their appetite for involvement.

This was particularly evident during the *Problem Definition* activity (please see Figure 15 for activity breakdown). Within the ophthalmic pilots, the change catalyst worked closely with Alex to understand the metagovernor's priorities in terms of organisational change. When asked to evaluate the effectiveness of change management within the pilots, Alex valued the change catalyst's ability to "actively engage and listen to what our problems were, and you've listened to what we needed you to do" (OPA-2019-Int- Alex). Here, the change catalyst was able to frame possible actions using the change rationale relating to NHS England's instability (covered in Section 7.2.2), which in turn enabled them to build a rapport with Alex.

This emerging dialogue opened up a line of direct communication between the metagovernor and the network manager (NHSBSA), which could be capitalised upon by members of the Assurance Teams. For example, Summer, a member of the NHSBSA's ophthalmic team, described the value in seeking out Alex's perspective when planning activity: "there's things that come up, that we need cleared up and we need Alex to provide clarity before we can move forward" (OPA: 2019: Int: Summer). Lichtenstein and Plowman (2009) suggest that problem definition needs to be robust enough to inspire collective action and Summer's comments suggest that robustness in the ophthalmic space stemmed from a clear direction by the metagovernor, which enabled the network members to course-correct as required. The change catalyst's role in this space was therefore relatively straightforward: establish lines of communication with the metagovernor and ensure the outputs from the pilots were aligned with their expectations.

In the GP pilots, however, the process was much more complicated. Max (Alex's equivalent in the GP space) was not willing to provide such a definitive steer around the activity of the PAN. The following observation shows how Olive, a senior leader within the NHSBSA and lead for the PAN, tried to establish a working dialogue with Max:

"Olive: I'm trying to get a better understanding of the GP environment and what you need in that space. Is there anything that you could share with us?"

Max: It's probably not me, to be honest. I think things are fluctuating so much with the introduction of Primary Care Networks and the like, that whatever I tell you will have changed by next week".

(GP:01.2020:PO:Olive)

Olive as lead, was trying to establish a line of communication similar to what the change catalyst had done with Alex in the ophthalmic space. However, Max felt that the systemic instability of the GP space (covered in Section 7.2.2) effectively rendered his knowledge ephemeral. Here, circumstances in the wider system actively nullified the change catalyst and Olive's attempts at engagement, simply because Max was too overwhelmed. In contrast to Alex's active role, Max did not have the bandwidth to be able to provide a definitive steer.

In the GP space then, the play of disciplinary power upon problem definition was less about interpreting the desires of the metagovernor because those desires were changeable and, to a certain extent, unknowable. From the perspective of the change catalyst, it then became more about determining what courses of action would be politically acceptable, given the fluctuating nature of the environment. In order to progress with change activity Olive, as lead for the PAN, asked the change catalyst to research "what does the landscape look like? What are our options? What risks are we trying to tackle? And how do we sell that to Max and his team?" (GP:08.2019:PO: Olive). As part of this horizon scanning activity, the change catalyst needed to identify potential assurance gaps but also frame these opportunities in a way that would be desirable to an inactive metagovernor. This was achieved through the use of policy pilots.

### 7.3.2 Enabling Discourse A: Policy Pilots as a Method of Engendering Buy-in

As discussed in Section 3.3, policy pilots are ostensibly apolitical methods of experimentation which enable the small-scale testing of organisational change as a precursor to large scale implementation. As a planned response to emergent change, pilots represent an interstitial form of change that allow for commitment free experimentation. Pilots had been successfully used in other areas of Provider Assurance and were a preferred method by NHS England to “test whether a policy is generally cost-effective” (Ettelt, Mays and Allen, 2014, p327). The change catalyst had been heavily involved in ophthalmic pilot activities, and was personally invested in the method, as this extract from a reflexive diary shows:

“Researcher: Pilots are how we’ve had success in the past and I’m keen that we do the same thing here, we know this can help improve outcomes for patients! It’s how I got this job, and we need to keep going”.

(GP:07.2019:RR:Researcher)

The career prospects of the change catalyst had directly improved from the successful implementation of pilots in the ophthalmic space, and as such the method had positive associations for them. When coupled with an awareness of NHS England’s preference for pilots, and grounded in the patient care change rationality, the change catalyst was able to frame the proposed action in such a way that Max agreed to a small-scale pilot. The change catalyst’s portrayal of pilots sought to balance the potential positive impact on patient care, against the allegedly risk-free nature of the pilot methodology. In framing the ask in this way, the change catalyst was able drive change

progress, even though the interpersonal relationships and metagovernor steer present in the ophthalmic space was missing.

However, during the *Research Delivery* activity it became apparent that the experimental nature of policy pilots was often blunted by political interests. As the PAN's network manager, NHSBSA had a vested interest in growing the scale and scope of the network. So, while the pilot methodology was used initially as a method of opening doors for the network, in the background, planning was already going on about how the network could be expanded and made permanent. During a conversation with the GP team, this jarring clash of perception versus reality became apparent:

“Luke: so, what happens if we reach the end of the pilot, and we haven't got sign off from NHS England?”

Researcher: people keep talking about pilots like they're going to end on the last day. And if that's the case, you've done it wrong. This is a complex service that we're standing up and sometimes the lines around start date/end date will get blurred. As a team, we need to get comfortable about that”.

(GP:09.2019:PO:Luke).

Here, the change catalyst acknowledges the inherent uncertainty around the pilot process but emphasises that the team must assume that the activity would carry on beyond the pilot. This created a tension between the external perception of pilots as experiments, versus the internal need to optimise the team to be able to scale-up activity. The change catalyst, in trying to manage Luke's expectations, was potentially motivated by an internalisation of the NHSBSA's growth agenda (covered in Section 7.2.3) and their

statements were intended to replicate that understanding within the wider team. It could be suggested therefore, that this internalisation subverted the discursive framing of the policy pilot methodology by prioritising growth over experimentation.

While policy pilots were a valuable method of engendering buy-in under the pretence of experimentation, they could also be used strategically to delay committing to an irreversible course of action. During the *Secure Pilot Members* activity in the GP pilot, the change catalyst had established a dialogue with two Clinical Commissioning Group leads to map out potential pilots. Bonnie (Southeast CCG) and Henry (West CCG) had radically different priorities for assurance, which could not be met through a single service provision model. Henry wanted a bespoke approach for his region while Bonnie was keen to standardise services nationally to “help avoid duplication of effort” (GP:10.2019:PO:Bonnie). This posed a significant challenge to the change catalyst: how could knowledge be produced to meet such contrasting needs?

The answer was to problematise the context in a non-threatening way, through the discourse of policy pilots. As discussed above, the branding of a pilot as an experiment can mask the political drive to pursue a course of action. Likewise in this example with the two CCG leads, the discourse of piloting also allowed the PAN to delay making a choice about between two radically different perspectives. The change catalyst could commit to meeting the disparate requirements of the two CCGs in the short term, through a temporary reconfiguration of the GP team, while delaying decision making until the PAN had been able to establish itself within the GP arena. After which point, the

PAN would hopefully occupy a more influential position in the system and the change catalyst would be better able to negotiate favourable terms.

Framing change activity as a pilot benefited NHSBSA, it engendered buy-in from the Inactive Metagovernor and was also an attractive proposition for prospective network members. The change catalyst was able to use the concept of piloting to provide a conceptual basket that combined cooperation with the promise of experimentation. By creating the impression of impermanence, the change catalyst's framing of the pilot methodology cultivated a perception that the change was risk-free and could be easily stopped. This played a part in encouraging undecided organisations to take part in pilot activity, but the reality was that the PAN, and by extension the change catalyst, had a vested interest in ensuring that the pilots would continue beyond the experimental stage.

### 7.3.3 Key Stakeholder 2: Existing Network Members

The second set of key stakeholders were existing members of the Provider Assurance Network. In the ophthalmic space, Alex was able to signpost the change catalyst to a number of NHS England regional teams, who had previously delivered assurance services and had significant expertise in that area but due to budget cuts no longer had the capacity to deliver. The change catalyst's role when engaging with these regions was primarily to capture their knowledge and feed it back to the Provider Assurance team, which would help shape process design. However, due to the internalisation

of the change rationality, the change catalyst also used these engagement sessions to identify additional business opportunities for NHSBSA.

During the *Insight from the Network* activity, the change catalyst held a series of workshops with Central NHS England team to map out their processes as part of the Ophthalmic Contract Administration pilot (please see Appendix B for specific pilot metadata). Alex had identified the Central team as a potential pilot site, and they had introduced the change catalyst to team members, Ryan and Gracie. The change catalyst subsequently facilitated a number of process mapping sessions to capture the knowledge of the Central team, which also provided Ryan and Gracie with an opportunity to shape the processes used in the pilot. Listening to the team's experience and actively seeking out their input enabled the change catalyst to identify gaps in existing knowledge. This engagement also helped create buy-in from the Central team into the nascent pilot, as shown in this extract from a conversation about services in care homes:

“Researcher: So, they would have to bring the testing equipment to you?”

Ryan: The whole point of the additional services contract is that the equipment is portable. So, if they can't bring it to our offices for inspection, how are they going to take it into a care home?

Gracie: We might agree to meet in a third location, but if they're not able to transport it.

Researcher: It's a red flag if they can't do it?

Gracie: Yeah”.

(OPA:04.2019:PO:Researcher)

Tapping into the lived experience of Ryan and Gracie enabled the change catalyst to identify “red flags” which would help the PAN identify areas of high risk. Directly engaging with the central team, and actively listening to what they were saying, enabled the change catalyst to develop a nuanced view of the challenges associated with assuring ophthalmic services in care homes. By extracting this lived insight from the Central Team, the change catalyst was able to create “substantive variety” (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004, p187) within the knowledge production process, which lead to alternative perspectives being incorporated into the design. Furthermore, involving Ryan and Gracie in the design of the pilot was a deliberate tactic to instil a sense of mutual investment, as this reflexive extract demonstrates: “I’m really keen to make them feel like they’re being listened to and can influence the process. That way they’re more likely to buy into what we’re trying to do” (OPA:04.2019:RR:Researcher). By actively deferring to their knowledge, the change catalyst was able to facilitate a robust dialogue with the veteran regional team members, which in turn helped to “create intersubjective meaning where individuals and groups can discuss and test their interpretations” (Hagebakken, Olsen and Solstad, 2020, p14).

These workshops also had a secondary purpose, as the change catalyst once again sought to identify additional business opportunities for NHSBSA. In addition to resolving queries, the Central Team also reviewed a series of value stream maps, an industry standard method of gathering data and testing hypotheses (Radnor, 2011; Harris and Elliott, 2020), that had been produced by the change catalyst. While the pedagogical nature of the conversations was primarily designed to encourage Ryan and Gracie to share

insight, the change catalyst had deliberately formatted the value stream maps “to frame the limitations of the current process and shape how we discuss the solutions” (OPA:04.2019:RR:Researcher). During one of these sessions, the change catalyst casually mentioned that NHSBSA had recently taken on a new contract administration function, while being fully aware that the Central Team’s corresponding function had recently been removed. This prompted Ryan to ask “if NHSBSA are providing those services for other areas of primary care, could they do the same in optom [ophthalmic]?” (OPA:07.2019:PO:Ryan). By highlighting the current gap in the process, and mentioning the NHSBSA’s track record in other areas, the change catalyst deliberately encouraged Ryan to ask for additional activity to be added to the pilot.

This represented an example of the change catalyst being directly influenced by the NHSBSA growth agenda discussed in Section 7.2.3. Mindful of the upcoming 40% cuts to NHSBSA’s funding, but cognisant of the need to ‘soften’ NHS England’s perception of NHSBSA’s entrepreneurialism-by-necessity, the change catalyst circumspectly promoted the PAN’s capabilities. So, while on the surface-level this exchange simply involved exchanging knowledge and establishing relationships, there was also a conscious and considered undercurrent, whereby the change catalyst used knowledge production as a method of opening up additional business opportunities.

#### 7.3.4 Enabling Discourse B: Clinical Expertise

By framing pilots as risk-free and impermanent experiments, the change catalyst was able to overcome potential resistance to the proposed organisational change. A similar influencing tactic involved incorporating clinical expertise into the pilot, to help bolster the perceived legitimacy of the PAN within the NHS space. In terms of engaging with stakeholders, the PAN frequently espoused the change rationality of improving patient care, which was supported by the change catalyst's wielding of clinical expertise.

It could be argued that clinicians embody the delivery of patient care by virtue of their skills, experience and activities. Clinical expertise, from a discursive perspective, therefore had a significant impact within the NHS and acted as an influential "way of interpreting the world, of validating particular discourses and disqualifying others" (Haugaard, 2002, p182). This perspective is potentially controversial and could be challenged, for example NHS England themselves suggest that the clinical voice is often neglected and needs to be better incorporated into strategic decision making (NHS England, 2021a). However, the empirical data gathered during this research very much emphasised that clinicians were able to wield significant influence within the power/knowledge structures of the PAN. During an interview with one of the ophthalmic leads in 2019, the Researcher was keen to explore how clinical input had been used during the knowledge development process:

"Researcher: how did you find the support from the clinicians in the regions, when it came to pulling stuff together?"

Robyn: It's obviously been really helpful to be able to pull on that clinical knowledge and say this is the route that we're thinking of going down. Is it right, is it wrong? And they can give us a nudge in the right direction".

(OPA:2019:Int:Robyn).

Robyn's comments here arguably suggest an interiorised inferiority, which manifests as a requirement for guidance from the clinicians, who were able to provide that steer due to their discursively privileged position. Clinicians possess a degree of expertise that is hard-won by virtue of the fact they directly care for patients. Considering the conceptual weight of patient care upon the change rationality, it could be argued that this expertise provides clinicians with "access [to] specialised truths and rare powers" (Rose and Miller, 2008, p26). Indeed, as shown in the previous example, this sense of embodied gravitas impacted on Robyn's perception of the knowledge production process, to the extent that, in her view, clinicians were able to define right and wrong. Considering the change catalyst's primary purpose was to drive organisational change, it thus became vital to harness this massively influential force as part of stakeholder engagement. However, it became apparent that clinical expertise could also be used for political purposes.

A key example of this harnessing occurred during the *Incorporate Specialist Expertise* activity in phase two of the GP pilot. In order to capitalise on the discursively privileged status of clinical expertise and progress pilots in the GP space, the change catalyst arranged for Penelope, a GP working for NHS England, to come and answer some questions from the GP team. The purpose of the session was to imbue the new processes with the benefit of clinical insight, and in doing so provide reassurance to the team that they were on the right track. In December 2019, Penelope travelled to the NHSBSA northwest offices and held a session with the nascent GP team, accompanied

by the change catalyst. Darcie, the acting lead within the team, gave an overview of the team's journey up until that point and proceeded to outline some of their questions. Not long into the exchange, it became apparent that Penelope was not able to answer the questions from the team, stating that "I suppose I came out of practice some years ago to take on more strategic level roles [...] and I tell you, you wouldn't want me seeing you as a patient these days" (GP:12.2019:PO:Penelope). Reflexive notes from this session speak to the bemusement of the caseworkers and the horrified reaction of the change catalyst: "I'm mortified that she's not even going to try and answer the question" (GP:12.2019:RR:Researcher). In terms of the stated aims of the session, answering the teams' questions and build their knowledge, Penelope's visit was not a success. On the face of it therefore, the change catalyst's attempts to leverage the weight of clinical expertise had failed.

However, subsequent conversations with the PAN leadership team provided a different interpretation. One of the main issues facing the PAN, was that the network did not have a proven track record in the GP space and involving Penelope was seen as a means of mitigating this relative inexperience. This was discussed during a PAN leadership team meeting in 2019, with Olive and Ella (a strategy lead within the network) both stating that, by bringing Penelope into the mix, the change catalyst had enabled the PAN to demonstrate clinical input into process development. Olive's view was that publicising Penelope's involvement would then open doors, as it enabled the PAN to engage CCGs in "peer to peer conversations" (GP:12.2019:PO:Olive). Similarly, Ella felt that framing knowledge production in this way "gives us [the PAN] a level of credibility that we have GPs supporting the work"

(GP:02.2020:PO:Ella). Being able to broadcast the fact of GP involvement, irrespective of any actual impact on the design of the process, was incredibly valued by the PAN. The change catalyst's involvement thus enabled the PAN to proactively manage perceptions of influential stakeholders (Klijn and Teisman, 1997) because it allowed them to claim a certain legitimacy when engaging with NHS stakeholders, who also privileged the clinical perspective.

Being able to demonstrate clinical involvement thus enabled the change catalyst to potentially assuage the doubts of potential pilot members. In a similar fashion to how pilot discourse was used to create an impression of impermanence, the fact of clinical involvement was used to assert that the PAN had the required expertise to effectively operate in the GP space. Ultimately, the quality of the input from Penelope was less important than the fact that the input occurred, and it could be exhibited to lend political weight to the change catalyst's engagement efforts.

### 7.3.5 Key Stakeholder 3: Potential Network Members

The previous groups of stakeholders were all already involved in the Provider Assurance Network, to a greater or lesser extent. However, in order to be able to grow the PAN, and successfully transition from pilot to business as usual (BAU), the change catalyst had to engage with stakeholders from outside the network. This was particularly relevant in the GP space, as the inactive metagovernor was not able to facilitate introductions. There were a significant number of observations which involved the change catalyst

reaching out to prospective members, but the following example involved both the discourse of policy pilots and the leveraging of clinical expertise.

As part of “Stage 2: Scope Out the Pilot” of the pilot lifecycle, the change catalyst undertook the activity “Engaging with Potential Pilot Members” (please see Figure 15 for more information). This involved the change catalyst looking to capitalise upon contacts within NHSBSA to arrange a call with the chairperson of a local CCG, Albert. In advance of this call, Olive, Ella and the change catalyst engaged in explicit “backstage activity” whereby they discussed how best to “influence, negotiate and manage meaning” (Burnes, 2009, p390). Focusing on the production of a presentation, the backstage activity was concerned with how best to structure the conversation with Albert. The aim being to gather insight into the GP system, while also encouraging Albert’s CCG to take part in a potential pilot. All three components of the change rationale (as discussed in Section 7.2) came to bear upon this conversation. The first and most overt component being patient safety, as seen below:

“Ella: we could say that the LTP talks about reducing fraud to enable effective commissioning and better outcomes for patients, or something?”

Researcher: yeah.

Olive: It’s all about being patient centric and reducing loss in the system. And you know, we already do it in other areas of Primary Care on behalf of NHS England. You know, it can help free up capacity within the CCG to be able to respond to other things.

Ella: Yep. Reducing loss in the system will help patients and this is how we would go about investigating it in the GP space”.

(GP:08.2019:PO:Ella)

As discussed in Section 7.2.1, the concept of patient care formed a Regime of Truth within the NHS, which could be used to justify, and prevent specific courses of action. Here, Ella uses patient care to form a conceptual blanket that encapsulates the less tangible, and less emotionally resonant, concept of fraud in an effort to make the overall package more enticing. By suggesting that “reducing loss in the system will help patients” Ella was attempting to frame the PAN’s activities in a way that would be receptive to the target audience, while still acknowledging the underlying fiscal drivers of the activity.

Olive’s response to Ella emphasised how NHSBSA wished to portray itself as enabling the “CCG to have capacity to respond to other things”, as a response to the changing landscape of the NHS. Not only did the presentation look to foreground how the change activity would contribute to patient care, but it also tried to position the PAN’s activity as something that would help with the wider instability of the NHS (see Section 7.2.2). Interestingly, Ella’s reference to the Long-Term Plan (LTP) also grounded the hypothetical exchange in the language of the inactive metagovernor, NHS England. Even though NHS England had limited involvement in the GP space, referencing their key strategy documents in the context of the Regime of Truth was arguably an attempt to illicit the perception that the discussed actions were congruent with the metagovernor’s aims, objectives and policy position.

Appealing to Albert as a means of growing the network was also directly linked to the change catalyst’s internalisation of the NHSBSA’s growth

agenda. Up until that point the PAN's lack of visibility in the GP space had caused significant tension, which was reflected in the Researcher's reflexive notes, which stated "we're flying blind here; we need to start gathering some real feedback from our potential customers" (GP:08.2019:RR:Researcher). The backstage production of the presentation was therefore a deliberate attempt to try and mitigate this tension through planning. The change catalyst's approach to the actual conversation with Albert was thus heavily influenced by the collective framing of the change rationality created during the back-stage meeting.

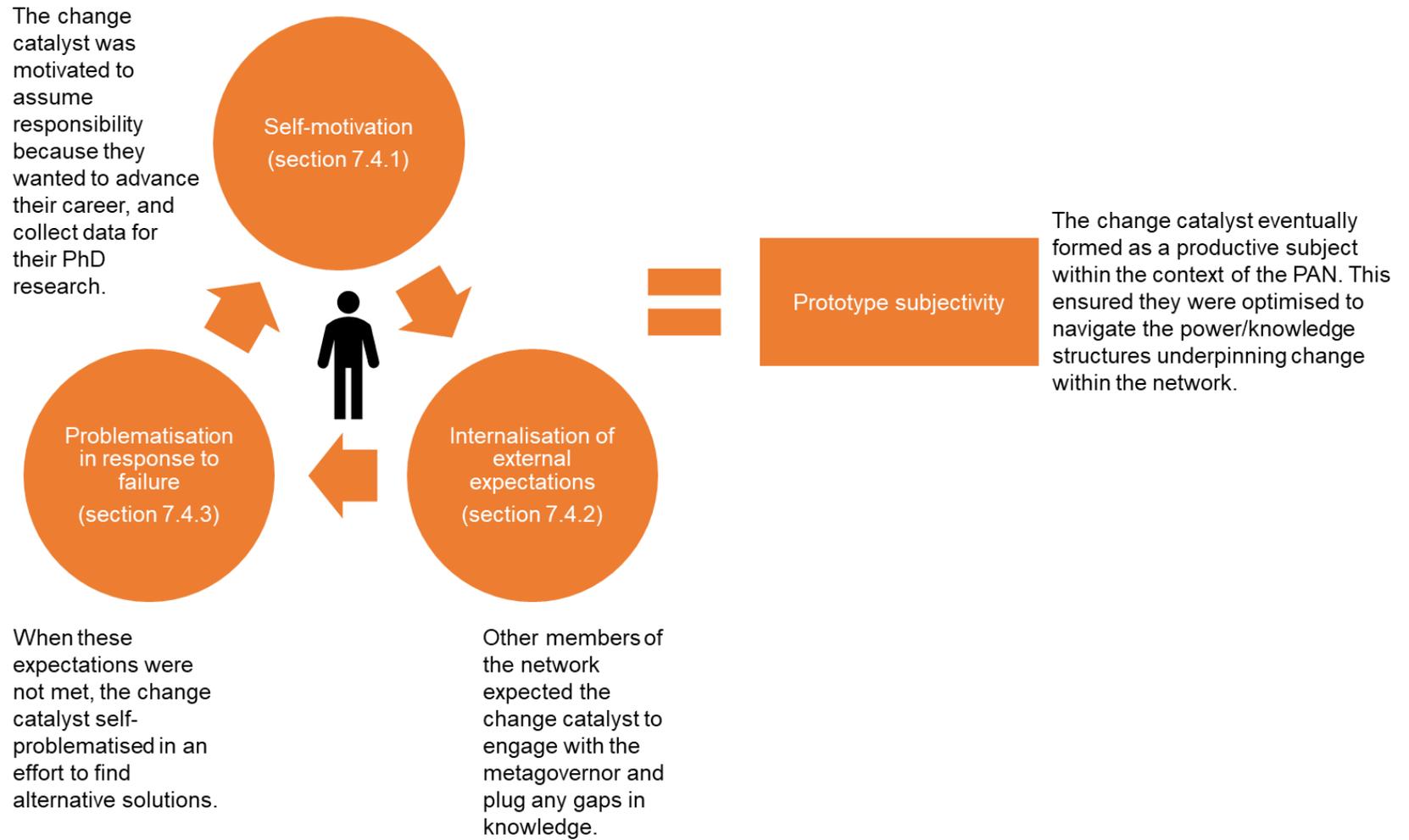
When it came to the meeting itself, the change catalyst was also able to emphasise the benefits of a pilot approach, suggesting that it enabled potential members to "try before you buy" (GP:08.2019:PO:Researcher) which was intended to assuage any of Albert's concerns about commitment. The change catalyst also referenced the fact of Penelope's involvement, in an attempt to cultivate a sense of legitimacy because a clinician had been involved. Ultimately the change catalyst sought to utilise the different components of the change rationality, in conjunction with the enabling discourse of pilots and clinical expertise, to make a convincing case for why the potential network member should participate. The end results of this engagement will be discussed in Section 7.4.3.

#### **7.4 Technologies of Knowledge Production Component 3: Responsibilisation of the Change Catalyst**

If articulating the change rationality set the direction of knowledge production and engaging with key stakeholders was a means of gathering data, then the self-creation of the change catalyst as a productive subject provided the driving force behind this technology. As set out in Section 2.1.4, disciplinary power's capacity to drive social action relies on the production of disciplined and docile subjects. As a mode of power, its focus is not about imposing external control, but rather influencing subjects to internalise normative standards, which in turn motivated them to self-monitor and self-steer.

The whirling mix of discourses within the change rationality, came to impact upon the change catalyst and caused them to internalise external expectations around change management. Evoking Deleuze's (1988) notion of folding explored in Section 2.2.1, this process of responsabilisation caused the change catalyst to take it upon themselves to produce required change management outputs. Within the ethnographic context of the PAN, this process of responsabilisation was a key enabler for producing actionable knowledge around the pilots, as the change catalyst's tendency to assume personal responsibility for the delivery of change outcomes added an urgency to how knowledge was gathered within the network. Responsibilisation therefore had a significant impact on how the change catalyst came to be formed as a productive subject; an impact which helped shape the change catalyst's internal motivation, moulded how they came to internalise the expectations of others and eventually came to self-problematise when those expectations could not be met. Figure 19 sets this process out diagrammatically below.

Figure 19: Responsibilisation of the Change Catalyst



#### 7.4.1 Responsibilisation of the Change Catalyst 1: Motivation for Engaging with Organisational Change

The change catalyst's initial motivation for engaging with organisational change was relatively simple but grew to become more complex as they became immersed in the process of responsabilisation. Ambition and a desire for career progression provided the initial spark of motivation, with reflexive diaries showing that the change catalyst believed participation in the PAN would provide "a real opportunity for me to get a step-up in my career" (GP:08.2019:RR). Within knowledge intensive environments, the pursuit of meaningful work is linked to the self-esteem of productive subjects (Pezet and Cornelius, 2017), with the prospect of career advancement acting "as an essential element in the path to self-fulfilment" (Rose, 1999, p119). Reflexive diaries suggest that the change catalyst's sense of self-worth was thus indelibly linked to the prospect of career advancement:

"Researcher: When I was younger, it always felt like the only time I received any attention from adults (parents, teachers etc) was when I excelled academically. Having grown up and entered the workplace, it's like career advancement and progression has provided another means of obtaining that validation".

(OPA:04.2019:RR).

Fascinatingly, the reflexive diaries highlight a disciplinary trajectory that originated from school age. It could be argued that the change catalyst's sense of self-worth was indelibly bound to performing well within a disciplinary context, where positive feedback galvanised a sense of self-esteem that otherwise would have been lacking. The pursuit of career advancement thus

provided a means of achieving external validation and bolstering the change catalyst's self-image, the desire for which manifested as personal ambition and a need to pursue career progression. In turn, this influenced how the change catalyst comported themselves within the context of the PAN.

The influence of ambition was therefore a key theme during participant interviews. However, the actual impact of personal ambition upon social interaction was complex, as this extract from Olive's interview demonstrates:

“Researcher: I consider myself to be quite ambitious. How do you think ambition should be balanced with the needs of the PAN?”

Olive: For me it's business first, team second and me third. I would always encourage individuals to have ambition and have a career pathway and know where they want to get to. But I wouldn't expect somebody to be following their personal ambition to the detriment of the business”.

(OPA:2019:Int:Olive).

As PAN lead, Olive set the tone for how individual ambition was to be perceived within the network; something to be simultaneously encouraged and restrained, useful as a motivator but only palatable when subordinated to the needs of the organisation. Section 2.3.1 discussed how individuals come to internalise organisational goals, as part of their formation as productive subjects. Within the PAN this process of internalisation was explicitly framed as a trade-off which benefitted both parties, with Olive suggesting to the PAN leadership team that “our role as managers is to develop people to allow them to progress, but we get the most out of them while they're here” (GP:11.2019:PO:Olive). There would be scope for individuals to develop and

progress their careers, but that development must always be subordinated to the needs of the network.

On the surface then, the change catalyst abided by this philosophy and framed their change management efforts (and emerging productive subjectivity) as a balancing act between meeting external expectations and pursuing their sublimated ambition. The reality of the change catalyst's inner world was complicated however by the fact that they were also undertaking PhD research within the PAN. During the time period of this ethnographic study, the change catalyst acknowledged that they were "spending huge amounts of energy to make sure this pilot goes ahead- mainly because I need data for my PhD" (OPA:10.2019:RR). This extract shows how the change catalyst's drive and capacity for action emerged, in part, from a need to gather data for this thesis. Naturally this raises questions about how naturalistic the data gathered actually was, given this motivation arguably blurred the line between research and practice. However, as set out in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 the change catalyst's dual positionality as participant and researcher was central to the research design, and a vital prerequisite for developing a view on how disciplinary power informs change management practice. To occlude the motivating impact of the PhD on the change catalyst's conduct would therefore be disingenuous. The change catalyst's motivation for becoming responsabilised thus emerged from a desire for career advancement, suitably aligned to the needs of the PAN, coupled with a desire to gather data for this thesis. In turn, the compelling influence of this motivation primed the change catalyst to become receptive to external expectations.

#### 7.4.2 Responsibilisation of the Change Catalyst 2: Internalisation of External Expectations

Section 2.2.1 outlined how normative expectations can be enfolded by productive subjects, whereby they are internalised and have a guiding influence on the subject's inner lifeworld. In the context of the change catalyst, enfolding mainly consisted of internalising the expectations of other agents within the PAN, which centred around plugging gaps in knowledge. An illustrative example occurred in "Stage 1: Identify and Leverage Opportunities" during the *Research Planning* activity. The PAN leadership team lacked knowledge around the GP space, which created an observable degree of anxiety within Olive, who frantically asked the PAN leadership team "What's NHS England's role? What's our role? How do we work with the regions? All of that needs to be researched and understood" (GP:09.2019:PO:Olive). The system was rapidly changing, and Olive's underlying unease was palpable; the network was entering a new, complex and ambiguous space, which it knew little about.

During planning conversations, there was an emerging expectation from Olive that the change catalyst would undertake research to produce knowledge and reduce this anxiety, with Olive stating "I need you to study the topic and really understand the problem" (OPA:2019:Int: Olive). A clear expectation was thus articulated to the change catalyst, which, because of their motivation to progress the change, was duly internalised. Producing knowledge would prove the change catalyst to be useful, but it would also

represent “a bid for power” (Kerry, 2013, p175), as accumulating knowledge would also enable the change catalyst to bolster their position within the network. In turn, this would allow the change catalyst to potentially boost their career prospects and ensure continued access to the PAN for PhD data gathering.

The primary method by which the change catalyst was able to produce the required knowledge was through capitalising upon strong working relationships with NHS England’s Alex to draw upon their insight and perspective. This was noted by Molly, a leader within the ophthalmic pilot, who attributed the change catalyst’s knowledge producing capabilities to the fact that “you were able to work closely with Alex and ask those questions in a way that would get the answers we needed” (OPA:2019:Int:Molly). External perceptions of the change catalyst’s role were thus inexorably bound to their ability to engage with key stakeholders and gather insight to help shape knowledge production. Olive explicitly articulated how much they valued this function during an interview:

“Olive: You [the change catalyst] were able to use the research produced by the team to articulate some options... and you had conversations with the CCGs about how we could use those options to help resolve some of their problems. Most importantly though, you were able to articulate the potential way forward, in a way the customer could understand”.

(GP:2019:Int:Olive)

Here, Olive describes how change catalyst’s value was measured in terms of their ability to utilise knowledge production to build relationships with

stakeholders. By articulating “the potential way forward” the change catalyst was essentially synthesising the different technology components, in that they had digested and interpreted the change rationality and were able to use that to shape a narrative that enticed stakeholders to participate. Setting the direction of travel was therefore a product of knowledge production, which was directly informed by the change catalyst’s internalisation of expectations from individuals, such as Olive and Molly. Having successfully harnessed the different technology components and met those internalised expectations in the ophthalmic space, the change catalyst’s confidence was high and the process of responsabilisation was relatively unproblematic.

However, as discussed in 7.3.1, the metagovernor in the GP space was effectively inactive, which rendered the change catalyst’s primary method of producing insight untenable. It therefore became much more difficult to meet internalised expectations, which created a real sense of unease within the change catalyst, as this excerpt shows:

“Researcher: I feel like a bit of a fraud because I don’t know enough about the GP landscape. There’s a tension here between what I actually know and what others expect me to know”.

(GP:08.2019:RR:Researcher).

Here, in an echo of Foucault’s Catholic confession metaphor from Section 2.3, the capability of the self was compared to past performance and found wanting; in that a new landscape posed new challenges, which could not be met through the tried and tested method of engaging with the metagovernor. The expectations of others had been enfolded but the change

catalyst was unable to deliver against those expectations and produce actionable knowledge about the GP context. The change catalyst's sense of self was bound up in being able to deliver tangible outcomes and when that failed, they self-identified as a fraud because that sense of self had become compromised. However, the resultant anxiety compelled the change catalyst to self-problematise in an effort to overcome these obstacles.

#### 7.4.3 Responsibilisation of the Change Catalyst 3: Self-problematism in Response to Perceived Failure

Lacking a close working relationship with the metagovernor in the GP space, the change catalyst desperately sought other sources of knowledge. As discussed in 7.3.4, one method of producing this knowledge had been to reach out to Penelope and secure clinical input into the developing PAN processes. Reflexive diaries show that the change catalyst felt that they had a vested interest in her knowledge sharing session with the GP team stating, "I have a lot riding on this because I arranged the session" (GP:11.2019:RR:Researcher). When the session failed in its purpose (the political value of demonstrating clinical involvement notwithstanding) the change catalyst felt responsible. Having internalised responsibility for finding clinical expertise, when that did not happen, the change catalyst felt as though they were not living up to the expectations of others. This also made the change catalyst worry about their reputation as "I feel like my credibility is bound up with the quality of Penelope's knowledge" (GP:12.2019:RR:Researcher).

In a similar vein, the change catalyst had internalised responsibility for arranging the conversation with Albert, the head of North CCG. As discussed in Section 7.3.5, the change catalyst and colleagues had held a pre-meeting to discuss how best to entice Albert's CCG into joining the PAN. However, when the meeting with Albert actually took place, in a windowless room in a nondescript northern office block, it would transpire that all that back-stage planning would have precious little impact. While Albert listened carefully and was able to share some insight about the issues faced by CCGs, when it came to the question of participating in a potential pilot, he was non-committal. Subsequent exchanges via email revealed that there was little appetite to take part because Albert's CCG felt it did not need the PAN's input. This news was received negatively by the change catalyst, who had internalised responsibility for establishing a pilot, stating "we need to be able to sell ourselves better, I feel like I've let the team down" (GP:09.2019:RR:Researcher).

The change catalyst's perceived failure with Albert was discussed at the following Research Steering Group meeting, the method of engaging with research participants in real-time to discuss emergent themes outlined in Section 5.1. The group clearly felt that Albert not wishing to take part in a pilot was not attributable to any shortcomings on behalf of the change catalyst, rather it was the result of complex inter-organisational dynamics. This echoes Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan's (1997a) assertion that there are inevitable limits to the extent of the individual change facilitator's influence, and network management activity will often fail due to external factors. For all that reassurance from peers however, the change catalyst still internalised responsibility and blamed themselves for the failure. While motivation drove

the change catalyst and the internalisation of expectations framed their efforts, the fact that self-problematisation produced anxiety, even when circumstances were entirely beyond the change catalyst's ability to influence, supports Townley's (1998) assertion in Section 6.2.2 that identities formed in relation to normative standards are potentially unsustainable.

As discussed in Section 2.2.1, the interiorisation of disciplinary power is a complex balance between the impact of external normative standards, put forward by Deleuze (1988) and a felt willingness by the subject to shape themselves in relation to that impact, emphasised by Butler (2016). Following their efforts with Penelope and Albert, the change catalyst felt that they had failed and consequently reviewed their subjectivity to ensure that the same failure did not happen again. The complex balance of interiorisation was enabled through the capacity of the self to self-survey, identify deficiencies and thus guide the process of self-creation (Clegg, 1989) but this production of self-knowledge was inescapably bound to the power structures of the change context, which framed the "ritual by which we change and produce our own subjectivity" (Kelly, 2013, p518). To refer back to the introduction, individuals work upon themselves but not in a manner entirely of their choosing. This speaks to the double-edged nature of self-constitution; for while negative experiences have an indelible impact, the change catalyst was nonetheless driven to relentless activity by their pervasive self-responsibilisation. It could be argued therefore that acting as a change catalyst, where disciplinary power converts personal anxiety into fuel for social action, has the potential to negatively impact on one's mental health. This potential downside needs to be balanced against the change catalyst's

capacity to internalise external stimuli, which in turn enables them to drive change outcomes through technologies.

The ultimate outcome of the change catalyst's responsabilisation was the creation of an individual ideally suited to navigating the complex environment of the PAN; a productive prototype of subjectivity, forged in response to the emerging exigencies of the network. Indeed, this was a prototype whose demonstrable willingness to internalise expectations and self-subjugate ambition, made them broadly acceptable to the PAN leadership and ideally placed to guide the self-cultivation of others (which will be explored further in Section 8.3).

## **7.5 Technologies of Knowledge Production: Summary**

Chapter 7 was an attempt to answer research sub-question 1: How was knowledge produced to identify the optimum path for the change to follow and how was that knowledge utilised to guide conduct within the network? Thinking back to the Dantean metaphor of organisational change as a dark path, Technologies of Knowledge Production are the means by which the path is mapped out and a navigable route developed. The key argument of this chapter is that, like the psychopomp Virgil, the change catalyst coordinated knowledge production to help support others through the change journey. Disciplinary power, when defined as the capacity to mobilise and coordinate social action, was reliant upon knowledge production to set a clear direction of travel for change management. The change catalyst role was able to

contribute towards this process by utilising specific technology components, as set out in Figure 16.

The first technology component involved interpreting the change rationality, which helped set the scene for knowledge production activity. Interpreting the change rationality empowered the change catalyst to shape how discursive elements such as patient care, NHS instability and NHSBSA's growth agenda were perceived by agents across the network. This enabled the change catalyst to foster a perception of the PAN as a patient-focused enterprise, that could help the network metagovernor (NHS England) mitigate some of the systemic issues encountered in NHS Primary Care. At the same time, the change catalyst pursued NHSBSA's growth agenda, which was intrinsically linked to their own motivations.

The second technology component involved engaging with key stakeholders. Once the change rationality had been clearly articulated, the change catalyst was able to use that interpretation to establish working dialogues with key players across the system. Linking in with the metagovernor (in both active and inactive modes) enabled the change catalyst to clearly understand NHS England's priorities, and what was likely to be supported in terms of pilot activity. Working closely with existing network members enabled the change catalyst to gain access to their lived experiences, while linking in with potential pilot members enabled the change catalyst to attempt to understand their potential requirements. All of these activities had a deliberate subtext, in that the change catalyst was continually attempting to grow the PAN and they were supported in this activity by leveraging discourse around policy pilots and clinical expertise. The change

catalyst was a political animal in this sense, applying discursive pressure and leveraging working relationships to achieve a specific outcome, progressing the policy pilots.

This political orientation was only possible because of the third technology component: responsabilisation, or the change catalyst's capacity to take on personal responsibility for the delivery of specific activities. Building on the concept of technologies of the self (discussed in Section 2.2.1), this process drove the change catalyst to deliver key outputs in line with the change rationality, and as such acted as the engine room for the production of knowledge. Responsibilisation of the change catalyst was driven by motivation, in that their conduct was shaped by the desire for career advancement and to collect data for this PhD; all while carefully framing those ambitions as being secondary to the needs of the PAN. In terms of setting the direction for self-cultivation, the change catalyst internalised the expectations of others, in particular around plugging gaps in knowledge by establishing close working relationships with the metagovernor. When these efforts failed it provoked a sense of deep disquiet within the change catalyst, as though their very identity was being compromised, which they then tried to resolve through self-problematisation.

Articulating the change rationality and engaging with key stakeholders would not have been possible without the enfolding of responsibility by the change catalyst, which created a prototype subjectivity that set out what an effective productive subject could look like in the context of the PAN. Ultimately the change catalyst did not control knowledge production. Instead, they acted as a conduit through which disciplinary power shaped their subjectivity, which

then impacted on the subjectivity of other individuals in the PAN (this will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 8).

## **Chapter 8: Technologies of Capability Building**

### **8.1 Defining Technologies of Capability Building**

Technologies of knowledge production established/reaffirmed the predominate Regime of Truth within the change context, which informed how the change catalyst engaged with disciplinary power to shape themselves as a productive subject. However, no one person can drive organisational change by themselves. In order to progress the PAN Pilots, it was necessary for the change catalyst to facilitate the creation of more productive subjects, who could then support change management activity and ultimately take over the pilot processes from the change catalyst. Technologies of capability building enabled this process by empowering individuals to “transform themselves in order to attain a certain amount of happiness” (Foucault, 1994a, p146) and productivity.

As outlined in Section 3.2, individuals working within change management need to be capable of responding to unexpected developments within complex environments, such as the Provider Assurance Network. The ability to function autonomously underpinned this flexibility, but it was an autonomy that needed to be tempered by “self-management of one’s inner world along normative lines” (Deetz, 1998, p164) and conformity to the expected standards of the context. Nurturing these productive subjectivities across the wider project team would also eventually allow the change catalyst to step away from the pilot activity.

The following analysis of technologies of capability building was developed to answer research sub-question 2: How were normative standards

established and embedded to enable participants to travel the path of change autonomously, without the continued presence of the change catalyst? The activities that constituted technologies of capability building within the context of the pilot lifecycle, are set out in the table below:

Figure 20: Technologies of Capability Building - Activities

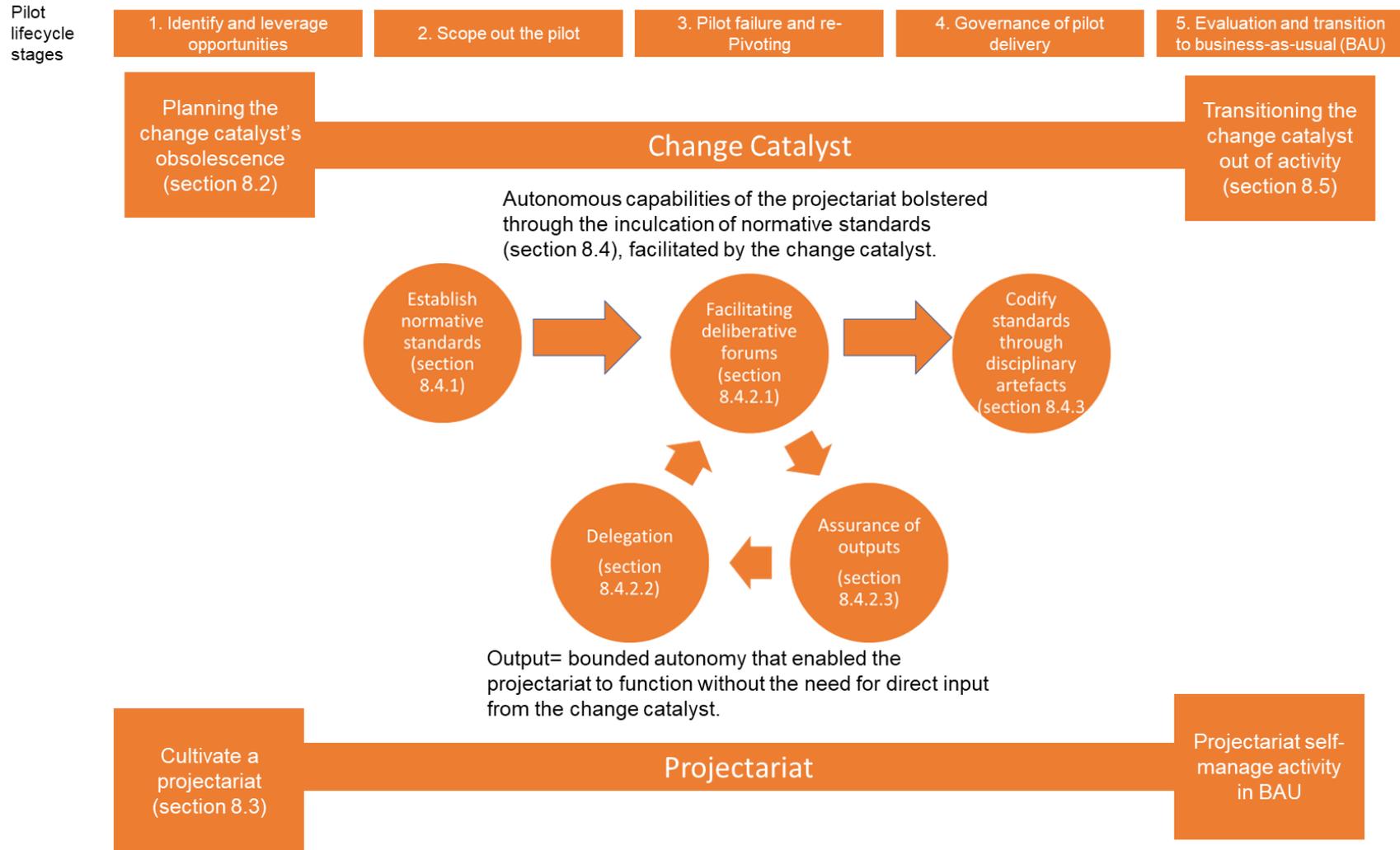
Pilot Stage	Activity Name	Activity Description	Linked Activities	In Which Pilots was the Activity Observed?	
				Ophthalmic	GP
1. Identify and leverage opportunities	8. Gap analysis of existing normative standards	Capitalising on the relationships established during knowledge production, the change catalyst and projectariat were able to engage with key stakeholders to map out relevant policies and legislation. This was tested with the metagovernor to understand any potential gaps, which would then be addressed through deliberative forums (see Section 8.4.2.1).	4. Engage with potential pilot members	✓	✓
	9. Lay foundations for change catalyst transition	As part of the planning for the administration of the PAN pilots, a lesson learned exercise for previous projects revealed that delays in allocating operational resource had led to the PAN being too reliant upon the change catalyst's input. To prevent this from reoccurring, the PAN leadership team decided that the change catalyst's input would be time limited, and it would be necessary to build operational capabilities to fill any gaps. This proved an operational impetus for instilling bounded autonomy (the capacity to operate autonomously while still adhering to normative standards) within the pilot team.	N/A	✗	✓
2. Scope out the pilot	10. Develop standard operating procedures	The largest and most significant activity in relation to Technologies of Capability Building. No less than nine separate SOPs were produced during the observed period, covering all aspects of the GP and ophthalmic pilots. Underpinned by deliberative forums, this activity involved intensive discussions about how normative standards should be translated into practical outputs that would define acceptable conduct within the pilot teams.	10. Gap analysis of existing normative standards	✓	✓
3. Pilot failure and repivoting	<i>No activities observed</i>		N/A	NA	NA

4. Governance of pilot delivery	<i>No activities observed</i>		N/A	NA	NA
5. Evaluation and transition to business- as-usual (BAU)	11. Handover and transition change catalyst out of activity	Towards the end of the pilot activity, once the project teams had become self-sufficient, it was necessary for the change catalyst to extricate themselves from the daily operations of the various pilots. This was achieved through a robust handover process, which is discussed in more detail in Section 8.5.	11. Lay foundations for change catalyst transition	✓	X

These activities were facilitated throughout the lifecycle of the pilot by the change catalyst. As with the previous chapter, Technology Discourse Analysis (please see Section 6.2) was used to pull technology components together from different activities and lifecycle stages.

Technologies of capability building attempted to foster bounded autonomy through the following technology components: 1) developing an approach for rendering the change catalyst obsolete by increasing the overall change management capacity within the PAN. This was enabled by 2) which saw the cultivation of a group of motivated individuals, the projectariat, who would become the vanguard of change management within the various PAN pilots. Once the projectariat had been established, it was necessary to 3) immerse them within the expected normative standards of the change context. In turn, this empowered the projectariat to step-up and take greater responsibility for change management outcomes, which 4) enabled the change catalyst to transition out of pilot activity, and fully activate the projectariat as productive subjects. Figure 21 below sets out how these different components interacted to create bounded autonomy and also provides an overview of this chapter's structure.

Figure 21: Chapter 8 - Conceptual Map



## 8.2 Technologies of Capability Building Component 1: Planning the Change Catalyst's Obsolescence

For all the time and effort that the change catalyst spent working within the Provider Assurance Network, they were never an official member of the organisation, rather they belonged to NHSBSA's strategy function. Having initially been assigned to the PAN to provide change management support, the change catalyst had come to play a vital role in establishing and driving change within the burgeoning network. This hands-on prolonged involvement came to be challenged by Ella, the strategy function lead, who questioned "is this level of involvement sustainable in the long run?" (GP:08.2019:PO:Ella). This critique stemmed from the strategy team's need to move the change catalyst to other areas of the business, following their successes in the PAN.

Consequent discussions between Ella and Olive, PAN lead, established a consensus view that the change catalyst could provide strategic direction about the new pilots but "from an operations point of view, we need to take ownership sooner" (GP:07.2019:PO:Olive). The change catalyst occupied a liminal position within the network, as discussed in Section 3.1.1, with their focus on change management and lack of structural ties holding them apart from their colleagues in the wider network. That being said, their liminal positionality fed directly into the responsabilisation that galvanised the change catalyst to relentlessly pursue change, which in turn enabled them to wield significant influence because of their expertise and skillset. This dynamic worked during the malleable pilot lifecycle, but Olive's point highlighted that the change catalyst would eventually need to transition ownership of the pilots to other individuals within the pilot teams.

The fact that the change catalyst would eventually step away from pilot activity was thus established very early in the process. When working with the teams, the change catalyst knew their involvement would be time limited and eventually the teams would need to become self- sufficient. This underlying expectation shaped how the change catalyst attempted to build capability at the team level, with a reflexive diary suggesting that they perceived their role as being to “catalyse, start things off and then I move on- they need to be capable when I leave” (OPA:06.2019:RR:Researcher). So, while the change catalyst would guide change management activity by “putting the right building blocks in place and setting the team off in the right direction” (OPA:2019:Int:Robyn), they also needed to establish an approach that would eventually render themselves obsolete and the team self- sufficient.

For this transition to be successful, the change catalyst worked to instil productive subjectivities within the pilot teams and establish normative standards that could effectively guide conduct. The outcome of which was to create a dynamic whereby the pilot teams “could take control of the process eventually and know what we were doing” (OPA:2019:Int:Bobby). Only once this autonomous capability had been established would the change catalyst be able to transition out of the pilot activity, as they would no longer be needed.

### **8.3 Technologies of Capability Building Component 2: Cultivating a Projectariat**

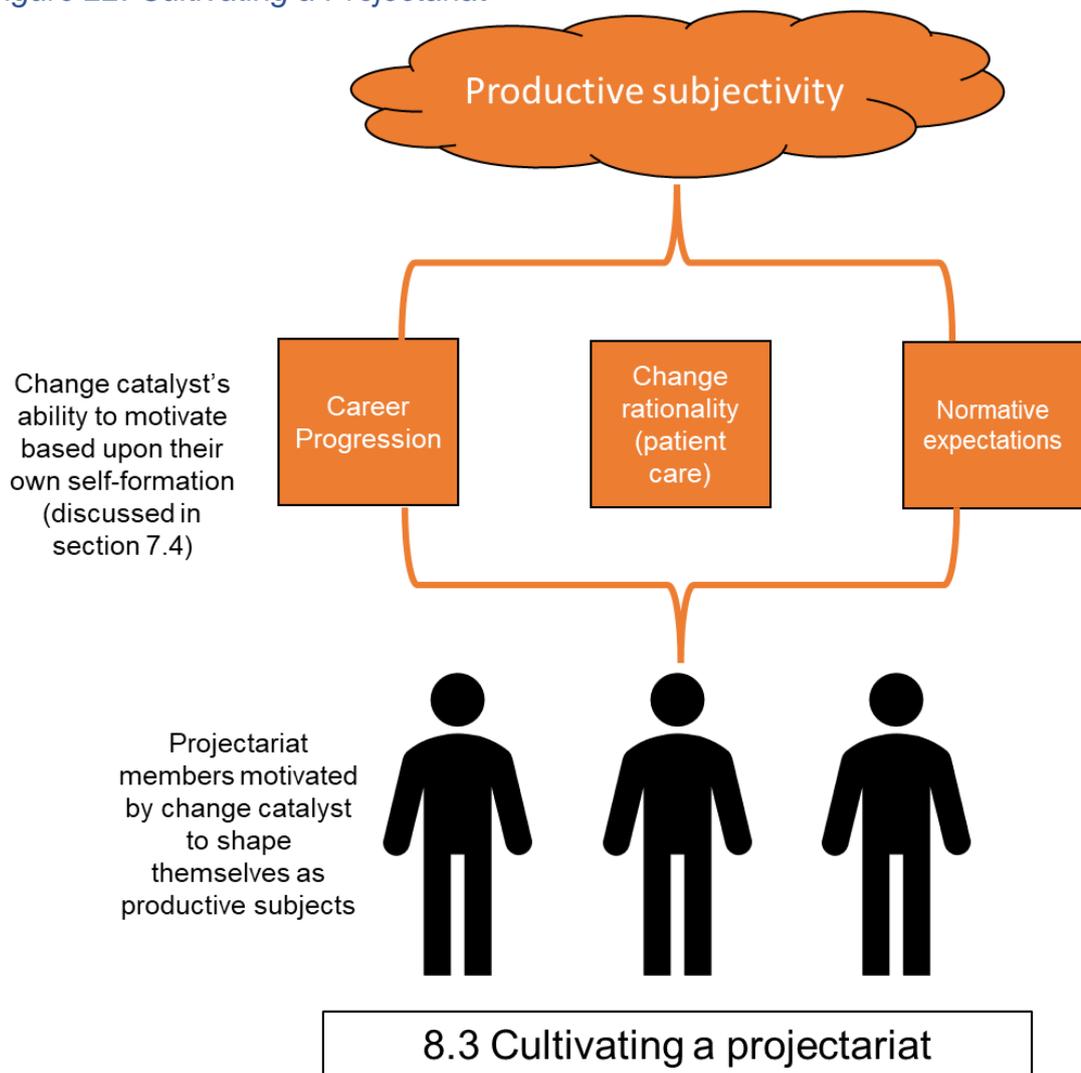
The first stage in building the autonomous capability of the pilot teams was to encourage the development of productive subjectivities at a group level.

As set out in Section 7.4, the being-in-the-world of the change catalyst helped present a template of productive subjectivity to those working in the PAN. Disciplinary power drove a complex mix of motivation, internalisation of expectations, and self-problematisation to help shape an individual who was optimised to initiate and accelerate change. However, no single individual can effectively steer organisational change by themselves. As set out in Section 8.2, the change catalyst needed to eventually transition responsibility for guiding the pilots over to others in the network. It was therefore necessary for the change catalyst to cultivate a group of individuals from within the network to support the scoping and implementation of the various pilots, with a view to them taking direct ownership of the outputs once the change catalyst departed.

Hodgson *et al* (2019) use the term “projectariat” (p10) to describe groups of frontline operational individuals that become enmeshed in change management activities, and who often have a disorientating experience of adapting to the future state environment (Greer, Samaluk and Umney, 2018). This usage arguably has negative connotations, in that the projectariat are represented as powerless figures swept up in the maelstrom of organisational change. However, when this concept was discussed with the Research Steering Group it was felt that the individuals within the pilot teams “stepped up and really acted as a vanguard for what we were trying to do in optom [ophthalmic] and GP” (OPA:2020:RSG:Olive). As such, the term projectariat has been used in this thesis to describe those individuals who were proactive members of the project team responsible for driving the observed policy pilots forward. This applied to approximately 30 individuals (please see Appendix H for a breakdown of their pseudonymised data), who were selected through

naturalistic sampling, in that they were already part of the project team prior to the commencement of research. These individuals had volunteered to take part in the ophthalmic and GP pilots, motivated in part by the reduced need for processing capacity within NHSBSA (as discussed in Section 7.2.3) and by the prospect of career advancement. The change catalyst then worked with the projectariat to shape their selfhood and become productive, in a similar fashion to the change catalyst's own journey of self-development (as outlined in Section 7.4). This dynamic is set out in Figure 22 below:

Figure 22: Cultivating a Projectariat



When cultivating a projectariat the process of responsabilisation did not take place organically. Rather, the change catalyst deliberately attempted to nurture a lattice of productive subjectivities, with the ultimate aim of producing a cadre of individuals capable of effectively driving change outcomes, which would eventually allow the change catalyst to step away from the pilot activity.

### 8.3.1 Motivating Projectariat Members

For the majority of individuals working in the PAN, their involvement was ostensibly temporary. Fixed term assignments were the norm within the network, with caseworkers being seconded from their permanent processing roles. However as discussed in Section 7.2.3, those permanent jobs were under threat by the move towards electronic processing. Places within the PAN pilot teams were therefore highly coveted because of the perception that “even though it’s temporary it’ll put you in a good position if something permanent comes up” (OPA:2019:Int:Bobby). The prospect of career progression therefore had a significant impact on how the change catalyst attempted to motivate projectariat members to shape themselves into productive subjects, as this extract from a briefing to the GP team shows:

“Researcher: we don’t know what the processes are going to look like, but the way to sell it to prospective members of the team is: they’re going to be able to inform, help develop and shape what we do. And the people who’ve done that in optom [ophthalmic], they’ve gone on to get band 5 and band 6 jobs elsewhere in the BSA”.

(GP:09.2019:PO:Researcher)

This extract echoes Rose's (1998) point from Section 2.3.1 that change catalysts can act as relays between organisational goals and personal desires, here suggesting that to become a productive subject is to improve one's career prospects. The reflexive diary that accompanied this observation showed that the change catalyst actively tried to frame the benefits of participating in pilots in terms of career advancement, which "was a real motivator for me, so I can talk about it authentically with them [projectariat members]" (GP:09.2019:RR:Researcher). As set out in Section 7.4.1, the change catalyst was motivated by their own career progression, and as such was able to use that tangible desire to inspire others to work on their own subjectivity and become productive. By linking pilot activity to career advancement, the change catalyst created a normative order with very specific benefits, namely, the potential opportunity to advance through the NHS Agenda for Change progression system (NHS Employers, 2019). Savage (1998) posits that career advancement can lead to the formation of a particular kind of selfhood, which actively pursues opportunities to grow and develop. With regard to technologies of capability building, it could then be argued that the combination of motivation, organisation and empowerment created a self-orientation that enabled the projectariat members to "exhibit self-surveillance and self-control...and use themselves for their own strategized employment and career movement" (Deetz, 1998, p164).

The change catalyst internalised the impact of disciplinary power (they must deliver change outputs such as research) but was able to use that

internalised motivation to impact on the self-constitution of others, by aligning their self-interest (potential career advancement) to the progress of pilots. Utilising the idea of career progression therefore provided a means of steering the conduct of conduct (as discussed in Section 3.1.2) and set the scene for instilling bounded autonomy within the projectariat members. While the allure of stable employment cannot be overstated here, the success of the pilots also seemed to become linked to the self-esteem of individual projectariat participants, with Bobby stating, “if the pilot is successful, you know there’s a sense of pride and other people will appreciate you” (OPA:2019:Int:Bobby). It could be argued therefore, that through the process of responsabilisation, some of the participants came to link aspects of their sense of self-worth to the success of the pilot, mirroring the change catalyst’s own internalisation.

A similar motivator was the influence of the change rationality. As outlined in Section 7.2.1, the prospect of improving patient care was a huge motivator for caseworkers. Ava, an ophthalmic caseworker, recounted her experience of project work whereby she was able to help a severely ill patient obtain a pair of new glasses. In helping the patient, Ava felt that she “was doing something worthwhile” (OPA:2019:Int:Ava) which helped her overcome her anxiety around the ambiguous nature of project work. Dean (1996a) suggests that identity can become problematised to produce specific effects and in Ava’s case, her workplace identity was directly informed by the Regime of Truth. She internalised the predominant rationale for change, by improving patient care, and was able to act in line with that rationality, in this case by providing the patient with glasses. In doing so, she “felt like I was connected to what we were doing (OPA:2019:Int:Ava). Again, the change catalyst was

able to understand this motivation and use it to frame self-formation as something that could have an altruistic impact.

The final element of motivation used by the change catalyst was articulating external expectations. To understand how projectariat members internalised expectations, the Researcher purposefully interviewed new starters to understand their perspective on the growing service. What became apparent, was the significant amount of pressure these individuals put themselves under to deliver change-related outputs, as this interview extract shows:

“Lily: I like to be able to contribute and know what I’m talking about.

Researcher: How long have you been in the role now?

Lily: Start of the month, so about twenty-one days.

Researcher: Do you not think you should give yourself some leeway?  
(Laughter)

Lily: I know, I want to do it now though. I want to know it now (laughter)”.

(OPA:2019:Int:Lily)

Lily’s drive to quickly acclimatise and become a productive member of the team, potentially stemmed from the burning platform, discussed in 7.2.3, as more traditional processing roles within NHSBSA were gradually disappearing. Getting up to speed quickly would potentially help Lily prove herself and hopefully secure more stable employment in the long-term. Arguably however, her drive was also a consequence of the implicit expectation that team members be able to process and analyse information quickly and effectively. It may seem somewhat ironic that the Researcher

advised Lily to “give yourself some leeway” when they had played a key role in engendering that expectation in the first place, but the change catalyst was just as enmeshed as Lily in the power/knowledge structure of those expectations.

The empathy displayed here speaks to the inherently contested duality of the change catalyst role. On the one hand, they were required to inspire members of the projectariat to engage in a process of dynamic self-optimisation and become productive subjects. At the same time, however, the change catalyst was expected to dispassionately organise those productive subjects to drive the pilots forward, which involved setting out expectations to influence conduct. The impact of expectations and normative standards upon conduct will be explored further in Section 8.4.

In that sense then, Lily’s engagement with external expectations demonstrated a darker aspect of motivation. Within the PAN, the productive subject was an individual who could autonomously deliver change outputs, such as produce knowledge about the context. They could then share that knowledge effectively within the wider network and influence the subjectivity of others. Given that this subjectivity was partially constituted by the external expectations within the change context, those who were unable to comply became “people who, by their particular being-in-the-world, are resisting truth and power” (Haugaard, 2002, p185). In other words, if individuals could not meet the expectations and deliver the required outputs, then they would cease to be productive and useful. The interlocking matrix of self-constitution that enabled the creation of productive subjects, thus hid some ugly truths, in that

the ultimate worth of an individual in a work context was arguably defined by their ability to become productive.

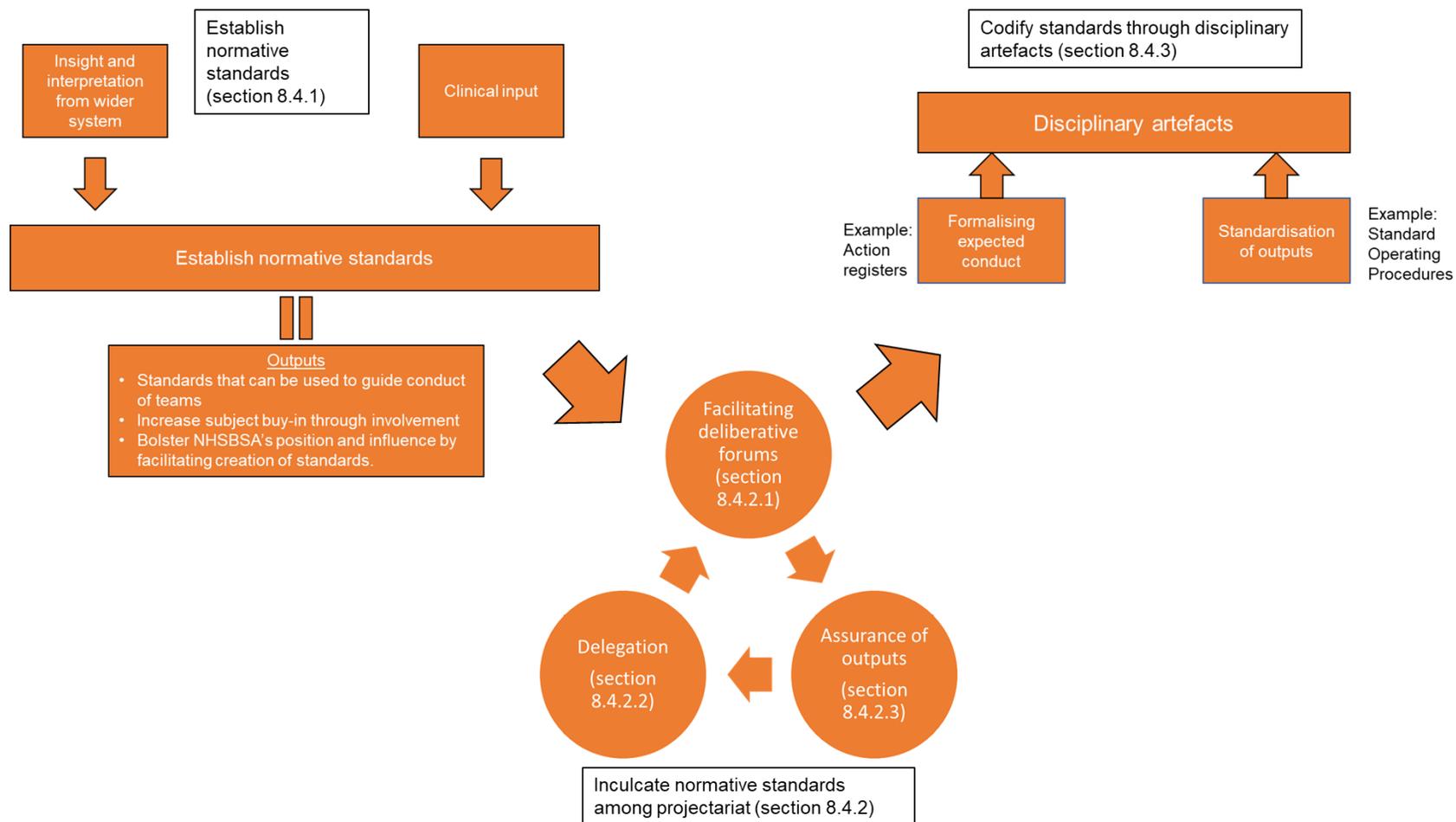
It could be argued therefore that the projectariat members attempted to become productive subjects simply because they feared losing their job. However, as we saw with Bobby, the ability to be productive in the pilot context also played a role in bolstering the participant's pride and self-esteem. While this sounds positive on the surface, it also echoes Townley's (1998) assertion from Section 6.2.2, that identities formed in this way can be unstable. Modern organisational life can be a tempestuous and unstable arena, to measure one's self-worth against the transitory standards of an organisation can create anxiety and a sense of dislocation when those standards invariably change. This risk is arguably even more applicable when one is working within a change management context, as these roles tend to be time limited.

Ultimately the Researcher's perception was that there was no single motivating factor for why these individuals wanted to self-optimize. Rather, alternate factors came into play at various points in the pilot lifecycle and different methods of motivation were used by the change catalyst to enable the creation of productive subjectivities. The allure of career progression provided a material goal for the projectariat participants, while supporting the delivery of patient care provided a moralistic dimension. All the while, their conduct was shaped by the emerging expectations of the change context. In order to build on this motivation and provide a foundation for the creation of bounded autonomy, it was necessary for the change catalyst to organise and empower the projectariat members. This was achieved by inculcating normative standards.

#### **8.4 Technologies of Capability Building Component 3: Inculcating Normative Standards**

Cultivating a projectariat enabled the change catalyst to establish a cadre of productive subjects that would act as a vanguard for pilot activity. While these individuals had ample motivation, it would prove necessary to create normative standards that would help guide their conduct and enable them to operate independently of the change catalyst. By immersing projectariat members in the expected standards, the change catalyst attempted to instil a sense of bounded autonomy, whereby autonomous capability was balanced against normative expectations. This technology component could thus be seen as a method of steering the conduct of conduct, as outlined in Section 2.3.1, as the change catalyst attempted to indirectly influence the activities of the projectariat, without compromising their autonomy. Specifically, this was achieved by the change catalyst establishing normative standards within the network, inculcating those standards within the teams and then codifying those standards through the creation of disciplinary artefacts. The dynamic between these different processes is set out in Figure 23 below.

Figure 23: Inculcating Normative Standards



#### 8.4.1 Establishing Normative Standards

Section 2.1.4 outlined how individuals are shaped in relation to disciplinary norms, whereby they compare their conduct to externalised standards and adjust their subjectivity to meet those standards (le Blanc, 2016). Within the context of the PAN, standards set out the expected norm for how caseworkers would deliver assurance activity, one example being how caseworkers were expected to interact with contractors. These standards were reliant upon there being a commonly agreed interpretation of the NHS England policies and legislation for Primary Care. In both sets of pilots however, the metagovernor was not able to provide a common interpretation, either because the relevant assurance policy was incomplete or did not exist, which was not surprising as Provider Assurance was not a priority for NHS England, given the systemic instability within the NHS at that time.

It therefore fell to the PAN to articulate and reify the normative standards which would guide the conduct of individuals within the network. To understand the lay of the land, the change catalyst and projectariat used the outputs from technologies of knowledge production to link in with existing and potential network members (please see Section 7.3) and tease out which normative standards were already in play. For example, during engagement for the contract administration pilot, Ryan from NHS England articulated an expectation that the PAN would administer a series of checks on ophthalmic practices, which would cover record keeping, patient engagement and verification of clinical personnel. However, there was no legislative underpinning for this request and practice varied significantly across the

country. To overcome this gap, the change catalyst suggested that the PAN could “build the need for these standards into our processes so that we’re dealing with it in a consistent way” (OPA:05.2019:PO:Researcher). In essence, the change catalyst assumed responsibility for articulating a consistent set of national standards, a responsibility they in turn cascaded down to the projectariat members.

Needing to create a sense of collective ownership for developing standards, the change catalyst actively sought to motivate the projectariat members, stating to the team “it’s true we don’t have standards, but you guys are going to play a key role in changing that” (OPA:05.2019:PO:Researcher). This attempt at empowerment galvanised the projectariat, with Robyn stating, “no-one will be able to tell us the answer, we’ll have to co-construct it with the other players in the system” (OPA:09.2019:PO:Robyn). Within Foucault’s work, there is arguably the implicit assumption that subjects have limited influence over the “diagnostic, prognostic, normative judgements” (Foucault, 1991, p19) that come to shape their conduct. However, within the context of the PAN, the basis for those judgements was fundamentally lacking. Rather than merely functioning as passive recipients, the subjects working in the pilots had to play an active role in establishing what those standards were, helping to shape the normative expectations which would come to guide their conduct. As such, it could be argued that the shaping of normative standards by emerging productive subjects actually played a role in the creation of their subjectivity. This idea will be explored in more detail in Section 8.4.2.

For all the change catalyst’s outward confidence when engaging with the projectariat, inwardly they were deeply concerned by the lack of pre-

existing normative standards, with their reflexive diaries suggesting that “it feels like we’re currently building a house on sand” (OPA:05.2019:RR). In order to overcome this sense of baselessness, the change catalyst and projectariat were able to call upon clinical expertise to add discursive weight to the PAN’s emerging standards. As outlined in Section 7.3.4, clinical knowledge was seen as being directly linked to the delivery of patient care, and as such clinical expertise was prized by the PAN. To help bolster their clinical credibility, NHSBSA directly employed a clinical advisor, Adam, in 2019 whose role was to provide clinical input into the emerging standards. Adam also played a key role in engaging with the metagovernor to clarify roles and responsibilities around the production of standards, as this extract from an observation shows:

“Olive: Adam, in your professional opinion who do you think should be setting national standards?”

Adam: In terms of contract admin, I think it should definitely be NHSBSA. Certainly, when it comes to interpreting what little guidance there is.

Alex: So, is this an issue with the current standards or is it about interpretation?

Adam: It’s interpretation but the standards are so opaque. I think the work that the team is doing now will make black and white, what is currently grey”.

(OPA:10.2019:PO:Olive)

This conversation was expertly stage-managed by Olive, given that the opinion of clinicians held particular weight within the PAN. She was able to leverage Adam’s gravitas for two purposes; the first being to legitimise the

standards being developed by the change catalyst and projectariat, as being able to demonstrate that a standard had incorporated clinical involvement meant it was more likely to be accepted by the wider system. Secondly, the weight of Adam's positionality was used to convince Alex that NHSBSA should be empowered to lead the process of establishing standards and "make black and white what is currently grey". This was a calculated strategy, as Alex had previously stated that "as a commissioner of clinical services, am I going to challenge a clinical advisor's decision? Of course not" (OPA:09.2019:PO:Alex). Olive was able to pull that unquestioning dynamic through into the debate about standards and in doing so, manoeuvre NHSBSA into an advantageous position. If NHSBSA was able to take on responsibility for articulating normative standards, then that would potentially increase their influence within the wider network and better serve the growth agenda outlined in Section 7.2.3.

The aim of establishing standards was to create baseline expectations that would influence the conduct of caseworkers during pilot activity. At the same time however, the process also played a role in shaping the subjectivity of caseworkers and bolstering the NHSBSA's position within the wider network. The following section will explore how these standards, once defined, were subsequently embedded within the projectariat through persistent instruction, also known as inculcation.

#### 8.4.2 Inculcating Normative Standards Within the Projectariat

Establishing standards provided a means of guiding the conduct of the projectariat within the network. In order to get the Provider Assurance teams to the stage where they could deliver the outputs required to drive change activity, it was necessary to build their capability through persistent inculcation of the standards established in Section 8.4.1. As set out in Chapter 3, productive individuals need to be capable of responding independently to the complexities of organisational change, while still being guided by the predominant normative standards. This complex balancing act was achieved by the change catalyst facilitating deliberative forums which helped nurture bounded autonomy within the projectariat. This was supported by the change catalyst regularly delegating responsibility for activities to projectariat members, all the while maintaining visibility of change outcomes. At the same time, the coordination of these activities was influenced by the change catalyst's awareness of their limited amount of time with the projectariat before they would have to step away from the pilots. This dynamic stemmed from the change-oriented nature of the change catalyst's role and liminal positionality.

#### 8.4.2.1 Facilitating Deliberative Forums

A key enabler for inculcating normative standards was the change catalyst's facilitation of deliberative forums, communal sites for the discussion and co-creation of knowledge about networks and their objectives (Davies, 2011). Iedema *et al's.*, (2017) description of agent interactions within healthcare networks demonstrated that deliberative forums could leverage the complex interactions of agents to produce knowledge and steer change

activities. This in turn allowed for the creation of “intersubjective knowledge” (Koppenjan and Klijin, 2004, p182) which created common understanding by drawing upon different perspectives from within the change environment (Hagebakken, Olsen and Solstad, 2020). Foucault (1994b) also suggests that the knowledge produced during these sessions can also help to clearly situate the subjectivity of individuals in relation to goal-orientated activities and relationships of communication.

Knowledge gleaned from the wider system provided the building blocks of the deliberative forums, with input coming from engagement with key stakeholders (Section 7.3), research undertaken by the projectariat themselves and emerging normative standards (Section 8.3.1). During stage two of the pilot lifecycle these outputs were synthesised to create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), documented processes that could be used to steer the conduct of team members when they were interacting with Primary Care contractors. To produce these outputs, the change catalyst facilitated a series of deliberative forums where members of the projectariat would present potential options for establishing standards, which would then be refined through constructive debate.

A typical example from the GP team in late 2019, saw caseworker Rosie present her research on extended hours payments back to the wider team. This culminated in Rosie arguing for a method of “remote working so that we don’t have to visit the practice in person” (GP:11.2019:PO:Rosie). While this approach was desirable because it would improve the economic sustainability of the process, Olive pushed back on the idea because she believed that the team “didn’t have the right infrastructure to be able to manage

remote analysis yet” (Ibid). This stimulated a wider debate among the projectariat members, about short-term solutions that could lay the groundwork for true remote working. By synthesising knowledge outputs and then stimulating a debate about their practical applications, Rosie enabled the team to begin codifying a standard series of actions that could be used to guide future conduct. Simultaneously, the deliberative nature of the conversations improved team cohesion by enabling “peer-to-peer mentoring and side-by-side learning” (GP:09.2019:PO:Darcie).

Participating in deliberative forums thus had a binding impact on the nascent teams, with mutual support and learning providing a basis for the creation of interlinked productive subjectivities. Underpinning this process was the expectation that individual projectariat members would take personal responsibility for delivering the outputs discussed during the deliberative forums. During the early stages of the ophthalmic pilot, this increased autonomy caused some issues with the team members, as they were “struggling a bit to use their own initiative and become more self-managed” (OPA:2019:Int:Lily). The individuals working in the pilot had very little experience of autonomy, with most of them having worked in a highly structured transactional processing environment prior to the pilot. While it was important that these individuals should eventually come to self-steer their activity, there was an interim period where the change catalyst was required to provide hands-on guidance to the team. Most obviously this involved the change catalyst setting broad parameters around how the outputs should be produced, with Robyn stating, “once you’d given us a steer about the expected direction, then it became much easier to action things” (OPA:2019:Int:Robyn).

Similarly in the GP space, the change catalyst was able to “bring the team together and make sure everyone understands what we need to do” (OPA:2020:Int:Darcie).

The change catalyst’s intention in providing guidance was not just to provide support to the projectariat, it was also designed to nurture their capacity for independent problem-solving. For example, during a SOP development session in early 2020, the change catalyst pushed the projectariat to consider a series of questions about capturing and using contractor data. Reflexive diaries show that rather than providing the team with an answer, the change catalyst’s aim was to “point out issues but then get them to self-design solutions” (GP:02.2020:RR). While the change catalyst may have had a view on potential solutions, getting the projectariat to produce the answers themselves helped build their capacity to make decisions independently. A key enabler for this approach was the change catalyst’s willingness to “listen to the points that we [projectariat members] were raising, which made me feel like I was making a valid contribution” (OPA:2019:Int:Ava). Rather than displaying a commitment to egalitarian discourse, the change catalyst’s strategy here was arguably geared towards empowering the projectariat by involving them in decision-making, while also ensuring that the conversation remained within the boundaries of the normative order.

This approach created significant buy-in from the projectariat, with ophthalmic lead Molly suggesting that “everyone was able to voice their opinion and put views forward and I think that’s what took people along on the journey” (OPA:2019:Int:Molly). It is worth considering though, that this open

approach to problem-solving was only possible because it occurred during an early stage of the pilot. The fact that there were no pre-existing standards allowed for a freedom of discourse that may not have been possible if disciplinary norms had been better established. This notion will be explored in more detail in Section 9.2.2.

Throughout this process, the change catalyst had to maintain a careful balance between supporting the team and enabling their independence. This tension was a recurring theme within the reflexive diaries from this period, with one example stating, “a key measure of my success is the extent to which I’m able to step back from the forum because the team are picking it up” (OPA:06.2019:RR). While deliberative forums provided an excellent basis for starting this transfer of responsibility; to truly build autonomous capability, it was necessary for the change catalyst to actively delegate responsibility for specific pilot deliverables to projectariat members.

#### 8.4.2.2 Delegation

To help build autonomous capability within the projectariat, and nurture productive subjectivities, the change catalyst regularly delegated change management activities to individual team members. Once these individuals had developed a certain degree of proficiency and confidence, the change catalyst stepped back to intentionally create a leadership vacuum, which encouraged the selected individuals to become more independent. PAN leader Olive was constantly looking for individuals “who would respond well to having additional scope and freedom to do things” (OPA:2019:Int:Olive).

Individuals who performed well during deliberative forums were therefore encouraged by Olive and the change catalyst, to put themselves forward for more responsibility. One key example was ophthalmic lead Molly, who came to lead on the development of an implementation plan for the post-pilot expansion of the ophthalmic service in July 2019. The plan was a key change management activity, which would have previously been coordinated by the change catalyst. However, mindful of the need to eventually step away from the pilot, the change catalyst delegated this vital activity to Molly.

This delegation marked the culmination of a significant journey for Molly. In early 2019, she had been seconded to a higher-level role within the PAN and over the course of the pilot she had adapted successfully to the complex environment. A discussion during her research interview was revealing, in that she felt that she was able to work upon her selfhood to achieve specific effects:

“Researcher: Moving forward, do you see yourself taking more ownership of driving change in the PAN?”

Molly: Yes.

Researcher: What do you think that will look like for you?

Molly: I’ll lead on pulling future roadmaps together and I’ll need to link in with NHS England more. So, I’ll need to ask the kind of questions you [the change catalyst] would have asked. It’s thinking more at that high strategic level and that’s probably what I’ve needed guidance with, up until now”.

(OPA:2019:Int:Molly)

Here, Molly outlines her approach to taking on a direct leadership role in the PAN, suggesting that she came to model her conduct on what she had

observed while shadowing the change catalyst. In attempting to anticipate what questions the change catalyst would have asked; Molly was shaping her approach so that it mirrored what had worked in previous situations. It could be argued therefore that Molly's self-development and progress within the PAN was because she had followed the example set by the change catalyst's prototypical subjectivity (as set out in Section 7.4.3). The kinds of questions asked by the change catalyst had resulted in positive outcomes, so she needed to model her conduct in way that would allow her to ask the right questions in similar situations.

The change catalyst also provided encouragement and emotional support to help Molly's emerging productive subjectivity to thrive, with Molly stating: "you were always there to give me a nudge and say I could do it, and then I started to think I could do it" (ibid). Acting as a role model then, the change catalyst had been able to indirectly shape Molly's conduct, to the extent that she was able to move far beyond the confines of her original role in the network. A key element of delegation therefore involved the change catalyst encouraging projectariat members to look beyond the confines of their current roles, which was welcomed by individuals such as Robyn who felt that "yeah, the activity may not be in my job description but imagine the kind of skills you'd get off the back of it" (OPA:2019:Int:Robyn). Delegating in this fashion enabled the change catalyst to create a web of productive subjects within the PAN, who would eventually be able to take direct responsibility and ownership for driving change.

Other examples of delegation included, Ava being asked to work with NHS England to clarify their expectations around the contract administration

pilot (OPA:08.2019:PO:Ava) and Robyn taking a lead on calculating what resources the network would need to expand an assurance pilot (OPA:07.2019:PO:Robyn). In both instances the change catalyst had previously carried out the activity and had been shadowed by the projectariat member. Reflecting on this process after the fact, Robyn recognised the importance of playing close attention as “we knew you [the change catalyst] weren’t going to be there forever, so I needed to tap into your expertise while I could” (OPA:2019:Int:Robyn).

It could be argued however that this approach was problematic, as projectariat members were taking on responsibilities that were beyond their substantive paygrade. Indeed, working beyond the bounds of one’s role for the promise of future advancement could be framed as exploitative. Fascinatingly, this dynamic also reflected the lived experience of the change catalyst, whose leadership role in the PAN was not formally reflected in their paygrade or official status in the NHSBSA. However, just because the change catalyst had experienced a similar dynamic in the past, did not justify the moral ambiguity of delegating additional activity to more junior employees. What this does suggest though, is that this vicious cycle of undertaking additional activity without guarantee of reward played a role in creating productive subjectivities, which speaks to the potential for disciplinary power to be exploitative.

Molly, Ava and Robyn were prepared for delegation by shadowing the change catalyst and through exposure to normative standards, via deliberative forums. At the same time, the change catalyst did provide some direct support. In terms of the above examples, Ava asked for advice on how to appropriately engage with NHS England and Robyn queried what methodology was best for

calculating staffing requirements. In both cases, the change catalyst deliberately softened the language they used when providing guidance; common phrases used included “I would suggest”, “it might be useful” and “have you considered” (OPA:09.2019:PO:Researcher). By framing their input as a suggestion, the change catalyst avoided taking ownership of the task back from the individual while still providing the required support, thus helping to steer conduct without resorting to direct instruction. Effective delegation thus enabled the change catalyst to disseminate responsibility for change activities from themselves and into the ownership of emerging productive subjects- which in turn, set the scene for the change catalyst’s eventual withdrawal from the pilot.

#### 8.4.2.3 Assurance of Outputs

In order to build capability among the projectariat, the change catalyst facilitated deliberative forums and delegated specific tasks to individual members. While these elements began to foster the autonomy vital for the functioning of disciplinary power, their outputs still had to conform to the normative standards of the context. Creating this bounded autonomy within the projectariat, helped to create a balance between independent responsiveness to complex situations and adherence to the normative standards of the context.

Within the PAN, that autonomy existed within clearly delimited boundaries, with change activities being expected to “meet the needs of NHS England and maintain NHSBSA’s reputation” (OPA:2019:Int:Ollie). In an echo

of the change catalyst's suppression of personal ambition from Section 7.4.1, the activities of projectariat members were thus expected to be geared towards benefitting the network. In order to manage this tension, the change catalyst had to quality assure outputs from the projectariat and provide course-corrections, without compromising the autonomy of the burgeoning productive subjects. To enable this assurance, it was necessary for the change catalyst to maintain "visibility so I can be assured that the team are working on the right stuff" (OPA:11.2019:RR). By acting as a single point of oversight for the assurance of outputs, the change catalyst "made it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly" (Foucault, 1991, p173). Concomitantly, the change catalyst's focus on the change outputs left sufficient space for the projectariat team members to effectively self-organise.

One example of this process happened during a team development session when the change catalyst asked two of the caseworkers, Dylan and Rosie, to set out how they planned to provide updates about the outputs of their research activity:

"Researcher: How's the vaccine research going?"

Dylan: Yeah alright.

Researcher: Have you shared it with the rest of the team?

Dylan: We went through it at our last team meeting.

Researcher: Excellent. At what point are you going to share that knowledge with the rest of us, so that we're as up to speed as what you are?

Rosie: We kind of assumed that you would put a meeting in to be honest.

Dylan: Yeah.

Researcher: Hmm, I need you to be coming to us when you're ready".  
(GP:10.2019:PO:Researcher)

In setting out their expectations around the visibility of activity, the change catalyst was fulfilling two purposes. First, the change catalyst was based in a different area to the GP team and needed to be assured that the required activity was actually taking place. This resulted in the repeated questioning of the participants, which is arguably an example of what Law (1984) referred to as "methods of long-distance control" (p2), whereby geographically removed authority figures attempt to influence the conduct of others by inculcating standards. The second purpose was arguably more important, whereby the repeated questioning presented an opportunity for the change catalyst to set out the expectation that the participants would be more proactive in the future and "be coming to us when you're ready". The explicit assumption being that productive subjects would not passively wait around for meetings to be organised, they would show initiative and arrange the meeting themselves. The change catalyst thus attempted to wield disciplinary power to create productive subjects that were capable of autonomous action, to facilitate the creation of a "well-regulated and responsabilised liberty" (Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996, p8).

While the change catalyst provided direct critique in the above example, they also encouraged the projectariat members to self-critique their own work. During the GP pilots, the change catalyst would use deliberative forums to host reviews of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) being produced by the team. Throughout the course of these forums, mindful of the need to inculcate

bounded autonomy amongst the projectariat, the change catalyst attempted to steer the conduct of the group by encouraging them to self-compare their outputs to normative expectations. One example during a SOP development workshop, saw the change catalyst encourage caseworker Layla to self-critique the section she had been working on, asking her to “think about where you’re happy and where you’re not happy” (GP:02.2020:PO:Researcher). Encouraging self-critique in this way was designed to encourage individuals to proactively identify issues rather than waiting for external input, causing them to “become their own overseer and thus exercise surveillance over, and against” themselves (Foucault, 1980e, p155). This was a deliberate tactic to strike a balance between autonomy and compliance, with reflexive diaries showing the change catalyst’s aim was to “make sure I’ve got confidence they’re [projectariat members] on the right track, while ensuring that they retain ownership of the process” (GP:02.2020:RR).

Even so, the change catalyst stood poised to address any significant variation away from the normative standards, particularly with regards to the PAN’s external reputation. In the same SOP development session where Layla was encouraged to self-critique, Rosie presented a summary of the outcomes that could result from a GP practice visit, which included financial recoveries. Midway through her presentation, the change catalyst interrupted stating “you use the term ‘fraudulent activity’ a number of times here, which we need to be very careful about because we can’t assume the mistake was deliberate” (GP.11.2019:PO:Researcher). As discussed in Sections 7.2.3 and 8.3.1, the PAN was trying to establish itself as a legitimate power in the Primary Care system and overcome its initially tenuous position. Accordingly, the network

had to hedge how it framed interventions and avoid using language that would potentially raise the ire of contractors and professional groups. This concern with reputation and perception therefore compelled the change catalyst to intervene and course correct during Rosie's presentation, which may have gone on to influence conduct within the team. Rosie's untempered use of language "deviated from the discursive logic of truth" (Jackson and Carter, 1998, p51) and had to be brought back into line. This intervention was only possible because the change catalyst had established themselves as a locus of visibility, an all-seeing eye that simultaneously shaped and was beholden to the emerging normative standards of the change context.

Koppenjan and Kickert (1997) suggest that change leaders must possess sufficient "tactical and strategic know-how" (p58) to effectively influence the conduct of others in a network. In the context of inculcating normative standards, this know-how manifested as the ability of the change catalyst to facilitate deliberative forums and effectively delegate tasks to support the creation of productive subjects. All the while positioning themselves as a centre through which information must flow, which enabled them to assure the outputs from projectariat members while providing space for self-organisation.

#### 8.4.3 Codifying Standards through Disciplinary Artefacts

The change catalyst's role in creating this balance between autonomy and compliance with normative standards was time limited. As discussed in Section 8.2, the change catalyst did not work directly for the Provider

Assurance Network, rather they worked for NHSBSA's strategy function and were only involved for a short period of time. This posed issues because the brand-new processes, teams and outputs of the PAN had informally coalesced around the change catalyst and this ownership/association was not sustainable in the longer-term, as the change catalyst would inevitably be required to step away from the pilot activity.

Technologies of capability building were therefore deployed to encourage the projectariat to take collective ownership of key change management activities, with the end goal of enabling suitably bound productive subjects to function independently within the pilot environments. However, the patterns of behaviour underpinning this independent capability had to be formalised before the change catalyst could move away. In an effort to crystallise "techniques of thought [...] by creating a connection to an authoritative artefact" (Rose, 1998, p190), the change catalyst created a series of documents which were designed to formalise how processes should be administered, which in turn would determine how the projectariat should conduct themselves.

Throughout the pilot lifecycle, emerging normative behaviours (specifically with regards to change management activities) were articulated through these disciplinary artefacts. Initially implemented by the change catalyst to support the facilitation of deliberative forums, these artefacts enabled the projectariat to assign ownership of tasks to specific individuals and track progress to ensure that the desired outcomes were achieved. Action registers were overtly framed as a method of enabling bounded autonomy, with Robyn commenting "there's no one standing over your shoulder, but the

trade-off is that you'll have your stuff ready by the deadline" (OPA:2019:Int:Robyn). The fact that an individual's assigned actions were visible to others encouraged mutual surveillance within the team, for as Darcie commented "it's giving me more discipline and it's making me make sure other people have got discipline, so we're not missing things as a team" (GP:2019:Int:Darcie). Action registers therefore create a communal view of activities, which enabled productive individuals to measure themselves and others against the normative standards of the context.

At the same time, the tracking of progress helped to ensure a sense of forward momentum within the change environment. Regular reviews of action register artefacts informed the creation of a coherent plan, which enabled the team to understand "where are we up to with specific tasks and what do we need to do next" (GP:2019:Int:Harriet). As set out in Section 3.3, a core function of change catalysts is to enable the effective monitoring of progress against pre-defined milestones. This in turn provided key stakeholders with the assurance and confidence that "we're [the PAN] going to deliver what we said we were going to deliver" (OPA:2019:Int:Olive).

Over time, this impulse to track progress against a plan came to be internalised by the projectariat themselves. For example, during the planning stage for the repivoted ophthalmic contract administration pilot, Robyn asked the change catalyst if she could "restructure the current action register to make it more user friendly?" (OPA:06.2019:PO:Robyn). The change catalyst readily agreed, hoping that reshaping the format of the tool would gradually cause Robyn to take ownership of the artefact, the impact of which did not derive from its format but rather from the patterns of thought it encouraged. By

establishing clear patterns of thought, the change catalyst set a precedent for organisation, hoping that this desire for structure would be emulated by the projectariat. Indeed, the change catalyst's tendency to encourage the self-organisation of others was remarked upon by Luke, one of the leads in the GP team, who stated that "[you the change catalyst] were obviously organised, but you made it simple and easy for other people to organise" (GP:2020:Int:Luke). Establishing action registers played a key role in this organising process, and arguably supported the process of creating productive subjectivities within the technology component.

As well as helping to organise change management activity, artefacts also provided a means of standardising outputs, an example being the use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). SOPs were documents that were used to define "standardised processes that we can use consistently across all regions" (OPA:07.2019:PO:Researcher). These documents served to reify the emerging normative order by formally establishing the expected course of action for specific scenarios, such as the process for engaging with Primary Care contractors.

Interestingly, the introduction of these standard work practices could occasionally be resisted by the projectariat. During the GP pilot, Darcie tried to establish a series of scripts that could be used by caseworkers when communicating with GP practices. She encountered significant resistance to the proposed artefact because "to some caseworkers using a script will be their worst nightmare" (GP:02.2020:PO:Darcie). Indeed, it could be argued that the caseworkers pushed back against the scripts because the expected disciplinary standard clashed with their self-perceived individualism. During

her interview, Darcie commented that her approach was to create a “herd mentality” whereby “if you can get enough people on the same page, the few dissenters will go along with it” (GP:2020:Int:Darcie). Ultimately, Darcie was able to overcome the team’s objections by framing the use of scripts as an aid for less experience staff, suggesting that “once caseworkers have sufficient experience on the phones then maybe they won’t need the scripts” (Ibid). In this instance, the disciplinary artefact of the scripts acted as a short-term measure that would be rendered obsolete once the caseworkers had become sufficiently disciplined, which in this case meant being able to converse with GP practices in the expected manner.

What was notable about the projectariat’s unease around the scripts was that the change catalyst had deliberately not become involved, with diary entries stating, “I can provide guidance but it’s up to Darcie to actually manage the team” (GP:02.2020:RR). Darcie’s engagement with the team thus embodied disciplinary power on two levels. On the surface, it was a case of creating a critical mass whereby the team would follow the standards set out in the SOP. Beneath that, however, it was noticeable that the responsibility for facilitating this process was gradually shifting away from the change catalyst and towards projectariat member Darcie. This emerging dynamic, when scaled up across all the pilots, was what ultimately enabled the change catalyst to transition out of the pilot activity.

## **8.5 Technologies of Capability Building Component 4: Transitioning the Change Catalyst out of Pilot Activity**

As set out in Section 8.2, it was always planned that the change catalyst's involvement in the PAN pilots would be phased out. Over time the emergence of the projectariat and the successful dissemination of robust normative standards had combined to make the change catalyst obsolete. Empowering the projectariat and delegating change management activities had set the direction of travel, while the minutiae of expected conducts had been enshrined in disciplinary artefacts like the action register and SOPs. This transitory process was only observed during the ophthalmic pilots, as the transition out of GP activity took place during the Covid-19 pandemic and was excluded from the thesis dataset (as described in Section 5.2).

Prior to transitioning out of the pilot activity, the change catalyst engaged with projectariat members to gauge their capacity and desire to fly solo. Conversations with Robyn revealed that she was happy to step up “as long as I know what is expected of me” (OPA:10.2019:PO:Robyn), with normative expectations thus providing a bedrock for taking on additional responsibility. Likewise, Lily felt that her experience of delegation had empowered her to “go to you [the change catalyst] for advice, rather than to ask you what to do or for your permission” (OPA:10.2019:PO:Lily). Here, technologies of capability building had gradually transformed Lily's subjectivity, so that she was confident in progressing without the change catalyst's direct input.

Not all projectariat members felt the same, however. When the subject of the change catalyst leaving was discussed, Molly expressed reluctance:

“Researcher: moving forward do you think you need me to be involved?

Molly: I would like you to be involved.

Researcher: need or would like?

Molly: would like.

Researcher: aye, you’ll be fine without me”.

(OPA:07.2019:PO:Researcher)

In the example from Section 8.4.2.2, Molly expressed a view that she was ready to take on strategic responsibilities from the change catalyst. When the time arrived, she pushed back and tried to keep the change catalyst involved, even though she was capable of leading independently. The change catalyst had come to be viewed as a comforting, protective presence, a view shared by other projectariat members who described them as an “umbrella that shelters us [the projectariat] from all the crap on high” (OPA:2019:Int:Ava). While it was undoubtedly pleasant for the change catalyst to be held in such high regard by the projectariat, they had been nurtured to become productive subjects that were capable of bounded autonomy. Furthermore, the assurance activity outlined in Section 8.4.2.3 provided the change catalyst with the confidence that the projectariat members were exhibiting bounded autonomy. In order to activate that bounded autonomy, all that remained was for the change catalyst to step away from the pilots.

In October 2019 the change catalyst transferred responsibility for the coordination of the ophthalmic pilots to projectariat members Molly, Robyn and Lily. During the handover session, the change catalyst attempted to reaffirm the normative standards and expectations that had guided the formation of the ophthalmic pilots, in a final effort to build confidence and tie their

responsibilisation to the predominant normative standards of the network. This involved providing practical advice about working closely with the metagovernor and reminding them of the responsibility which they were now taking on, “this is a national service that you guys are delivering, that’s a big deal” (OPA:10.2019:PO:Researcher). Ultimately however, the change catalyst was not telling them anything they did not already know. While this handover officially marked the beginning of Molly, Lily and Robyn’s independence, in reality they had been capable of autonomous action for quite some time. Transitioning the change catalyst out of the pilot finally gave them the discursive space to fully actualise as productive subjects, capable of independent action while being bound by the normative standards of the context.

During this process, the change catalyst experienced a swell of contradictory emotions. Feelings of pride about “what I had achieved in ophthalmic” (OPA:10.2019:RR) were complicated by a pervasive sense of loss, as even though the transition had been planned it was still painful to step away from something where so much time and effort had been invested. The transition meant that the change catalyst would be removed from colleagues they had worked with for over two years and, even though they had occupied a liminal position during this time, there had still been a strong sense of belonging and camaraderie, which would be missed.

That being said, during the final months of the change catalyst’s involvement in the PAN, Olive did offer them a substantive role within the network. For all the sadness associated with leaving colleagues behind, the change catalyst actually turned this opportunity down, feeling that “if I wanted

to stay, I'd have to take on an operational role, which doesn't really interest me" (OPA:07.2019:RR). It was as though occupying such a liminal space had made the prospect of a more tethered role unpalatable, with the idea of undertaking the same tasks day-in and day-out coming across as "stifling and lacking opportunities for creativity" (Ibid). As set out in Section 7.4, the change catalyst had engaged in a prolonged process of responsabilisation, shaping their productivity to meet the needs of the environment and become capable of navigating the vagaries of organisational change. Towards the end of the pilot lifecycle, that change-orientated subjectivity became surplus to requirements, as the wider context of the network had begun to settle into business-as-usual. It could be argued therefore, that the change catalyst's self-responsibilisation created a subjectivity that had no place within the future state of the PAN, as it was geared towards dealing with instability and complex change. For all that they may have felt conflicted about the end of their involvement, the change catalyst's exposure to disciplinary power, and subsequent self-formation as a productive subject, had arguably made their leaving the network inevitable.

## **8.6 Technologies of Capability Building: Summary**

Chapter 8 attempted to answer sub-question 2: How were normative standards established and embedded to enable participants to travel the path of change autonomously, without the continued presence of the change catalyst? Thinking back to the Dantean metaphor used in the introduction, where organisational change is a transformational journey, participants in

change processes play the role of Dante's narrator. They are often lost, confused, and unsettled by the changing landscape around them. The role of the change catalyst, like that of the spirit-guide Virgil, was to guide the PAN participants down a particular path, but with the knowledge that the participants must ultimately travel that path alone.

Technologies of capability building directly enabled this dynamic by looking to gradually shape the subjectivity of a wider group, replicating the change catalyst's subjectivity on a larger scale. Knowledge production provided a basis for the change catalyst's formation as a productive subject, but the successful coordination of pilots would require a greater number of productive subjects. The process of fostering this wider interrelationship of productive subjectivities was facilitated by the change catalyst's use of specific technology components, as set out in Figure 21.

The first technology component involved setting out clear expectations around the change catalyst's time-limited involvement in pilot activities. Knowing that their involvement would be temporary, the change catalyst sought to create a dynamic where they nurtured the capabilities of the projectariat, rendering themselves obsolete in the process. This approach was underpinned by the concept of bounded autonomy, whereby individuals are capable of autonomously responding to complex situations, while still being bound by the standards and expectations that define acceptable conduct within a specific environment. The change catalyst had engaged in process of responsabilisation (Section 7.4) to shape themselves as a productive subject. To establish the bounded autonomy necessary for the network to function

effectively, they would have to replicate that subjectivity on a much larger scale.

This was achieved through the second technology component which sought to cultivate a projectariat, a group of sufficiently motivated individuals within the change environment who would act upon their own subjectivity to become productive. The change catalyst attempted to motivate this group of individuals by framing the pilots as opportunities for career progression. By using their own journey as a reference point, the change catalyst attempted to position their own subjectivity as an exemplar of what could be achieved, provided one engaged in productive self-formation. The change catalyst also sought to motivate the projectariat by harnessing the change rationality around patient care and by encouraging the internalisation of external expectations.

Key to this cultivation of subjectification was the third technology component, which involved articulating and embedding normative standards to establish baselines that would guide individual conduct. The PAN was somewhat unusual, in that the policy and legislative bases for the NHS processes it administered were poorly defined, primarily due to the systemic instability within the NHS at that time. Taking responsibility for reaffirming those processes, the change catalyst worked across the network to tease out any potential gaps and plug them by tapping into expert knowledge, such as clinical expertise.

One method of reifying these standards was through the change catalyst's facilitation of deliberative forums, where intensive interactions within the projectariat created intersubjective knowledge and spurred the projectariat

on to iteratively develop their processes. Deliberative forums helped to create an emerging sense of collective ownership for change outcomes, by encouraging individual projectariat members to take personal responsibility for delivery outputs. Delegation took this further by assigning ownership of specific tasks to individual projectariat members, as a means of assessing their suitability for more formal responsibilities.

Deliberative forums and delegation eventually combined to create an emerging confidence and independence within the projectariat. To ensure that this independence was aligned to normative standards, the change catalyst was careful to quality assure any outputs. This involved maintaining clear visibility of activity while refraining from direct involvement, unless the activity looked like it would veer away from the normative standards. The change catalyst therefore positioned themselves as a locus of information, an individual panopticon that maintained a judgemental view over the activities of the projectariat, all with the aim of enabling the balance between independence and conformity. In turn, these normative standards were enshrined within disciplinary artefacts, which helped guide the creation of productive subjectivities by providing a documented point of reference. These artefacts also helped embed the normative standards, which would help guide conduct even after the change catalyst stepped away.

All of these technology components combined to create a lattice of productive subjectivities within the projectariat, where supporting the implementation of the PAN pilots became intrinsically linked to the predominant regime of truth. To fully activate these productive individuals, it was necessary for the change catalyst to formally remove themselves from the

pilot arena, which proved to be a complex emotional experience. Throughout the entirety of the observed period the change catalyst had been a guide, a force for change whose professional identity was geared towards the realisation of specific goals, i.e., the delivery of policy pilots. When that goal had been achieved and pilots were no longer necessary, neither was that version of the change catalyst. Disciplinary power had shaped the change catalyst to effectively drive change, but in doing so had made them unable/unwilling to persist in the post-change network. Just as Virgil was unable to accompany Dante's narrator into paradise, the change catalyst could not accompany the projectariat into business as usual.

## **Chapter 9: Technologies of Network Management**

### **9.1 Defining Technologies of Network Management**

Technologies of capability building enabled the change catalyst to use their own subjectivity to establish a projectariat, a group of productive subjects grounded in the normative standards of the context. While nurturing this bounded autonomy would enable the change catalyst to eventually transition out of the pilot activity, for those pilots to be successful it was also necessary to influence the conduct of network members who were not directly employed by NHSBSA. This was to be achieved by engaging with influential stakeholders, such as the metagovernor, via technologies of network management.

The NHS context of this ethnographic study was especially complex and multi-faceted (as discussed in Section 3.4). The establishment of networks can be a direct response to such complexity, as they enable participants to mitigate uncertainty (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004) by establishing close working relationships between the different actors in the network (Keast, 2022). As set out in Section 3.5.2, network management could be described as a series of strategies which aim to leverage these relationships to achieve specific outcomes within the network environment (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003).

When viewed through the lens of disciplinary power, network management offers a conceptual bridge between the formation of subjectivities at the individual/team levels, and the effective coordination of activities at the network level. This chapter will explore how the change

catalyst's attempts to facilitate social interactions at the network level acted as "a glue that binds individuals to collective action" (Keast, 2022, p442) and sought to influence conduct across the PAN. The following analysis of technologies of network management was structured to answer research sub-question 3: how was the network coordinated and the right people brought along on the path of change? The activities that constituted technologies of network management are set out in the table below:

Figure 24: Technologies of Network Management - Activities

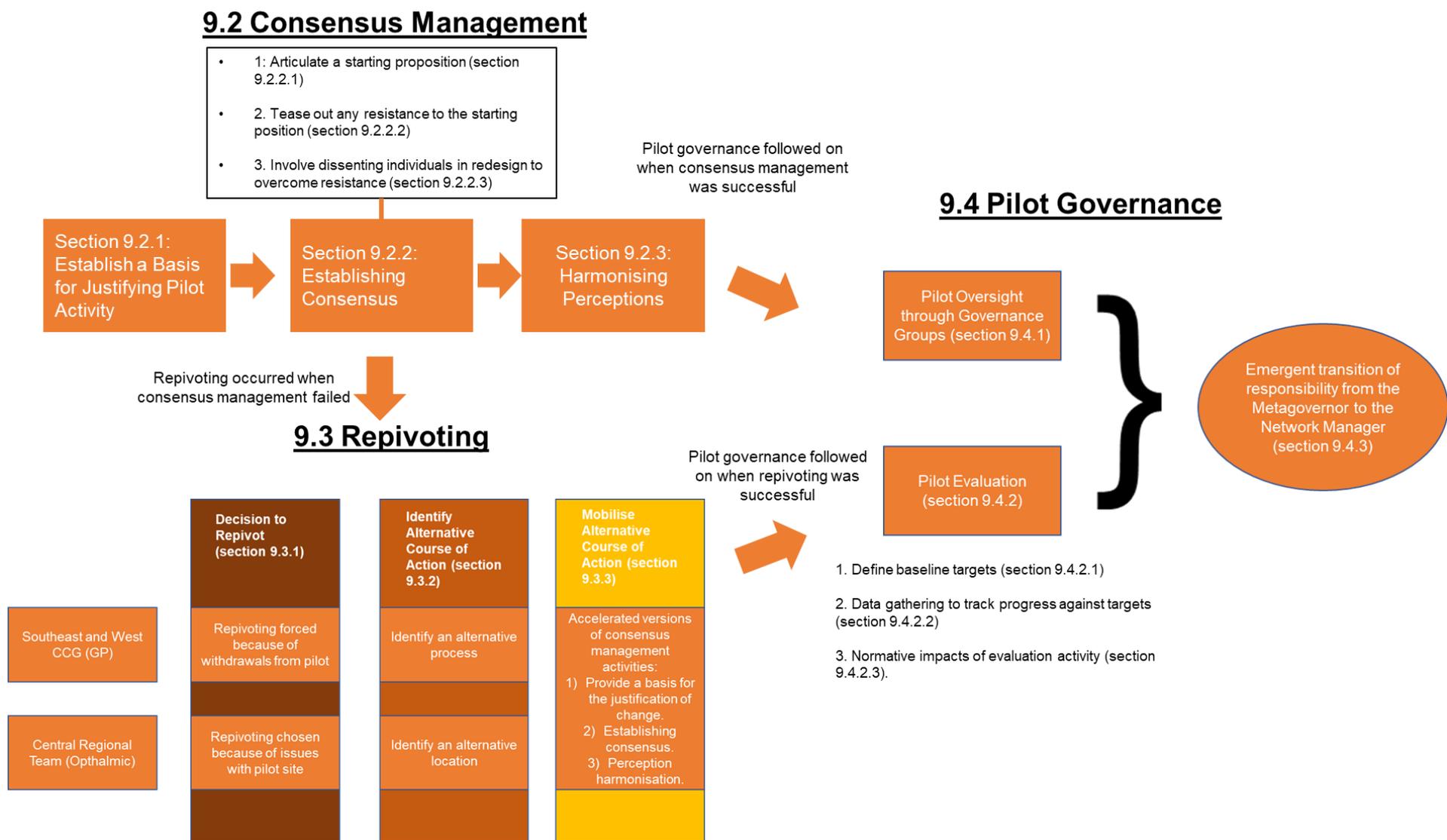
Pilot Stage	Activity Name	Activity Description	Linked Activities	In Which Pilots was the Activity Observed?	
				Ophthalmic	GP
1. Identify and leverage opportunities	12. Approval for pilot initiation	In order to build on the outputs from Technologies of knowledge production, it was essential that the change catalyst establish a clear basis for proceeding with the pilot activity. In the ophthalmic space, this involved working with the metagovernor to secure official approval to proceed with the pilot. In the GP space, due to the lack of metagovernor involvement, this involved working with regional governance groups.	11. Plan pilot delivery	✓	✓
2. Scope out the pilot	13. Plan pilot delivery	Once the pilot had been approved, the change catalyst and the projectariat worked to sequence the activities that were required to launch specific pilot activities. This involved close working with pilot sites and the metagovernor.	3. Insight from the Network 4. Engage with potential pilot members	✓	✗
	14. Establish pilot governance	Alongside planning for the delivery of pilot activities the change catalyst worked with senior colleagues within the PAN to define what governance structures/groups would be required to monitor the progress of the pilot. These groups would act as forums where roles and responsibilities would be formalised and change controls implemented.	19. Monitor pilot progress through governance.	✓	✗
	15. Negotiate access to resources	The majority of pilot activity within the PAN was delivered without a dedicated budget from the metagovernor, with staffing resources being provided by NHSBSA as part of a loss leader strategy. Given the lack of a formal pilot budget, the change catalyst worked with the pilot sites to arrange informal access to their clinical advisors and data sources to support pilot launch.	N/A	✓	✗
3. Pilot failure and re-pivoting	16. Repivot	Where issues were encountered in pilot stage 2 that led to specific pilot sites or processes becoming unfeasible, the change catalyst led a process of identifying alternative courses of action. Re-pivoting involved shifting the focus of the pilot activity towards these alternative courses of action. On some occasions, however, it was not possible to re-pivot and the pilot was terminated, one example being the ophthalmic deep dive process.	19. Monitor pilot progress through governance	✓	✓

4. Governance of pilot delivery	17. Monitor pilot progress through governance	Following the successful launch of a pilot, overall progress was monitored through the governance groups created in <i>establish pilot governance</i> . These project groups were used to manage emerging issues but also played a key role in planning out post-pilot activity, for example how pilots could be expanded nationally.	N/A	✓	✓
5. Evaluation and transition to business-as-usual (BAU)	18. Evaluation of pilot	During the final stages of a pilot, the change catalyst led the process of evaluating the impact of the pilot and establishing a case for future action, building on information gathered during the monitor pilot progress through governance activity.	21. Grow the network	✓	✗
	19. Grow the network	Following the evaluation process, the change team within the PAN would work with the metagovernor to develop an implementation plan and begin engagement with additional sites post-pilot.	13. Handover and transition change catalyst out of activity	✓	✗

The change catalyst engaged in these activities as part of their substantive role, employed as they were by the PAN's network manager, NHSBSA. As with the other analysis chapters, technology components have been aggregated from across different activities and lifecycle stages using Technology Discourse Analysis (see Section 6.2).

Technologies of network management, aimed to galvanise collective action within the network through the application of the following components: 1) establishing a clear consensus to help manage perceptions within the network, which established a collective direction for the network. In the event that consensus management failed however, 2) repivoting was required to ensure that alternative courses of action could be explored and agreed by the network participants. Once consensus had been successfully established, whether directly following on from consensus management or through repivoting, the final component involved 3) implementing pilot governance to monitor progress. Figure 25 below sets out how these components interacted and establishes a conceptual map for the chapter.

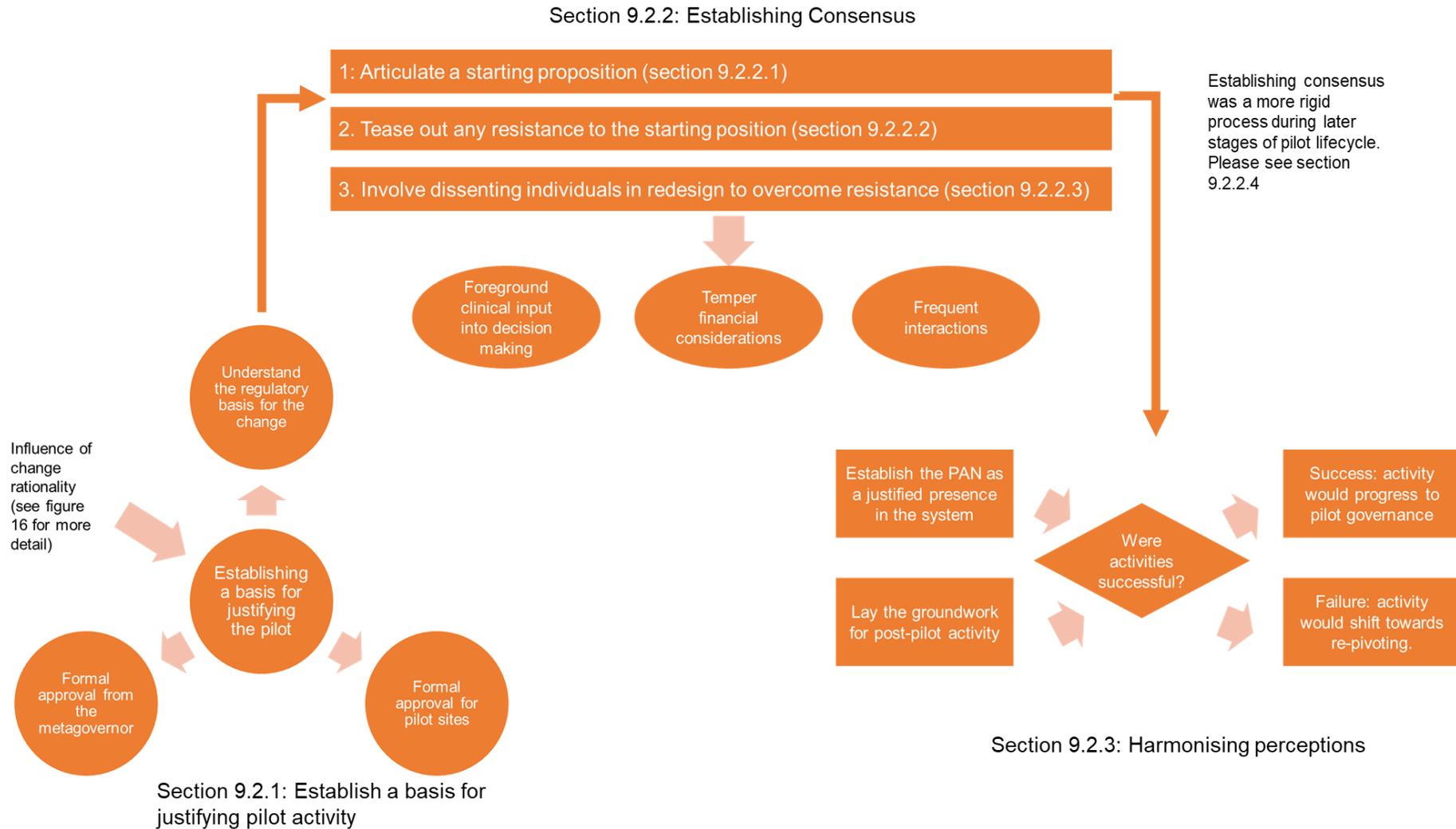
Figure 25: Technologies of Network Management - Conceptual Map



## 9.2 Technologies of Network Management Component 1: Consensus Management

As outlined in Section 3.5.2.1, creating consensus around the purpose and scope of pilot activity was vital for guiding change within the PAN. It empowered the change catalyst to “manage conflict through active commitment to prior agreements” (Simon and Oakes, 2006, p129) and also encouraged participants to “provide a thicker flow of information, share previously withheld resources and develop joint goals” (Keast, 2022, p444). The PAN was made up of a variety of NHS organisations (see Figure 7 for a breakdown of the different organisations involved) all of whom were trying to deal with the wicked problems impacting upon healthcare (as discussed in Section 2.4). It was vital therefore that the change catalyst be able to effectively facilitate interactions that would lead to the creation of consensus among network members. This facilitation involved providing a basis for justifying change, establishing consensus within the network and harmonising perceptions in line with established norms. The interrelationship between these elements is set out in Figure 26 below.

Figure 26: Consensus Management



### 9.2.1 Consensus Management 1: Providing a Basis for the Justification of Change

Within an organisational context, justifying a change initiative is often a case of “balancing affordability and achievability with the desired benefits of value to stakeholders” (AXELOS Ltd, 2020, p74). The reality within the PAN was significantly more complex and saturated with power dynamics. Section 7.2 explored how a rationale for change was created by combining a complementary set of discourses: bringing together patient care, NHS instability and NHSBSA’s growth agenda. In order to provide a basis to justify the pilots, the change catalyst established the change rationality as foundation, upon which they sought to build a reified perception of the PAN as a legitimate part of the healthcare system. This was achieved by harnessing the relevant legal discourse and explicit approval from the metagovernor to provide a robust basis for the policy pilots.

First, during the *Approval for Pilot Initiation* activity, the change catalyst researched the regulatory underpinnings of NHS England’s statutory requirements. By becoming conversant in the regulations that obligated NHS England to assure primary care activity, such as the General Ophthalmic Services contract (NHS England, 2008), the change catalyst was able to justify NHSBSA’s involvement. A key part of this understanding was teasing out the legal means by which NHS England were able to delegate their responsibilities for assurance to other organisations, under the terms of the NHS Optical Charges and Payments Regulations (Department of Health and Social Care, 2013). Being aware of this legal ability, made it easier for the change catalyst to frame the PAN’s activities in legally resonant terminology, which would be

particularly useful if the network's involvement in assurance were to ever be challenged. NHS England were legally obliged to assure services, but they were also empowered to delegate the obligation to other parties, such as NHSBSA. Justification through regulatory means was therefore a tactical exercise, a means of "using the laws themselves to arrange things in a way that such-and-such ends may be achieved" (Foucault, 1994c, p211).

In order to maximise the justifying impact of this legal discourse, it was necessary for the change catalyst to obtain formal approval from the metagovernor to begin pilot activity. Section 7.3.1 sets out the difference between active and inactive metagovernors within NHS England and the process for gaining approval differed significantly between the two. In the ophthalmic space, the change catalyst had a strong working relationship with Alex, which Olive believed was due to the fact that "you [the change catalyst] have always delivered on your promises to NHS England" (OPA:2019:Int:Olive). In turn, the strength of dialogue between the two parties enabled Alex to "provide insights around how best to navigate our awful maze of approvals and sign-offs" (OPA:2019:Int:Alex). This insight was gladly received by NHSBSA, for as Robyn commented "there's only so much we can self-steer in this sort of new environment, we need a guide" (OPA:09.2019:PO:Robyn). Maintaining a tight consensus between the metagovernor and the change catalyst was key to launching successful pilots, as the close alignment enabled the change catalyst to navigate NHS England's "awful maze".

By way of contrast, the change catalyst did not have a strong working relationship with GP metagovernor Max. Due to the instability of the system,

discussed in 7.3.1, Max was not able to provide centralised approval for GP pilots, instead he suggested that the change catalyst “get the relevant local approvals to proceed with pilots and then we can see what happens” (GP:01.2020:PO:Max). This was not ideal for the PAN, as “rather than dealing with one central decision maker we’re now going to have to work across seven regions” (GP:01.2020:RR:Researcher). However, spurred on by their responsabilised state, the change catalyst ploughed ahead with securing formal approval from potential pilot sites, southeast CCG being a case in point.

Following on from the initial conversations with Bonnie, outlined in 7.3.2, Olive was keen to establish “a memorandum of understanding, or official instruction from the CCG to say we’ve got permission to do this” (GP:02.2020:PO:Olive); a memorandum of understanding (MOU) being a formal agreement between two organisations that can act as a precursor to a formal partnership (Murthy, 1990). Responsibilisation once again reared its head here, as the change catalyst volunteered to lead on producing a draft MOU, motivated in part “by wanting to prove myself worthy of Olive’s faith in me” (GP:01.2020:RR:Researcher). Efforts to launch the pilot were therefore directly informed by the ongoing formation of the change catalyst as a productive subject, whereby they took on additional responsibilities in an effort to illicit praise from senior leaders in the network. This dynamic of self-constitution was further reinforced once positive feedback had been received, with Olive’s positive response to the draft MOU leaving the change catalyst “feeling extremely relieved” (GP:02.2020:RR:Researcher). Unfortunately, as many change professionals will attest, having the explicit approval of the metagovernor or region is not enough by itself to drive change progress.

Instead, it must be supplemented by a complex process of establishing consensus.

### 9.2.2 Consensus Management 2: Establishing Consensus

Once the change activity had been justified, the change catalyst acted on behalf of the network manager to develop a consensus view on how the various pilots should proceed. Koppenjan and Kickert (1997) suggest that change catalysts can support consensus building through “organising workshops, conducting surveys, organising brainstorming sessions, initiating role play and promoting collective image building” (p49). The purpose of these activities is to create opportunities for constructive debate, without silencing dissenting voices (Koppenjan, 2016) and actively inviting the interpretations of other agents (Jabri, 2012). The three consensus management steps observed within the PAN were: 1) articulate a starting position, 2) tease out any resistance to the starting position and 3) involve dissenting individuals in redesign to overcome resistance. These are represented diagrammatically in Figure 26.

To explore how the establishing consensus activity contributed to the overall impact of the technology, two in-depth examples from different points in the project lifecycle will be compared and contrasted. Pilot A, covering Sections 9.2.2.1 to 9.2.2.3, took place during “Stage 2: Scope Out the Pilot” of the pilot lifecycle, and involved the ophthalmic deep dive process. Launched at the behest of NHSBSA in 2019, the deep dive pilot involved carrying out intensive reviews of individual contractors rather than generalised sampling.

Pilot B, covered in Section 9.2.2.4, was an extension of the standard assurance pilot into a new area. Interestingly this took place in “Stage 5: Evaluation and Transition into Business-as-usual”, where the experimental nature of the change was beginning to peter out and the discourse was becoming more inflexible. Comparison between the two examples will help outline how power dynamics fluctuated depending on the stage of the pilot, which had a significant influence on the change catalyst’s engagement tactics.

### 9.2.2.1 Articulate a Starting Position

Taking place during the *Plan Pilot Delivery* activity, the first step in establishing consensus in Pilot A was for the change catalyst to articulate a starting position to the wider network. This echoed Koppenjan’s (2016) point about open debate, with discussions being framed as opportunities to “raise concerns anybody may have about the process or the purpose of a deep dive” (OPA:08.2019:PO:Molly). Reflexive diaries suggest this was a conscious strategy to generate buy-in from the stakeholders and create “a sense of ownership for them by proactively seeking out their interpretations” (OPA:08.2019:RR:Researcher). However, the discourse of collaboration was at odds with the actual communications that had gone out from the PAN leadership about Pilot A.

A briefing had been circulated across the network in late August 2019 which stated that the deep dive pilot was intended to launch in the final quarter of 2019/2020. This caused significant outrage from PAN members as these timescales had been decided without any prior consultation with the network.

Indeed Alex, lead at NHS England, recognised in hindsight that this messaging had “failed miserably” (OPA:10.2019:PO:Alex) and reflexive diaries lamented the leadership team’s inability to “establish a shared understanding of what was being proposed” (OPA:08.2019:RR:Researcher). Tensions were also exacerbated by the fact that the shift towards a different, more financially focused approach, was vehemently opposed by Hugo, the PAN’s ophthalmic professional representative.

#### 9.2.2.2 Tease out Resistance to the Starting Position

Step two thus involved the change catalyst facilitating open discussions with the network members, to understand how they perceived Pilot A. When discussions began, Hugo decried the fact that the process was presented as a fait accompli and pushed back on how the decision to focus on specific contractors had been made:

“Hugo: We just need some oversight, so it [decision to focus on specific contractors] isn’t all done in a dark room, where the witchfinder comes and points a finger.

Alex: We’ve been open and transparent from the start Hugo and we’re not about to change that now”.

(OPA:10.2019:PO:Hugo).

Hugo’s resistance to the proposal was arguably motivated by the lack of transparency around decision making and, in an attempt to defuse the situation, Alex here refers back to a proven track record of collaboration. In

reality however, when it came to the deep dive process, the PAN leadership had deliberately avoided undertaking wider engagement about the proposed plans.

NHSBSA, as network manager and facilitator of the PAN, were under significant pressure to deliver the deep dive process. As discussed in Section 3.4.1, one of the primary purposes of the PAN was to drive reductions in fraud through a programme of national ophthalmic assurance, fraud being the unlawful claiming of NHS payments by contractors. The NHS Counter Fraud Authority's (2019a) Strategic Intelligence Assessment had highlighted ophthalmic fraud as being in the region of "£79 million" (p8), a figure used to support the original rationale for the pilot. In order to justify the expansion of the pilots, and indeed its own long-term existence, the PAN had to deliver significant financial recoveries. In turn, this need to generate more savings motivated the implementation of the deep dive process, with Olive asking the PAN leadership team "if we don't implement the deep dive, where are we going to get the required recoveries from?" (OPA:07.2019:PO:Olive).

This tension between carrying out meaningful engagement with the profession and pushing through changes required to achieve increased financial recoveries, created a sense within the PAN that "everyone is coming at this from a different perspective" (OPA:09.2019:PO:Hugo). As a responsabilised productive subject with a vested interest in the progression of the pilot, the change catalyst therefore took it upon themselves to "align the different perspectives" (OPA:09.2019:RR:Researcher) and find a way of overcoming Hugo's resistance to the proposed pilot.

However, as set out in Section 2.1.5, the concept of resistance to disciplinary power is complex, with Foucault suggesting that power/knowledge structures are the very means by which we understand our social environment. Any attempt to escape from power is thus an attempt to escape meaning, which would render the act of resistance nonsensical. Indeed, Clegg (1998) describes resistance to power as “irremediable” because power “acts as a nexus of meaning and interpretation that, because of its indexicality, is always open to being refixed” (p42). In this view resistance to power is impossible because power is always able to re-orient itself in relation to the environmental context. In the case of Hugo however, it could be argued that he was resisting a particular set of circumstances which disciplinary power had given rise to, where he had not been consulted about the timescales for the pilot, rather than resisting the underlying disciplinary power/knowledge structures themselves. Achieving consensus thus became about re-orientating the discourse about Pilot A to placate Hugo and overcome his surface-level resistance.

#### 9.2.2.3 Involve Dissenting Individuals in Redesign to Overcome Resistance

Step three of establishing consensus therefore saw the change catalyst involving Hugo in process redesign, a variation on the process mapping observed in Section 7.3.3. Termeer and Koppenjan (1997) argue that, rather than excluding dissenting voices from network activities, network managers should “consciously invite those actors to participate as a means of strengthening ties within the network” (p92). This approach was enabled by emphasising the importance of clinical input into process redesign,

downplaying the financial considerations around the pilot and by facilitating frequent interactions with the dissenting voices.

One of the major points of contention around the deep dive process centred around contractor selection, with Hugo challenging the use of “potentially subjective triggers” (OPA:09.2019:PO:Hugo) during a mapping session, which prompted the following response from the change catalyst:

“Researcher: when it comes to selecting contractors, we’re hoping to get the best of both worlds essentially. To have a standardised approach which still has, you know, valid and robust clinical input into it”.

(OPA:09.2019:PO:Researcher)

Here, the change catalyst attempted to overcome accusations of subjectivity by emphasising that there would be clinical input into decision-making, with reflexive diaries suggesting that “it’s almost as if the privileged knowledge of the clinicians means they aren’t susceptible to accusations of subjectivity” (OPA:09.2019:RR: Researcher). Clinical knowledge and expertise were wielded in other technologies to lend gravitas to process development (Section 7.3.4) and to create a sense of legitimacy about normative standards (Section 8.4.1). Here, the change catalyst invoked the idea of clinical input to gloss over the perceived subjectivity of the process.

In reality, clinical input into the process was highly variable, which caused significant issues due to the fact that “there is little consistency in terms of how clinicians work” (OPA:05.2019:PO:Alex). In a similar fashion to Penelope’s involvement in Section 7.3.4 therefore, the change catalyst’s

parading the fact of clinical input was more about smoothing ruffled feathers than it was about providing actual clinical input into the process. With Penelope, the value derived from generating a veneer of legitimacy as the PAN entered a new area; with the deep dive, it was more around providing Hugo with reassurance that the selection of contractors was informed by clinical input.

Another method of overcoming resistance was for the change catalyst to shape how discourse around the process redesign was framed, with a view to crafting an overarching narrative that would be more palatable to Hugo and their colleagues. This is demonstrated in the following exchange between the change catalyst and William, a new senior manager within the PAN who was brought in to support Olive as the network began to grow:

“William: I think we need to be honest and open about the fact that the deep dive is driven by financial risks.

Researcher: If we go in and say there’s a financial risk and we’re going to do a deep dive to see what we find, Hugo is not going to support that. If we badge it around patient care and say, there’s a financial component to it, they might support that”.

(OPA:08.2019:PO:William).

In this example, William and the change catalyst clashed about how to frame the deep dive activity, while planning for a service redesign workshop. This a prime example of the change catalyst demonstrating “reticulist skills” i.e., “the capacity to navigate and make appropriate connections within a network” (Koppenjan and Kickert, 1997, p58). Being new to the PAN, William did not fully appreciate how best to structure messages that would be palatable

to the professional representatives in the network. Overcoming their “annoyance at the fact that William is jeopardising the working relationship” (OPA:08.2019:RR:Researcher) the change catalyst was able to convince him of the need to adjust messaging. By influencing William’s language, the change catalyst attempted to craft a more palatable message which foregrounded the importance of patient care, while partially obscuring the financial elements of the discourse.

The final aspect of step three involved ensuring that there were frequent interactions with the dissenting members of the network, regular intercommunication being a key enabler for cohesive networks, as discussed in Section 3.5.2. Frequent workshops were facilitated by the change catalyst and areas of disagreement were proactively sought out, with projectariat members such as Molly encouraging Hugo to keep providing feedback because “with it being your area, your insight is proving really valuable to us” (OPA:08.2019:PO:Molly). This approach led to Hugo softening his opposition over time, stating that “my concerns are probably going to be mitigated if we’re going to have a discussion around them” (OPA:08.2019:PO:Hugo). Frequent interactions between members of the network were therefore vital to establishing consensus, even when it was not possible to overcome the original point of contention. Hugo ultimately signed off on the process but was still opposed to the concept of in-depth contractor sampling. However, as Alex pointed out: “when everyone has had input into the process, even if they aren’t happy with a specific aspect of it, they tend to still be happy because their concerns were acknowledged” (OPA:07.2019:PO:Alex). The very fact of involving dissenting individuals went some way to mitigating resistance, even

when the subject of their dissent remained unchanged, because the dissenter had become part of the overarching discussion.

Establishing consensus was ultimately concerned with overcoming resistance by intensively involving dissenting voices in the design of the process. By actively seeking out contrasting opinions, it could be argued that the change catalyst enabled disciplinary power to change focus and address specific areas of disharmony. This approach fostered consensus by winning over specific resisting individuals, while ensuring that the underlying aims of the pilot were achieved.

#### 9.2.2.4 Establishing Consensus in the Later Stages of the Pilot Lifecycle

By the time the pilot had reached “Stage 5: Evaluation and Transition into Business-as-usual”, this spirit of flexibility and accommodation had ossified somewhat. The willingness to engage and canvass opinion shown with Hugo in Pilot A was conspicuously absent later in the pilot lifecycle. This was exemplified during Pilot B, when the projectariat began engagement with the East Regional Team as part of the national assurance rollout. On the surface, the same steps in establishing consensus were followed. The PAN representative, Lily, articulated a starting position which was challenged by the regional team representative, Jasmine. This resistance manifested as an objection to contractors being able to submit their claims remotely, with Jasmine stating, “they’ll provide you with whatever you want, doesn’t mean it’s correct” (OPA:11.2019:PO:Jasmine) and pushing for in-person site visits.

Whereas in the previous example, the change catalyst would have engaged in process redesign, here Lily proceeded to shut down the objection:

“Lily: we can definitely look at the process. I mean it’s all been reviewed and agreed by NHS England representatives and the professional bodies, but we can certainly raise your objections at the Network Steering Group”. (OPA:11.2019:PO:Lily)

On the one hand, Lily evoked the spirit of collaboration by saying she would review the process, but simultaneously she highlighted the fact that the process has been approved by the metagovernor and professional representatives. Evoking the wider consensus which had been established around the process, was arguably an attempt to stymie Jasmine’s objection. Reflexive diaries suggest that a potential reason for this calculated response was the fact that “it would not be financially viable for the PAN to do physical site visits” (OPA:07.2019:RR:Researcher) but regardless of the rationale, the change in approach was markedly different from the deep dive example, where Hugo had been actively involved in the process redesign.

So, what changed between pilot stages two and five? Put simply, the window for redesigning the process had closed. In pilot stage five, the PAN began moving the pilots into business-as-usual, which involved increasing the number of participating regions. This created a sense of forward momentum within the network, which prevented the kind of course corrections that had previously resulted from Hugo’s objections. As pilots began to move into business as usual, consensus management became much more rigid, as the spirit of pilot experimentation (discussed in 3.3.) began to move to wider

implementation. It could also be argued that the firmness of Lily's stance demonstrated a growing confidence within the projectariat, as technologies of capability building had gradually created productive subjects capable of replacing the change catalyst (as seen in Chapter 8). By this point, the projectariat had successfully completed a number of pilots, which potentially made them less deferential to potential network members (for whom the ophthalmic metagovernor had mandated they join the PAN). It could be argued therefore that, as the pilot lifecycle came to a close, so too did the scope for open discussion and involvement, with the more mature network environment making overt resistance more unlikely.

Ultimately the change catalyst used all of the tools at their disposal to negotiate a workable consensus. When applying a critical lens, there are two ways of interpreting this technology component; with consensus management either being a politically orientated yet genuine attempt at compromise, or a Machiavellian means of driving through change by saying or doing whatever was required to overcome resistance. When this point was discussed with the Research Steering Group, Olive favoured the former view stating, "we always tried to take the network on a journey with us" (OPA:2020:RSG:Olive). However, it is worth noting that no professional representatives participated in the RSG as, although invited, they declined to take part which makes the view expressed here potentially one-sided. In the end, both positions are equally valid, with the preferred interpretation being dependent on one's positionality, and the aims that one is looking to achieve.

### 9.2.3 Consensus Management 3: Perception Harmonisation

By establishing consensus, the change catalyst set clear boundaries around what was thinkable within the context of the PAN's change management activity. Sustaining the normative impact of this consensus was achieved by harmonising perceptions across the network. As established in Section 3.5.2.1, perceptions can be harmonised by calling upon the previously established consensus to create a common goal, which in this case revolved around establishing policy pilots. The harmonisation of perceptions helped establish and reify that common goal by reinforcing the perception of the PAN as a legitimate provider of assurance services and secondly, which in turn laid the groundwork for post-pilot transition to BAU.

Building upon the justification activity in Section 9.2.1 and the intensive consensus management in Section 9.2.2, the change catalyst played a role in positioning the PAN as a benevolent agent, working for the wider good of the system. Cultivating this perception was coordinated through the creation of a robust communications strategy, which also informed the stakeholder engagement activity in Section 7.3. In the GP space, the change catalyst facilitated a series of workshops to establish standard messages, that network members could express to entice potential pilot sites:

“Researcher: When we're going out to potential pilot sites, we need to make sure we're landing the key messages. It's a case of: we're doing some discovery work, we're trying to understand CCG requirements and we're trying to see how we can help in this space”.

(GP:12.2019:PO:Researcher).

This extract shows how outward-facing discourse within the PAN was carefully crafted to appear non-threatening and collaborative, which Luke summarised as “we need to pitch our involvement to show we’re here to help” (GP:12.2019:PO:Luke). Aiming to capitalise on this non-threatening perception, the change catalyst also foregrounded the benefits of participation, stating to CCG representatives that “we can help you do things as efficiently as possible” (GP:08.2019:PO:Researcher) in an effort to strongly sell the PAN’s involvement. Another tactic was demonstrated by the projectariat when Lola suggested that “we need to talk about patient safety, we don’t want to focus too much on money” (GP:10.2019:PO:Lola). Once again, the rationality of patient care was strategically deployed to engender buy-in into a particular course of action. In deploying the communications strategy, the change catalyst aimed to harmonise the perception of the PAN as a helpful force within the system. By articulating a non-threatening and beneficial future vision to the CCGs, the change catalyst and the wider projectariat were able to cultivate the perception of the PAN as “a safe pair of hands who could implement services nationally and consistently” (GP:2019:Int:Olive).

Alongside the drive to shape how the PAN was perceived, harmonising perceptions also involved laying the groundwork for post-pilot expansion. Throughout the first two phases of the pilot lifecycle, the change catalyst urged their colleagues to “develop processes that we can scale out nationally as soon as possible” (GP:07.2019:PO:Researcher). Similarly, when negotiating with the Central Regional Team during the *Plan Pilot Delivery* activity, the change catalyst encouraged Ryan and Gracie to “think about what the national version of these processes might be once we’ve completed the pilot”

(OPA:04.2019:PO:Researcher). In part, this drive was motivated by NHSBSA's growth agenda (discussed in Section 7.2.3) but was exacerbated by the time pressures to launch and complete pilots before the end of the then-current financial year, as this had implications for what funding would be available from NHS England.

In pilot terms, this underlying motivation echoed Bailey, Hodgson and Checkland's (2019) critique that the experimental nature of pilots can often be subverted. Additionally, the change catalyst's push to begin planning for post-pilot activity resonates with Clegg's (1989) criticism (addressed in Section 3.5.2.1) which suggests that organisations can hijack perception management in service of their own needs, which here saw NHSBSA pushing pilot progress as a means of securing funding. Even so, a counter-argument to these points may be that this manipulation of the pilot ethos was both pragmatic and necessary. Building on the conversation with Lukes in Section 7.3.2, the change catalyst's attempts at perception harmonisation were arguably an attempt to downplay the ephemerality of the pilot form and plan for the future of the network, thus increasing the confidence of the projectariat. Indeed, when asked to define the change catalyst's contribution to change activity, Molly suggest that it was their ability to "keep track of what we need to do to keep the network going in the long-term" (OPA:2019:Int:Molly) that added value.

When engaging in perception harmonisation, the change catalyst manifested disciplinary power by attempting to shape the fields of available actions that were thinkable to participants. Cultivating a non-threatening image of the PAN and trying to solidify the perception of the pilots, were arguably attempts by the change catalyst to stabilise the network and enable

its longer term success. However, in some scenarios it was simply not possible to proceed with a proposed pilot because of factors beyond the network's control. When these pilots failed to make progress, it became necessary to repivot the pilot activity.

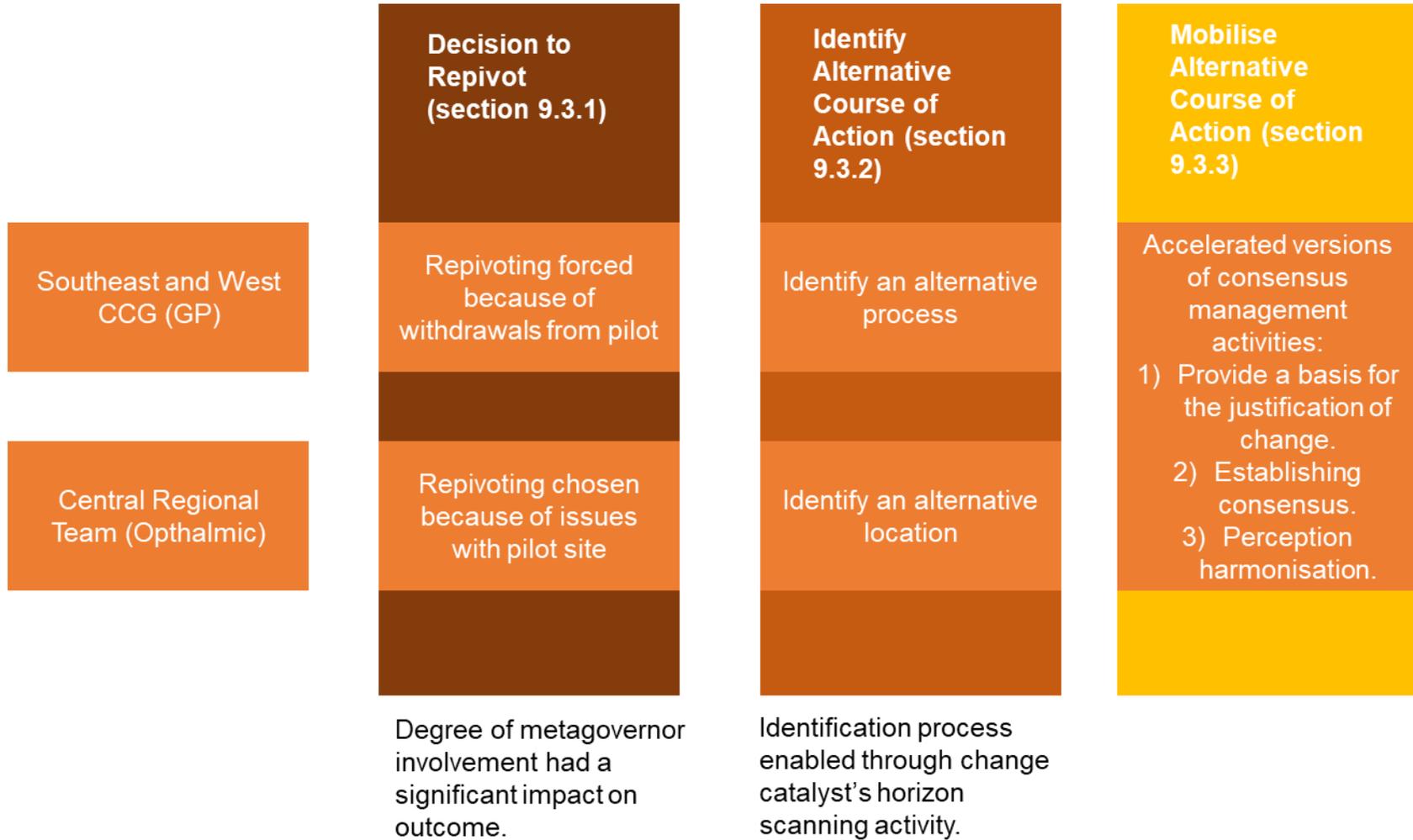
### **9.3 Technologies of Network Management Component 2: Repivoting**

Technologies of network management were geared towards mobilising disparate groups of agents and organisations in pursuit of a common goal. Inevitably there were some stumbling blocks along the way, as the sheer complexity of interactions meant that “network managers cannot know in advance which outcomes are likely to occur [...] which means strategic interaction is vital for the process” (Klijn, 1997, p32). Indeed, whenever consensus management failed within the PAN, it was the self-assumed responsibility of the change catalyst to identify strategic solutions and “change network arrangements to achieve better coordination” (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997,p10). This was achieved through the technology component of repivoting, a series of course correcting activities designed to re-orient pilot activities following notable setbacks. Building on Clegg's (1998) critique from Section 9.2.2.2, repivoting arguably represents a practical manifestation of disciplinary power's capacity to “refix” (p42) itself, in response to resistance. There were two primary areas of setback during the observed period (one from ophthalmic and one from GP), both of which involved potential pilot sites withdrawing from the PAN. Taking place exclusively during phase 3 of the pilot lifecycle, repivoting had three stages: decision to repivot, identify

alternative courses of action and mobilise a viable alternative course of action.

The interrelationship between these different elements is set out in Figure 27 below.

Figure 27: Repivoting



### 9.3.1 Repivoting 1: Decision to Repivot

In the GP example (which followed on from the pilot conversations with Bonnie and Henry outlined in Section 7.3.2), the decision to repivot towards an alternative course of action was imposed upon the PAN. While previous conversations with Southwest and West CCGs had been promising, both pilot sites ultimately withdrew from the pilot process. Bonnie pulled out due to “it being far too unstable at the moment to try something new” (GP:11.2019:PO:Bonnie), this being another manifestation of the NHS’s endemic instability. Similarly, Henry admitted that “I’m really struggling with this proposal, I’m getting no traction with the GPs” (GP:10.2019:PO:Henry), primarily due to the financial pressures facing GP practices. Notwithstanding the complex organisational dynamics at play, the change catalyst took both of these rejections personally.

This failure sparked a crisis of confidence with reflexive diaries showing that the change catalyst was “absolutely devastated, if I’m not able to establish these relationships, then what use am I?” (GP:10.2019:RR:Researcher). The change catalyst had assumed responsibility for bringing new pilot sites into the PAN, driven by the self-responsibilisation outlined in Section 7.4.2. The intended course of action was not possible, for reasons beyond the change catalyst’s control, but that did not prevent them from feeling like they had failed. The resultant feeling of helplessness was made worse by the fact that NHS England was fairly inactive in the GP assurance space. Following the withdrawal of the CCGs then, the PAN was left with no other option but to change course and repivot towards an alternative course of action.

Where the metagovernor was actively involved in the pilot however, the decision to repivot was more considered. In the second example, which comes from the ophthalmic contract administration pilot, the change catalyst purposefully worked with the metagovernor to exclude a pilot site from the PAN. As outlined in Section 9.2.2.1, in 2019 the PAN leadership shared plans for an increase in pilot activity, sharing the proposals as a fait accompli, with Alex commenting “the bottom line is that we’re going ahead with these changes” (OPA:06.2019:PO:Alex). Needless to say, this bullish approach backfired dramatically, mainly because it compromised the carefully cultivated perception of the PAN as a non-threatening participant/helper to the system. This shift, which arguably damaged the PAN’s wider reputation, emboldened dormant critics such as the Central Regional Team to come out of the woodwork.

As outlined in 7.2.2, in 2019 NHS England were imposing a headcount reduction of approximately 20% across all regional teams. The Central Regional Team had come to view the PAN’s pilot activities as an enabler for those cuts. By conflating the PAN with the proposed headcount reductions, the Central Regional Team were able to resist participating in the pilot. Indeed, Central Regional Team member Ryan used the very language of piloting to chastise the PAN, stating “pilot suggests that there’s going to be an evaluation before out rolling out the processes on a larger scale, but that’s not what’s happening here” (OPA:06.2019:PO:Ryan). By emphasising that the discourse of piloting came with an expectation of evaluation, Ryan was able to effectively hold the PAN leadership team to account and point out that “we were using language to occlude the possibility of the change not going ahead”

(OPA:06.2019:RR:Researcher). So even though Ryan's real motivation was arguably resisting the 20% cuts imposed from the centre, this manifested as increased resistance to the policy pilots. This negatively impacted on morale with the PAN's projectariat, with Robyn stating, "I really feel we were let down by those communications, it wasn't fair that we [the ophthalmic team] were left to come in as the bad guy" (OPA:2019:Int:Robyn). Given the strength of the resistance, negative impact on team morale and the fact that other regional teams were keen to participate, the change catalyst became convinced that the Central Regional Team should be removed from the pilot.

In this instance, the change catalyst's responsabilisation compelled them to find an alternative course of action, which they were able to do because of a robust relationship with the metagovernor. The recommendation to bypass the Central Regional Team was made and Alex agreed, however the change catalyst had to encourage Alex to dilute their response, as this extract shows:

Alex: what happens if we let Central stay involved and that emboldens other regions to say, "I don't want to play, come back later". You know, we can't have the tail wagging the dog. We need to cut them out.

Researcher: I hear what you're saying, and I understand the frustration, but would it not be better to say we're pressing pause until they're ready. They're still technically involved but we'll come back to them later.

Alex: far too diplomatic [laughter].

(OPA:07.2019:PO:Alex).

Here, the metagovernor wished to permanently curtail the involvement of the Central Regional Team, due to the belief that their continued presence would encourage further dissent within the network. By softening the language used, and suggesting that the exclusion of Central was temporary, the change catalyst was able to use their influencing skills and convince Alex to temper their approach. This was arguably driven by the change catalyst's internalisation of the NHSBSA growth agenda (outlined in Section 7.2.3), which was geared towards eventually launching a national service, which would not be possible without eventually involving Central Regional Team. Interestingly, this represented one of the first times that the NHSBSA were able to exert overt influence over NHS England's decision making, this will be explored further in Section 9.4.3.

### 9.3.2 Repivoting 2: Identify Alternative Courses of Action

Once the decision to repivot had been made, the change catalyst then worked to identify an alternative course of action that would lead to alternative pilots in the GP and ophthalmic spaces. In order to understand what options were available, the change catalyst had to engage in horizon scanning and additional stakeholder engagement. Still reeling from the failed engagement session with Albert in Section 7.3.5, in early 2020 the change catalyst facilitated a session with the PAN leadership team emphasising the need to improve the network's intelligence gathering:

“Researcher: unless we manage to get a better sense of what the circumstances are, who the players are and what their priorities are—then all our engagement won’t make any difference”.

(GP:02.2020:PO:Researcher).

Here, the change catalyst’s self-responsibilisation prompted them to pressure the wider team into better understanding their environment. This call to horizon scan (Bas, 2022), a term used to describe the process whereby organisations systematically monitor their environment to identify threats and opportunities (Schultz, 2006), enabled the PAN to identify alternative processes to pilot and different sites to engage with.

In the GP space the change catalyst and projectariat had engaged with numerous CCGs to understand what processes could feasibly be delivered in their areas, with no success. There had also been no direct steer from the inactive metagovernor, Max. That being said, horizon scanning by the projectariat revealed that a national project would soon commence, with the aim of increasing levels of Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) across England, a process designed to improve the flow of information between GP practices and pharmacies (NHS England, 2015).

To understand eRD better and assess the potential opportunity, the change catalyst utilised network connections to make contact with Hunter, a CCG lead and known proponent of eRD, who was able to provide insight into the challenges posed by this national initiative. Hunter revealed that, while eRD was a significant priority for NHS England, the sheer volume of GP practices made the project a daunting proposition, for as Hunter pointed out: “the analogy that they shared with me was, they’re feeling like they’ll push the

ball up to the top of the hill- but then there's thousands of other hills" (GP:10.2019:PO:Hunter). Given these difficulties, and the PAN's national reach and enthusiasm for entering the GP space, the change catalyst was able to secure buy-in from NHS England to scope out an eRD pilot. In turn, this enabled the change catalyst to mobilise the projectariat and "develop practical ways in which we can help GP practices increase their eRD levels" (GP:10.2019:PO:Olive). Horizon scanning in this instance, thus lead directly to an alternative course of action when the previous pilot had failed.

Interestingly when it came to identifying alternative courses of action in the ophthalmic space, horizon scanning seemed to be less crucial. Following the exclusion of the Central Regional Team from the pilot, as set out in 9.3.1, the metagovernor was able to suggest alternative pilot sites, with Alex suggesting "one of the areas that I think is good to go is South, and after talking to their lead, I'm pretty sure they'd be up for it" (OPA:06.2019:PO:Alex). Alex facilitated an initial introduction with the South Regional Team, which was then followed by an intensive period of engagement whereby "we [the PAN] introduced ourselves and you know, there was an element of pitching or sales, whatever you want to call it" (OPA:09.2019:PO:William). In a sense then, especially when compared to the GP example, the PAN was pushing at an open door, albeit one that had been unlocked through the involvement of an active metagovernor.

There were other contextual factors that made it easier for the PAN to repivot towards the South region. Part of the reason why the South Regional Team were so receptive to piloting in their area, was the fact that they had already reduced their headcount. Bringing in the PAN to deliver contract

administration was almost seen as a method of mitigating these cuts, with the South lead even going so far as to ask: “has the BSA got capacity to take some more of the associated functions?” (OPA:07.2019:PO:Orla). A question that would have been unthinkable to the Central Regional Team.

Alex, as representative of the metagovernor, was keen to frame this perspective positively, stating that shifting activity away from regional teams and towards the PAN would “give the regions the capacity to start delivering the extra stuff from the Long-Term Plan” (OPA:2019:Int:Alex). As set out in Section 3.5.2, the Long-Term Plan (LTP) was the cornerstone of NHS England policy and directly linked to the dominant rationality of improving patient care. By tying the PAN’s mitigation of regional cuts to the LTP, Alex was explicitly trying to justify a specific course of action that would involve repivoting towards the South Regional Team. To an extent this justification was endorsed by the PAN, with William deriding the tendency of regional teams to “talk about cuts and nationalisation of services like they’re the same thing” (OPA:07.2019:PO:William). Separating out the two perceptions was therefore a recurring theme during the repivoting process, with the change catalyst reflecting that engagement with South involved “trying the keep the two contrasting rationales as separate as possible” (OPA:06.2019:RR:Researcher).

That being said, on a personal level this dual perspective had a negative impact on the change catalyst’s morale, with reflexive notes suggesting that “it doesn’t feel amazing that we’re helping them mitigate the impact of reducing headcount” (OPA:09.2019:RR:Researcher). The fact that their work was having a direct negative impact on people’s livelihoods did not

stop the change catalyst, but they did feel remorse. This contradiction echoes 8.3.1, whereby the change catalyst empathised with Lily's anxiety while simultaneously propagating the discourse that put her under stress. It could be suggested therefore that disciplinary power, when forming change catalysts as productive subjects, did not preclude the change catalyst empathising with others who were also locked within the dominant power/knowledge structures. But the observed reality in this ethnographic study suggests that the influence of disciplinary power suppressed that empathy, with responsabilisation causing the change catalyst to prioritise change progress over concerns for other people. Shaw, Hughes and Greenhalgh (2019) warn that change management activity can lead to "moral blindness" (p245), whereby change leaders single-mindedly pursue change outputs, to the detriment of other considerations. This particular example would suggest that while not morally blind, the change catalyst definitely prioritised repivoting over empathy, in part due to their disciplined subjectivity.

### 9.3.3 Repivoting 3: Mobilise Alternative Course of Action

Once the decision to re-pivot had been made and an alternative course of action identified, the change catalyst then had to work across the PAN to mobilise the new approach. This essentially involved delivering the consensus management activities outlined in Section 9.2 within a compressed timescale, as effective consensus management was still required to mobilise the repivoted option with stakeholders.

Unfortunately, the change catalyst transitioned out of the ophthalmic pilots before this final element of repivoting took place, but they did mobilise the repivoted eRD pilot in Southwest CCG. Following on from the initial repivoting, the change catalyst scrambled to provide a justification for the proposed action (as seen in 9.2.1), which in this case took the form of agreeing an MOU with the CCG and also prompted them to engage with local professional representatives to “pre-empt any potential objections” (GP:02.2020:PO:Researcher). Building on this accelerated justification, the change catalyst began to establish consensus (discussed in 9.2.2), which in this instance focused on agreeing clear timescales for the repivoted pilot, as this exchange with the CCG lead Luna shows:

“Luna: What scale are we putting around the pilot? Six months, a year?”

Researcher: I think at this moment in time, it’s open to discussion and we’re open to suggestions”.

(GP:01.2020:PO:Luna)

Here, the change catalyst has arguably internalised the learning from the missteps in communication with the Central Regional Team and adopted a genuinely collaborative approach. This flexibility and willingness to defer to Luna, speaks to the precariousness felt by the change catalyst, as the eRD pilot was the only realistic repivoting option. Given the isolated position of the PAN within the GP system, resulting from the absence of an active metagovernor, deferential collaboration was the only way that the change catalyst and projectariat could build effective working relationships with the pilot sites and generate some forward momentum. As seen in Section 9.2.2.4,

this deference only petered out once the network had become more established.

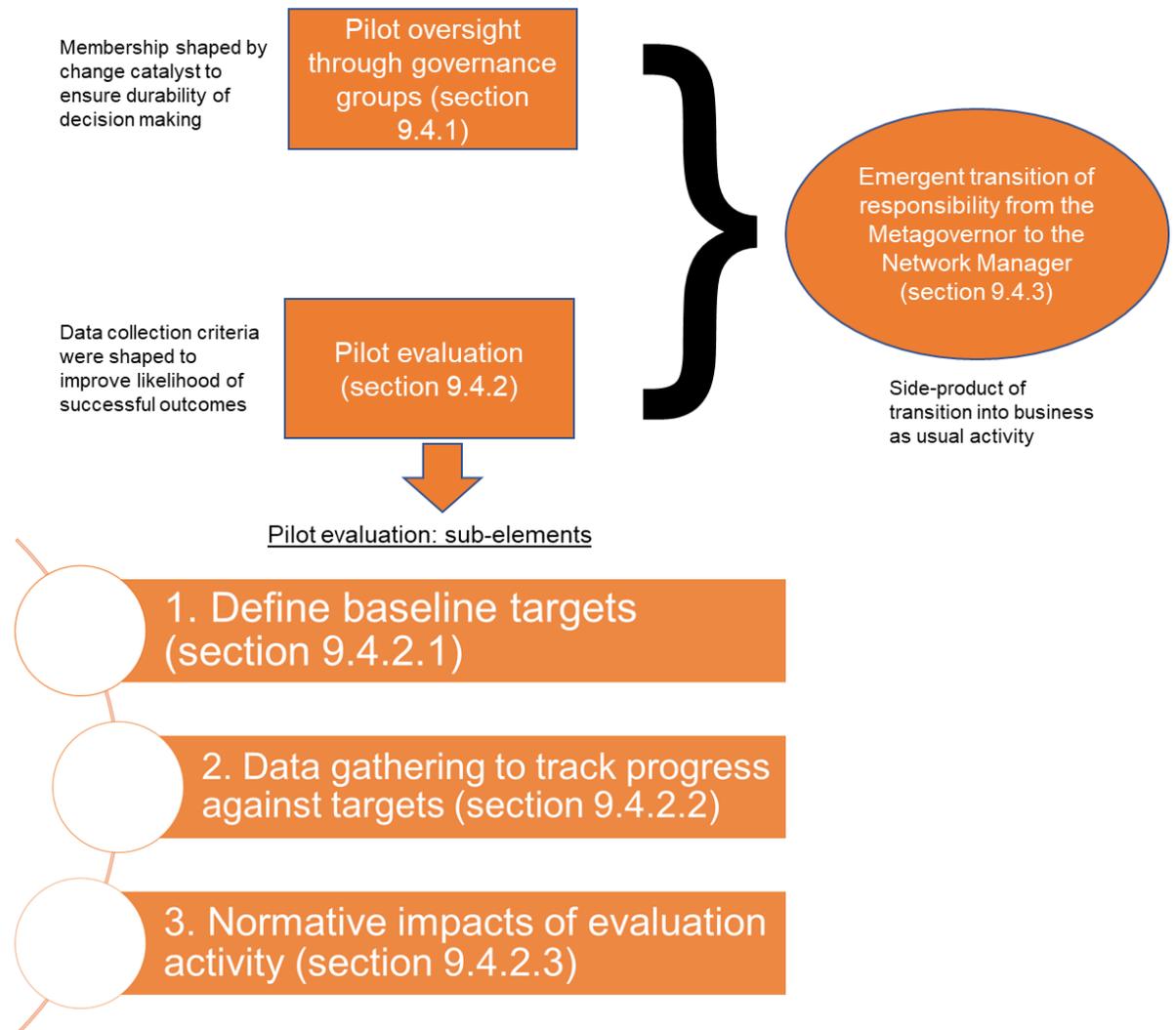
Given the significantly reduced timescales around repivoting, with time pressures caused by the sourcing of viable alternative processes and locations, it was essential that the change catalyst rapidly harmonise perceptions between the PAN and the nascent pilot site. This was achieved through direct engagement with the Southwest CCG Leadership Team, whereby the change catalyst was able to ask: “does anyone foresee any issues around this, given the compressed timescales? Has anyone got any concerns or comments?” (GP:02.2020:PO:Researcher). Whereas in other pilots harmonising perceptions was a measured process, here it was accelerated, with the change catalyst keen to “crystalise decision making with the CCG” (GP:01.2020:PO:Researcher) in order to rapidly progress the pilot. Repivoting thus enabled the change catalyst to find alternative courses of action when pilots failed, which created an impetus to progress as quickly as possible through the consensus management stages. Once the change activity had been repivoted and consensus around next steps achieved within the network, the change catalyst then had to coordinate the governance of the pilots.

#### **9.4 Technologies of Network Management Component 3: Pilot Governance**

Consensus management created a cohesive view within the network of what activities should be undertaken. Where this process failed, the change

catalyst led the PAN leadership team in identifying feasible alternatives through repivoting. In either case, once the pilot had launched it became necessary for the change catalyst to track progress through the implementation of robust pilot governance. As set out in Section 3.5.2.2, pilot governance enabled the change catalyst (working on behalf the network manager NHSBSA) to maintain effective visibility of pilot activities. Specifically, this involved facilitating the Provider Assurance Steering Group and carrying out evaluations of the various pilots. The fact that NHSBSA led on pilot governance activity created an unexpected side-effect, in that the overall responsibility for the coordination of the network began to transfer from the metagovernor (NHS England) to the network manager (NHSBSA). The overall dynamic between these different elements is set out in Figure 28 below:

Figure 28: Pilot Governance



#### 9.4.1 Pilot Governance 1: Maintain Pilot Oversight through Facilitation of Steering groups.

Within network management, steering groups can act as the main node of governance within project environments and provide a forum for negotiating access to resources and defining anticipated benefits (Müller, 2009). As set out in Section 3.5.2.2, pilot governance is concerned with monitoring activity within the change environment. The change catalyst facilitated this process by creating a steering group, made up of representatives from all the different organisations in the network.

The Provider Assurance Network Steering Group (hereafter referred to as the Network Steering Group) was established in 2019, as a consequence of the network manager (NHSBSA) encouraging the metagovernor (NHS England) to establish a forum to “address emerging national issues in a timely manner” (OPA:07.2019:PO:Olive). Membership of the Network Steering Group was offered to all organisations participating in the PAN and was framed by the change catalyst as an opportunity to participate in important discussions. For example, the deep dive debate outlined in Section 9.2 took place during a series of Network Steering Group meetings.

On the surface this inclusive approach was driven by NHS England’s commitment to collective problem solving, with the national fraud strategy clamouring for organisations to “work collaboratively [...] in tackling fraud, bribery and corruption” (NHS England, 2019b, p10). Indeed, the Network Steering Group proved to be a fruitful source of substantive variety, as the diverse members “provided invaluable input because they think of things that

never would have occurred to us at NHSBSA (OPA:07.2019:PO:Olive). This point echoes the value added by deliberative forums outlined in Section 8.4.2.1, whereby collective involvement helped improve the quality of the processes developed, and also helped build shared ownership among the projectariat.

However, at the same time, Alex was keen to use the Network Steering Group to manage the discourse within the network and avoid post-facto resistance to policy decisions. This was something they explicitly addressed during the process of identifying potential Network Steering Group members :

“Alex: We need to ensure that we have the right seniority of members. Having the right people on this group will ensure that nobody can have questions about what we’re doing or how we’re doing it because they’ve been engaged from the outset. If we do that, they won’t be able to stop us at a later point”. (OPA:07.2019:PO:Alex)

The Network Steering Group was intended to enable collaborative problem solving but Alex’s comments reveal that member selection was a political process, designed to ensure that decisions made by the Network Steering Group would be durable. Here, Alex echoes their earlier view from Section 9.2.2.3, whereby they felt that up-front engagement with network members would defuse potential resistance. In this instance though, Alex’s approach was taken further, as they deliberately selected potential members who would offer the least amount of resistance. By establishing an ostensibly collaborative forum, the PAN leadership were able to “eliminate any noise while also finding out answers” (OPA:07.2019:PO:Alex). Facilitating the

Network Steering Group thus built upon the foundations of consensus management to draw out and negate emerging resistance through the pragmatic, and politically savvy, selection of participants. Working together, Alex and the change catalyst sought to create the impression of collaboration, while simultaneously ensuring that the direction and progress of the pilots were not derailed.

Reflexive diaries from this period show that the change catalyst was pleased to be privy to these conversations because “deciding who gets to be part of this puts us [NHSBSA] in an influential position” (OPA:07.2019:RR:Researcher). The change catalyst’s pleasure arguably exemplifies their interiorised inferiority, in that they felt the metagovernor was superior to them, but also speaks to their growing confidence within the PAN that they were able to push to be involved in the discussion. This gradual shift in the power dynamic between the metagovernor and network manager will be discussed in more detail in Section 9.4.3.

Once membership had been identified, the change catalyst worked with the Network Steering Group members to identify how the group would report their activities to other key stakeholders. This was particularly relevant in the GP space, as the metagovernor had little involvement. Consequently, the Network Steering Group had to “make sure make sure we’re linking in appropriately with NHS England’s governance boards” (GP:02.2020:PO:Researcher), in order to promote the PAN and secure long-term funding in the GP space.

Olive in particular, as NHSBSA lead for the PAN, was keen to “make sure that senior leaders are getting sight of what we’re planning” (GP:02.2020:PO:Olive). Interestingly, this impulse to ensure senior level visibility of pilot outputs was also present in the ophthalmic space, with the change catalyst emphasising the need to report into Alex, to “help ensure that we’ve got all our ducks lined up before we press go” (OPA:08.2019:PO:Researcher). Section 2.1.4 outlined how the influence of disciplinary power encourages individuals to engage in self-monitoring subjectivity, with technologies acting as enabling mechanisms for self-surveillance (Gordon, 1980). In these examples, it could be argued that this power dynamic transcended individual conduct and impacted on network management activity, in that the change catalyst and Olive actively sought out the metagovernor’s surveillance. Exposing themselves and their pilots to a one-way judgemental dialogue, was arguably a method of engendering goodwill and bolstering their standing within the network.

So why would a network manager willingly entangle themselves in a panopticon of governance? One possible interpretation is that NHSBSA’s self-perceived weakness drove them to actively seek the metagovernor’s input as “by ourselves we can’t compel contractors to do anything, we don’t have the gravitas” (OPA:07.2019:RR:Researcher). By establishing clear lines of reporting from the Network Steering Group to NHS England governance boards, the change catalyst and projectariat were able to foreground their value adding activity and thus strengthen how their position was perceived within the network. This echoes Volden and Andersen’s (2018) earlier point about the importance of strategically justifying the continued effort of

supporting a change initiative. In order to foreground this value-add activity, the change catalyst led on the development and promotion of an implementation plan. Building on the outputs of technologies of knowledge production, the implementation plan enabled the PAN leadership team to “keep on top of deliverables and make sure that we’re engaging with the right people in the right timescales” (OPA:2019:Int: Robyn), all the while positioning themselves as an indispensable part of the network’s governance.

The Network Steering Group was therefore a carefully constructed form of governance that housed an implicit tension; with the avowed goal of collaboration clashing with the politically savvy selection of pilot members to help steer decision making, in a direction desired by the metagovernor and network manager. The change catalyst played a key role in finding a pragmatic compromise between these two considerations, which also went on to inform how the pilots were evaluated.

#### 9.4.2 Pilot Governance 2: Evaluation

Evaluation in a change management context refers to the collection of data about a change initiative and using it to “make judgements about its merit, worth and significance” (Patton and Campbell-Patton, 2021, p4). Green and South (2006) suggest that in the UK public sector it has become de rigueur to commit to an evaluation plan as part any appeal for funding. Furthermore, the “imperative to evaluate” (Rose and Miller, 2008, p29) is a key element of disciplinary power, whereby individual cases are compared to a normative standard (or expectation) and any aberrations will be “brought back to the

normal” (Taylor, 1986, p76). If a pilot failed to meet expectations, evaluation would enable targeted remedial action, or provide a justification for terminating the pilot altogether.

This evaluatory dynamic is superficially essential for pilots, as due to their status as time limited experiments it could be assumed that a full evaluation would be necessary to prove their efficacy. As seen in Section 7.3.2 however, the observed reality was that pilots often generate momentum by virtue of vested political interests, which arguably diminished the impact of any evaluation upon the final outcome. That being said, evaluation still played a key role in coalescing the disparate strands of pilot governance into a discursive package that could feasibly support the transition into business-as-usual. The change catalyst contributed to this outcome by establishing baseline performance targets and structuring how data was gathered to track progress against targets.

#### 9.4.2.1 Establish Baseline Performance Targets

In order to evaluate the impact of the pilots it was necessary for the change catalyst to establish performance targets, against which progress could be benchmarked. In the ophthalmic space, this involved working closely with Alex to assign delivery targets against the implementation plan, with Olive stating “our aim is to be able to articulate a baseline, which we can use to show evidence of changes in contractor behaviour” (OPA:05.2019:PO:Olive). Targets within the ophthalmic pilots were thus orientated towards assessing a

certain percentage of contractors, progress against which was measured through the Network Steering Group.

In the GP space, it was initially not possible to establish baseline targets because no pilots had been launched, following the failed engagements with Albert, Bonnie and Henry. It was only after repivoting to eRD (as outlined in Section 9.3.2) that the change catalyst was able to work with the projectariat to define targets. Given the inactive metagovernor, the change catalyst had to rely upon other sources of information to define targets that were realistic. For example, projectariat lead Harriet had previous experience of eRD which the change catalyst called upon during a business planning workshop:

“Researcher: I suppose Harriet, based on your expertise, how realistic is targeting an increase of 30%?”

Harriet: Going off past history, I think it’s a realistic aim to start with. We just need to be mindful that there’s going to be a lot of variation between the regions”. (GP:02.2020:PO:Researcher).

The change catalyst’s motivation in this exchange was twofold. First, given the change catalyst’s unfamiliarity with eRD, it was an opportunity to draw from Harriet’s experience to “suggest a credible approach to an unfamiliar section of NHS England” (GP:02.2020:RR:Researcher). Secondly, by actively deferring to Harriet’s expertise, the change catalyst was arguably empowering Harriet, in a similar fashion to the approach taken with Molly in Section 8.4.2.2. Whereas Molly was encouraged to take on specific management functions, here Harriet’s involvement was structured to encourage her, and by extension the team she managed, to take ownership

of the baseline targets. eRD was new to the projectariat and had only come about because of repivoting, which created a sense of ambiguous unease around the pilot. By co-designing the target with Harriet, the change catalyst was able to reify the context and provide reassurance to the GP team that the pilot would happen and provide them with an opportunity to “show that we can make this work, demonstrate some success and have some pride in what we’re doing” (GP:2020:Int:Harriet). Establishing a baseline target therefore did not just create a disciplined standard, it directly informed technologies of capability building and helped bring the team together. In turn, this empowered the change catalyst to start building consensus with the various eRD pilot sites that “getting every practice up to the national average” (GP:03.2020:PO:Researcher) was an appropriate target.

#### 9.4.2.2 Data Gathering to Track Progress Against Targets

Logically the next step would have been for the PAN to develop a method of checking progress against the baseline targets, through the collection and analysis of relevant data. In reality, this proved to be a process saturated in power dynamics, whereby assessment criteria were heavily influenced by the vested interests of the change catalyst and PAN leadership team. Flyvbjerg (1998) suggests that where there are vested interests “evaluation becomes more ritual than real” (p15) but the observed reality in this instance was more complex. Contrary to Flyvbjerg’s point, robust evaluations were required to support the PAN’s burgeoning influence within

the system but at the same time, the parameters of that activity were definitely informed by the vested interests of the participants.

Following Harriet's input, the change catalyst facilitated a workshop with the projectariat to plan out which key performance indicators (KPIs) should be used to support the overarching target:

“Researcher: If something is within our direct control, we should keep the KPI high. But when we're potentially reliant on the practice or someone else doing something, then we should put a lower target in”. (GP:02.2020:PO:Researcher).

The proposed eRD process was reliant upon GP practices providing specific outputs and it was outside the PAN's remit to force them to comply. Here, the change catalyst advocated for a pre-emptive tailoring of the KPIs to take this external dependency into account, and in doing so retain control of how the pilots would be evaluated. That is not to say that the evaluation was nefariously subverted, that data was fabricated or results misrepresented. Rather the change catalyst felt that “if we're looking to demonstrate our value, we don't want to set ourselves up to fail” (GP:02.2020:RR:Researcher), which in practice meant that they would select parameters for evaluation that could realistically be met by the PAN.

A specific example of this approach, was when the change catalyst encouraged the GP team “to think about how we might exclude certain complex patient types from the pilot, so that the metrics are achievable” (Ibid). The rationale being that it may not have been possible to change how those patients accessed their medications, due to the complexities of their

conditions. By restricting the types of patients in scope, which was openly discussed and agreed with the eRD pilot sites, the change catalyst aimed to make it easier to demonstrate the positive impact of the process. One impact of this streamlined approach to selecting patients, was that it was easier for the PAN to demonstrate clear financial impact (as discussed in 9.2.2.2) by “coming up with a way of putting a pound sign in front of any improvements” (GP:02.0202:PO:William). The change catalyst thus played a key role in defining the lens through which the pilot activity would be ultimately judged, which involved framing the PAN’s activities in the best possible light and excluding any potentially disruptive elements.

#### 9.4.3 Emergent Output of Pilot Governance: Devolution of Responsibility from Metagovernor to Network Manager

As the governance around the pilots matured, the dynamic between the PAN’s metagovernor (NHS England) and the network manager (NHSBSA) began to shift, in that the metagovernor began to transfer responsibility for coordinating the pilots to the network manager. The ophthalmic pilots in particular, were characterised by a strong working relationship between the two organisations. This relationship was directly facilitated by the change catalyst and the loose power dynamic between the two organisations, set the tone for how disciplinary standards would be propagated within the network. In the early stages of the plot, this dynamic definitely took place within the “shadow of hierarchy” (Scharpf, 1994, p37), with NHSBSA playing the junior role. An example being the problem definition activity in Section 7.3.1, whereby

the change catalyst actively sought Alex's approval for the proposed direction of travel.

Towards the end of the pilot lifecycle however, the metagovernor began to push NHSBSA to take on a direct leadership role within the PAN, with Alex stating, "you ask us for direction a lot, which is great, but I think going forward we could give you more autonomy" (OPA:2019:Int:Alex). Keast (2022) suggests that network governance is not static and roles and responsibilities can change in response to the wider context. In this case, it could be argued that the gradual devolution of responsibility resulted from a combination of NHSBSA's growing influence and NHS England's desire to extricate itself from the practical fulfilment of its statutory responsibilities.

As discussed in Section 7.2.2, NHS England retained responsibility for ophthalmic assurance, but the required activity was not being carried out. Early engagement from the change catalyst revealed that "the regional teams really don't do anything with ophthalmic compared to other services" (OPA:04.2019:PO:Researcher), which was predominantly due to the lack of expertise and resource within the regional teams to deliver the activity. Indeed, when the contract administration pilot began, Olive commented "it's incredible that they've let it get this bad but that means there is more opportunities for us" (OPA:05.2019:PO:Olive). Over time, NHSBSA had proved itself to be an effective network manager (largely through the efforts of the change catalyst) and the metagovernor representatives had gradually stepped back from the running of the pilots. One notable example being when NHS England devolved the chair of the Network Steering Group to the change catalyst, stating:

“Alex: I’m happy for you guys to take ownership of the Network Steering Group moving forward and I’ll wait for you to come to me, rather than you know interfere. It’s the logical next step really, to show that NHSBSA are fully embedded as leaders of the programme”.

(OPA:07.2019:PO:Alex).

Here, the transfer of the chair arguably represents a passing of the torch between the two organisations. Alex was keen to divest themselves of the day-to-day responsibility for assurance, which NHSBSA were especially keen to take on because it helped solidify their position within the network. Furthermore, becoming chair of the Network Steering Group represented the culmination of the change catalyst’s disciplinary journey, with the transfer from pilot into business as usual being a key driver for their responsabilisation. The chair would subsequently be passed on to Molly, as part of the change catalyst’s transition out of pilot activity (as discussed in Section 8.5).

Indeed, it could be argued that this passing of the torch was driven largely by the transition into business as usual. During this transitional period, it was NHSBSA who was closer to the operational reality, with Molly suggesting that “we were seeing the issues, we knew what was going on and Alex was there in case they were needed” (OPA:2019:Int:Molly). NHSBSA’s increase in influence was arguably necessary because the pilots were coming to the end of the lifecycle, at which point delivery of pilot outcomes would become more operationally focused. In order for NHSBSA to transition out of change and into standard operations, it could be argued that they needed to assume some of the metagovernor’s functionality, especially oversight of

governance. This increase in NHSBSA's influence and status within the network coincided with the change catalyst's transition out of the pilot activity (as seen in Section 8.5), which is somewhat ironic given it was the change catalyst's efforts which had led to transition of responsibility in the first place.

## **9.5 Technologies of Network Management: Summary**

Chapter 8 attempted to answer research sub-question 3: how was the network coordinated and the right people brought along on the path of change? Referring back to the Dantean metaphor of change as complex journey, technologies of network management enabled the change catalyst to foster a collective sense of unity among those travelling the path of change. The key argument of this chapter was that the change catalyst's engagement with the technology created a network dynamic that helped to successfully drive progress through the pilot lifecycles. An intensely political process, network management was saturated with manifestations of disciplinary power, as the change catalyst sought to steer the multiform participants in successfully implementing the policy pilots. This involved the change catalyst interacting with the various technology components outlined in Figure 25.

Bringing disparate individuals and organisations together in common action began with the first technology component, consensus management. Establishing agreement among the diverse members of the PAN was key to building a cohesive approach to the management of change in the network. Consensus management involved the change catalyst establishing the discursive foundations which would eventually enable the creation of robust

agreement within the network. Starting with a basis for justification, the change catalyst utilised power/knowledge formations within the discourse to tease out potential resistance to the emerging direction of travel. Through proactively seeking out dissenting voices, the change catalyst was then able to refix disciplinary power by co-opting the agency of dissenters into a process of mutual re-design, which enabled the pilot to continue. It is worth noting that this process of mutual redesign was only present during the earlier stages of the pilot, as normative standards had significantly hardened during the latter stages. The change catalyst also used this process to disseminate key messages about the long-term viability of the network, and the necessity of planning for post-pilot activities.

For all that however, consensus management would still occasionally fail. In those circumstances the change catalyst would mobilise the technology component of repivoting. This involved shifting the parameters of the pilot to make it more likely that implementation would go ahead, and it could be argued that repivoting represented a practical example of disciplinary power refixing itself to overcome resistance. Fascinatingly, the specifics of this process varied depending on the extent to which there was an active metagovernor. Within the GP arena, the PAN did not have an active metagovernor, which meant that the change catalyst had to use their own initiative to identify alternative pilot processes through horizon scanning. They were also required to use network connections to find alternative pilot sites and also to wade through local governance arrangements. By contrast in the ophthalmic space, the change catalyst was able to engage with the metagovernor and choose to repivot to a different pilot site. The metagovernor

was able to identify an alternative site and facilitate introductions with the relevant regional team, which made it relatively straightforward to mobilise the repivoted pilot. While repivoting may be a tangible example of disciplinary power's inherent flexibility, it also highlighted the importance of the metagovernor/network manager relationship when overcoming resistance to change.

The final technology component, pilot governance, could be said to exemplify disciplinary power's capacity to render a context calculable, as it sought to increase the visibility of pilot activity across the network. This governmental panopticon created a single point of decision making within the network, the Network Steering Group, which guided the change activity and maintained visibility of outputs. On a practical level, this regime of visibility was underpinned by the change catalyst's administrative efforts; working with the metagovernor to 'stack the deck' in the PAN's favour by shaping which individuals joined the Network Steering Group and by determining which criteria were selected for the pilot evaluation. Ultimately this close collaborative relationship led to NHSBSA taking over pilot governance on behalf the metagovernor, as part of the transition to business-as-usual.

The loose interconnectivity of networks is a source of great strength, it enables them to flex and respond to emerging circumstances in a way that more rigid organisational forms cannot. But there arguably still remains an underlying need for coordination, organisation and some degree of steering, otherwise it can be impossible to achieve strategic change outcomes. No one person can effectively provide this strategic steering, rather it was through engaging in network management that the change catalyst was able to subtly

steer collective action, a capacity which was informed by their productive subjectivity and helped, or hindered, by their relationship with the metagovernor.

## Chapter 10: Discussion

Throughout this thesis, Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* has been used as a metaphor for exploring how disciplinary power shapes the management of organisational change. In the epic poem, Dante's narrator undertook a journey to the afterlife and was guided by Virgil, a ghostly figure who existed in a liminal purgatory. During his traversal of the seven circles of hell, the narrator was schooled in the catechisms of renaissance Christian morality and came to internalise the normative standards espoused by his hellish surroundings. This internalisation compelled the narrator to renounce sin, which enabled him to progress to the next step in his journey and prepared him for existence in paradise. Meanwhile the guide, Virgil, who as a pagan spirit was incapable of going through the same transformation, could not follow the compliant and disciplined narrator into paradise. Political and religious allegory to one side, Dante's *inferno* captures a fundamental truth about human social interaction, in that exposure to change can be a transformative experience. However, the ways in which that experience plays out varies depending on one's positionality.

The core tenant of this research has been the idea that in order to successfully navigate organisational change, individuals have to be able to act upon their own being-in-the-world and shape themselves to meet the exigencies of their current environment. The change catalyst role exemplifies this dynamic because they incite and galvanise organisational change through their very positionality; shaping themselves to navigate their environment but also helping to shape others, fostering productive behaviours and

subjectivities within the network environment. Much like Dante's Virgil, the change catalyst helped steer the change journey and acted as a role model for what a productive subject should be, even as they were held separate from the wider network due to their liminal status.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the aim in utilising a post-modern research design was to present a trustworthy account that acknowledges there are "divergent interpretations of the real" (Tamboukou and Ball, 2003, p5). The model provided in this thesis is intended to provide a trustworthy and rigorously empirical account, that represents a single interpretation of how individual change leaders come to influence change in complex networks. Some thoughts around how elements of this approach could be expanded upon or transferred to other applicable contexts, will be explored in Chapter 11.

Chapter 1 set out the primary research question for this thesis: "how do change catalysts interact with disciplinary power to catalyse organisational change within complex network environments in the NHS?" At a high level, the answer to this question is that the change catalyst utilised Foucauldian technologies to achieve specific power effects, which in turn helped to facilitate the creation of productive subjectivities within the network. Using the three sub-questions outlined in the introduction, Technology Discourse Analysis revealed that technologies were used to produce knowledge about the path of change (Chapter 7), guide change related activity through the creation of normative standards (Chapter 8) and then coordinate perceptions and approaches at the network level (Chapter 9). These tools enabled the change catalyst to influence the emergence of specific power effects such as responsabilisation, the inculcation of bounded autonomy and the emergence

of metagovernance within the network. These power-effects helped shape individuals from across the network, including the change catalyst, into productive subjects that were capable of navigating their specific social environment. Disciplinary power thus collectively orientated the being-in-the-world of productive subjects within the network towards achieving change outcomes, which in turn ensured that the policy pilots within the PAN were able to progress through the pilot lifecycle.

Underpinning this answer was a theoretical foundation that combined Foucauldian theories of power, change management theory and network governance theory. Building upon this foundation, this research offers an intensive empirical examination of how productive subjectivities came to be formed in a network context. Taking the analysis of the technologies from Chapters 7, 8 and 9 as a starting point, and then organising them in line with the power schema set out in Chapter 2, this chapter will discuss the empirical findings to set out a concluding view of how disciplinary power came to guide conduct at the individual (micro), team (meso) and network level (macro). Key cross-cutting themes that impacted upon the process of subjectification will also be included, such as harnessing the change rationality, steering the conduct of conduct and managing the relationship with the network metagovernor. Figure 29 below sets out how this discussion chapter has been structured.

Figure 29: Discussion Structure and Thesis Answer

<b>Research question: “How do change catalysts interact with disciplinary power to catalyse organisational change within complex network environments in the NHS?”</b>			
<b>Answer “Change catalysts facilitate the creation of a lattice of productive subjectivities, orientated towards achieving change outcomes. This was achieved through their use of Foucauldian technologies, which create specific power effects to shape subjectivities.”</b>			
<b>Levels of power</b>			
<b>Micro-level</b> impact of disciplinary power: Interiorisation of power by individuals	<b>Meso-level</b> impact of disciplinary power: shaping the conduct of teams	<b>Macro-level</b> impact of disciplinary power: influencing conduct at the network level.	
<b>Specific effects of disciplinary power (enabled through the use of technologies) that helped inculcate productive subjectivities</b>			
<u><b>Responsibilisation</b></u> <i>(section 10.1): assuming responsibility for deliverables helped shape the change catalyst as a productive subject, and provided a template for shaping the subjectivity of others.</i>	<u><b>Bounded Autonomy</b></u> <i>(section 10.3): balance between autonomy and adherence to normative standards. Enabled flexibility and control.</i>	<u><b>Metagovernance (section 10.5)</b></u> : enable bounded autonomy at the network level, which empowered the network to self-organise	
<u><b>Technologies of knowledge production:</b></u> Research sub-question 1 <i>“How was knowledge produced to identify the optimum path for the change to follow and how was that knowledge utilised to guide conduct within the network? (Chapter 7)</i>	Responsibilisation created an internalised sense of drive which shaped the change catalyst’s journey of self formation (section 10.1.1)	Change catalyst nurtured bounded autonomy within the projectariat through role-modelling and acting as a relay between organisational goals and personal desires (section 10.3.1)	Change catalyst gathered intelligence from existing and potential network members about their requirements, providing direction to the network while also helping to create a cohesive vision (section 10.5.1)
<b>Cross cutting theme 1: Harnessing the change rationality (section 10.2)</b>			
<u><b>Technologies of capability building:</b></u> Research sub-question 2 <i>“How were normative standards established and embedded to enable participants to travel the path of change autonomously, without the continued presence of the change catalyst?”(Chapter 8)</i>	Responsibilisation compelled the change catalyst to engage with the projectariat, to ensure the long-term success of the pilots.(section 10.1.2)	Change catalyst involved the projectariat in establishing the normative standards that would govern conduct within the team, which set the scene for bounded autonomy (section 10.3.2)	Change catalyst eventually transitioned themselves out of the activity, which provided the necessary discursive space for metagovernance to activate (section 10.5.3)
<b>Cross cutting theme 2: Subverting resistance through collaboration (section 10.4)</b>			
<u><b>Technologies of network management:</b></u> Research sub-question 3 <i>“How was the network coordinated and the right people brought along on the path of change?”(Chapter 9)</i>	Responsibilisation compelled the change catalyst to facilitate the repivoting process, searching for alternatives when pilots experienced issues (section 10.1.3)	Change catalyst attempted to influence conduct by creating a commitment to prior consensus, which influenced what actions were perceived as possible within the network (section 10.3.3)	Facilitation of the pilot governance structures enabled the change catalyst to back-stage manage the situation to ensure that the pilots were launched and eventually found to be successful (section 10.5.2)
<b>Cross cutting theme 3: Maintaining the relationship between the network manager and metagovernor (section 10.6)</b>			

## 10.1 Specific Effect of Disciplinary Power at the Individual (Micro) Level: Responsibilisation

Chapter 2 set out a theoretical grounding for understanding how disciplinary power can impact at the individual level. Foucault's conception of power influenced individuals by shaping them into subjects, who are simultaneously enmeshed within complex disciplinary norms and compelled to self-monitor their progress in becoming disciplined. This balance was geared towards creating individuals who were productive, that is capable of meeting the normative expectations of the historical-social context in which they find themselves.

The literature review suggested that this balance is achieved by individuals engaging in a dynamic process of self-optimisation, utilising technologies of the self to actively shape their inner lifeworld, and in doing so increase their impact upon the social environment. Technology Discourse Analysis of the ethnographic data revealed that the creation of productive subjects at an individual level was enabled through a process of responsibilisation, whereby the change catalyst's journey of self-formation was driven by their internalisation of the expectations of others. This created an internal dynamic that relied upon self-monitoring to drive self-improvement, which improved the change catalyst's efficacy and thus enabled them to achieve specific change management outcomes. In turn, this set the scene for how the change catalyst attempted to influence the subjectification of others in the network. The following section will explore responsibilisation in the context of the three technology areas and cross-reference with relevant theory, with Figure 30 setting this relationship out below.

Figure 30: Responsibilisation

	<p><b>Specific effects of disciplinary power (enabled through the use of technologies) that helped inculcate productive subjectivities at the Micro/Individual level of power</b></p>
	<p><b>Responsibilisation (section 10.1):</b> <i>assuming responsibility for deliverables helped shape the change catalyst as a productive subject, and provided a template for shaping the subjectivity of others.</i></p>
<p><b>How did technologies of knowledge production influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 7)</b></p>	<p>Responsibilisation created an internalised sense of drive which shaped the change catalyst's journey of self formation (section 10.1.1)</p>
<p><b>How did technologies of capability influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 8)</b></p>	<p>Responsibilisation compelled the change catalyst to engage with the projectariat, to ensure the long-term success of the pilots.(section 10.1.2)</p>
<p><b>How did technologies of network management influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 9)</b></p>	<p>Responsibilisation compelled the change catalyst to facilitate the repivoting process, searching for alternatives when pilots experienced issues (section 10.1.3)</p>

### 10.1.1 The Influence of Technologies of Knowledge Production upon Responsibilisation

Section 7.4 set out how the change catalyst engaged with technologies of knowledge production to shape themselves as a productive subject. In the context of the environment being productive meant they were able to produce the knowledge that the PAN required to effectively plan the progress of the policy pilots. Disciplinary power played a key role in this dynamic, as responsabilisation came to influence the change catalyst's self-motivation, namely through the allure of career progression. Within the literature (covered in Section 3.1.2), career advancement acts as a particular disciplinary trajectory that defines expected standards and promises certain benefits, prompting the change catalyst to undertake a Sisyphean task of upwards progression.

The impact of this trajectory emerged through Technology Discourse Analysis, as the change catalyst went to great lengths to secure the approval of senior stakeholders within the network, as a means of bolstering their career prospects. Interestingly, this desire for positive feedback arguably stemmed from the change catalyst's childhood insecurities, discussed in detail in Section 7.4.1, which provided primordial fuel for the change catalyst's compulsion to become productive. Responsibilisation thus provided a tangible means of progressing the interests of the change catalyst within the network, while also being unconsciously influenced by their personal history and background.

The cumulative effect of responsabilisation thus created an internalised drive and forward sense of momentum, which compelled the change catalyst

to undertake “a reflexive project of the self” (Dean, 1996a, p214) and shape their being-in-the-world to better influence the organisational change going on around them. Intriguingly, data analysis revealed that the change catalyst’s reflexive project was not entirely straightforward. Pezet and Cornelius (2017) argue that a desire for career progression and meaningful work is vital for individual self-esteem. In the case of the change catalyst, this desire resulted in a burning sense of ambition, which propelled their responsabilisation. However, the expectation within the PAN was that any personal ambition would be subordinated to the needs of the network, with a prioritisation hierarchy of “business first, team second and self, third” (OPA:2019:Int:Olive) being the expected norm. The change catalyst’s self-formation and pursuit of personal ambition thus had to be ostensibly sublimated to the needs of the network. Complicating this dynamic however, was the fact that the change catalyst was also undertaking data gathering as part of this research. So, while the change catalyst demonstrably suppressed their personal ambition in support of the wider network, the very fact that they were using the PAN to conduct research enabled them to pursue their personal ambition at the same time. Responsibilisation was thus a complex adaptable process, with its inherent flexibility contributing to the forward momentum of change.

Responsibilisation also stemmed from the change catalyst’s internalisation of external expectations. Section 2.2.1 critically engaged with Deleuze’s (1988) concept of folding, whereby the lifeworld of the individual comes to be shaped by the internalisation of external forces. These external forces come to shape the internal thought-processes and responses of the individual, indeed Foucault (1991) believed that this process of internalisation

shaped the formation of the soul, suggesting that “the soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body” (p30). One’s inner lifeworld, what Foucault calls the soul, is directly impacted upon by external influences, which in turn limits the physical potential of the subject; the conduct of the body is thus limited by the ‘soul’, which itself is invaginated by external standards and expectations.

Within technologies of knowledge production, this invagination manifested as the change catalyst taking it upon themselves to produce the knowledge required for the pilots to progress. Deleuze argues that individuals have little choice over the content of a fold, while Butler (2016) and Skinner (2012) argue that personal choice plays a key role. On balance, analysis of the ethnographic data suggests a hybrid position may be appropriate; in that the content of the fold was indeed established by external expectations but the desire to engage with the fold and take on responsibility for its manifestation came from within. In this instance, the change catalyst’s desire to become productive compelled them to willingly internalise external expectations, which would then go on to shape their conduct within the network.

While this internalised sense of responsibility provided motivation, it also caused significant feelings of anxiety and distress within the change catalyst, when the desired change outcomes were not achieved. As mentioned in Chapter 6, Townley (1998) suggests that identities that ground themselves in relation to power/knowledge structures are inherently unstable and seek “a constant reaffirmation of their identity” (p203). This was echoed in Chapter 7 where the change catalyst identified as a fraud following their inability to produce knowledge about the GP landscape. Nonetheless, responsabilisation

compels action, as disciplinary power does not allow would-be productive subjects to remain idle. Instead, the change catalyst was compelled by their internalised drive to engage in a process of problematization and by fixating on the nature of the perceived failures, the change catalyst was compelled to self-survey and identify problems (Clegg, 1989).

Responsibilisation thus created an unyielding and relentless impetus for the change catalyst to pursue the needs of the network, where their sense of self-worth was linked to achieving change outcomes. Indeed, when one considers the mercurial nature of change and the likelihood of failure, it could be argued that responsabilisation poses a significant risk to the mental health and wellbeing of those whom it seeks to motivate. It is acknowledged within the literature that organisational change can have a negative impact on the individuals who experience it (Bamberger *et al.*, 2012), which as Durdy and Bradshaw (2014) point out is especially true of the NHS, where prolonged change and ambiguity can lead to “worsening employee morale and health, reduced productivity and quality of care” (p17). Indeed, this was recognised by NHS England (2021b) who have developed a health and wellbeing framework that emphasises the importance of creating a positive culture around change management. However, there is still a significant amount of work to be done to understand more about the negative impacts on mental health and how they are taken for granted within change management practice.

Organisational change, within the modern and turbulent society we live, is almost a given and cannot be avoided. For individuals such as the change catalyst, who take it upon themselves to engage with this change head-on and attempt to use it for their own purposes, responsabilisation thus poses

something of a Faustian bargain; engaging and leading change initiatives can potentially improve one's career prospects but at the same time, this progress will almost inevitably have a negative impact on one's mental health. Within the data it was clear that this trade-off was accepted as a natural phenomenon by the change catalyst and seen as part and parcel of the role they were inhabiting. Herein then lies the value of the Technology Discourse Analysis approach because it is only through rendering the familiar unfamiliar that it begins to become clear how potentially unhealthy, and indeed unnatural, this dynamic truly was. The mental health risks posed at a team level will be explored further in Section 10.3.1, and avenues for future research around this risk will be explored in the conclusion chapter.

#### 10.1.2 The Influence of Technologies of Capability Building upon Responsibilisation

Technologies of capability building looked to capitalise upon the momentum established by the creation of the individual productive subject, to enable collective responsibilisation at the team level. Section 3.1.1 discussed how change catalysts are necessarily liminal, in that they occupy interstitial positions within networks and continually shape their identity “through a dialogue between context and self” (Söderlund and Borg, 2018, p885). In this instance though, for all their liminality, the change catalyst played a key role in driving organisational change within the PAN. This created a tension, where it was recognised that the change catalyst would eventually transition out of the pilot activity, as their assignment was only temporary.

Responsibilisation of the change catalyst was geared towards achieving the long-term organisational objectives of the PAN but, ironically, the change catalyst would not be there to see the fruits of their labour. The only way responsibilisation could be sated therefore, was for the change catalyst to create an environment where others would eventually come to take on the responsibilities once internalised by the change catalyst. To achieve this, the change catalyst actively sought to foster productive subjectivities within a wider project team, the projectariat (as seen in Section 8.2).

In order to inspire responsibilisation within the projectariat then, the change catalyst shared their own journey and motivations, with career progression again acting as the desired end goal that drove their self-formation as a productive subject. This corroborates the idea put forward separately by Rose (1996), Deetz (1998) and Ibarra-Colado *et al* (2006), that change catalysts can act as relays between organisational goals and personal desires. By creating a tangible link between the needs of the organisation and the personal benefits that could arise from becoming a productive subject, the change catalyst actively tried to encourage the projectariat to bind themselves to the requirements of the PAN. At the same time, foregrounding the self-starting nature of their own journey helped to emphasise the proactive and self-steering capabilities that would be required to effectively navigate the complex environment. The change catalyst's journey of self-formation thus arguably provides an empirical basis for understanding how an individual's subjectivity can be scaled up to influence a wider team.

### 10.1.3 The Influence of Technologies of Network Management upon Responsibilisation

Responsibilisation also impacted on technologies of network management, as the change catalyst sought to identify strategic solutions to issues experienced by the network. Working on behalf of the PAN's network manager, NHSBSA, the change catalyst took on personal responsibility for identifying alternative sites and processes for pilots that had faltered as part of the repivoting process set out in Section 9.3. In the literature review, Burrell (1998) emphasised the capacity of disciplinary power to overcome obstacles and refix itself in relation to changing circumstances. It could be argued that responsabilisation acts as a mechanism for this refixing, compelling would-be productive subjects to tenaciously pursue alternative courses of action, specifically in terms of enabling the repivoting process.

Taking on personal responsibility for facilitating the repivoting process, created an internalised drive that compelled the change catalyst to find workable solutions and overcome perceived failures. It could be argued that this combination of flexibility and unrelenting drive, played a key role in enabling the hybrid change model defined in Section 3.2, as it creates a balance between the emergent and planned approaches to change. Responsibilisation, as a manifestation of disciplinary power at the individual level, thus impacted network level activity by helping to drive the repivoting process.

However, when repivoting failed, the change catalyst once again took that setback personally, even when the circumstances leading up to the failure

were beyond their control. In a similar fashion to what happened during the technologies of knowledge production; responsabilisation, which had initially been a source of motivation, led to feelings of anxiety and helplessness. This spurred the change catalyst on to desperately search for viable options for repivoting, which caused them to deliberately gloss over the unsavoury aspects of potential opportunities. As set out in Section 9.3.2, the ophthalmic pilots in the South region had been launched with the express purpose of mitigating job cuts made within that team. Disregarding the moral implications of the pilots, the change catalyst ploughed on, driven by their responsabilisation to make the pilot work. While this could be held up as an example of Shaw, Hughes and Greenlagh's (2019) concept of "moral blindness" (p245), it must also be noted that the change catalyst felt a deep unease about the pilot and experienced empathy for those affected by the cuts. This emotion, however, was overridden by the internalised sense of responsibility, which prioritised progression and meeting the expectations of others above all else.

## **10.2 Cross-Cutting Theme 1: Harnessing the Change Rationality**

A key influence upon the manifestation of disciplinary power at all levels was the change rationality, an overriding rationale and justification for change that would provide a commonly agreed basis for social action. Throughout the ethnographic study, the change catalyst actively attempted to harness this rationality as a means of achieving specific change management outcomes, namely the progression of the policy pilots.

The literature review set out the Foucauldian perspective that truth is a social construct; a temporary, yet adamant, manifestation of power intrinsically bound to a specific space/time. Accordingly, Foucault used the term Regime of Truth to describe the process whereby the momentary manifestation of truth is harnessed and utilised as a reified basis for social interaction. In turn, this arguably establishes what is thinkable and doable within a specific context. As discussed in Section 7.2.1, the overarching regime of truth within the NHS was focused on the delivery of high-quality patient care, which in the context of the Provider Assurance Network was used to justify various anti-fraud initiatives.

Flyvbjerg (1998) points out “power, quite simply, produces that knowledge and that rationality which is conducive to the reality it wants” (p36). Given the change catalyst’s internalised drive to deliver organisational change within the PAN, it was therefore imperative to use the change rationality to support the delivery of the policy pilots. The extent to which supporting the delivery of patient care was a genuine motivator for the change catalyst and other members of the network cannot be overstated. Framing the change activity in relation to patient care thus endowed the change with a meaningful altruistic dimension, which had a deep personal resonance with many of the participants. At the same time, this did not prevent the change catalyst from choreographing the discourse around patient care to achieve specific political outcomes, namely driving the progress of the PAN’s policy pilots. One of the primary means of choreographing discourse, was for the change catalyst to showcase and promote the input of clinical knowledge and expertise into the pilot processes.

It could be argued that clinical practitioners within the NHS embody the aforementioned Regime of Truth, as they interact with, and directly care for, patients. The clinical perspective and voice thus possessed a degree of gravitas that non-clinical voices lacked, within the specific power/knowledge structures of the NHS. The change catalyst sought to capitalise upon this gravitas to help smooth out the mobilisation of the policy pilots. One example, occurred during technologies of capability building (covered in Section 8.4.1) when the change catalyst foregrounded clinical involvement in the PAN to help convince NHS England to delegate the setting of normative standards to NHSBSA, thus drastically increasing the influence of the network manager. Similarly in technologies of network management, the change catalyst was able to overcome objections to the proposed deep dive process by foregrounding the fact clinicians had been involved in designing it (outlined in Section 9.2.2.3). In both cases, clinical involvement provided the stakeholders with confidence that the proposed actions were acceptable. Broadcasting the fact of clinical involvement thus bestowed legitimacy on the actions taken to deliver the pilots, by directly evoking the overarching Regime of Truth.

However, the political impact of promoting clinical involvement within the discourse did not always correspond to the process value of that input. Within technologies of knowledge production there was a disconnect between the quality/extent of the clinical input and its discursive impact. Penelope, a GP, was unable to provide the network team with additional insight around the wider system during the workshop outlined in Chapter 7. However, the simple fact that a GP had been involved in the design workshop (regardless of their actual impact) enabled the change catalyst to crow about the PAN's clinical

legitimacy. It was almost as if clinicians embodied the Regime of Truth, and their very involvement constituted a tacit endorsement of the proposed course of action, opening courses of action not otherwise available to the change catalyst. This point is not to denigrate the importance of the clinical voice when considering complex organisational change within the NHS; clinical input is absolutely essential, as is patient advocacy. However, what this research does emphasise is the importance of also considering the political dimensions and impact of that clinical voice.

Patient care, as a key aspect of the Regime of Truth, thus contributed towards framing the change rationality but it was not the only influence. The wider instability of the NHS system created a broad sense of uncertainty and ambiguity, which led to reductions in headcount and expertise, that in turn threatened the provision of patient care. This dynamic directly informed the change rationality used to justify the PAN's change activity, which was positioned as a potential mitigation for the wider instability. While motivated, at least in part, by a desire to improve patient care, this helping hand to the NHS was partially driven by NHSBSA's growth agenda.

Section 7.2.3 provided an in-depth overview of how the threat of funding cuts and NHSBSA's growing influence in the wider healthcare system, led to the emergence of an informal growth agenda. NHSBSA possessed significant experience in delivering large scale administrative and assurance processes, which incentivised them to explore other income streams as a means of mitigating governmental expenditure cuts. Given the existence of a prior relationship with NHS England, a proven track record in other areas of assurance and a growing imperative to diversify funding sources, there was a

certain synergy to NHSBSA delivering this activity (at least in the eyes of the change catalyst). This emerging growth agenda was justified by framing it in the context of improving patient care, with the two perspectives being combined to create a mutually agreeable change rationality between NHSBSA and NHS England. The growth agenda also had a significant impact on the change catalyst's responsabilisation, for the prospect of organisational growth brought with it the prospect of career advancement.

However, NHSBSA did not have a proven track record in the ophthalmic and GP spaces which, when coupled with the systemic instability of the late 2010s, made it difficult for the metagovernor to approve any permanent solutions or services. Instead, the change catalyst was able to utilise the discourse of policy pilots to find a way of progressing the organisational change. As set out in Section 3.3, policy pilots can act as an experimental form of change that enables organisations to test options before scaling up into full development. Ostensibly temporary, pilots represent a middle ground between the planned and emergent approaches to change, in that they embody a structured approach to dealing with uncertainty. The change rationality demanded action, but system instability had reduced the required resource to deliver change within NHS England; policy pilots therefore provided a means of consequence-free testing that would help mitigate uncertainty through commitment-free experimentation. However, the experimental nature of the PAN's policy pilots was arguably only surface deep.

In overseeing the progress of pilots, the change catalyst was arguably meant to act as an impartial facilitator, who would eventually provide an objective evaluation of the pilot. In reality, they had a vested interest in

ensuring that the pilots were perceived to be successful, which would lead to further expansion and contribute towards NHSBSA's growth agenda. The change catalyst's responsabilisation compelled them to drive change forward as a means activating their productive subjectivity, hence the motivation to ensure that the pilots continued. Indeed, the change catalyst went to great lengths to frame the pilots as time-limited experiments that could be easily stopped, which was in part an effort to secure buy-in from the inactive metagovernor.

However, as seen in Chapter 9, when it came to technologies of network management it became apparent that the change catalyst did not perceive the pilots as temporary. Rather, they were committed to using the pilots as a means of launching permanent services, which would potentially bolster NHSBSA's income streams and boost the change catalyst's career prospects. While pilots offered a superficially consequence-free method of testing hypotheses, in reality the vested interests of the NHSBSA and the change catalyst meant that they possessed a momentum that would have made it difficult for them to be stopped.

Ultimately, the concept of high-quality patient care framed the change rationality that underpinned organisational change within the PAN. Was this a significant motivator for the change catalyst and other members of the network? Absolutely, but it was also entwined with less altruistic concerns about funding for the network manager and the long-term future of the network. The change rationality was thus complex and interwoven throughout all of the network's social interactions. At the individual level, it informed the process by which individuals came to shape themselves as subjects, which influenced

how productive subjectivities were cultivated at the team level. At the network level meanwhile, the network manager used the change rationality to justify and leverage courses of action that helped the pilots come to fruition.

It goes without saying that the scope of any individual to shape a Regime of Truth is limited, given their status as intangible power/knowledge structures that span whole societies. However, by being conversant with the change rationality for the specific context, which involved using the discursive levers of clinical expertise and policy pilots, the change catalyst was able to harness the rationality and use it for their specific purposes. Which, because of their responsabilisation and orientation as a productive subject, were geared towards driving organisational change.

### **10.3 Specific Effect of Disciplinary Power at the Team (Meso) Level: Bounded Autonomy**

Responsibilisation impacted upon subjectivities at the individual level by providing energy and motivation, which compelled the individual change catalyst to become productive. To maintain this trajectory at the team (meso) level of power, it was necessary to create a team dynamic that encouraged autonomous problem-solving, while staying within the bounds of the dominant normative order. Disciplinary power impacts upon the conduct of individuals via “strategic effects” which re-enforce its “disciplinary character” (Clegg, 1989, p152), i.e. the external disciplinary standards, expectations and norms that shape the inner life and positionality of subjects. The process of scaling up productive subjectivities to influence activity at the team level was incredibly

complex, especially considering the change catalyst was also a member of those teams. There were two types of teams involved in this research, with the projectariat carrying out process redesign within NHSBSA (discussed in Chapter 8) and the cross-organisational Network Steering Group helping to steer overarching network activity (as covered in Chapter 9).

Change within complex environments can be characterized as non-linear, where it is not always possible to anticipate cause and effect (Rickles, Hawe and Shiell, 2007; Blomme, 2012). Indeed, this ambiguity impacts on attempts to effectively lead change as it cannot be directly controlled, only influenced due its emergent nature (Lawrence, 2015). In turn, this non-linearity impacts on teams operating within this space, with Werder and Maedche (2018) suggesting they are “required to act and react quickly in such uncertain environments” (p823). So, when it came to fostering productive subjectivities within a team, if those individuals become disciplined in relation to static norms and ideals, then their capacity to navigate complexity would be potentially diminished. For as Hallsworth (2011) pointed out so eloquently in Section 2.4, taking an overly prescriptive approach to change in complex environments, can have a negative and restrictive impact by restricting the flexibility of the team. At the same time, a balance needs to be struck between enabling sufficient flexibility to navigate complexity, and conformity with the wider norms of the context.

Within the literature on governmentality, examined in Chapter 2, there is a recurring motif around how steering “the conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1994b, p341) can enable subjects to manage their own conduct, in a way that nonetheless corresponds to external normative expectations. The inherent

paradox between autonomy and compliance was summarised effectively by Rose (1998) who asked, “how can free individuals be governed so that they enact their freedom appropriately?” (p29). Esmark and Triantafillou (2009) suggest that the particular manifestations of power which influence this “steering of self-steering” (p32) are under-researched and little understood, a gap which this thesis has empirically explored through ethnographic study. Indeed, analysis of the ethnographic data suggests that a potential answer could be that, in order to effectively steer the conduct of conduct within a complex change environment, the change catalyst sought to foster bounded autonomy at the team level.

Clegg (1989) points out that the effects of social activity are based on a “normative rather than causal imperative” (p211), which is to say that normative standards, if they are to have an impact; must be established, made relevant for the context and reified through intensive socialisation. Bounded autonomy achieves this reification while steering the conduct of individual subjects; manifesting as a delicate balance between the countervailing forces of self-discipline, which bind conduct, and operational autonomy, that enables flexibility. It could be argued that bounded autonomy embodies Foucault’s views on freedom and resistance to power, in that this balance creates a sense of “freedom [that] is both located and constituted in relation to power” (Ibarra-Colado *et al.*, 2006). If one adopts this perspective, the concept of freedom becomes less about being untethered from external norms or obligations, and more about the capacity to function autonomously within clearly defined boundaries. It was one of the key functions of the change catalyst to help foster

this delicate balance at the team level, with specific approaches taken in each of the technology areas, which are set out in Figure 31 below.

Figure 31: Bounded Autonomy

	<p>Specific effects of disciplinary power (enabled through the use of technologies) that helped inculcate productive subjectivities at the meso/team level</p>
	<p><b>Bounded Autonomy (section 10.3):</b> <i>balance between autonomy and adherence to normative standards. Enabled flexibility and control.</i></p>
<p>How did technologies of knowledge production influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 7)</p>	<p>Change catalyst nurtured bounded autonomy within the projectariat through role-modelling and acting as a relay between organisational goals and personal desires (section 10.3.1)</p>
<p>How did technologies of capability influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 8)</p>	<p>Change catalyst involved the projectariat in establishing the normative standards that would govern conduct within the team (section 10.3.2)</p>
<p>How did technologies of network management influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 9)</p>	<p>Change catalyst attempted to influence conduct by creating a commitment to prior consensus, which influenced what actions were perceived as possible within the network (section 10.3.3)</p>

### 10.3.1 The Influence of Technologies of Knowledge Production upon Bounded Autonomy

One method for inculcating bounded autonomy within a wider team was for the change catalyst to use their own subjectivity as a template, presenting themselves as a prototypical subject in an attempt to nurture productive subjectivities through active role modelling. As set out in the literature review, change catalysts must externalise their own subjectivity and “find some way of creating entrepreneurial individuals and collective actors” (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009, p3); in order to guide and build confidence within project teams, who often have to navigate ambiguous circumstances (Gällstedt, 2003).

However, just as self-formation caused the change catalyst to experience anxiety when they could not produce the required outcome, so too did it impact on the members of the projectariat. For example, Chapter 8 outlined how individuals such as Lily struggled to live up to the standards expected of a productive subject in the PAN. Indeed, this dynamic revealed a harsh truth about the power/knowledge configuration of the network, namely that the worth of an individual was ultimately decided by the extent to which they could become productive within the context. If you could not become productive, then eventually you would be discarded by the organisation- a stark realisation that applied to all members of the network, including the change catalyst.

Bounded autonomy thus capitalised upon the effects of responsabilisation, in that would-be productive subjects were compelled to engage in a perpetual process of self-improvement, ever fearful of being left

behind if they were not able to meet the emerging normative standards of the changing environment. Disciplinary power thus had the potential to negatively impact upon the mental health of teams, as well as individuals; for when one compares one's positionality to an external ideal and comes up short, this can create a profound sense of inadequacy and stress (Townley, 1998). In a sense then it could be argued that the change catalyst, through role modelling their prototypical subjectivity, played a part in propagating this negative mental health dynamic. While role-modelling provided a hands-off method of inculcating bounded autonomy, it arguably also had a morally ambiguous dimension that must be called out and addressed as part of any move towards more humane change management practices. Some ideas around how this could be explored as part of future research will be included in Chapter 11.

### 10.3.2 The Influence of Technologies of Capability upon Bounded Autonomy

A more hands-on method of fostering bounded autonomy at the team level, was through the inculcation of normative standards. Normative standards are methods of enacting disciplinary power's signature one-way judgemental dialogue, with Foucault's metaphor of the panopticon being a case in point. However, data analysis suggests that the inculcation of normative standards was significantly more nuanced than simple internalisation. For instance, during the early stages of the pilot it became obvious that there were no existing normative standards within the NHS system that could be used to shape conduct. As discussed in Section 8.4.1, the change catalyst therefore engaged with the metagovernor to establish

baseline expectations around conduct. Given that these standards would bracket autonomy, it was necessary for the change catalyst to imbue them with a certain discursive weight, by clearly situating the standard in relation to legislation and clinical knowledge.

Once these boundaries had been set, the inculcation of bounded autonomy could begin, with the change catalyst leading the projectariat in developing an understanding of how those high-level standards should shape their daily conduct. While it may be assumed that individual subjects would have little influence over how and when internalisation took place, the observed reality was that sustained participatory dialogue was essential for the internalisation of standards to occur, with projectariat members taking an active role in shaping how those standards were interpreted. This suggests that in a network without pre-existing standards, the agency and input of team members can be vital for shaping processes, for as le Blanc (2016) points out “subjects are not only produced by norms, they also recreate them” (p133). Indeed, it could be argued that participating in the creation and recreation of norms helped build cohesion and improve the morale of the projectariat, by creating a collective sense of ownership around the standards.

In order to nurture the independence of the projectariat, the change catalyst facilitated deliberative forums (discussed in Section 8.4.2.1) which encouraged the team members to proactively self-identify issues with the new process. It could be argued that this mode of engagement echoes Clegg’s (1998) assertion that “one can frame a normative order that encourages, rather than discourages voices” (p45) but at the same time, the change catalyst was willing to course-correct any attempts by the projectariat to veer from the

agreed path. The change catalyst built upon this approach by devolving responsibility for specific tasks to individual projectariat members, testing their ability to demonstrate bounded autonomy. These individuals shadowed the change catalyst and as such, were able to develop an understanding of what conduct they needed to embody to achieve a similar level of material success. It should be pointed out however, that this approach to delegation could be seen as exploitative, in that the projectariat members were taking on responsibilities beyond their job description without additional remuneration. Mackenzie and McKinlay (2021) term this phenomenon “hope labour”, that is “under-compensated labour undertaken in the present, usually for exposure or experience” (p1842). It is telling how the concept of hope labour was simply accepted by the change catalyst, as working beyond the confines of the present without guarantee of recompense had played such a key role in their own career trajectory. Indeed, this taken-for-granted exploitation is arguably symptomatic of disciplinary power on the whole, for while it can energise and empower, so too can it exclude and exploit. Bounded autonomy, when examined in a certain light, arguably has a tinge of moral ambiguity, which must be addressed and Chapter 11 outlines some potential approaches for how this could be mitigated in future research.

Eventually projectariat members came to lead workstreams in their own right within the PAN, and the change catalyst’s focus shifted from inculcating bounded autonomy to making sure it was functioning properly. As discussed in Chapter 8, the change catalyst began to gradually step away from pilot activity and needed to be assured that the conduct of the projectariat would continue in line with the established normative standards. Achieving this

balance was vital, with the change catalyst attempting to nurture the projectariat's burgeoning independence, while remaining confident that their change activities would comply with established normative standards. To that end, the change catalyst established themselves as an administrative locus, a centre point through which all "intellectual and administrative knowledge" (McKinlay and Pezet, 2017, p14) must flow; maintaining visibility (and the capacity to stage an intervention), while leaving space for the self-monitoring subjectivity of the projectariat to grow. One particular tool which informed this dynamic was the change catalyst's encouragement of the projectariat to self-critique their activities, to independently learn from their failures and cultivate "the rational equipment that ensures a wise behaviour" (Foucault, 1990, p62). Normalising an introspective and reflexive approach to problem solving thus re-enforced normative standards and steered individual self-conduct but when there were issues, the change catalyst was still able to intervene, course correct and bring aberrant cases back in line with the norm (Taylor, 1986). Indeed, by providing this balance of guidance and oversight it could be argued that the change catalyst played a key role in inculcating bounded autonomy, as their interventions supported individuals to become autonomous, while "re-enforcing expected social conduct" (Waring and Martin, 2016, p138).

When the change catalyst was involved, cultivating bounded autonomy was thus a live and dynamic process, with the ethnographic data suggesting that balance was underpinned by the close working relationships between the projectariat and the change catalyst. In order to ensure that this cultivated bounded autonomy would continue beyond the change catalyst's departure, it was necessary to discursively sever the change catalyst from the context and

then codify the standards, so that the expected ways of working became embedded directly within the consciousness of the team. This was achieved through the creation of disciplinary artefacts; documents such as scripts for customer engagement and standard operating procedures, which captured and reified the expected standards of conduct. These precepts enabled individuals to compare themselves, and others, to a set of idealised norms, with the resulting web of normalizing judgements steering their conduct and aligning the projectariat in common purpose. In turn, this orientation resulted in “a mode of political and economic management” (Foucault, 1980d, p141) that was internalised by the projectariat, and geared towards driving organisational change.

### 10.3.3 The Influence of Technologies of Network Management upon Bounded Autonomy

The change catalyst used the outputs from technologies of knowledge production to foster bounded autonomy by role-modelling an idealised subjectivity. Meanwhile, technologies of capability building contributed to bounded autonomy by establishing standards that governed conduct and set parameters around autonomy. In terms of technologies of network management, bounded autonomy presented a means for the change catalyst to influence conduct within the wider network, bringing the disparate organisations together in pursuit of a common purpose.

As set out in Chapter 3, networks are reliant upon meaningful consensus being established among its members, which creates cohesion

and common orientation towards a clear goal. Chapter 9 explored how the change catalyst played a key role in creating consensus within the context of the ophthalmic deep dive pilots, working with PAN members to understand areas of concern and developing a mutually acceptable compromise (the implications of how this engagement was used to overcome resistance will be explored in Section 10.4). What was fascinating about this process was how the outputs from this particular technology came to influence the conduct of participants “through establishing active commitment to prior consensus” (Simon and Oakes, 2006, p129). The literature review in Chapter 3 engaged with the notion that managing consensus is a manifestation of disciplinary power, which acts through “structuring the fields of possible actions” (Dean, 1996b, p47). This helped instil bounded autonomy by creating a reified perception that certain courses of action were not viable because they had not been approved by the majority, which in this case meant the Network Steering Group. Within the context of the PAN, the change catalyst was able to use the Network Steering Group to legitimise some courses of action and halt the consideration of others, thus helping to shape what was perceived as thinkable within the network.

Grounding the discourse within a collective agreement about what was to be done, gave some individuals agency (those who were attempting to mobilise the pilots) and denied it to others (Clegg, 1998). The change catalyst, while fully immersed within this dynamic, was able to utilise their agency in an attempt to harmonise perceptions within the group, and in doing so “influence people’s future activities and not just current behaviours” (Scheurich and McKenzie, 2005, p854). In harmonising perceptions, the change catalyst

attempted to present the PAN as a benevolent force within the system, altruistically supporting the metagovernor and delivering against the change rationality. In turn, this helped layer a veneer of legitimacy over the actions that had previously been rendered thinkable as part of the change catalyst's consensus management, which added further weight to the change management activities of the PAN.

That is not to suggest that a prior commitment to consensus was an inviolate indicator of future action, as network participants inevitably have a multitude of concerns and considerations that could potentially nullify any prior agreements with other organisations. That being said, in terms of shaping bounded autonomy at the team level, consensus did create a certain discursive momentum which was used by the change catalyst to steer conduct within the network.

#### **10.4 Cross-Cutting Theme 2: Subverting Resistance**

Bounded autonomy represented a way of steering the conduct of individuals and teams working to achieve organisational change outcomes. A linked theme that cut across all levels of disciplinary power was the idea that potential resistance could be pre-empted or subverted through a relentless commitment to collaboration and co-design. At the micro level of power, as set out in Section 7.4, the successful delivery of change was inexorably tied to the change catalyst's self-definition of what it meant to be a productive subject. They had become responsabilised to deliver the pilots but had foreknowledge that they would be leaving, which created a gnawing

tension and anxiety that their burgeoning subjectivity would be hindered, and that they would not be able to gather sufficient data for their research. This created an intense desire within the change catalyst, to make as much progress as possible in the time they had with the pilots.

If one were to consider how power could be deployed to achieve the maximum possible impact within the shortest period of time (especially when considering the modernistically inspired modes of power discussed in Chapter 3), the image that perhaps springs to mind is of a single leader, dominating the discourse and bending others to their will. Disciplinary power, however, is more subtle and shapes conduct by immersing individuals within a discursive normative order, which comes to shape how issues and potential solutions are perceived. For instance, when the change catalyst encountered resistance within the PAN, rather than attempting to combat that resistance head-on, they sought to mitigate the pushback by adopting an intensely collaborative approach.

Involving dissenting voices in the design of process was thus viewed by the change catalyst as a method for engendering buy-in into the pilots, while also providing a subtle means for mitigating any resistance to the change. Chapter 2 discussed the Foucauldian perspective on resistance, whereby disciplinary power utilises points of resistance to reorientate and refix itself. This concept is particularly relevant in a change management context; for as Battilana and Casciaro (2012) suggest, change catalysts “may need to overcome resistance from members of their own organisation” (p381). Indeed, it could be argued that overcoming resistance through an inclusive and collaborative approach was an enabler for disciplinary power’s capacity to refix

itself. Within the PAN, this manifested as an intense focus by the change catalyst on assimilating would-be dissenting into the normative structures of the network, co-opting their resistance and re-purposing it to drive the pilots forward.

At the team level (as set out in Chapter 8) the change catalyst consistently sought to involve the projectariat members in the research and co-design of assurance processes. While this was done to build capability within the team and set the scene for the change catalyst's eventual transition out of pilot governance, it also helped overcome resistance to the new processes from the teams, which manifested as anxiety about their readiness to deliver the change. Meaningful and persistent collaboration thus enabled the change catalyst to overcome resistance by building the capabilities and confidence of the projectariat members. By involving the team in process design, the change catalyst helped to build capabilities and improve overall team cohesion.

The change catalyst also coached specific individuals so that they could pick up delegated responsibilities, which helped build capabilities but also acted as a means of testing their capacity for bounded autonomy. This approach to empowerment also arguably caused those individuals' resistance to wither away, for as they undertook delegated activities, they become more aware of what was required to be productive in that role, within the context of the PAN. As they began to self-form as productive subjects, motivated by the overarching change rationality and their own self-interest, their professional identities eventually came to be shaped by the very change they once resisted.

In those cases, resistance was eventually overcome through exposure to potential opportunities.

Within the wider projectariat, the change catalyst's collaborative approach created a collective responsibility that encouraged buy-in to the proposed change. Disciplinary artefacts, such as the action registers described in Section 8.4.3, created collective agreement on which activities were required to drive the change, that in turn helped to create a "herd mentality" (GP:2020:Int:Darcie); whereby the misgivings of any individuals were suppressed by the momentum of the collective agreements forged during the deliberative forums (covered in Section 8.4.2.1). Indeed, the change catalyst went to great lengths to involve all the projectariat members in the design of the future state of assurance, and by involving everyone and giving them a say in that future, the change catalyst was able to slowly acclimatise the caseworkers to the emerging status quo.

Overcoming resistance through collaboration also occurred at the network level but the type of resistance encountered was more political in nature, and it needed to be mitigated through more explicit and ostentatious methods of collaboration. A primary example of this took place during the deep dive pilot workshop discussed in Section 9.2.2, which saw Hugo, a senior representative of the ophthalmic profession, resisting the proposed parameters of the pilot. Rather than shy away from conflict, the change catalyst sought out Hugo and attempted to bring them into the fold by involving them in the redesign of the pilot. This saw the change catalyst attempting to justify the proposed process by foregrounding clinical input, while also

backtracking on particularly contentious issues, such as when they downplayed the underlying financial objectives of the pilot.

In the short term then, the change catalyst was willing to give up ground in order to draw dissenters into a discussion. Once the network members had been drawn into the debate, the very fact of their involvement arguably created a vested interest in the topic being discussed. The change catalyst's goal was thus not just to overcome resistance, but to create buy-in from the dissenters into the change initiative itself, by giving up ground on some topics and holding firm on others. Alex, the ophthalmic metagovernor, summed up this dynamic best, suggesting that "when everyone has had input into the process, even if they are not happy with a specific aspect of it, they tend to still be happy because their concerns were acknowledged" (OPA:07.2019:PO:Alex). A little bit of flexibility thus went a long way in terms of overcoming emerging resistance within the network but what was interesting was that this flexibility was only present during the early stages of the pilot lifecycle. As outlined in Section 9.2.2.4, once the pilots had progressed to "Stage 5: Evaluation and Transition into Business-as-usual" this willingness to compromise had diminished somewhat, with projectariat members being less accommodating of the issues raised by prospective network members. While this may be attributable to increased confidence within the PAN, and the solidified processes that underpinned assurance; it may also be that the catalyst's efforts had created a critical mass of stakeholder buy-in, which created a "herd mentality" at the network level.

But what motivated the change catalyst to take this collaborative approach? Responsibilisation undoubtedly played a part, but it was almost as

though the change catalyst's subjectivity and being-in-the-world could not tolerate resistance to the emerging change. Resistance arguably represented a threat to the change catalyst's productive identity, and in order to mitigate that threat, they took it upon themselves to assimilate resisting subjects into the normative order. Which is not to say that this approach was always successful, for as set out in Section 9.3 there were numerous instances where the pilots ultimately failed, but it does provide valuable insight into how resistance to change was mitigated within the PAN. For the change catalyst, it was not about suppressing resistance wholesale but more about subverting and co-opting the energy of resistance, which could then be diverted to support the wider organisational change.

### **10.5 Specific Effect of Disciplinary Power at the Network (Macro) Level: Metagovernance**

At the meso level, bounded autonomy created balance between flexibility and conformity to normative standards. This balance was also observed at the network level, which was enabled through the concept of metagovernance. Section 2.4 outlined how networks, as an organisational form, possess unique characteristics that are ideally suited to mitigating wicked issues in complex systems. Metagovernance is a term used to describe how networks are governed to balance cohesiveness with looseness and flexibility (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Networks bring disparate groups and individuals together in a common purpose, with balance and coordination

being achieved through “hands-off management and through persuasion” (Bevir and Rhodes, 2016, p84).

It is this equilibrium that puts networks in a unique position to deal with complex change, as they arguably have the potential to balance local responsiveness with access to centrally held resources (van Duijn, Bannink and Ybema, 2022). NHS England, as metagovernor of the NHS, was able to articulate a long-term vision for the NHS and thus enable “a redesign of patient-care to future-proof the NHS for the decade ahead” (NHS England, 2019c, p6). In articulating a vision and telling a story, the metagovernor was able to achieve effective governance through “the construction of social and political meaning and identity” (Sørensen, 2006, p101). This enabled the metagovernor to achieve their aims by empowering local actors (Wachhaus, 2012) while simultaneously ensuring those same actors were aligned to the dominant logic espoused by the metagovernor (Flyvbjerg, 1998). In a sense, metagovernance is like bounded autonomy taken to the next level, in that it aims to enable “the governance of governance” (Molin and Masella, 2016, p494).

On the surface then, the literature seems to suggest that the scope of individual change leaders to impact upon or steer metagovernance is limited. However, ethnographic data suggests that the change catalyst undertook specific activities, orientated towards cultivating productive subjectivities, that directly enabled the emergence of metagovernance, these activities are set out in Figure 32 below. Furthermore, this thesis will argue that the lines between network management and metagovernance can often become blurred, which impacted on how change progressed within the PAN. The

somewhat porous relationship between the metagovernor and the network manager/change catalyst will be explored further in Section 10.6.

Figure 32: Metagovernance

	<p><b>Specific effects of disciplinary power (enabled through the use of technologies) that helped inculcate productive subjectivities at the macro/network level</b></p>
	<p><b>Metagovernance (section 10.5):</b> <i>enable bounded autonomy at the network level, which empowered the network to self-organise</i></p>
<p><b>How did technologies of knowledge production influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 7)</b></p>	<p>Change catalyst gathered intelligence from existing and potential network members about their requirements, providing direction to the network while also helping to create a cohesive vision (section 10.5.1)</p>
<p><b>How did technologies of capability influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 8)</b></p>	<p>Change catalyst eventually transitioned themselves out of the activity, which provided the necessary discursive space for metagovernance to activate (section 10.5.3)</p>
<p><b>How did technologies of network management influence the power effects that shaped subjectivities? (chapter 9)</b></p>	<p>Facilitation of the pilot governance structures enabled the change catalyst to back-stage manage the situation to ensure that the pilots were launched and eventually found to be successful (section 10.5.2)</p>

### 10.5.1 The Influence of Technologies of Knowledge Production upon Metagovernance

The effective coordination of conduct at the network level is dependent upon the facilitation of monitoring and course-correcting activities (Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh, 2012), which was undertaken by the change catalyst as part of their change management role. A notable example of this was during technologies of knowledge production, when it was necessary for the change catalyst to engage with network members to gather intelligence and understand their requirements. This enabled the change catalyst to gather real-time information about the needs of key organisations within the PAN, while also providing an opportunity to plant seeds about what the network could eventually become.

In Section 7.3.3, the change catalyst engaged with existing network members to understand how best to scale up the assurance processes delivered by the PAN. This in-depth and sustained engagement enabled the change catalyst to build a mutual sense of investment into the proposed pilots, by incorporating the voices of the network members into the design process. At the same time, the change catalyst was able to use the opportunity to surreptitiously promote the PAN and seek out additional business opportunities. It could be argued that this process supported the network's blossoming metagovernance, as it brought network members closer into the orbit of the pilots being scoped by NHSBSA. These pilots would ultimately shape conduct at a national level, and including network members in that design process was a deliberate tactic to secure their buy-in. This was not a one-sided process however, as the insight gained through engagement did

help shape the content of the processes being developed by the change catalyst and projectariat. Indeed, this intensive engagement arguably helped create a mutual readjustment of perceptions and strengthened the ties between the pilot team and the regional teams. The change catalyst's role in enabling effective metagovernance in this instance was therefore centred around "strengthening the ties of mutual dependence" (Torfing, 2022, p532) between the different members of the network.

When engaging with prospective members who had yet to join the network, it was rather more difficult to create a sense of mutual dependency. Indeed, for metagovernance to impact conduct of network members, they must first agree to be network members. Section 7.3.5 outlined how the change catalyst and PAN leadership team attempted to craft an approach which would entice a local CCG into joining one of the GP pilots, and potentially joining the wider network. Again, this engagement was framed as an innocent data gathering exercise, with a clear subtext of encouraging the CCG to consider joining the PAN. Observation of the resultant backstage activity provided insight into how the network manager (NHSBSA) attempted to create the impression of goal alignment (Vangen and Huxham, 2012), by bringing all three components of the change rationality (patient safety, NHS instability and NHSBSA growth agenda) to bear upon the conversation. Crafting a compelling rationale for why the North CCG should join the network, enabled the change catalyst to plan for an uncertain encounter but it also helped to codify what being a member of the PAN could look like. Even though the attempt to bring in the North CCG ultimately folded, this drive to clearly articulate the identity of the network arguably helped shape how the network

perceived, and went on to govern, itself. Indeed, if metagovernance is the steering of conduct at a network level, then knowledge production is arguably a necessary preamble as it helped to create a clear vision of what the network should be.

### 10.5.2 The Influence of Technologies of Network Management upon Metagovernance

Technologies of knowledge production set the scene for metagovernance, creating parameters around the network's identity while creating cohesion with existing and potential members. Technologies of network management meanwhile, helped to put the structures in place that actually allowed metagovernance to manifest (which is why this section has been brought ahead of Section 10.5.3 in the running order). Chapter 3 engaged with the literature around how pilots are governed, the purpose of which is to ensure that change activities are progressing in time against a pre-defined plan. These governance structures, which were implemented by the change catalyst, also provided a basis upon which metagovernance could be used to steer the conduct of conduct at a network level.

Chapter 9 set out how the Network Steering Group was established by the change catalyst to act as a forum for collaboration and problem solving. The facilitation of these groups, which focused on the validation of assurance processes and guiding the implementation of the policy pilots, helped to shape normative expectations of conduct within the network. Fascinatingly, even though these groups were effectively run independently by NHSBSA, the

change catalyst and colleagues displayed a marked fixation with ensuring that the proposed direction of travel met the needs of NHS England. Even to the extent that the network manager (NHSBSA) willingly submitted themselves to normative judgement, assuming a position within a panopticon of their own making, in an attempt to secure the explicit approval of the metagovernor. On the one hand, this approach echoes Derakhshan, Turner and Mancini's (2019) point from Chapter 3 about the importance of demonstrating a change initiative's value to those in positions of hierarchical power. On the other hand, this intentional submission to the metagovernor, could be seen as an attempt to explicitly validate the change catalyst's network management activity by securing metagovernor approval, which in turn elevated NHSBSA's position in the network and capacity to influence metagovernance.

This growing interdependency between NHSBSA and NHS England was further enabled by the change catalyst collaborating with metagovernor representatives to stage-manage membership of the Network Steering Group. Manifesting almost as a pre-emptive subversion of resistance, this intensely political act (outlined in Section 9.4.1) was made possible by the close proximity of the change catalyst to the ophthalmic metagovernor. The Steering Groups were designed to create the sense that decision making in the PAN was collaborative. While the group did play a role in governing the pilots, it could be argued that the potential for resistance (or the consideration of any differing viewpoint) was effectively managed out of the group. A prime example of this behind-the-scenes management of possibilities was the approach taken for pilot evaluations.

As set out in Section 9.4.2, an integral aspect of policy pilots is the expectation that the pilots will be evaluated in some way before it moves into business as usual. That being said, the data suggests that the apparent objectivity of these evaluative methods was undermined by the vested political interests of the change catalyst. When it came to defining targets against which the pilots would be evaluated, the change catalyst was able to suggest targets that, if achieved, would make it easier to justify the transition into business-as-usual. The process for establishing these targets involved the change catalyst pulling from intelligence gathered as part of knowledge production, which enabled them to anticipate which options would be readily achievable within the context of the pilot. For example, in the GP pilots there were some potential targets that would have relied upon GP practices complying but given that they were outside the direct influence of the PAN, they were discounted as targets.

Ultimately, this enabled the change catalyst to suggest baseline targets to the Network Steering Group, that had been pre-considered as being more likely to result in a successful outcome. No information was ever manipulated or captured inaccurately, but the very parameters by which the data was collected had been carefully selected to achieve specific effects. Indeed, it could be argued that these targets were only agreed by the Network Steering Group because of the way that the membership of those groups had been shaped by the change catalyst and metagovernor. This supports Brujin and Heuvelhof's (1997) point, discussed in Section 3.5.2, about network managers having an unfair advantage over other participants. A counter point may be though, that this manipulating of the evaluation methodology was a political

necessity, as there would have been no point in selecting knowingly unattainable targets.

The governance structures used to guide change thus directly enabled metagovernance, by steering conduct at the network-level to achieve change management outcomes. It could be suggested that these structures, and the interventions which the change catalyst used to put them in place, evoke Scharpf's (1994) concept of shadow of hierarchy from Chapter 3, in that they are simply methods of control branded differently. Indeed, Daugbjerg and Fawcett (2017) argue that the extent to which metagovernance has replaced hierarchy has potentially been overstated in the literature. The counterargument in this thesis would be that metagovernance did not just materialise out of nowhere, it emerged from a series of calculated interventions undertaken by the change catalyst and their colleagues, designed to create a network where flexibility was balanced against normative conformity. However, in order for metagovernance to fully manifest, the organisations and individuals within the network needed to function independently of the change catalyst. Like bounded autonomy at the team level, it was therefore necessary for the change catalyst to step away from managing the pilots in order for metagovernance to be truly activated.

### 10.5.3 The Influence of Technologies of Capability Building upon Metagovernance

Chapter 8 set out how the change catalyst's involvement within the PAN was always intended to be temporary and they only had a short time to nurture

the creation of a functioning network, which would be capable of navigating complex change. The value of metagovernance, like bounded autonomy at the team level, was that it provided a hands-off method of steering conduct at the network level. Through the use of technologies, the change catalyst was able to galvanise the network and stimulate the growth of power/knowledge formations that would enable metagovernance to flourish. This process involved the change catalyst working closely with the projectariat to build their capabilities, with a view to them inheriting the change catalyst's network management function within the PAN. It could be argued therefore that fostering the bounded autonomy of teams, itself informed by responsabilisation, directly impacted upon how conduct was shaped at the network level. However, for that dynamic to fully mature, the change catalyst would need to step away from the governance of the pilot and allow it to self-organise.

It was necessary for the change catalyst to step away because their liminal positionality made it impossible for them to thrive within the solidifying network, unless they were willing to take up a non-change related role. Given their instinctive reaction against that possibility, it was almost as if the change catalyst's disciplinary trajectory, which had provided the tools necessary for driving the success of the policy pilots, was incompatible with a stable role in a more structured environment. Ultimately, all that was left for the change catalyst to do was hope that the productive subjectivities they had fostered throughout the pilots would continue to thrive, and that the normative impact of metagovernance would enable the PAN to effectively self-steer without their input.

## **10.6 Cross-Cutting Theme 3: Maintaining the Relationship Between the Network Manager and Metagovernor**

A key factor which influenced how change progressed within the network was the relationship between NHSBSA, the PAN's network manager, and NHS England, the network metagovernor. Section 3.5.1 set out the theoretical background to the concept of the network metagovernor, a stewardship role typically undertaken by an influential actor/organisation which provides hands-off coordination of activities. Within the literature, there is arguably an empirical gap in terms of understanding how metagovernors interact with network managers to steer activity within the network environment. This gap is important because the findings of this ethnographic study suggests that the interplay between the two roles within the network can have a significant impact on how disciplinary power informs the emergence of organisational change.

Analysis suggests that over the course of the various PAN pilots, a symbiotic relationship developed between the two organisations, directly enabled by the change catalyst's engagement activities. They shared a common background and language, with both being part of the NHS, which in turn enabled them to co-establish a common rationale for change and the need to reduce fraud in the health care system. This resulted in a clear sense of goal intertwinement (Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004) that grew between the two organisations; as NHS England had a statutory responsibility they wished to delegate away from themselves, while NHSBSA needed to pursue a growth

agenda to mitigate potential cuts. The change catalyst, motivated by their own sense of responsabilisation, was mindful of both sets of drivers and sought to frame the PAN's development activity as an opportunity for furthering mutual interests, which helped create a powerful sense of forward momentum within the network.

Serendipitously, the Researcher was able to gather data within the PAN during a time when there were two metagovernors involved with the network; with Alex, the ophthalmic services metagovernor, being actively involved in the pilots, while Max, the GP metagovernor, was inactive. Comparison between the two approaches was particularly fruitful, as it provided insight into how the change catalyst's capacity to influence change was inexorably linked to the status of their relationship with the metagovernor. An engaged metagovernor arguably made the change catalyst's task more straightforward; Alex was able to provide clear direction about their desires, and the change catalyst could invoke their authority during discussions as a way of justifying aspects of the change. Conversely where Max was disengaged (but not actively trying to prevent the pilot from occurring) the change catalyst had to undertake all the necessary legwork themselves, with any doors that the metagovernor may have opened, remaining closed.

This duality played itself out in a number of interesting ways across the pilot lifecycle. For example, during "Stage 1: Identify and Leverage Opportunities", it was possible for the change catalyst to get a clear steer from Alex about their desired outcomes. As set out in Section 7.3.1, Alex was also able to give formal approval at a national level, which legitimised the pilots and provided a clear future direction of travel. In the GP space, by way of contrast,

the inactive metagovernor, Max, was not able to give a definitive steer about their expectations, nor were they able to provide any formal approvals for the pilot activity. Instead, the change catalyst had to develop a politically acceptable proposal that could be tested regionally. The PAN was thus compelled to become self-sufficient and work intensively at a local level to achieve the same results, which, while more inefficient, arguably helped boost the network's resilience, capabilities and confidence.

Similarly, in "Stage 3: Pilot Failure and Repivoting", the ophthalmic metagovernor was able to provide clear guidance around the repivoting process and signpost the change catalyst to an alternative regional team. While the repivoting process in ophthalmic was distressing, the change catalyst was essentially led to the eventual solution by the metagovernor. In contrast, within the GP space, the change catalyst and PAN leadership had to make the decision themselves to repivot. Compensating for the lack of a direct steer, the change catalyst undertook horizon scanning activity and utilised NHSBSA contacts to identify eRD as an alternative pilot opportunity. Again, the results were piecemeal, but it enabled the network to self-identify a potential course of action and then self-organise to achieve the required change outcomes.

Finally, during "Stage 4: Governance of Pilot Delivery" ophthalmic metagovernor Alex colluded with the change catalyst to shape the membership of the Network Steering Group to help reduce resistance to the future direction of travel, an act which could potentially pose challenges to the democratic nature of networks (Sørensen and Torfing, 2016a). Indeed, it could be suggested that at times this relationship was almost co-dependent and

united in an attempt prevent the kind of wider resistance that was described in Section 9.4. Again, the GP space was completely different in that NHSBSA was left to manage the governance of the pilots on their own, with no direct involvement from the metagovernor.

The different approaches taken by the two metagovernors emphasised how adaptable the change catalyst needed to be; in that they were required to either maintain close working relationships with the metagovernor, or build alternative relationships in the wider system to compensate for their indifference. Interestingly, in both cases this dynamic ultimately resulted in the network manager taking on some of the metagovernor's functionality. In the ophthalmic space, Alex deliberately surrendered responsibility for delivering statutory assurance activity to NHSBSA, ensuring that the required legal obligations would be met while removing NHS England from any quotidian involvement. One particular manifestation of this trend (as discussed in Section 9.4.3) saw the change catalyst directly chairing the Network Steering Group, an opportunity which they seized as a method of bolstering their position and influence within the network. Meanwhile, in the GP space, NHSBSA again took on the metagovernor functionality, providing the high-level coordination of activities while reaffirming the change rationality. Rather than this stemming from the metagovernor's willing surrender of influence however, it emerged because Max's lack of involvement had created a power vacuum, which the change catalyst sought to fill.

In both cases, the assumption of power and influence by NHSBSA only occurred because their desire for growth (justified in the context of the overarching change rationality) corresponded to NHS England's need. Would

this dynamic have played out in the same way, if NHS England had decided to manage assurance activity directly? Potentially not, but the alignment between the two organisations' desires helped forge a unique context; where the crossover between disciplinary power, organisational circumstances and personal ambition helped to shape the subjectivity of individuals and thus drive organisational change.

## **10.7 Discussion Chapter Summary**

The change catalyst utilised an interlocking series of technologies to nurture various levels of self-regulating freedoms within the network environment. Intervening at the micro, meso and macro levels, they played a role in creating power/knowledge effects that helped facilitate the delivery of organisational change, and which also played a part in shaping their own subjectivity and identity. These power/knowledge effects were highly interconnected; with responsabilisation setting the scene for bounded autonomy, which in turn was scaled up into metagovernance.

Responsibilisation, as a manifestation of disciplinary power at the micro/individual level, acted as the engine room for change. Technologies of knowledge production compelled the change catalyst to internalise responsibility for the delivery of change outputs, even when those outputs were beyond the capacity of any one individual to deliver. By shaping how the change catalyst came to view themselves, and their role within their environment, responsabilisation played a key role in shaping the change catalyst as a productive subject. During technologies of capability building, the

change catalyst was then able to use themselves to shape the subjectivity of others and influence change outcomes through their relentless drive. Engaging with responsabilisation also provided material benefits to the change catalyst in terms of career progression and pay, which influenced their approach to engendering buy-in from other subjects in the network. In terms of technologies of network management, the influence of responsabilisation caused the change catalyst to actively pursue repivoting opportunities when issues were encountered with pilots. However, it also ingrained a relentless and never-ending striving for self-improvement within the change catalyst, which compelled them to pursue context-specific goals. This took a toll on the change catalyst when, inevitably, some of the pilot goals were not achieved, leading to feelings of helplessness and anxiety.

At the micro/individual level, responsabilisation mobilised and motivated subjects during a period of organisational change. At the meso/team level, bounded autonomy endowed teams with the flexibility to respond to unforeseen events, while also ensuring compliance with normative standards and expectations. The change catalyst fostered bounded autonomy within technologies of knowledge production, by acting as a role model and demonstrating standards around acceptable conduct. This was built upon during technologies of capability building, when the inculcation of normative standards provided a direct means of influencing conduct. The change catalyst facilitated this process of normalisation by inculcating standards, which set boundaries around the outer limits of bounded autonomy. However, like the change catalyst's experience at the micro level, not being able to achieve those external standards had a negative impact on the mental health and

wellbeing of projectariat members, the implications of which will be discussed further in Chapter 11. In terms of technologies of network management, the change catalyst was able to use commitment to prior consensus to create bounded autonomy across the wider network. Actors within the wider network retained their autonomy, while their actions were constrained by what they had previously agreed to do. All of these elements combined to imbue the management of the PAN pilots with a flexibility to respond to complexity, while also cleaving to the normative standards of the context and wider Regime of Truth.

Metagovernance built upon the foundations of responsabilisation and bounded autonomy to steer conduct at the macro/network level. Here, the change catalyst steered conduct by utilising technologies of knowledge production to bring potential network members into the fold, while simultaneously using that experience to help articulate the network's sense of identity. Meanwhile, the change catalyst used technologies of network management to establish methods of pilot governance, which helped structure the pilots and maintain momentum around their delivery. This also helped create the perception that the network was a collaborative forum, even while the parameters around membership and evaluation were being stage-managed by the change catalyst to achieve political effects. While these interventions helped metagovernance to emerge, for the network to actually self-steer it was necessary for the change catalyst to extricate themselves from the very power/knowledge structures that they had helped to create. Only by stepping away during technologies of capability building, could the change

catalyst provide the discursive breathing room necessary for metagovernance and bounded autonomy to activate.

Responsibilisation thus provided the energy required to motivate individual action, bounded autonomy set the boundaries around conduct at a team level, and metagovernance helped orientate the network towards an overarching goal. These interlocking effects were informed by a series of cross-cutting activities undertaken by the change catalyst. These themes helped articulate a potent change rationality which shaped what was thinkable in the network context, bringing together a range of underlying motivations to create a compelling and cohesive call to action. The change catalyst also subverted the resistance of network members through sustained collaborative efforts, which simultaneously addressed their concerns while diverting their dissenting energy and using it to drive progress around the pilots. Finally, the change catalyst was also responsible for maintaining the relationship between the network metagovernor and the network manager, which helped shape the overall context for disciplinary power, set the scene for a gradual transfer of responsibility between the two organisations and arguably represented the zenith of the change catalyst's impact.

In the observed context, the change catalyst was at the centre of organisational change. This position of centrality and influence, however, did not stem from their hierarchical status or relationship with influential stakeholders- rather it originated from their hunger for approval and their willingness to alter their subjectivity to achieve that approval. Where networks exist in a state of flux; individuals who are able to tease out the underlying political needs of the environment, and then alter their subjectivity so they can

meet those needs, can create positions of influence for themselves. While these findings provide fascinating insight into how individuals change leaders can hope to impact on complex network-level change, it also foregrounds the significant mental health costs of such an approach, both to change catalysts and those they lead through the change process. In shaping themselves as a productive subject, the change catalyst was able to directly shape the course of organisational change, but it is debatable whether the cost they paid to do so was worth it.

## Chapter 11: Conclusion

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I emphasised the inevitability of change. As I look back over the four years it took to develop this research, I am struck by the sheer extent of the changes that have occurred within the NHS during that time. The advent of Covid-19 has ravaged healthcare provision in England, resulting in a mammoth backlog of care and severely depleted workforce morale. This system-disrupting event (which is still ongoing in 2022) has not been helped by continued structural instability within the NHS, with regional integration via Integrated Care Systems accelerating at pace, and the mooted integration of health and social care promising to drastically change the system, yet again. All of which has arguably been made worse by continued political turmoil, with five separate Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care taking the reign within the last four years. In short, the NHS has become even more materially, structurally and politically unstable since 2018.

This trend has also been echoed for me at a personal level; as during this time I have changed jobs twice, had numerous health scares and a death within my family, got engaged and married during lockdown and I also have a baby due in early 2023. My point being that change and instability are ever-present, they do not slow down, and both need to be addressed head-on if individuals and systems are going to survive and thrive.

At the time I thought that my core research question was relatively direct: “How do change catalysts interact with disciplinary power to catalyse organisational change within complex network environments in the NHS?”

Answering it, however, has proved to be anything but straightforward. The conclusion I have come to is that, like Dante's narrator, change leaders need to embark on a journey of self-development, to create a disciplined and productive version of themselves, that is better able to meet the needs of the chaotic environments they find themselves in. To wield power in this viewpoint, is to use one's own self-development and burning desire for improvement as a means of influencing the self-formation and conduct of others. To be a change catalyst is thus to engage with disciplinary power via responsabilisation, bounded autonomy and metagovernance; all of which combine to foster productive subjectivities, that can become orientated towards delivering organisational change. The theoretical framework I have developed here, sets out a starting position for understanding how this complex dynamic works, and how it can inform practice within the wider NHS. The remainder of this final chapter will articulate how this approach has yielded unique contributions to knowledge, address the challenges and limitations of my approach and provide some thoughts around next steps.

### **11.1 Contributions to Knowledge and Impact of Research**

This thesis produced several novel contributions to knowledge and theory, which include: the use of an innovative methodology, an intense empirical engagement with theories on power and the exploration of a unique research setting. In terms of research design and methodology, I decided early on in the process that I wanted to make the most out of my positionality and access to the Provider Assurance Network and wider NHS system. After all, it

was questions about my capacity to influence organisational change outcomes that set me down the path of a PhD in the first place. This desire to use myself as a research instrument, when coupled with an interest in Foucault's conceptual framework, inspired me to pursue a post-modernistically inspired research design. Deploying a relentless critical reflexivity, while emotionally exhausting, enabled me to craft a unique research perspective, which blended researcher and participant together, and balanced insider insight with a continuously critical research gaze. This can be a disorientating experience (using the third person perspective to analyse your own reflexive diaries was an odd experience to say the least) but by persevering I was able to sustain this approach throughout the entirety of data collection and analysis. Which was no small feat, considering I maintained reflexive diaries for over fifteen months and two hundred hours of recordings. The aim in gathering such a large data corpus was to ensure that my theoretical findings had a solid empirical base, rather than any attempts at qualitative positivism (see Section 5.2 for more detail).

To help achieve this approach, I developed a novel variant of discourse analysis, which I termed Technology Discourse Analysis (TDA). Pulling from the critical, ethnographic and Foucauldian traditions of discourse analysis, my intention with TDA was to develop a method of data analysis that would enable me to unpick how individuals interact with disciplinary power to alter subjectivities. TDA provided a robust, yet flexible, framework that enabled me to bring together the various sources of data and create a unified view of how the formation of productive subjects impacted upon organisational change. I

am particularly keen to explore and refine my approach to TDA as I move into my post-PhD research career.

Given my unconventional approach to ethnography, I was especially keen to use strategies within my research that would help ensure it was perceived as a trustworthy account. I believe that I have achieved this aim, by using a rigorous triangulated approach to data collection, a novel and innovative method of discourse analysis, and an unwavering commitment to participant involvement. Indeed, the implementation of the Research Steering Group was one of my proudest achievements in this research, as it provided an effective way of empowering participants to have real-time input into research that touched upon their lived experiences. It was unfortunate that I experienced difficulties in maintaining the RSG during Covid and once I left NHSBSA, but I feel that it worked well as a concept and could provide a solid foundation for future development.

The second of my contributions to knowledge has been through a rigorous empirical engagement with Foucauldian theories on power, in the context of complex organisational change. A big part of what attracted me to Foucault was the idea that individuals come to self-monitor and self-steer their conduct in relation to external influences, not just because of threat or coercion but because their inner lives, their very sense of self, can be altered through multiform interactions with power. This idea really resonated with my lived experience of change management, but it was quite difficult to pin down how that process of internalisation and self-formation actually worked within the literature. I believe that the framework I have developed in this thesis (which is summarised comprehensively in Chapter 10) presents a possible answer

for how that process can work in specific circumstances. Foucauldian-style analyses focus on specific instances of power/knowledge that are inexorably bound to a specific historical context. The multi-disciplinary conceptual framework in this thesis, which pulls from post-modernism, network governance and change management theories, enabled me to empirically explore how internalisation and self-formation worked within the specific historical context of the PAN. Ultimately, this fusion of approaches enabled me to unpick how I was able to shape my subjectivity, as a change catalyst, to impact upon the subjectivity of others, in service to the delivery of organisational change.

My final contribution to knowledge stems from the novelty of this research setting, as it provided insight into how disciplinary power can influence change management practice within the NHS. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the NHS is a system in perpetual turmoil. Within the ethnographic timeframe of my research, cuts and loss of expertise posed serious challenges to the delivery of patient care; a tendency that has arguably worsened in the years since, exacerbated by the epoch-defining impact of covid and continued political mismanagement. For the NHS to survive and deliver the required level of outcomes for patients, it needs to be able to effectively manage complex system-level change. For organisational change to be successful in an environment as complex and saturated with power dynamics as the NHS, I feel that change leaders need to take a more critical approach to how they attempt to manage change and make explicit the hidden motivations and politics that shape their conduct. Indeed, more openness and reflexive transparency could potentially improve collaboration between NHS

organisations and enable more coordinated approaches to solving wicked problems. The novel theoretical framework outlined in this theory may go some way towards enabling such an approach.

While I believe the outputs of this research will be applicable to a variety of contexts in the NHS, generalisability was never a goal for me because as an approach it is incompatible with a post-modern research design (as discussed in Section 4.4). Instead, my aim was to provide an account that was sufficiently detailed and rich enough so that any relevance would be clear to those individual leaders working in similar contexts to me, and they would be able to transfer any relevant learning to their situation. It is no easy thing to essentially evaluate one's own subjectivity and immersion within disciplinary power, which in turn influences how one approaches system-level change, but this thesis provides a potential roadmap for understanding how this can be achieved and practice improved.

I feel it is important at this stage to reflect on how this PhD journey has impacted upon my practice as a change practitioner within the NHS. Since I began this research in 2018, I have left NHSBSA and stepped into a senior leadership role in another NHS organisation. My learning during this time, both in terms of my environment and my positionality, has helped shape how I approach change leadership. I remain committed to the NHS's ideals of high-quality patient care, but I am also not afraid to shine a critical light on how those ideals are sometimes used for political purposes, even when it is I who is engaging in politicking. It is this sense of relentless reflexivity and self-critique which has had the most lasting impact on me. While such an approach

can be challenging at times, I believe it ultimately makes me more self-aware and a more effective leader.

In terms of wider impact on practice, throughout the research process I consistently shared my research findings with colleagues from NHSBSA. Outside of the Steering Group, I delivered a series of seminars to different areas of the organisation so as to engage and debate my emerging findings. I have also taken a similar approach with NHS England and will look to expand this as part of my post-PhD activity.

## **11.2 Limitations and Challenges**

Undertaking a PhD was an absolutely fantastic and life-enriching experience, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the scale of the challenges I experienced. Balancing research with full-time employment has been incredibly difficult, especially while working in a senior role within a complex environment such as the NHS. I have alluded a number of times within this thesis to how stressful change leadership can be, and if I am being honest, this was undoubtedly exacerbated by the fact I was simultaneously undertaking research. When a project fails, it can be a very emotional experience, but to then have to critically analyse that experience can lead you down a rabbit hole of anxiety. This was an intentional part of the research design, and I maintain that it can provide a unique and insightful dataset, but I did not fully appreciate the toll it would take on me. It was only through the fact that I had such a fantastic support network, comprising of my wife, family,

friends and university supervisors that I was able to keep pushing forward, even when things seemed hopeless.

A contributing factor to that stress and anxiety was the sheer volume of data that I collected. My aim in using an insider ethnographic research design was to collect data that was naturalistic as possible, which could then be critically analysed utilised Technology Discourse Analysis. Looking back, I now recognise that I was somewhat overzealous and tried to capture everything that was going on around me, an impulse which stemmed from a nascent researcher's desire not to miss anything. Unfortunately gathering the data via participant observation, interviews, document analysis and the Research Steering Group was only half of the task. By the end of the data collection process, I had gathered over two hundred hours of data that, thanks to the comprehensive reflexive notes, I was able to whittle down to approximately eighty hours of content, but which still equated to approximately three thousand pages of transcripts.

It must be acknowledged that without this intensive and expansive approach, some of the most important datasets that I've used during this thesis would have been missed. Looking back with a critical gaze, however, the amount of data I gathered was impractical. Indeed, it was only through sheer determination that I was able to gather, organise and analyse such a large corpus within a short period of time. During the restrictions due to Covid-19 in 2020 and 2021 I was able to dedicate up to six hours a day for transcription and data analysis, on top of my work commitments. So, while I am extremely pleased with the quality of the data and analysis I was able to produce, I don't think it is replicable and nor do I think I would recommend it to other

researchers. Rather, in the future I will definitely be taking a more targeted approach to data collection, especially if I am looking to use a similar insider ethnographic approach.

### **11.3 Next Steps and Future Research**

After I complete the PhD process, my first priority will be to publish a series of articles using the content from this thesis, focusing on my methodological approach and theoretical findings. After that, I will seek to carry out additional research using data that was collected during my PhD but was not used. For example, I collected data during the first five months of the Covid-19 pandemic, when I led the Provider Assurance Network in supporting NHS England's efforts to reduce patient footfall in GP practices. While this data was gathered using the same research design and methodology as other datasets, I deliberately removed it from the corpus out of fear it would have a disproportionate impact on my findings. Nonetheless, this data now presents me with an opportunity to test my theoretical model further and tease out how disciplinary power impacts on the creation and coordination of productive subjectivities during times of real crisis.

Similarly, I was not the only change catalyst working within NHSBSA at this time, I belonged to a wider strategy function that supported the delivery of business development opportunities across the organisation. I devoted a significant amount of time to gathering data about how this community of practice came together to solve problems and provide mutual support, all of which was happening in parallel to the change management activity within the

PAN. When I reluctantly excised this dataset from the corpus for the sake of cohesiveness and manageability, I was resolute in my ambition to explore how my interactions with a community of similarly orientated individuals shaped my positionality as a change catalyst. I will explore research opportunities using both existing datasets moving forward.

In terms of future research that does not utilise existing data, it would be interesting to test out the extent to which my theoretical framework can be applied to other settings, for example other types of healthcare networks such as public-private partnerships. Likewise, it may be possible to test the framework in network settings outside of healthcare, but which nonetheless have a strong public sector rationality, such as local or central government. These are just some of the alternative applications that I will be looking to explore, with a particular view to refining my approach to Technology Discourse Analysis.

Another way of expanding upon the conceptual framework developed in this thesis may be for me to engage more broadly with the literature on leadership styles. As discussed in section 3.1, this thesis took a novel approach to theorisation by focusing on how subjectification impacts on the progress of organisational change. To expand this approach further, it could be beneficial to explore this phenomenon in other settings through lenses that pull from the broader literature on leadership. For example, there are clear synergies between my definition of a change catalyst and transformational leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2005), while my laser focus on the individual change catalyst could be challenged from a distributed leadership perspective (Spillane, 2006). Additionally, it could be fruitful to explore some of my findings

through the prism of values-based leadership (Stanley, 2019), particularly with regards to how patient care was used as part of the change rationality. Similarly, it is my intention to explore around how the pre-understanding (Alvesson and Sanberg 2021, Heidegger, 1962) of change catalysts help shape their process of subjectification, which may help build upon the conceptual frameworks developed in this work. I will look to incorporate these additional literature areas as part of any future research.

While I can look back on the work I have done over the past four years with a sense of accomplishment, I am mindful that there were certain limitations to my approach which could be addressed through additional research. My approach to insider research was innovative and, when combined with Technology Discourse Analysis, allowed me to capture a blended perspective of participant and researcher. And yet, blended though that perspective may be, it was still inescapably the perspective of a white, heterosexual, cis-gendered male. Given that I arguably inhabit a position of social privilege, the onus is on me as a researcher to come up with strategies for mitigating that privilege through an inclusive research agenda. One option being for me to work with researchers from different ethnic backgrounds, gender identities and sexual orientations to explore how other positionalities experience disciplinary power. Replicating the same research design with different researchers, may enable the academy to develop a richer understanding of how one's being-in-the-world shapes their capacity, and even their desire, to wield disciplinary techniques.

Similarly, looking back I am very conscious of the potential power imbalances which resulted from my position of hierarchical influence within the

PAN, which I attempted to mitigate through the introduction of the Research Steering Group (RSG). While I am pleased with how the RSG worked out, it is still potentially problematic for me, as a researcher, to make claims about disciplinary power when I inhabited an elevated position within the network. To challenge this and diversify any emerging literature on disciplinary power, it may be possible to adapt the multi-researcher approach so that, in addition to coming from different backgrounds, researchers could occupy different roles and positions within a network. For example, one researcher could adopt the role of change catalyst, while another could become a member of the projectariat. There are challenges with this approach, namely that one would need a significant number of practitioner/researchers, or pracademics (Posner, 2009), capable of effectively operating within the same ethnographic context. However, I do believe that this issue could be overcome given enough preparation (and a sufficiently accommodating host organisation), which could in turn provide alternative perspectives that challenge or substantiate my findings. The methodology I used in this research, particularly around the Research Steering Group, may prove a solid foundation to support the design of this future research.

Another area of the findings that could be built upon is the impact of organisational change on the mental health of change practitioners. As discussed in Section 10.1.1. there were a number of occasions in this study where it became apparent that disciplinary power, for all its productive potential, can take a real toll on one's mental health and well-being. Bringing together researchers from different backgrounds and positionalities would present a fantastic opportunity to explore how different people experienced

and coped with the stress and ambiguity associated with organisational change. I believe this workstream has massive potential for impacting upon practice as well as theory, given the ever-growing emphasis on foregrounding the mental health issues experienced by NHS employees (NHS Employers, 2022). Such an approach would potentially provide insight into what a more humane and emotionally sustainable approach to change management could look like, which in turn would have a significant impact upon my practice as a leader in the NHS system.

#### **11.4 Conclusion Summary**

I was motivated to undertake this research to understand how disciplinary power comes to shape the inner worlds of individuals and drive organisational change. That question has been my primary driver for the last four years, and while I feel like I have the building blocks of an answer, there is still so much to be done. I look forward with great enthusiasm to building upon the conceptual framework developed in this thesis and continuing to innovate with regards to methodology. The areas of additional potential research outlined in this chapter a roadmap for how this work can be taken further. My ultimate ambition being to have a real impact on how organisational change is approached within complex systems such as the NHS, both from a theoretical perspective and in terms of practice.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Pilot Life-cycle Codebook

#### **1. Identify and Leverage Opportunities**

##### **1.1. Develop subject matter expertise about the area in question**

1.1.1. Process Map Current State

1.1.1.1. Facilitate the conversation

##### **1.2. Understand key players within the prospective area**

##### **1.3. Leverage uncertainty to access opportunities**

#### **2. Scope out the Pilot**

##### **2.0 Define activity as a pilot**

##### **2.1. Develop interventions**

2.1.1. Facilitate the conversation

2.1.2. Translate current state into future state

2.1.3. Prepare for wider engagement around future state

2.1.4. Ensure the intervention will add value to the network member

2.1.5. Confirm roles and responsibilities

##### **2.2. Test Future State with Stakeholders**

2.2.1. Facilitate the conversation

2.2.2. Resolve queries flagged during process map future state development

2.2.3. Flag up potential areas of concern for pilot

2.2.4. Amend future state map in line with feedback

2.2.5. Articulate how the proposed process will benefit the network member

2.2.6. Establish normative standards of process

2.2.7. Articulate next steps

##### **2.3. Implement future state processes within team**

2.3.1. Facilitate the conversation

2.3.2. Relay feedback from stakeholders

2.3.3. Share existing knowledge

2.3.4. Create a Standard Operating Procedure

2.3.5. Produce guidance for contractors

##### **2.4. Secure pilot sites and new members to the network**

2.4.1. Facilitate the conversation

2.4.2. Assess the pilot site

2.4.3. Meet governance requirements of pilot participants

2.4.4. Establish the relevant pilot governance groups with participants

2.4.5. Failure

2.4.6. Re-pivoting

2.4.7. Success

##### **2.5. Ensure infrastructure is in place**

2.5.1. Get the CMS in place

- 2.5.2. Access to clinical resource
- 2.5.3. Establish agreements with external suppliers

**2.6. Reporting and meta-data in place**

- 2.6.1. Apply learning from previous pilots
- 2.6.2. Improve visibility of activity in the system
- 2.6.3. Ensure transparency around BSA activity

**2.7. Permission to proceed with pilot delivery**

- 2.7.1. Permission from pilot site to begin
- 2.7.2. Engage metagovernor about delivery plan

**3. Governance of Pilot Delivery**

- 3.1. Demonstrate value of interventions**
- 3.2. Facilitate governance groups**
- 3.3. Identification and management of risk**
- 3.4. Manage interdependencies**
- 3.5. Memoranda of understanding and KPIs**
- 3.6. Move from regional to national implementation**
- 3.7. Quotidian management of the pilot**

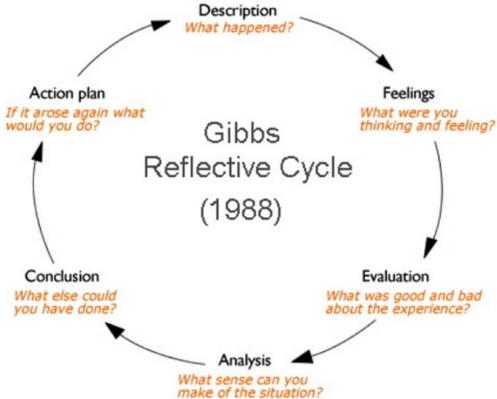
**4. Evaluate and Transition into BAU**

- 4.1. Gain approval to transition from pilot to BAU**
- 4.2. Scale up infrastructure to meet increase in activity**
- 4.3. Expand network and move into BAU**
- 4.4. Use momentum to identify and lever other opportunities**
- 4.5. Change Catalyst transitions out of activity**
- 4.6. Evaluating the pilot**

## Appendix B: Provider Assurance Network Pilots (metadata)

Provider Assurance Network- Pilots in scope of ethnographic study							
Pilot name	Purpose	Time-period observed	Which agent/body acted as Metagovernor?	Where was the pilot based?	Pilot stages observed	Number of individuals involved in pilot	Notes
Ophthalmic Post-Payment Verification (PPV)	Develop a process for NHSBSA to assure the contractual performance of ophthalmic contractors in England, on behalf of NHS England.	April 2019-October 2019 (7 months)	NHS England Commissioning Function (Ophthalmic) Metagovernor was active.	National	2,3,4	14	Deep dive process was a sub-set of this pilot
Ophthalmic Contract Administration	Develop processes and service offering for NHSBSA to support the administration of ophthalmic contractual arrangements in England, on behalf of NHS England.	April 2019-October 2019 (7 months)	NHS England Commissioning Function (Ophthalmic). Metagovernor was active.	Initially Central but repivoted towards South region	1,2,3	14	NHSBSA gradually took on some of the Metagovernor functionality as part of pilot initiation.
General Practice PPV and Practice Support	Develop processes that NHSBSA could use to enter the GP space, an area where the PAN had little input previously.	August 2019-January 2020 (6 months)	NHS England Commissioning Function (GP). Metagovernor was inactive.	Central region	1,2	13	NHSBSA gradually took on some of the Metagovernor functionality as part of pilot initiation.
Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) Pilot	Engage with existing networks to increase utilisation of eRD across the South region.	November 2019-March 2020 (5 months)	Blend between NHS England, eRD network and NHSBSA	South region	1,2,3	13	PAN repivoted to eRD after the failure of the GP PPV pilots.

Appendix C: Reflexive Field Notes Template



Name of observation	
Date	
Venue	
Attendees	

Time index	What happened?	How did I feel?	How was the context rendered calculable?	How was a normative order created?	How were specific areas problematized to enable social action?	Other notes and observations

## Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet (2019)

Research project: *Intervening within a Complex Adaptive System to effect change: The role of the Liminal Change Agent*

### What is the study about?

The aim of this study is to examine how individual change agents can enable the delivery of change within Complex Adaptive Systems, focusing specifically on NHS Primary Care. The research will focus on the Provider Assurance initiative being delivered by NHS Business Services Authority and the role the researcher (Sean McCulloch) plays in facilitating the scoping, implementation and delivery of this change. This purpose of this research is to develop a theory around how best to manage change in this context and to support the successful delivery of this initiative.

### Voluntary Participation

Please note that your involvement in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw consent to participate at any time, without giving a reason and with no negative consequences (e.g. without loss of current services).

### Why have you been selected?

You have been selected to take part in this study because you meet one or more of the following criteria:

- You are involved in the Provider Assurance initiative and you have previously engaged with the researcher in their role as change agent.
- You are a subject matter expert relating to a subject or theme which has been raised during a participant observation session.
- The Research Steering Group which provides input around the design and implementation of this research has identified you as a potential research participant.
- You are a change agent working within NHSBSA or partner organisation.

### What will you be asked to do?

As a research participant you will be asked to one or more of the following:

- Consent to allow the researcher to observe your contributions to meetings and interactions relating to change management, such as the Provider Assurance initiative. These meetings will already be taking place as part of the day to day activity within the system and will not be convened solely for the purposes of the research. It is envisaged that these observations will take place over approximately 12 months. Written consent will be sought prior to the first meeting observed and consent will be re-affirmed verbally for each subsequent meeting. If you do not wish to give consent for your contributions to be observed, the researcher will not include your contributions in any notes relating to the meeting or interaction. Participation in an initial observation does not obligate you to participate in any follow-up observations and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. The researcher will also be a participant in these meetings and interactions.

- Consent to be interviewed by the researcher; to discuss your views, opinions and experiences around change management. The researcher will contact you directly to confirm a time and location that is suitable to you. It is anticipated that interviews will last approximately one hour and the content of the interview will be tape recorded. The researcher may approach you for follow-up interviews over the course of the research period but again this will be at your convenience. Participation in an initial interview does not obligate you to participate in any follow-up interviews and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

The researcher will share the outputs from data collection with participants to ensure accuracy.

#### What will the outputs of the research be?

Ultimately the research will be used by the researcher to produce a doctoral thesis. This may lead to articles being published in academic journals. For a breakdown of how your contributions to the research will be anonymised, please see below.

#### Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymised data exists when it can no longer be used to identify a living individual either by itself or in conjunction with any other information available to the person possessing that data. All participant data relating to this study will be anonymised, which will involve assigning pseudonyms to participants and potentially merging accounts to prevent identification. Any references to personal identifiable information which arise in the data, relating to the participant or any other party, will be anonymised. Relationships between pseudonymised participants will be reflected in the data analysis, unless to do so would enable the participant(s) to be identified.

When raw data is collected by the researcher, participants will be assigned a unique reference number. This will be used to create an “index list” which contains the reference number and the names of participants. A second list, the “working list” will use the reference number to sort and categorise the data collected. By themselves, neither list identifies a specific individual and it is not until they are combined that the specific participant can be identified. The two lists will be stored separately and securely, thus ensuring that only the researcher will be able to identify the specific contributions of individual participants. No other personal identifiable information will be collected or stored throughout the duration of this research.

If during data collection, participants feel that the information captured is sensitive or confidential; then the researcher will remove said information upon request.

#### Data

The legal basis for collecting data in this study is article six of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which states:

*Article 6(1)(e) processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested the controller.*

The Data Controller for this study will be Northumbria University and the university’s data protection officer can be contacted via [dp.officer@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:dp.officer@northumbria.ac.uk).

Information gathered through participant observation and interviews will be stored electronically. Data will be stored securely on the Northumbria University cloud server and backed up on an encrypted hard-drive, which will be stored in a locked cabinet when not in use. The “index list” which contains participant names, and is the only personal identifiable information captured in the research, will stored on the Northumbria University cloud server which is only accessible to the researcher.

### Contact Details

If you have any queries or concerns around this research, please contact the following:

Researcher name: Sean McCulloch

Phone number: -----

Email: -----

Research supervisor: Professor Joyce Liddle

Phone number: -----

Email: -----

## Appendix E: Informed Consent Form (Participant Observation)

Research Project: *Intervening within a Complex Adaptive System to effect change: The role of the Liminal Change Agent*

Name of organisation: Northumbria University

Name of Principal Investigator: Sean McCulloch

For an explanation of the research aims and an outline of what is required from research participants, please see the Participant Information Sheet.

I have read, or had explained to me, the contents of the Participant Information Sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the purpose of this study	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the chance to ask questions about the study and these have been answered to my satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing for the researcher to observe my contributions to meetings and interactions relating to change management	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing for my contributions to be tape-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I can withdraw at any time if I change my mind and this will not result in any negative consequences for me	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware that my name and details will be kept confidential and will not appear in any printed documents.	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Participant Name:

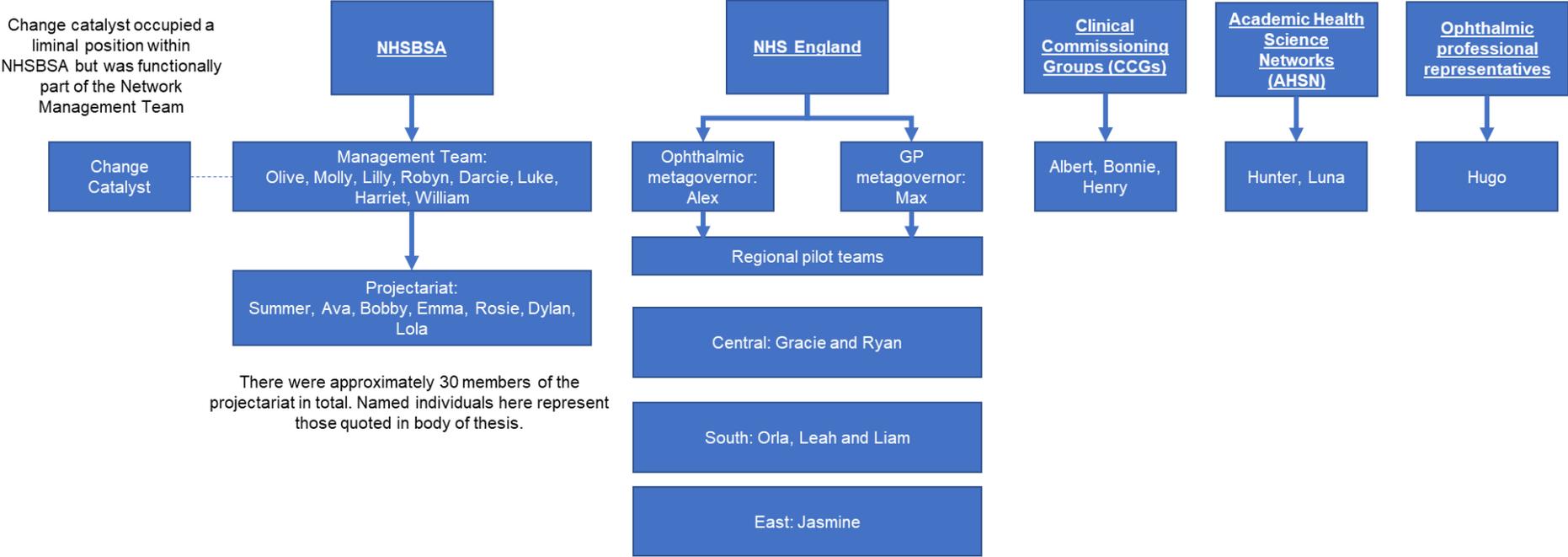
Date:

Researcher Name:

Date

# Appendix F: Provider Assurance Network Structure

Provider Assurance Network



## Appendix G: Semi-Structure Interview Questions

Research Question: *“How can individual change agents facilitate the successful delivery of change across organisational boundaries within the NHS?”*

### Your role

- How did you come to be involved in Provider Assurance?
- How have you found it being in a project-type role?
- Do you feel clear about what is expected of you in your role?
- How do you deal with ambiguity in the project?
- Do you see this role as a development opportunity? What areas are you keen to develop and/or gain more experience of?
- When it comes to developing in your role, what motivates you?

### My role

- What do you perceive my role to be in the project?
- How do you feel about my involvement? Was there any conflict?
- How do you think we’ve worked together? What worked well and what didn’t work well?
- Is there anything about our working relationship that has helped you to influence change?
- Is there anything about our working relationship that has made it more difficult to influence change?
- Why is your perception of why I’ve been involved in the project?

### The project

- Do you feel you can influence what’s going on in terms of change?
- How do we track progress around the project? Do you think its effective?
- What sort of things have we done to support the team in the project?
- How do you get everyone on the same page about purpose and desired outcomes?
- How do you maintain that common understanding over long periods of time? Do you see this as part of your role?

### Strategy

- Are you aware of the NHS England Long Term Plan? Do you feel that it has an impact on the way you approach your role?
- Are you aware of the NHSBSA strategy? Do you feel that it has an impact on the way you approach your role?
- Do you feel that you understand the purpose of Provider Assurance?

### Relationships with other stakeholders

- Do you think you work well with the other areas of Provider Assurance?

- How would you describe our relationship with:
  - NHS England central team
  - NHS England regional teams
  - CCGs
  - PCNs
  - Clinical advisors
- How are we able to influence these stakeholders? What sort of things have we tried?

## Appendix H: List of Research Participants

Please note, all research participant data was pseudonymised. For more information, please see Chapter 4.

Pseudonym	Organisation	Team	Pilots	Projectariat members	Notes
Olive	NHSBSA	Provider Assurance	All	No	Overall lead for Provider Assurance
Ella	NHSBSA	NHSBSA Strategy	All	No	
Luna	NHS England	CCG	GP	No	
Georgia	NHS England	CCG	GP	No	
Bonnie	NHS England	CCG	GP	No	
Henry	NHS England	CCG	GP	No	
Albert	NHS England	GP	GP	No	
Frederick	NHS England	NHS England Central	GP	No	
Aria	NHS England	Clinical	GP	No	
Max	NHS England GP Team	NHS England	GP	No	Metagovernor lead for GP pilots
Darcie	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	GP Lead within NHSBSA
Luke	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Layla	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	

Iris	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Rosie	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Thea	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Ivy	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Millie	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Dylan	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Harriet	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Lola	NHSBSA	GP Provider Assurance	GP	Yes	
Penelope	NHSBSA	NHS England	GP	No	
Alex	NHS England	NHS England HQ	Ophthalmic	No	Metagovernor lead for Ophthalmic Pilots
Lottie	NHS England	NHS England-South East	Ophthalmic	No	
Heidi	NHS England	NHS England-West	Ophthalmic	No	
Ronnie	NHS England	NHS England HQ	Ophthalmic	No	
Gracie	NHS England	NHS England-Central	Ophthalmic	No	

Ryan	NHS England	NHS England-Central	Ophthalmic	No	
Orla	NHS England	NHS England-South	Ophthalmic	No	
Charlotte	NHS England	NHS England-West	Ophthalmic	No	
Jasmine	NHS England	NHS England-Central	Ophthalmic	No	
Leah	NHS England	NHS England-South	Ophthalmic	No	
Liam	NHS England	NHS England-South	Ophthalmic	No	
Molly	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	Ophthalmic lead within NHSBSA
Robyn	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	Ophthalmic lead within NHSBSA
Lily	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	Ophthalmic lead within NHSBSA
Elizabeth	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Theodore	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Harry	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Reuben	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	

Bobby	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
William	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Martha	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Adam	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Emma	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Ava	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Elizabeth	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Lyla	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Eliza	NHSBSA	Optom Provider Assurance	Ophthalmic	Yes	
Roman	NHSBSA	Dental	Ophthalmic	No	
Isaac	NHSCFA	NHS CFA	Ophthalmic	No	
Hunter	South East CCG	South CCG	Ophthalmic	No	eRD CCG Lead
Gabriel	Professional Representative	Professional Representative	Ophthalmic	No	
Hugo	Professional Representative	Professional Representative	Ophthalmic	No	

## Glossary

### **CCG - Clinical Commissioning Group:**

Clinically lead statutory bodies that are responsible for the commissioning of GP services at a local level. Formed as a consequence of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

### **Change Catalyst:**

Individual change leader who is able to utilise their being-in-the-world to catalyze organisational change. Role fulfilled by the Researcher within the ethnographic context.

### **Contract Administration:**

A particular series of ophthalmic pilots designed to test whether the PAN could take on the administration of ophthalmic contractual arrangements of behalf of the metagovernor NHS England.

### **Deep dive:**

An ophthalmic pilot designed to test whether it would be possible to focus on specific high-risk contractors rather than generalised sampling. Strongly resisted by the ophthalmic professional community.

### **DHSC - Department of Health and Social Care:**

Government body that has ultimate responsibility for healthcare legislation and NHS strategy and funding. DHSC have delegated much of the day-to-day operation of the NHS to NHS England.

### **eRD - Electronic Repeat Dispensing:**

GP pilot stood up as an alternative to GP PPV and Practice Support. This was selected by the PAN as a viable option for repivoting, due to it being viewed as an operational priority by NHS England. The pilot focused on making it easier for patients to receive repeat prescriptions without having to visit a GP practice.

### **GP - General Practice:**

Services provided by doctors to members of the community in the treatment of non-emergency conditions. Private contractors who are remunerated by the NHS via a standard contract. The PAN launched a number of pilots in this space, following the successes of the various ophthalmic pilots.

**Network Steering Group:**

Governance group set up to coordinate all pilot activity. Initially chaired by the metagovernor, over time the change catalyst came to act as chair.

**NHS - National Health Service:**

Formed in 1948, the NHS is the largest healthcare system in Europe, providing services that are free at the point of contact to all British citizens. Comprised of hundreds of smaller organisations, the NHS is nominally overseen by DHSC with daily activity coordinated by NHS England.

**NHSBSA - NHS Business Services Authority:**

Arms-length body of DHSC, NHSBSA is an organization that provides high volume, transactional and business services to the wider NHS, with the aim of helping to improve health care outcomes for patients. Acted as the Network Manager for the Provider Assurance Network NHSBSA was the substantive employee of the Researcher during the ethnographic time period.

**NHS England:**

Arms-length body of DHSC, NHS England is responsible for setting overall strategy within the NHS (in consultation with DHSC) and holds direct responsibility for primary care budgets. NHS England has statutory responsibilities for assuring the quality of care provision, which they sought to delegate to the Provider Assurance Network.

**Ophthalmic/Ophthalmology:**

Primary care services that seek to treat medical issues and conditions relating to the eyes and visual system. Private contractors who are remunerated by the NHS via a standard contract. The majority of the pilots launched by the PAN were in the ophthalmic space and proved to be a significant success.

**PAN - Provider Assurance Network:**

A network made up of organisations from across the NHS system, the Provider Assurance Network was established by NHS England as a means of ensuring that the activity of Primary Care contractors was carried in line with regulations and to ensure the effective delivery of patient care. NHS England acted as the metagovernor for this network, with NHSBSA acting as the network manager. All change activity referenced in this thesis took place within the context of the PAN.

**Policy Pilot:**

A method of testing a policy hypothesis on a small scale before evaluating and progressing to a wider implementation. The primary method of change management observed during this ethnographic study.

**PPV - Post-Payment Verification:**

A series of pilots delivered in the ophthalmic and GP spaces, designed to assure the effective delivery of primary care contractors. The majority of the activity within the PAN focused on PPV.

**Practice Support:**

A GP pilot that was stood up to determine how the PAN could best add value to the GP system. Following a lack of success, the PAN repivoted towards the eRD pilots.

**Projectariat:**

Theoretical term utilised as part of data analysis and applied to the group of individuals working within the PAN who were supporting the change catalyst in the delivery of pilot activities.

**RSG - Research Steering Group:**

A group made up of participants from within the network, whose purpose was to discuss the Researcher's findings, identify any factual errors or misunderstandings and help guide the Researcher in exploring emerging lines of inquiry.

**TDA – Technology Discourse Analysis:**

A novel data analysis methodology that focuses on how individuals engage with disciplinary power through Foucauldian technologies; power knowledge formations that help shape social interaction. Intensely empirically focused, TDA was designed as a hyper-empirical method of analysis that enables the rigorous interrogation of multiple qualitative data sets.

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