

**Teach For America and rural Southern teacher labour supply:
An exploratory case study of Teach For America as a supplement
to teacher labour policies in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta from
2008 to 2010**

Mallory Dwinal

A thesis submitted to the University of Oxford Department of Education
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(81,550)

Brasenose College

Hilary Term 2012

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
List of abbreviations and acronyms.....	v
List of figures	vi
List of tables	vii
Abstract	viii
PART ONE- FOUNDATIONS FOR RESEARCH	1
Chapter One – Teach For America and its changing role in rural Southern teacher labour supplies	2
1.1. Filling gaps in the literature: Teach For America and the rural South	9
Chapter Two – An introduction to rural Southern teacher shortages	19
2.1. An introduction to the labour market framework	20
2.2. A review of the teacher shortage literature.....	33
2.2.1. Shocks to the aggregate US teacher labour market	36
2.2.2. Disaggregated teacher labour supply challenges.....	41
2.3. Conclusions: Identifying the gaps in rural Southern research.....	48
Chapter Three – Teach For America and rural Southern teacher recruitment and retention strategies.....	50
3.1. Teacher recruitment, retention, and attrition	52
3.1.1. Recruitment	52
3.1.2. Attrition and retention	63
3.2. Teach For America as a rural recruitment strategy	64
3.3. Policy theory and policy maker decision-taking mechanisms.....	73
3.3.1. Behaviour economics and the decision-taking process	74
3.3.2. Stephen Ball’s ‘spheres of influence’	77
3.4. Conclusions: Identifying gaps in the recruitment/retention research	80
Chapter Four – Methodological strategies for data collection and analysis	81
4.1. Defining the nature and scope of the research question	83
4.2. Rationale of the case study approach.....	84
4.3. Rationale and data sources of a mixed-methods approach.....	87
4.3.1. Semi-structured policy maker interviews	89
4.3.2. Superintendent and school principal questionnaires.....	95
4.3.3. Secondary data analysis.....	100
4.3.4. Document analysis.....	103
4.3.5. Community, school, and classroom observations	105
4.3.6. Other data sources	106
4.3.7. Final synthesis of the data	107
4.4. Ethical compliance and research limitations	107

Chapter Five – An introduction to the case study site: Historical and institutional contexts of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta	111
5.1. The origins of public education in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta	113
5.1.1. Historical development of education policyscapes in Mississippi	116
5.1.2. Historical development of education policyscapes in Arkansas.....	122
5.2. Recent developments in education funding	126
5.2.1. Mississippi funding mechanisms.....	127
5.2.2. Arkansas funding mechanisms	129
5.3. Conclusions: Criteria for analysis.....	133
PART TWO- FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	135
Chapter Six – Driving forces and defining features of the Delta teacher shortages	136
6.1. Perceived causes of the Delta teacher shortages.....	138
6.1.1. History of slavery and post-bellum racism.....	141
6.1.2. The present rural context	154
6.1.3. Poverty as an intersection of race and rurality.....	160
6.1.4. School-level consequences: A lack of school leadership	161
6.2. Severity and scope of the Delta teacher shortages.....	162
6.3. Policy maker perceptions of TFA.....	169
6.3.1. TFA as a vehicle for increasing teacher quantity and quality	170
6.3.2. Policy maker critiques of and opposition to TFA.....	172
6.3.3. TFA within the context of policy maker decision-taking mechanisms	176
6.4. Conclusions: Sources and characteristics of the Delta teacher shortages.....	183
Chapter Seven – Teach For America’s position within state strategies for Delta reform	185
7.1. Recent ‘policyscapes’ as a context for TFA analysis	187
7.1.1. Education funding outcomes	187
7.1.2. Teacher labour policyscapes in Mississippi and Arkansas.....	190
7.1.3. TFA as a stopgap to policyscape shortcomings.....	211
7.2. Empirical evidence of TFA’s role as a targeted supply of teacher labour....	214
7.3. Conclusions: TFA as a teacher recruitment strategy	230
Chapter Eight – Missed opportunities, policy dilemmas, and future policy maker engagement with TFA	232
8.1. Missed opportunities under current TFA partnership strategies.....	234
8.2. Policy dilemmas and insights for future policy maker engagement with TFA.....	242
8.2.1. Criteria for ‘successful’ future engagement	243

8.2.2.	State funding for concentrated TFA expansion	244
8.2.3.	Grow-your-own approaches to long-term resolution	257
8.3.	Conclusions: An integrated approach to engaging TFA.....	268

Chapter Nine– Concluding thoughts: A new direction for the TFA debate 271

9.1.	Summary of findings and a return to the central research question	273
9.2.	Extending the debate: Generalisations of TFA engagement in rural sites.....	280
9.3.	The larger TFA debate.....	283
9.4.	Closing thoughts and a call for future research	294

Bibliography..... 297

Appendices 317

2A.	A brief introduction to rational actor theory.....	318
3A.	Stephen Ball’s ‘three spheres’ and the Delta context.....	320
3B.	Identifying the three ‘central’ policy makers under Ball’s ‘spheres of influence’	323
4A.	List of interviewed policy makers	332
4B.	List of semi-structured interview questions.....	333
4C.	Process for qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews.....	336
4D.	Sample transcripts and final coding analysis: One Mississippi policy maker and one TFA-Delta official	344
4E.	Summary of interview identification codes.....	353
4F.	Questionnaire messages and surveys.....	355
6A.	A brief history of racially motivated socio-economic inequities in Mississippi and Arkansas, 1865-1964	370
7A.	Federal, state, and local revenue sources for elementary and secondary education.....	373
7B.	Breakdown of spending within public school districts.....	375
7C.	‘Goodness of fit’ outputs for potential iterations of tobit regressions	376
8A.	Connections between teacher quality and educational attainment	377

Acknowledgements

This dissertation stands as tangible evidence of the endless amounts of encouragement, support, and mentorship that I received throughout my time at Oxford; indeed, both my acceptance into and completion of the DPhil programme serve as solid reminders that my most meaningful accomplishments in life are hardly mine at all. The list below offers a very abridged but heartfelt ‘thank you’ to the people who have given the most to help me complete this project.

First and foremost, I must extend my deepest thanks to my advisers, Professors John Furlong and Ken Mayhew, for all of their feedback, guidance and—most importantly—patience over the last three years. I arrived to this programme poorly prepared for the rigour and detail required of doctoral-level research; as a direct result, they have had to sacrifice countless hours in the name of my development. In fact, John and Ken have gone above and beyond any reasonable set of expectations, offering patient direction to ill-conceived proposals, careful feedback on countless chapter drafts, as well as genuine kindness and support in the many moments when I felt certain I would quit. This dissertation truly is a testament to their mentorship, and I cannot thank them enough for everything they have done.

I also owe sincere thanks to the Mississippi and Arkansas State officials as well as the Teach For America-Delta leaders involved in this research for all of their time and candour. The data, documents, and interviews I received from this group are a reflection of their transparency and also their impressive hospitality.

Additionally, I will be forever indebted to Chase Palisch and Caroline Huang. Chase has braved the ups and downs of this entire process, providing a daily sounding board for new ideas as well as insightful advice in the murkiest moments. He has been an unbelievable source of support—I quite literally could not have completed my research without him. Caroline proved herself equally invaluable over the last few months of the project, as she meticulously combed through every last word of this document to ensure that it was ready for print. Her attention to detail has been a true blessing—thank you, Caro!

And finally, I must thank my family as well as the Rhodes Trust for making this experience possible. My mother, father, and two younger sisters have always shown me unwavering love and support; they are more than I deserve, and I never would have made it to Oxford without them. The same may be said of the Rhodes Trust, whose generous financial support and academic inspiration encouraged me to matriculate into the DPhil programme. Thank you again to these and the many others who have helped to make this research a reality!

List of abbreviations and acronyms

ADA	Average Daily Attendance
ADE	Arkansas Department of Education
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ELL	English Language Learner
FY	Fiscal Year
GYO	Grow-Your-Own
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
MAEP	Mississippi Adequate Education Plan
MAPQT	Mississippi Alternative Pathways to Quality Teachers
MAT	Masters of the Arts in Teaching
MDE	Mississippi Department of Education
MFP	Minimum Foundations Program
MTC	Mississippi Teacher Corps
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
TDM	Total Design Method
TFA	Teach For America
TMI	Teach Mississippi Institute

List of figures

1.1.	The Southern region of the United States of America.....	10
2.1.	Basic teacher labour supply and demand.....	22
2.2.	Teacher labour supply, demand, and budget functions	23
2.3.	Disaggregated variations to the teacher labour supply	25
2.4.	Shifts in the teacher labour supply and district budget functions.....	28
2.5.	Process of the literature review.....	35
3.1.	Teach For America growth in the Delta, 1991-2010.....	67
4.1.	Research sub-questions.....	84
4.2.	Underlying mixed-methods research design	89
5.1.	Counties included in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta	115
6.1.	Teacher labour supply, demand, and budget functions	139
6.2.	Teacher vacancies in Delta and non-Delta districts by state, 2007-10.....	163
6.3.	Aggregate teacher vacancies by state, 1998-10.....	166
6.4.	Subject-specific teacher labour shortages in a monopsonistic market	169
7.1a.	Vacancy rates in TFA and non-TFA Delta districts, Mississippi, 2007-10.....	224
7.1b.	Vacancy rates in TFA and non-TFA Delta districts, Arkansas, 2007-10.....	225
8.1.	Average ‘saturation point’ of TFA teachers in TFA school districts	236
8.2.	TFA growth in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, by state, 1991-2010.....	248
9.1.	The ‘Black Belt’ of the Southern United States	282
3A.1.	A visual representation of the Mississippi education policy network.....	324
3A.2.	A visual representation of the Arkansas education policy network	325
4C.1.	Round one interview analysis: Map of the literature review.....	337
4C.2.	Round one interview analysis: Policy maker reactions to Teach for America	338
4C.3.	Round two thematic clusters.....	340
4C.4.	Refining round two themes for round three interviews and analysis	342
4C.5.	Final organisation of the interview findings.....	343

List of Tables

1.1.	Teach for America Organizational growth, by year, 2003-11	11
5.1.	Timeline of Mississippi education policyscape developments.....	121
5.2.	Timeline of Arkansas education policyscape developments.....	132
6.1.	Major and minor themes emerging from interview analysis.....	142
6.2a.	Summary of statistics from superintendent questionnaires	145
6.2b.	Summary of statistics from principal questionnaires	146
6.3a.	Teacher vacancies in Mississippi Delta districts versus Mississippi districts outside of the Delta, 2007-10.....	164
6.3b.	Teacher vacancies in Arkansas Delta districts versus Arkansas districts outside of the Delta, 2007-10	165
7.1.	Funding sources for elementary and secondary public education, by percentage, 2007-8.....	189
7.1a.	Sources of local funding, by percentage, 2007-8	189
7.2a.	Recent teacher labour policyscape reforms in Mississippi.....	192
7.2b.	Recent teacher labour policyscape reforms in Arkansas	193
7.3a.	Alternative teacher certification programmes in Mississippi	206
7.3b.	Alternative teacher certification programmes in Arkansas	207
7.4.	Descriptive summary of potential variables	217
7.5.	Covariance matrix of potential independent variables, by school district for Mississippi and Arkansas.....	218
7.6a.	Coefficient values and statistical significance from state-level regressions, Mississippi	222
7.6b.	Coefficient values and statistical significance from state-level regressions, Arkansas	223
7.7a.	Teacher vacancies in Mississippi Delta districts with TFA versus Mississippi Delta districts not using TFA, 2007-10	226
7.7b.	Teacher vacancies in Arkansas Delta districts with TFA versus Arkansas Delta districts not using TFA, 2007-10	227
8.1.	TFA district and corps member growth in the Delta, 2007-10.....	235
8.2a.	Comparisons of rates of change in teacher vacancies between TFA and non-TFA districts of the Mississippi Delta, 2007-10	238
8.2b.	Comparisons of rates of change in teacher vacancies between TFA and non-TFA districts of the Arkansas Delta, 2007-10.....	239
8.3.	Differences in TFA size by state, Mississippi versus Arkansas, 2007-10.....	252
8.4.	Potential teacher recruitment and retention strategies	259
7A.1.	Sources of school district revenue	374
7B.1.	Distribution of total school expenditures, by percentage, 2007-8.....	375
7B.2.	Distribution of current spending, by percentage, 2007-8	375

Abstract

The recent growth of Teach For America (TFA) has enabled it to substantially expand the teacher labour supply in many rural Southern communities, one of its largest and fastest-growing partnership subsets. Though it is generally accepted that these areas face more severe teacher shortages than most other regions in the country, there is little research as to how these staffing challenges arise or how they might be resolved; TFA's potential to grow the rural Southern teacher supply thus signals a promising opportunity in need of further research. This work offers a case study of teacher labour outcomes in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, TFA's oldest and largest rural Southern partnership site. In this region, local schools have experienced a 600 per cent increase in corps member presence since 2008; consequently, TFA provided anywhere from a quarter to a half of the area's new teacher labour supply each year from 2008 to 2010.

A mixed-methods analysis illuminates both the causes of Delta teacher shortages and TFA's potential to address these vacancies. Within the Delta, local schools face chronic teacher shortages because the communities they serve are overwhelmingly poor, geographically isolated, and racially segregated. TFA appears to have targeted the Delta communities where teacher labour policies have systematically fallen short, as it partners with districts bearing the greatest share of the region's aggregate teacher vacancies. Additional statistical testing reveals that amongst these hard-to-staff districts, TFA has further focussed its resources into the schools that serve more rural, less educated, and/or predominantly African American populations. In this way, TFA funnels its corps members into the very districts where state reform efforts have struggled most, thus serving as a powerful resource for realigning 'sticky' outcomes in the most hard-to-staff Delta school districts.

These findings notwithstanding, closer examination reveals significant drawbacks and limitations to current TFA outcomes in the rural Southern Delta. TFA does not saturate hard-to-staff school districts enough to produce statistically significant changes in local teacher vacancy rates. Instead, the programme appears to have established an unofficial threshold for the number of teachers placed per district; once this ceiling has been reached, additional corps members are funnelled into a new area regardless of the original district's remaining need. Additionally, there is no long-term 'exit strategy' to help Delta districts employing TFA corps members to eventually cultivate their own high-quality teacher labour supply, thus leaving them perpetually dependent on TFA to staff their classrooms.

Preliminary evidence suggests that state governments could address these shortcomings through 1) increased financial support for TFA to fully saturate vacancies in current partnership districts, as well as 2) the simultaneous development of grow-your-own teacher certification programmes in rural Delta districts. The evidence suggests that these two strategies would improve TFA as a targeted teacher recruitment strategy for hard-to-staff communities both in the Delta and across the programme's nine other rural Southern partnership sites.

-PART ONE-

FOUNDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Chapter One – Teach For America and its changing role in rural Southern communities	2
Chapter Two – An introduction to rural Southern teacher shortages	19
Chapter Three – Teach For America and rural Southern teacher recruitment and retention strategies	50
Chapter Four – Methodological strategies for data collection and analysis	81
Chapter Five – An introduction to the case study site: Historical and institutional contexts of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta	111

-1-

Teach For America and its changing role in rural teacher labour supplies

Chapter Abstract: The debate surrounding TFA examines the programme at the aggregated national level, typically focussing on quantitative measures of teacher performance and quality but ignoring other, region-specific implications of TFA presence and growth. Turning to one such consideration, there is growing evidence that TFA has substantially increased the local teacher supply in its rural Southern partnership sites—regions where teacher shortages are structurally induced and typically unresponsive to traditional teacher recruitment and retention strategies. This possibility merits a new type of metric for evaluating TFA, namely, the programme’s potential to realign teacher labour outcomes in such hard-to-staff communities. Towards this end, this chapter establishes the central purpose of this research: to establish a case study analysis of TFA as a source of teacher labour in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, one of the organisation’s oldest and largest rural Southern partnership sites.

Since its creation over twenty years ago, Teach For America (TFA) has become the largest and most visible alternative teacher certification programme in the United States. Founded in 1989 by Princeton graduate Wendy Kopp, the programme trains high-performing college graduates without any formal education coursework to become teachers. These ‘corps members’ undergo a five-week intensive summer training programme before entering into two-year teaching contracts with some of the nation’s most hard-to-staff schools. Partner schools may be either rural or urban and are home to varied types of populations, though all typically face high rates of poverty, low rates of student achievement, and chronic teacher shortages; additionally, 90 per cent of students served within these partnership schools identify as African American or Latino (Farr, 2010).

Given its effort to provide both manpower and political capital for education reform in poor minority communities, TFA’s supporters view the organisation not just as a means to provide teachers to hard-to-staff schools, but also as a vehicle for achieving social justice. This belief resonates with the programme’s sweeping mantra: ‘One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.’ The TFA website identifies three aims that help it to realize its mission statement: to recruit ‘committed individuals,’ to ‘invest in leaders,’ and to ‘accelerate impact.’¹

Towards the first end, TFA’s website claims that the organization seeks to ‘recruit a diverse group of leaders with a record of achievement who work to expand educational opportunity, starting by teaching for two years in a low-income

¹ All quotations from this and the following paragraph were found on the teachforamerica.org website, accessed 20 July 2012.

community.’ Once corps members have agreed to two years of service, the organization aims to cultivate them as leaders and to ‘deepen their understanding of what it takes to close the achievement gap’ through ongoing training and professional development. Finally, the organization strives for ‘a growing movement of leaders [amongst its alumni]... [to work] at every level of education, policy and other professions....’ Through these three specific aims, TFA seeks to create a corps of diverse and talented teachers sensitive to the socio-political issues surrounding US education reform and committed to addressing these issues while in the corps and through a variety of professions long after they have completed their initial two-year commitment.

So as to maintain the agility and responsiveness necessary to achieve these goals, TFA operates under a finely tuned ‘federalist’ organizational structure, wherein its central office manages most high-level functions but also delegates a significant level of autonomy and responsibility to each of its forty-three site-specific offices. In this vein, the central office manages corps member recruitment and selection, publicity, and alumni services, as well as all fund-raising required to support these functions. By contrast, site offices have the discretion to determine how many corps members serve and in which schools, as well as the responsibility to generate sufficient funds from local governments, philanthropies, and private organizations to fund training and support for these teachers.²

² There is significant central-local office coordination here: national recruitment team creates a target number of corps members based on previous local office requests as well as projections of the number of corps members they will request the following year. In 2011, TFA reportedly selected 5 100 corps members from more than 48 000 applicants and then placed these corps members according to local office requests.

While the central office seeks funding via federal grants and private support, local offices target potential donors within their specific community: in 2003, four state governments as well as twenty-two school districts and city governments had appropriated money to a particular Teach for America site, and more than 350 corporations, foundations and individuals were registered as site-specific annual donors (Tourangeau, 2003). Reflecting this division between central and site-specific fundraising responsibilities, site-specific offices fundraised 78 percent of the organization's \$270 million revenue stream in FY2011, and 75 percent of the organization's budget was allotted towards site-specific obligations.³ During that same year, 11 percent of total site-specific fundraising was generated through 'fees for service'—headhunting fees charged to the individual schools hiring corps members⁴—while the remaining 89 percent came through the types of community-specific donations and appropriations described above.

Mirroring its fund-raising system, the central office and local offices hold distinct-but-connected responsibilities for the teacher certification process. At the national level, central administrators coordinate a five-week summer 'institute,' mandatory for all corps members and hosted at nine different locations nationwide. After completing this summer programme, corps members complete ongoing, site-specific training during their two-year teaching commitment; site offices typically coordinate such

³ The 3 percentage point difference (between 78 percent and 75 percent) is a result of TFA's budget surplus in FY2011; all statistics here were taken from TFA's 2011 Annual Report, publically available on teachforamerica.org.

⁴ Partner schools paid TFA an averaged \$4,500 headhunting fee per first-year corps member placed in the 2011-2012 school year. According to TFA, this fee is to help offset the costs of teacher training, though the exact fee varies widely by region—from as low as \$3,000 per corps member in some locations to as high as \$7,000 in others—depending on the other funding streams available in that community. Once placed, corps members are official employees of their school districts throughout their two years of teaching, receiving the same benefits and salaries as their traditionally certified peers. These and other costs will be thoroughly discussed later in this dissertation.

programmes through the teacher certification arm of a local partner university and always tailor this training to fit their state's particular certification requirements.⁵

Noble intentions and a well-organized infrastructure notwithstanding, such an abbreviated—not to mention costly—teacher certification programme has aroused significant public controversy. On the one hand, TFA has become the darling of many prominent politicians and private business leaders. During the 2008 presidential election campaign, both major candidates (John McCain of the Republican Party and Barack Obama of the Democratic Party) explicitly endorsed the TFA programme as a model for education reform. In 2009, President Obama gave further praise to the programme, declaring at the signing of the 2009 Serve America Act that TFA should serve as a model for future young adult service programmes. The organisation has also received numerous awards, accolades, and monetary support from the private sector since 1989; most recently, the Fast Company/Monitor Group named TFA as the 2010 Top Social Enterprise in the United States.⁶

On the other hand, many professionals involved in traditional teacher training have strongly opposed TFA's recent expansion, calling the programme a detriment to comprehensive teacher training reform. Such critics claim that TFA directly 'crowds out' traditionally certified teachers from the communities in which it operates, thus replacing potentially high-quality lifetime teachers with poorly trained temporary ones. In 2009, the Boston Teachers Union claimed that TFA corps members were used to replace twenty traditionally certified teachers

⁵ In the US, teacher certification requirements are determined at the state level.

⁶ A complete list of TFA awards, praise, and accolades may be found on the TFA website, www.teachforamerica.org.

whose teaching experience would have required greater compensation from local school districts (Feyerick and Steffen, 2009; Toppo, 2009). In the same year, eighteen other local teachers unions also have claimed their members were laid off to make room for TFA, leading Boston Teachers Union President Richard Stutman to conclude: 'I don't think you'll find a city that isn't laying off people to accommodate Teach For America' (Toppo, 2009). Those sharing these concerns also argue that TFA de-professionalises the field of education and creates excessive turnover in already vulnerable schools: according to Donaldson and Johnson (2011), 85 percent finish their two-year commitment, and 'nearly two-thirds [of corps members] stay in teaching beyond their two-year commitment. However, less than a quarter stay in their initial, low-income school for more than three years.' Ultimately, critics claim that TFA damages student development by placing some of the least trained and most inexperienced teachers with students especially in need of consistent and high-quality instruction.⁷

Although academics have expressed similar concerns, the resulting spike in TFA-related literature has done little to clarify this polemic public debate. Indeed, numerous studies have attempted to evaluate TFA's role within the American education system, and yet there has been little consensus amongst researchers as to if, when, or how TFA might benefit or burden partner schools. Underlying this discord, a meta-analysis by Anderson (2009) finds that most of the literature surrounding TFA examines the programme at the aggregated (i.e. national) level, typically focussing on quantitative measures of corps member performance but ignoring other, region-specific implications of TFA presence and growth.

⁷ The critiques of TFA will be introduced fully in Chapter Three.

The findings from this nationwide research are often confounded by site-level variations in population and environment because, as Heilig and Jez (2010) observe, site-specific contextual factors lead TFA to play a fundamentally different role within different types of partner communities. Key amongst these distinctions, there is growing evidence that TFA serves a very different purpose in urban communities than it does in its rural partner sites; compounding the matter, educational needs also vary by geographic region, meaning rural schools in one corner of the United States face different challenges from their rural counterparts in other regions. Until such distinctions are thoroughly considered within the TFA literature, it is unlikely that academic researchers will be able to reach a consensus on the programme's potential as a tool for public education reform.

Such discord holds serious implications for local staffing outcomes, as there is currently little guidance for school leaders deciding if and how they should engage with this increasingly powerful organisation. During its launch in 1989, Kopp's team recruited, trained, and placed 500 new corps members in six partnership sites across the United States for the 1990-1 school year. In 2007—seventeen years after the programme's creation—the national TFA office selected 2,900 new corps members from over 18,000 applications, all of whom were placed in one of twenty-five different partner sites. Only three years later, TFA had grown by half that size again, selecting 4,400 corps members from more than 45,000 applications to staff its thirty-nine partner sites in the 2010-11 school year. This growth not only attracted new attention from politicians and the national press, but also allowed TFA to become one of the most competitive hiring institutions in the country; highlighting this point, only

three of the United States' eight Ivy League universities had lower acceptance rates than TFA in the 2010-11 school year.⁸

Though TFA now operates in forty-three sites spread across the United States, recent expansion patterns have made the programme particularly visible in the rural South. According to Heilig and Jez (2010), nearly 45 per cent of all TFA corps members were placed in the Southeast in the 2009-10 school year, and all three of the programme's most recent rural expansion sites are located in rural Southern communities (Alabama, Appalachia, and South Carolina). Thus, it is logical to begin new site-specific research with a study of TFA in the rural South—one of the programme's largest and fastest-growing partnership regions.

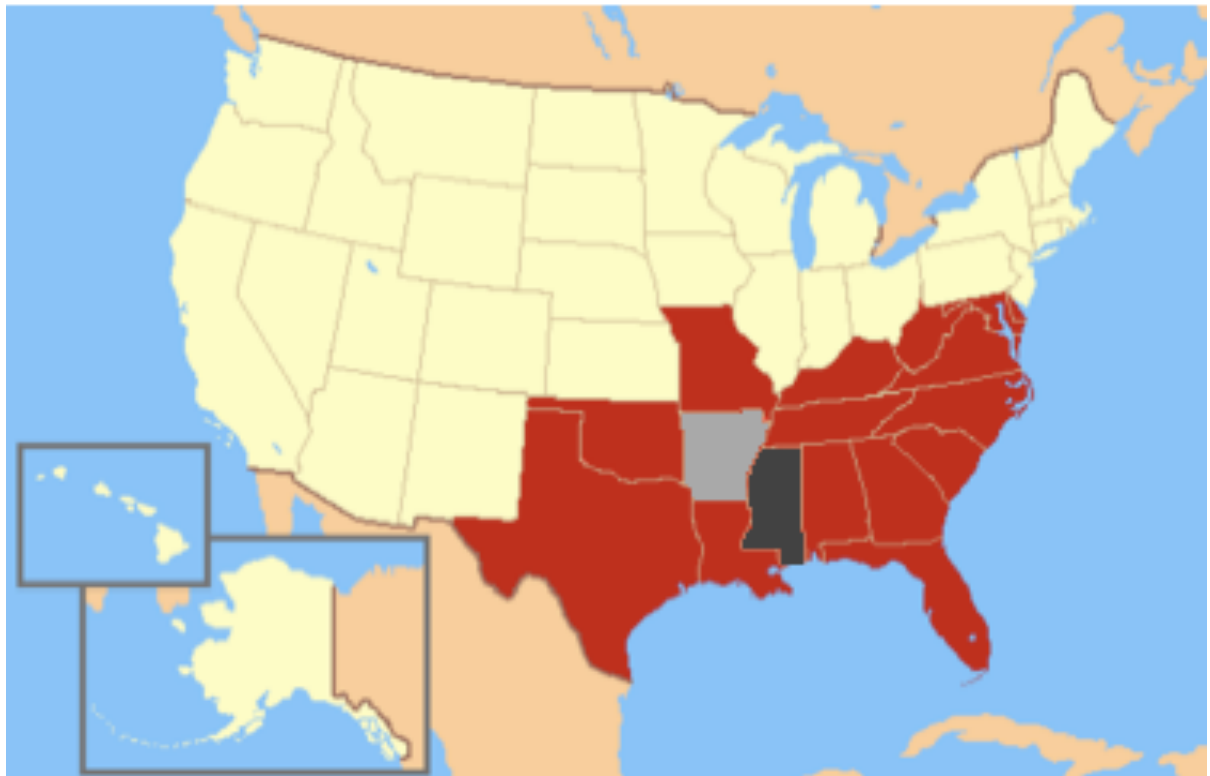
1.1 Filling gaps in the literature: Teach For America and the rural South

Though the exact causes remain unclear, there is a general consensus amongst researchers that the fifteen Southern states highlighted in Figure 1.1 are especially prone to rural teacher shortages.⁹ Works from the Southern Legislative Conference and the Southern Regional Education Board as well as findings from Collins (1999), Gains (2003), and Medcalfe and Thornton (2006) all affirm this point, concluding that rural Southern schools have struggled for decades with statistically greater teacher vacancy rates than schools in most other regions of the United States. Unfortunately, effective methods for filling these vacancies also elude local school leaders, as most teacher recruitment and retention strategies outlined in the existing academic literature focus on urban environments and therefore assume certain types of resources and infrastructure that are not typically available within rural Southern communities.

⁸ Only Yale, Harvard, and Princeton had lower acceptance rates than TFA for the 2010-11 school year.

⁹ What literature does exist on the causes of rural Southern teacher shortages will be outlined in Chapter Two.

Figure 1.1 The Southern region of the United States of America



States in red and grey are considered a part of the South. Mississippi has been shaded dark grey, while Arkansas is coloured light grey. Source: Southern Legislative Conference (2000).

These on-going teacher shortages prompt more careful exploration of TFA's capacity to supplement teacher recruitment and retention efforts within its rural Southern partnership sites. To date, the programme's potential as a source of teacher labour has been ignored within the academic literature because most education researchers have dismissed TFA as too small to have any demonstrable impact on the aggregate teacher supply. As educational historian Diane Ravitch asserted in an editorial to *The Washington Post*:

The problem with TFA is that it grossly overstates its role in American education. This year, TFA sent [8,000] young people into high-needs schools; they agree to stay for two years; some stay longer, but most will be gone within three years. This is a small number indeed when you consider that our nation has [4] million teachers. (Strauss, 2011).

Table 1.1 Teach for America organizational growth, by year, 2003-2011

Year	Number of Applicants	Corps Members	Regions	Operating Budget
2003	15,708	1,646	20	\$29.8M
2004	13,378	1,626	22	\$34.0M
2005	17,348	2,181	22	\$38.4M
2006	18,968	2,464	25	\$55.6M
2007	18,172	2,895	26	\$77.9M
2008	24,718	3,614	29	\$122.3M
2009	35,178	4,065	35	\$153.4M
2010	46,359	4,493	40	\$176.0M
2011	48,000	5,200	43	\$219.2M

All numbers collected from publically available Teach for America annual reports.

Such conclusions reflect the nation-centric focus outlined in the previous section, as Ravitch overlooks any site-specific variations in TFA’s role as a source of teacher labour. It is true that TFA bears little impact on national labour outcomes or, for that matter, on teacher labour outcomes in highly urban partnership sites like New York City, where public schools employ tens of thousands of teachers. Nevertheless, there is mounting evidence that the programme serves as a significant teacher supply source in many of its less populated rural Southern partner sites, where the entire teaching force may only contain several hundred individuals.

The impact on such communities has been especially pronounced since the programme’s rapid growth from 2008 to 2010.¹⁰ For example, in the Rio Grande

¹⁰ See Table 1.1 for a breakdown of this growth, by year, from 2003 to 2011. Clearly, the accelerated growth that began in 2008 continued in the 2011-2012 school year, however the metrics required for

Valley—a rural TFA site located in southern Texas—the population density of most communities is under fifty people per square mile and only 16 per cent of the adult population holds a college degree (US Census Bureau, 2010). Within this rural space, TFA reported 320 corps members for the 2010-11 school year, and the organisation plans to provide 1,500 additional corps members to teach the region’s 16,000 students during the four-year window from 2011 to 2015 (*Rio Grande Valley*, 2011).

Consequently, TFA has become the single largest source of teacher labour within this isolated area, providing more than half of the region’s total teacher labour supply.

Returning to an earlier point, Monk (2007) warns that rural communities look very different across the United States; as such, an analysis of TFA’s role within these types of teacher labour markets requires carefully grouping sites by geographic location and population demographics. A comparative study across all seven of TFA’s rural Southern partnership sites would greatly enhance education leaders’ understanding of TFA as a source of teacher labour; unfortunately, it is difficult to know the exact size or nature of the teacher supply in these communities, as they are often too small, too dispersed, and/or too poorly defined to be captured by local, state, or federal census reports. Consequently, while rural Southern partner sites share much of the same history, social structures, economic systems, and demographics, the existing data and related research on these communities are currently too scarce to support a comparative study. As such, this research will contribute to the existing literature by generating the necessary data from the oldest and largest rural Southern TFA partner site: the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta.

analysis were not available for that school year at the time of the research. As such, this research focuses on growth from 2008-2010

Similar to the example of the Rio Grande Valley, TFA has provided as much as 40 per cent of the Delta's annual incoming teacher labour supply; the findings from this case study should offer some preliminary insights on TFA's potential as a source of teacher labour in rural Southern partner sites with a similar history, geography, and demographic context. In this way, the following research stands at the intersection of two distinct gaps in the academic literature. First, it develops a detailed understanding of why rural Southern shortages are so severe and, second, it considers how TFA might supplement other teacher recruitment and retention strategies to address these teacher vacancies in both the short and long term. So as to provide a concrete means of discussing these issues, a single research question will guide the overarching construction and analysis of the findings presented in this work:

How—if at all—has Teach For America been able to supplement state efforts to address teacher shortages in the rural South, particularly since the programme's rapid growth from 2008 to 2010?

Because this focus is new and relatively unexplored, a case study analysis of TFA's oldest and largest rural Southern site should provide a valuable first step in addressing the research question. As such, each of the three findings chapters (Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight) will address a Delta-specific sub-question that feeds into the broader themes and concerns covered by this research. These sub-questions are:

- **Chapter Six:** What social, historic, and economic forces underlie the Delta's chronic teacher shortages? How do Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers perceive Teach For America within the context of these many forces?

- **Chapter Seven:** In light of its recent growth from 2008 to 2010, what role does Teach For America now play within the overarching set of state strategies meant to ameliorate the Delta teacher shortages?
- **Chapter Eight:** How might Teach For America's growth outcomes from 2008 to 2010 inform immediate as well as future engagement between relevant state policy makers and TFA leadership in rural partnership sites?

The remainder of Part One lays the groundwork for exploring these research questions; Part Two builds on this foundation to examine and discuss each question in depth. To begin, Chapter Two establishes a teacher labour market model to frame rural teacher shortages and to convey the divide between most teacher shortage research—which examines trends at the aggregated national level—and the particular realities of teacher shortages within the rural South. Here, it becomes apparent that the existing body of academic literature offers little clarity on the particular structures and institutions that contribute to the especially problematic teacher supply challenges in the rural South. The chapter closes by outlining the need for additional research on the driving forces and defining features of rural Southern teacher shortages—a need that will be addressed in the first findings chapter (Chapter Six).

Next, Chapter Three explores the existing research on rural-specific teacher recruitment and retention policies, noting the present dearth of rural-specific strategies and introducing policy maker engagement with TFA as one new potential approach. To fully capture the likelihood of successful policy maker engagement with TFA, the

chapter develops a decision-taking model for unpacking when and how TFA might appeal to policy makers as a viable strategy for local teacher labour reform in rural Southern partnership sites—a concern taken up in the first and second findings chapters (Chapters Six and Seven).

Chapter Four then documents the research methodologies employed throughout the course of this research. It begins with a discussion of the mixed-methods approach, noting the specific procedures used to gather, sort, and analyse the qualitative as well as quantitative data included in this work; the chapter then articulates the logic and logistics behind a case study of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. As a final consideration, it explores the major limitations and/or ethical considerations underlying the selected research strategies. Central to this exploration, the researcher chose to conduct the following research after she already had been accepted to Teach for America (in 2009), and entered the corps as she was completing her analysis (in 2011). As such, the discussion centres on the ramifications and potential biases surrounding this arrangement.

Concluding Part One, Chapter Five offers an introduction to the historic, social, and economic contexts that define the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Whereas Chapter Four justifies the decision to represent the rural South through a case study of the Delta, this chapter develops a detailed account of the typically ‘rural Southern’ features that characterise the Delta. Here it becomes evident that given the highly agrarian and racially divided structures in the Delta, the historical evolution of local public education has been delayed and limited. As a result, many Delta communities are characterised by low educational attainment and low community expectations for

education. Moreover, education funding systems in each state have failed to provide adequate resources for the Delta's poor rural communities. These preliminary conclusions provide context for the findings presented in Part Two, as they illuminate the ways in which certain Southern institutions compound one another to create systemic teacher shortages for local rural communities.

In Part Two, the data is presented and analysed. The first three chapters of this section develop the substantive research findings, while the final chapter integrates these conclusions into a single discussion. First, Chapter Six investigates the ways in which relevant Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers perceive the Delta teacher shortages as well as TFA's role in their eventual resolution. Such analysis reveals evidence that century-old social, political, and economic forces have produced systemic teacher shortages unimproved by most traditional teacher labour policies. As previously mentioned, Delta schools appear to face chronic teacher shortages because the communities they serve are overwhelmingly poor, geographically isolated, and racially segregated. According to state officials in Mississippi and Arkansas alike, current teacher labour policies struggle to address these underlying structural forces and thus generally fail to alleviate the region's chronic teacher vacancies. In turn, TFA's ability to directly target such hard-to-staff districts makes the programme a particularly appealing resource to these policy makers.

Chapter Seven proceeds to examine the specific ways in which TFA has addressed policy shortcomings, exploring whether the organisation's expansion patterns have effectively supplemented existing Delta teacher labour policies. On the whole, TFA appears to have targeted the Delta communities where such policies have fallen short,

showing a statistically significant proclivity to partner with schools bearing the greatest share of the region's aggregate teacher vacancies. Additional statistical testing reveals that amongst these hard-to-staff districts, TFA has further directed its resources towards the schools that serve more rural, less educated, and/or predominantly African American populations, thus functioning as a powerful resource for realigning rural teacher labour market outcomes in the most hard-to-staff Delta school districts.

These findings notwithstanding, Chapter Eight reveals considerable drawbacks and limitations to current TFA outcomes. Despite a recent influx of corps members, TFA still does not saturate hard-to-staff school districts enough to produce statistically significant changes in local teacher vacancy rates. Instead, the programme appears to have established an unofficial threshold for the number of corps members placed per district; once this ceiling has been reached, additional corps members are funnelled into a new community regardless of the original district's remaining need.

Additionally, there is no long-term 'exit strategy' to help districts employing TFA to eventually cultivate their own high-quality teacher labour supply; consequently, many become perpetually dependent on TFA to staff local classrooms. The latter portion of this chapter aims to address these current dilemmas, drawing insights that might inform more optimal TFA engagement with rural teacher labour policies in the coming years.

As a conclusion to this research, Chapter Nine works to place the findings from Part Two within the larger rural Southern context. In particular, this final discussion begins with a return to the initial argument: that TFA has the capacity to fill rural Southern

vacancies not easily remedied by other teacher recruitment and retention policies, especially since the programme underwent rapid growth from 2008 to 2010. By extension, this changing capacity must colour future discussions of TFA's 'effectiveness', as it marks a wholly new purpose and function for the programme within understaffed rural Southern regions.

-2-

An introduction to rural Southern teacher shortages

Chapter Abstract: Though there is substantial evidence that the rural South faces more acute teacher shortages than most other regions of the United States, there is only a limited amount of literature that examines why this is the case. This chapter provides a cursory overview to the research problem, introducing a teacher labour market framework for exploring gaps within the existing teacher shortage literature. While these works support the conclusion that rural Southern shortages are especially pronounced, it is not fully clear as to how these vacancies emerge or how they might be alleviated. In this way, the current body of academic literature offers little clarity on the particular structures and institutions that contribute to the especially problematic teacher supply challenges in the rural South. This review demonstrates a need for additional research that explores specifically the driving forces and defining features of rural Southern teacher shortages.

According to education economists, teacher supply, teacher demand, and school district budget constraints all influence teacher labour outcomes within a community, region, or nation. At the national level, researchers have developed a detailed portrait of when, how, and why these forces have interacted with one another to trigger aggregate teacher vacancies. When considering teacher shortages specific to the rural South, however, the picture is less clear. While there is a general consensus that this region faces some of the nation's most severe teacher shortages, and that these vacancies are closely connected to many of the region's historic institutions and practices, the literature does not elucidate how exactly these rural Southern shortages have arisen or why they have been unresponsive to most public policy efforts over the last few decades.

So as to better understand when and where the current understanding of rural teacher shortages breaks down, this chapter first develops a labour market framework for conceptualising teacher shortages and then places the existing shortage literature within that structure. In doing so, the chapter is meant to achieve two goals: first, it establishes the analytical framework underlying this research and, second, it clarifies the size and depth of gaps in the current literature by outlining the available information on rural Southern teacher shortages and underlining the issues that have yet to be addressed.

2.1 An introduction to the labour market framework

This research draws heavily on the teacher shortage literature from education economists; as such, this section outlines the basic labour market framework

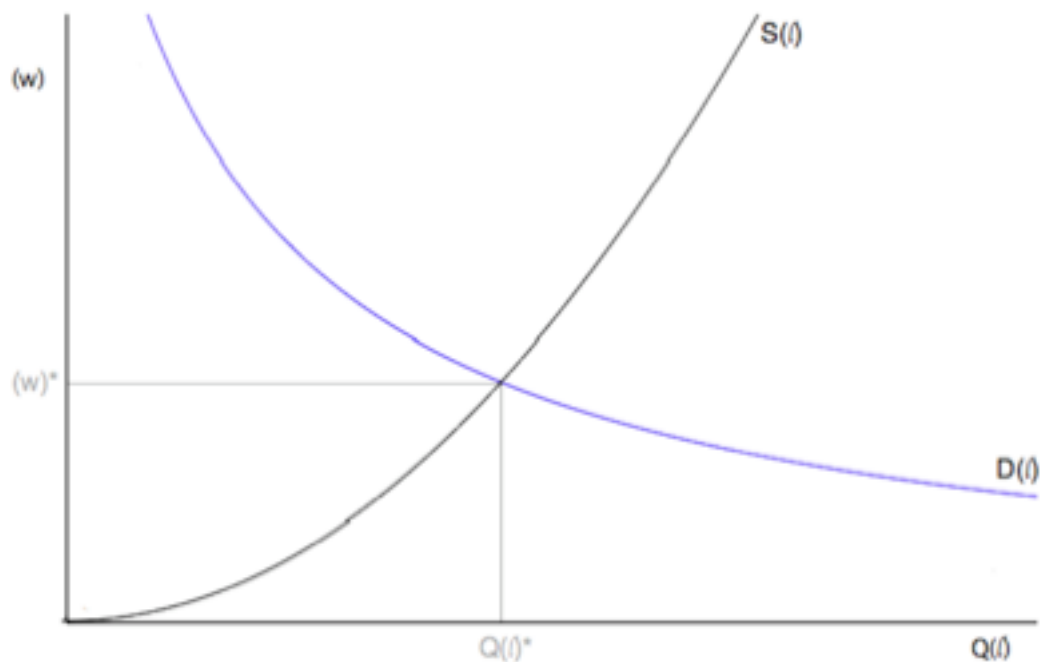
economists typically use when considering teacher shortages of any magnitude, be they at the national level or within small, local communities.

When modelling teacher shortages, economists typically treat teacher labour as a commodity to be bought (by school districts) and sold (by teachers) within a local teacher labour market; within the context of the Delta case study, this supply and demand construct provides a logical means of conceptualising the ways in which various social, historical, political, and economic events (including the recent expansion of TFA) interact with one another to produce or ameliorate the Delta teacher shortages. In their most basic form, these models employ the standard form depicted in Figure 2.1.

This simple model has some merit, as it accounts for some of the most important assumptions within the economic approach. As Boardman et al. (1982) point out, this framework assumes that teachers are rational utility-maximising individuals and school districts are rational entities looking to maximise social welfare given their budget constraints.¹¹ Beyond this basic premise, however, many educational economists have emphasised the need to sensitise this model so that it may distinguish between a school district's teacher demand function and its budget constraint. As noted by Eide et al. (2004), state and federal laws often mandate strict student-teacher ratios within local schools, meaning that a school district's demand for teachers is more or less fixed, as represented by the vertical demand curve, $D(1)$, in Figure 2.2. As this work further explains, teacher shortages arise when a school district's total

¹¹ This assumption draws off of rational actor theory, which argues that individuals (and groups of individuals) will behave in a way that maximises their desired outcomes. For a more complete discussion of this theory, see Appendix 2A.

Figure 2.1 Basic teacher labour supply and demand

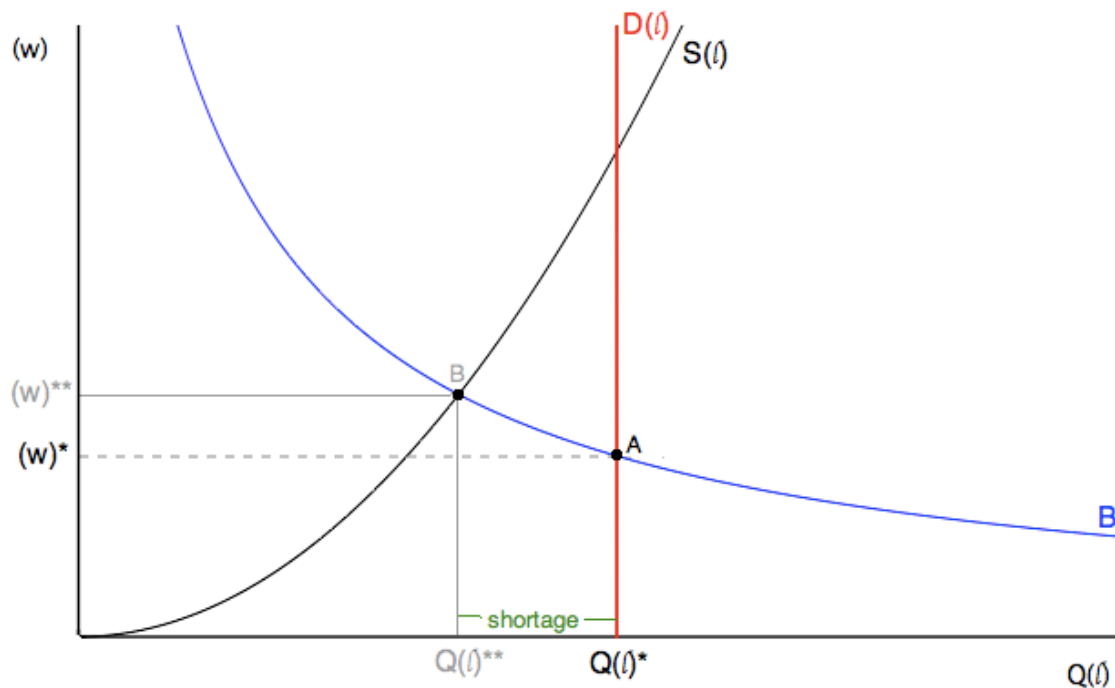


Teacher labour may be graphically represented as a tradable good. Schools can afford a certain number of teachers at any set wage price—as represented by the downward-sloping demand function, $D(l)$ —while more teachers are willing to work as the wage increases—represented by the upward-sloping supply curve, $S(l)$. The point at which these two lines intersect marks an equilibrium wage, (w) , and quantity of teachers employed, $Q(l)$; in this figure, that equilibrium is denoted by the points $(w)^$ and $Q(l)^*$.*

funds—as represented by the downward-sloping budget function, B —are too limited to pay the wages required to attract the mandated number of teachers—represented by the vertical demand function, $D(l)$. Within this framework, a misalignment between a local school’s legislatively derived demand for teachers, $D(l)$, the supply of teachers willing to work at a given wage, $S(l)$, and the district’s budget constraints, B , dictate both the presence and the severity of local teacher shortages (shown in green in Figure 2.2).

The third curve in this market model, the teacher supply curve, $S(l)$, represents a complex set of forces and outcomes. Certain subjects and grade levels are relatively more difficult to staff than others, primarily because teachers with different subject

Figure 2.2 Teacher labour supply, demand, and budget functions



*This figure illustrates a graphical representation of a teacher labour shortage, with $S(l)$ as the teacher labour supply, $D(l)$ as the demand for teacher labour, and B as the budget line. The horizontal distance between points A and B [i.e. the difference in $Q(l)**$ and $Q(l)*$] represents a district's teacher shortage.*

backgrounds (e.g. maths, science, English, etc.) have access to distinct professional opportunities outside of the teaching profession.¹² As a result of these varied opportunity costs, schools face heightened pressure to compete for teachers whose skills could be easily transferred to another high-paying field.

In particular, instructors with engineering, mathematics, foreign language, and/or computer science backgrounds are in short supply, especially when compared to the supply of teachers with English, history, and elementary certification (Barro, 1992; Bempah, 1994; Hull, 2004; Hammer et al., 2005; Leukens et al., 2004; Monk, 2007).

Disparate opportunity costs caused by subject-specific skill sets influence wage; as

¹² In economic terms, these differing professional options refer to the 'opportunity cost' of teaching. That is to say, a teacher cannot enter some other field (such as nursing, accounting, etc.) while she is a teacher; the size of the opportunity cost varies depends on the types of jobs for which she is potentially qualified.

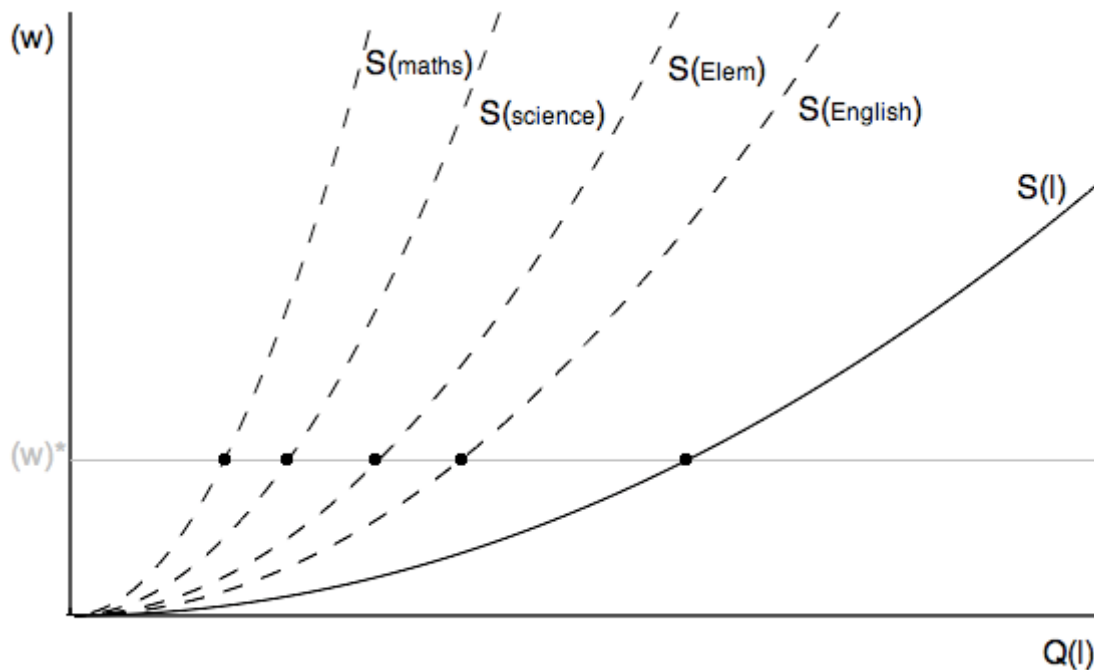
Murnane and Steele (2007) explain, ‘During the mid-to-late 1990s, starting salaries in engineering, mathematics, and computer science occupations were [fourteen] to [thirty] percent higher than starting salaries in liberal arts occupations’ (p.19).¹³

Figure 2.3 graphically depicts these subject- and grade-specific variations within the aggregate teacher supply. At a given wage level, the total number of teachers, $S(w)$, masks variations in the particular grade and subject supplies; for example, in Figure 2.3, there are more than twice as many elementary school teachers as there are maths teachers willing to work at the wage level $(w)^*$.

Similarly, the relative attractiveness of certain geographic regions affects teacher distribution, with more teachers competing for jobs in the most desirable locations. Numerous works have shown that teachers tend to be highly immobile, almost always working in a school that is close to their hometown, their spouse’s job, and/or the town where they attended university (Baugh and Stone, 1982; Boyd et al., 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Player, 2009; Stinebrickner, 2001). Consequently, not all communities have access to the same quantity of teachers. To the contrary, many of the most isolated and/or most rural school districts struggle considerably more to attract teachers than communities near teacher training colleges and/or major industrial centres (Monk, 2007). In addition to the subject-specific variations described above and represented in Figure 2.3, these geographic considerations must be carefully considered when discussing local teacher labour outcomes.

¹³ More findings on subject-specific shortages will be presented later in the chapter.

Figure 2.3 Disaggregated variations to the teacher labour supply



The aggregate teacher supply function, $S(l)$, captures the summation of active teachers across all subjects and grade levels at a given wage, $(w)^$. As such, this function may mask subject- and grade-specific variations in the teacher supply, with subjects such as maths and science being relatively more difficult to staff.*

This research will rely on the conceptual taxonomy presented in Figure 2.2 as the framework for analysing the causes of the Delta teacher shortages, the effects of state policies on these shortages, and TFA's contribution in shifting the teacher supply curve to close (or widen) teacher shortages. When using this framework, however, it is important to remain cognisant of how broadly or narrowly the teacher labour market has been defined. At certain times, this work will discuss the aggregated US teacher labour market; at other times, it will investigate the rural South or the teacher labour market specific to a certain Delta community. The same general market principles will apply in all of these cases (unless mentioned otherwise), regardless of the market's size. It also will be necessary in some instances to incorporate the disaggregated teacher supply functions illustrated by Figure 2.3; particularly, this model will be essential to discussions explicitly addressing geographic-, subject-, and grade-specific shortages.

Shifts within the teacher labour market

Certain social structures, teacher labour policies, and the growing reach of TFA all shift one or more of the three curves presented in Figure 2.2; such movement will change the relative severity of teacher shortages within the affected teacher labour market. These mechanics are rather straightforward, yet they also provide a powerful tool for conceptualising how shortages arise and how they may be resolved.

Beginning with the teacher demand function, $D(l)$, Murnane and Steele (2007) note that each school district's demand for teachers is determined primarily by student enrolment rates and class size policies. Thus, any literature that attributes teacher shortages to a change in student enrolment or class sizes may be interpreted as a shift in the demand for teachers. In terms of closing teacher shortages, policy makers have no real control over the number of school-aged children living in a given community, either at the national level, within rural Southern communities, or within the particular Delta communities examined in the case study; as such, all state-led efforts to shift the teacher demand must come from a change in class size policies (i.e. a shift in state-determined student/teacher ratios).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that national student/teacher ratios have remained roughly constant at approximately fifteen students per teacher for the last fifteen years. Similarly, annual reports from the NCES show that student/teacher ratios have held steady at the state level in Arkansas and Mississippi—the two states governing the case study site—with the former providing a teacher for every thirteen students and the latter providing one for every fifteen.¹⁴

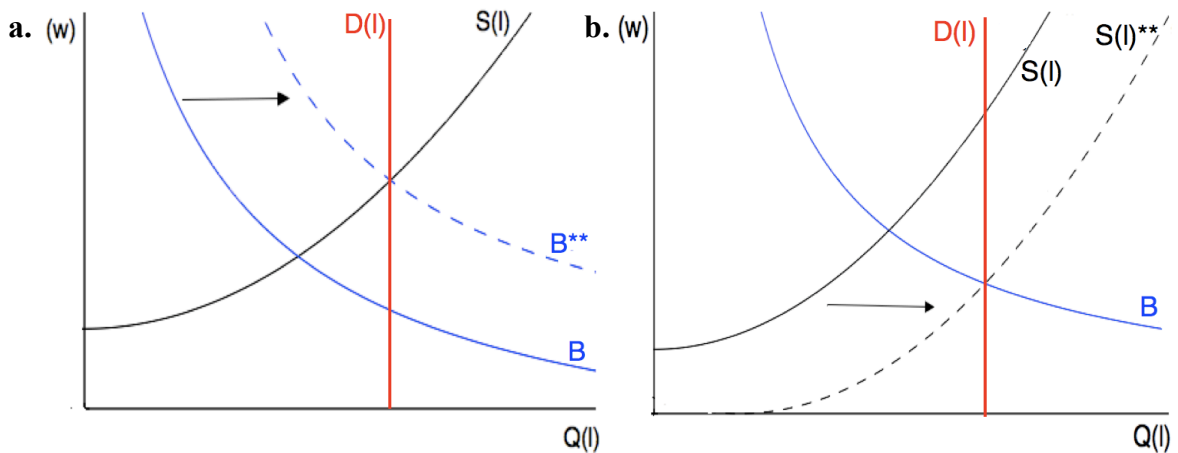
¹⁴ These reports may be downloaded individually from the NCES (2011).

Additionally, there is growing evidence that these student/teacher ratios will remain constant in years to come, as they are the direct result of fixed teacher productivity. In most other professional fields, an improvement in technology increases the overall productivity of each worker, making it possible to provide more of a good or service with the same number of workers or, conversely, to provide the same amount of a good or service with fewer workers. Lakdawalla (2001, 2002) asserts that because technological advances cannot dramatically increase teacher productivity—by its very nature, a service-sector profession—student/teacher ratios have remained constant in recent years and are likely to remain fixed in the future.

To summarise, the demand for teachers is predominantly a function of student enrolment rates and student/teacher ratios. Thus, while discussions of demand may elucidate the causes behind teacher shortages, there is relatively little policy makers can do to change a school district's demand. Therefore, most of the literature offering strategies to close these vacancies focusses not on a change in demand, but on shifts in the teacher supply and/or school budget curves; Figure 2.4 depicts such outcomes within the conceptual labour market model developed earlier in this chapter.

In Figures 2.4a and b, the initial graph from Figure 2.2 is modified to include shifts in the school budget function, B , and the teacher supply, $S(l)$, respectively. Shifting each of these curves a certain way results in a new equilibrium wherein all three functions intersect at the same point (representing total resolution to the market's aggregate teacher shortages). Treating these shifts as a conceptual tool, this research will examine the ways in which various forces, factors, and institutions move one or both

Figure 2.4 Shifts in the teacher labour supply and district budget functions



*These two graphs show the demand for teachers, $D(l)$, held constant with increases in a district budget function and in the teacher supply, respectively. In both, an increase in one function creates a new equilibrium; in figure (a), this shift—from B to B^{**} —leads to an increase in the total teacher quantity, $Q(l)$, as well as the average teacher wage, (w) . In figure (b), the supply shift from $S(l)$ to $S(l)^{**}$ produces a greater quantity of teachers, but a lower wage for each. By determining how different policies affect the teacher supply and demand, it is possible to use this model to understand how TFA and various state policies complement one another to create a new teacher supply and demand equilibrium within the Delta region.*

of the budget and teacher supply functions; such analysis provides a meaningful foundation for understanding why teacher shortages become more or less severe as new policies and programmes (including TFA) are introduced.

First, a few major financial sources dictate the shape and position of a school district's budget function. By increasing (decreasing) the total budget set aside for teacher wages, school districts shift the budget function outwards (inwards) to create a new equilibrium. As the intersection between the teacher supply and budget curves moves closer to (farther from) the vertical demand function, total teacher shortages become relatively less (more) severe. In the context of the academic literature, any proposals for increased teacher salaries or financial incentives may be understood as an outward shift in the budget curve. In Part Two of this research, changes to Delta teacher salaries, financial relocation incentives, and other programmes designed to make Delta teaching positions more financially enticing are treated in the same manner.

Apart from these changes in salaries and funding, which influence the budget curve, most other factors that affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession can be understood as shifts in the teacher supply curve. According to Murnane and Steele (2007), the position of the teacher supply curve may be shifted by changes in ‘the working conditions [teachers] will face, the wages and working conditions available to them in other occupations, and the cost of services such as child care they need to purchase if they decide to work outside the home’ (p.18). Thus, to increase the total number of teachers willing to work at a given wage level, (w^*), policy makers could alter one or more of those factors determining the position of the supply curve;¹⁵ such factors include teacher work conditions, certification requirements, and/or the benefits of teaching relative to other professions.

Essentially, any force that makes teaching more attractive relative to other professions (except changes to teacher wages, which are represented by the budget curve) will shift the teacher supply function outwards, as shown in Figure 2.4b. As noted in the following chapter, a growing body of research concludes that undesirable work conditions, low respect for teachers, and poor standards of living all suppress the aggregate teacher supply function in many communities; the corresponding solutions proposed in such research—improved work conditions, eased teacher certification routes (including through the TFA programme), the creation of teacher mentorship

¹⁵ It is important to distinguish here between the theoretical supply function and the total supply of teachers actively working. The former denotes all individuals who are already teachers or who could possibly become teachers (should the incentives to do so become large enough)—as represented by the supply function, $S(l)$ in Figure 2.3. The latter accounts for only a portion of this total pool, as it represents those professionals currently choosing to teach—denoted by the quantity, $Q(l)^*$, at the intersection of the supply and budget function in Figure 2.3; as the supply and/or budget constraints shift relative to one another, the new equilibrium will contain a new quantity of active teachers.

programmes, etc.—all may be understood as strategies to shift the teacher supply curve outwards.

Limitations to the labour market framework

Certain education researchers have argued that economists place too much emphasis on the role of wages in dictating teacher labour market outcomes; indeed, the quantity of teachers, $Q(l)$, is by definition a function of teacher wages, (w) .¹⁶ On the one hand, educational economists defend this model by noting that non-pecuniary benefits—such as geographic location, available classroom resources, and work-life balance—are captured by the position of the supply curve, $S(l)$. On the other hand, there is mounting evidence that teacher wages are far less relevant to teacher labour outcomes than these other factors, leading some to argue that wages are still given too much emphasis within the economic paradigm described above.

Hanushek, Rivkin, and Kain (2003) use cross-sectional data to demonstrate empirically that teacher supply is more responsive to school and student characteristics than to wage incentives. These findings imply that other factors may play an equally large—if not larger—role in aligning supply and demand as do wages and other financial incentives. Similarly, researchers such as Stoddard (2004) have come to the empirical conclusion that teachers may take less pay because they want to live in a certain area (motivated by low crime, nice weather, etc.) even if the cost of living there is high and teacher compensation is relatively low.

¹⁶ For a detailed explanation of the theory behind this, see Cahuc (2004) and Freeman (1972).

Though these findings provide important insights on the non-pecuniary influences in a typical teacher labour market, it is imperative to note that they do not actually contradict the labour market taxonomy presented in Figure 2.2. In fact, this framework can be used to account for the findings just described. If the teacher supply is depicted as a very steep curve, the framework then demonstrates that a change in wages has relatively little effect on the active teacher supply and that by contrast, a change in non-pecuniary work conditions (represented as a shift in the supply curve) may produce more significant changes in the quantity of available teachers.

As a second critique, many education economists have argued that the competitive supply-demand model is too simplistic to accurately capture teacher labour dynamics. First, when large enough, teachers unions create a monopoly on teacher labour, making it possible for teachers to negotiate a higher wage than would otherwise be possible in a purely competitive market. Moreover, works such as Baird and Landon (1972) and Goldhaber et al. (2010) present evidence that large and/or geographically isolated school districts may also hold bargaining power over teacher wages, as they are one of the only major buyers of teacher labour in their given region.¹⁷ Temin (2002) points out that in instances where a strong teachers union (a monopoly) works within a very large or very isolated school district (a monopsony), the single competitive equilibrium may be replaced by a bargaining range containing numerous potential equilibria.¹⁸

¹⁷ This outcome, known as a teacher labour monopsony, has been found in numerous other works on teacher labour economics (Boal and Ransom, 1997; Johnson and Mack, 1978; Landon and Baird, 1971; Lipsky and Drotning 1973; Luizer and Thornton, 1986; Medcalfe and Thornton, 2006; Merrifield, 1999; Ransom, Boal, and Beck, 1999; Vedder and Hall, 2000).

¹⁸ The competing presence of a monopoly and a monopsony within a single market is known as a bilateral monopoly—a market characterised by a range of potential equilibria rather than a unique equilibrium point. For a more careful explanation of bilateral monopolies, see Baumol and Blinder (2008).

Though these bargaining range scenarios are probable in certain regions of the United States, they do not seem relevant to this particular research project, and thus will not be incorporated into the model described above. The majority of the literature included in Part One explores the national US teacher labour market, which most researchers agree is not characterised by monopsonistic tendencies at the aggregate level (Boal, 2000; Gustman and Clement 1977; Medcalfe and Thornton, 2006; Thornton, 1975). The competitive market framework is also well suited to the rural Southern discussions and analysis presented in Part Two of this research. Teacher unionisation rates are low throughout the rural South (they average less than 4 per cent in the Delta) and most local communities are too small to exhibit any real bargaining power; such characteristics suggest the presence of a fairly competitive teacher labour market, as portrayed in Figure 2.2 (Landon and Baird, 1975).

More to the point, this research uses the labour market taxonomy as a theoretical framework for analysis; it is meant as a basic structure for unpacking the myriad forces that contribute to local, regional, and national teacher shortages. While it is always possible that certain markets in certain instances will not be fully competitive, the model developed in this section nevertheless provides an effective construct for conceptualising TFA's role within hard-to-staff teacher labour markets.

The highly theoretical nature of this framework marks a final limitation. Namely, it presents supply, demand, and budget as distinctive entities that can be quantitatively measured; in actuality, it is unfeasible to measure the effects of supply, demand, or budget relative to the Delta teacher labour market because the boundaries delineated

within it are largely artificial. For example, an increase in the Mississippi State education budget for after-school student programmes would increase schools' budgets, increase the demand for teacher services, and potentially increase the supply of teachers willing to work at affected schools (if the after school programme elevated student performance or improved teacher work conditions in some other way). It would be impossible to 'tease apart' the cumulative effects of this policy relative to others, let alone the degree to which the net effects of such a policy could be divided into discrete functions of supply, demand, or budget.

In this way, the labour market framework is meant more as an organising schema than an analytical tool. It is useful in that it enables a conceptual understanding as to how various policies—including the use of TFA—interact to promote or stymie teacher recruitment and retention within hard-to-staff Delta schools. At the same time, the framework cannot facilitate empirical tests or analysis of the ways in which a given policy shifts relevant supply, demand, or budget curves to alter Delta teacher labour outcomes. Chapter Nine offers a final synthesis of the research findings that further considers the implications of this limitation.

2.2 A review of the teacher shortage literature

Within the labour market framework, any number of forces may affect the teacher supply, teacher demand, and/or school district budget to create, intensify, or ameliorate teacher shortages. Using this framework to unpack the existing shortage research, it becomes apparent that academics have constructed a rather thorough account of national teacher labour outcomes, and some have gone so far as to theorise on the ways in which these national trends 'trickle down' to affect local communities in places like the rural South. Beyond these preliminary connections, however, the

literature overlooks the particular challenges of individual regions, devoting little attention to the systems, mindsets, and institutions that fuel local teacher vacancies. This marks a significant gap within the existing academic literature, which must be filled by a more localised understanding as to how and why regional teacher shortages arise.

To clearly determine the size, scope and characteristics of the gaps in the existing academic research, it was necessary to employ what Fink (2010) calls ‘a research literature review.’ Similar to a systematic review of the literature, Fink explains that ‘a research literature review is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners’ (p. 3).

Fink (2010) also creates a step-by-step ‘map’ of the steps required for achieve this type of rigour across various academic fields. Given the education focus of this research, seven steps were chosen from the Fink model to guide the literature review, as illustrated in Figure 2.5. It was first necessary to identify a preliminary research question and to then use google scholar, related literature reviews, and Oxford University libraries to collect relevant research papers, academic articles, reports, and books. The following six search terms were used to guide this search: ‘rural,’ ‘(southern) teacher shortages,’ ‘Teach for America,’ ‘teacher recruitment,’ ‘teacher retention,’ and ‘teacher attrition.’ Fink (2010) next calls for bounding this search through a ‘practical screen;’ as such, all material included in the review was specific

Figure 2.5 Process of the research literature review



Adapted from Fink (2010). As shown in this figure, the research literature review was conducted as an iterative process for steps one through six. Once these iterations were complete, step seven was completed.

to the United States, published in or after the year 1999, and written in English.¹⁹

Next, all texts were screened for indicators of methodological quality, such as research design, sampling methods and/or data collection, and analytical rigor. The results from all texts included after this quality screen were then synthesized to clarify the quality of existing knowledge as well as gaps in knowledge. In turn, this synthesis made it possible to further refine the research question, and to then conduct further literature searches following the same steps as outlined above. Finally, the results from this iterative process were organized, documented, and included in this chapter and in Chapter Three as a descriptive account of existing literature on teacher shortages as well as the recruitment / retention strategies developed to address them.

¹⁹ There were some exceptions to these practical limits; namely, literature reviews and meta-analyses published before 1999 and highly rigorous works with a non-US focus—such as Dolton (2000)—were included in the literature review.

2.2.1 Shocks to the aggregate US teacher labour market

Beginning at the broadest level, a sizeable body of academic literature concludes that shifting demographics within the US population have placed considerable strain on national teacher labour outcomes. Connecting these aggregate findings with local teacher shortages, researchers have argued that national teacher vacancies are not evenly distributed across the United States; instead, they ‘trickles down’ to disproportionately affect certain regions and communities. In this way, it is argued that recent national trends have produced acute vacancies in places like the rural South, where local communities are ill equipped to compete for highly demanded teachers.

The three curves from Figure 2.2 offer some insights as to how these national strains arise. Turning first to the teacher labour demand function, $D(l)$, works such as Hull (2004) and Hammer et al. (2005) suggest that the so-called ‘baby boom echo’ has increased the number of students in public classrooms since the early 1980s, thus shifting the demand function outward and requiring districts to hire more teachers than ever before.²⁰ According to Murnane and Steele (2007), this ‘echo’ manifested as an 8 per-cent growth in the student population throughout the 1990s; the authors contend that similar increases will continue even after the last of the ‘echo’ children graduate. In fact, public school enrolment is expected to exceed 50 million students by 2013—a 6 per-cent increase above annual student enrolment during the 1990s, when the size of the ‘echo’ student population reached some of its highest levels.

²⁰ The ‘baby boom echo’ refers to an elevation in school enrolment as the children of the post-World War II ‘baby boomers’ (i.e. the grandchildren of WWII veterans) entered school.

Also shifting the national demand function outward, efforts to reduce class sizes from the 1950s to the 1990s have made it such that schools require significantly more teachers to handle the ‘echo’ population than they did during the original baby boom shock (Hull, 2004; McClure and Reeves, 2004). According to the empirical estimations of Murnane and Steele (2007), the average US class size has fallen from 26.9 students in 1955, to 17.9 in 1985, to 17.3 in 1995, to 15.5 in 2005—where it has since remained.²¹ Thus, while policy makers face similar shocks to public enrolment as they did during the initial baby-boom era of the 1950s, they must now place 40 per cent fewer students in a single teacher’s classroom than they could fifty years ago. Taken together, increased enrolment and decreased student-teacher ratios have spurred significantly greater need for teachers, as represented by an outward shift in the national demand function, $D(I)$.

Demographic shifts amongst teachers have simultaneously pushed the aggregate teacher supply function, $S(I)$, inwards to exacerbate national teacher staffing challenges. There has been a noticeable ‘greying’ of the teacher workforce since the mid-1990s, wherein more teachers are reaching retirement than individuals are entering the teacher labour market to replace them (Hull, 2004; McClure and Reeves, 2004). As baby boomers filled public schools in the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s, administrators hired an influx of new teachers; as the baby boomers left the public system, these teachers remained in place and relatively fewer new teachers were hired. In this way, the baby boom created a teacher supply bubble in the 1970s; policy

²¹ Murnane and Steele (2007) predict that student-teacher ratios will fall to 14.5 by 2014, but as of 2010, the US Census Bureau reported them to have remained near 15.3 students per teacher.

makers and school leaders have struggled to absorb the shock as this bubble pops and teachers from the baby boom era reach full retirement.

The changing role of women in the US teacher labour market

In addition to the demographic shifts just described, the changing role of women in the workplace also has affected the national teacher supply and demand curves in significant ways over the last fifty years; the aggregate effects of these changing opportunities also appear to have ‘trickled down’ to exacerbate regional teacher shortages. Looking first to aggregate supply, females compose the overwhelming share of teachers in the United States—more than 85 per cent of teachers were women in 1999 (Stinebrickner, 2001), and as of 2005, these numbers had fallen only slightly, with 83 per cent of all teachers still identifying as female (NCEI, 2005). Because women constitute the overwhelming majority of America’s national teacher labour force, their changing professional opportunities have substantively impacted both the number and type of teachers entering the field. In the words of Flyer and Rosen (1997), ‘The economics of educational production is greatly affected by the value of women’s time’ (p.105).

Largely the result of women’s rights movements throughout the twentieth century, the ‘value of women’s time’ has increased significantly, as females have come to enjoy substantially greater professional opportunities outside of teaching. In 1975, women earned 35 per cent more in teaching positions than in non-teaching positions, but by 1992 they earned only 10 per cent more, and by 2000 they earned 5 per cent less (Turner, 2000). Not surprisingly, this newfound earning potential caused many women who would have previously entered the field of education to consider other options. In 1960 more than 50 per cent of female college graduates entered teaching;

by 1990 it was less than 10 per cent (Flyer and Rosen, 1997). Within the labour market framework, these changing professional preferences can be understood as a significant shift inwards of the aggregate US teacher labour supply.

In addition to decreasing the share of women applying to become teachers, the impact of women pursuing careers outside of teaching has also affected the type of women who become teachers. According to Corcoran et al. (2004), the share of women ranking in the top 10 per cent of their high school classes who apply to become teachers has steadily fallen since 1960: ‘In the 1964-71 period, [20 to 25] percent of all new female teachers ranked in the top (10th) decile of their high-school cohort; by 2000, this proportion dropped below [thirteen] percent’ (p. 233). Similarly, Corcoran et al. (2004), Bacolad (2003), Flyer and Rosen (1997), Hanushek (2006), and Hoxby and Leigh (2004) have also found empirical evidence that the growing professional opportunities for women and racial minorities have had an adverse effect on the quality of the teacher labour supply.²²

These changes have led many researchers to hypothesise that professionally orientated females now opt for better paying careers, while those women more focussed on rearing a family tend to become teachers. According to Dolton (1996), teaching is a popular choice amongst certain groups of females because it allows considerable time out of the workforce and also enables teaching mothers to keep the same hours as their school-aged children.²³ These factors are statistically more important for female

²² ‘Quality’ measured here as a function of teachers’ own academic performance. Such performance offers a powerful proxy for teacher quality, as it is closely linked to student achievement outcomes within a given teacher’s classroom.

²³ Dolton is an educational researcher from the United Kingdom; all of his works included in this research either included US data or were generally applicable to teacher labour supplies in both the United Kingdom and the United States.

college graduates than males, perhaps explaining why females still dominate the field today. According to Flyer and Rosen (1997), female teachers 'spent [42 per cent] more time out of the [labour] force than other female college graduates and well over twice that of male college graduates' (p.107). This argumentation is consistent with the labour theory developed by Polachek (1981), which states that female-dominated fields typically have lower rates of human capital depreciation; that is to say, females tend to dominate occupations that are more flexible regarding family-related absences. The evidence above suggests that many women who enter the teaching profession do so because it is highly compatible with family planning, whereas women who are less family-orientated and more career-focussed now select another occupation.

Despite this obvious shift in female job preferences, teacher certification programmes remain largely unchanged. As summarised by Hess (2009), teacher training colleges served a captive female labour force and, consequently, were structured towards ambitious women who knew from a young age that their only professional opportunity was to become a lifelong teacher. Today, such individuals may teach for only a few years before moving into education administration or may choose to enter another career entirely; according to works such as Plunkett and Dyson (2011), traditional teacher certification programmes' failure to account for these changing opportunities has only further decreased the number of female college students entering traditional teacher training programmes.

Apart from shifting the relative position and composition of the US teacher labour supply, women's growing professional options have also increased the demand for

teachers, albeit in subtler ways. According to Flyer and Rosen (1997), as more women leave the home to pursue professional options, their families have a greater demand for education services that serve as a substitute for the diminished presence of parents at home. They note that the rate of female entry into the labour force outside of teaching has doubled from 1960 to 1990, and the rate of female college graduates has increased by more than 500 per cent during that same time period. As a result of this shift out of the home and into the labour market, the authors argue that female employment has increased the demands for more specialised attention and individual time with students in schools, as such services provide a substitute for parental attention. These shifts drive down the aforementioned student-teacher ratios and increase the need for child developmental programmes as well as before- and after-school teacher services.

2.2.2 Disaggregated teacher labour supply challenges

Taken together, the various demographic and social shifts just described have created a scenario in which large shares of teachers are retiring from the classroom just as the total student population climbs, with reduced class size policies further increasing the gap between teachers needed and teachers available. Put in the language provided by the labour market framework, education leaders have seen an outward shift in the demand for teachers just as the supply appears to be retiring at greater rates and entering the profession at lower rates than ever before—denoted as an inwards shift in the supply curve. As a result, researchers such as Hussar (2002) have predicted that the US public school system will need to attract anywhere from 1.7 to 2.7 million new teachers by 2013 to avoid substantial teacher shortages.

And yet, contrary to such conclusions, many researchers maintain that the United States actually enjoys a surplus of teachers, and that localised teacher shortages arise not from aggregate shifts in teacher supply and demand, but from complex distributional challenges that stymie the flow of teachers into the areas where they are needed most (Collins, 1999; Hare and Heap 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll 2003). In line with this assertion, Hess (2009) concludes that there were 3.1 million teachers instructing 47 million public school students in 2003, with an additional 6 million qualified teachers choosing to remain outside the teacher workforce—whether because they could not find work as a teacher, chose to pursue another profession, or chose to leave the workforce entirely.

Given these statistics, many academics have argued that policy makers could saturate localised teacher shortages in the rural South or any other hard-to-staff region by finding an effective means to channel those teachers outside of the workforce back into the classrooms where they are needed most. Returning to the disaggregated teacher labour supply functions illustrated in Figure 2.3, some of the literature has sought to disentangle geographic- and subject- specific teacher shortages from the national demographic changes mentioned above. The findings from these works offer some of the most promising insights as to how and why rural Southern teacher vacancies have arisen.

Grade- and subject- specific teacher supply challenges

Across the nation, certain types of teachers are in especially short supply; these subject-specific shortages often arise as a result of structural barriers within the teaching profession and competing offers from positions in other professions. As a

primary example, secondary school teachers—especially in certain content areas—are much less common than elementary school teachers. As explained in Monk (2007), secondary school teachers face higher barriers to entering the profession, as they must receive additional certification in their specific subject; perhaps as a consequence, those individuals successfully achieving secondary school certification often have skills that can be more easily transferred to positions other than teaching.

Amongst high school teachers, certain subject areas are especially hard to staff. In particular, there is a shortage of secondary school teachers specialising in mathematics, science, special education, and English as a Second Language (ESL), most likely because the skills from these subjects are highly demanded in professions outside of education (Monk, 2007).

Many empirical studies have produced similar conclusions. For example, in the 1999-2000 school year, a survey of principals across the nation reported that 75 per cent of schools experienced difficulties in filling special education teacher vacancies and 77 per cent struggled to fill maths vacancies; by contrast, only 30 per cent had any trouble in filling social studies vacancies (Murnane and Steele, 2007). Such discrepancies most likely result from the different opportunity costs of teachers with different academic backgrounds, in which those with specialised mathematical, scientific, and/or linguistic abilities can find much higher-paying jobs outside of the teaching field than can teachers specialising in subjects such as English or history (Murnane and Olson, 1990; Stinebrickner, 2001).

When a subject remains chronically understaffed, schools must rely on teachers without proper training to fill content-specific vacancies. In the 2003-4 school year, ‘out-of-field’ teaching was highly evident amongst certain secondary school subjects, as 57 per cent of physical science teachers throughout the United States had no training or background in science and 33 per cent of maths teachers faced similar situations (Murnane and Steele, 2007). Out-of-field teaching has been linked with lower student achievement and, since the implementation of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, creates serious legal and financial ramifications for understaffed schools. Similar to the demographic research described in the previous section, the current literature on subject-specific teacher shortages only examines national trends and outcomes; consequently, there is presently little to no information on rural Southern challenges with out-of-field teaching.

Geographic- and rural-specific teacher supply challenges

Several recent works have noted that regional staffing challenges also create pockets of teacher shortages across the United States; this vein of literature offers the most direct connection between the findings on national teacher labour trends and rural Southern teacher shortages. McClure and Reeves (2004) point to elevated teacher vacancy rates in the South (where the Delta is located), Southwest, and Western regions of the United States, despite an excess supply of teachers in the Midwest and Northeast.

According to Mulkey (1993) and Perna et al. (2007), shared social, economic, and historic institutions underlie the rural South’s chronic teacher shortages. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the South’s economy was comprised largely of

slave-run plantations, leading most of the region to develop as a series of small, dispersed farm-based communities. Mulkey (1993) explains that as a result of these deeply rooted social and economic structures, most rural Southern areas are still defined by these same poor, small, and highly dispersed farming communities, many of which are now also characterised by declining populations and limited educational attainment amongst local residents. As the result of the region's agricultural roots, Mulkey (1993) explains that 'education in Southern states is on the average, more rural in character than it is for the nation as a whole, reflecting the higher degree of rurality in the region' (p.6).

Several researchers link the rural, agrarian systems in these communities to the region's on-going teacher vacancies. Empirical evidence shows that rural states generally struggle to attract teachers relative to their more industrialised neighbours, and the same trend holds true when comparing school districts within a state (Hammer et al., 2005). As a type of interaction effect, highly rural areas in states that are already overwhelmingly rural suffer from especially pronounced teacher vacancy rates. As a result, particularly rural parts of the agrarian South thus appear to be highly susceptible to chronic teacher shortages.

Certain socio-economic factors seem the most likely sources of these localised Southern teacher shortages. First, rural areas tend to be spread out and are typically poorer than their non-rural counterparts, thus compromising rural school districts' ability to collect sufficient financial resources through the local tax base (Jimerson, 2003). As a result, poor rural schools are often forced to offer systematically lower pay than do their suburban and urban counterparts; this disparity makes it difficult for rural education leaders to compete for teacher labour (Swars et al., 2009). Such

inadequate financial resources also undermine rural schools' recruitment and retention efforts by limiting the availability of teaching materials and financial stipends available for teaching and/or supervising projects (Hull, 2004).

Rural schools often have limited access to prospective teachers, which only further compounds the financing challenges just discussed. Works such as Weaver (1983) provide evidence that the training programme a teacher attends is one of the most important predictors in determining where that teacher will later work. Player (2009) notes that student teachers are most often placed in areas close to their graduating institution,²⁴ while Maier and Youngs (2009) and Portes (1998) find that these new teachers overwhelmingly seek positions in the school where they did their student teaching. Because hard-to-staff rural school districts are usually located far from teaching colleges, they are further disadvantaged in their attempts to hire new teachers. According to the works listed above, geographically isolated schools—like those found in either side of the Delta—face the greatest challenges in attracting teachers because they are excluded from prospective teachers' training networks. Such discussions of teachers' professional networks fit well into critical contact theory, a concept that will be discussed in the following chapter.

Additionally, significant research has shown that low-income rural schools typically serve more challenging community and student demographics; in turn, these patterns appear to drive out qualified teachers. In 2007, 244 of the 250 poorest counties in the United States were rural, and every single one of the schools in those counties qualified as 'hard-to-staff' (Monk, 2007). Such high rates of poverty affect student

²⁴ The term 'student teachers' refers to those college students training to become teachers, particularly while they are conducting apprenticeships in certified teachers' classrooms.

performance, available teaching resources, and the local quality of life—all factors linked to lower rates of teacher recruitment and retention (Stinebrickner, 2001). Furthermore, the agricultural structures enveloping many rural communities lead local schools to serve a disproportionate share of the nation’s minority students and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, as well as those students requiring special education, ESL, and non-college bound curriculum—factors that only further deter teachers from entering such hard-to-staff schools (Ingersoll, 2001; Swars et al., 2009; Voke, 2003).

Finally, rural communities’ low population density requires most teachers to instruct multiple subjects and sometimes across combined grade levels (Hare and Heap, 2001). And, even when teachers are willing to work in these more challenging school environments, geographic and social isolation outside of the classroom often dissuade them from opting for rural positions (Collins, 1999; Murphy, DeArmond, and Guin, 2003; Proffit et al., 2004). Taken together, these hardships require that rural educators teach more subjects to a wider age range of poorer, lower-achieving students for less pay than they would receive if they were to transfer to wealthier suburban districts. Considering these expectations, it is hardly surprising that many teachers compete for openings in fully staffed suburban areas rather than accept a rural post in a hard-to-staff rural region.

The existing literature thus provides a starting point for understanding when and why rural communities across the United States are prone to teacher shortages. While such findings offer valuable insights for this research, they also reveal important gaps in the existing knowledge. Collins (1999) and Monk (2007) assert that rural

communities take on very different characteristics within particular regions of the United States; these characteristics undoubtedly shade the nature of local teacher labour markets and drive subtly different types of teacher shortage outcomes. Part Two of this research will develop a preliminary understanding of such systems as they pertain to the rural Southern context, characterising the driving forces and defining features of the Delta teacher vacancies and then applying these findings to similar communities throughout the region.

2.3 Conclusions: Identifying the gaps in rural Southern research

Over the past few decades, researchers have developed an extensive understanding of national teacher shortages. Shifting demographics and social norms have created a demand for more teachers; at the same time, fewer women are willing to teach and existing teachers are retiring at some of the highest rates ever recorded. These outcomes have created a noticeable strain on the nation's aggregate teacher labour market, but the resulting burden has not been evenly distributed; indeed, certain regions of the country and rural communities across all regions appear to bear the brunt of these shortages, facing higher vacancy and out-of-field teaching rates than most other communities.

At the intersection of these clustered shortages, the rural South seems doubly disadvantaged in its effort to fill local classrooms. And yet, while there is substantial documentation that the rural South faces more acute teacher shortages than most other regions of the United States (even when compared to other rural regions) the existing literature fails to explain why this is the case, how these vacancies emerge, or how they could be mitigated. This work is meant as a preliminary response to such gaps, as

Part Two explores the particular social, economic, and historic institutions that appear to have contributed to the region's especially problematic teacher labour challenges.

-3-

Teach For America and rural Southern teacher recruitment and retention strategies

Chapter Abstract: Though there have been numerous studies on the teacher recruitment and retention policies designed to fill teacher shortages, most assume urban demographics and resources. These studies offer little direction for rural Southern officials because few urban tactics are readily adapted to the local context. Thus, whereas the previous chapter emphasised how little is known about the causes and characteristics of rural Southern shortages, this chapter highlights the knowledge gaps surrounding their resolution. Additionally, it considers when and how TFA might appeal to rural Southern officials as a viable teacher recruitment strategy. Towards this end, the chapter introduces a decision-taking construct that combines the works from various behavioural economists and policy theorist Stephen Ball to understand how state policy makers form preferences for or against TFA, as well as when and why they are likely to act on those inclinations when forming state policies.

While literature from the previous chapter documented the many forces that trigger teacher shortages, a parallel strand of research has emerged to propose, test, and measure strategies for filling chronic vacancies. This chapter explores the findings from these studies of teacher recruitment and retention policies and introduces TFA as a new, rural Southern-specific recruitment technique; in turn, this exploration is meant to enable further discussion of when and how TFA might fill the teacher recruitment needs particular to under-researched rural Southern communities.

The chapter is divided into three parts, each of which considers a different facet of the teacher recruitment and retention needs specific to the rural South. The first section explores current literature on teacher recruitment and retention strategies, noting the ways in which the existing academic body has overlooked rural-specific needs and resources. In much the same way, the recruitment literature that specifically examines TFA also has failed to account for such region-specific considerations; the second section explores this subset of the academic literature, using rural Southern TFA statistics to re-frame the programme as a budding recruitment strategy within these particular types of partner communities.

The current oversights in the existing recruitment/retention literature create confusion for rural Southern policy makers, charged with filling teacher vacancies but lacking the direction of contextually relevant empirical research. Such uncertainty begets more careful consideration as to when, how, and why these officials have engaged with TFA to address local teacher labour outcomes; to facilitate this analysis, the third section of the chapter develops an ancillary framework for unpacking state-level

decisions to engage with TFA. Taken alongside the first two sections, this final discussion provides a foundation for Chapters Six and Seven, which explore the ways in which Delta policy makers have engaged with TFA as well as the apparent effects of these partnership patterns on local teacher shortages in recent years.

3.1 Teacher recruitment, retention, and attrition

In the 2002-3 school year, there were 7,824 rural school districts—accounting for slightly fewer than 50 per cent of total public school districts in America (Hammer et al., 2005, p.1). These districts contained 24,350 schools and 7,618,077 pupils—one in every six of all students from the total public school enrolment in that year (ibid). Such figures provide clear evidence that rural schools are an integral part of the American education system, yet many educational experts lament the fact that the scope and quality of research on rural teacher recruitment, attrition, and retention is falling behind the research dedicated to suburban and urban regions (Jimerson, 2003; McClure and Reeves, 2004). Equally troubling, what research is being done on rural teacher supply focusses on rural schools in general, overlooking variations in size, composition, and staffing requirements. In response to these gaps, Part Two develops an account of the staffing challenges and corresponding recruitment / retention policies specific to the rural Southern Delta. Chapter Nine also clarifies the extent to which such findings can be applied to other communities within this region—especially those within the ‘Black Belt’ of the rural South.

3.1.1 Recruitment

At present, teacher recruitment research proposes that officials grow their teacher supply by enticing more people to become and remain classroom teachers. According to Maier and Youngs (2009), most such studies draw from standard job choice theory,

and are typically characterised by one of three distinct camps within the field: objective factor theory, which emphasises improved benefits, pay, and classroom resources; subjective factor theory, which stresses the importance of emotional and professional support for teachers; and critical contact theory, which highlights the ways in which the existing pool of teachers may be more efficiently distributed across schools.

While these three subsets offer varied and meaningful insights for urban policy makers, they provide negligible direction for those in rural communities, where the incentives to teach can be significantly different. This section reviews the existing teacher recruitment and retention literature, noting the ways in which most of the proposed strategies are too abstract and/or too ill-suited to the realities of hard-to-staff rural Southern schools.²⁵

Objective factor theory

Objective factor theory states that teachers will choose a job assignment based on their personal ranking of tangible work conditions, usually preferring higher salaries, smaller classes, high-achieving students, and a good location (Maier and Youngs, 2009). Though recruitment research has considered a wide array of such factors, the overwhelming majority of this literature focusses on increasing financial compensation to teachers where they are needed most; in the labour market framework, these increased financial incentives may be represented by an outward

²⁵ It is important to note that many of the objective, subjective, and critical contact factors discussed here do not apply to Teach for America corps members. Rather than selecting a school on their own, as traditionally certified and most other alternatively certified teachers do, corps members are placed in a school by TFA. As such, their personal preferences do not factor into placement; Chapter Seven highlights the ways in which this makes TFA a valuable resource for communities where objective, subjective, and critical contact factors create especially challenging teacher shortages.

shift in the school budget function. In addition to these financial incentives, objective theory researchers have also explored other non-pecuniary objective factors that could improve teacher recruitment efforts in a wide array of hard-to-staff schools.

Numerous works have shown that the relative size of financial incentives largely predicts whether an individual enters the teaching profession and, if so, for how long she remains in the field (Jimerson, 2003; Murnane and Olsen, 1990; Murnane, Singer, and Willett, 1989). These financial incentives have become increasingly popular amongst education policy makers, as they offer a clear and tangible means, first, to increase the total supply of teachers and, second, to ensure more equitable distribution of teachers across districts (Goldhaber, 2006; Hoff, 2005; Jacobson, 2006; Prince, 2003).

In terms of increasing the aggregate teacher supply, raising the teacher wages relative to wages in other professions should attract more individuals into education; additionally, these tactics have been linked to an increase in teacher retention (Beckett 2009; Murnane and Olsen, 1990; Murnane, Singer, and Willett, 1989; Podgursky, Monroe, and Watson, 2004). Using the labour market framework, Dolton (1996) contends that ‘economic theory would suggest that the relative wage in teaching is the most important determinant of available [teacher] supply’, as it substantively shapes the appeal of a career in teaching (p.188). Additionally, Berry et al. (1985) argue that increased teacher pay grows the teacher supply by expressing the value society places on teachers and public education. Applying this assertion to the case study, one would assume that increasing teacher wages in Mississippi and Arkansas would significantly

grow the available teacher supply by making the profession a more appealing choice for local residents.²⁶

So as to more evenly distribute teachers, financial incentives also can be targeted to fill subject- and region- specific shortages. As mentioned in the previous chapter, teachers with maths, science, and language skills often face high opportunity costs when they forego other professions to become educators. In 2002, for example, the average yearly salary for teachers was near \$53,000; in comparison, accountants made \$55,000, computer programmers made \$72,000, engineers earned \$78,000, and lawyers earned \$90,000 (Eide et al., 2004).

Much research has demonstrated that targeted pay increases for teachers in hard-to-staff subjects—particularly in subjects requiring the same skills as these high-paying alternative professions—grow the subject-specific teacher supply (Murnane and Olson, 1989; Stinebrickner, 2001). Furthermore, substantial empirical evidence suggests that similar targeted incentives can be effective in attracting teachers to hard-to-staff geographic regions with otherwise poor living and working conditions (Antos and Rosen, 1975; Chambers and Fowler, 1995; Eberts and Stone, 1985; Fowler and Monk, 2001; Hanushek, 2006; Hanushek and Luque, 2000; Hanushek, Rivkin and Kain, 2004; Kenny, 1980; Levinson, 1988; Toder, 1972).

²⁶ As noted in the chapter introduction, this discussion is meant only to illuminate the gaps in the existing academic literature as it pertains to the rural South and thus remains largely theoretical. Building on this foundation, Chapter Seven presents the ways in which these recruitment strategies actually have been implemented in Mississippi and Arkansas over the last fifteen years. Additionally, it uses statistical evidence to estimate the impact of these policies on statewide as well as Delta-specific teacher shortages.

The extensive citations above help to illustrate the fact that financial incentives are one of the most popular propositions in the existing literature; perhaps as a consequence, they are also frequently lauded amongst policy makers as a top strategy for filling teacher vacancies. And yet, as will become apparent in Chapter Seven, such research offers little insight for rural officials, as it fails to account for the limited financial resources available to most rural Southern school districts. Moreover, additional research suggests that even when limited financial incentives are available, they do not always translate into a larger and/or higher quality supply of teachers in hard-to-staff rural areas because they treat the symptoms rather than the causes of inequitable teacher distribution (Dolton, 2006).²⁷

Certain logistical issues further undermine the efficacy of such incentives within a rural Southern context; chief amongst them, pay increases do not usually mitigate short-term teacher labour shortages because uncertified individuals require several years to gain teaching credentials and already-certified teachers out of the labour market often leave for non-financial reasons like raising a family (Ballou and Podgursky, 1997; Dolton, 2006; Eide et al., 2004; Manski, 1987; Murnane and Steele, 2007). Thus, financial incentives provide an effective means to pre-empt forecasted shortages, but offer little resolution to existing vacancies in the short term. Even if financial incentives could theoretically overcome these challenges, Goldhaber et al. (2010) point out that serious questions would remain as to whether policy makers have the knowledge or authority to correctly align and implement these complex financial pay scales.

²⁷ The rural Southern-specific causes behind local teacher shortages are discussed carefully in Chapter Six.

Eide et al. (2004) warn that financial incentives may also ‘damage collegiality or lead to a too narrow focus on particular outcomes (e.g. student test scores)’ (p.240). In this way, it is possible that financial incentives worsen teacher distribution inequities by further damaging the already difficult work conditions in hard-to-staff schools. For these reasons, Cohen and Murnane (1986) note that financial incentives only work when they are provided in addition to ample opportunities for collaboration and an abundance of classroom resources. The authors conclude that spending more money on teacher pay at the expense of providing materials in already under-resourced schools may actually deter teachers from entering or staying in many hard-to-staff communities (Beckett, 2009).

Looking beyond the financial incentives debate, a growing body of literature has examined the potential of other non-pecuniary objective factor recruitment strategies. Namely, there is mounting evidence that streamlining the teacher certification process would draw more qualified professionals into affected school districts by lowering the entry obstacles that keep some out of traditional certification programmes.

Researchers such as Newman (1999) and Tatel (1998) find that alternative certification programmes like TFA and Troops-to-Teachers draw in new, high-quality teachers who would otherwise not find a route into the classroom.²⁸ These groups target hard-to-staff areas and often assign recruits to a teaching post (rather than allowing the individual to choose her location), thus avoiding many of the distribution

²⁸ Because there are so many different types of alternative certification programmes across the US, there are currently no empirical studies that measure the number of rural Southern vacancies filled by alternatively certified teachers. Like the financial incentives outlined above, the effectiveness of these alternative certification programmes will be measured and analysed more concretely within the Delta-specific findings of Chapter Seven.

problems encountered when traditionally certified teachers secure their own positions (Hull, 2004; Tibbetts, 2006).²⁹

Much research has been conducted on the classroom performance of alternatively certified teachers – especially those in TFA. By contrast, little to no research explores the interaction these programmes have with short- and/or long-term labour supply dynamics in hard-to-staff regions. That is to say, researchers have not documented if or to what extent TFA might affect the teacher supply-demand equilibrium in a rural Southern community; as such, it is difficult to fully weigh the costs and benefits of such programmes in recruiting teachers to fill the region’s on-going teacher shortages. The following section introduces TFA as a teacher recruitment strategy, and Part Two of this research builds on this introduction to investigate the recent impact of TFA on teacher labour outcomes in rural Southern partnership sites.

Subjective factor theory

Receiving relatively less attention than objective job factor theory, subjective factor theory nevertheless remains a critical component of the teacher recruitment literature. Subjective factor theorists argue that people seek jobs where they feel valued, emotionally supported, and positioned to succeed; applying these tenets to the teaching profession, there is a general consensus that educators choose amongst teaching positions in two different ways. First, similar to objective factor theory, teachers are prone to select jobs with the best facilities, the greatest classroom resources, and the best provision of other tangible work conditions. Second, while objective factor theorists argue that such factors maximise the likelihood that teachers

²⁹ The impact of and controversy surrounding alternative teacher certification programmes will be discussed later in the chapter.

will enjoy their jobs, subjective factor theorists emphasise that these conditions will allow a teacher to feel supported and successful (Gellerman, 1964; Ingersoll, 2001).

Additionally, factors such as perceived collegiality and emotional support also determine the success of a school's teacher recruitment efforts (Behling et al., 1968; Farkas et al., 2000; Johnson and Birkeland, 2003, 2004; Kardos et al., 2001). By this logic, teachers prefer positions that maximise their potential not only by providing the necessary physical resources, but also the prerequisite emotional and collaborative resources required to be successful. Berry et al. (1985) extend this assertion beyond the classroom and into the larger community, arguing that teachers will prefer to live and work in communities where they feel socially accepted and appreciated. The authors conclude that it is especially important that teachers feel a sense of belonging in geographically isolated rural areas, as such communities are often many miles away from the nearest neighbouring community. This isolation makes it difficult to attract and integrate outside teachers into the local social fabric, thus creating pressure to draw teachers from rural communities' small local populations.

Though relatively less popular amongst education policy makers, these subjective factor approaches have produced positive recruitment outcomes in much of the empirical literature. In fact, in many empirical cases, non-pecuniary work quality characteristics had a higher effect on teacher entry and exit than did financial changes to teacher compensation (Boyd et al., 2002, 2005; Greenberg and McCall, 1974; Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin, 2004; Lankford et al., 2002; Murnane, 1981; Podgursky

et al., 2004; Scafidi et al., 2002).³⁰ For this reason, more and more researchers are turning to subjective factor theory in their explorations of teacher recruitment efforts in hard-to-staff rural schools with limited financial resources.

Critical contact theory

Finally, a growing body of work has emerged over the last ten years arguing that certain critical contact factors play a fundamental role in teacher job selection outcomes; these factors predict the impact of personal and professional networks on the geographic distribution of teachers. According to critical contact theorists, teachers receive limited information on the objective and subjective factors that define different schools and thus select their jobs primarily on the inferences they gather from interpersonal experiences and professional teaching networks (Baker-Doyle, 2010; Liu and Johnson, 2006).

First, preliminary findings from this field suggest that teachers judge a school based on whom they meet and how they are treated during the hiring process; in particular, teachers tend to prefer schools with friendly and receptive interviewers who are of similar race to themselves (Cannata, 2007a, 2007b; Young and Heneman, 1986; Young et al., 1997; Young et al., 1989). Further research suggests that teachers also prefer to teach in the districts where they conducted their student teaching, as they feel relatively more certain about the teaching resources and responsibilities expected within that community (Baker-Doyle, 2010; Liu and Johnson, 2006; Winter et al., 2004).

³⁰ When placed in the labour market framework, improvements in work conditions and collegiality would be represented as an outward shift in the supply function, $S(l)$, whereas an increase in financial incentives would be represented in the labour market framework as an outward shift in the school district budget function, B .

Critical contact theorists have produced several teacher recruitment strategies to more efficiently distribute teachers in notoriously understaffed regions of the US. The broadest such proposal that several academics have advocated is a ‘national manpower policy’ for education. Under this model, teachers would be recruited, monitored, and distributed in the same way as doctors are within the American medical system, typically being placed for their teacher training ‘residency’ in the schools with the greatest teacher vacancies (Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 2003; Murphy, DeArmond, and Guin, 2003). While this approach has some strong academic advocates, it seems unlikely that federal policy makers would ever implement such a system. Moreover, it is not clear that teachers would be willing to receive placements in communities far removed from their hometown and/or university for student teaching, as teacher labour markets tend to be highly localised (Baugh and Stone, 1982).

As an alternative approach, some critical contact researchers have called for interstate ‘certification reciprocity’, which would allow certified teachers to use a licence administered in one state to teach in another. Such policies would make it easier for teachers to travel between states, thus increasing the fluidity of the teacher supply across state lines and, by extension, the success of existing redistributive efforts (Hull, 2004). While such flexibility could make it easier to move teachers into understaffed areas, critics point out that it could also spark an interstate bidding war, further sapping resources from poor rural school districts that cannot compete with their wealthier, more industrialised neighbours (Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley, 2006). To avoid this outcome, some states have foregone the chance to bring in teachers from

other states, trying instead to bring retired teachers from their own constituencies back to the workforce by offering retirement stipend plus pay (Collins, 1999; Hull, 2004).³¹ Though this option avoids interstate bidding, it seems to encounter the same challenges as those incurred by financial incentive schemes.

Relatively new to the critical contact literature, grow-your-own (GYO) teacher training initiatives have become an increasingly popular recruitment approach for hard-to-staff rural communities (Hull, 2004; Proffit et al., 2004). These programmes place rural middle and high school students from hard-to-staff districts in local community colleges and teacher training programmes. In doing so, school leaders attempt to convince their own pupils to become teachers and then return to teach in their hometowns, thus capitalising on teachers' strong preferences to work close to where they grew up. In recent years, researchers have documented such GYO programmes as a viable means for addressing rural-induced teacher shortages (Berry, 2004; Henderson, 2010; Lashway, 2003; Madda and Schulze, 2009; Osterling and Buchanan, 2003; Reichardt, 2001).

Despite these promising results, however, doubt remains as to whether GYO programmes could systematically provide rural schools the quantities and types of teachers they need (Proffit et al., 2004). These programmes require years of upfront investment and training as well as the presence of local higher education institutions, all of which pose serious obstacles for isolated rural districts in need of teachers now. As will be discussed in Chapter Eight, TFA seems well suited to offset many of these

³¹ Policies that incentivise re-entry for retired teachers have been especially popular in Arkansas, an approach that is documented and discussed in Chapter Seven.

challenges, thus making it possible that TFA and GYO programmes could become powerful complements to one another in isolated Delta schools.

3.1.2 Attrition and retention

While recruiting new teachers is an essential element to mitigating rural teacher shortages, stemming the flow of teachers out of these schools may be of even greater importance. As noted in the previous chapter, Hull (2003) concludes that the need for teacher recruitment accounts for only 20 per cent of total US vacancies, whereas excessive teacher attrition is responsible for the remaining 80 per cent. Apart from the financial incentives outlined in the previous section, most recommendations for increasing teacher retention draw from subjective factor theory, advocating the development of induction and mentoring programmes for new staff in hard-to-staff schools (Collins, 1999; Ingersoll and Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll and Smith, 2004; McClure and Reeves, 2004; Mont and Rees, 1996). These programmes could theoretically address rural Southern shortages by investing new teachers in their schools and the surrounding community, thus decreasing the likelihood that they leave the region and/or the profession.

While such initiatives have been empirically effective in increasing retention rates amongst new teachers at the national level, the provision of high-quality mentors requires both financial capital as well as extensive human capital (Monk, 2007). Having the financial resources to fund these programmes as well as sufficient senior teachers to mentor all incoming teachers is an unlikely scenario for most hard-to-staff rural schools—in fact, the rural schools that have the necessary resources to staff these programmes are currently the least likely of all rural schools to face chronic

teacher shortages (Monk, 2007). This may be a sign that mentoring programmes are highly effective or, conversely, that they can only occur in schools that already have the resources to retain their teachers (or perhaps some combination of the two). In any case, they provide little direction for the impoverished, hard-to-staff rural Southern schools targeted in this research project.

Though there are other ways of keeping teachers in rural schools, financial incentives and mentoring programmes presently account for the overwhelming majority of literature on teacher retention. Such recommendations seem better suited to districts with larger tax bases and well-established teacher populations than to rural districts, as they fail to consider the types of resources available to hard-to-staff rural schools (Berry et al., 1985). All together, the literature on teacher recruitment and retention seems ill-suited to address rural teacher labour needs; to date, GYO programmes stand as the only rural-specific strategy for filling chronic teacher vacancies, but such programmes currently require too much upfront time and investment for understaffed schools in need of teachers now.

3.2 Teach For America as a rural recruitment strategy

Given the gaps in the existing recruitment and retention literature, there is a need for new research that explores additional strategies to accommodate rural, region-specific teacher labour needs. Current statistics would suggest that TFA has become a significant source of teacher labour for many rural Southern communities, but academics have yet to consider the programme as such. To address this gap, the following discussion uses the existing TFA research as well as recent rural Southern TFA growth statistics to introduce the programme as a powerful teacher recruitment resource within these types of partner communities. In doing so, this discussion

provides a foundation for the data analysis presented in Chapters Seven and Eight, which uses statistical analysis to measure if and to what extent TFA has been able to ameliorate shortages in chronically understaffed Delta teacher labour markets.

TFA and teacher recruitment

Few researchers have examined TFA's potential as a teacher recruitment tool, mostly because its national size makes it more of a political symbol than a significant source of teacher labour. In the words of Miner (2010), 'TFA accounts for a small percentage of the roughly one-quarter of a million public school teachers hired every year but receives significant media coverage.... TFA placed about [4,000] new members in 2009, bringing its corps to [only] 7,300 teachers in [thirty-five] regions.' TFA has tried to defend its relevancy against such claims, noting that TFA teachers instructed approximately 500,000 students in the 2009-10 school year and more than 3 million students since the programme's inception.³² Nevertheless, the statistics presented in Miner (2010) and Strauss (2011) offer compelling evidence that TFA still has only a marginal impact on the size and quality (for better or worse) of the national teacher labour supply.

Turning to more site-specific outcomes, however, a different story emerges. After conducting a review of the existing TFA literature, Heilig and Jez (2010) conclude that TFA could provide a much-needed source of teachers to isolated rural communities with low educational attainment:

The evidence suggests that districts may benefit from using TFA personnel to fill teacher shortages when the available labor pool consists of temporary or

³² These statistics include those students receiving summer school instruction during TFA's 'Summer Institute' training programme. For more details, see teachforamerica.org.

substitute teachers or other novice alternatively and provisionally certified teachers likely to leave in a few years. (Heilig and Jez, 2010, vii).

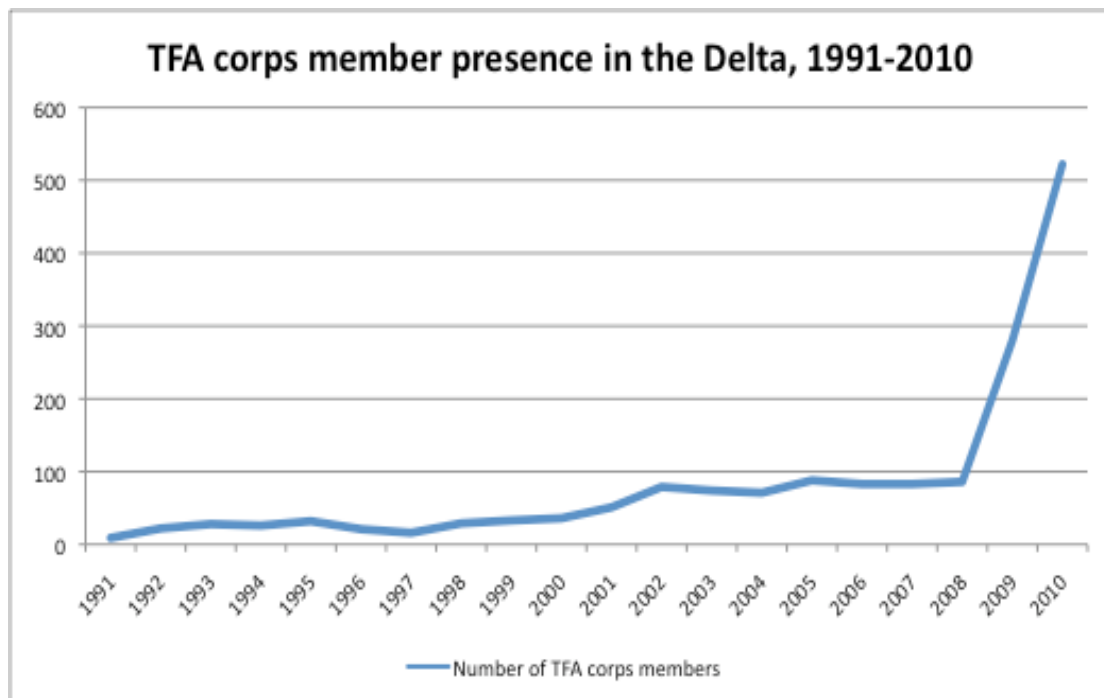
In this way, it would appear that TFA may benefit rural Southern communities because the population density and educational attainment of local residents often limits the supply of available teachers. Works such as Monk (2007) affirm this argument, concluding that a dearth of local human capital in many of these communities requires teachers from outside of the region to be brought in to fill most teacher vacancies—be it through TFA or some other set of teacher recruitment strategies. As Monk (2007) concludes, limited human capital makes it difficult to train local teachers and severe geographic isolation makes it similarly challenging for school leaders to attract outside teachers in.

Potentially as the result of these conditions, TFA now provides a significant share of the total incoming teacher supply in its rural Southern partnership sites, especially since the programme underwent significant growth from 2008 to 2010. Indeed, the organisation received 250 per cent as many applications for the 2010-11 school year as it did for the 2007-8 school year. During this same time, the organisation rapidly expanded in the Delta region; indeed, Figure 3.1 illustrates that while the Delta region received only eighty-six corps members in the 2008-9 school year, it drew six times as many corps members into local schools during the 2010-11 school year.³³

Such rapid growth holds several important ramifications for TFA, chief amongst them the fact that it changes the programme's position and purpose within the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Combining estimates from the Mississippi and Arkansas Departments

³³ The reasons for this disproportional growth will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

Figure 3.1 Teach For America growth in the Delta, 1991-2010



Teach For America has grown rather steadily in the Delta for most of its twenty-year history there, from just nine corps members in 1991 to eighty-six in 2008. From 2008 to 2010, however, the organisation underwent a much more rapid local expansion, growing to 522 corps members in the 2010-11 school year.

of Education with similar figures produced by TFA, one may estimate that the Delta region requires anywhere from 600 to 1,000 new teachers each year.³⁴ In 2010, TFA provided 261 new corps members and thus filled somewhere between 25 and 40 per cent of the Delta's total need for new instructors that year; as will be discussed in Chapter Eight, this presence is only expected to grow in coming years.³⁵ Therefore, unlike its position in urban partnerships, where TFA accounts for less than a fraction of a per cent of new teachers each year, and even unlike its position in the Delta in past years, when TFA was too small to fill a substantial share of the region's total

³⁴ This estimate accounts for any teaching posts that must be filled in a given year, whether that vacancy arose recently from a teacher leaving the Delta or had been unfilled for many years. Thus, if a teaching post is not filled for multiple years, it is counted as a vacancy in each of those years.

³⁵ There were 522 Delta corps members in 2010; 261 of them were first-year teachers, while the remaining 261 were second- and third- year teachers. Whether TFA filled closer to 25 or 50 per cent of total teacher vacancies depends on the time of year total vacancies were measured, as well as how vacancies were defined and who collected these estimates. Such questions will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four, which outlines the central methodological approaches structuring this research.

vacancies, TFA has become a prominent force within the Delta's current teacher labour markets. This growing influence signals a need to carefully document and explore the programme's emerging power to realign teacher labour outcomes in rural Delta schools.

On the one hand, this newfound size has boosted the programme's influence over local teacher labour outcomes in obvious ways: TFA can exercise greater control over what schools receive which and how many new teachers as the programme grows to account for an increasing share of the region's total incoming teacher labour supply. On the other hand, TFA does not operate in a vacuum, and local TFA leaders claim to align their growth with the objectives set out by those state reform efforts and teacher labour policies already in place. The nature of this balance—accomplishing TFA's own agenda, while also supporting the aims of current Mississippi and Arkansas teacher labour policies—will hold significant implications for the size and distribution of the Delta's teacher supply. As such, there is a need for a more careful examination as to when and how TFA might supplement other state efforts—such as targeted financial incentives or local GYO programmes—to realign aggregate teacher labour market outcomes in the Delta region and, by extension, in other rural Southern partnership sites.

TFA and teacher retention

While TFA appears to provide an effective vehicle for recruiting new teachers, many educators and academics have identified corps members' limited two-year teaching commitment as a major concern. Works such as Fullan (2007), Holloway (2002), and Hull (2004) find that excessive teacher turnover creates significant financial and

developmental burdens for hard-to-staff schools; along these same lines, Chapter Six illustrates that many Delta policy makers fear corps members' short-term tenure will only damage local schools in the long term. Accordingly, works such as Tell (2001) have proposed that TFA lengthen its minimum teaching contract as a means to ensure that corps members do not further destabilise already vulnerable school environments.

Other works have questioned the feasibility of the reforms suggested in Tell (2001), concluding that the limited preparation provided to corps members would fuel perpetually high attrition rates regardless of any efforts to improve corps member retention. In the words of Hammond (2000), 'Evidence suggests that [corps members'] lack of preparation actually contributes to [their] high attrition rates and thereby becomes a disincentive to long-term teaching commitments and to the creation of a stable, high ability teaching force' (p. 8).

Proponents have rebuffed such criticisms, arguing that they fail to fully capture corps members' commitment to the schools they serve. According to a report by Kelly (2006), the majority of TFA alumni remain active in the educational field long after their initial contracts have expired. Similar accounts from TFA report that nearly 85 per cent of corps members finish the initial two-year commitment and more than 60 per cent remain in the education profession after their initial contract has ended—49 per cent of whom continue on as full-time teachers (Alumni Social Impact Report, 2009). Though no data currently exists on the nature of TFA corps member attrition specific to the rural South, TFA-Delta administrators reported that roughly half of all corps members stay in teaching for at least a third year, suggesting no real difference

between the programme's retention rates in the rural south and in other regions across the United States.

Critics have argued that these retention rates fall well below the average retention rates for traditionally certified teachers—about 75 per cent of whom remain in the classroom nationwide after their first three years of teaching (Boyd et al., 2009). TFA proponents have urged such sceptics to consider the context surrounding these statistics, as corps members are placed exclusively in hard-to-staff areas where attrition rates are especially severe; during interviews, teacher licensure bureaucrats in Mississippi and Arkansas estimated a 40 per-cent attrition rate for traditionally certified Delta teachers after four years of full-time employment; these figures are significantly better than the fifty percent attrition of TFA-Delta corps members after two years. Thus, the difference in attrition rates between TFA (50 per cent after two years) and traditionally certified teachers (40 per cent after four years) seems less severe in the hard-to-staff Delta region than it is when comparing TFA to traditionally certified teachers nationwide (25 per cent after three years). Nevertheless, the gap between TFA and traditionally certified attrition rates across Delta schools is still significant enough that TFA presence may trigger more 'churn' in the local teacher labour supply than would otherwise be the case.

TFA and the quality of the teacher labour supply

TFA teacher quality must also be considered in this discussion of rural Southern teacher labour dynamics because, as will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, a region's current teacher quality seems to predict the size and quality of its future teacher labour supply. Thus, if TFA corps members do not prove themselves to be

high-quality teachers, their recent concentration within understaffed rural Southern schools could perpetuate the cycle of chronic teacher vacancies there.

Numerous studies have examined the particular attributes of TFA corps members relative to traditionally certified teachers. Several research groups have conducted empirical tests on TFA teachers' impact on student performance relative to the performance of students taught by non-TFA teachers; of such works, Glazerman et al. (2006) is particularly relevant to this case study as it included the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta as one of six sites for TFA teacher evaluation, making it the only study to include a rural Southern partnership site. In this report, the researchers examined mathematics and reading scores for students in first through fifth grade, finding that TFA teachers produced positive and statistically significant differences in student maths scores, but no difference in reading performance. Other research, such as Raymond et al. (2001), Kane et al. (2008), and Xu et al. (2007), has found similar results for TFA teachers teaching at the high school level and in grades four through eight.

Yet not all research on TFA teachers' student performance has produced such positive results. Boyd et al. (2006) found that students of TFA teachers in grades four through eight performed statistically worse than students taught by traditionally certified teachers. Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) and Laczko-Kerr and Berliner (2002) also found negative impacts of TFA teachers relative to traditionally certified, experienced teachers. Though all of these investigations were conducted based on TFA data, researchers' model specification and the particular standardised tests included in the study seemed to substantially alter the findings of the research. Boyd et al. (2007)

attribute these conflicting findings to the complex trade-offs between TFA teachers' initial academic ability and limited formal training:

TFA and [similar programmes] strongly emphasize recruitment and selection and their teachers have better general qualifications but receive substantially less pre-teaching preparation to teach. Thus these findings [of equal teacher effectiveness] may mean that the higher general qualifications of TFA teachers initially offset the more substantial preparation of teachers following the traditional route. (p. 37)

Further exploring these contradictory outcomes, Anderson (2009) conducted a meta-analysis that weighted six major studies of student performance (including some of those mentioned above) and found results similar to those in Galzerman et al. (2006): TFA teachers generally exert a small but statistically positive effect on student performance in mathematics but no significant effect on student reading performance. These findings suggest that while not the most effective teachers, TFA corps members are effective enough that they will not worsen rural Southern teacher shortages in the long term.³⁶

In terms of individual teacher characteristics, corps members hold certain credentials that are typically scarce in hard-to-staff rural areas. First, TFA teachers tend to have higher SAT scores and to hold more leadership positions at their undergraduate universities than do traditionally certified teachers (Parsons, 2003). Additionally, TFA corps members are selected based on their demonstration of verbal communication abilities, adherence to high expectations, and perseverance—all qualities that are linked to effective teaching (Tatel, 1999). For example, of the programme's 1996 corps, 80 per cent of corps members were involved in undergraduate campus organisations and 65 per cent held leadership positions in those organisations

³⁶ The long-term implications of TFA presence in rural Southern schools are addressed in Chapter Eight.

(Parsons, 2003). In terms of university selectivity, 70 per cent of TFA corps members in the 2001-2 academic year had attended the most highly competitive undergraduate institutions, compared to less than 4 per cent of traditionally certified teachers (Decker et al., 2004). This gap has been documented in recent years as well (Baker and Dickerson, 2006; Murnane and Steele, 2007), and Miner (2010) offers evidence that the gap has actually widened as TFA becomes more prestigious, with 11 per cent of all Ivy League graduates applying to TFA in 2009. Within the rural South, where college completion rates are some of the lowest in the nation, TFA's ability to provide highly educated young adults may be one of its greatest strengths.

3.3 Policy theory and policy maker decision-taking mechanisms

The previous two sections have underlined the limited research and significant gaps in knowledge that surround rural Southern teacher recruitment strategies; not least amongst these gaps, there is little understanding of the ramifications that may arise from flooding a partner community with TFA corps members to saturate local teacher vacancies. This uncertainty creates significant challenges for rural Southern policy makers, who must ultimately decide if and how they will incorporate TFA into their larger strategy for ameliorating widespread teacher vacancies. It is essential that these political decisions be taken into account when discussing TFA's potential as a rural Southern recruitment strategy.

The teacher labour market framework introduced in Chapter Two helps to unpack how (and how significantly) TFA can realign teacher labour outcomes in its rural

Southern partnership sites.³⁷ That said, the labour market model does not explain how or why policy makers actually come to use TFA – for this it is necessary to employ a different kind of framework, one that looks at the process whereby state officials individually and then collectively choose to support, ignore, or oppose a programme. Towards this end, the following discussion introduces an ancillary model for exploring when and why policy makers might choose to incorporate TFA into their larger set of teacher labour policies.

This additional framework relies on behavioural economics to identify three of the most prominent forces shaping individual policy makers' decision-taking processes. From there, this second framework incorporates the works of education policy theorist Stephen Ball to determine how individual decisions are reconciled within the policy arena to produce a state-level policy outcome. Taken together, these two sets of literature offer a solid policy framework for exploring when and how elected officials might decide to incorporate TFA into their state-level teacher labour policies.

3.3.1 Behavioural economics and the decision-taking process

Drawing from the same rational actor theory that underpins the labour market framework, behavioural economists have developed a considerable body of research on decision-taking outcomes within a political context. Simon (1995) explains that the political mechanisms documented within this field '[borrow] the basic assumptions of neoclassical economics about the nature of human rationality and [apply] them to the explanation and prediction of [behaviour] in the political domain' (p.45). In particular,

³⁷ A substantive discussion of TFA's impact on teacher labour market outcomes is set forth in Chapter Seven, which uses the teacher labour market framework to explore TFA's impact on teacher labour outcomes in the case study site, the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta.

behavioural economists have identified three pivotal forces behind collective political outcomes: the influence of interpersonal relationships, the political incentive to discount long-term reform in favour of more immediate results, and a high rate of informational uncertainty.

Unsurprisingly, policy makers' interpersonal relationships—with one another, with their constituents, and with lobbyists and leaders from private organisations—appear to influence the types of policies that they develop and implement. In fact, works such as Downs (1972) claim that policy makers' desire to maintain these personal and professional connections can be equally or more important than objective data in predicting many political outcomes; similarly, Simon (1995) further suggests that a politician's identification with a group (race, political affiliation, etc.) changes his or her political priorities in real and significant ways. Following this logic, it is necessary to consider the ways in which TFA has formed relationships with individual policy makers to fully grasp how and why this programme has grown so quickly in its rural Southern partnership sites.

Considering the second decision-taking mechanism, researchers such as Herrnstein et al. (1993) find that policy makers are particularly near-sighted, often prioritising programmes with immediate gratification over long-term comprehensive reforms. Long-term reform requires massive coordination, regular monitoring, and continuous re-evaluation, as well as high upfront costs with little political pay-out for elected officials. So as to gain re-election, policy makers often 'discount' the long-term potential of such reforms, selecting instead those policy strategies with immediate and obvious returns. Strotz (1955) qualifies this argument, explaining that policy makers

discount long-term reforms not because they are lazy or greedy, but because long-term efforts bear significantly greater levels of risk and uncertainty. Whatever their cause, these ‘discount rates’ hold serious analytical implications, as they provide guidelines for explaining why state-level officials might support programmes like TFA over other reform strategies as a function of the required time and upfront investment for either.

Reflecting more on the findings from Strotz (1955), there is evidence that informational uncertainty, risk, and doubt all affect a rational being’s decision-taking process; looking to works like Downs (1972), Merrifield (1999), Shepsle and Weingast (1981), and Simon (1995), there are several ways in which such factors typically shape the political arena as a third major decision-taking mechanism. In the most general sense, ‘uncertainty’ refers to any situation wherein the outcome of a policy is unknown, while ‘risk’ refers to a subset of uncertainty wherein one or more of the possible outcomes would be negative. Distinguishing these two entities from yet another force entirely, policy makers must also deal with imperfect or incorrect information that skews their understanding of what risks are present and in what degree.

Weingast, Shepsle, and Johnsen (1981) note that these three concepts can be applied to present and/or future temporal contexts. Considering these many types of uncertainty as a structure for analysing policy makers’ decisions vis-à-vis Delta teacher labour reform, it appears that shortcomings within a given teacher labour policy—or the lack of such policies altogether—might be explained by the limited certainty and/or incomplete information available to policy makers at the time.

Though by no means intended as an exhaustive list, the three decision-taking mechanisms described here offer a powerful means for unpacking Delta policy makers' recent engagement with TFA. Indeed, insights on central officials' interpersonal relationships, discount rates on future returns, and/or contextual uncertainty offer a compelling account as to why TFA has been promoted above or alongside other state strategies for Delta reform.

3.3.2 Stephen Ball's 'spheres of influence'

Whereas the behavioural literature just described outlines the decision-taking process for individual policy makers, Ball's writings explore the ways in which these micro-level preferences are reconciled to produce a macro-level policy decision. First mentioned in Ball and Bowe (1992), Ball has produced numerous works on what he calls 'the three spheres of influence'. Within this taxonomy, Ball conceptualises the policy production process as a complex and iterative set of negotiations occurring amongst education policy makers as well as between state and local education actors (teachers unions, school principals, classroom teachers, etc.). He groups these many interactions into three separate 'spheres', considering the ways individual behaviours and actions in each sphere affect collective policy outcomes.³⁸

First, the 'influence' sphere represents any portion of the political process wherein different actors compete, cooperate, and negotiate with one another to determine which issues become legislative priorities. Essentially, individuals act within this sphere to establish which aspects of a teacher shortage will be addressed through

³⁸ Within the context of this research, the 'collective policy outcome' would be the state decision to block, allow, or actively support TFA growth within local rural Southern schools and communities.

which types of teacher labour policies. The second sphere established in Bowe and Ball (1992) is that of ‘text production’—the actual writing of legislative priorities into text. As soon as educational agendas have been established, policy makers must set their intentions into print, thus lending significant political power to those responsible for crafting the required legislative texts (Ball, 1990).

As the third sphere outlined by Bowe and Ball (1992), ‘practice’ refers to any and all matters concerned with the actual implementation of policy texts. At this stage, yet another transformation occurs as policy text is decoded and carried out by those responsible for the day-to-day management of local education systems. This causes further opportunity for distortion or change from the original policy intentions because, as noted by Ball (1993), ‘Reactions are not constructed in circumstances of their own making. Policies pose problems to their subjects. Problems that must be solved in context....we cannot predict or assume how they will be acted on, what their immediate effect will be, what room for manoeuvring [policy implementers] will find for themselves’ (12).³⁹

Ball sees education reform as a highly decentralised process and thus contends that numerous policy makers have some role to play within each of the spheres named above; as a result, he concludes that it is impossible to fully capture the processes driving education policy development and implementation, processes characterised by a ‘sociology of complexity, uncertainty, and doubt’ (Ball, 1994, p. 180). The three-sphere model developed in Ball and Bowe (1992) may still be used to conceptualise the complex networks and hierarchies that dictate rural Southern policy outcomes

³⁹ For a more thorough discussion of Ball’s three spheres as it relates to this research, see Appendix 3A.

related to TFA. Given the nature of policy maker networks within most US states, it appears that three different individuals or groups of individuals typically control Ball's three spheres at the state level. Namely, most states have established a semi-centralised education policy structure wherein the state governor, the state superintendent of public education, and the chairmen of the State Education and Appropriations Committees⁴⁰ primarily shape TFA-related policy outcomes in either side of the Delta.⁴¹

Because these three types of positions are highly influential within each state's education policy outcomes, it seems logical to conclude that these officials' decisions to support or oppose TFA are particularly important in deciding when and to what degree the programme is employed in a given partnership site. The findings presented in Part Two of this research thus give particular weight to the decision-taking processes reported by these central officials during their semi-structured interviews. All together, the conclusions drawn through this policy framework will help to explain when and why TFA has been a politically viable strategy for filling rural Southern teacher vacancies. In turn, this understanding should more fully elucidate the ways in which TFA might be an effective supplement to existing state-level teacher labour policies.

⁴⁰ It should be noted that the titles of these positions vary by state, though the powers entrusted to the positions are fairly uniform. For example, Mississippi State has a Superintendent of Education, while Arkansas State calls this same position the Commissioner of Education; despite these nominal differences, the Mississippi Superintendent and the Arkansas Commissioner hold nearly identical duties and responsibilities.

⁴¹ For a discussion of how these actors were identified as 'central' within the context of the Delta case study, as well as a discussion of other influential actors—including teachers union leaders, local district superintendents, and local TFA leadership—see Appendix 3B.

3.4 Conclusions: Identifying gaps in the recruitment/retention research

The central research question (introduced in Chapter One) asks, essentially, if and how TFA has supplemented state efforts to resolve the Delta teacher shortages, especially as the programme grew rapidly from 2008 to 2010. Numerous types of teacher recruitment and/or retention strategies have been carefully developed, tested, and critiqued within the existing academic literature, but few seem suited to the particular needs of rural communities. Moreover, almost none of the research accounts for regional variations in rural community structures and institutions. Consequently, rural Southern policy makers have very few empirically tested options at their disposal: to date, only GYO programmes seem equipped to handle rural Southern needs, but these programmes take years of upfront investment before they produce any new teachers.

This gap signals a significant need for new, region-specific rural teacher recruitment and retention research. Part Two examines TFA as one such potential strategy; a second, policy-based framework introduced in this chapter will structure subsequent discussions of state engagement with TFA. This model combines the accounts of various political-behavioural economists with Ball's 'three spheres' to determine when and how state officials might feel motivated to support or oppose TFA expansion.

-4-

Methodological strategies for data collection and analysis

Chapter Abstract: Having established both the context and vision for this research in the first three chapters, this chapter proceeds to consider the methodological and paradigmatic structures underlying it. To do so, it first clarifies the scope and purpose of the central research question. Next, it discusses the rationale behind a case study approach as well as the mixed-methods analysis employed throughout. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of certain ethical considerations as well as the limits to any generalisations drawn from the research project.

Because there is so little research available on Teach for America's specific role as a source of teacher labour within the rural South, it is not yet possible for researchers to know or evaluate the organization's efficacy in achieving such ends. Offering a first step to address this gap, this project provides a deeper understanding of the nature and possible ramifications of TFA as a tool for teacher labour realignment in one hard-to-staff rural Southern community. In doing so, this exploratory case study develops essential preliminary data on TFA's emerging role within rural Southern teacher labour markets.

This chapter documents the methodological approaches, limitations, ethical concerns, and other central considerations surrounding the Delta case study. It begins with a justification of the selected case study site, which presently stands as the oldest, largest, and most established rural Southern TFA partnership location. Additionally, the state divide between the Mississippi Delta and the Arkansas Delta provides a 'natural experiment'⁴² for examining the ways in which TFA may complement state-level teacher labour strategies in some political contexts but not in others. These characteristics make the Delta a valuable subject of analysis, as they enable

⁴² According to Vogt, Gardner, and Haefele (2012), the term 'natural experiment' is 'used [in the social sciences] to describe independent variables that arise as a result of social or political action, such as policies or legislation.... In what most people would term a natural experiment, the data are generated in a more-or-less natural process or by an event that can approximate an experimental intervention' (p. 62). Within this context, the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta is a historically, racially, and socio-economically homogenous region geographically isolated from other regions; as a result, Teach for America has one Delta office to handle its placement throughout the entire area. The artificial Mississippi-Arkansas state border dividing the region allows us to observe the ways in which different types of state policies have contributed to differing teacher shortage outcomes and Teach for America placement patterns within this otherwise homogenous region, thus fitting the Vogt, Gardner, and Haefele (2012) criteria for a natural experiment.

researchers to draw more insightful conclusions on TFA's role in the rural South than might otherwise be possible in newer partnership sites where there is relatively less data on TFA's local history and/or policy engagement.

4.1 Defining the nature and scope of the research question

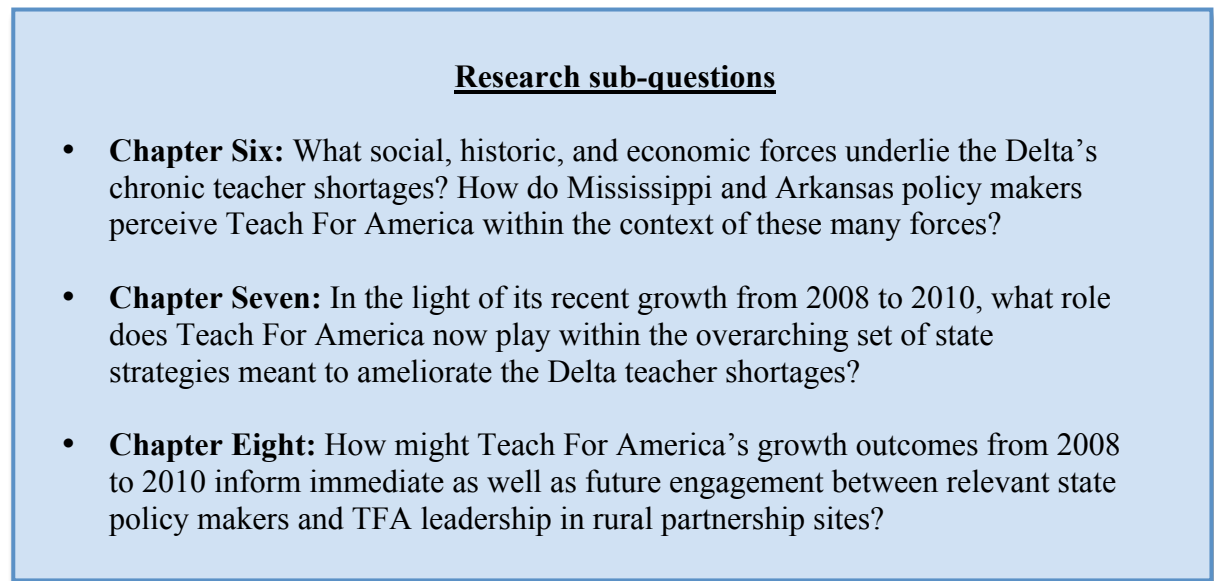
The central research question focusses on the ways in which TFA has interacted with rural Southern teacher labour dynamics to address widespread local shortages. More specifically, this research seeks to answer the following question:

How—if at all—has Teach For America been able to supplement state efforts to address teacher shortages in the rural South, particularly since the programme's rapid growth from 2008 to 2010?

Put simply, the research question considers the effects that TFA has brought to bear on teacher labour markets in its rural Southern partnership sites; more specifically, it asks if these effects are in line with state officials' broader goals for local teacher labour reforms. So as to more fully understand the nature of this research question, Chapters Two and Three provided an introduction to the relevant literature and analytical constructs. First, Chapter Two developed a basic teacher labour market framework to explore the driving forces and defining features of current US teacher shortages; next, Chapter Three surveyed the teacher recruitment and retention literature that aims to explain these chronic teacher vacancies.

In both chapters, significant gaps in the existing literature highlight a need for further, rural Southern-specific research. Because there is no data on TFA's role within this region's teacher labour markets, it will be necessary to adopt an exploratory case

Figure 4.1 Research sub-questions



study approach. As such, subsequent chapters will shift focus from the national-level findings discussed in previous chapters to explore outcomes particular to the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. The three sub-questions outlined in Figure 4.1 will guide this exploration, asking how TFA has engaged with policy makers to fill Delta teacher shortages; each of the findings chapters (Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight) addresses one of the sub-questions. So as to connect these findings back to the central research question, the final chapter considers when and to what extent the Delta-specific findings may be generalised to fit the broader rural Southern context.

4.2 Rationale of the case study approach

Discussions of TFA's impact on rural Southern teacher labour dynamics are wholly absent from the current body of academic literature; researchers such as Patton (1990) suggest that a case study approach would be well suited to the exploration of this under-studied field. Case studies are a popular form of research within the social

sciences, at least in part because of the in-depth information they provide on complex social issues. Patton (1990) defines the case study as a detailed focus on a single entity, constrained in terms of time and also the event or activity to be studied. In this case study, the scope of research is limited to the impact of TFA growth patterns on understaffed schools within the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, focussing specifically on those outcomes occurring from 2008 to 2010. Robson (2002) asserts that by establishing these substantive, geographical, and temporal boundaries, it is possible to create a tangible space to explore new concepts previously undocumented within the academic literature; subsequent portions of this section will consider the rationale behind the temporal and geographic boundaries chosen for this case study.

Stake (1995, 2000) explains that case studies can be categorised as intrinsically valuable, instrumental, and/or collective in nature; this research serves as both an intrinsic and instrumental case study.⁴³ First, the findings presented in this work will be intrinsically important, as they capture a detailed portrait of TFA-Delta outcomes; they also provide meaningful information on the results of TFA engagement with the Delta's teacher labour markets and offer insights on the policy dilemmas that arise from these patterns.

Additionally, this work serves as an instrumental first step into a new field of TFA-related research. The case study approach enables some preliminary conclusions on TFA's impact within rural Southern teacher labour market outcomes more generally.

Namely, Chapter Nine notes that the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta is one of five rural

⁴³ To draw some brief distinctions amongst these categories, an intrinsic case study provides valuable information on a unique phenomenon or event that must be considered in its own right; an instrumental case study provides a foundation for more general research on new fields of research; and a collective case study relies on multiple instrumental examinations to solidify knowledge of the field. For a more in-depth description, see Stake (1995, 2000).

TFA sites within the Southern ‘Black Belt’—a region characterised by a shared set of social, racial, economic, and historic legacies;⁴⁴ because the other four TFA sites located in the rural ‘Black Belt’ are characterised by the same social and educational challenges that define the Delta, many of the findings presented in this research will be applicable to those sites as well. In this way, the generalisations drawn from this case study provide a valuable starting point for analysing TFA’s role in realigning rural Southern teacher labour market outcomes.

Why the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta from 2008 to 2010?

Several factors make the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta an ideal instrumental site for analysis. First, the Delta is the oldest and largest of the nine current rural TFA partnership sites; consequently, it holds the most ample data for evaluation. Moreover, the TFA-Delta corps grew faster than any other TFA site from 2008 to 2010; during this time, expansion rates averaged an impressive 593 per cent (from eighty-three corps members in the 2007-8 school year to 522 in the 2010-11 school year). This recent growth has transformed the Delta into the single largest TFA site in the country. TFA’s long-standing presence and recent growth within the Delta provide the largest data set for analysing TFA’s role within a rural region’s teacher labour supply, making a 2008-2010 case study of the Delta a top choice for this research project.

As an added benefit, the Delta stands as the only TFA site to straddle a state border. Delta corps members operating under the same local TFA administrators are placed in either Mississippi or Arkansas; in this way, the region serves as a ‘natural experiment’, wherein it is possible to examine the impact different state policies

⁴⁴ Those TFA sites in the rural Southern ‘Black Belt’ include: the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, Alabama, Eastern North Carolina, South Carolina, and South Louisiana.

might have on the relative size and importance of TFA in local teacher markets. Mississippi and Arkansas received roughly equal shares of the Delta's total TFA corps member supply up until 2008. From 2008 to 2010, however, the influx of new teachers was disproportionately funnelled into Mississippi schools. In 2007—the year before major growth began—there were forty-two teachers in Arkansas and forty-one in Mississippi; by 2010, there were only 169 in Arkansas compared to 353 in Mississippi, marking growth rates of 402 per cent and 861 per cent, respectively. Exploring the various social, political, and economic structures governing either side of the Delta provides insights as to how and why these inter-state divergences arose.

4.3 Rationale and data sources of a mixed-methods approach

The exploratory nature of this case study requires a wealth of various data types; consequently, it employs what Patton (1990) calls a 'multi-method data triangulation approach' to data collection and analysis (p.274). In particular, three different types of data (semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and quantitative analysis of secondary data) serve as the primary data sources, while additional resources (document analysis of state legislation, non-participatory observation, and analysis of official state finances and teacher labour data) provide further contextual support. Taken together, these varied data sources allow more careful examination as to how and why TFA has become a prominent contributor to the Delta's teacher labour market outcomes, and, ultimately, enable an evaluation as to whether the organisation has supplemented or hindered regional reform efforts in the short and long term.

Once collected, these separate sources were analysed using the 'triangulation' techniques described in Jang et al. (2008). Under this mixed-methods approach, researchers collect and analyse data sources separately and then integrate the findings

from each to enable deeper analysis of the research topic. As Jang et al. (2008)

explain:

The different methods remain discrete through data collection and analysis and ... mixing the methods takes place at the level of interpretation and inference... The classic view of a triangulation design is to seek convergence on a single perspective of a particular social phenomenon and to strengthen validity by offsetting biases resulting from various sources such as substantive theories, researchers, and methods. (p. 222-3)

Similar to Jang et al. (2008), Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) outline an 'interactive model for research design,' wherein they emphasize the ways in which various components of the research study (such as the research purpose, questions, framework, and methods) '...are integrated with, and mutually influence, one another' and '...are connected in a network or web rather than a linear or cyclic sequence' (p. 242-243). Figure 4.2 illustrates the web that structured this mixed-methods research. As shown in this figure, quantitative and qualitative data strands were collected and analysed separately, guided by the findings and theories within the existing literature and in accordance with relevant research methodology handbooks. Once fully developed, all findings were placed within the labour market / policy framework developed in Chapters Two and Three so that they might 'speak' to one another. Because qualitative and quantitative findings were given equal weight, the research employed an 'equivalent status design' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). At this point, peripheral data sources (researcher observations, policy document analysis, and additional data sources outlined in Section 4.3.6) were used to further contextualize and develop the 'story' that emerged.

Figure 4.2 Underlying mixed-methods research design

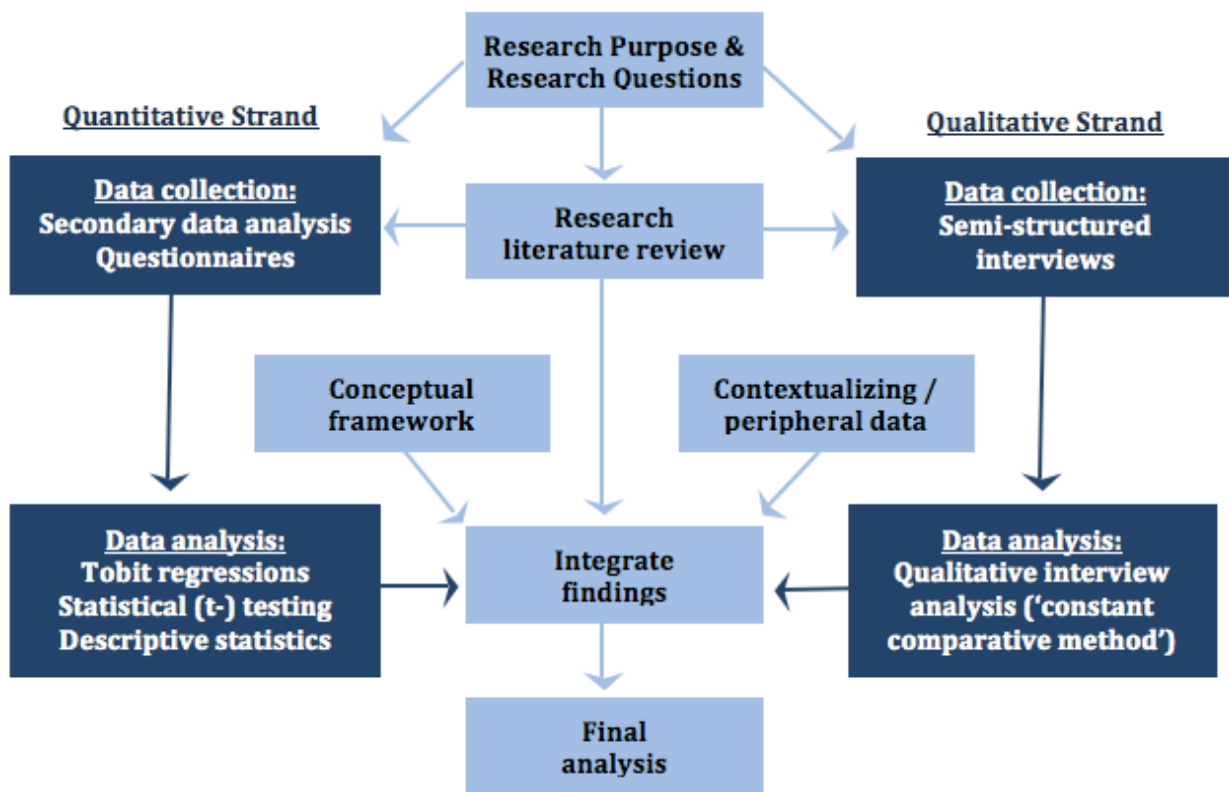


Figure 4.2 illustrates the mixed-methods design developed in this research project. It draws from the models developed in other mixed-methods works, including Jang et al. (2008), Sammons et al. (2011), and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010).

This section documents the data collection and analysis strategies used for each of the central and peripheral data sources listed above; it then explains how the findings from each source were analyzed and then synthesised into the single body of work presented in Chapters Six through Nine.

4.3.1 Semi-structured policy maker interviews

Semi-structured interviews served as a central data source, offering insight into the perceptions and priorities of state-level education policy makers in Arkansas State and Mississippi State. There were two major logistical challenges behind this process: first, identifying the relevant policy makers in either state and, second, convincing

these policy elites to grant interviews. So as to successfully navigate both issues, the researcher contacted all members of the Mississippi and Arkansas Boards of Education and then interviewed any board members who seemed receptive.⁴⁵ Following what Bernard (2000) labels the ‘snowball’ technique, interviewed officials were then asked to list any policy makers they considered ‘important actors’ within Delta education reform; when necessary, they also helped contact these policy makers. Such an approach seemed the most effective means of identifying and accessing otherwise reticent interviewees because, as Kadushin (2006) explains, ‘Doors open when one member of an elite [political] group passes you on to another’ (p.179).

Though contacting elite education policy makers in both states was challenging and time-intensive, the snowball process yielded a seemingly comprehensive list of relevant policy makers;⁴⁶ it also provided an effective means of accessing the policy elite. In total, fifty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted, forty-four of them with policy makers who appear to directly shape TFA growth and/or teacher labour policies on either side of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Additionally, this process enabled interviews with three TFA-Delta leaders, including the Executive Director, Corps Member Development Co-ordinator, and School Partnerships Liaison of the Delta site office; these interviews focused on the ways in which TFA officials perceived their organization’s role within local teacher labour policyscapes and their

⁴⁵ For a list of policy makers interviewed, see Appendix 4A.

⁴⁶ As stated above, the policy maker positions interviewed are listed in Appendix 4A. This list was comprehensive because, by the final round of interviews, officials did not name a single new policy maker who would be relevant to the research. Bernard (2000) contends that when the snowballing technique is conscientiously applied, this outcome would suggest the researcher has created an exhaustive list of relevant officials.

specific goals for education reform in the Delta.⁴⁷ Two other policy makers declined their interviews.

Because of the small size and close-knit nature of these two groups, it was not possible to conduct pilot studies on any of their members; instead, a pilot interview was conducted with a lead education researcher and practitioner based at the University of Mississippi in March 2010.⁴⁸ Feedback from the pilot interview helped to troubleshoot the types of questions included in the interviews; in particular, the pilot interviewee provided substantial feedback on the scope and wording of the research question. He had worked with and/or advised all of the central Mississippi policy makers and many of the central Arkansas policy makers targeted in this study and, so, was aware of the types of knowledge these officials would have and would be willing to share. Additionally, his expertise in local education policy landscapes and controversies enabled him to ‘translate’ generic terms on teacher attrition, recruitment, and retention into the specific language employed by these officials when developing Delta education policies.

The pilot interviewee also suggested that the interviews be conducted by Skype phone and, when possible, Skype videophone rather than in person. Most elected and appointed education officials in Mississippi and Arkansas hold another full-time job somewhere in their respective state. As these states are very large and home to a highly dispersed, rural population, there were no public transit options for meeting

⁴⁷ The nine individuals interviewed who were not state policy makers or TFA officials were somehow insiders in this field and therefore could provide important information/insights for analysing other interviews as well as contact information with certain state officials. For example, several were education policy aides to elected officials, while others were former state officials who had been instrumental in developing current TFA and/or relevant state-level teacher labour policies.

⁴⁸ For a list of semi-structured interview questions developed during the pilot, see Appendix 4B.

with each official; it therefore would have been logistically and financially unfeasible to meet all fifty-three individuals in person. Using Skype made it possible to interview geographically dispersed officials at a time that was compatible with their non-governmental work schedules.

These interviews were conducted in five rounds; once one round of interviews was completed (each round consisted of approximately ten individual interviews), the transcripts from that round were analysed to refine the goals and questions for the subsequent round of interviews. This process aligns with what Patton (1990) would call the ‘constant comparative method’. Under this interview analysis strategy, the researcher reviews and analyses each new round of interviews as a means to recalibrate the objectives and strategies for subsequent interview rounds. In doing so, the interview process becomes a more dynamic and refined source for research analysis. For this project, interviews from all five rounds were recorded and transcribed by the researcher from April to October 2010. For a more careful explanation of the coding process, sample transcripts, and an interviewee identification code chart, see Appendices 4C-4E.⁴⁹

Beyond the logistical challenges involved in arranging these interviews, the political status of those interviewed required special consideration. While any interviewee is capable of withholding or misconstruing information, the political elite are

⁴⁹ Appendix 4C outlines the ways in which the Patton (1990) account of the ‘constant comparative method’ was applied to the interviews conducted for this research project. Appendix 4D includes two sample transcripts that were coded under this method, one transcript from an interview with a Mississippi policy maker and one transcript from a TFA-Delta administrator’s interview. Appendix 4E provides a chart of each policy maker’s identification code, along with their state affiliations, gender, professional position, as well as race and history as a teacher. This appendix gives the reader more context as to the type of person that made a given comment (for example, a white female serving as an appointed official in Mississippi) without compromising interviewee rights to anonymity. These same codes are utilised extensively in Chapters Six through Eight.

particularly ‘confident in regulating openness’ and also able to ‘invalidate lines of inquiry; ... deflect the inappropriate; ... [and] accomplish a weaving of a narrative of justification’ (Batteson and Ball, 1995, p.203). According to Phillips (1998), ‘Research conducted in elite settings should start from the premise that interviews only reveal a picture which is partial and incomplete’ (p. 10). As such, it was necessary to spend additional time crafting the semi-structured interview questions so as to ensure that they had a clear purpose from the onset. As a further step, the pilot interviewee, who had worked with many of the intended interviewees, offered insights and techniques to ensure that interviews with these officials were carefully managed throughout.

As described above, all interviews conducted using the constant comparison method served two purposes: providing data and informing the nature of all subsequent interviews. After collection, they were transcribed and analysed using the strategies outlined in Rubin and Rubin (2005). Researchers must first read all the transcripts carefully, identifying the major ‘concepts, themes, events and topical markers’ that emerge from this reading (ibid, p. 207). From there, the researcher then clarifies, synthesises, and elaborates on the central concepts and themes to create a list of the most important ideas for analysis. These ideas were clustered around three distinct focal points: 1) perceived causes and characteristics of the Delta teacher shortages, 2) policy maker goals for the Delta teacher supply, and 3) policy maker perceptions of TFA in relation to these other two focal points.

Once the major ideas had been identified, the transcripts were coded accordingly. Rubin and Rubin (2005) warn, ‘The decisions the researcher makes when coding

largely shape what he or she will be able to conclude during the analysis. If a researcher does not have a label for stress, he or she will not be able to develop themes based on stress' (p. 208). As such, it was essential that the research topic was well defined by the time of coding, and that the central and sub-research questions had been fully developed. Relevant academic literature can also provide useful insights as to the types of topics that should be coded for analysis (ibid). In line with the three central focal points described above, three corresponding strands of literature were used to inform transcript coding: 1) literature documenting the nature of (rural) teacher shortages, 2) empirical studies of recruitment and retention strategies meant to improve the (rural) teacher supply, and 3) empirical research on TFA, particularly as it relates to teacher quality and student performance in (rural) partner schools.⁵⁰ One may notice that these foci form the backbone of the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three.

Once the major concepts had been identified and the transcripts coded accordingly, the interview transcripts were then dissected, whereby each of the coded excerpts was sorted and grouped with similar excerpts. This grouping made it possible to identify the collective ideas and perspectives that dominated policy maker responses. These dominant ideas were then synthesised into a single narrative; more nuanced analysis of each of the groups was used to elaborate the nuances and diverging opinions connected to each part of the central narrative. The whole analytical process—from recognising, synthesising, and elaborating on central themes, to coding transcripts, to grouping and analysing transcript excerpts—was highly iterative, requiring constant attention to the ways in which individual themes and concepts might affirm or

⁵⁰ Because the Delta is a highly rural region, literature that emphasised a rural perspective on teacher shortages, recruitment and retention strategies, and TFA corps member quality was given priority.

contradict one another. As a result, this interview analysis provided a central understanding of how policy makers perceive TFA in relation to their efforts to reform the Delta teacher supply.

4.3.2 Superintendent and school principal questionnaires

An electronic questionnaire was distributed to the ninety-four district-level superintendents in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, while another similar questionnaire was sent to the 542 school principals working directly underneath these superintendents. As a consequence of the Delta's sparse population, questionnaires were administered to all Delta principals and superintendents; no sampling was necessary, as the entire population—defined and contained by the geographic parameters of the case study—could be identified, accessed, and analysed. Because numerous state policy makers and TFA leaders warned that these target audiences would be very hard to reach,⁵¹ the Dillman Total Design Method (TDM) was employed to develop and distribute the two questionnaires.

Created by communications researcher Robert Dillman in the 1970s and adapted by Dillman and other researchers to accommodate the rise of electronic communication in recent years, the TDM is meant to maximise the response rate to various types of questionnaires and surveys. This approach, piloted in Dillman (1974), uses a specific set of directives to engage survey participants before, during, and after a questionnaire is administered as a means of increasing the likelihood that the target audience does engage with the researcher. Put simply, 'The TDM is based on sound research

⁵¹ Nearly half of all interviewed state officials as well as all interviewed local TFA leadership warned that Delta principals and superintendents are highly sceptical of outside inquiry. The degree and impact of this 'distrust of outsiders' is examined more critically in Chapter Six.

principles and confirms that when attention is paid to administrative detail, high response rates can be achieved from difficult subjects' (Hoddinott, 1986, p.2366).

TDM advocates assert that throughout the entire data collection process—before, during, and after the survey or questionnaire response is solicited—it is essential that the researcher engage each respondent through consistent, positive, and professional individualised attention; the following principles outlined by TDM experts were all employed to foster positive and professional relationships with the intended Delta participants.

Before administering a survey, researchers must make a conscious effort to select the correct sample population—a non-issue for this research, as it targeted the Delta's entire superintendent and principal populations. Having identified the target audience, it was then necessary to design clear questionnaires that could be easily accessed by Delta superintendents and principals. The writings from an extensive body of TDM literature were used to achieve this end—including the works of Cobanoglu (2001), Dillman (1974), Goyder (1985), Heberlein (1978), Mehta (1995), Schaefer and Dillman (1998), Scott (1961), and Smith (1997). These works provided guidelines for screening potential questions so that they were logically arranged, clearly and succinctly worded, and politically neutral. Once a preliminary questionnaire for each of the two target groups (district superintendents as one and school principals as the other) had been constructed, it was possible to conduct a pilot study with superintendents and principals immediately outside the Delta region.⁵²

⁵² These responses were used only to recalibrate questionnaires, and thus were not included in the final data set. To view a final draft of the questionnaires and all accompanying messages, see Appendix 4F.

Based on the pilot feedback and further reading within the TDM body of research, it seemed appropriate to use email and an electronic database to administer and collect these questionnaires. Cobanoglu et al. (2001) summarise some of the major advantages to this approach:

It is recommended using e-mail/web-based surveys when surveying educators for three reasons; first, e-mail/web methodology yields a higher response rate at less cost and more rapidly than mail surveys. Second, the majority of educators have access to e-mail in the United States. Finally, since e-mail/web surveys code the data automatically eliminating hand-coding, it saves the researcher time and resources. (p. 410)

Similar findings have led numerous other data collection studies to conclude that email surveys are also the most efficient and effective option for accessing education officials with consistent internet access (Bachmann, 1996; Kittleson, 1995; Mehta, 1995; Schaefer, 1998; and Sproull, 1986).

Once the survey was finalised and posted online through an electronic questionnaire service, a database was created containing the name, school district affiliation, and email address for each of the district superintendents and school principals included in the target audience. This information and the accompanying email messages (which contained links to the appropriate questionnaire for each group) were sent to the Office of the State Superintendent/Commissioner of Education—the direct superior to all school district superintendents and, by extension, also the superior of local school principals.⁵³ After reviewing the database list, introductory messages, and questionnaire topics, these central education offices sent the questionnaire links and all follow-up messages out on behalf of the researcher.

Sheehan (1999) asserts that when possible, administering questionnaires through the

⁵³ For a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the Mississippi State Superintendent and the Arkansas State Commissioner, who are the appointed heads of each state's public school system, see Appendix 3A.

direct supervisor of the target audience enables the researcher to establish credibility and authority amongst questionnaire recipients, thus increasing the likelihood that they will respond. Questionnaire recipients were also informed that all data would be processed confidentially through the aforementioned online database, ensuring that their responses would be anonymous and confidential.

The state superintendent/commissioner's office contacted district superintendents and school principals five times from July to August 2010; both offices agreed that this period would be the best time to collect data because it marked the window when most superintendents and principals would be back from summer holiday but still would be a few weeks away from the start of the new school year—making it a relatively less busy time for the target audience. Superintendents and principals first received an introductory message, stating that they would soon receive a link to a short questionnaire and encouraging them to complete it; from there they received three emails containing the appropriate link⁵⁴ and a reminder to complete the questionnaire at their earliest convenience; as a final contact, these individuals received a message thanking them for their time and encouraging them to be in touch if they had any remaining questions.

Despite all of these efforts, response rates remained very low. In fact, less than 20 per cent of superintendents and little more than 13 per cent of school principals completed the questionnaire. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, state policy makers and TFA leaders warned the researcher about this possibility, noting that many of the Delta's local education administrators are highly suspicious of outside researchers and

⁵⁴ Separate messages were sent to superintendents and to principals so that they would be addressed appropriately and would also contain the appropriate questionnaire link. To view these accompanying messages, see Appendix 4C.

usually avoid any external examinations of their schools. Alternatively, it seems likely that flaws in the questionnaire design contributed to low response rates. Numerous questions for both principals and superintendents requested specific percentage rates rather than general impressions and experiences. In doing so, it required that respondents would readily know these details or would have the time and resources to compile this information to respond. As this is a rather unrealistic expectation, the question design most likely inhibited responses from some otherwise willing participants. It would have been more effective for the researcher to have designed broader, perception-based data from superintendents and principals and to have collected specific percentages and details through a separate database.

Whether the result of an apparent distrust of outsiders, a poor design in the nature of the questionnaire contents, or other forces entirely, the low questionnaire response rate held serious implications for the data collection and analysis process outlined in figure 4.2. Namely, these low response rates limited the depth of the analysis that could be conducted on the survey results. Originally, questionnaire responses were intended as a data set on school characteristics and teacher shortages; regressions were going to be run using this data to determine if TFA was more likely to enter certain types of Delta schools or school districts (e.g. schools with the most teacher vacancies, the largest concentrations of African American students, etc.); in turn, the findings from such tests would have been used to analyse if and how TFA has supplemented state efforts to target certain types of hard-to-staff Delta communities. Despite these intentions, the number of respondents was too small to conduct any meaningful statistical tests; moreover, there was no way to determine if there had been a systematic bias in the types of principals and superintendents that chose not to

respond. Bernard (2000) warns that as a consequence of these challenges, the questionnaire responses may not accurately represent the intended target population (i.e. it may not be representative of Delta principals and superintendents as a whole).

As such, the questionnaire responses were not used in any statistical testing. Instead, responses to each question were tabulated and then used as descriptive statistics; in turn, these statistics complement findings from other types of data throughout the findings chapters. For example, Chapter Six discusses policy maker perceptions of the Delta teacher shortages; at one point it analyses interview responses to determine whether certain grade levels and/or subject areas are more hard-to-staff than others. Similarly, the school principal questionnaire asked principals to name the three subjects/grades that they have the most trouble staffing; the tabulation of these findings offered support to policy maker assertions, as the two subject areas that state officials perceived as most hard-to-staff also ranked as two of the three most frequently listed hard-to-staff subject areas on principal questionnaires. Thus, while it was not possible to conduct any sophisticated statistical analysis of these questionnaire responses, they still provided useful descriptive information for interpreting the findings from other data sources.

4.3.3 Secondary data analysis

As a further consequence of the low questionnaire response rate, it was necessary to construct an additional data set for statistically testing TFA partnership patterns. As the third and final major data source, this research relied on secondary data from the US Census Bureau, the US Department of Education, the Mississippi and Arkansas Departments of Education, and TFA to construct a database for statistical testing and regression analysis.

TFA's Delta office provided panel data documenting the number of TFA teachers by school district from 1991 to 2010. So as to match this data by school district, it was necessary to search Mississippi Department of Education and Arkansas Department of Education databases to collect student testing and performance data from 2007 to 2010 for each of the ninety-four districts targeted in the questionnaire.⁵⁵ By using panel data across three (and in some statistical tests, four) years, it was possible to triple (and sometimes quadruple) the sample size.⁵⁶

To further develop this data set, publically accessible databases from the US Census Bureau and the US Department of Education provided demographic information on race, socio-economic distribution, and population density for each of these school districts—also for the years from 2007 to 2010. The US Census Bureau lists its data by county rather than school district, but the rural nature of the Delta region made it fairly easy to convert between these two units. In over 90 per cent of the target districts, the surrounding population is so small and dispersed that there is only one school district within a county; in these cases, the county-level data was used interchangeably as district-level data.

In the remaining 10 per cent of cases, there was almost always one school district serving a more consolidated town, while all remaining county residents attended another municipal school district. In such instances, the town was usually large

⁵⁵ Though the window of analysis is from 2008 to 2010, data from 2007 was included as a 'baseline' comparison when necessary and appropriate.

⁵⁶ By including a set of dummy variables to control for including the same district multiple times for each school year in the regression analysis, it was possible to increase degrees of freedom and, thus, the predictive power of those regressions. For a more complete discussion of this approach, see Woolridge (2006).

enough to be documented as a distinct entity by the Census Bureau; these statistics were used to represent the town's school district statistics. From there, it was necessary to weight this town-level data within the aggregate county-level data to extrapolate the demographic information for the school district serving the remainder of the county (i.e. the regions not captured by the town's demographic statistics). Through this process, it was possible to attain full demographic data for all but three districts from the Delta region. Though difficult to achieve, it was essential that these multi-district counties be included in the analysis so as to avoid systematic omission of test subjects, an outcome that would have introduced a significant bias within the data set and created serious questions of validity within any of the quantitative findings.

Finally, it was necessary to create various dummy variables that could be used to group the data as necessary (for example, comparing school districts by state, or comparing those districts using TFA teachers to those not using TFA teachers). Once completed, this data set provided the foundation for all the statistical testing and regression analysis conducted in Part Two. For the most part, one-way ANOVA tests were used to explore TFA partnership patterns by comparing TFA expansion in Mississippi and Arkansas, TFA placement patterns between two years, and community demographics and characteristics in districts with and without TFA partnerships.

This research also relied on state-level regression analyses that predicted TFA partnership patterns as a function of school district characteristics. Though a classic linear model seemed desirable for this regression, the dependent variable (number of

TFA corps members in a district) is bounded at 0. That is to say, a district may have zero TFA corps members, but it can never have fewer than that—it is impossible to have a negative number of corps members. Thus, the data required a regression model suited to cases with a ‘censored’ dependent variable. As such, a tobit model was used for the regressions. In more technical terms, Woolridge (2006) provides the following explanation of the tobit model:

$$y^* = \beta_0 + \mathbf{x}\boldsymbol{\beta} + u, u|\mathbf{x} \sim \text{Normal}(0, \sigma^2)$$
$$y = \max(0, y^*)$$

The latent variable y^* satisfies the classical linear model assumptions; in particular, it has a normal, homoskedastic distribution with a linear conditional mean. [The equation $y = \max(0, y^*)$] implies that the observed variable, y , equals y^* when $y^* \geq 0$, but $y = 0$ when $y^* < 0$. (p. 596).

Using the tobit regression model, it was possible to determine if certain characteristics of Mississippi and Arkansas Delta schools predicted the strength of TFA partnerships there. Put simply, these tests provided the means for verifying interview claims that TFA had targeted certain types of Delta school districts in its efforts to increase the local teacher supply. In this way, the quantitative data provided new means to engage with the qualitative findings from the aforementioned qualitative data sources.

4.3.4 Document analysis

The remaining types of data were more peripheral to this analysis, serving mostly to contextualise the interpretation of the three central sources just discussed. When conducting the necessary document analysis, Arkansas and Mississippi’s state congressional archives as well as the WestLaw database were used to construct a basic understanding of what Ball and Bowe (1992) would call teacher labour

‘policyscapes’ for either side of the Delta.⁵⁷ Searches were conducted within these databases for all state legislation including the keyword ‘teacher’ somewhere within the text from 1995 to 2010; these legislative texts were then further culled, and only those documents that directly related to TFA, general state teacher recruitment and retention practices, and/or teacher recruitment efforts specific to the Delta region were summarised and included in the ‘policyscape’ descriptions developed in Chapter Seven.

Ball (1992) describes a ‘policyscape’ as the collective set of texts (including legislative documents and all relevant supporting documents) that define the legislative outcomes surrounding a given policy issue. This research used the legislative documents selected from the process described above alongside other related documents from the Mississippi and Arkansas Departments of Education to sketch the teacher labour policyscapes in place in each state. In turn, these accounts made it possible to determine which legislative approaches policy makers have used to ameliorate the Delta teacher shortages so far, and to also consider the ways in which TFA could potentially supplement these policies to more fully address local teacher vacancies.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) warn that document analysis can become highly complex when it is necessary to consider the author’s intent, audience, and temporal context. That said, most such issues were irrelevant to the research project, as these documents were only used to generate a list of the recent Mississippi and Arkansas policies related to TFA and/or the Delta teacher shortages. There was no attempt to determine

⁵⁷ ‘Policyscapes’ refer to the set of existing legislation and mandates—i.e. the ‘policy landscapes’—that shape a given social issue. In this case, such policyscapes include all the relevant political documents shaping teacher labour outcomes from 2008 to 2010 in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta.

policy makers' teacher labour goals or political agendas through examining these documents, nor was there any effort to measure the actual effectiveness of these policies. Instead, these legislative documents were used to construct a summary of the teacher supply instruments and strategies employed in Mississippi and Arkansas; in turn, such information was used to contextualise this examination of TFA as a supplement to state-run Delta reform efforts.

4.3.5 Community, school, and classroom observations

Similarly, the time spent observing teacher work and lifestyles in two separate Delta communities was used to contextualise the findings from interviews and quantitative regression analysis. On two separate occasions, the researcher travelled to the Delta and lived with a house of four TFA corps members. During each of these week-long visits, it was possible to observe classes taught by TFA and traditional teachers, tour two separate schools, and, perhaps most importantly, learn about the work and lifestyle typical of a Delta teacher.

As will become evident in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight, policy makers believe that some of the biggest challenges to closing the Delta teacher shortages stem from the general undesirability of the region's living and work conditions. Resonating with much of the empirical literature, Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers universally believed that the overwhelming poverty, severe rurality, hostility towards 'outsiders', and on-going racial tensions in many Delta communities made it almost impossible to attract teachers to live and work there. As such, these visits were intended primarily as background to inform the analysis of such comments within the interview responses outlined earlier in the chapter. Once a major theme or concept was identified in the interview analysis, it was then possible to check the journal entries from these visits

for any reference to that issue; the relevant journal entries were then used to inform the analysis of that theme or concept by providing insights as to how prevalent/severe it might be as well as the ways in which it might be connected to other themes or concepts.

Though these observations were meant only as a peripheral source of data, it was nevertheless important to remain aware of the risks of incomplete and/or biased interactions, both during the time there and when drawing on experiences after-the-fact. As such, several sources on qualitative observation were consulted throughout this process, including Denzin and Lincoln (1995), Fontana and Frey (2005), and Silverman (2006) as a means to safeguard against these challenges as much as possible.

4.3.6 Other data sources

In addition to the five data sources described above, it was necessary to examine official state finance documents and teacher labour data. Each state's education budget is annually documented by its department of education; the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) released these documents in accordance with the stipulations laid out in the 2007 Freedom of Information Act. Similar to the questionnaire surveys, these documents were used to provide descriptive statistics of the types of funding available for general school maintenance, teacher recruitment and retention programmes, and in Mississippi, recent TFA expansion. Similarly, it was necessary to obtain panel data of teacher vacancy rates in all Mississippi and Arkansas school districts (not just those in the Delta). This data was also released from the MDE and ADE under the 2007

Freedom of Information Act; once collected, it was used to discuss state-wide teacher shortage trends from 1991 to 2010.

4.3.7 Final synthesis of the data

Once all the data had been collected, the triangulation strategies mentioned at the beginning of this section were used to synthesise the findings into a single body of analysis. The narrative developed from the interview analysis was combined with the relevant statistical tests and regression analysis of quantitative secondary data to craft the overarching argument of the research. From there, the remaining data sources were used to develop a more nuanced understanding of this central story. Such a process was highly iterative, as preliminary rounds of analysis would highlight the need for additional information (such as the budgetary and teacher shortage data discussed above); once this new data was included, a new round of synthesis and analysis could occur, which would highlight the need for still other types of data. The findings presented in Chapters Six through Nine represent the final version of this iterative process, offering a single body of analysis that incorporates and synthesises the findings from all those sources listed above.

4.4 Ethical compliance and research limitations

This research was conducted in full compliance with the British Educational Research Society's Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research of 2004. Under these guidelines, research was conducted in a manner that respected the individuals interviewed and the knowledge retrieved from all forms of data collection. There was also strict compliance with these Guidelines' requirements for academic freedom and

integrity. Throughout the analytical process, all audio recordings, transcriptions, artefacts and related notes were kept in a secure area accessible only to the researcher.

In addition to these precautions, Israel (2006) contends that all social science researchers must set clear ethical parameters at the onset of their research so as to ensure that the resulting work is thorough and ethically sound. Peshkin (1988) furthers that contention; beyond setting clear ethical parameters, social scientists must also address their inability to fully eliminate their personal biases. It is impossible for researchers to entirely extricate their personal opinions or to control for all of the confounding environmental factors that may bias their results. In this research, such biases include previous perceptions of TFA, views on rural education, and personal opinions about policy maker intentions and efficacy. By identifying these limitations early on, it becomes possible to better control for their potential impact on the research findings.

The unique position of the researcher makes it especially important to explore and name potential biases. Namely, she was selected as a Teach for America corps member in 2009, but had to choose between joining the corps or accepting a scholarship to research education as a graduate student at the University of Oxford. Additionally, several traditionally certified teachers in her family voiced concerns regarding the Teach for America programme given their own experiences as lifelong educators. Ultimately, the researcher received a two-year deferral to attend the University of Oxford and decided to develop a research project that might better inform her decision to join or withdraw from TFA. At the end of this deferral, she decided to join the 2011 TFA corps and was placed in Washington, DC as a middle

school (students aged eleven- to fifteen-years-old) Spanish teacher at a public charter school. She then completed her third year of research while simultaneously working as a full-time first-year corps member.

This position as a deferred and then active corps member created distinct opportunities and challenges within the research project. On the one hand, it was significantly easier to access TFA officials and databases given her ‘insider’ status. TFA leaders provided more candid responses than they might have with an ‘outsider’—especially given the highly polemic discourse currently surrounding Teach for America. These leaders also granted direct access to current Delta corps members and schools, their assumption that the researcher would share similar beliefs, attitudes, and sympathies with these corps members probably influenced this decision.

The researcher sought to remain actively aware of these biases throughout the research process. Additionally, she sought feedback on research questions, design, and analysis from friends and family members who self-identified as doubtful and/or critical of Teach for America. Despite such efforts to thoughtfully address the potential biases created by her position, it seems inevitable that some partiality remained. As such, it is important that the reader engage with this text consciously aware of the potential assumptions, preferences, and/or biases that underlie it.

Moving from the ethical concerns of researcher bias to the limitations of the research itself, it is imperative to set clear goals and limits for the generalisations to be drawn from this research. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this project is meant in part as

an instrumental case study, providing inroads into a wholly under-studied field of research. While the rural-specific conclusions drawn from this analysis may seem sensible within the context of other rural TFA sites—particularly the other four rural sites in the ‘Black Belt’ of the Southern United States—one must bear in mind that this exploratory piece of work has not been designed to draw broad generalisations for rural sites with substantively different histories and populations, or for urban sites dealing with fundamentally different types of teacher supply challenges. Chapter Nine identifies ways in which future research could build on this exploratory work to address these limitations.

-5-

**An introduction to the case study site:
Historical and institutional contexts of the
Mississippi-Arkansas Delta**

Chapter Abstract: Whereas Chapter Four justified the decision to represent the rural South through a case study of the Delta, this chapter develops a detailed account of the typically ‘rural Southern’ features that characterise the Delta. Here, it becomes evident that the region’s highly agrarian and racially divided structures hamstrung the historical evolution of local public education throughout the nineteenth century. As a result, many communities are still characterised by low educational attainment and low community expectations for education today. Additionally, education funding systems in each state have failed to provide adequate resources for the Delta’s poor rural communities, further reinforcing many of the historically rooted attitudes and outcomes caused by the region’s agrarian structures.

Perhaps the result of its twenty-year presence in the Delta, TFA appears to have become a prominent fixture of the region's education landscape; in recent years, TFA's massive growth has enabled it to address some of the area's most troubling educational needs. In particular, its impressive size has allowed it to fill a significant share of the Delta's chronic teacher shortages since 2008. Though a modern concern, these shortages appear to be rooted in century-old Delta institutions, structures, and hierarchies; the following discussion offers a brief history of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, connecting the region's antebellum socio-economic structures to its current struggle to maintain a supply of local schoolteachers.

The chapter begins by identifying the Delta's exceptionally rural history, a feature that seems closely linked to the region's more recent teacher labour outcomes. Indeed, careful examination of historical accounts would suggest that the Delta's extensive 'rurality' throughout the nineteenth century retarded the development of its public education system. In turn, this delay heavily influenced the evolution of a local public school system from the early 1800s all the way up through the late 1990s. Certain education historians have argued that recent education struggles, including the struggle to staff chronically vacant classrooms, are a direct consequence of the Delta's slow and highly rural development patterns in decades past. Related to this historical evolution, the chapter also explores ways in which recent state-level education funding challenges have compounded these historic developments; all together, this

discussion provides the context for Chapter Six, which explores the link between these histories and modern Delta teacher shortages.

5.1 The origins of public education in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta

As a result of the South's rich soil and distinctive farming seasons, rural Southern areas have shared the same social and economic history since the arrival of American settlers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Mulkey, 1993; Perna et al., 2007). During this time, the South's economy was comprised largely of slave-run plantations; as a result, the region became characterised by the development of small, dispersed farm-based communities. These agrarian structures are still evident throughout most of the South today, but they are especially apparent in Mississippi and Arkansas. In fact, Mississippi and Arkansas ranked as two of only six Southern states to produce agricultural goods for all five of their top exports in 2009 (US Department of Agriculture, 2010). This agricultural focus is also apparent within the states' school demographics: 45 per cent of all Mississippi students and 35 per cent of all Arkansas students attended rural schools in 2005, compared to a Southern average of 28 per cent and a national average of only 19 per cent (Johnson and Strange, 2005).

Rural schools struggle to attract and retain highly qualified teachers partly because their surrounding communities experience higher rates of poverty and lower average family income levels than do communities in urban and suburban regions; unfortunately, these characteristics are especially pronounced amongst rural communities in Mississippi and Arkansas. For Mississippi, average rural income was the second lowest of any state in the country at \$15,242 per person, while for Arkansas, rural income reached only \$16,117 per person—both falling far below the national rural average of \$19,285 (ibid). Thus, even when compared to other rural

communities, rural towns in Mississippi and Arkansas are relatively less equipped to attract, pay, and retain highly qualified teachers.⁵⁸

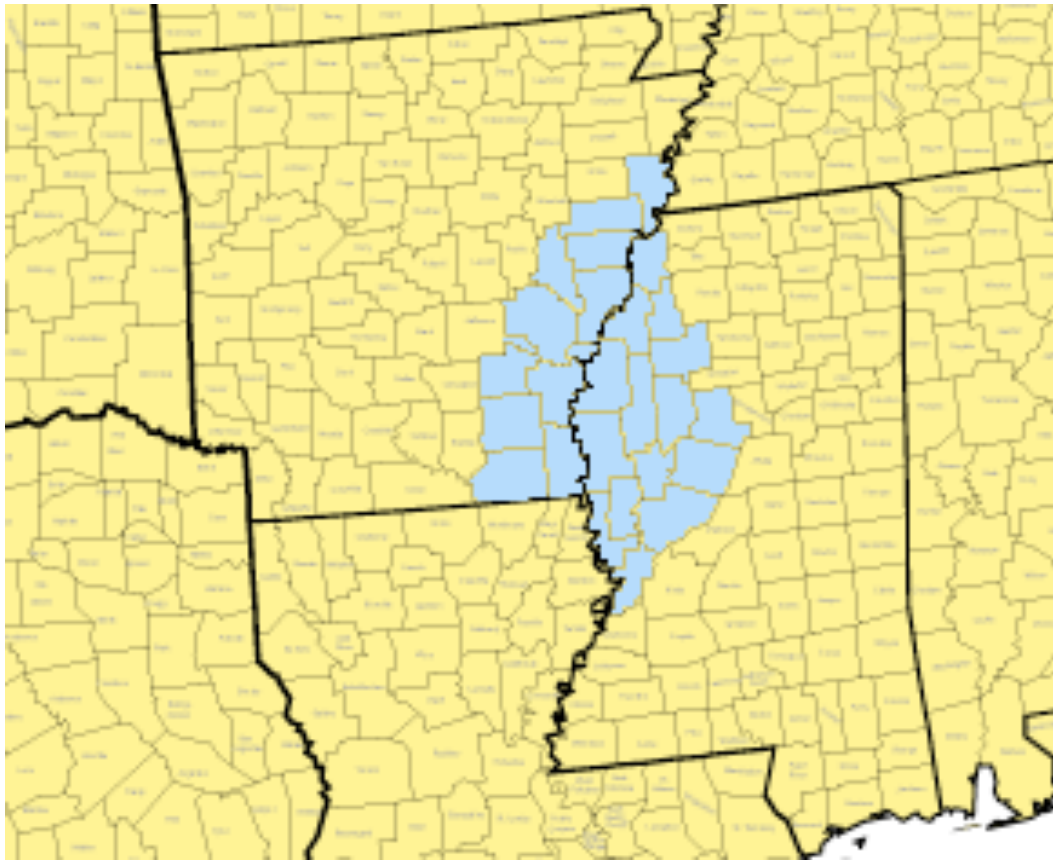
Narrowing the focus to Delta communities within Mississippi and Arkansas, historically rich farmland has rendered the region even more rural than most other parts of either state. Contrary to what its name might imply, the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta is not actually a delta at all. Rather, as illustrated in Figure 5.1, the ‘Delta’ refers to a region of land straddling either side of the Mississippi River—with the Mississippi State portion of the Delta on one side and the Arkansas State portion on the other. Mississippi and Arkansas residents originally referred to this region as a ‘delta’ not because they were unaware of its true geographic nature, but because the area was subject to annual flooding for centuries, making local soil so rich that its farmland was comparable to that found along actual river deltas.

During their semi-structured interviews, most Mississippi and Arkansas state policy makers traced the Delta’s current rural structures back to these origins, noting that the region’s rich farmland and convenient river-based transportation made it a hub for some of the South’s largest and most successful antebellum plantations. As a result of these characteristics, most of the farm-based communities there became highly self-sufficient and, as a consequence, too geographically isolated to maintain their own public school system.

Recent technological developments as well as state-led efforts to end annual flooding have pushed many Delta residents out of the agricultural labour force, yet most local

⁵⁸ The funding schedules and resources for Delta public schools will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Figure 5.1 Counties included in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta



The counties shaded in blue belong to the Delta region; the Mississippi-Arkansas state boundary dividing these counties roughly in half is the Mississippi River.

communities remain unable to attract other forms of industry. As a result, the region remains as rural as ever and is now home to increasing poverty and unemployment (Gage, 2010).⁵⁹ Monk (2007) argues that these factors directly correlate with acute regional teacher shortages. Placing them back within the broader state context, Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers must provide teachers to especially rural, especially poor Delta communities while also balancing the needs of their respective states' many other dispersed rural areas. Similar to Delta towns, most of these Mississippi and Arkansas communities are endowed with even fewer financial resources than those available in a typical rural community; consequently, they are

⁵⁹ The connections between Delta poverty, unemployment, and teacher vacancies will be discussed extensively in Chapter Six.

less capable of attracting and retaining teachers through the local tax base alone.

Taken together, these state-wide struggles place enormous pressure on policy makers to spread their limited resources across the state, rather than exclusively targeting Delta-specific vacancies.

5.1.1 Historical development of education policyscapes in Mississippi

The rural characteristics described above have characterised the Delta for centuries and thus have hindered the development of local educational systems since the region was first settled in the late 1700s. Indeed, as a result of the poverty and geographic isolation just described, Mississippi and Arkansas state policy makers have struggled to establish and maintain rural Delta schools from the very beginning. Turning first to Mississippi, state structures failed to address most rural education financing needs for more than a century after the state's inception in 1817. As a consequence of this delayed response, Mississippi's historic educational development patterns appear to have suppressed schooling in poor, isolated schools by limiting the resources available to maintain schools and pay sufficient teacher salaries.

Neither the first state constitution (passed in 1817) nor the second constitution (of 1832) mentioned the provision of education or the establishment of a public school system. Instead, individual communities valuing public education were required to found, staff, and maintain their schools entirely through local means. As a consequence, many poor communities—especially those in the highly rural Delta region—remained without access to formal education well into the second half of the nineteenth century.

This is not to say that there were no efforts to provide state-run schooling. Mississippi legislators established the state's first tuition-free public school in 1820 (albeit in a wealthy urban area); during this time, they also created a state Literary Fund, which provided rural communities with monetary support for school development on a per-student basis. Despite these efforts, the Literary Fund's prorated funding was too meagre to maintain a school without significant financial contributions from the surrounding community. In fact, under the system created by the Literary Fund, the development of and on-going provision for local schooling were still technically the burdens of each community. As a result, all public schools established during the early 1800s were located in wealthy urban areas.

It was not until 1836 that a third state constitution legally required the state legislature to establish a set of free public schools for all children and to work towards the establishment of higher education institutions. Just four years later, however, bank failure led to the 1840 collapse of the Literary Fund, and the necessary financial reserves were not replaced until a new state constitution established the Common Fund in 1868. During that twenty-eight-year gap in funding, few to none of the constitution's education mandates were realised. Moreover, rural education floundered even once the Common Fund was created because, like the Literary Fund, it provided financial backing to schools on a per-student basis, regardless of each community's relative poverty or rurality. This prorated funding remained standard until the Common Fund was replaced in 1890.

As a result of the per-student funding system, most rural communities still lacked a public school system by the 1880s; this outcome lead officials to conclude that such

funding formulas were not sufficient to overcome regional income disparities—particularly in isolated rural communities, where schools remained almost non-existent. Consequently, legislators sought other means of promoting a uniform education system and so, in 1890, they introduced the Equalizing Fund, a programme designed to supplement funding above and beyond allotted per-student entitlements in the poorest communities.

Though a promising gesture towards improving rural education, this fund never achieved its intentions, largely because the additional finances it appropriated to impoverished rural communities were still too small to fully fund a public school (Conlon and Kimenyi, 1991). As a result, few rural areas were able to establish public schools under the Equalizing Fund, which remained the primary state funding mechanism until 1952. Because its supplemental funding formula was never amended, scholars such as Leonard and Box (2010) and White (2008) argue that the Equalizing Fund, contrary to what its name might imply, actually cemented the educational divide between poor rural communities and their wealthier urban counterparts through the first half of the twentieth century.

During this same time period, state legislators also enabled racist practices within existing public schools, a move that would disproportionately affect plantation-based communities where most of the state's African American population still remained. In 1890, the same year that the Equalizing Fund was created, lawmakers ratified the fifth Mississippi State Constitution, which, amongst other things, officially established segregated schools. Not surprisingly, this legislative action soon provided the framework and justification for a period of renewed racial segregation, a damaging

movement that would last through the first half of the 1900s.

According to W.E.B. DuBois's famous 1901 study, taxes on Mississippi's black residents required them to pay 113 per cent of the cost of Mississippi's black schools from 1890 to 1900, thus serving as a subsidy for the white schools from which their students were banned. This financial injustice became more severe as time passed and, by 1941, black Mississippi children accounted for 57 per cent of the total state enrolment but received only 13 per cent of the state's education appropriations (Hodges, 2005). As will be discussed in Chapter Six, such discrimination produced tangible repercussions for the educational outcomes and available teacher workforce found in many traditionally black Delta communities.

It was not until the 1950s—some sixty years later—that policy makers first began to remedy the socio-economic and racial injustices inherent in the Equalizing Fund and the Constitution of 1890. In 1954, the Mississippi State Legislature passed the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) to completely replace the Equalizing Fund (rather than build on it, as had happened in the past). This formula provided a progressive new means of funding schools for forty years, until it was replaced in 1997 by the state's current funding structure, the Mississippi Adequate Education Plan (MAEP). Instead of dividing education funding into simple per-student allotments, the MFP required the state to calculate the basic financial needs of each school (in terms of transportation costs, teacher salaries, and other essential expenditures) and then translate those costs into an amount of money to be provided by Mississippi tax coffers. Such a shift marked a significant turn in the state's education funding strategies, away from prorated funding formulas and towards a

more needs-sensitive approach for financing public schools.

At the same time as the creation of the MFP, social activists also earned a national victory for racial integration. In 1954, the US Supreme Court declared school segregation to be unconstitutional in the case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. This ruling outlawed racially separated schools, thus creating an imperative for reforms to Mississippi's 1890 Constitution. Nevertheless, white residents vehemently resisted change, and it was not until 1964 that Mississippi faced the first court order to integrate its own schools. This order notwithstanding, the segregated education of white and minority children actually continued until Mississippi was prosecuted in the US Supreme Court case *Alexander v. Holmes* in October of 1969.

After the legal battles for racial integration in the 1950s and 1960s, Mississippi did relatively little to improve the dismal academic outcomes still characterising most of its rural schools. Indeed, more than a decade passed before any major changes altered the state's schooling system again. In 1982, the state legislature passed the Mississippi Education Reform Act as a means of levelling educational outcomes between the wealthy and poor (a divide that was almost synonymous with 'urban and rural' as well as 'white and minority') by increasing educational funding once again. The law also established a compulsory attendance law. Though seemingly unrelated to rural education, this legislation prevented impoverished rural communities from pulling students out of class and into the agricultural workforce before they were sixteen years old, making Mississippi the last state in the Union to pass such a law.

The delayed implementation of an equitable public education system within

Table 5.1 Timeline of Mississippi education policyscape developments

Mississippi Education Policyscape Timeline
1817: Mississippi gains statehood
1820: Creation of Literary Fund
1836: New Constitution: Establishment of free public schools
1840: Collapse of Literary Fund
1868: New Constitution: Creation of Common Fund
1890: New Constitution: Equalizing Fund replaces Common Fund Creation of segregated schools
1900s-1940s: Retrenchment of segregation in public schools
1954: Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) replaces Equalizing Fund
1982: Mississippi Education Reform Act reformulates Education funding, creates compulsory education attendance
1997: Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) replaces MFP

This timeline summarises the political developments discussed in section 5.1.1, developments that significantly impacted the current educational systems and teacher labour outcomes in Mississippi Delta schools.

Mississippi's poor, rural, and/or predominantly African American communities has undoubtedly affected the Delta's current educational structures. White (2008) and Eckes (2004) both argue that the inertia of these century-old patterns remains obvious today, with those same rural, poor, and black Delta schools still bearing a disproportionate share of the state's aggregate teacher vacancies—a point to be discussed at length in Chapters Six and Seven. As will be discussed below, Arkansas's rural schools appear to have fallen victim to similar historical developments, thus creating rather uniform structural challenges to filling teacher vacancies on either side of the Delta; TFA's ability to navigate these systemic barriers must factor heavily into any evaluation of the programme's purpose in local Delta schools.

5.1.2 Historical development of education policyscapes in Arkansas

First settled at the turn of the nineteenth century, Arkansas shares an educational history similar to Mississippi's. In fact, many of those frontiersmen first arriving in Arkansas initially hailed from Mississippi; consequently, these two states shared comparable demographics, degrees of industrialisation, and public opinions towards education throughout the 1800s (Shinn, 1900). As Weeks (1912) explained:

It is safe to assume then, that the conditions confronting education in [Arkansas] and the sentiments and training brought to the solution of its problems by the settlers were not essentially different from those which prevailed in the first half of the nineteenth century of the older [Southern] states of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia. (p.10)

By the time settlers from Mississippi and other Southern states arrived in Arkansas in the early 1800s, they had already been exposed to a certain type of state-level school system (or, perhaps more appropriately, the absence thereof); consequently, many communities originally relied on the same privately funded school systems found in neighbouring states (Shinn, 1900). In 1818, Arkansas territory leaders established a collective Seminary Fund, which further increased educational access by setting aside tracts of land for the establishment of local schools and a public university. Though it would be altered in 1849, the Seminary Fund remained in place for fifty years before it was replaced by a new finance scheme in 1868.

Under this fund, communities were permitted to lease or sell the allotted land as a means of generating school funds. Given these general purposes, there are two important caveats to the Seminary Fund. First, it did not establish a public school system: there were no forms of oversight to ensure the establishment of schools in each community and no checks on the quality of education provided when schools

were established. Second, because different parcels of land produced greater or lower crop yields, the initial distribution of land was highly biased: those white landowners wealthy enough to live in more fertile areas received land that could generate greater amounts of funding for schools (Weeks, 1912). By contrast, white farmers living on less fertile land and black farmhands working for wealthy white plantation owners remained wholly uneducated. As a result of these funding inequities, schooling spread slowly and unevenly throughout the poorer, less fertile, and/or predominantly black regions of the territory up until Arkansas gained statehood in 1836.

By the time Arkansas became a state, efforts to establish uniform public education had floundered so badly that the first governor, James Servier Conway, declared in 1837 that the state was ‘almost destitute of good common schools’ (ibid, p.30). Despite these concerns, the state’s highly dispersed, agricultural nature deterred officials from establishing a state school system, and it was not until 1843 that lawmakers established some form of public education. From there, it took another six years for policy makers to address the distributional issues of the Seminary Fund. In 1849, they finally amended the state’s education funding mechanisms and required that all Seminary Fund monies be centrally collected and then proportionally distributed to county schools on a per-pupil basis. While this step alleviated some land-based disparities, the change also prompted the same socio-economic challenges that characterised the Literary and Common Funds of Mississippi.

The Constitution of 1868 marked the next big step towards more equitable education for Delta residents, as it guaranteed universal (though segregated) education for all black and white citizens between the ages of five and twenty-one years. At this point,

the state took over and incorporated the few non-governmental black schools that had been independently established by black communities. It also replaced the Seminary Fund, mandating instead that all prior education funds be consolidated and that school finances shift away from land-based funding to rely instead on tax-generated financial support.

While the Constitution of 1868 took great strides towards improved educational equity, the legacies of its replacement, the Constitution of 1874, are less clear. On the one hand, the Constitution of 1874 established a universal poll tax to fund education, thus increasing total financial appropriations for both white and minority schools. This funding formula would remain in place for over a hundred years, going entirely unchallenged until a 1983 State Supreme Court ruling required an overhaul to Arkansas's school funding formula. On the other hand, the Constitution of 1874 also established legal grounds for racially segregated schools, providing a foundation for racist education practices in years to come.

Initially, racially segregated schools appeared to have little negative impact on African Americans' educational outcomes. In fact, black communities' commitment to education actually outpaced that of white communities in the decades immediately following the Constitution of 1874: as Smith and Joshua (2003) note, 'As late as 1890, [20 per cent] of the state's school districts, black and white, had a black majority on their school boards and the average per capita expenditure for enrolled students was \$6.27 for blacks and \$5.87 for whites' (p.4).

Unfortunately, the institutionalised racism inherent to Arkansas's political and

education systems eventually overpowered black education efforts. As two scholars argue, 'Following the almost complete disfranchisement of blacks by the Democrats in the mid-1890s, funding for black schools steadily declined. By 1920, black students in state public schools averaged nearly [30 per cent] of total enrolment, but the state spent only [10 per cent] of its educational fund on black schools' (ibid, p.4). Once the Great Depression struck Northern philanthropists, black education became even more marginalised in Arkansas. As a result, from 1930 to 1935, black students received gravely inadequate educational opportunities. As Smith and Joshua (2003) point out, during this five-year window, 'White schools averaged \$32 per white student... compared to \$12 per black student' (p.27). Such outcomes struck a serious blow to most Delta schools, as they served a disproportionate share of the state's African American population.

Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, black education advocates launched a series of lawsuits and other legal challenges to bring more equity to teacher pay and student funding in black schools. While these suits did mitigate the funding differentials between black and white schools to a certain degree, it was not until the forced integration following the infamous 'Little Rock Crisis' in 1957 that black students began to gain access to comparable education resources.⁶⁰

Similar to the case in Mississippi, Arkansas's education system went without any significant changes for more than twenty years after its initial struggles with forced racial integration. In fact, it was not until the 1983 State Supreme Court case *Dupree*

⁶⁰ The Little Rock Crisis occurred when former Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus used the Arkansas National Guard to prevent nine African American students registered at an all-white school from attending classes on the first day of the 1957-8 school year. This action led President Eisenhower to insert federal troops into the state so as to force the integration of these 'Little Rock Nine' into their previously all-white school. Many American scholars consider the Little Rock Crisis to be a landmark moment in the US Civil Rights Movement.

v. Alma School District No. 30—nearly 30 years after the Little Rock Crisis of 1957—that black Arkansas residents received equitable access to public schools. This case constituted a four-year legal battle—spanning from 1979 to 1983—between the Arkansas state government and eleven individual school districts regarding the state’s education funding formula. In 1983, the Arkansas Supreme Court sided with the individual school districts, striking down the state’s funding formula for public schools as too limited and inequitable and declaring that it held no ‘rational relationship to the educational needs of the individual [school] districts...’ (*Arkansas*, 2010).

Despite this verdict, little changed within the Arkansas education system, and in 1992 the Lakeview School District sued the state over the same inequitable distribution issues that plagued the public school finance system in the 1980s. The State Supreme Court ruled against the state legislature once again, this time mandating that policy makers produce a more equitable funding formula; the resulting education reforms are described more carefully in the following section, accompanied by a comprehensive timeline of Arkansas’s educational development.

5.2 Recent developments in education funding

Similar to the development of their rural education systems in the 1800s, Mississippi and Arkansas’s recent education funding histories are largely characterised by delayed and piecemeal efforts to satisfy the rural-specific needs of many impoverished Delta communities; the financial troubles that many rural schools currently face as a result of these irregular advances have only further exacerbated the region’s chronic teacher shortages. For Mississippi, this recent history entails the development of the MAEP after it was first established in 1997; for Arkansas, it includes those education funding

mechanisms laid out by the Public School Funding Act of 2003 and the later alterations brought about by subsequent ‘Lakeview’ court rulings.

5.2.1 Mississippi funding mechanisms

As mentioned in the previous section, the Mississippi State Legislature replaced the Minimum Foundations Program of 1954 with the Mississippi Adequate Education Plan in 1997. At the time, this new programme was intended to further equalise and advance public education throughout the state; perhaps as a consequence of these ambitious intentions, the MAEP funding formula remains the most complex—and arguably the most effective—mechanism for determining education resource allocation in Mississippi today. It accounts not only for the basic resources required for a school to function (as the MFP did), but also for the funding necessary to achieve a certain level of instructional *quality* within every school (Leonard and Box, 2010). Essentially, the MAEP uses estimates of average daily attendance and available local resources to determine the level of state funding required for a school to reach a certain performance score.⁶¹

Under this rubric, the MAEP was originally meant to close intrastate educational disparities by placing a focus not only on minimum operational costs, but also on the costs required for students in impoverished communities to succeed alongside their wealthier peers in other parts of the state. This approach has had some success: in 2008, Mississippi had the fourteenth smallest gap between rich and poor school district funding in the country, at least in part as a result of the redistributive measures

⁶¹ Average daily attendance (ADA) counts the average number of full-time students marked in attendance on a daily basis. As such, truant students are not counted within ADA estimations; this poses potentially serious funding concerns for areas like the Delta, which face especially high truancy rates. This point will be addressed in Chapter Six.

of the MAEP (White, 2008). In this way, Mississippi policy makers' increased focus on educational equity appears to have produced at least some results—a point that should theoretically improve educational outcomes in many Delta schools.

And yet, the MAEP has fallen short of its initial aims in several ways. First, the programme uses a complex formula to determine how much funding each school district will need, yet there is no guarantee that the state legislature will appropriate the full cost of the MAEP budget. In fact, the state legislature votes on the MAEP budget at the end of each legislative session (rather than at the beginning); as a result, state coffers are often too low to fully fund MAEP budget estimates (Hodges, 2005). In such instances, schools must cut their spending or draw more funding from local taxes to remain solvent. In poor Delta communities where local resources are scarce, shortfalls in MAEP funding bear obvious ramifications for school services and programmes.

The MAEP has been fully funded only twice since its creation in 1997, and the financial gaps in each of the other twelve years have been considerable. As a typical example, schools received \$134 million less in state funding than required by MAEP in fiscal year (FY) 2004, creating a total deficit of just over 6 per cent of the MAEP-suggested funding level (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010). In FY 2010, the aggregate underfunding reached over 7 per cent of total funds; in FY 2011, state funds fell nearly 10 per cent below the required MAEP allotments, creating a financial gap of more than \$230 million for schools across the state (*ibid*).

Consequently, local communities have become increasingly responsible for

financially maintaining public schools; in fact, local funding has actually risen in proportion to state expenditures on public education since the MAEP was passed nearly fifteen years ago. Mississippians paid only 26 per cent of educational costs through local taxes in 1990. Yet in 2007, ten years after the MAEP was signed into law, 30 per cent of all education funds in Mississippi stemmed from community-based financing; meanwhile, the share of federal funding remained constant (16 per cent in 1990 and in 2007), and state funding decreased as a share of total education expenditures (from 58 per cent of education expenditures in 1990 to only 53 per cent in 2007). In this way, MAEP appears to have fallen short in its goal to provide high-quality education to all communities, regardless of their socio-economic resources.

5.2.2 Arkansas funding mechanisms

On-going litigious battles between the state government and local school districts suggest more overt conflict within the state's recent funding systems. The previous discussion of Arkansas's educational developments ended with the Lakeview ruling of 1992, whereby the Arkansas State Supreme Court mandated that the state legislature overhaul its funding formula so as to more equitably distribute education resources amongst impoverished communities. In response to that ruling, the Arkansas State Legislature reformulated its funding distribution formula in 1995 so that districts with starkly different needs no longer received a flat sum to finance local schools; instead, they began to receive funding in proportion to the size of their total enrolment (Ritter, 2006). In 1996, citizen voters further refined this formula via public referendum on Amendment 74, which required all counties to levy a local tax to supplement state-level education funding. Though intended to improve public education across the state, these two outcomes actually marginalised many rural Delta communities whose populations were too small to receive substantial amounts of state

funding and too poor to generate supplemental funding through local tax levies.

As a result, numerous school districts petitioned to reopen the Lakeview case in 2000 (ibid). In 2001, the Pulaski Circuit Court ruled against the state, finding its funding to still be 'inadequate and inequitable' (Smith and Joshua, 2003). The Court found that Arkansas policy makers had not gone far enough in funding adequate education facilities or preschool programmes and providing sufficient teacher salaries. The state was also required to construct a new funding formula based on schools' needs rather than on the state's availability of funds. In 2002, the State Supreme Court upheld this ruling (with the exception of the pre-school requirements) and gave legislators until 2004 to create a more appropriate funding formula. At this point, the state ordered an outside report; in 2003, a final draft was released, calling for an additional \$850 million in state funds to supplement the existing education budget (Ritter, 2006).

In response to the report findings, Governor Mike Huckabee ordered a special legislative session in December 2003. During this session, legislators passed laws to increase student accountability and assessment, promote school consolidation, expand education funding through an increase in the state sales tax, and dramatically increase teacher pay. They also established a new funding formula, under which districts are now guaranteed \$5,400 base funding per child, with additional funds if a child participates in an alternative education programme, qualifies as Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and/or receives free or reduced-price lunches. This final stipulation offered new promise for many Delta communities, where as high as 98 per cent of some districts' students are poor enough to receive subsidised school meals. Legislators also set aside funding specifically for teachers' professional development

programmes so as to ensure a greater supply of qualified instructors for understaffed regions.

Though the regular and special legislative sessions of 2003 offered substantial legislative reform, Arkansas's new funding formula remained a prime concern for many education reformers. In January 2004, the Lakeview District returned to the State Supreme Court, demanding that the Arkansas government be found in contempt for non-compliance with previous rulings. The Arkansas State Supreme Court agreed with the district and re-opened the case, this time appointing two overseers to direct and monitor the state's funding reform. In 2004, the state legislature set aside an additional \$400 million for school finance and fine-tuned its funding formula, leading the Supreme Court to believe that it had finally made adequate progress.

Despite these additional changes, the 2004 reforms did not mark the end of the state's legal battle over education funding. In April of 2005, the state legislature appropriated \$104 million to repair education facilities, but did so by deducting the total amount from schools' base funding (Ritter, 2006). In response to this action, forty-nine different school districts immediately demanded that the State Supreme Court re-open the Lakeview case, which the Court agreed to in June of that year. External overseers were once again appointed, and in October 2005, these two individuals issued an evaluation that required the state to further increase education funding. The State Supreme Court supported these findings and gave the state until January 2007 to fully meet the new funding demands.

Table 5.2 Timeline of Arkansas education polycscape developments

Arkansas Education Polycscape Timeline
1818: Establishment of the Seminary Fund
1836: Arkansas gains statehood
No formal creation of public schools
1843: Establishment of public school system
1849: Legislative reform of Seminary Fund
1868: New constitution
Consolidation of all existing schools
Move from land- to tax-based school funding
Creation of universal, segregated education
1874: New constitution
Creation of universal poll tax to fund schools
1920s - 1940s: Retrenchment of racial segregation in schools
1950s – 1960s: Forced racial integration in schools
1957: The Little Rock Crisis
1983: Arkansas State Supreme Court ruling: State funding formula too limited
1992: Lakeview case opens in State Supreme Court
1995: Legislative reformulation of school funding
1996: Amendment 74 mandates use of local school levies
2000: Lakeview case re-opened
2001: Arkansas State loses Lakeview review
2002: 2001 ruling upheld in the State Supreme Court
2003: Court-mandated infusion of \$850 million into schools
Special legislative session: Public Schools Funding Act
2004: State found in contempt of non-compliance:
Additional infusion of \$400 million required
2005: Lakeview case re-opened
2007: Act 272 amends Public Schools Funding Act

This timeline summarises the political developments described in this chapter that most impacted the current educational systems and teacher labour outcomes in Arkansas Delta schools.

With these reforms providing a foundation for the state’s new education financing scheme, legislators made the final round of legally required changes later that year. First, the state legislature responded to the overseers’ earlier funding mandates with Act 272, which amended the Public School Funding Act of 2003 to increase needs-

based funding as a means of reducing inter-school funding disparities. Under this current funding mechanism, districts now receive a modified per-student pay schedule: \$5,450 per regular student (this rate includes funds for teachers' professional development); \$5,930 - \$6,890 per free or reduced-price lunch student (the exact rate depending on the proportion of such students in the school district, with higher concentrations of impoverished students leading to higher funding rates per student); \$5,745 per English Language Learner (ELL) student; and \$8,700 per special education service-receiving student (Ritter, 2006).

5.3 Conclusions: A context for analysis

Historical evidence suggests that antebellum plantation-based economies hindered the development of a Delta public school system. More than a century after the abolition of slave-based plantations, many local communities are still characterised by the same highly dispersed, highly agrarian socio-economic structures that defined the Delta in the early 1800s, and most have struggled with segregation and racism up through the 1970s and beyond. This history of racial tension, coupled with continuous financial troubles in both states, appears to have delayed the development of a public Delta school system; as a result, most local communities—especially those serving a large share of the states' former slave populations—lacked a coherent educational system until the mid-1900s. In the following chapter, qualitative and quantitative analysis reveal that similar questions of race, rurality, and poverty still persist in modern times, and there is significant evidence that these obstacles are closely linked to the region's on-going teacher shortages.

Whereas Chapter Six clarifies the scope and nature of teacher shortages in the rural Southern Delta, Chapters Seven and Eight explore TFA's potential to address these

historic legacies and, in doing so, ameliorate teacher shortages within the most understaffed Delta schools. More specifically, they consider if and to what degree TFA could answer the Delta's immediate need for teachers while also mitigating the long-term, historically rooted causes of local teacher vacancies outlined in this chapter.

-PART TWO- FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter Six – Driving forces and defining features of the Delta teacher shortages	136
Chapter Seven – Teach For America’s position within state strategies for Delta reform	185
Chapter Eight – Remaining policy dilemmas and future policy maker engagement with TFA.....	232
Chapter Nine – Concluding thoughts	271

-6-

Driving forces and defining features of the Delta teacher shortages

Chapter Abstract: This chapter uses qualitative and quantitative analysis to connect the Delta's education history (documented in the previous chapter) to its modern teacher labour outcomes. In particular, it offers a detailed account of the causes behind local shortages as well as a preliminary measurement of the severity of these shortages. Mixed-methods analysis suggests that the Delta suffers from chronic teacher shortages because of a continued struggle with institutionalised racism, widespread agrarian rurality, and acute poverty. These factors challenge Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers and have led many to wonder if and how they might adjust teacher incentives to close local shortages. Looking to the decision-taking taxonomy outlined in Chapter Three, these uncertainties seem to have significantly influenced policy maker support for TFA growth in local Delta schools.

Though the current body of literature offers little understanding of the causes underlying rural Southern teacher shortages, the historical account developed in Chapter Five offers some preliminary insights. The following discussion integrates findings from policy maker interview responses, survey responses, primary and secondary document analysis, and researcher observation to critically examine the ways in which historic issues of race, rurality, and poverty might have contributed to the Delta's current teacher labour struggles. Additionally, it employs interview analysis to explore how and why policy makers have come to rely on TFA to fill such a large share of the region's shortages. The first research sub-question presented in Chapter One provides a guide for this analysis:

- What social, historic, and economic forces underlie the Delta's chronic teacher shortages? How do Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers perceive Teach For America within the context of these many forces?

Summarised briefly, the findings suggest that a closely interwoven set of forces both fuel and define the Delta teacher shortages. Historical struggles with slavery and racism, a highly dispersed rural population, and overwhelming poverty have indeed interacted with one another as the central causes of teacher shortages both within the Delta and far outside it. Given these complex challenges, policy makers hold generally positive views of TFA, frequently citing it as the only tool capable of providing teachers to certain Delta schools. Though some expressed misgivings about long-term dependence on TFA, little to no resistance has arisen to counter or qualify general political support for the programme; Ball's 'three spheres' and the decision-

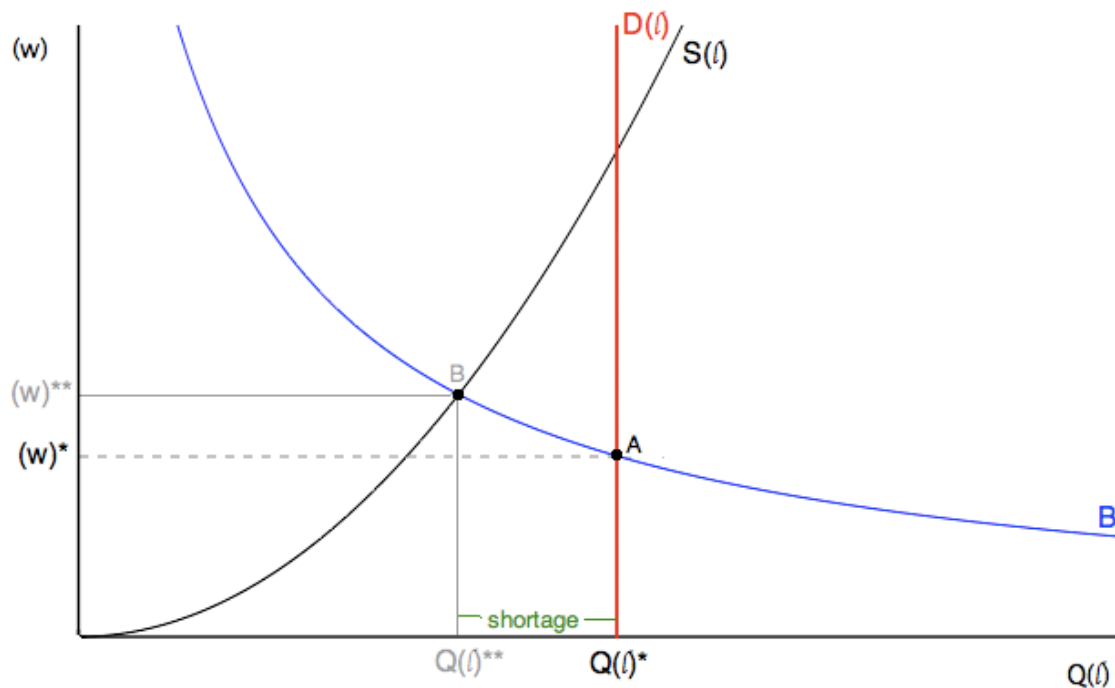
taking mechanisms outlined in Chapter Three offer one possible explanation of this rather one-sided outcome.

6.1 Perceived causes of the Delta teacher shortages

The current Delta teacher shortages are undoubtedly connected to the region's social, political, and economic histories—a point that most officials mentioned within the first moments of their interviews. Throughout these conversations, officials demonstrated a shared belief that the region's historic racial tensions, agricultural dependence, and widespread poverty triggered a systematic development of widespread teacher shortages on either side of the Delta; these different factors have interacted with one another to de-rail modern policy maker efforts to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in local rural schools.

The labour market framework established in Chapter Two offers a basic structure for thinking about the Delta teacher shortages as well as any relevant state-level teacher labour policies. To review, human labour is treated (and thus, analysed) as a commodity. As a result, those teachers working in Delta schools, as well as those potentially available to teach in Delta schools, constitute the aggregate supply for the region's teacher labour market. Likewise, all teacher posts in Delta schools—filled and vacant alike—function as the aggregate demand for these teachers. When budget constraints place a significant limit on the number of teachers that can be hired and/or the average salary per teacher, shortages arise. Shown previously in Chapter Two, Figure 6.1 illustrates this scenario: Delta teacher shortages occur here because the demand for teachers, $D(l)$, intersects the budget curve, B , at a point beyond the budget curve's intersection with the supply of teachers, $S(l)$. In Figure 6.1, these two

Figure 6.1 Teacher labour supply, demand, and budget functions



This figure, shown earlier in Chapter Two (see Figure 2.2), illustrates a graphical representation of a teacher labour shortage, with $S(l)$ as the teacher labour supply, $D(l)$ as the demand for teacher labour, and B as the budget line.

intersections are represented as points A and B, respectively; the horizontal distance between these points represents the magnitude of the resulting teacher shortage.

Thus, one may conceptualise the ‘causes’ of the Delta teacher shortages as any forces that position the curves B and $S(l)$ such that point B is closer to the wage axis (w) than point A; a greater distance between these two points represents a relatively more severe teacher shortage. For example, high rates of poverty in Delta communities—a factor to be discussed later in this chapter—usually result in limited funding for schools. This outcome is represented by a budget curve, B , which is positioned relatively close to the wage axis. Additionally, researchers such as Ladd (2007), Monk (2007), and Murnane and Steele (2007) find that teachers are often less willing to work in poor communities because there are fewer resources for them to be effective teachers; in this way, high rates of poverty also position the supply curve,

S(l), relatively close to the wage axis, (w). As a result, poverty helps to trigger the shortage scenario represented in Figure 6.1 by positioning curves B and S(l) such that point B is further to the left than point A.

Before exploring these issues, it is important to differentiate between the forces that contribute to a labour market curve's original position and those forces that shift its position. On-going issues that have defined the Delta's history (such as its continual struggles with race, rurality, and poverty) dictate the original position of the region's labour market curves. By contrast, changes to those forces produce a shift in the position of the affected function(s).⁶² When the supply and/or budget functions are shifted inwards, point B moves further away (horizontally) from point A, and the teacher shortage widens. Conversely, shifting these curves outwards would bring point B closer to point A, marking a decrease in the shortage. Returning to the poverty example, any social, political, or economic changes that further impoverish the Delta would shift the supply and budget functions inwards, thus exacerbating the region's existing teacher shortages. By contrast, policies that supply more money to poor Delta schools for teacher wages and resources would shift these curves outwards, bringing point B closer to point A and thus mitigating local teacher vacancies.

As a general rule, the historically rooted forces discussed in this chapter all influence the *original positioning* of the Delta's teacher labour market curves; by contrast, TFA's growth from 2008 to 2010 and the other recent teacher labour policies discussed in Chapter Seven may be conceptualised as forces that *shift* those positions.

⁶² While it is theoretically possible to shift the demand function, D(l), this function is exogenously determined by student enrolment rates and federal student-teacher ratio requirements. State policy makers must focus most of their attention on changes in supply and budget functions. See Figure 2.4a and b for a review of these shifts.

All the factors discussed in this chapter have triggered Delta teacher shortages by positioning the supply function, $S(l)$, such that it is close to the wage axis, (w) . Additionally, two of these forces—namely, the rural Delta context and high Delta poverty—have also suppressed the position of the budget function, B , to further compound the severity of resulting teacher shortages.

Table 6.1 lists the major and minor themes that emerged when policy makers discussed the supply, demand, and budgetary drivers of Delta teacher shortages; it also documents reasons policy makers offered for their support of (or resistance to) TFA growth in Delta schools.⁶³ Additionally, Table 6.2 catalogues related descriptive statistics produced from superintendent and principal questionnaires; these findings offer further data for contextualizing interview responses. The remainder of this chapter develops a narrative that expands on these two tables, describing the ways in which listed factors have positioned the supply curve and (sometimes) the budget curve to create on-going Delta shortages.

6.1.1 History of slavery and post-bellum racism

Before the American Civil War of the 1860s, nearly all black Southerners lived as slaves and received no formal education whatsoever. Unfortunately, African Americans throughout the South remained wholly under-educated even after the official abolition of slavery in 1865, as most Southern state governments resisted federal efforts for racial equity.⁶⁴ As many Mississippi and Arkansas officials were quick to note, these deeply rooted legacies of racial discrimination hold serious

⁶³ For a detailed discussion of the process by which these interviews were collected, coded, and analysed, see Appendix 4C.

⁶⁴ The racial struggles specific to Mississippi and Arkansas were outlined briefly in Chapter Five. For a more detailed outline of the racially driven socio-economic inequities that permeated the Mississippi and Arkansas education systems up through the 1950s, see Appendix 6A.

Table 6.1 Major and minor themes emerging from interview analysis

Major Theme	Minor Theme	Frequency
<i>The role of slavery and racial tensions in Delta shortages</i>		
High concentration of African Americans in Delta communities	Limited mobility of African Americans in the Delta	15
	African Americans clustered amongst ‘black’ communities in the Delta as a result of slavery	18
Low educational attainment of Black Delta residents	Low educational attainment amongst black residents due to a history of racism	42
	Low emphasis on education in black Delta communities	11
	No available ‘native’ teachers in black Delta communities	4
	Teachers do not feel valued in (black) Delta communities with low emphasis on education	9
	<i>Counter-narrative:</i> Delta communities’ emphasis on education is misunderstood and mischaracterized by policy makers from outside of the Delta	1
On-going racial tensions in Delta communities	Racial tensions undermine modern efforts for Delta education reform	3
	States’ predominantly white teacher force does not want to teach in predominantly black Delta schools	3
<i>The role of rural and agrarian characteristics in Delta shortages</i>		
Agrarian focus in Delta communities	Low emphasis on education in agrarian Delta communities	30
	Low parental involvement in schools in agrarian Delta communities	41
Geographic and social isolation	Few social and cultural attractions in the Delta	53
	Delta towns are severely isolated from all other communities and attractions	45
	Geographic and social isolation are too powerful for any teacher labour policy to overcome	15
Community distrust of outsiders	Close-knit nature of small Delta communities triggers a distrust of ‘outsider’ teachers	23
	Pervasive nepotistic hiring practices within many rural Delta schools	5
<i>School-level teacher shortage issues</i>		
Lack of strong school leadership in Delta schools	Lack of school leadership as a central driver of Delta teacher shortages	11
	Competition from non-Delta schools with better school leadership perpetuates Delta shortages	4

Table 6.1 documents the major and minor themes that emerged from fifty-three semi-structured interviews with education policy makers, TFA-Delta leadership, and other relevant education officials in Mississippi and Arkansas. These themes are discussed predominantly in Chapter Six, and to a lesser extent in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Table 6.1 *Continued.*

Major Theme	Minor Theme	Frequency
Subject-specific shortages in Delta schools	Subject-specific shortages are a significant issue in Delta schools	40
	High school teaching positions are harder to staff than elementary positions in Delta schools	21
	Subject-specific shortages are at the root of high emergency licensure rates in Delta schools	5
<i>Perceptions of Teach for America</i>		
Teach for America addresses quantity <i>and</i> quality issues of Delta teacher labour supply	Feel receptive to recent patterns of TFA growth	42
	TFA is an effective response to Delta shortages	40
	TFA is the only policy solution currently able to overcome the root causes of Delta shortages	37
	TFA elevates overall Delta teacher quality	40
	TFA corps members are the only teachers willing to move to ‘undesirable’ Delta locations	16
	TFA ‘improves’ educational culture in Delta communities with low educational emphasis	13
	TFA successfully targets the most hard-to-staff Delta school districts	18
	Hope for continued growth of TFA in coming years	35
Critiques of TFA	Two-year teaching commitment is too short and/or undesirable	6
	High TFA teacher turnover is a ‘necessary evil’ in hard-to-staff Delta communities	3
	TFA model is unfair and/or problematic for the Delta’s traditionally certified teacher labour	3
TFA as an answer to uncertainty surrounding other solutions / strategies	TFA has close working relationships with key policy officials	13 ⁶⁵
	Unsure of what other policies or strategies will effectively draw teachers to the Delta	16
	Other policies designed to solve Delta teacher shortages have failed	29
	Traditional certification programmes have not been able to address Delta shortages	5
TFA as an answer to pressures for immediate reform	Feel pressure to prioritize short- over long-term teacher labour outcomes	23
	Support TFA even if they suspect it is creating a long-term ‘crutch’	6
	The <i>immediate</i> need for teachers is a top priority for Delta reform	16
	It is inevitable that TFA will be a long-term feature of the Delta teacher labour supply	20

⁶⁵ One TFA-Delta official made the claim that the organization has worked to establish strong working relations with key state policy makers in Mississippi and Arkansas; twelve such officials verified that they had a close relationship with at least one TFA-Delta leader.

Table 6.1 *Continued.*

Major Theme	Minor Theme	Frequency
<i>Policy options for Delta teacher labour reform</i>		
Target improved teacher work conditions in Delta schools	Improved teacher work conditions are not sufficient to improve Mississippi Delta shortages	12 (of 24)
	Improved teacher work conditions are not sufficient to improve Mississippi Delta shortages	7 (of 20)
Targeted financial incentives to attract Delta teacher labour	Financial incentives could overcome shortages induced by geographic and social isolation	31
	Financial incentives are the most effective state-level strategy for filling Delta teacher shortages	28
	Financial incentives are too crude to target community- and subject-specific Delta shortages	13
	Financial incentives would have to be outrageously high to draw enough teachers to Delta schools	20
	Financial incentives only appeal to teachers already living in the Delta	2
Reform / expand existing certification routes to grow the Delta teacher supply	Recent licensure changes streamline the process for quality teachers rather than lower requirements	8
	(Non-TFA) alternatively certified teachers find jobs outside the Delta because of local living conditions	15
	'Grow-your-own' programmes could be effective in the Delta, but are currently underdeveloped	4
Tensions between statewide and Delta-specific teacher labour reform	There is a need for more Delta-specific state-level teacher labour policies	5
	Policy makers must prioritise statewide teacher labour challenges over Delta-specific shortages	38
	Drawing teachers to the Delta comes at the direct expense of staffing other regions of the state	30
	Local variations in race, rurality, or poverty create cause specific Delta school districts to struggle more with teacher shortages than other local districts	4

Table 6.2a Summary of statistics from superintendent questionnaires

<i>District-level teacher labour composition</i>			
School year	Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching positions	Number of TFA corps members (if other than '0') ^a	Number of FTE teacher vacancies ^b
2007-8	121.0	7.1	9.2
2008-9	117.9	7.6	8.2
2009-10	118.3	10.4	9.6
<i>District-level student composition</i>			
School year	Per cent of students identifying as African American	Per cent of students receiving reduced-price lunch (<i>i.e.</i> , in poverty) ^c	Per cent of students with a parent who completed high school ^d
2007-8	89.9	78.2	31.4
2008-9	92.0	78.7	31.8
2009-10	91.6	79.8	31.5
<i>Average district-level teacher wage</i>			
School year	Average annual wage (\$USD) ^e		
2007-8	40 357.20		
2008-9	41 070.00		
2009-10	41 353.40		

^a Only districts with at least one corps member were included in this statistic so as to capture TFA concentration within partner districts

^b Number of teachers working on an emergency license (excludes positions filled by corps members)

^c The per cent of students living below the poverty line and, therefore, qualifying for state-provided meal support

^d Per cent of students with at least one parent / guardian who holds at least a high school degree (or equivalent)

^e Average annual salary for full-time (FTE) teachers within a given district

implications for current education outcomes—including teacher labour supply dynamics—in many black Delta communities. Indeed, though temporally removed from the Delta's present teacher labour market, these historical forces continue to limit the supply of teachers available to local Delta schools today.

Table 6.2b Summary of statistics from principal questionnaires

School-level teacher labour composition			
Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching positions		32.1	
Number of TFA corps members (if other than '0')		4.4	
Number of FTE teacher vacancies ^a			
Average for all responding schools		2.0	
Average for schools with a response other than '0'		6.5	
Teacher labour qualifications			
Per cent of teachers holding a Bachelor's Degree or higher		83.6	
Per cent of teachers holding some form of 'Highly Qualified' certification		78.6	
Per cent of teachers 'Highly Qualified' in their subject area		64.1	
Subject-area shortages			
Most commonly listed subject shortage ^b	Frequency	Most commonly listed subject placement of TFA ^c	Frequency
Science	16	Maths	7
Special Education	13	Spanish	5
Maths	11	Language Arts	4
Spanish	5	Elementary grade	2
English / Language Arts	2	Science	2
Rank of TFA teachers' effectiveness relative to other teachers (% of total responses) ^d			
Substantially less effective than other teachers in the school		11.5	
Less effective than other teachers in the school		3.8	
Equally effective as other teachers in the school		65.4	
More effective than other teachers in the school		15.4	
Substantially more effective than other teachers in the school		3.8	
Rank of TFA teachers' involvement relative to other teachers (% of total responses) ^e			
Substantially less involved than other teachers in the school		19.2	
Less involved than other teachers in the school		7.7	
Equally involved as other teachers in the school		30.8	
More involved than other teachers in the school		11.5	
Substantially more involved than other teachers in the school		30.8	

^a Vacancies remaining after corps member were placed (if school uses TFA). The first row reports the average result from all responding schools; the second row reports the average result when schools reporting 'no vacancies' are excluded.

^b Principals were asked to list the three subject areas most prone to teacher vacancies in their school. The frequency chart lists the number of times a principal listed that subject as one of his or her school's three most hard-to-staff subject areas. Only the five most common subject area responses are shown

^c Principals were asked to list the three subject areas in which they are most likely to employ a TFA corps member (and to answer only if their school uses TFA). The frequency chart lists the number of times a principal listed that subject as one of the three subject for which they most commonly employ TFA labour. Only the five most common responses are shown

^d Of the principals working with TFA corps members, the percentage selecting each category (does not add to 100 per cent due to rounding)

^e Of the principals working with TFA corps members, the percentage selecting each category (does not add to 100 per cent due to rounding)

But first, an important pattern arises from this history, one that continues to shape the Delta's racial demographics in significant ways nearly 150 years after the abolition of slavery. As mentioned in the previous chapter, white plantation owners brought in massive numbers of slaves to manage crops on fertile Delta land. As a result, African Americans significantly outnumbered their white oppressors in the Delta region. Even after African Americans were freed, they remained highly concentrated within the area. Given the inequities they faced as slaves, few African Americans had either the resources to leave the Delta or the skills to work in an industry besides crop production and harvesting. Additionally, Baker (1991), Morrill and Donaldson (1972), and White (2008) note that many stayed in the Delta for fear of encountering more severe violence and discrimination outside of their local communities. As a result of these various struggles, most African Americans freed from Delta plantations never actually left, instead opting to live and work together as uneducated farm hands or sharecroppers for generations after slavery had technically ended.

During their interviews, four out of five state officials noted that the Delta's high concentration of African Americans creates a serious challenge to modern teacher labour reforms. Numerous all-black communities sprang up around Delta farmlands shortly after the abolition of slavery, where local uneducated African American residents typically worked as manual labourers for white farmers. Because of the low mobility in and out of these communities, many remain today, still characterised by a mostly black labour force with very limited educational attainment. One policy maker explained that as the result of these historical forces, 'the Delta is just completely populated with many African Americans ... that just don't have the means to take

themselves somewhere else' (ID#5, MS, F).⁶⁶ Statistical evidence from the US Census Bureau's 2008 American Communities Survey would support this claim: whereas only 13 per cent of the total US population identified as black in 2008, 44 per cent of residents from the Southern United States were black and 65 per cent of Delta residents identified as such.

Ultimately, this concentration of historically oppressed African Americans has driven back the position of the teacher supply curve in several ways, particularly by fostering low educational attainment and widespread poverty within many African American communities. These outcomes make vacant positions in black Delta communities undesirable for many teachers, as represented by a supply function, $S(l)$, that has been positioned close to the wage axis, (w) , for centuries. Further suppressing this function, muted racial tensions still linger today, making it difficult to attract the states' primarily white teacher labour supply into the concentrated African American communities created in the wake of nineteenth century abolition.

Low educational attainment within African American Delta communities

More than 80 per cent of interviewed policy makers in Mississippi and Arkansas mentioned that long histories of racial discrimination within their states' public education systems have severely hampered educational attainment for black Delta communities.⁶⁷ Additionally, a quarter of these officials believed that this history has

⁶⁶ All interview quotations presented in the findings chapters are labelled with the interviewee's identification code, as discussed in Chapter Four. Each interviewee was given a number (in this case, ID#5); to help contextualize quotations, the interviewee's state affiliation (MS for Mississippi, AR for Arkansas, and TFA for officials from the TFA-Delta office) and gender (M or F) are included alongside all ID numbers. In certain cases, other significant markers will be included (namely, 'Black' for officials who identify as black, and 'Teacher' for officials who have worked as a full-time teacher at some point in time. See Appendix 4E for a summary of these identification codes.

⁶⁷ Once again, for a detailed outline of the racially driven socio-economic inequities that permeated the Mississippi and Arkansas education systems up through the 1950s, see Appendix 6A.

resulted in low educational emphasis amongst black Delta residents. Representing this belief, one state senator from Mississippi voiced the concern that a long history of racism had permanently damaged black Delta residents' perceptions of educational attainment:⁶⁸

And what is it about these schools [in the Delta] ... that you think makes them so unique and so different from other schools such that other examples [of teacher shortages] don't really work as data? Is it the geography or what?

Well, I uh, I'm going to speak very frank to you and you can decide how to use it.

Mmm hmm.

Well, number one is that you go back to slavery and after that we kept suppressed African Americans for another hundred years ... [and during that time] they stayed then in their communities without adequate plan, which is not their fault.... The other [point] is that most [black Delta residents] are poorer clientele, which you well know, and their ancestors were labourers [just like them] ... and so there was no [state provision of] education and [so there still is] no sense of [educational] attainment within those communities.
(ID#11, MS, M)

While the Delta as a whole may have struggled to maintain a public school system in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the delayed educational development for black Delta residents is especially pronounced: 67 per cent of all Delta residents hold a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to only 33 per cent of those individuals living in predominantly African American communities (*Mississippi Delta*, 2010). These statistics resonate with the questionnaire results, wherein school principals reported that on average, only 31 per cent of students had one or more parent(s)/guardian(s) with a high school degree equivalent in schools where the population was at least 80 per cent African American. Similarly, only 10 per cent of the Delta region's low-income (predominantly black) eighth graders scored 'proficient' or higher in maths in the 2009-10 school year, and less than 13 per cent

⁶⁸ Quotations in italics represent the interviewer. Normal font represents the responses of individuals.

achieved proficient levels in reading—suggesting that most black children currently enrolled in Delta public schools will not graduate from high school (ibid).

These low attainment levels are a concern for many reasons, chief amongst them the fact that education researchers have documented low student performance as a major obstacle to teacher recruitment and retention. First, four interviewed officials commented that low attainment across many generations depletes the local human capital that communities require to produce their own teachers. As one career teacher-turned-policy maker from Mississippi explained, ‘[Delta residents] maybe don’t go to college and so therefore you don’t have students in that area who are going to be teachers. When I started teaching, I wanted to teach where I am from. And so actually the first place that I started to teach was the high school that I graduated from.’ (ID#3, MS, F, Teacher)

As mentioned in Chapter Two, authors such as Baugh and Stone (1982) and Murnane and Steele (2007) find that teacher labour markets are highly localised, making it difficult to attract educators from other areas. It is, therefore, essential that communities produce enough instructors to fill the majority of their own teacher labour demand. If they fail to do so, teacher shortages may persist even after policy makers formulate incentives to draw teachers into the region.

Additionally, teachers typically prefer to work in schools where they feel they can produce successful students, making low educational attainment a powerful deterrent to outside teacher entry. Researchers such as Stinebrickner (2001) have demonstrated that teachers avoid low-performing schools, preferring to work in well-educated areas

where community members value teacher efforts. As noted in Chapter Three, the governor, state superintendent/commissioner, and legislative chairs of the Education Committee and Appropriations/Joint Budget Committee appear most central within the Delta teacher labour reform movement in either state. Ten of these twelve central officials⁶⁹ believed that a long history of under-education had diminished both the ability and the willingness of many black Delta communities to make such a commitment. As one central Arkansas policy maker asserted, ‘Sometimes in these local farm communities, we, um, we need to educate the parents just as well as the students. Not in the same form, but in forms of [understanding] the importance of a good education’ (ID#35, AR, M)

As a consequence of this perception, 57 per cent of interviewed officials (including central as well as more peripheral actors) claimed that their state would always struggle to attract teachers to Delta schools because the surrounding communities do not have and, in some cases, cannot appreciate the value of a good education. Nine claimed that Delta residents place little value on education, making teachers less willing to establish their profession there. In the words of one Arkansas official, ‘[Teachers say to themselves,] “Look at those Delta schools, they’re in rural areas and you’re working with children in tough conditions and we’re not sure whether the Delta has a commitment to do it and all we’ve ever heard is how tough it is to work in those schools, in that area...” ’ (ID#40, AR, F)

Diverging from this dominant narrative, one Arkansas policy maker actually living and working in the Delta argued that other policy makers have simply failed to

⁶⁹ The twelve central officials include: two governors (and their education advisers), one state superintendent (Mississippi) and one state commissioner (Arkansas), four Education Committee chairmen, and four Appropriations/Joint Budget Committee chairmen.

identify the unique assets black Delta communities invest in their schools:

Unfortunately, the viewpoint of people outside of this area [the Delta] is that we are all a lot of pitiful people.... And while we certainly have severe [education] situations that need to be rectified, we have a lot of stuff to yield. And so I want to express to you that Teach For America certainly brings a lot, but hopefully they leave with a lot more (ID#31, AR, F, Black).

In line with the argumentation of Tatum (2003), this official went on to explain that many individuals outside of the Delta struggle to identify the rich cultural and social resources available in black Delta communities, such as a strong sense of community and familial influence over individuals' actions. While she did not deny that the region's history of racism has had lasting effects on Delta education, this policy maker also rejected the belief that her community's attitude towards education was beyond repair. Instead, she argued that the approach to improving educational attainment (and the perceived value thereof) amongst Delta residents would require a new approach that relies more on the region's existing assets and resources.

Incorporating this alternative viewpoint into the more common policy maker narrative described above, officials contend that a history of slavery and racial discrimination has affected Delta teacher labour supplies in multiple ways. Not least amongst these, racial bigotry has led to a systematic under-education of most African American communities within the region. As a result, these areas typically do not have the human capital necessary to satisfy their demand for teachers, nor are the living and teaching conditions within these communities attractive enough to draw in outside teachers. Most central policy makers believe that the low educational standards and even lower levels of educational attainment amongst many black residents further deteriorate the attractiveness of most Delta teaching positions, driving teachers to opt instead for white, non-Delta schools with better track records of student performance.

On-going racial tensions

When asked why racially divided educational outcomes were so hard to overcome, a small number of policy makers—one from Arkansas and two from Mississippi—intimated that certain racial tensions still linger throughout the Delta and weaken efforts to close the racial achievement gap.⁷⁰ Particularly, black and white Delta students are still segregated in certain Delta communities. Though such segregation is illegal *de jure*, significant evidence suggests on-going *de facto* separation by race, with a disproportionate share of black students attending poor public schools and nearly all white students enrolled in private schools. Eckes (2006) found statistically significant levels of racial segregation in Delta schools, even after empirically controlling for academic performance, parents' education, and other socio-economic factors. As Eckes concluded, empirical tests suggest that white Delta parents are, on the whole, unwilling to place their students in a predominantly black school, even if that school has a track record of academic success.

Results from the principals' survey support the conclusions drawn in Eckes (2006). Amongst surveyed public schools, black students accounted for 91 per cent of total enrolments, despite the fact that black constituents account for less than 65 per cent of the region's population.⁷¹ TFA produced similar statistics in a report on the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, finding that 88 per cent of public school students are

⁷⁰ The fact that only a handful of policy makers in Mississippi and Arkansas made reference to current racial tensions does not necessarily suggest that these tensions are not widely present or recognised by state officials. In fact, evidence from Eckes (2006) would suggest that these tensions remain prominent within most Delta schools. The limited discussion surrounding this sensitive topic during interviews may reflect an act of omission on the part of these policy elites—a tendency discussed in Chapter Four and outlined in Batteson and Ball (1995).

⁷¹ The total share of African Americans living in the Delta is based on the county-by-county findings of the US Census Bureau's 2008 American Communities Survey.

African American even though this ethnic group accounts for only 63 per cent of the regional population (*Mississippi Delta*, 2010). TFA and non-TFA teachers disclosed personal experiences with such segregation during on-site school observations, commenting that not a single white student attended the school in the 2008-9 and 2009-10 school years.

This divide seems problematic in its own right, but three policy makers explained that it is especially detrimental to teacher recruitment efforts for hard-to-staff public schools, given the fact that a substantial majority of the local teacher supply identifies as white. One central Mississippi official explained that as the result of these divides, ‘You have a concentration of poor black families and poor black school students in [Delta public schools], and a lot of white teachers are hesitant to go there’ (ID#14, MS, M). Such sentiments echo the findings of Eide, Goldhaber, and Brewer (2004), Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2005), and Sorenson, Young, and Mandzuk (2005), which assert that teachers exhibit a preference for students with a race similar to their own. Returning to the taxonomy presented in Figure 6.1, these on-going racial tensions suppress the position of the Delta teacher labour supply, $S(1)$, by decreasing the number of teachers willing to serve in the region’s (predominantly black) public schools.

6.1.2 The present rural context

Also a result of the region’s historic slave-based plantations, the Delta’s farm-based focus has triggered the development of small, dispersed, agricultural communities. Every Mississippi and Arkansas official identified these dispersed, agricultural characteristics as a challenging obstacle to teacher recruitment efforts amongst Delta schools. Additionally, 77 per cent of these policy makers commented that the region’s

agricultural focus has decreased community members' interest in non-agricultural education and contributed to low parental involvement in schools; such attitudes hold important implications for the Delta teacher labour supply as they further reinforce the low educational attainment issues discussed in the previous section. Furthermore, rural-driven struggles with geographic and social isolation and also with local nepotism appear to further suppress the position of the Delta teacher supply, S(l), by preventing teachers not native to the Delta from seeking or accepting a job position there.

Geographic and social isolation

Every policy maker from Mississippi and Arkansas insisted that teachers avoid the Delta because local communities offer few social or cultural attractions. As one Arkansas senator stated, 'There's nothing in those [Delta] towns to attract young people, young teachers, to go there, to want to be there. I mean, I wouldn't go there to live. There's just no attraction to get folks to come into those areas to live' (ID#36, AR, M). Similarly, when asked why there was a teacher shortage in the Delta, another individual from Arkansas responded, 'Well, my goodness [*laughing*], have you ever *been* to the Delta? It's just *dead*' (ID#28, AR, F). Responses like these highlight the shared belief that beyond any challenges in the classroom, the Delta struggles to attract teachers because of equally great challenges outside of the classroom. These concerns are closely attuned to the findings of Stoddard (2004) and Temin (2002), which identify geographic and social isolation as central obstacles to rural teacher recruitment and retention.

Roughly 85 per cent of policy makers emphasised the severity of Delta isolation when naming the causes of Delta teacher shortages. One Mississippi board member contended that ‘many times in those communities there’s absolutely nothing there to attract [teachers] other than the job’ (ID#2, MS, M). Similarly, an Arkansas board member explained, ‘It’s hard to get qualified teachers who can get jobs just about anywhere to go to the Delta, where there’s no Wal-Mart and there’s no grocery store. You have to drive miles just to get groceries’ (ID#30, AR, F). These perceptions resonate with the academic literature, as well as researcher observation in two Delta towns. In one community, there was one gas station offering basic amenities such as milk and eggs, but the nearest grocery store was more than fifty miles away. The nearest shopping centre was more than seventy miles away—a ninety-minute drive in each direction.

Young people typically desire to live close to cultural centres, friends, their hometowns, and/or the universities from which they graduated, making it difficult for policy makers to convince new teachers to move to a remote Delta town.

Additionally, the severe isolation of many Delta towns repels older teachers seeking a community with resources for their children and professional opportunities for their spouses. Thirty-one of the fifty-three interviewed policy makers believed that increased and targeted financial incentives could persuade teachers to move to the Delta in spite of these drawbacks, while the remaining twenty-two were sceptical that any such policies could outweigh the region’s severe geographic and social isolation. Interestingly, all eight of the Mississippi and Arkansas officials with a background in teaching believed that teachers would be unwilling to live in such remote

communities, regardless of any financial incentives offered by the state.⁷² In the words of one teacher-turned-policy maker:

You know, but teachers, a lot of teachers are women and they're mostly mothers. And so when you start talking about giving the teachers incentives, well even if you're giving them incentives you're still uprooting that family because you're asking that woman to uproot her children and her husband, if that's the case, to move to that area and the woman maybe isn't even the breadwinner. You know, even with the incentives the husband may still say, 'You know, this isn't worth me leaving my job' (ID#8, MS, F, Teacher).

Like the racial factors described in the last section, geographic and social isolation lessen teachers' willingness to live and work in the Delta region, thus triggering acute teacher shortages in many local communities. In addition to deterring outside teachers from entering the Delta teacher labour force, the region's rural context also limits the development of highly qualified 'native' teachers. Hull (2004) points out that rural populations are typically smaller and less educated than urban and suburban ones. As such, these communities have a limited supply of local skilled adults: within the Delta, only a third of adult residents currently hold a high school degree or higher (*Mississippi Delta*, 2010).⁷³ Works from Collins (1999) and Hare and Heap (2001) suggest that these outcomes make local teacher recruitment difficult in most Delta communities, as few educated adults are available to fill the region's many local vacancies.

Within the labour market framework, the limited number of native and outside teachers may be understood as a labour supply curve, $S(l)$, that is positioned close to the wage axis, (w) . Furthermore, the small, poor tax bases typical of geographically isolated rural communities do not provide sufficient funding to attract or retain highly

⁷² Chapter Seven outlines the size and nature of existing financial incentives in each state.

⁷³ This figure applies to the Delta's predominantly African American communities; as will become evident in Chapter Seven, these are the communities where TFA typically places its Delta corps members.

qualified teachers. These limited resources also position the budget function, B, relatively close to the wage axis, (w). In this way, the isolation brought forth by the Delta's dispersed, agrarian economic structures creates teacher vacancies in many Delta communities by suppressing both the teacher supply function, S(l), as well as the budget function, B.

Community distrust of outsiders

Also related to what Johnson and Strange (2005) would call the 'rurality' of the Delta region, 42 per cent of officials asserted that the small, close-knit nature of local agrarian communities fosters a distrust of people not native to the area. In much the same way that surveyed principals and superintendents were unwilling to respond to the research questionnaire on TFA, many are hesitant to hire teachers from outside the Delta. In the words of one central policy maker from Mississippi, 'Unfortunately, one of the things that has been very difficult has been that some local school leaders and community leaders have not been as excited about bringing "outsiders" in [to serve as teachers]' (ID#15, MS, M) As an apparent consequence, some Delta leaders have struggled to balance their communities' need for high-quality teachers with the pressure to 'protect' stable teaching positions for local, and often under-qualified, community members.

Related to this distrust of outsiders, five officials commented that the rural nature of many Delta communities leads local education officials to place nepotistic loyalties above their responsibility to employ high-quality teachers. One Arkansas policy maker explained that this resistance to hiring outside teachers stemmed from especially strong social cohesion within the Delta's poorer rural regions:

Communities that are, um, particularly in terms of school leadership, they are so bogged down into the structure of the local communities and the attitude that every job in this community should go to someone in this community [that they resist hiring outside teachers]. [They say,] ‘We don’t need to be bringing in people from [outside] to teach here, even if it means we’re going to take someone on an emergency certificate,⁷⁴ that’s better because it saves our jobs.’ So those are the types of closed attitudes that makes [sic] it difficult [to recruit and retain teachers] (ID#25, AR, M).

According to another central Mississippi official, some community members resent new outsider teachers because they ‘may [have wanted] to hire their cousins, and their nephews, and their friends rather than a qualified teacher’ (ID#13, MS, M). The leader of one alternative certification programme in Mississippi (not TFA) explained that this resentment can be so strong that new teachers must be removed from their Delta teaching posts because they feel physically and/or emotionally threatened.

It is important to qualify this finding and to note that such extreme instances of community resistance appear to be rare. TFA officials reported only isolated cases of local opposition to outside entry, claiming that most Delta communities actively vie to receive corps members:

I would say there were five years prior to [2008 where we had] about twenty-five districts on the Mississippi side and twenty on the Arkansas side who would consistently call me [for teachers] every year and we just did not have teachers enough to satisfy the partners we were working with and therefore could not expand... and there are still more wanting us [now] but we just don’t have the capacity (ID#45, TFA, M).

Survey findings support this claim: nearly 85 per cent of Delta school principals considered TFA teachers to be at least as effective as non-TFA teachers and just under three-quarters considered corps members to be at least as involved in their schools as non-TFA teachers. Given these outcomes, it does not appear that community distrust

⁷⁴ ‘Emergency certificates’ are given to individuals without proper teaching credentials when no qualified teacher can be hired. Emergency certification is discussed more fully in Chapter Seven.

suppresses the teacher supply curve, $S(l)$, in all Delta communities; instead, it seems likely that this issue is isolated to particular towns within the region.

6.1.3 Poverty as an intersection of race and rurality

Closely connected to the racial discrimination and rural economic structures that are characteristic of many Delta communities, extensive poverty further exacerbates the region's chronic teacher shortages by suppressing both the teacher supply and school budget curves. More than 70 per cent of policy makers identified 'poverty', 'lack of industry', or 'limited financial resources'⁷⁵ as the single largest cause of Delta teacher shortages.

When asked to explain why the Delta faced such high rates of poverty, just under sixty percent of interviewees mentioned that changing agribusiness practices had negatively impacted the local economy. As explained in one particularly insightful response:

The Mississippi Delta is a very tough region. The economy is horrible there; we're still experiencing the effects of decisions that community leaders made as long as thirty and forty years ago. In that time period many leaders resisted the recruitment of manufacturing jobs because that would prove to be competition for farm labour, and if jobs came to the Delta and those jobs took labour off the farm, it would make harvesting the cotton crop more expensive. So those community leaders of thirty and forty years ago resisted the recruitment of manufacturing jobs. And now fast forward thirty years; all of the sudden, technology and mechanisation of farming operation meant that where you used to need 500 people to operate a farm, now you can [sic] operate that farm with ten people. So, that leaves 490 people out of a job and there's no manufacturing to offer alternative jobs. (ID#4, MS, M)

As a result, more than a third of Delta residents live below the poverty line, and most live in the historically under-educated black communities. Indeed, as of 2009, nearly

⁷⁵ Policy makers typically listed 'limited financial resources' as a reference to the funding required for teacher compensation and to cover the cost of school materials and teacher support programmes.

90 per cent of the (mostly black) students enrolled in the Delta's public schools received free or reduced-price lunches (*Mississippi Delta*, 2010).⁷⁶

Highly demanded teachers are seldom willing to live and work in such destitute areas, especially when those communities are not able to competitively compensate them. Thus, the Delta's poverty contributes to its teacher vacancies through two routes: first, it makes Delta schools seem relatively less attractive, which suppresses the teacher supply function. Second, it also suppresses the budget function by limiting the resources available for teacher wages.

6.1.4 School-level consequences: A lack of school leadership

Though not as widely mentioned as issues of poverty, rurality, or race, one in five policy makers identified 'lack of school leadership' as a significant force behind the Delta shortages. When asked why these vacancies are so persistent, one Mississippi official claimed simply, 'You're dealing with a leadership problem and a lack thereof [in most Delta schools]' (ID#21, MS, F). Another Arkansas policy maker proposed, 'We need to make sure we get good leaders. That's where I think we're failing in low-performing schools, is in the leadership. ... You can bring in whatever you want but until you have good leadership in these schools, working with parents about those schools. ... You're not going to do anything about [teacher shortages]' (ID#33, AR, F). As four different officials pointed out, the poor leadership in certain Delta schools only augments their teacher shortages because highly demanded teachers can easily find a job at a new school if their current position fails to meet their expectations. In the words of one Arkansas congressman:

⁷⁶ As mentioned earlier in the chapter, these public schools—which usually account for most or all teacher vacancies in a given region—disproportionately serve poor African American students without access to other educational opportunities.

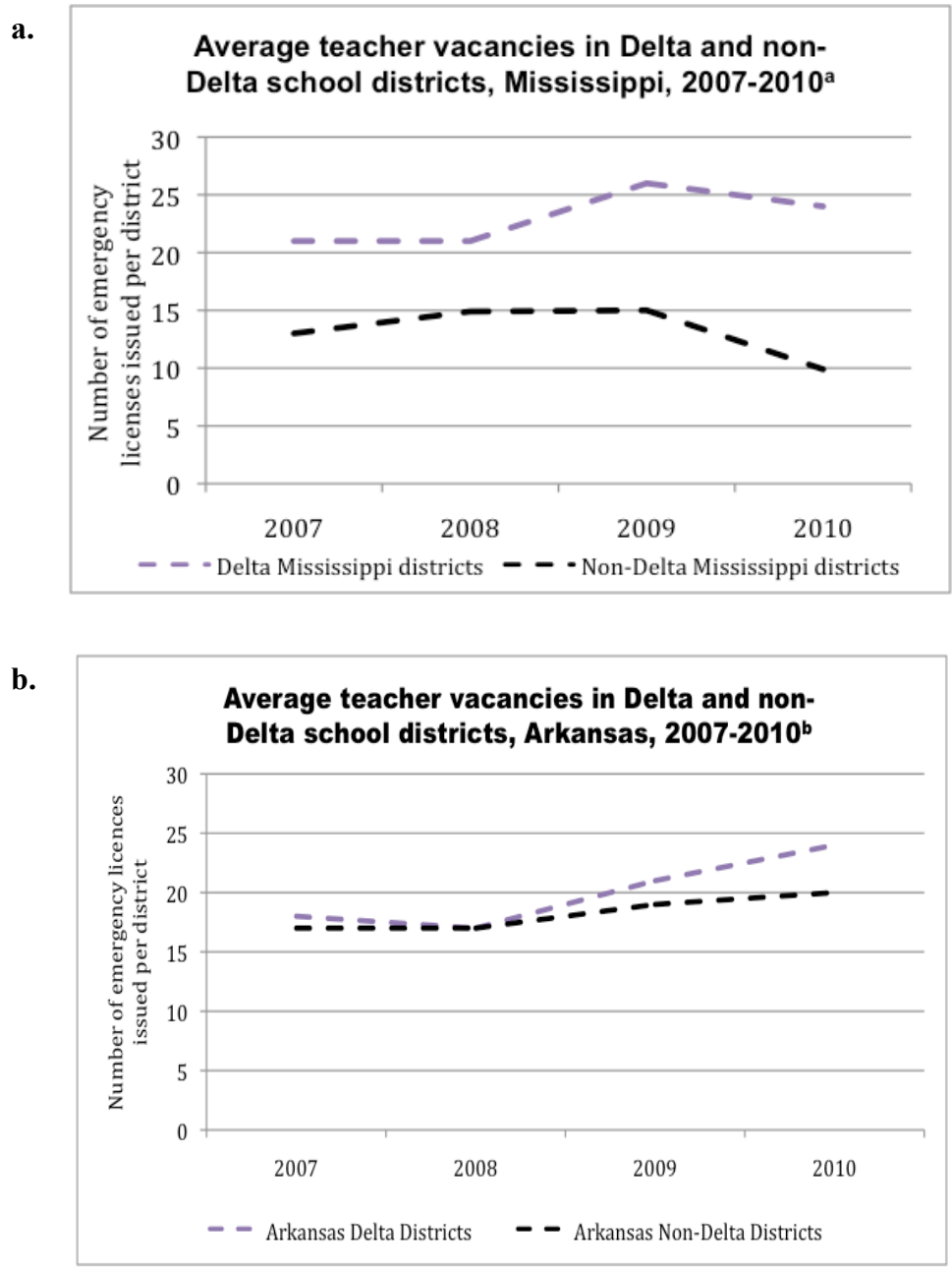
Teachers don't have to teach in the perceived poor schools or school districts [of the Delta], and I don't mean poor by lack of resources, I mean by reputation. They don't want to work or have to work in a low-performing school. They can get jobs elsewhere because there's such a high demand (ID#37, AR, M).

The empirical literature backs these claims, suggesting that teachers desire jobs where strong school leadership fosters a successful, supportive, and collaborative teaching environment (Eide, Goldhaber, and Brewer, 2004). Without strong leadership, certain Delta schools struggle to develop the environment necessary to attract or retain sufficient teachers—especially if they must compete with more effectively run non-Delta schools. That said, the same social, geographic, and economic forces that limit the Delta teacher labour supply are likely to have a similar impact on the local supply of effective school principals. Without a systematic resolution to the racial legacies and rural poverty that plague the Delta region, there is little chance that schools will be able to attract the strong leaders necessary to improve teacher work conditions, signalling further suppression of the teacher supply curve, $S(1)$.

6.2 Severity and scope of the Delta teacher shortages

Given the complex and historical nature of these many forces, most Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers identified the Delta as one of the most hard-to-staff regions in their respective states. Quantitative analysis offers qualified support for this conclusion, as Delta shortages do tend to be larger than those in other parts of Mississippi and Arkansas, though not significantly so. Qualitative analysis further refines these findings, as it suggests that subject-specific subsets of teachers are particularly rare within Delta schools.

Figure 6.2 Teacher vacancies in Delta and non-Delta districts by state, 2007-10



^{a.} The average number of emergency teacher licences issued per Delta school district (purple) and per non-Delta school district in Mississippi from the 2007-8 school year to the 2010-11 school year. This graph includes those vacancies filled by TFA teachers, thus representing the total amount of vacancies the Delta would face without TFA. Data provided by the Mississippi Department of Education.

^{b.} The average number of certification waivers issued per Delta school district (purple) and per non-Delta school district in Arkansas from the 2007-8 school year to the 2010-11 school year. This graph includes those vacancies filled by TFA teachers, thus representing the total amount of vacancies the Delta would face without TFA. Data provided by the Arkansas Department of Education.

Table 6.3a Teacher vacancies in Mississippi Delta districts versus Mississippi districts outside the Delta, 2007-10

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. ^f
EM07 ^b Between Groups	49.704	1	49.704	.027	.871
Within Groups	78113.841	42	1859.853		
Total	78163.545	43			
EM08 ^c Between Groups	126.286	1	126.286	.136	.714
Within Groups	38957.600	42	927.562		
Total	39083.886	43			
EM09 ^d Between Groups	23.917	1	23.917	.026	.873
Within Groups	39059.969	42	929.999		
Total	39083.886	43			
EM10 ^e Between Groups	26.592	1	26.592	.029	.867
Within Groups	39057.295	42	929.936		
Total	39083.886	43			

^a This figure displays the results from a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, comparing the number of emergency licenses issued to school districts using TFA teachers to those not using TFA teachers in Mississippi for each of the school years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. Note: TFA teachers do not use emergency licenses.

^b The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2010-11

^c The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2009-10

^d The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2008-09

^e The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2007-08

^f The statistical significance of differences between TFA and non-TFA districts for each school year, with ** demarking results that were statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

Establishing the relative size of the Delta shortages

A quantitative analysis of state-wide shortages in Mississippi and Arkansas sheds some light on the severity of Delta vacancies. As displayed in Figures 6.2a and b, school-level vacancies have been greater in the Delta schools than in other regions of Mississippi and Arkansas during every year of the case study window.⁷⁷ In both

⁷⁷ Throughout the findings chapters, ‘teacher vacancies’ are measured by the number of emergency licences (in Mississippi) and certification waivers (in Arkansas) given to teachers in a given school district. These emergency licences are issued to adults who have not met the requirements to be recognised by their state as certified teachers. In this way, emergency credentials allow adults to fill a teaching vacancy that district leaders could not fill otherwise. As schools are required by federal law to have sufficient supervision of their students, they cannot simply leave a position unfilled—they must hire someone on emergency licence if no certified teachers are available. As such, the number of emergency licences issued to a school district ought to function as a powerful proxy for the true number of teacher vacancies in a given school district. Though they are called by different names in each state, emergency licences and certification waivers are the same for all intents and purposes. As such, this research refers to both as ‘emergency licences’.

Table 6.3b Teacher vacancies in Arkansas Delta districts versus Arkansas districts outside of the Delta, 2007-10

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. ^f
EM07 ^b Between Groups	19.055	1	19.055	.790	.379
Within Groups	1012.672	42	24.111		
Total	1031.727	43			
EM08 ^c Between Groups	.573	1	.573	.014	.905
Within Groups	2452.982	61	40.213		
Total	2453.556	62			
EM09 ^d Between Groups	18.399	1	18.399	.461	.500
Within Groups	2435.157	61	39.921		
Total	2453.556	62			
EM10 ^e Between Groups	7.468	1	7.468	.186	.668
Within Groups	2446.088	61	40.100		
Total	2453.556	62			

^a This figure displays the results from a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, comparing the number of emergency licenses issued to school districts using TFA teachers to those not using TFA teachers in Arkansas for each of the school years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. Note: TFA teachers do not use emergency licenses.

^b The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Arkansas for the school year 2010-11

^c The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Arkansas for the school year 2009-10

^d The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Arkansas for the school year 2008-09

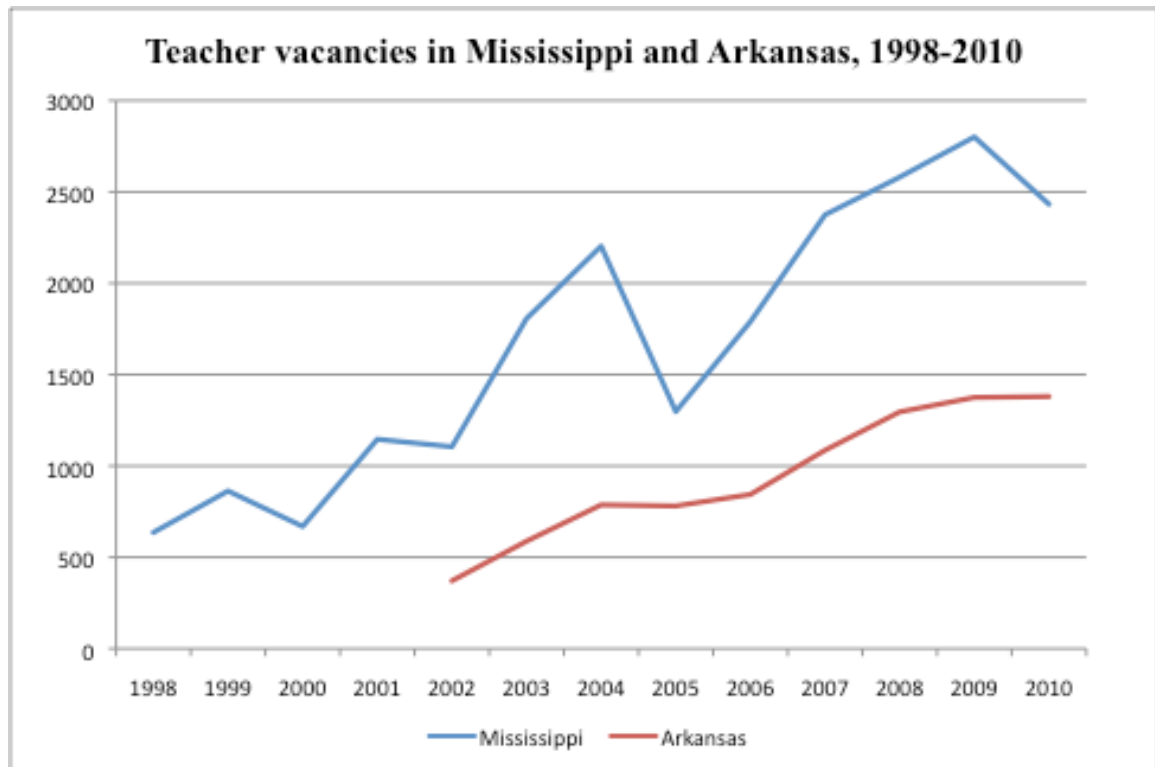
^e The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Arkansas for the school year 2007-08

^f The statistical significance of differences between TFA and non-TFA districts for each school year, with ** demarking results that were statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

states, Delta school districts faced relatively higher teacher vacancies than did school districts in other parts of each state, with rates for Arkansas 2010 the only exception. Such findings would suggest that policy makers have rightly characterised the Delta as relatively more hard-to-staff than other regions within each state.

Nevertheless, statistical testing reveals that Delta shortages are not unique, either in size or in the forces behind them. Tables 6.3a and b display the outputs from one-way ANOVA tests that compare Delta and non-Delta teacher vacancy rates in each of the

Figure 6.3 Aggregate teacher vacancies by state, 1998-2010



Aggregate teacher shortages in Mississippi and Arkansas have risen significantly over the past decade, requiring policy makers to redirect much of their time, effort, and resources away from Delta-specific teacher labour reform efforts.

four years from 2007 to 2010.⁷⁸ The results show that these differences are highly insignificant, suggesting that the Delta teacher shortages, though slightly more severe than shortages in other regions of Mississippi and Arkansas, are neither rare nor isolated. As noted in Chapter Five, such far-reaching teacher shortages are likely rooted in the poverty and agricultural dependence that characterises much of Mississippi and Arkansas.⁷⁹

Such conclusions expose a major policy dilemma for policy makers in each state. The many intersections of race, rurality, and poverty that drive Delta teacher shortages also appear to have suppressed the teacher supply and school budget functions in

⁷⁸ Though the case study window is from 2008 to 2010, the year 2007 was included in these tests as a pre-growth 'baseline' for comparison.

⁷⁹ For a review of these issues and their connection to state-wide teacher shortages, see Section 2.2.

other areas. Consequently, while these forces may create slightly larger average vacancy rates in Delta schools, Figure 6.3 illustrates that such shortages are neither isolated nor unique to the Delta region; quite to the contrary, these shortages have actually become more severe throughout Mississippi and Arkansas over the last decade.⁸⁰

This rise in aggregate teacher labour shortages weakens policy maker efforts to resolve Delta shortages because it limits the amount of money, teachers, and time they may invest in Delta schools. In this sense, teacher shortage resolution seems to be a ‘zero-sum’ game, wherein any efforts to direct resources towards the Delta comes at the direct expense of diverting them away from other hard-to-staff communities facing relatively similar histories and/or educational needs.

Subject-specific shortages in Delta schools

So far, this discussion has treated teacher vacancies at the broadest level, combining shortages from all subjects and grade levels into a single unit of analysis. Though a necessary first step, this approach also can mask underlying trends and outcomes.

During interviews, nearly three quarters of policy makers noted that certain subjects were particularly hard-to-staff; such subject-specific shortages further challenge teacher labour reform efforts in the Delta and throughout either state. Returning to the disaggregated teacher supply framework developed in Chapter Two, Figure 6.4

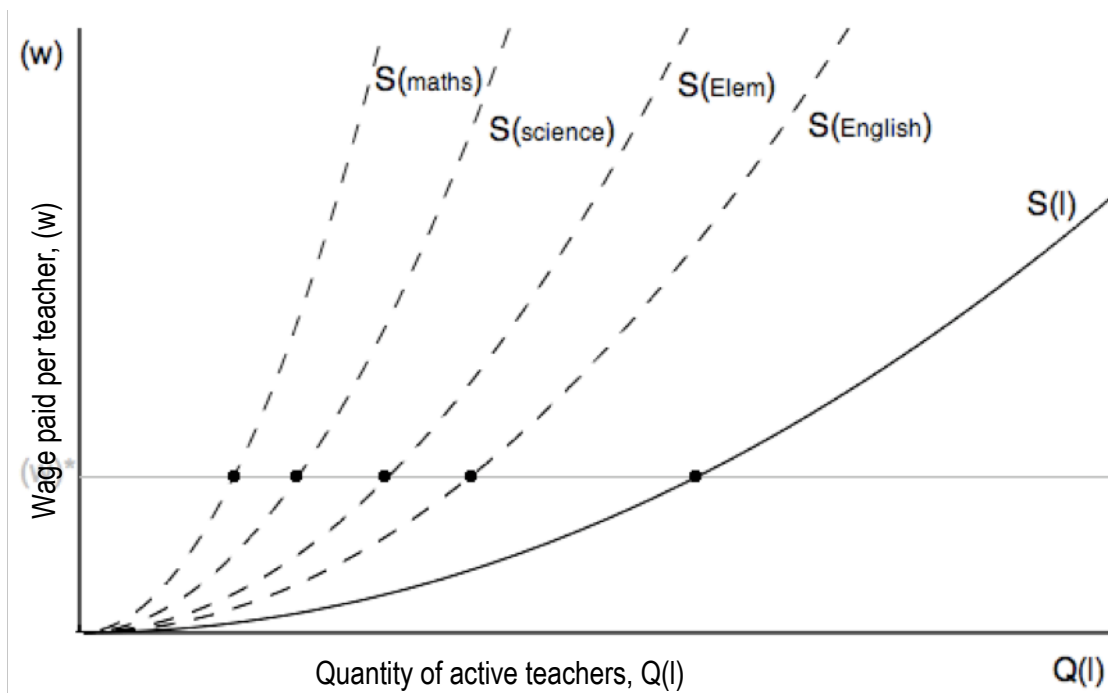
⁸⁰ The exact cause of these increasing teacher vacancy rates is not fully clear, though two particular factors appear connected. First, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) placed greater restrictions on teacher certification; as these requirements came into effect, fewer teachers met the ‘highly qualified’ criteria. Second, Chapter Seven finds that high retirement rates—particularly in Arkansas—appear to reflect a ‘greying of the teacher workforce’, a shift to the teacher labour supply, S(1), which was discussed in the previous chapter.

illustrates again the taxonomy required to understand these subject-specific challenges.

Ladd (2007) and Murnane and Steele (2007) identify maths and science as particularly hard-to-staff subject areas for most schools; this finding is captured in Figure 6.4 by the especially steep curves representing these two subject areas. This disaggregated model seems to reflect the current Delta reality reported in principal questionnaires. Delta principals cited maths, science, and special education as the most understaffed subjects in their schools; 58 per cent listed at least two of those areas as the three most difficult subjects to staff.

Also in alignment with the argumentation of Monk (2007), nearly 40 per cent of policy makers commented that highly qualified high school teachers were more difficult to recruit and retain than elementary school teachers. As a result, Delta schools faced disproportionate vacancy rates amongst their high school teaching posts: from 2007 to 2010 over 70 per cent of all emergency licences were issued to fill high school teaching vacancies (ID#45, TFA, M). Five policy makers working within either state's teacher licensure department noted that as a result of these subject-specific shortages, out-of-field teaching has been rampant in many Delta high schools—particularly amongst their high school maths and science faculty. In the words of one such Mississippi bureaucrat, '[Delta schools] just have to do the best they could to get people to go into those classrooms and teach—including [using] people who are not certified for subjects like math[s] and science' (ID#22, MS, F).

Figure 6.4 Conceptual framework for subject-specific teacher labour shortages



In this figure, the total supply of teachers, represented by the red line, may mask variations in supply by subject. As is the case in the Delta region, there are typically fewer maths and science teachers available at any given wage rate, $(w)^$, than other teachers, such as those teaching history or elementary school. The axes contain no number scales as this figure is meant as one of the theoretical constructs for framing the analysis of section 6.2.*

6.3 Policy maker perceptions of TFA

The complex nature of the Delta teacher shortages has coloured policy makers' perceptions of TFA in important ways. Nearly 90 percent officials in Mississippi and Arkansas alike appear highly receptive to TFA's growth in the Delta region, usually because they view the organisation as a highly effective response to the daunting teacher vacancies outlined above. Within this context, 80 percent of policy makers described the organisation as a highly effective measure for addressing the Delta teacher shortages.

6.3.1 TFA as a vehicle for increasing teacher quantity and quality

State officials exhibited generally positive and often strong support for TFA growth in hard-to-staff Delta schools, with 90 per cent of officials identifying it as an effective means of remedying the region's local teacher deficit in one of two ways. First, policy makers generally share a belief that TFA corps members grow the otherwise limited Delta teacher labour supply. As one Arkansas interviewee commented, 'Supply and demand. That's the word, you know, supply and demand—the demand for teachers [in the Delta] exceeds the supply. ... Teach For America actually serves to satisfy some of the deficit situations we find ourselves in, in terms of recruiting teachers' (ID331, AR, F, Black). Other officials voiced similar arguments, naming TFA as a counter to many of the forces that suppress the teacher supply function, $S(l)$, to produce teacher shortages. Furthermore, two thirds of officials argued that these forces were too strong and interconnected to be undone by other policy measures, making TFA one of the few resources capable of filling perpetually vacant Delta teaching positions.

Second, nearly 80 per cent of interviewed officials claimed that TFA corps members elevate the Delta's average teacher quality. These interviewees described corps members as knowledgeable and enthusiastic leaders who are 'committed and excited about their work'. Building on this view, policy makers seemed particularly pleased by how many TFA teachers received certification in the subjects that are most hard-to-staff. In the words of one state policy maker:

And I know we've got some [TFA teachers] now ... but I don't think it's nearly enough. I'm just telling you, there is no way to put a value on bright, young energetic people who don't get burned down or mired down in processes that pedagogy and all that bull. I would much rather take a TFA

person and take a little time to try and assist them in classroom management and pedagogy than to try and take someone who doesn't have the content ability that those folks do but do have the university pedagogy. If I have to take my pick I want those ones who have the knowledge, the content knowledge in subjects like math and science first, and then the rest comes later. I think that's easier taught than the other (ID#6, MS, M).

In the words of another Mississippi official, 'There have been so many TFA teachers who have raised the bar and have been teachers of the year in the districts they were at and it is certainly worth the effort [to bring them into the Delta]' (ID#18, MS, F). In both states, four out of five officials agreed that these young new teachers 'raised the bar' by bringing leadership, enthusiasm, and content knowledge into their classrooms.

For all of these positive attributes, three-quarters of interviewed officials seemed most enthused that TFA corps members are willing to go to the hard-to-staff Delta regions that other teachers—even other alternatively certified teachers—avoid. Expressing such sentiment, one official commented 'TFA [corps members] have worked in the parts of the Delta region ... where teachers are more difficult to place. And there, with their seeming enthusiasm it has helped a lot in many places where it would have been hard to staff [without them]' (ID#26, AR, M). In the words of a central Arkansas policy maker, 'It still comes down to, and this is where TFA helps us, it's really, really hard to get people to move [to the Delta], no matter what the incentives' (ID#38, AR, M). In this way, three of every four officials named TFA as a tool that could be used not just to fill the vacancies that other qualified teachers do not want, but to fill these vacancies even after other policy incentives have failed to make them sufficiently attractive to other alternatively certified teachers.

Interestingly, a quarter of policy makers also cited TFA as a vehicle for affecting cultural change in Delta attitudes towards education. One Mississippi bureaucrat named TFA as a highly effective response to the distrust of outsiders and low educational value/attainment that pervade some local Delta communities, claiming that TFA corps members ‘bring a different level of culture and expectation [than would be possible otherwise]—we’ve seen that really, really be effective in [improving] the Delta schools’ (ID#20, MS, F). Another Mississippi official echoed this sentiment, claiming that TFA was a powerful tool for Delta reform: ‘You know with TFA they’ve already passed their [qualifying exams for teaching], they have a degree, they’re considered highly qualified. So that was the premise, was to bring—we’re trying to change a *culture* here, do you understand what I’m saying?’ (ID#18, MS, F). In the same way that many officials believe that Delta culture actively rejects outsiders and any efforts to increase educational standards, they also seem to view TFA as an equally proactive mechanism for calming that resistance.

6.3.2 Policy maker critiques of and opposition to TFA

These generally positive sentiments notwithstanding, roughly 10 per cent of officials expressed significant reservations about the programme. On the one hand, all six of these TFA ‘sceptics’ named the short-term nature of corps members’ teaching contracts, which require only two years of service before leaving the Delta.⁸¹ As one official commented:

When you get an individual into your school, two years is about what you need to acclimate them and get them used to the communities that they serve, but in two years the TFA teacher has left. So that’s just another one of those challenges that superintendents in that region have expressed to me (ID#16, MS, M, Black).

⁸¹ The stringency of this contract is debatable, as 10 to 15 per cent of TFA teachers did not complete their two years in 2006 (Gillers, 2006). According to a Delta official, 95 per cent of Delta corps members completed their two-year contracts in 2009.

On the other hand, three of the six officials who worried about high TFA turnover also commented that attrition rates are equally high amongst new Delta teachers entering schools through other certification routes. According to one Mississippi bureaucrat, '[New Delta teachers] have a 40 per-cent washout rate over the first four years of teaching, maybe quicker than that.' Arkansas officials offered similar statistics, noting that the challenges of race, poverty, and rurality drive many teachers out of Delta schools.⁸² In comparison, a TFA-Delta administrator reported that approximately 50 per cent of corps members agree to teach in the Delta for a third year, commenting that, 'the fact that half of teachers are staying in the Mississippi Delta, a rural, kind of different place, most people in their 20s don't want to be in the middle of nowhere, is a testament to their commitment to the community. And that's just what they do, they go into these communities and they stay in these communities' (ID#47, TFA, F)

Thus, TFA corps members leave Delta schools at notably higher rates than other new Delta teachers (50 per-cent attrition after two years of service compared to 40 per-cent attrition after four years). But, given the fact that TFA corps members are already recruited by TFA and are only slightly more likely to leave Delta schools than other new teachers, the majority of policy makers appear to have concluded that these short-term contracts are a 'necessary evil' to attracting young people to work in the Delta. As one Mississippi official explained, 'Well you know, of course TFA participants are there for two to three years, you know, and ideally we'd like someone who would be

⁸² These Delta-specific attrition rates are especially high compared to average national attrition rates, which were just below 17 per cent in 2005, and only as high as 20 per cent in many urban areas deemed 'hard-to-staff' (Carroll, 2009).

there for twenty or thirty years, you know. But also, [we] recognise the difficulties of staffing completely schools in that part of the state' (ID#7, MS, M).

TFA's short-term teacher contracts represent one of the most commonly held concerns amongst state policy makers, though by no means the only concern. One Mississippi official commented that TFA teachers could not exhibit real leadership in a community they knew nothing about, while another Arkansas policy maker noted that corps members only rarely have any meaningful teaching experience when they first enter a Delta classroom. Additionally, one Arkansas official criticised TFA's impact on the traditional labour supply, claiming that he had 'heard some mainstream regular teachers concerned that TFA teachers will take their job' (ID#29, AR, M, Teacher). Further speaking to this threat of teacher crowd-out, another Arkansas policy maker questioned whether or not TFA was 'fair' to traditionally certified teachers, raising the question of indirect teacher crowd-out as well:

But I'm a traditional teacher and I know the hoops that we make our traditional teachers jump through is [sic] just unconscionable to make them prove they are effective in the classroom. And I do not think it is fair to them nor to the students, to have somebody wake up one morning and decide 'oh I want to teach' and place them in a classroom equal to a teacher. Now if they have to go through some of the same processes of them proving themselves and having their children tested longitudinally in the same way, I have no problem with it. But as it is, I think [TFA] is not a panacea and it is short sighted (ID#32, AR, F, Teacher).

Concerns such as these resonate with the complaints from urban union leaders discussed in the introductory chapter, that TFA corps members take traditional teachers' jobs and 'crowd out' potentially long-term teachers within a given teacher labour market. As mentioned in Chapter One, researchers such as Feyerick and Steffen (2009) and Toppo (2009) reported that TFA teachers may be pushing traditionally certified, lifetime teachers out of partner schools, noting that numerous

TFA corps members had been hired in major cities at the same time that veteran teachers were receiving pink slips due to district-wide budget cuts.

Furthermore, research by Darling-Hammond (2003) contends that TFA may also ‘crowd out’ teachers indirectly: by teaching for only two years before returning to their ‘real careers’, TFA corps members may de-professionalise teaching and/or lessen the pressure for politicians and administrators to fix the underlying sources of a region’s teacher shortages. Such effects diminish the attractiveness of the teaching profession, leading some researchers to conclude that TFA compels many potential lifelong educators to select another career.

In actuality, there is little evidence that such concerns are germane to the rural Delta context, where teacher shortages are so pervasive that even a 600 per-cent increase in TFA presence has not closed local vacancies, and where not a single traditional teacher, school administrator, or community member mentioned recent teacher layoffs during researcher observations. Moreover, many local teachers denied that TFA presence had de-professionalised their career choice. As one Mississippi teacher explained, a wide array of student discipline problems, limited financial resources, and poor student performance led her to believe that she had ‘bigger things to worry about than TFA teachers coming to [her] school’. Others argued that TFA actually improved the local prestige of the teaching profession by replacing under-qualified teachers working on emergency licences (many of whom might have been hired through nepotistic practices) with enthusiastic corps members from some of the nation’s top undergraduate universities.

While concerns about teacher crowd-out are rare and seem relatively inapplicable to the Delta context, they reflect a profound apprehension amongst some officials that TFA provides a short-term fix at the expense of long-term reform to the Delta's traditionally certified teacher supply. Interestingly, sceptical officials have not channelled these concerns into any cohesive opposition to TFA growth, a point discussed more thoroughly in the following section.

6.3.3 TFA within the context of policy maker decision-taking mechanisms

To summarise the findings thus far, policy makers in both Mississippi and Arkansas identified the Delta as an especially hard-to-staff rural region of their states. And yet, while the Delta may have slightly higher-than-average teacher vacancy rates, statistical tests show that the shortages are not significantly larger than those in other areas. Further complicating matters, policy makers also identified subject-specific and grade level shortages as well as an overall lack of teacher quality as particularly troublesome within Delta schools.

As a result of these many challenges, policy makers were generally supportive of TFA growth throughout the region, viewing it as an effective means of providing more—and more qualified—teachers than would be otherwise available. Though perceptions of the programme were generally positive, a sizeable (10 per cent) minority of policy makers conveyed misgivings about corps members' short-term, two-year commitment, and several others worried that TFA may crowd out qualified, lifelong educators. Despite these concerns, sceptical officials do not appear to have resisted TFA expansion in either state. The policy framework developed in Chapter Three

offers one theory as to why state-level support for TFA has gone uncontested despite some policy makers' concerns. Particularly, the three micro-level decision-taking mechanisms offer a means of 'unpacking' the seemingly one-sided political support for TFA growth in Mississippi and Arkansas.

TFA and policy maker uncertainty

Approximately 70 percent of policy makers lamented that the Delta teacher shortages are too deeply entrenched in history and culture to be easily resolved through education legislation, often voicing uncertainty as to whether the shortages could be remedied at all. Returning to the policy framework, such doubts feed into one of the three decision-taking mechanisms developed in Chapter Three to help dissect policy maker decisions to support, oppose, or ignore TFA growth. Namely, researchers such as Merrifield (1999) and Shepsle and Weingast (1981) find that high levels of informational uncertainty, doubt, and/or risk significantly shape policy makers' political decisions.

Just under a third of interviewees seemed to feel overwhelmed by the myriad social, political, historic, and economic issues that defined the Delta context, rendering them doubtful that they could convince non-TFA teachers to enter Delta schools. In the words of one central Mississippi official, 'What will get [teachers to the Delta] I don't know. I don't know what motivates a young teacher anymore' (ID#5, MS, F). And, as another Mississippi policy maker explained, 'I'm a big believer in research and data, and with no research [or] data out there that looks at schools out there like we have in Mississippi Delta schools, we just don't know what to do [to fill teacher vacancies]' (ID#12, MS, M).

This is not to say that policy makers have not attempted to mitigate Delta shortages via other policy solutions besides the employment of TFA teachers. As will be discussed in the following chapter, officials have used multiple types of legislation in their efforts to increase the Delta teacher labour supply, including policies that promote teacher job fairs, the use of financial incentives, the relaxation of licensure requirements, and teacher induction and mentoring programmes. But, when asked why TFA seemed so important given the presence of these other policies, roughly half of all officials explained that these other approaches had failed to produce significant changes in the size and/or distribution of the state-wide teacher supply. According to one central Arkansas congressman, ‘We’ve created some incentives to get [teachers to hard-to-staff regions]. But obviously it’s not working really well. We’ve got high needs in critical [Delta] areas and all over the state’ (ID#37, AR, M).

Second, for at least five officials, this uncertainty and frustration stemmed from a belief that traditional teacher certification programmes are unable to provide enough teachers to staff Delta schools. As one Mississippi policy maker contended, ‘A lot of the embracing of alternate route processes [like TFA] among policy makers is not based on their knowledge and acceptance of the new processes. ... A lot of their acceptance and embracement of the new model is based simply on their frustration with the old model’ (ID#4, MS, M). Expanding on this view, an Arkansas policy maker claimed, ‘[Traditional teacher] colleges are not giving us the quality of teachers that we need. They’re not giving us the quantity of teachers that we need so we have to go to other places [to find enough teachers]’ (ID#36, AR, M). Yet another Arkansas official furthered this assertion, explaining that ‘our universities are turning

out quite a few teachers but not many of them—many of them do not go into teaching and many of them that do don't last long' (ID#41, AR, F).

This belief has compelled some policy makers to allow, if not openly embrace, TFA expansion. When asked why he supported TFA growth, one legislative official from Mississippi commented, 'I know that some of the [other] programmes that have offered to recruit teachers have made some leeway in it, but we still need to find more innovative ways to attract people to our areas that have significant need' (ID#13, MS, M). In these ways, it would seem that the doubt and uncertainty surrounding other teacher certification programmes have heavily influenced policy maker attitudes towards TFA. The complex set of issues driving current Delta teacher shortages as well as the inadequate response of traditional certification programmes have triggered a deep uncertainty as to whether officials can minimise the shortage without TFA, leading many to embrace the programme even while harbouring reservations about its two-year model.

TFA as an answer to pressures for immediate action

Policy makers also seem willing to overlook TFA shortcomings because they feel pressured to quickly ameliorate state-wide teacher vacancies. This feeling speaks to the power of the second decision-taking mechanism, wherein more than half of interviewed policy makers reported pressure to discount comprehensive, long-term reforms in favour of immediate, 'quick-fix' solutions. As one central Mississippi official explained, mounting national pressure for immediate increases in student performance has made it more difficult for policy makers to refuse support from programmes like TFA. According to this official, top policy makers feel pressure to

demonstrate that teacher staffing challenges—often the product of century-old institutions—are on track to resolution within a few years’ time. In his own words, ‘Attention has been drawn to these low-performing schools more than any other time and I think now is the time [we are expected to] think about it and settle it right away. I mean, we are thinking about it more and there’s more attention on it ... [but I’m not sure we can settle it so quickly]’ (ID#12, MS, M). Several officials complained that as a result of this pressure, they feel the need to accept a flawed TFA model because it is the only programme that has been able to meet this immediate demand.

Interestingly, six officials expressed support for TFA while simultaneously noting that the programme—designed to be a short-term fix to local shortages—could become a detrimental long-term crutch for Delta schools. The second mechanism, which emphasises short-term results even at the expense of long-term returns, sheds some light on this paradox. Put simply, policy maker concerns that TFA does not address long-term shortages—and may even worsen these shortages by providing a crutch—are outweighed by even greater pressure to provide immediate resolution to teacher vacancies. As further evidence of this possibility, 30 per cent of officials seemed to believe that the short-term need for new teachers overshadows any long-term concerns about TFA. Reflecting these sentiments, one ‘sceptical supporter’ of TFA explained:

I feel like [TFA] is supposed to have been a short-time thing until we work the situation out but it’s like the chicken and the egg, you know, you can’t get the teachers down there until you get the industry down there and you can’t get the industry until you get the qualified people to work for them so it’s back and forth and so you know, we’re just continuing on with TFA until something happens in the area of economics in that area. And I don’t know that that is going to happen but I know that we don’t have enough teachers that are willing to go there to teach. And even though it’s not idyllic for TFA to go there and teach, it’s the best option and it’s what we have to do (ID#43, AR, F).

In this way, the trade-offs policy makers face between short- and long-term strategies for dealing with Delta teacher shortages seem to factor heavily into officials' acceptance of TFA. Micro-economic literature from the policy framework would explain that public officials feel strong pressure to prioritise immediate needs and temporary fixes over less politically rewarding long-term solutions. Similarly, though certain Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers feared long-term dependence on TFA to staff Delta schools, this fear appears to be trumped by a perceived pressure to find an immediate remedy to Delta staffing challenges.

Personal relationships between TFA leadership and central policy makers

The third mechanism outlined in Chapter Three emphasises the importance of an official's personal relationships with and connections to an organisation in predicting political support for that organisation. According to Downs (1972) and Simon (1995), policy makers are much more likely to overlook a programme's faults if they feel personally connected to it or if they believe that they (or their constituents) will directly benefit from it. TFA-Delta leadership has invested considerable time and resources in developing and maintaining personal connections with each state's central policy makers. The third decision-taking mechanism would suggest that these connections have insulated the organisation from organised political resistance.

Though all interviewed officials have a chance to shape their states' education policy in some way, Chapter Three found that three positions are relatively more central in the formation and implementation of state-level education agendas. Generally

speaking, the governor is responsible for directing his state's educational agenda, the chairmen of the Education Committee and Appropriations/Joint Budget Committee for the production of policy texts to enact this agenda, and the state superintendent/commissioner for the implementation of policies into practice. These three offices effectively dominate the influence, text production, and implementation spheres of Ball's policy cycle framework, making them some of the single most influential actors in determining whether or not TFA receives state support.

TFA leaders have worked hard to cultivate personal relationships with each of these central policy makers in Mississippi and Arkansas, most likely because they recognise the power these officials hold in directing state-level education policies and agendas. When asked to whom he was most committed to developing strong working relationships, the Executive Director of TFA-Delta responded:

Well obviously we try to keep a wide and deep pool of [connections with] individuals but in both states, governors and governors' offices, the chairs of education and appropriations [legislative committees], as well as committee members especially on appropriations and education, and especially those individuals that come from the Delta counties, and individuals from the respective departments of education, so in Mississippi it's the state superintendent and in Arkansas it's a commissioner... (ID#45, TFA, M).

The response here is telling, as this TFA leader emphasises his programme's relationships with exactly those individuals most central in the state-level education policy networks. In turn, each of these individuals also reported strong relationships with the Executive Director of TFA, often referring to the TFA leader by his first (i.e. given) name. Such responses would suggest that TFA leadership has worked hard to develop very personal relationships with the individuals holding the greatest authority to sway their states' official stances on TFA; the micro-economic literature from the policy framework would suggest that these connections are a powerful tool for

overcoming any isolated resistance amongst more peripheral policy makers concerned by the shortcomings of the TFA model.

6.4 Conclusions: Sources and characteristics of the Delta teacher shortages

This chapter has centred on a sub-question that asks how one might understand the Delta shortages as well as policy maker attitudes towards TFA given these shortages. Reflecting on the chapter's findings, the confluence of rurality, poverty, and a history of institutionalised racism has created an environment that deters new teachers from entering the Delta region. Similar forces define the larger state contexts enveloping the Delta, further diminishing policy makers' capacity to provide the time and resources required for local teacher labour reform. Viewed through the lens of these challenges, most policy makers perceive TFA as a powerful tool for supplying teachers to understaffed Delta schools. Moreover, they believe the programme's corps members are enthusiastic, knowledgeable leaders who offer great value to the communities they serve.

Despite these positive views, officials also voiced some serious concerns regarding the nature of the TFA model. Though the short two-year commitment was the most common issue, some policy makers also fear that TFA might become a long-term crutch to Delta schools at the expense of crowding out traditionally certified, lifelong teachers. These concerns seem highly relevant to Delta education reform, yet none appear to have been seriously discussed or considered by the general political body. Many theories could be put forth to explain this outcome; the policy framework structuring this research would point to the power of certain decision-taking mechanisms in dictating policy maker acceptance or rejection of TFA.

Namely, policy makers are uncertain as to how else they might reform the Delta teacher vacancies, and many doubt the capacity of traditional certification programmes to meet the region's teacher labour needs. These concerns are coupled with the political pressure to provide immediate resolution to shortages rooted in century-old challenges. Finally, TFA leaders have developed strong working relationships with those policy makers most central within the education policy networks of either state. Given these findings, it seems unlikely that TFA will face any considerable political pushback in Mississippi or Arkansas. Instead, the organisation appears to be a permanent feature of Delta teacher labour reform, meriting more careful examination of when and how the programme might best serve the needs of local Delta schools.

Teach For America's position within state strategies for Delta reform

Chapter Abstract: Findings from Chapter Six illustrate the complex nature of the Delta teacher shortages and, by extension, the need for a comprehensive response to the region's prolonged teacher vacancies. The following discussion explores state-level policies currently employed to improve teacher recruitment and retention outcomes in Mississippi and Arkansas. Analysis of these teacher labour policyscapes reveals that state officials have implemented all of the strategies most heavily recommended in the existing research over the last fifteen years, yet district-level teacher vacancy rates actually grew during that same period. These findings affirm the argument from Chapter Three: little of the existing teacher recruitment/retention research addresses the distinct challenges underlying rural Southern teacher shortages. By contrast, TFA has provided an effective response to local teacher vacancies, as its growth from 2008 to 2010 was especially concentrated amongst the Delta communities most characterised by those 'rural Southern' drivers identified in Chapter Six (race, rurality, and poverty). In this way, TFA stands as a potentially powerful tool for targeted teacher labour reform throughout the Delta and within other rural Southern communities struggling to attract and retain a highly qualified local teacher labour supply.

The central research question stresses TFA's role as a supplement to state-led efforts to fill the Delta teacher vacancies; this focus demands a thorough examination of the programme's position within the larger set of state strategies for Delta teacher labour reform. While the findings presented thus far might tempt some to simplify TFA's role in the Delta as a mantra of 'fill as many vacancies as possible, as quickly as possible', a more extensive examination reveals that TFA appears to have carefully selected new partner schools during its growth from 2008 to 2010 so as to accommodate concurrent state efforts for Delta teacher labour reform. The second sub-question presented in Chapter One offers a guide for exploring instances in which TFA was able to complement broader teacher labour policies:

- In light of its recent growth from 2008 to 2010, what role does Teach For America now play within the overarching set of state strategies meant to ameliorate the Delta teacher shortages?

There is evidence that TFA has concentrated its corps members in the districts whose teacher labour supplies have been least responsive to recent state-level teacher labour reform efforts. Policy makers have passed a battery of laws that encourage well-educated state residents to become teachers and offer additional incentives for these teachers to move to the Delta region. Despite these efforts, Delta teacher vacancies have actually risen in recent years, and vacancies remain especially pronounced in the Delta districts most characterised by those historical, social, and economic factors described in the previous chapter. Addressing this need, TFA selected Delta schools with above average teacher vacancy rates during its expansion from 2008 to 2010, and

particularly targeted the schools most characterised by one or more of the ‘rural Southern’ drivers discussed in Chapter Six (e.g. race, poverty, and rurality).

These findings offer compelling reasons to view TFA as a sophisticated tool for rural teacher recruitment, one that policy makers may use in conjunction with other policies and programmes to maximise and more equitably distribute the influx of teachers into especially hard-to-staff communities within the rural South.

7.1 Recent ‘policyscapes’ as a context for TFA analysis

Chapter Five provided a chronological account of the Delta’s educational development; this section builds on that background to further contextualise state-led reform efforts in two ways. First, it explores the education funding outcomes produced by those education financing policies also discussed in Chapter Five—namely, the MAEP of 1997 and the stipulations created by the Lakeview funding cases in Arkansas. This analysis lends some perspective on the types of resources policy makers have at their disposal for improving the Delta’s current teacher labour shortages. Second, this section extends the chronological account from Chapter Five to include a discussion of those more recent non-financial additions to what Ball and Bowe (1992) would call the teacher labour ‘policyscapes’ in Mississippi and Arkansas. This portion of the research examines the ways in which teacher labour legislation from the last fifteen years has shaped state-wide teacher supplies and/or redirected a greater share of these supplies into hard-to-staff regions like the Delta.

7.1.1 Education funding outcomes

Funding systems in Mississippi and Arkansas have followed different paths in recent years, with Arkansas’s contentious legal battles placing more pressure on

redistributive state funding measures than has been the case in Mississippi; this divergence seems evident in Table 7.1. Under the MAEP, Mississippi communities still fund a large portion of their school systems directly, with local funding accounting for roughly 30 per cent of total school revenue, state aid for 54 per cent, and federal aid for the remaining 16 per cent in 2007. By contrast, Arkansas's various Lakeview rulings have placed considerable financial responsibility on the state, which accounted for 76 per cent of total education funding in that same year.⁸³

The Lakeview reforms notwithstanding, it appears that Arkansas's education finance system continues to require heavy local financing through other means. Whereas Mississippi residents must provide the majority of their local funding through property taxes, a greater share of Arkansas's local funding comes through user-based fees on services such as school lunches, after-school care, and classroom fees—counted in the 'Charges' column of Table 7.1a. Additionally, Arkansas schools are also more dependent on philanthropic donations and interest from local investments—represented by the column marked 'Other' in the same figure.

Such reliance on local 'charges' seem to have counteracted the redistributive effects of the Lakeview rulings, as the poorest residents within a given Arkansan community are unable to pay these fees and thus cannot participate in most school programmes. As a result, school districts in Arkansas actually receive less money per student than districts in Mississippi: while Mississippi schools received an average of \$7,500 for each full-time student in the 2007-8 school year, their counterparts in Arkansas received an average of around \$6,800 (varying relative to students' socio-economic

⁸³ For an explanation of the types of programmes and expenditures covered by federal, state, and local mechanisms, as well as the means in which these funds are distributed to local schools, see Appendix 7A.

Table 7.1 Funding sources for elementary and secondary public education, by percentage, 2007-8

	Federal aid	State aid	Local funding
National average	8.1	48.3	43.7
Mississippi	16.0	53.8	30.2
Arkansas	10.6	76.0	13.4

a. Sources of local funding, by percentage, 2007-8

	Taxes and appropriations	Charges	Other
National average	85.9	5.8	8.2
Mississippi	76.1	13.4	10.5
Arkansas	57.5	23.9	18.6

Each column shows the percentage share of various revenue streams for public education, with each row adding up to 100 per cent (with slight variation from rounding numbers). All percentages were calculated based on data from the US Census Bureau's 2010 report Public School Finances, 2008.

and educational needs). In both cases, these rates fall far short of the 2007-8 national average, whereby schools received approximately \$10,300 per student (*Arkansas*, 2010). Using slightly different figures, Johnson and Strange (2005) produced parallel findings specific to rural education: in 2003, rural Mississippi schools received \$3,083 per student and Arkansas schools received \$3,474, compared to a national rural average of \$4,199.⁸⁴

The limited funding available for educational services in Mississippi and Arkansas—even relative to the funding available in other rural states—creates a significant burden for schools on either side of the Delta. Throughout the region, there is little money for understaffed schools to invest in attracting and retaining high-quality teachers. This is not to say that they have not tried: Mississippi spent 7.9 per cent of its 2010 GDP on education expenditures while Arkansas outlaid 7.6 per cent of its

⁸⁴ The disparities between the Johnson and Strange (2005) figures and those per-student estimates listed just above stem, in part, from differences in accounting methods. Thus, while it is valid to compare estimates from Johnson and Strange (2005) to one another, they cannot be directly compared to other estimates generated in this research.

2010 GDP to provide public elementary and secondary education services; in that same year, the average state spent only 6.1 per cent of its GDP on similar services (US Census Bureau, 2010). Because other states are much wealthier, however, the total amount of funding available to schools is still far below average in Mississippi and Arkansas, where total education expenditures in 2010 reached \$4.4 billion and \$4.5 billion, respectively—compared to the national state average of \$11.8 billion in the same year.

School districts in Mississippi and Arkansas have invested the overwhelming majority of their total education financing in teacher compensation and other recruitment/retention efforts—spending 89.7 per cent of total expenditures in Mississippi and 87.4 per cent in Arkansas on teacher compensation, classroom support services, and other programmes to improve teacher resources (ibid).⁸⁵ By comparison, Southern states spend an average of 82.2 per cent on these services, and the United States as a whole spends an average of 77.0 per cent (ibid). Researchers such as Cohen and Murnane (1986) and Beckett (2009) argue that this emphasis on instructional resources should grow the state supply of teachers. And yet, because the total amount of funding available to schools is substantially smaller than it would be in more industrialised states, schools across Mississippi and Arkansas continue to struggle to attract and retain a sufficient supply of quality teachers.

7.1.2 Teacher labour policyscapes in Mississippi and Arkansas

Generally speaking, state officials used these recruitment/retention funds to grow the teacher supply from 1995 to 2010 by investing funds in policies that 1) improved

⁸⁵ A breakdown of these programmes and services is provided in Appendix 7B.

state-wide teacher work conditions, 2) increased and targeted financial incentives for teaching in hard-to-staff regions, or 3) modified teacher licensure requirements to streamline the certification process—including the creation of state charter schools capable of hiring teachers with few to none of the traditional credentials. Though certain laws may fall into more than one of these categories and others may fit into none, these groupings provide a useful heuristic for determining how and to what extent the established teacher recruitment/retention strategies (discussed in Chapter Three) have affected teacher supplies in each state. In Tables 7.2a and b, the relevant Mississippi and Arkansas legislation has been condensed and colour-coded to illustrate these groupings more clearly.

Using the same labour economics framework employed in previous chapters, the following discussion thematically examines each of these types of policies, placing particular emphasis on the features of each approach that make it better or worse suited to addressing the teacher supply needs of Delta schools. Such analysis provides a context for understanding when and why policy makers find TFA a necessary addition to other strategies for Delta teacher labour reform.

Before proceeding with this discussion, however, it should be noted that the goal here is not to ‘prove’ or quantify the degree to which individual policies have succeeded or failed to increase the state-wide and Delta-specific teacher supplies.⁸⁶ When creating a

⁸⁶ Quantitative evidence of if and to what extent teacher labour policyscapes have been able to attract and retain teachers in Mississippi and Arkansas would be highly valuable, but such information is well beyond the scope of this research project. Consequently, this section will focus only on the types of policies implemented by state officials as well as the cumulative effect these policies appear to have produced on the Delta’s teacher labour outcomes. Under this approach, the research treats any statistics on the Delta’s current teacher compensation, teacher vacancies, etc. as the ‘cumulative effects’ of each state’s policyscape and asks if and how TFA has responded to these outcomes to meet policy makers’ perceptions and/or expectations.

Table 7.2a Recent teacher labour supply policyscape reforms in Mississippi

Mississippi Education Policyscape Timeline
1997: Senate Bill 2512: Ease licensure requirements for teachers
1997: House Bill 1672: Allow for six conversion charter schools
1998: Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act: Create incentives for teachers entering hard-to-staff areas
1999: House Bill 694: Provide funds for teacher mentorship programmes
2000: House Bill 1134: Increase teacher pay 30% over 5 years
House Bill 294: Increase pay for teachers in hard-to-staff areas
2001: Senate Bill 2370: State Board creation of MAT, MAPQT programmes
2002: Senate Bill 2209: Increase teachers' disciplinary power
2004: Senate Bill 2712: Establish the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI)
2006: Senate Bill 2602: Relax teacher certification requirements
2008: <Senate Bill 2721 dies in committee: Would have allowed five new conversion charter schools
2009: MDE limits district use of emergency teacher licenses
MDE creates summer institute licenses for TFA trainees
2010: Senate Bill 2293: Renew provisions for conversion charter schools

In Table 7.2a, all Mississippi policy texts from 1995 to 2010 that related specifically to teacher labour supply reforms have been listed and colour-coded based on the category into which they fall. Blue represents policy related to the modification of teacher certification requirements, orange the creation of financial incentives, and green improvements in teacher work conditions.

‘policyscape’ context for analysis, researchers like Ball and Bowe (1992) would argue that it is the cumulative effects of all policies that define change—in this case, change in local teacher labour market outcomes— more than any single piece of legislation.

Thus, this section does not claim that individual pieces or types of policies have altered Delta teacher shortages in a particular way. Rather, it examines the relative strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches as well as their collective effects on state and region-specific shortages. This ‘collective effect’ on Delta teacher shortages is quantified as Delta districts’ reported teacher vacancies plus the number of vacancies filled by corps members in a given year.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ These two statistics must be combined because a Delta district typically hires TFA teachers once it has an estimate of its vacancies. Thus, corps members presumably are filling spots that would otherwise be filled by a teacher working on an emergency licence.

Table 7.2b Recent teacher labour supply policyscape reforms in Arkansas

Arkansas Education Policyscape Timeline
1995: Act 1126: Allow for the creation of conversion charter schools
1997: Act 1304: Allow teachers to bring children to same school
1999: Act 890: Allow for open-enrolment charter schools
2003: Act 462: Increase teacher planning time
Act 756: Mandate provision of teacher school supplies
Act 1745: Creation of Office of Teacher Recruitment
2005: Act 1881: Guarantee teachers duty-free lunch time
Act 2005: Raise state limits on open enrolment charter schools
Act 2196: Increase teacher pay in hard-to-staff regions
2006: Education Adequacy Act (EAA): Increase to all teacher pay
2007: Act 169: Relax recertification requirements for veteran teachers
Act 46: Ban employment of long-term substitute teachers
Act 736: Loosen restrictions on charter school distribution
2009: Act 1309: Increase in teacher professional development services
<House Bill 1412 dies in committee: Would expand eligible teacher supply by including out-of-state non-traditional teachers

In Table 7.2b, all Arkansas policy texts from 1995 to 2010 that related specifically to teacher labour supply reforms have been listed and colour-coded based on the category they fall into. Blue represents policy related to the modification of teacher certification requirements, orange the creation of financial incentives, and green improvements in teacher work conditions.

While it is impossible to fully extricate TFA’s subtler interactions with these policies, one may draw the simplifying assumption that TFA is exogenous to the policyscapes outlined in Tables 7.2a and b. None of the related policy texts contained any explicit reference to TFA; moreover, no policy seemed to hinge its approach on the presence of TFA, and not a single policy maker from either state mentioned a situation to the contrary. Treating TFA as an external supplement to state policyscapes should clarify the types of teacher labour challenges that state policies seem least equipped to address; in turn, this understanding provides a context for appraising TFA’s ‘fit’ as a complementary addition to these larger strategies.

Improved teacher work conditions

First, recent policy makers—especially those in Arkansas— have attempted to increase their state’s aggregate teacher supply by improving general work conditions

in public classrooms and schools. In theory, these policies function primarily to increase the total teacher labour supply by making the teaching profession a more enticing field relative to other careers requiring similar levels of training and expertise. Researchers such as Collins (1999); Murphy, DeArmond, and Guin (2003); and Proffit et al. (2004) conclude that such policies should be highly effective in attracting potential teachers ‘at the margins’; that is, those individuals who are already considering enrolment in a teacher certification programme or who already hold certification credentials but do not currently teach.

In Arkansas, policy makers have placed considerable stock in this approach, passing five legislative acts related to non-pecuniary teacher work conditions since 1997. As illustrated in Table 7.2b, Act 1304 of 1997, Act 462 of 2003, Act 756 of 2003, Act 1881 of 2005, and Act 1309 of 2009 all target different aspects of a teacher’s work life, from increased time and resources during the work day, to provisions for teachers to more conveniently drop off their own children before and after school. Recent Mississippi policy makers have also employed this type of approach, though to a lesser extent. Since 1999, two pieces of legislation have targeted non-pecuniary benefits: House Bill 694 of 1999 increased the resources for teacher mentorship programmes, while Senate Bill 2209 of 2002 granted educators more disciplinary authority within their classrooms. Extending beyond these recent policyscapes, each state also runs a long-standing teacher induction and mentorship programme through its Department of Education. Extending back to the mid-1980s for either state, these mentorship programmes are intended to improve new educators’ initial experiences by providing them at least a yearlong partnership with a veteran mentor teacher.

Works by Dolton (2006) and Ingersoll (2003) would emphasise these types of teacher workplace policies as a potentially powerful tool for increasing teacher recruitment and retention rates.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, many policy makers seemed unconvinced that recent legislation in either state had improved teacher work conditions enough to draw in a significant number of new teachers, especially in the Delta, where undesirable living conditions deter most teachers from entering the region. Roughly half of all Mississippi officials voiced a belief that this body of legislation had improved teacher work conditions, but still failed to address the poor living conditions that keep professionals out of the Delta. As one Mississippi board member explained:

We've tried offering just about everything we can think of [to make it more attractive to live and work in the Delta], but we can't change [the fact that] there's nothing for people to do that live there. ... There's just nothing there. Obviously years ago cotton, when cotton was king, those areas were thriving. But certainly after cotton went away, there's literally just nothing there. The towns have just dried up... (ID#1, MS, M, Black).

Even in Arkansas, where improved teacher work conditions have been utilised rather extensively within recent state policy reforms, one-third of officials expressed similar doubts. In the words of a central Arkansas official:

You know, no matter what we do, your most highly qualified teachers... will choose the better school districts over those [Delta] districts because [even if the classroom conditions are good], many times in those communities there's nothing there to attract them other than the job. So even if the job is good, [it does not matter because that community] is not the most desired place to live in the first place (ID#38, AR, M).

While improved teacher work conditions may have improved either state's aggregate teacher labour supply, $S(1)$, by lowering teacher attrition out of the available pool of teachers, responses similar to those above suggest that such policies seem ill-suited for improving the local teacher supply in those hard-to-staff Delta towns characterised by unattractive living conditions.

⁸⁸ Though Dolton (2006) studied teacher recruitment and retention in the United Kingdom, the findings seem similar to those from studies conducted in the United States, such as those from Ingersoll (2003).

Targeted financial incentives

Murnane and Olsen (1990) and Podgursky, Monroe, and Watson (2004) find that financial incentives provide an effective means to increase the aggregate teacher labour supply and simultaneously target teacher recruitment in especially hard-to-staff regions. According to these works, across-the-board increases in teacher pay (i.e. the use of general financial incentives) reduce teacher vacancies by enticing more educated adults to become active teachers.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, pay increases that only improve the teaching wage in hard-to-staff regions (i.e. the use of targeted financial incentives) make the positions in those regions relatively more attractive to prospective and current teachers deciding where to work. Education researchers have hypothesised that if large enough, targeted incentives could increase the share of the teacher supply willing to work in the targeted hard-to-staff area. In line with these conclusions, many policy makers in Mississippi and Arkansas identified targeted financial incentives as their most effective option for creating teacher labour reforms that specifically impact the Delta's needs.

For Mississippi, this focus served as a central approach to tackling both state-wide and localised teacher shortages in the last few years of the 1990s. When asked about these types of policies, current officials deemed the Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Act (MCTSA) of 1998 to be a monumental step towards targeted teacher pay, arguing that it laid the foundation for future financial incentive policies like House Bill 1134 of 2000 and House Bill 294 of 2000. To date, the MCTSA has

⁸⁹ Returning to the teacher labour market graph developed in Chapter Two and presented again in Chapter Six, it is important to make a distinction here. Whereas improved teacher work conditions and eased teacher licensure shifts the teacher labour function, $S(l)$, outwards, increased pay is represented by an outward shift in the budget function, B , and not the supply function. As shown in Figure 2.4a, this shift in the budget function results in a slide along the original supply function, thus lessening the gap between teacher supply and demand without shifting $S(l)$.

provided some of the most targeted geographic teacher shortage relief of any single act in Mississippi. The bill created several incentives geared to draw qualified teachers to ‘critical teacher shortage areas’. First, it established scholarships for education-focussed college students, including a Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship Program for students agreeing to teach in a hard-to-staff school upon completion of their degree. The bill also established and funded three professional teacher recruiter positions, outlined provisions to cover moving expenses, and created a home loan programme for teachers who relocate to a ‘geographical critical teacher shortage area’.

Two years later, House Bill 1134 dramatically increased the pay for all teachers in the state; known as the Teacher Opportunity Program, this bill raised teacher salaries by the largest percentage share of any bill in the state’s history, growing teacher salaries by an average of \$9,112 (30 per cent) over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. This dramatic shift was meant to increase the aggregate number of teachers willing to enter local classrooms. In contrast, House Bill 294 (enacted in 2000) targeted increased pay to forty-eight different hard-to-staff areas, most of which are located in the Delta region. Such targeted reforms should produce a further increase in the active Delta teacher labour force by making jobs there relatively more attractive.

Arkansas policy makers emphasised these same tactics five years later, though to a lesser extent than was the case in Mississippi. First, in 2005, Act 2196 established grants for teachers in high-need regions that subsidised the costs of earning certification in a second subject area and also offered an increase in annual pay for earning full levels of certification (anywhere from several hundred dollars to \$1,300

per year, depending on the subject). Moreover, Act 969 of 2009 provided new teacher recruitment and retention bonuses (as high as \$5,000), in addition to establishing more equitable pay rates in ‘high priority’ school districts (poor, rural school districts) relative to wealthier surrounding districts. Taken together, these two acts shifted the relative appeal of teaching in hard-to-staff schools by offering greater financial rewards for teachers who entered and stayed in the surrounding region.

While it would be impossible to separate the impact of these types of legislation from that of other non-pecuniary incentive programmes passed during the same time period, policy makers believed that targeted financial incentives have most directly addressed the particular struggles of the Delta teacher labour supply. Indeed, two-thirds of officials named financial incentives as their ‘best bet’ for channelling resources to hard-to-staff regions like the Delta and nearly all praised these incentives as the most concrete solution to localised teacher shortages. In the words of one Arkansas board member:

So these [financial incentives] are probably our best bet [in resolving the Delta shortages]. We have high-priority district bonus incentives, and those teachers, they’re in districts with fewer than one thousand students and over 80 per cent of those students qualify for free and reduced lunch. And those teachers receive \$5,000 incentive bonus for the first year, \$1,000 for the second year, and \$3,000 for the third year. And then there’s also a housing [programme] ... where they can also get breaks on housing (ID#28, AR, F).

In this way, teachers in either state are offered thousands of dollars each year to serve in rural, poor areas that have consistently struggled to staff their schools. As a result, teachers living in either side of the Delta receive substantially better compensation than most other individuals there. Indeed, Shuls et al. (2010) find that Arkansas Delta teachers earn ‘nearly [40] per cent more than the median household’ (p. 28). Using statistics from TFA and the US Department of Agriculture to produce similar

estimates for Mississippi, Mississippi Delta teachers earned, on average, 50 per cent more than the local median income.⁹⁰

Despite these advantages, a quarter of policy makers worried that financial incentives were still too crude to address the complex nature of the Delta shortages and, in doing so, to shift outward the total teacher labour supply. First, while state-funded financial incentives have made teaching one of the Delta's highest paying professions, Delta teachers still earn less than their peers in other parts of either state. In 2009, Mississippi teacher salaries averaged \$41,510, but only \$38,780 amongst Mississippi Delta districts; during that same year, Arkansas teachers averaged an annual income of \$43,580, compared to \$36,772 in Arkansas Delta districts (*Teacher Salary Info*, 2012). These outcomes reflect the fact that teacher wages are heavily dependent on local property taxes and, thus, targeted financial incentives at the state level merely offset the extremely limited local funds available for teacher wages in the poorest rural districts. On the one hand, a low median family income (below \$27,000 on both sides of the Delta) grants Delta teachers high purchasing power within their local communities. But, on the other hand, targeted financial incentives still have not gone far enough to raise Delta teacher wages up to the state average, which could drive some teachers away from the Delta and into wealthier districts across each state.

Additionally, roughly 40 per cent of officials voiced the same concern raised in Murnane, Singer, and Willett (1989): financial incentives would have to be outrageously high to attract significantly large pools of new teachers to a hard-to-staff region. The empirical findings presented in that paper suggest that increased

⁹⁰ Estimates for Mississippi were generated based on Mississippi Delta teacher salary data provided by TFA and household income data provided by the US Department of Agriculture in the Economic Research Service's 2009 county-level income and poverty data set.

incentives are an effective means of drawing teachers into understaffed schools in or near urban areas where many potential teachers already live, but are typically far less successful if applied to regions that are remote, devoid of human capital, and/or considered a highly undesirable place to live.

Put simply, raising Delta teacher wages up to the state average might not be enough to draw teachers into the region, as many educators would still prefer to live in areas that are less geographically and socially isolated when their potential earnings are the same as they would be within a remote Delta town. As such, a sizable minority of policy makers noted that any financial incentive short of doubling or tripling Delta teacher salaries does not seem to be enough to convince teachers to relocate there. As one teacher-turned-policy maker noted: ‘I think about myself [as a teacher], and I don’t know how great the incentives would be, we never really [offer high enough incentives for] my husband to agree to ... move to the Delta’ (ID#3, MS, F, Teacher).

In the words of another official, ‘We’ve had some success with these [financial] incentives, but not nearly enough, and that’s where Teach For America comes in’ (ID#6, MS, M). Once again, the localised nature of teacher labour markets plays a crucial role in determining state-wide teacher distributions. Though financial incentives may attract teachers already living in or near the Delta, there are not nearly enough of these individuals to fill all Delta shortages. Meanwhile, teachers living far from the Delta remain unconvinced to move there, choosing instead to take teaching positions in other, more desirable areas or to enter another profession entirely. Second, even in the cases where these incentives attract new teachers to the Delta, such policies are often too broad to address intra-regional differences amongst local

communities. As one Arkansas official explained, ‘The Delta is a big place ... not all of these communities are as poor, as [rural], as [economically] depressed as others’ (ID#42, AR, F) Incentives that draw teachers to the Delta are not usually sensitive enough to discriminate between the subtle geographic, social, and economic differences driving region-specific teacher supply outcomes. In the words of a central Mississippi policy maker:

Yes, it is always great—we are always pleased when we can attract new teachers into [the Delta]. But, sometimes, you know, we see these [targeted financial incentives] fall down in that they only get people to [certain Delta regions] as a whole, but they don’t do anything to make sure that teachers end up in the most [hard-to-staff] schools within those regions. We still haven’t figured out a way to do that (ID#14, MS, M).

As a result, while certain Delta school districts may benefit from financial teacher recruitment incentives, other local communities that are less desirable places to live and/or work—either because they are too remote, or too poor, or too uneducated—could remain as understaffed as ever. Financial incentives may stand as policy makers’ best legislative option for addressing teacher shortages, but they are neither powerful nor refined enough to attract new teachers to certain Delta schools. According to many policy makers, these shortcomings leave them in need of supplementary programmes like TFA to fill remaining vacancies.

Teacher licensure requirements

Finally, policy makers in Mississippi and Arkansas have attempted to grow the aggregate teacher labour supply, S(l), by modifying their states’ requirements for teacher certification. Some policies have made it easier for traditionally trained teachers to receive and/or maintain certification, while others have paved the way for state-run alternative certification programmes similar to TFA, and still others have

expanded the presence and resources of those charter schools capable of hiring teachers with few to none of the standard teacher certification requirements.⁹¹ In any case, these approaches theoretically lower the barriers to becoming a teacher, thus shifting outwards the teacher labour supply curve. Policy makers emphasised that these modifications have not lowered standards for teacher quality; rather, they have removed obstacles that block potentially high-quality teachers from entering the classroom. In support of this claim, eight officials pointed out that these laws, in addition to streamlining teacher certification, have also established more stringent limits on emergency certification for under-qualified teachers. In this way, policy makers argue that teacher licensure laws have been used to increase each state's aggregate supply of highly qualified teachers.

In Mississippi, Senate Bill 2512 of 1997 made it easier for traditional teachers to gain certification by streamlining the process to receive teaching credentials. First, this piece of legislation simplified the state's teacher certification process for first-time, traditionally educated teachers as well as for veteran teachers seeking licence renewal, thus increasing the likelihood that these individuals enter and remain in the teacher labour market. Additionally, the bill granted licence reciprocity for any out-of-state licenced teacher with at least two years of teaching experience, further expanding the potential supply of qualified teachers. Finally, Bill 2512 required that anyone with an accredited bachelor's degree be allowed to apply for a standard five-year licence (though the bill did not guarantee that these individuals receive certification).

⁹¹ As will be discussed later in the chapter, Arkansas allows teachers at certain charter schools to teach without standard credentials; this is not the case in Mississippi, where all teachers are required to receive the same certification credentials (or to apply for the same emergency certification) whether they are teaching at a public or charter school.

A few years later, Senate Bill 2370 of 2001, Senate Bill 2712 of 2004, and Senate Bill 2602 of 2006 further expanded the teacher labour supply by creating three distinct state-run pathways to alternative teacher certification.⁹² All three of these programmes—the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI), the Mississippi Teacher Corps (MTC), and the Mississippi Alternative Pathways to Quality Teachers (MAPQT)—were intended to increase the teacher labour supply by enabling adults holding at least a college degree to quickly gain certification. Rather than return to college to complete an entirely new degree in teaching, alternative certification programmes allow educated adults to enter the classroom after a much shorter training period.

Further easing entry into hard-to-staff classrooms, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) created a new provisional licence for summer institute TFA trainees in 2009;⁹³ this relaxation to licensure requirements for TFA trainees made it possible to bring in hundreds of additional summer school teachers each year.⁹⁴ At the same time as it eased these certification requirements for TFA, however, the MDE also restricted district use of emergency licences, requiring that districts prove no teacher with state certification was willing to fill a vacant post before they bring in an uncertified teacher on emergency licence.

Mississippi policy makers explained that such restrictions on emergency licences were meant to ensure that district administrators earnestly seek qualified teachers to

⁹² The nature of the different alternative certification training models in Mississippi and Arkansas will be discussed later in the chapter.

⁹³ These mandates are a part of the teacher labour policyscape as much as any individual piece of legislation, though the State Legislature never formally approves them. Instead, the superintendent passes Department of Education mandates down to local districts with just as much weight as if they had been passed as normal law.

⁹⁴ These provisional summer licences were created to accommodate the launch of a TFA training site in the Mississippi Delta. First opened in the summer of 2009, this site hosts over 500 TFA trainees from multiple rural sites during their five-week summer training. During this time, TFA trainees work as summer school teachers in local Mississippi Delta schools.

fill local vacancies rather than resort to nepotistic hiring practices. In the words of one Mississippi licensure bureaucrat:

What we were having [before the MDE issued restrictions on emergency licences] was not just a difficulty to staff [Delta schools], but a lot of school districts were trying to hire teachers on emergency licence that had no certification and were not highly qualified even when other [qualified] teachers were available (ID#18, MS, F).

In their eyes, the new TFA licences allow for an influx of qualified (TFA) summer school teachers while the restrictions on emergency licences require local hard-to-staff districts to take advantage of this new teacher labour source. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many policy makers believed that some Delta communities harbour a distrust of outsiders that makes them unwilling to hire non-native teachers. As explained by former Superintendent Dr Hank Bounds, the MDE had to formulate mandates to counter this resistance so that such communities would hire available qualified teachers:

...one of the things I had to do as State Superintendent was to basically stop [issuing] emergency licences [to some Delta communities]. We had to change the way we gave out emergency licence because district superintendents were giving out—‘Betsy’, who ... clearly can’t pass the PRAXIS [teacher certification exams], so they put them on an emergency licence as opposed to hiring these young, energetic, very, very bright individuals [from TFA].⁹⁵

Mississippi policy makers often commented on the importance of these MDE mandates in creating an ‘entry point’ for qualified teachers into understaffed Delta communities where local residents were suspicious of outside teachers.

In Arkansas, policy makers appear to have been relatively less focussed on legislation that directly lowers the barriers to teacher certification. In 2007, Arkansas policy makers passed Act 169, which exempts all teachers over the age of sixty-five from

⁹⁵ No code is provided here as the interviewee is clearly identified here as Dr Hank Bounds of Mississippi. By not attaching his code here, it is possible to maintain confidentiality in other comments he made but did not give express consent to be identified.

needing to renew their teaching licences. This measure is meant to slow retirement amongst older veteran teachers, making it the state's only policy to streamline traditional teacher certification in the last fifteen years. Similar to the MDE mandates of 2009, Act 46 of 2007 created restrictions on emergency certification, in this case requiring that 'long-term substitute teachers' not be used for more than thirty days unless the substitute held 'highly qualified teacher' status. In this way, Act 46 is aimed to prevent school districts from hiring uncertified teachers (in this case as 'permanent' substitutes) when qualified teachers are available.

TFA in the context of state-run alternative certification programmes

As a sub-set of those legislative approaches meant to lower the barriers to teaching, state-run alternative teacher certification programmes are meant to close teacher shortages in hard-to-staff regions by providing educated adults a fast track to receiving teacher certification. Depending on the model they employ, these programmes have experienced different levels of success in targeting hard-to-staff regions of Mississippi and Arkansas; looking specifically to the Delta, all of these programmes have been able to place some teachers in this area, though none to the same extent as TFA. In fact, Tables 7.3a and b show that TFA averaged three times as many Delta teachers a year from 2008 to 2010 as all other Mississippi- and Arkansas-run programmes combined. These tables also compare the models of these different programmes (by state), creating a basis for analysing how TFA has produced such a large share of the Delta's incoming teacher supply. This analysis should, in turn, elucidate TFA's position within the policyscapes and programmes that shape the flow of alternatively certified teachers into the Delta region.

Table 7.3a Alternative teacher certification programmes in Mississippi*

	Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI)	Teach for America (TFA)	Mississippi Teacher Corps (MTC)	Mississippi Alternative Pathways to Quality Teachers (MAPQT)
Year Founded ^a	2005	1993	1989	2001
Training Length ^b	6.5 months	5 weeks	1 summer	1 month
Training Style ^c	Online, year-long	In-person, summer	In-person, summer	In-person, summer
Size ^d	100 new teachers/year, 0 in the Delta	180 new teachers/year, all in the Delta	25 new teachers/year, 10 in the Delta	230 new teachers/year, 20 in the Delta
Other Requirements ^e	60 hours field experience Pass PRAXIS exams Find teaching position	Pass PRAXIS exams	Pass PRAXIS exams,	Pass PRAXIS exams Find teaching position
Funding Source ^f	Student tuition, some state funding through job centres	Private donations, state funding, district head-hunting fees	State funding: \$235,000/year	Student tuition, partial state subsidy

* *Masters of the Arts in Teaching (MAT)* programmes were not included as they are run entirely through the public university system and vary in content and requirements by university.

a. For TFA, 'year founded' represents the first year TFA placed teachers in the Mississippi Delta.

b. All programmes require on-going training; the times listed here represent the initial training time before entering a classroom.

c. As was the case for 'Training Length', all training styles refer to the style of initial training before entering a classroom.

d. All statistics are from the 2009-10 school year.

e. These represent requirements selected trainees must meet before they may begin teaching.

f. This category names the sources of funds used to maintain the programme; dollar amounts varying by year were not listed.

Table 7.3b Alternative teacher certification programmes in Arkansas*

	ADE Non-traditional Licensure Program (NTLP)	Teach for America (TFA)
Year Founded ^a	1986	1991
Training Length ^b	4 weeks	5 weeks
Training Style ^c	In-person, summer	In-person, summer
Size ^d	300 new teachers/year, 30 in the Delta	80 new teachers/year, all in the Delta
Other Requirements ^e	Pass PRAXIS exams Find teaching position	Pass PRAXIS exams
Funding Source ^f	Student tuition, partial state subsidy	Private donations, district head-hunting fees

* *Masters of the Arts in Teaching (MAT) programmes were not included as they are run entirely through the public university system and vary in content and requirements by university.*

a. For TFA, 'year founded' represents the first year TFA placed teachers in the Mississippi Delta.

b. All programmes require on-going training; the times listed here represent the initial training time before entering a classroom.

c. All training styles refer to the style of initial training before entering a classroom.

d. All statistics are from the 2009-10 school year.

e. These represent requirements selected trainees must meet before they may begin teaching.

f. This category names the sources of funds used to maintain the programme; dollar amounts varying by year were not listed.

In these two figures, interesting similarities and important differences become apparent amongst the many alternative certification programmes placing teachers in the Delta. Highly varied by age and size, many of these programmes have adopted the same training approach as TFA, offering 'crash-course' summer training in conjunction with on-going professional development for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher. Marking an important distinction amongst these models, TFA is the only programme focussing all of its teachers within the Delta region, mostly likely because it is the only programme that does not allow teachers to place themselves.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ TFA corps members may only teach in partner schools—all of which are currently located in the Delta—and are matched to a school based on local need. Thus, unlike any of the state-run certification programmes in Mississippi and Arkansas, TFA does not allow its corps members to choose their schools.

This point is reflected in the ‘Size’ data from Tables 7.3a and b, which highlights that the state-run alternative certification programmes place only a small share of their teachers in Delta communities. Fifteen of the seventeen policy makers working with alternative certification programmes directly (e.g. teacher licensure bureaucrats and the heads of these state-run programmes themselves) believe that their states’ alternatively certified teachers typically find jobs in hard-to-staff areas outside of the Delta region because they wish to avoid some of the region’s more undesirable living conditions. As the head of one state-run alternative certification programme in Mississippi explained:

Um, yes ... I would say that [the Delta] struggles the most to [attract our alternatively certified] teachers [compared to other regions of Mississippi]. ... Why? I don’t know, probably because that’s not an area many of our teachers want to [live in]. You know ... they can go to a lot of areas [in Mississippi] ... and not many want to go [to the Delta] (ID#23, MS, F).

Furthermore, these policy makers explained that most of their states’ alternatively certified teachers desire to teach in the community where they are already living; because relatively few Delta residents hold a college degree (what the previous chapter named as ‘limited human capital’), few of the region’s adults are currently eligible for an alternative teacher certification programme. In light of this challenge, roughly 10 per cent of policy makers voiced the belief that other routes to teaching must be established within the Delta; four of these six officials pointed to the potential of grow-your-own programmes within the Delta region.⁹⁷ As one Arkansas licensure official commented:

It seems like, by the time they get to college it’s already too late [for Delta residents]. We need more programmes that start Delta kids down the right track [to become teachers before they reach college age] ... and we have some of these [grow-your-own] programmes in some other parts of the state, but we

⁹⁷ As noted in Chapter Three, grow-your-own (GYO) programmes train high school students from under-resourced communities to become teachers, typically granting them an abbreviated college degree and subsidised tuition in exchange for returning to their hard-to-staff communities to teach.

as a state don't do anything to create those. So that's something I think [the Delta could] really use (ID#41, AR, F).

While the majority of these alternatively certified teachers relieve undoubtedly serious shortages in other areas of either state, these programmes appear to provide relatively few teachers directly to Delta schools. Similar to the Arkansas policy maker quoted above, several other officials asserted that these outcomes signal a need for new programmes using features like the GYO model in many Delta communities.⁹⁸

Charter schools and eased teacher licensure requirements

In addition to creating state-run alternative teacher certification programmes, Arkansas officials have also made it easier for highly educated adults to enter the classroom through local charter schools. First allowed by Act 1126 of 1995, Arkansas charter schools have expanded dramatically in recent years; indeed, by 2010 the state was home to twenty-seven charter schools teaching more than 3,800 students (*Arkansas State Profile*, 2010). Contributing to this growth, Act 890 of 1999 expanded the type of charter schools available to local leaders, allowing not only for conversion charter schools, but open enrolment charter schools as well.⁹⁹

In 2005, Act 2005 doubled the number of open enrolment schools allowed to operate in Arkansas at any given time: originally capped at twelve, as many as twenty-four open enrolment charter schools could now be active in Arkansas at any given time.

⁹⁸ The viability of GYO programmes in Delta schools—particularly in those districts already using TFA—will be discussed carefully in the following chapter.

⁹⁹ Conversion charter schools are failing public schools that have been converted into charter schools. By contrast, open enrolment charter schools—first allowed in Arkansas by Act 890 of 1999—are schools established as a charter school (as opposed to converted from a public school). Open enrolment charter schools allow children outside of their district to enrol, whereas conversion charter schools serve the same district population as they would as public schools. These open enrolment schools also draw fire from charter school critics for competing with struggling local public schools for funding and resources. For a more complete comparison of conversion and open enrolment charter schools, see Finn, Manno, and Vanourek (2000).

Finally, in 2007, Act 736 further loosened state restrictions on open enrolment charters, allowing these schools to open anywhere; as a result, there are four charter schools currently serving communities in the Arkansas Delta.¹⁰⁰

In Arkansas, charter schools may apply for a waiver of teacher certification requirements; if granted, this waiver enables the school to hire any teacher holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited university. As a result, charter schools provide another route into the classroom for educated Arkansas adults without traditional teaching credentials, allowing those holding a college degree to teach without any traditional or alternative certifications. By allowing anyone with a college degree to enter a charter school classroom, these waivers remove a significant barrier for would-be teachers living within Delta communities that are far removed from the nearest university or alternative certification campus.

By contrast, Mississippi has heavily restricted the development of local charter schools, and all teachers within these schools are required to hold the same certification credentials as a public school teacher. In 1997, House Bill 1672 allowed six failing public schools to convert to charter status, though only one of these schools actually opted for conversion; this school remained the only charter school in the state as of 2010 (*Mississippi State Profile*, 2010).

House Bill 1672 expired in 2009 and was replaced by Senate Bill 2293 the following year; many pro-charter organisations have noted, however, that this new law places so many restrictions on potential conversion charter schools that it is unlikely many

¹⁰⁰ Previous laws required that open enrolment charter schools be proportionately distributed across each of Arkansas's four legislative districts. Act 736 removed this restriction, allowing such charter schools to be established anywhere.

public schools will make the switch to charter status in coming years. As the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools declared in a 2010 press release, ‘It is clear that [Senate Bill] 2293 will not spur the creation of high-quality public charter schools in the state [of Mississippi]. . . . It is safe to say that not a single public charter school will actually open because of the bill’ (*National Alliance for Public Charter Schools*, 2010). Because almost no charter schools currently exist in Mississippi and, more to the point, because Mississippi’s charter school teachers must still hold the same certification credentials as their peers working in public schools, this approach appears to have done little to nothing to ease the state’s barriers of entry into teaching.

7.1.3 Teach For America as a stopgap to policyscape shortcomings

Policy makers from Mississippi and Arkansas have introduced numerous incentives to teach over the last fifteen years, most of which align with one of three major recruitment/retention strategies outlined in the current literature. First, improved teacher work conditions are meant to increase the desirability of a teaching career; while such efforts should theoretically increase both the recruitment and retention of teachers throughout either state, policy maker experience has led nearly half of them to assert that state-wide improvements in teacher work conditions cannot overcome the undesirable living conditions that appear to deter many teachers from entering hard-to-staff Delta schools.

By contrast, officials seem to perceive targeted financial incentives as the most direct means of funnelling teachers into understaffed public schools. Such policies increase the compensation for teaching in a hard-to-staff region, which is meant to trigger an inflow of teachers into areas like the Delta. Officials believe these initiatives have produced some results, and yet they also express deep concerns that financial

incentives will never be large enough to close the Delta shortages on their own. Two officials stated that such incentives are unlikely to attract any additional teachers besides those already living in or very near to the Delta region. Additionally, financial compensation tactics are usually too broadly applied to a single hard-to-staff region as a whole to target intra-regional variation, allowing teachers to ‘cream skim’ the best available teaching positions.

Finally, the third approach aims to make it relatively easier for educated adults to enter the classroom. Policies that streamline traditional teacher licensure requirements, expand alternative certification options, and/or establish charter schools that require teachers to meet fewer certification prerequisites all are intended to grow the aggregate teacher supply available for Mississippi and Arkansas schools. Yet, none of these programmes seem to funnel a sufficient number of new teachers into the most hard-to-staff Delta schools because all fail to address the underlying forces that drove teachers out in the first place: poverty, race, and extreme geographic isolation. The limited success of these many policies led roughly ten percent of policy makers to conclude that new programmes more tailored to the region’s specific context would be required to close the Delta teacher shortages.

Taken together, these different types of legislation have created teacher labour policyscapes that target various strains on the state-wide teacher labour supply. Despite this multi-pronged approach, Chapter Six noted that aggregate teacher vacancy rates have increased in Mississippi and Arkansas over the last decade. These state-wide teacher shortages are highly problematic for Delta reform because they limit the time and resources policy makers may invest in the particular needs of hard-

to-staff Delta schools.

Because many regions outside the Delta also struggle with teacher shortages and because state policy makers have limited resources available for teacher recruitment and retention efforts, nearly three quarters of officials claimed that they feel obliged to prioritise the state-wide need for new teachers above the Delta's particular needs. As one Mississippi board member stated, 'What can we do? Yes [the Delta] needs teachers, but so does everyone else. Any teachers we send [to the Delta] is, you know, someone we take from somewhere else' (ID#7, MS, M). Along these same lines, three out of every five policy makers voiced the concern that teacher recruitment efforts may be 'zero sum', and each dollar spent drawing teachers into the Delta was a dollar wasted drawing teachers out of other similarly hard-to-staff communities.

Furthermore, these widespread teacher vacancies keep intrastate competition for teachers high, making it difficult for relatively poorer, agrarian Delta communities to attract teachers away from areas with more desirable living and working conditions. Officials believe that many of the policies implemented in recent years have produced only qualified results in Delta schools, most likely because they must still compete with wealthier, more urban school districts that are also in need of teachers.

Within this context, the Delta faces a glaring need for a programme that provides more teachers and, equally important, a means to funnel these new teachers into the region's most remote and impoverished communities. Indeed, the analysis above suggests that the most heavily researched recruitment/retention strategies fail to address the 'rural Southern' drivers that trigger Delta-specific shortages. As such, the

schools most entrenched in these historic, social, and economic forces are the least likely to attract new teachers under the existing incentive structures in place for either state.

A small number of policy makers (four) affirmed this conclusion, claiming that such Delta communities have always been the last to benefit from any growth in state-wide or region-specific teacher labour supplies. In the words of one Arkansas board member, ‘A rising tide raises all ships ... but [the Delta seems] to have [its] ships coming up the [slowest]’ (ID#33, AR, F). Other officials sharing this view typically concluded that those Delta communities most characterised by the previously mentioned challenges of race, rurality, and/or poverty would most likely remain understaffed regardless of the approaches they adopted in any foreseeable education policies. The following section carefully examines TFA’s recent track record in providing teachers to these types of Delta communities, thereby examining the organisation’s success as a supplement to state strategies in the areas where it is needed most.

7.2 Empirical evidence of TFA’s role as a targeted supply of teacher labour

Policy makers have too few resources to create effective Delta-specific policies—not to mention high uncertainty as to what would constitute an ‘effective policy’ within the rural Southern context. Consequently, there remains serious need for supplementary programmes like TFA to fill teacher vacancies, especially in the poorest, most rural communities of the Delta region. Within this context, TFA appears to have operated as a specialised tool for supplying teachers to the particularly hard-to-staff Delta districts whose teacher vacancies remain high despite a battery of relevant state legislation.

State policy makers and local TFA leadership touted the organisation as a specialised tool for filling certain types of teacher shortages: 35 per cent of state officials emphasised that while not all Delta schools struggle to find teachers, TFA effectively targets those communities most in need of new instructors. TFA-Delta leaders extended this assertion, claiming to partner with the districts characterised by those ‘rural Southern’ drivers unaddressed in existing recruitment/retention research. As one such TFA official claimed, ‘There are certain things that we look for [when deciding where to expand]. I’d say number one, what we look for is truly need—you know, are these communities that haven’t been able to find teachers...maybe because they’re incredibly poor, or isolated, or maybe don’t have a history of [educational attainment]’ (ID#48, TFA, F). The remainder of this chapter uses various statistical tests and regression analyses to explore when and to what degree TFA has been able to provide a significant supply of teachers to school districts struggling with century-old questions of race, rurality, and poverty.

A statistical examination of the types of TFA partnership patterns suggests that certain social and economic characteristics fuelling Delta shortages significantly influenced TFA placement as the programme expanded from 2008 to 2010. This section documents and analyses outputs from state-level tobit regression analyses that use school district characteristics to predict the likelihood of TFA entry into that school district. These regressions show that on either side of the Delta, geographically and socially isolated rural schools are more likely to receive TFA teachers. From there, predictors of TFA entry divide along state lines, with TFA focussing more on predominantly black communities in the Mississippi Delta and on communities with

low educational attainment in the Arkansas Delta. Taken together, these findings suggest that TFA did target districts characterised by one or more of the ‘rural Southern’ drivers as the organisation underwent expansive growth in either side of the Delta from 2008 to 2010.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the tobit regressions run off of a panel data set that documents the demographic characteristics, student test scores, and percentage of TFA teachers for every school district in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta from the years 2008 to 2010, even if the district has never used TFA.¹⁰¹ The percentage of teachers identifying as first- or second-year TFA corps members in a given school district serves as the dependent variable (i.e. the variable to be predicted). For the independent variables (i.e. the predicting variables), eight possible variables were initially considered: 1) the per-cent change to a school district’s population over the ten years preceding that school year, 2) the percentage of the population identified as African American, 3) the percentage of the population without a high school degree or higher, 4) the percentage of the population living below the poverty line, 5) the number of people per square mile in a school district (as a measure of rurality), 6) the percentage of seventh grade students failing the state maths test in the previous school year, 7) the percentage of seventh grade students failing the state English test in the previous school year, and 8) the number of emergency licences issued during that school year.

If TFA targets hard-to-staff rural Southern schools, an increase in one or more of the following independent variables should increase the total percentage of teachers

¹⁰¹ In districts that have never employed TFA, the per cent of TFA teachers there is listed as 0.

Table 7.4 Descriptive statistics of potential variables

Variable title	Number of observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum value	Maximum value
EMlicense	321	12.03115	27.71911	0	287
pctPOPchange	321	-7.291589	9.341009	-20.9	48.1
pctBLACK	321	49.16822	24.07356	0	98.4
pctHSdegree	321	64.41776	10.08166	10.9	85.9
pctPOPchange	321	-7.291589	9.341009	-20.9	48.1
popDENSITY	321	73.5486	190.4238	13.1	1576
mathFAIL	281	49.36655	20.69655	0	92
engFAIL	272	55.18382	17.56599	16	94

A summary of basic descriptive statistics for all potential variables for regression analysis

identifying as corps members in a given partnership district (i.e. the following independent variables should take positive estimator coefficients in the regressions): the percentage of the community's population that is black, the percentage of the population without a high school degree, the percentage of the population living in poverty, the percentage of students failing English or maths, and the percentage of teachers working on emergency licensures. Conversely, the other two potential independent variables (per-cent change in the size of the community population and the number of people per square mile) are expected to take a negative value in the regression; that is to say, an increase in either of these variables should produce a decrease in corps members' per-cent share of the total teacher supply in the respective community. If these signs are correct and statistically significant within the regressions, it will be possible to reject the null hypothesis that TFA does not focus its partnerships amongst especially hard-to-staff Delta schools in favour of the hypothesis that TFA has, in fact, targeted certain types of hard-to-staff Delta schools.

The cumulative findings from interviews, the literature review, and researcher observations from the Delta region suggest that each of the eight factors above shapes

Table 7.5 Covariance matrix of potential independent variables, by school district for Mississippi and Arkansas ^a

	EMlicense	pctPOP change	pctBLACK	pctHS degree	pctPOV	pop DENSITY	mathFAIL	engFAIL	dummy 2009	dummy 2010
EMlicense	1.0000									
pctPOP change	0.1937	1.0000								
pctBLACK	0.0681	-0.1913	1.0000							
pctHS degree	-0.2579	0.2511	-0.1387	1.0000						
pctPOP	-0.1077	-0.3101	0.8146	-0.2361	1.0000					
pop DENSITY	0.1999	0.1642	0.0362	0.2123	-0.1299	1.0000				
mathFAIL	0.0722	-0.1195	0.6476	-0.0853	0.5039	0.0393	1.0000			
engFAIL	0.0514	-0.1517	0.6441	-0.1141	0.5258	0.0015	0.8071	1.0000		
dummy 2009	0.0545	-0.0004	0.0093	-0.0021	0.0032	0.0014	-0.0252	0.0439	1.0000	
dummy 2010	-0.0709	0.0009	-0.0060	0.0018	-0.0007	-0.0024	-0.1175	-0.3111	-0.5027	1.0000

^a This figure shows a covariance matrix for the eight potential independent variables to be used in the Tobit regression analysis: 'EMlicense,' the number of emergency licenses issued to the school district that year (as a proxy for teacher vacancies); 'pctPOPchange,' the percent change in the school district's population size over the ten years preceding that school year; 'pctBLACK,' the share of the community identifying as African-American; 'pctHSdegree,' the share receiving a high school diploma or higher; 'pctPOV,' the share living below the poverty line; 'popDENSITY,' the number of people per square mile within the school district (as a proxy for rurality); 'mathFAIL,' the share of seventh grade students failing the state maths test in the previous school year; 'engFAIL,' the percent failing the state English test in the previous school year; 'dummy2009' takes a value of 1 for all data entries from the 2009-10 school year and 0 otherwise; and 'dummy2010' takes a value of 1 for entries from the 2010-11 school year and 0 otherwise. The boxes highlighted in yellow denote relatively high multicollinearity between the two related variables.

the degree to which a Delta school would be 'hard-to-staff'. As shown in Table 7.5, there is high multicollinearity between several of these potential dependent variables. For both states, there is high covariance between the percentage of a population that is African American and three other variables: the percentage of that population living in poverty, the percentage of students failing maths, and the percentage of students failing English.

This collinearity resonates with the background information provided in Chapter Five as well as in the findings from Chapter Six. In both states, the racial history of the

Delta region is highly connected to economic and educational attainment throughout. All of these issues speak to the same social and economic history, and thus they are highly inter-connected within the Delta data set. So as to meet the requirements for a valid regression, it is necessary to remove all but one of these interdependent variables. In this regression, the variable controlling for poverty and the two variables controlling for maths and English fail rates were dropped from the regression;¹⁰² the variable controlling for race, 'pctBLACK', is thus intended to control for much of the variance produced by these highly interconnected factors. Consequently, this 'pctBLACK' variable captures far more than the racial demographics in a Delta community; its high collinearity with poverty and test performance indicators (which were dropped from the regression) suggests that this variable will also control for much of the variance otherwise attributed to these dropped variables.

Returning to the covariance matrix in Table 7.5, it appears that paradoxically, the percentage of students failing maths and English examinations in the seventh grade (five years before students would theoretically complete high school) is only minimally correlated to the percentage of individuals earning a high school degree or higher. This outcome is unexpected, as one would assume that educational attainment in seventh grade would closely correlate with educational attainment in twelfth grade. The exact cause of this result is unclear, though it may reflect the fact that standards for high school graduation are very low in both states; this theory was put forth by Mulkey (1993) as well as Johnson and Strange (2005). Whatever the reason, high

¹⁰² 'pctBLACK' was kept and other three variables dropped (as opposed to another variable being kept and 'pctBLACK' dropped) because this iteration of the tobit regression produced the highest pseudo R² score. When all data points were included (*i.e.*, when districts from both Mississippi and Arkansas were included in the regression) the 'pctBLACK' model had a pseudo R² of 0.2100. Appendix 7C provides the 'goodness of fit' outputs for this and other potential regression models so that the reader can compare goodness of fit amongst models.

school graduation rates (captured by the variable ‘pctHSdegree’) are still an important indicator of available human capital for local schools. No one may become a teacher in Mississippi or Arkansas without earning a high school and subsequent college degree; therefore, the percentage of local residents holding at least a high school degree reflects a community’s ability to produce and maintain its own supply of teachers.

These considerations lay the groundwork for the regression. Based on the analysis provided above, the models will take the following form:

$$\text{TFAthatYR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{EMlicence} + \beta_2 \text{pctPOPchange} + \beta_3 \text{pctBLACK} + \beta_4 \text{pctHSdegree} \\ + \beta_5 \text{popDENSITY} + \beta_6 \text{dummy2009} + \beta_7 \text{dummy2010} + e$$

In this model, ‘TFAthatYR’ represents the percentage of a district’s teachers that are TFA corps members in a given school year; ‘EMlicence’, the number of emergency licences issued to the school district that year (as a proxy for teacher vacancies); ‘pctPOPchange’, the per-cent change in the school district’s population size over the ten years preceding that school year; ‘pctBLACK’, the share of the community identifying as African American; ‘pctHSdegree’, the share receiving a high school diploma or higher; ‘popDENSITY’, the number of people per square mile within the school district (as a proxy for rurality and geographic/social isolation); ‘dummy2009’ takes a value of 1 for all data entries from the 2009-10 school year and 0 otherwise;

and ‘dummy2010’ takes a value of 1 for entries from the 2010-11 school year and 0 otherwise.¹⁰³

The tobit model seemed well suited for these regressions as it offers an effective means of analysing censored data sets. Censored data is naturally bounded by a lower and/or upper limit that the dependent variable cannot exceed. These state-level regressions are meant to determine if certain school district characteristics (such as the number of emergency licences, per-cent population change, etc.) increase the likelihood of TFA entry. While the number of TFA teachers in a school district can continually increase as that districts becomes more in need, it can only decrease as far as zero—there can never be a negative number of TFA teachers within a school district. Thus, the data is censored because once districts reach the lower bound of zero TFA teachers, they all take the same value in the dependent variable, 0, even though some may be far less likely candidates for TFA than others. As tobit models are constructed to handle this type of data, they are a good fit for the regressions to be run here.

Tables 7.6a and b display the results from these tests on Mississippi and Arkansas Delta school districts, respectively. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of these regressions is to explore whether or not the severity of certain shortage characteristics (like poverty or isolation) within a given school district statistically predicts the likelihood that TFA would select that district as a partner during its growth from 2008 to 2010. The outputs from these two figures all take the proper sign (positive or negative), and more careful interpretation of these findings would suggest that

¹⁰³ So as to prevent perfect collinearity of independent variables, at least one dummy variable representing one of the three school years must be dropped from the equation, in this case, the dummy variable for the 2008-09 school year. For a further discussion of this practice, see Woolridge (2006).

Table 7.6a Coefficient values and statistical significance from state-level regressions, Mississippi

Factors increasing the likelihood of TFA placement, by school district, Mississippi, 2008-2010 ^a						
	Coefficient ^j	Std. error	t-score	P> t ^k	[95% Confidence Interval]	
EMlicense ^b	0.0196768	0.0435032	0.45	0.652	-0.0664214	0.1057751
pctPOPchange ^c	-0.0021628	0.0217633	-0.1	0.921	-0.0452352	0.0409096
pctBLACK ^d	0.1757326	0.0805955	2.18	0.031**	0.0162241	0.3352411
pctHSdegree ^e	0.0936232	0.1392382	0.67	0.503	-0.1819466	0.369193
popDENSITY ^f	-.4973016	.1646954	-3.02	0.003**	-.8232543	-.1713489
dummy2009 ^g	10.9268	3.009185	3.63	0.000**	4.971246	16.88235
dummy2010 ^h	15.88123	3.01203	5.27	0.000**	9.920051	21.84241
constant ⁱ	30.90169	11.05132	-2.8	0.006**	-52.77362	-9.029764

^a This figure displays the outputs from a Tobit regression of all Mississippi school districts in the Delta region, where the number of TFA teachers in the school district (listed as 0 for those without TFA) is the dependent variable and six different independent variables are used as predictors. This regression uses panel data spanning three school years: 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11.

^b 'EMlicense' measures the number of emergency licenses issued to a school district in the given school year.

^c 'pctPOPchange' measures the percent change in a school district's population from ten years prior to that given school year.

^d 'pctBLACK' measures the percent of a school district's population that identifies as African-American.

^e 'pctHSdegree' measures the percent of a school district's population that holds at least a high school diploma.

^f 'popDENSITY' measures the average number of people per square mile within a given school district, serving as a proxy for rurality.

^g 'dummy2009' takes a value of 1 for all data points from the 2009-10 school year, and a value of 0 otherwise.

^h 'dummy2010' takes a value of 1 for all data points from the 2010-11 school year, and a value of 0 otherwise.

ⁱ 'constant' is the value of the intercept estimator.

^j This column lists the estimated Beta coefficient for each independent variable.

^k This column lists the p-value for each coefficient, with ** demarking those values which are statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

particular 'rural Southern' driving forces have, in fact, played a significant role in determining which school districts TFA has chosen to enter during its recent period of growth. At the broadest level, this seems to align with the goals TFA-Delta administrators reported in their semi-structured interviews. As one official claimed, 'there are certain things that we look for [when deciding where to expand]. I'd say number one, what we look for is truly need' (ID#45, TFA, M). As another such official noted, 'we're definitely trying this year to cluster our corps members....Our goal is to make sure that all the teachers [in a partner community] are quality' (ID#47, TFA, F).

Table 7.6b Coefficient values and statistical significance from state-level regressions, Arkansas

Factors increasing the likelihood of TFA placement, by school district, Arkansas, 2008-2010 ^a						
	Coefficient ⁱ	Std. error	t-score	P> t ^k	[95% Confidence Interval]	
EMlicense ^b	0.2345523	0.2587099	0.91	0.366	-0.2759042	0.7450088
pctPOPchange ^c	-0.0005224	0.0070019	-0.07	0.941	-0.0143376	0.0132929
pctBLACK ^d	0.054935	0.0660577	0.83	0.407	-0.0754023	0.1852723
pctHSdegree ^e	0.5943917	0.2486608	2.39	0.018**	0.103763	1.08502
popDENSITY ^f	-1.62822	0.3236171	-5.03	0.000**	-2.266744	-0.9896961
dummy2009 ^g	6.320327	3.28128	1.93	0.056**	-0.1539147	12.79457
dummy2010 ^h	8.432928	3.253036	2.59	0.010**	2.014414	14.85144
constant ⁱ	-75.97353	20.5915	-3.69	0.000**	-116.6023	-35.34476

^a This figure displays the outputs from a Tobit regression of all Arkansas school districts in the Delta region, where the number of TFA teachers in the school district (listed as 0 for those without TFA) is the dependent variable and six different independent variables are used as predictors. This regression uses panel data spanning three school years: 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11.

^b 'EMlicense' measures the number of emergency licenses issued to a school district in the given school year.

^c 'pctPOPchange' measures the percent change in a school district's population from ten years prior to that given school year.

^d 'pctBLACK' measures the percent of a school district's population that identifies as African-American.

^e 'pctHSdegree' measures the percent of a school district's population that holds at least a high school diploma.

^f 'popDENSITY' measures the average number of people per square mile within a given school district, serving as a proxy for rurality.

^g 'dummy2009' takes a value of 1 for all data points from the 2009-10 school year, and a value of 0 otherwise.

^h 'dummy2010' takes a value of 1 for all data points from the 2010-11 school year, and a value of 0 otherwise.

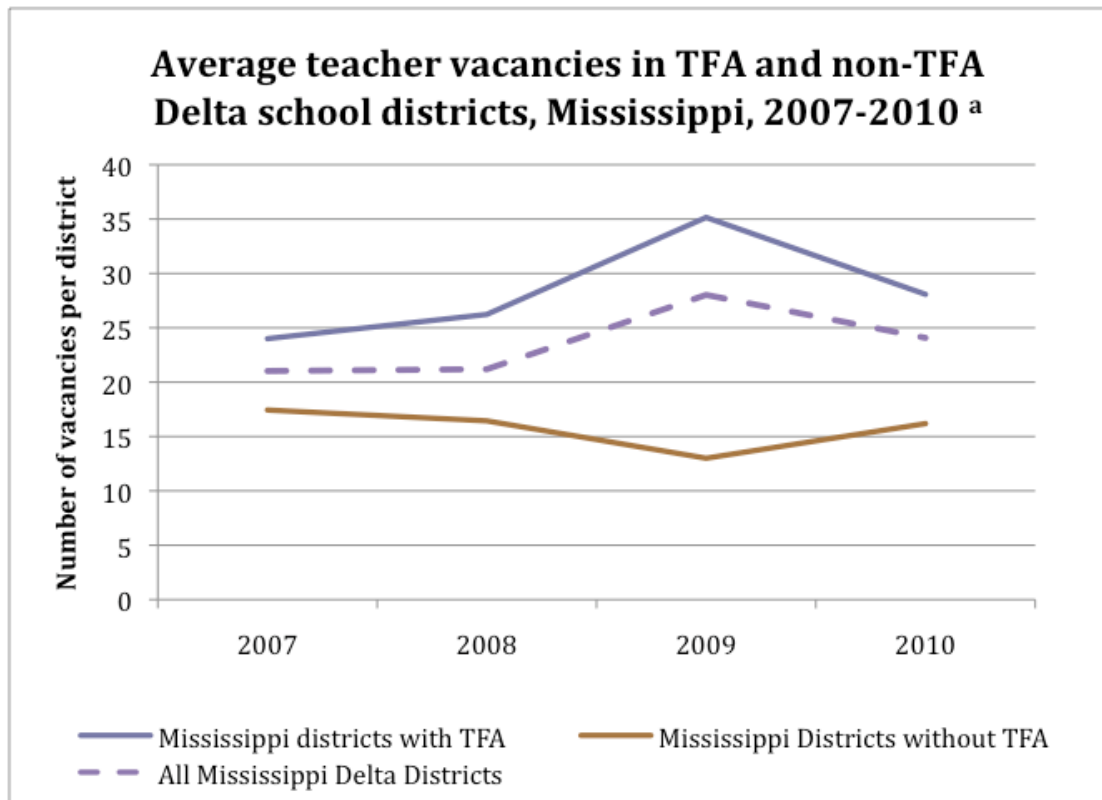
ⁱ 'constant' is the value of the intercept estimator.

^j This column lists the estimated Beta coefficient for each independent variable.

^k This column lists the p-value for each coefficient, with ** demarking those values which are statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

Before discussing these features, however, it is important to note that in both state regressions, teacher vacancy rates (as measured by 'EMlicense', the number of emergency licences issued to a given district) were not a significant predictor of TFA entry into a Delta school district. Though initially counterintuitive, this outcome fits nicely with the findings presented thus far. In Chapter Six, graphical analysis combined with one-way ANOVA tests showed that while the Delta suffered from relatively greater shortages than other areas of either state, these differences were not statistically significant. These findings suggest that the Delta region is a 'hot spot' for state-wide teacher vacancies, but by no means unique in its struggle to attract and retain a sufficiently large supply of teachers.

Figure 7.1a Vacancy rates in TFA and non-TFA Delta districts, Mississippi, 2007-10



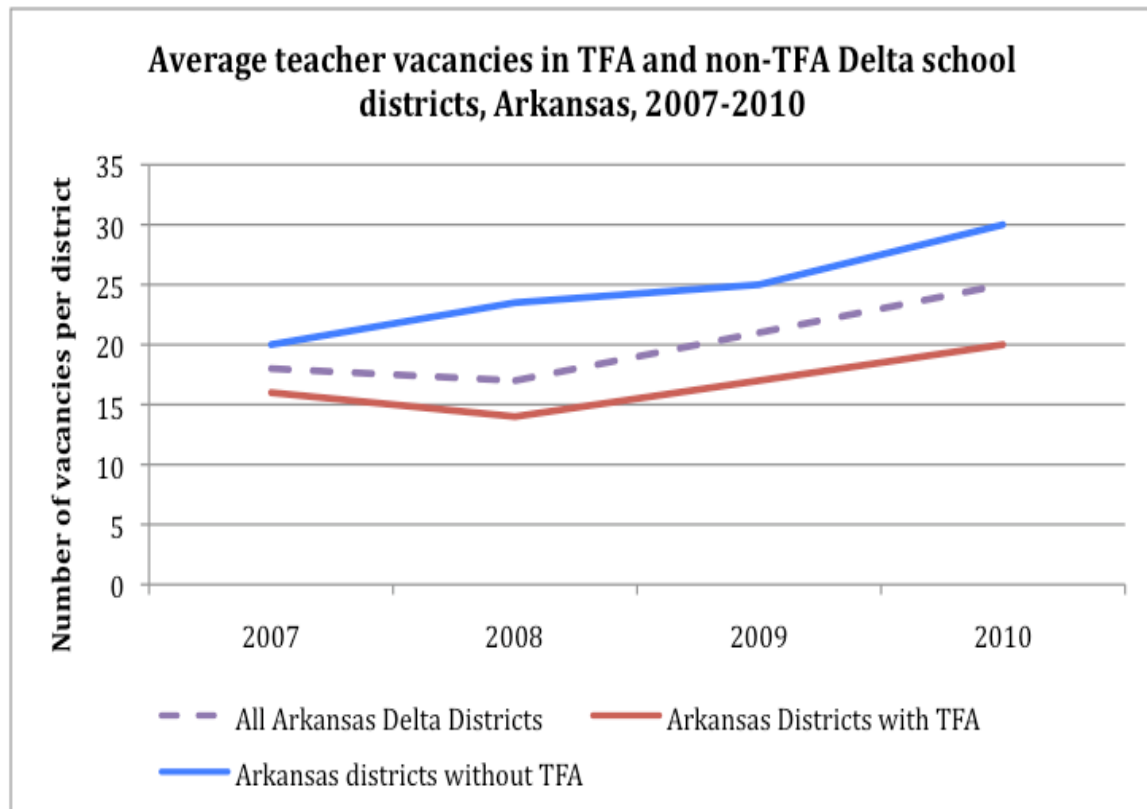
The average number of emergency teacher licences issued per Delta school district with TFA (blue) compared to Delta school districts without TFA (red). The average for all Delta schools is shown in purple.

Using the same statistical tools to compare districts *within* the Delta, one may draw a similar conclusion when comparing TFA-partner districts to other Delta districts not employing TFA teachers. Looking to the intra-Delta comparisons of districts’ average teacher vacancies presented in Figures 7.1a and b, those Delta districts selected as partners for TFA typically face higher vacancy rates than Delta districts without TFA.¹⁰⁴ But, as illustrated in Tables 7.6a and b, one-way ANOVA tests reveal that TFA districts did not face statistically greater teacher vacancy rates than non-TFA Delta districts in Arkansas until 2009 and in Mississippi until 2010.¹⁰⁵ Taken together, this data suggests that TFA used its growth from 2008 to 2010 to select ‘hot spot’

¹⁰⁴ This corresponds with the positive beta coefficients for ‘EMlicence’ in Tables 7.6a and b (with values of .020 and .235, respectively).

¹⁰⁵ This finding corresponds with the statistical insignificance of the beta coefficients for ‘EMlicence’ in Tables 7.6a and b.

Figure 7.1b Vacancy rates in TFA and non-TFA Delta districts, Mississippi, 2007-10



The average number of emergency teacher licences issued per Delta school district with TFA (blue) compared to Delta school districts without TFA (red). The average for all Delta schools is shown in purple.

districts within the Delta. In these districts, school leaders face relatively more need for teachers than do their peers in neighbouring districts, but they are by no means alone in their struggles. While TFA districts may have a higher average vacancy rate than non-TFA Delta districts, these differences only became statistically significant in the last few years. Such findings highlight two important conclusions: first, most Delta communities face some degree of acute teacher vacancies; and second, TFA has used its growth to target those districts most in need. Indeed, the findings in Table 7.7a and b suggest that as TFA grew from 2008 to 2010, it was able to select those districts statistically more in need of new teachers—making it a highly powerful tool for targeted Delta teacher labour reform.

Table 7.7a Teacher vacancies in Mississippi Delta districts with TFA versus Mississippi Delta districts without TFA, 2007-10^a

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
EM07	Between Groups	783.704	1	783.704	2.847	.098
	Within Groups	14315.556	52	275.299		
	Total	15099.259	53			
EM08	Between Groups	292.448	1	292.448	.721	.400
	Within Groups	21088.978	52	405.557		
	Total	21381.426	53			
EM09	Between Groups	1414.533	1	1414.533	1.966	.165
	Within Groups	50375.244	70	719.646		
	Total	51789.778	71			
EM10	Between Groups	5719.623	1	5719.623	8.177	.006**
	Within Groups	50360.593	72	699.453		
	Total	56080.216	73			

^a This figure displays the results from a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, comparing the number of emergency licenses issued to school districts using TFA teachers to those not using TFA teachers in Mississippi for each of the school years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. Note: TFA teachers do not use emergency licenses.

^b The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2010-11

^c The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2009-10

^d The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2008-09

^e The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2007-08

^f The statistical significance of differences between TFA and non-TFA districts for each school year, with ** demarking results that were statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

As discussed at the end of the previous chapter, many Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers viewed TFA as a highly effective means of targeting the most understaffed Delta school districts; the findings here would suggest that TFA has in fact been able to target those districts that suffer statistically more from teacher vacancies. Furthermore, analysis of the regression outputs in Table 7.6a and b suggests that TFA has sought out partnerships not just with understaffed districts in general, but more specifically, with those understaffed districts where one or more rural Southern drivers are likely to undermine other recruitment/retention strategies.

Table 7.7b Teacher vacancies in Arkansas Delta districts with TFA versus Arkansas Delta districts without TFA, 2007-10 ^a

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
EM07	Between Groups	9.858	1	9.858	.477	.492
	Within Groups	1365.363	66	20.687		
	Total	1375.221	67			
EM08	Between Groups	77.593	1	77.593	3.338	.072
	Within Groups	1534.215	66	23.246		
	Total	1611.809	67			
EM09	Between Groups	621.066	1	621.066	21.144	.000**
	Within Groups	2114.840	72	29.373		
	Total	2735.905	73			
EM10	Between Groups	492.508	1	492.508	10.116	.002**
	Within Groups	3505.438	72	48.687		
	Total	3997.946	73			

^a This figure displays the results from a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, comparing the number of emergency licenses issued to school districts using TFA teachers to those not using TFA teachers in Mississippi for each of the school years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. Note: TFA teachers do not use emergency licenses.

^b The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2010-11

^c The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2009-10

^d The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2008-09

^e The number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi for the school year 2007-08

^f The statistical significance of differences between TFA and non-TFA districts for each school year, with ** demarking results that were statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

Indeed, looking to the findings in Tables 7.6a and b, it appears that TFA partnered with the school districts whose social and economic characteristics seem to make their teacher vacancies unresponsive to most empirically tested approaches; it is this very tendency that makes TFA a highly effective supplement for closing the Delta teacher shortages. According to these regression outputs, in Mississippi, TFA was statistically inclined to enter the most rural communities with the highest concentration of

impoverished, under-educated African Americans.¹⁰⁶ In Arkansas, the organisation focussed its growth on the most rural districts suffering from some of the lowest high school graduation rates of anywhere in the Delta.¹⁰⁷

In Chapter Six, policy makers named all of these characteristics as major roadblocks to the success of current teacher labour policyscapes in resolving the Delta's teacher labour shortages. Thus, TFA appears to target the districts whose characteristically 'rural Southern' social and economic traits render local teacher labour markets highly resistant to the most commonly researched recruitment and retention strategies. In this way, TFA may be viewed as a highly effective tool for placing teachers in the Delta school districts where vacancies are not easily answered by the financial incentives and alternative certification programmes created through recent state policy.

It seems interesting that TFA has targeted communities with different types of shortage-inducing characteristics in either side of the Delta. As mentioned above, the organisation has partnered with schools that are highly rural in both states; beyond that, it has also selected schools with a statistically larger share of impoverished African American students in Mississippi and communities with statistically lower high school graduation rates in Arkansas. These results raise another interesting question, as to why TFA leadership has targeted different types of 'rural Southern' characteristics in either side of the Delta.

¹⁰⁶ This interpretation is drawn from Table 7.6a, where the 'POPdensity' variable, used as a proxy for 'rurality', took a positive significant value. Additionally, 'pctBLACK', denoting the relative concentration of African Americans and, more indirectly, the degree of poverty and limits to educational attainment in a community, also took a positive significant value.

¹⁰⁷ In Table 7.6b, the 'POPdensity' variable, used as proxy for 'rurality', took a positive significant value, while 'pctHSdegree', marking the share of the population with a high school degree, took a negative significant value.

Further research will be required to explain the organisation's shifting focus from one side of the Mississippi-Arkansas border to the other, though it appears that TFA may have shaped its partnerships in either side of the Delta to accommodate policy maker perceptions and priorities. In Mississippi, where African Americans account for more than half of the state's total public enrolment (compared to only a quarter of Arkansas's total public enrolment), policy makers may be more conscious of the challenges posed by their state's legacy of racial oppression and consequently more likely to emphasise the role of race in making a school 'hard-to-staff'. In Arkansas, where teacher retirement rates have averaged nearly 115 per cent those in Mississippi, policy makers may be more concerned with creating an educated young teacher labour supply to replace retirees.¹⁰⁸ Policy makers most likely convey these concerns to local TFA leadership when they interact, and it seems possible that TFA would try to build relationships with these officials by prioritising different types of rural Southern drivers in each state.

Regardless of the 'true' reason for these state-specific outcomes, the regression analysis above finds that TFA is more likely to target districts that are especially defined by at least two of the rural Southern drivers outlined in Chapter Six. As a final consideration, TFA also seems to be an effective tool for filling subject-specific teacher shortages. As stated in Chapter Six, the Delta region especially struggles to fill high school teaching posts, particularly for maths and science openings. From 2008 to 2010, over 70 per cent of all TFA-Delta corps members were placed as high school teachers, and half of these corps members taught maths or science (*personal correspondence*, Rarick, 7 March 2011). This outcome highlights TFA's capacity to

¹⁰⁸ This statistic was produced using teacher licensure data from the Mississippi and Arkansas Departments of Education from the years 2003 to 2010.

not only target specific geographic vacancies, but to also address content-specific shortages.

Taken together, these patterns suggest that TFA is a highly effective tool for growing subject- and region-specific teacher supplies in communities where the most commonly researched recruitment/retention strategies do not work. This finding is critical to understanding TFA's effectiveness as a tool for resolving teacher shortages, as it could ensure a greater and more equitable resolution to Delta teacher shortages than would otherwise be possible.

7.3 Conclusions: TFA as a teacher recruitment strategy

The sub-question guiding this chapter asks how TFA might 'fit' into current teacher labour policyscapes and policy maker strategies for resolving state-wide and Delta-specific teacher shortages. In both states, officials have attempted to grow and redistribute the teacher supply in three ways: improved work conditions, targeted financial incentives, and eased teacher licensure requirements. Though well established in the academic literature, these strategies have failed to alleviate state-wide or Delta-specific shortages, presumably because the existing research fails to account for the 'rural Southern' drivers underlying these chronic teacher vacancies. Additionally, limited resources and an increase in state-wide teacher vacancies have further limited the attention and resources available to Delta schools.

Within this space, TFA seems to offer a powerful supplement to state efforts, as it is capable of providing an immediate teacher supply where even the most targeted state policies have failed. Quantitative regression analysis supports this conclusion, providing evidence that TFA has targeted not just any understaffed Delta school

districts, but instead has selected those hard-to-staff districts most characterised by the typically rural Southern issues of race, rurality, and/or poverty.

Though additional research is required, there is some evidence that this attention to policy maker perceptions compels TFA's different partnership patterns in either side of the Delta. In Mississippi, where policy makers confront questions of race on a much larger scale, TFA expansion from 2008 to 2010 appears to have targeted rural districts defined by a high concentration of impoverished African Americans. By contrast, in Arkansas, where replacement of retiring teachers is a top policy maker concern, TFA targeted those rural districts with low high school graduation rates (i.e. a highly limited supply of potential replacement teachers).

Given the scope and severity of the Delta teacher shortages, as well as the lack of rural Southern teacher recruitment/retention research currently available, TFA appears to have provided a powerful supplementary resource for altering teacher labour outcomes in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. This is not to say that TFA is always an appropriate fit for filling the Delta's vacancies; in fact, certain policy makers from each state feared that unchecked support for the organisation could actually deter the long-term development of a local teacher supply. The following chapter considers ways in which TFA might be coupled with other state strategies to more fully address chronic Delta vacancies in the short *and* long term, as well as the trade-offs and dilemmas state officials would face when implementing this new framework for engaging with TFA.

-8-

**Missed opportunities, policy dilemmas,
and future policy maker engagement
with Teach For America**

Chapter Abstract: This chapter extends the analysis from the previous two findings chapters, critically examining the shortfalls of TFA's current school partnership and teacher placement patterns. First, though TFA may partner with the most hard-to-staff Delta schools, it does not saturate enough vacancies in these schools to significantly change local vacancy rates. Second, there are no systems in place to transition TFA partner schools into long-term self-reliance; as such, these districts remain perpetually dependent on TFA to fill teacher vacancies. In response to these shortcomings, the chapter also proposes potential solutions policy makers could implement to realign TFA partnership outcomes. Namely, it advocates increased state funding for TFA in exchange for total saturation of partner district vacancies as well as the creation of grow-your-own transition programmes in each partner district. Implementing these strategies should re-position TFA within the Delta context to make it a more effective supplement to existing state strategies for long-term teacher supply reform.

Legacies of race, poverty, and rurality appear to hinder the development of local teacher labour supplies in rural Southern regions like the Delta; in many instances, these legacies degrade local living conditions so severely that education officials struggle to attract outside teachers into affected schools. Within the context of this case study, TFA has demonstrated the capacity to provide a targeted and immediate supply of corps members within these types of hard-to-staff Delta communities, though certain questions remain regarding its viability as a supplement to state-level reform efforts in Mississippi and Arkansas. This chapter explores such questions, seeking to understand and address the current drawbacks surrounding TFA engagement with Delta schools and, by extension, schools in other rural Southern communities. The third sub-question will guide this exploration:

- How might Teach For America's growth outcomes from 2008 to 2010 inform immediate as well as future engagement between relevant state policy makers and TFA leadership in rural Southern partnership sites?

The following discussion reveals two major drawbacks to current TFA partnership patterns as well as insights for future policy maker engagement with TFA. First, the organisation's expansion strategies failed to saturate teacher shortages within Delta partner districts; perhaps a result of this pattern, there is no 'exit strategy' to move partner districts towards long-term self-reliance. Increased state funding for TFA would encourage the programme to fully address vacancies in the districts where it is needed most. From there, state-run grow-your-own (GYO) programmes could complement TFA partnerships in rural Delta sites; employed together, TFA and GYO

programmes seem well suited to create a sustainable and locally derived Delta teacher labour supply in the long term.

8.1 Missed opportunities under current TFA partnership strategies

As a result of TFA's capacity to provide educated corps members to the most isolated Delta communities, many policy makers hold the programme in high regard; in fact, nearly 70 per cent of Mississippi and Arkansas officials expressed the hope that TFA would continue to grow its presence in Delta schools. As one Arkansas board member explained:

Well Teach For America should most certainly [expand in the Delta], any time someone volunteers, and [is] willing to serve in places that are difficult, you have to think they're going to be a real asset because there's... not a whole lot else to be living there [laughing]. The Delta is a hard [place to staff] and... what with having more [corps members], I can't see a down side to that (ID#30, AR, F).

In the words of a Mississippi official:

Oh I would encourage more [TFA growth]...my impression is very favourable. And I think bringing bright and enthusiastic [corps members] into the classroom must be a strong plus. I can't imagine discouraging that for as long as it can happen (ID#11, MS, M).

Such support notwithstanding, TFA's expansion patterns from 2008 to 2010 appear to have produced certain policy dilemmas for Mississippi and Arkansas officials seeking to resolve the Delta teacher shortages.

'Saturation thresholds' in hard-to-staff partner districts

Preliminary statistical evidence would suggest that TFA does not place enough corps members in each of its partner districts to significantly lower teacher vacancy rates. As a result, many TFA partner districts remain severely understaffed and dependent on a sizeable number of emergency-certified teachers to fully staff their classrooms.

Table 8.1 TFA district and corps member growth in the Delta, 2007-10

		2007	2008	2009	2010
Mississippi	School Districts	10	11	27	29
	Teachers	42	51	182	353
Arkansas	School Districts	8	7	13	17
	Teachers	41	35	98	169
Total	School Districts	18	18	40	46
	Teachers	83	86	280	522

TFA has grown to provide more teachers in either side of the Delta and, in turn, has used this increased supply to reach new partner districts. As shown in the table above, the number of TFA partner districts doubled in Arkansas and tripled in Mississippi from 2007 to 2010.

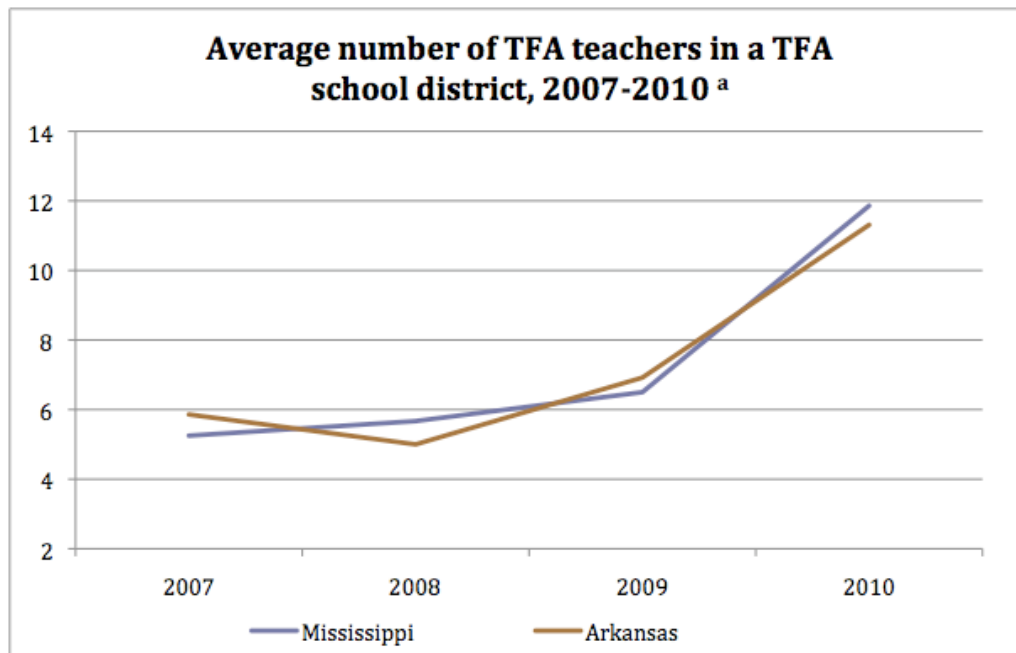
Table 8.1 reveals that TFA has taken some steps to cluster more corps members in each of its partner districts, a move that should ameliorate these districts' aggregate teacher shortages. TFA-Delta leadership used the six-fold increase in corps members from 2007 to 2010 to produce only a two-fold increase in the number of TFA partner districts in either side of the Delta, meaning that significantly more corps members were placed in each of these districts than before. This increase in district-level corps member concentration is apparent in Figure 8.1: in 2007, TFA typically placed about five corps members in school districts from either side of the Delta, whereas the concentration level had doubled to approximately twelve teachers per district by 2010. In this way, the organisation seems to have struck some balance between two different types of growth, concentrating more teachers in existing partner districts while also expanding into a greater number of partner districts.

Of interest, statistical analysis later in the chapter demonstrates that Mississippi and Arkansas experienced statistically different TFA growth rates in 2009 and 2010.¹⁰⁹

Despite this finding, Figure 8.1 illustrates that the average Mississippi school district

¹⁰⁹ See Table 8.3.

Figure 8.1 Average ‘saturation point’ of TFA teachers in TFA school districts



^a This figure shows the average number of TFA teachers in TFA-using Delta school districts for Mississippi (blue) and Arkansas (red) for each school year from 2007-08 to 2010-11. The average school district ‘saturation point’ has been roughly the same for both states, rising from approximately 5.5 in 2007-08 to approximately 11.5 in 2010-11.

received the same number of corps members as the average Arkansas school district during those years, suggesting that TFA used the significantly larger number of Mississippi corps members in 2009 and 2010 to expand the number of Mississippi districts employing TFA rather than to concentrate more corps members in its existing Mississippi partner districts. This finding fits with the data presented in Table 8.1, which shows that rapid growth allowed TFA to double the number of Arkansas partner districts from 2007 to 2010, while it enabled the programme to triple its Mississippi partnerships during that same time period.¹¹⁰

These findings lead to the conclusion that whether consciously or unconsciously, TFA-Delta leadership has imposed a ‘saturation threshold’ for its partnerships over the last few years. Once a district receives this set number of corps members, TFA

¹¹⁰ The 2007-8 school year is included in this analysis as a ‘baseline’ for comparing the growth that occurred from 2008 to 2010.

typically diverts additional corps members into new communities, regardless of the remaining teacher vacancies in that original partner district. While this threshold has risen in conjunction with the general growth of the TFA programme—from five corps members per district in 2007 to twelve teachers in 2010—TFA’s current tactics still leave many vacancies in partnership districts unfilled.

Tables 8.2a and b list the outputs of one-way ANOVA tests that compare changes in partner districts’ teacher vacancy rates from 2007 to 2010 to the changing vacancy rates in other Delta districts without TFA. As TFA further concentrates its corps members within partner districts, one would expect to see a statistical decline in partner districts’ reliance on emergency-certified teachers compared to other Delta communities not receiving TFA corps members. Yet, as illustrated by the outputs from Tables 8.2a and b, there was no significant change in vacancy rates for TFA partner districts relative to the vacancy rates in non-partner Delta school districts from 2007 to 2010. These findings suggest that rather than saturate the total need for highly qualified teachers, TFA still only partially fills vacancies in existing partner districts before diverting additional teachers into new partner communities. Indeed, Tables 7.6a and b (from the previous chapter) showed that TFA has not shrunk vacancy rates in partner districts at all, as vacancies rose in TFA-partner and non-partner Delta districts alike from 2008 to 2010; the outputs presented in Tables 8.2a and b would thus suggest that TFA has only provided enough corps members to prevent vacancies in its partner districts from increasing significantly faster than in other, non-partner Delta districts.

Table 8.2a Comparisons of rates of change in teacher vacancies between TFA and non-TFA districts of the Mississippi Delta, 2007-10^a

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. ^e	
change0708 ^b	Between Groups	1.756	1	1.756	.013	.908
	Within Groups	5488.971	42	130.690		
	Total	5490.727	43			
change0809 ^c	Between Groups	88.736	1	88.736	.872	.356
	Within Groups	4272.241	42	101.720		
	Total	4360.977	43			
change0910 ^d	Between Groups	222.984	1	222.984	.334	.567
	Within Groups	28070.743	42	668.351		
	Total	28293.727	43			

^a This figure displays the results from a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, comparing the annual rate of change in the number of emergency licenses issued to school districts using TFA teachers to those not using TFA teachers in Mississippi for each of the school years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. Note: TFA teachers do not use emergency licenses.

^b The rate of change in the number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi from school year 2007-08 to school year 2008-09

^c The rate of change in the number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi from school year 2008-09 to school year 2009-10

^d The rate of change in the number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Mississippi from school year 2009-10 to school year 2010-11

^e The statistical significance of differences between TFA and non-TFA districts for each school year, with ** demarking results that were statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

Put simply, TFA leaders may select the most isolated hard-to-staff rural communities as partners, but even after undergoing massive programme expansion from 2008 to 2010, they still do not alleviate the full weight of these districts' teacher shortages once corps members arrive. To be sure, TFA is not expected to saturate teacher vacancies in its urban partnership sites, as the organisation would account for only a fraction of that city's incoming teacher labour supply each year. As discussed in the introductory chapter, however, TFA presence has a much larger impact on the teacher labour dynamics of sparsely populated rural areas—in the case of the Delta, it accounts for a third to a half of the region's new teachers annually. As such, the findings presented above mark a missed opportunity for Delta reform: while TFA has the capacity to fully saturate vacancies in the most hard-to-staff districts, its expansion from 2008 to 2010 produced no significant changes to teacher vacancy rates amongst partner sites in either side of the Delta.

Table 8.2b Comparisons of rates of change in teacher vacancies between TFA and non- TFA districts of the Arkansas Delta, 2007-10^a

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. ^e
change0708 ^b	Between Groups	33.532	1	33.532	6.800	.011**
	Within Groups	300.786	61	4.931		
	Total	334.317	62			
change0809 ^c	Between Groups	.794	1	.794	.185	.668
	Within Groups	261.143	61	4.281		
	Total	261.937	62			
change0910 ^d	Between Groups	42.875	1	42.875	3.786	.056
	Within Groups	690.839	61	11.325		
	Total	733.714	62			

^a This figure displays the results from a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, comparing the annual rate of change in the number of emergency licenses issued to school districts using TFA teachers to those not using TFA teachers in Arkansas for each of the school years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. Note: TFA teachers do not use emergency licenses.

^b The rate of change in the number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Arkansas from school year 2007-08 to school year 2008-09

^c The rate of change in the number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Arkansas from school year 2008-09 to school year 2009-10

^d The rate of change in the number of emergency licenses in TFA school districts versus the number in non-TFA districts in Arkansas from school year 2009-10 to school year 2010-11

^e The statistical significance of differences between TFA and non-TFA districts for each school year, with ** demarking results that were statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

Long-term dependency dilemmas

In the short term, completely saturating fewer districts may not appear to have any advantage over evenly distributing corps members across a larger number of Delta districts. Looking towards long-term reform, however, the advantages become more apparent. The meta-analyses of Heilig and Jez (2010) and Anderson (2009) conclude that TFA corps members consistently outperform emergency-certified teachers, but having a corps member for one class in one school year is not likely to have a significant impact on students' overall educational trajectories. That is to say, Delta students may be slightly better educated if corps members replace a few of their under-qualified teachers, but this change is not significant enough to raise the abysmally low graduation rates reflective of those students' cumulative educational histories. In turn, students in these communities continually fail to meet the academic prerequisites required to become teachers themselves, and their surrounding districts

remain perpetually understaffed and dependent on TFA to fill vacancies in the long term.

As it stands, there is little chance that TFA partner districts will be able to fully staff their schools without TFA in the long term because TFA has not significantly lowered their local teacher vacancy rates in the short term. Much of the literature discussed in Chapters Two and Three highlights the long-term implications of on-going teacher vacancies. As Jimerson (2003) explains, localised teacher shortages have severe consequences for student outcomes, especially in rural communities suffering from particularly widespread teacher vacancies:

The ultimate result of teacher shortages is obvious: educational quality suffers and student learning is seriously compromised. To the extent that rural districts are experiencing high rates of shortages... students in these areas have a high probability of being denied the fundamental resources necessary for a quality education. (p.13)

Because teacher labour markets are highly localised (Baugh and Stone, 1982; Murnane and Steele, 2007), low student performance resulting from high teacher vacancies often begets more vacancies amongst the next generation of teachers, thus creating a self-perpetuating cycle in some of the most isolated rural schools. As one Mississippi board member explained, this pattern seems apparent in many Delta communities:

Um, well I would think that some of the people who live in [the Delta], or not some but most, probably do not go on to higher education. They maybe don't go to college and so therefore you don't have the students in that area going on to be teachers. ... So I think that's one thing [hard-to-staff Delta schools] may not have, is their own students going into education [to replace emergency-certified teachers] (ID#8, MS, F, Teacher).

This cycle—wherein students from understaffed schools are too poorly educated to become quality teachers themselves—seems apparent in TFA partner districts.

Indeed, every school district that had partnered with TFA in 1996 still employed TFA corps members in 2010, and every single one of these districts remained amongst the most hard-to-staff districts in the state.¹¹¹

Heilig and Jez (2010) find that TFA corps members produce significantly greater levels of student achievement in isolated communities that lack human capital, as they must otherwise rely on emergency-certified teachers. Therefore, saturating a district's teacher vacancies in the short term should produce significantly better student performance in the long term, creating the possibility that these students become educated enough to attend college and become highly qualified teachers themselves. In the past, TFA was too small to fill all of the vacancies within its partner districts; as a consequence, many partner districts continued to rely on emergency-certified teachers to educate local students. In turn, all of these districts still struggle with teacher vacancies over a decade later, suggesting that a mix of corps members and emergency-certified teachers is not sufficient to raise student performance. With this lesson in mind, it seems total saturation in the most hard-to-staff districts would be the best way for TFA to ameliorate teacher vacancies in the long-term.

Unfortunately, TFA's expansion strategies from 2008 to 2010 suggest that corps members still are not concentrated enough to significantly close teacher vacancies, which will presumably result in the same low student performance outcomes that have characterised TFA partner sites for the last twenty years. Even after TFA has grown into a major source of the Delta's new teacher labour, vacancies in partner districts remain more or less unchanged when compared to vacancies in Delta districts without

¹¹¹ 1996 marks the year when the current executive director of the TFA-Delta branch was appointed to run that office.

TFA, as seen in Tables 8.2a and b. Such findings suggest another missed opportunity, as TFA's expansion strategies from 2008 to 2010 give little reason to expect that students in current TFA partner districts will receive an education strong enough to become high-quality teachers in local schools and, by extension, will be able to fill local teacher vacancies in the long term. Put simply, recent TFA growth has done nothing to provide an 'exit strategy' for local partner schools to achieve long-term self-reliance.

8.2 Policy dilemmas and insights for future policy maker engagement with TFA

The missed opportunities just described create serious policy dilemmas for the Mississippi and Arkansas officials who have identified TFA as their 'best bet' for resolving the most isolated Delta communities' chronic teacher shortages. In both states, partner school districts pay TFA a \$3,000 headhunting fee for each corps member they receive; without some plan for eventual self-reliance, these districts are committing a sizable share of their already limited resources to a programme that shows no signs of creating systemic change in the long run. Similar dilemmas challenge state-level officials as well, particularly in Mississippi, where state officials have invested more than \$8 million of state funds in TFA expansion as a strategy for resolving Delta teacher shortages.¹¹² As such, the missed opportunities described above pose serious questions for state officials, who must weigh the trade-offs between the partial, short-term teacher shortage resolution provided by TFA and other long-term teacher recruitment strategies that may produce even fewer teachers to isolated Delta schools and/or require years of upfront investment.

¹¹² These funds are in addition to the headhunting fees paid by local school districts. As discussed later in the chapter, this money came from state-level appropriations in fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011.

In response to these dilemmas, the following discussion considers ways in which TFA could be transformed into a more powerful supplement to current state efforts, seeking to align future TFA partnership strategies with policy makers' long-term goals for Delta reform. To do so, it is necessary to first establish criteria for evaluating the ways in which different outcomes would make TFA a more or less desirable supplement in the rural Delta context. From there, the remaining discussion considers how policy makers might capitalise on TFA's capacity to provide an immediate teacher labour supply without sacrificing their states' resources and/or vision for long-term resolution of the Delta teacher shortages.

8.2.1 Criteria for 'successful' future engagement

Based on the findings presented thus far, it seems necessary to consider TFA's role as a source of Delta teachers through two lenses: 1) as a short-term tool for providing teachers to the areas where other legislative efforts have not, and 2) as a vehicle for long-term resolution of the Delta teacher shortages. Within the context of this research, the more fully TFA achieves one or both of these objectives, the more powerful it becomes as a supplement for Delta reform.

The following discussion explores ways in which policy makers can engage with TFA to more fully address existing partner districts' teacher vacancies in the short term.

The evidence thus far has highlighted TFA's capacity to grow the teacher labour supply within the most isolated Delta communities, making it a powerful tool for narrowing the region's current gap in teacher supply and demand. That said, analysis from the previous section of this chapter demonstrates that TFA has not gone far enough to fully close the gap, meriting a more careful examination of how this goal

might be achieved and what effects can be expected from total ‘saturation’ of partner district vacancies.

Moving beyond these short-term aims, the second criterion emphasises TFA’s role in the long-term resolution of Delta teacher shortages, presumably through its ability to improve student outcomes in current partner districts enough to eventually create a well-educated, locally derived teacher labour supply. So as to avoid perpetual dependence on TFA, the following discussion considers ways to eventually fill partner district vacancies not with TFA corps members, but with equally or more highly qualified teachers committed to a lifetime of service in current partnership communities.

8.2.2 State funding for concentrated TFA expansion

To formulate strategies for concentrating TFA growth within the districts where TFA is needed most, policy makers must first identify and then alter the incentives that have pushed TFA to adopt its current partnership strategies. Looking to TFA’s national growth model, it seems evident that mounting financial pressure has forced TFA-Delta administrators to expand into new districts as a means of brokering more private fundraising partnerships; as one TFA official explained, ‘we’re trying to go to Jackson this year, so we’ll hopefully have a chance to work with more corporations’ (ID#47, MS, F). By offering state funding in exchange for concentrated growth within current partnership sites, policy makers could realign these incentives to promote total saturation of teacher vacancies in existing partnership sites.

TFA-Delta staff members noted that under TFA's programme model, local sites (e.g. the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta site, the New York City site, etc.) do not receive financial support from the national TFA office; instead, each region's administrative team must raise enough money from local businesses, governments, and foundations to cover the costs of training, placing, and supporting their corps members. According to leaders in the TFA-Delta administrative office, these costs total more than \$18,000 per corps member placed in the Delta region.

Despite these steep costs, the Delta office recoups only \$3,000 per teacher in headhunting fees, meaning that each corps member placed in the Delta requires the TFA-Delta office to fundraise an additional \$15,000. As one TFA official explained, these costs, coupled with additional overhead and administrative expenditures, required the Delta office to generate enough funds to cover a \$10.3 million operating budget during the 2010-11 school year. As that official went on to explain, 'We [in the Delta office] are the ones that [determine how many corps members we can afford]. So that's all backed on funding. [The] national [TFA administration] is not going to let us grow if we don't have funding.'

As a consequence of this financial responsibility, TFA officials named local financial support as a central component to their development strategies within the Delta region. In the words of TFA-Delta Executive Director Ronald Nurnberg:¹¹³

There are certain things that we look for [when deciding if we should expand to a new district]. I'd say number one, what we look for is truly need. Number two, can we put together a consistent and constant stream of money, which

¹¹³ As was the case for an earlier quotation of Dr Hank Bounds, this quotation is not labelled with an ID code so as to maintain confidentiality of Nurnberg in other quotations.

will underwrite all the expenses? And then we look to go saturate, better saturate the needs of schools where we're already partnered.

TFA-Delta administrators recognise the need for corps members in the poorest and most rural Delta communities; moreover, they seem committed to developing and maintaining those partnerships as much as possible. And yet, these administrators also point out that they cannot sustain that focus without sufficient funds. As another TFA-Delta official explained, 'We've always seen the Delta as a place that we could really saturate if we could get the funds, but the problem was that it's a very rural region where it's hard to find the money.'

So far, wealthy philanthropic organisations committed to Delta education reform—namely, the Barksdale Foundation of Mississippi and the Walton Family Foundation of Arkansas—have invested significant amounts of money in maintaining TFA's Delta partnerships. But, as TFA-Delta officials explained, the funding that enabled TFA growth from 2008 to 2010 is now required to maintain its current size; any further growth above this level will demand new sponsorships, a fact that has led local TFA leaders to seek new donor sources by expanding into new partner districts.

By FY 2015, the TFA-Delta branch is expected to bring in at least 300 new corps members every year and will require a \$14 million annual operating budget.¹¹⁴ When

¹¹⁴ Given prior TFA retention rates, this would grow TFA presence to approximately 590 teachers at any given time, marking a 14 per-cent increase from current levels. As TFA-Delta is now the only rural TFA training site in the country, the shift from \$10.3 million to \$14 million would cover not only the cost of bringing in these additional teachers, but also the costs of running a summer training programme for over 600 new corps members from other rural TFA sites each year. By holding training in the Delta, TFA provides free summer school services to more than 3,000 Delta school children.

asked about the likelihood of achieving this additional growth, Executive Director Ronald Nurnberg highlighted TFA's dependency on financial support:¹¹⁵

We're still sorting out [our future growth trajectory in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta]. We could be looking to bring in 300 [additional TFA corps members] a year, could be as early as next year we may stair-step it [up to this level], part of it is going to again depend on funding.

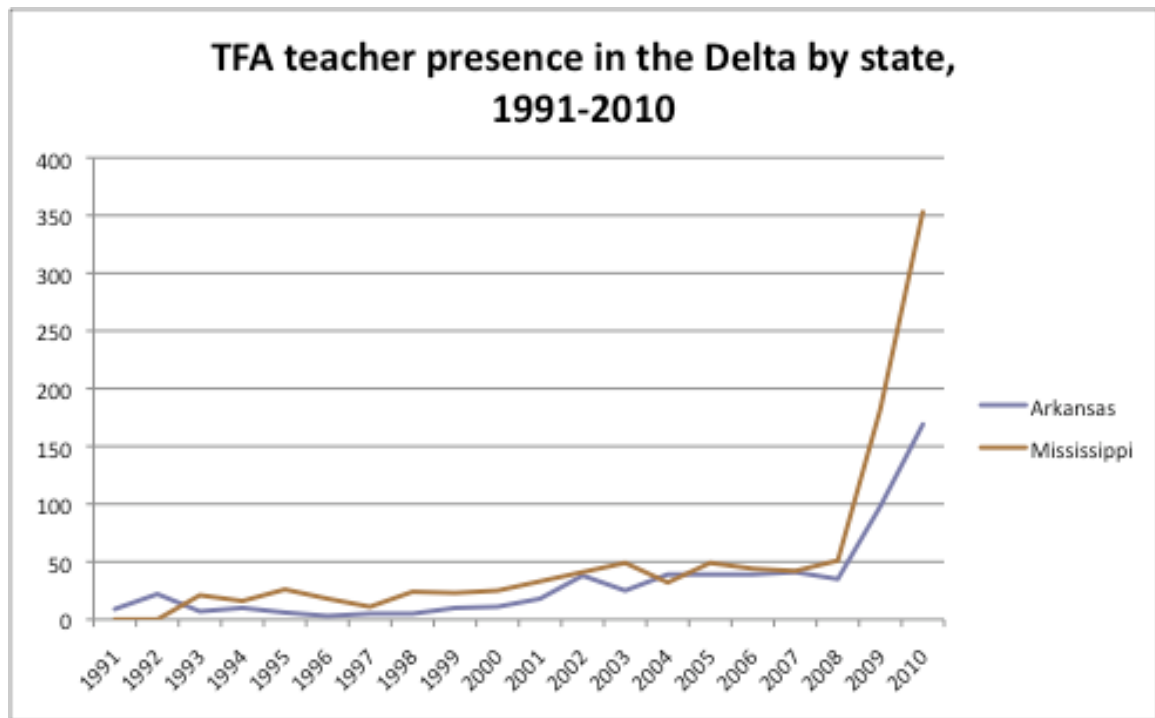
And do you mean funding from the state or from TFA?

Either. If we see our way cleared financially to bring in, say, an extra twenty-five teachers, we'll do it. We're also open to the thought of bringing in more [than 300 new corps members a year] ... If the money were to happen, then boom—that would do it.

During its recent growth, TFA was able to cover its financial needs by focussing on the most rural Delta areas. But as TFA-Delta leadership faces the challenge of covering a 39 per-cent increase in expenditures by FY 2015, these officials have begun to consider partnerships with districts in more urban areas outside of the Delta region—including Jackson and Little Rock, the respective capital cities of Mississippi and Arkansas and also two of the most industrialised areas in either state. As TFA officials explained, these cities are home to some of the wealthiest donors and organisations in each state; by partnering with local urban schools, they could attract numerous new business sponsors. Though such a strategy might increase TFA's financial resources, it would also decrease the organisation's capacity to fulfil the first criterion, which considers TFA's supplementary effectiveness based on its ability to supplement state reform efforts within the poorest, most isolated Delta schools.

¹¹⁵ This quotation is not labelled with an ID code so as to maintain confidentiality of Nurnberg in other quotations.

Figure 8.2 TFA growth in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, by state, 1991-2010



Though TFA grew rapidly in either side of the Delta from 2008 to 2010, growth was more than twice as steep in Mississippi as it was in Arkansas. Mississippi provided significant monetary support for TFA in FY 2009 and FY 2010, most likely accounting for these different outcomes.

Financial implications of the ‘saturation dilemma’

Given the financial constraints described above, it does not seem that TFA will further saturate vacancies in existing partner districts without financial support from Mississippi and Arkansas’s state governments. In fact, if state officials do not invest any monetary support in the programme, it is likely that TFA will actually saturate fewer rural teacher vacancies in coming years, seeking instead to funnel more corps members into wealthier urban areas.

Empirical evidence supports the obvious conclusion that financial support for TFA would significantly increase the total number of corps members available to the Delta region. As illustrated in Chapter Five, TFA expanded rapidly from 2008 to 2010, averaging a 600 per-cent increase in corps member presence over three years, from

eighty-three corps members in the 2007-8 school year to 522 in the 2010-11 school year. Yet, as demonstrated in Figure 8.2, this influx of new teachers was not evenly distributed to either side of the Delta region: while TFA quadrupled its size in Arkansas from 2007 to 2010 (from 41 corps members teachers to 169), it underwent an eight-fold increase in Mississippi during that same time (from 42 corps members to 353).

At first glance, this growing gap between TFA presence in Mississippi and Arkansas would seem puzzling. Generally speaking, officials in both states perceive TFA as a vehicle for placing young, enthusiastic, and intelligent leaders in particularly hard-to-staff school districts. Furthermore, when asked about the diverging TFA outcomes in either side of the Delta, most Arkansas policy makers voiced a desire to spur TFA expansion in their state to the same levels it had reached in Mississippi. Voicing this common sentiment, one Arkansas official explained, ‘We would welcome as many [TFA] teachers as we could get to go into failing schools where no one else will go, so I certainly think those [TFA] numbers should be increased, more like they have in Mississippi, for a long time into the future.’

Though it is possible that policy makers in either state held subtly different attitudes towards TFA, comments like the one above would suggest that any such state-level differences in political will were not prominent enough to account for the markedly different growth outcomes in the Mississippi and Arkansas sides of the Delta from 2008 to 2010. Looking to another possible source of these disparities, the policy maker networks mapped out in Appendix 3A suggest that the Mississippi State Superintendent and the Arkansas State Commissioner of Education manage most of

the financial ties between their respective states and TFA. As will be discussed shortly, the current Mississippi Superintendent and Arkansas Commissioner share a similar enthusiasm for TFA, but have adopted significantly different approaches—and, incidentally, have enjoyed significantly different levels of success—in fundraising on the organisation’s behalf. In turn, statistical evidence would suggest that these dissimilar fundraising outcomes triggered the different TFA growth patterns on either side of the Delta from 2008 to 2010.

Turning first to Mississippi, the two most recent State Superintendents have been highly successful in their efforts to procure financial support for TFA growth. In the final years of his 2005-9 term as Mississippi State Superintendent, Dr Hank Bounds lobbied his peers to set aside millions of dollars in state funds for TFA expansion. As a result of these efforts, Dr Bounds first procured state funding for TFA in FY 2009, acquiring \$1,255,500 from the state’s general budget to further develop the TFA programme. In FY 2010, Bounds and his successor, current State Superintendent Tom Burnham, garnered an additional \$3,750,000 in state funds for TFA expansion and, in FY 2011, another \$3,000,000 towards this same end. Not surprisingly, nearly every single Mississippi policy maker—and even many Arkansas policy makers—identified this funding as a crucial force behind Mississippi’s accelerated TFA growth outcomes.

Though the Arkansas State Commissioner demonstrated a similar commitment to funding TFA growth during that same time, he focussed his fundraising efforts outside of the Arkansas state legislature. Rather than lobby for state-level appropriations, Commissioner Tom Kimbrell made several grant applications to the

US Department of Education, all of which were ultimately unsuccessful. When asked about the logic behind this choice, Commissioner Kimbrell explained that while state-level policy maker support for TFA could have translated into financial backing, Arkansas's limited resources in fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011 compelled him to apply for federal monetary support during those years:¹¹⁶

A big part of our Race to the Top [federal] grant [application] was to expand [TFA] into more schools in the Delta by providing Teach For America not only additional spots but financial support to fill those spots. Because of our economy [in Arkansas], which across the state is the lowest in the country, [I did not think] additional [state] resources [would be] available to expand that programme.... So without Race to the Top we [have not been] able to expand Teach For America.¹¹⁷

Despite the Commissioner's efforts, the US Department of Education rejected Arkansas's Race to the Top grant application for the second and final time in August 2010, leaving the state no money to support TFA growth and requiring Arkansas education leaders to seek other funding sources for TFA.

Linking these histories with subsequent TFA growth patterns, the connection between monetary support and programme expansion seems clear. In both states, the State Superintendent/Commissioner sought out significant financial resources to support TFA growth, though they pursued these resources through fundamentally different channels. In Mississippi, former Superintendent Bounds and current Superintendent Burnham successfully petitioned their state legislature for millions of dollars in fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011, while Commissioner Kimbrell submitted bids for federal money on behalf of Arkansas that were ultimately unsuccessful. Looking to Table 8.3,

¹¹⁶ This quotation is not labelled with an ID code so as to maintain confidentiality of Superintendent Kimbrell in other quotations.

¹¹⁷ Race to the Top funds are a form of federal grants available to state education systems. Race to the Top grant money is a part of the Obama administration's 2009 fiscal stimulus package, wherein states can compete for billions of dollars of public education funding; this funding is rewarded based on the state's ability to craft programmes that will improve student performance.

Table 8.3 Differences in TFA size by state, Mississippi versus Arkansas, 2007-10

ANOVA: Number of TFA teachers in Mississippi vs. Arkansas: 2007-2010 ^a

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. ^f
TFA10 ^b Between Groups	752.531	1	752.531	11.846	.001**
Within Groups	6669.974	105	63.524		
Total	7422.505	106			
TFA09 ^c Between Groups	172.552	1	172.552	7.478	.007**
Within Groups	2422.737	105	23.074		
Total	2595.290	106			
TFA08 ^d Between Groups	9.437	1	9.437	2.058	.154
Within Groups	481.442	105	4.585		
Total	490.879	106			
TFA07 ^e Between Groups	2.390	1	2.390	.440	.509
Within Groups	570.227	105	5.431		
Total	572.617	106			

^a This figure displays the results from a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, comparing the number of TFA corps members placed in Mississippi to those placed in Arkansas for each of the school years from 2007-08 to 2010-11.

^b The number of TFA teachers in Mississippi versus those in Arkansas for the school year 2010-11

^c The number of TFA teachers in Mississippi versus those in Arkansas for the school year 2009-10

^d The number of TFA teachers in Mississippi versus those in Arkansas for the school year 2008-09

^e The number of TFA teachers in Mississippi versus those in Arkansas for the school year 2007-08

^f The statistical significance of differences between states for each school year, with ** demarking results that were statistically significant at a 5% significance level.

these outcomes align perfectly with the diverging TFA growth rates that developed in either side of the Delta from 2008 to 2010. In the year before massive TFA growth (2007-8) and the first year of major growth (2008-9), the difference between TFA presence in the Mississippi and Arkansas sides of the Delta was statistically insignificant.

By contrast, in each of the years where Mississippi provided financial resources to TFA growth and Arkansas did not (i.e. for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years), TFA presence in the Delta region was statistically larger in Mississippi than in it was in Arkansas.¹¹⁸ Given the fact that TFA grew rapidly in both sides of the Delta from 2008 to 2010, these statistical findings and policy maker interview responses suggest

¹¹⁸ Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 runs from October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009. Therefore, any funds received during FY 2009 would reach TFA in time for it to decide how many teachers to bring in for the 2009-10 school year, which runs from August 2009 to May 2010. No statistical tests were available for the 2011-12 school year (corresponding with financial appropriations from FY 2011) because TFA will not release any estimates on teacher placement until the 2011-12 school year has begun.

that strong political support for TFA in Mississippi and Arkansas ensured that the programme's massive national expansion 'trickled down' to create a baseline level of growth in either side of the Delta; from there, additional monetary support drawn from Mississippi's general funds appears to have fuelled accelerated TFA growth within the state's many hard-to-staff Delta communities.

At first glance, policy makers might be tempted to settle for the seemingly 'cost-free' baseline growth level so as to funnel limited financial resources into other teacher recruitment programmes. Yet, as discussed above, TFA will most likely need to expand into more urban areas if it does not receive some form of governmental support in the next few years. In such a scenario, TFA's capacity to saturate vacancies in the most hard-to-staff rural districts would be seriously compromised.

Thus, by securing additional state funding—particularly in Arkansas, where the state has not yet appropriated any money for TFA—state policy makers could achieve two distinct goals. First, they could further grow TFA's total presence—an objective that nearly 70 per cent of all state officials mentioned as desirable during their semi-structured interviews. Second, state funding would enable TFA to maintain (or even strengthen) its current role as a 'last resort' supply of teachers for the poorest, most isolated, rural Delta schools whose teacher shortages have not improved despite the many state reforms discussed in Chapter Six. Thus, state funds would grant TFA the means to concentrate a growing supply of corps members into the districts where few other options remain; such funding could also provide Mississippi and Arkansas officials leverage for negotiating even greater district-level concentration than they may expect otherwise.

Additional considerations

70 per cent of policy makers expressed the hope that TFA would continue to grow in coming years, and one in every three interviewees identified TFA's ability to target vacancies in the most hard-to-staff Delta districts as the organisation's top contribution to local education reform efforts. Given these preferences, the discussion thus far has focused on ways in which Mississippi and Arkansas officials could use state resources to keep TFA growth concentrated within the most hard-to-staff Delta communities. At the same time, however, it is necessary to address the underlying assumption of such a goal: that TFA saturation would actually Delta education outcomes in the short and/or long term. Returning to the meta-analysis of TFA teacher effectiveness conducted in Heilig and Jez (2010), the authors conclude that TFA corps members are more effective than emergency certified teachers and, so, ought to be hired in cases where 'the alternative hiring pool consists of uncertified and emergency teachers or substitutes' (p. 13). Conversely, the authors find that TFA corps members are less effective than traditionally certified teachers and, therefore, should be reserved as a 'last resort' for the particular instances when traditionally credentialed educators are not available.

Though further research would be needed to examine secondary effects of concentrating TFA corps members (as opposed to spreading them across districts), this type of existing research suggests that using TFA to replace emergency licensed teachers in Delta communities—especially in the most isolated communities, where there traditionally certified teachers remain in short supply despite state policy efforts—would improve student performance in the short term. In turn, this short-term improvement in student performance could be used to create a highly educated local

teacher labour supply in the long term, a point to be considered in the following section. In this way, the assumption that TFA saturation is a worthy goal for Delta policy makers is built on the premise that concentrating TFA presence in the short term will enable the production of a superior, traditionally certified local teacher labour supply to replace TFA corps members in the long term.

In addition to the financial considerations listed above, policy makers who do decide to adopt such a goal, and in doing so, to prioritise TFA saturation of partner district vacancies must also carefully monitor any local pushback to the increased presence of ‘outsider’ teachers. As mentioned in Chapter Six, many poor Delta communities try to protect relatively stable and high-paying teaching positions for local residents.

According to some TFA administrators, this resistance could pose a major obstacle to bringing significantly more corps members into a single community. As one TFA official explained, ‘These districts, they might be willing to take two or three [corps members], but individual schools might not want any more than that’ (ID#48, TFA, F). Increasing TFA presence in partner districts means that most or all of the community’s emergency-certified teachers would lose their jobs, an outcome that could incite local pushback to outsider entry.

If these state officials decide to concentrate even more TFA corps members in partner communities, they may need to further tighten current emergency certification restrictions as a means of ensuring that local community leaders permit highly qualified corps members to enter the schools where they are sorely needed. To this end, officials in Mississippi and Arkansas must carefully monitor signs of community pushback and, in particular, ought to deny any emergency certification requests in

districts where TFA is trying to saturate local vacancies. In barring the use of under-qualified teachers, they could more or less guarantee that these hard-to-staff districts take advantage of the fully certified corps members available to their schools.

By increasing funding for TFA and simultaneously limiting emergency certifications for current partner districts, state policy makers would be well positioned to channel more corps members into continually understaffed Delta schools. In turn, encouraging greater TFA presence in isolated regions should benefit policy maker efforts in two ways. First, if corps members were concentrated enough to eliminate all teacher vacancies in the most hard-to-staff communities, they would immediately elevate the average quality of instruction there, thus freeing up officials' remaining resources for targeting teacher vacancies in other understaffed communities. A wide array of teacher quality literature links increased quality of instruction with the production of better educated local adults.¹¹⁹ In this way, a short-term increase in TFA corps member presence will also provide an essential foundation for training local youth to become highly qualified local teachers in the future—an essential foundation for long-term resolution to local teacher shortages.

As an added benefit, concentrating more TFA corps members within fewer districts (as opposed to placing fewer corps members in each of a greater number of districts) will allow policy makers to better monitor the returns to hiring a TFA teacher. As it stands, it is difficult to discern corps members' impact on standardised test performance, community attitudes towards education, and other measures of improved educational outcomes. It is doubtful that districts would be worse off using

¹¹⁹ For a review of this literature, see Appendix 8A.

TFA teachers to fill all of their vacancies, and by moving towards greater corps member concentration, policy makers could better determine just how valuable TFA partnerships actually are for hard-to-staff Delta schools. Such insights would be incredibly helpful for future policy makers trying to decide how often they should employ TFA and how much they should be willing to invest to reach that point.

8.2.3 Grow-your-own approaches to long-term resolution

Because the Delta teacher shortages are a by-product of the region's century-old legacies of race, poverty, and rurality, nearly 40 per cent of officials believe that TFA will be a necessary feature of the local Delta landscape for many years to come. As one Arkansas official explained, 'Like it or not, [TFA is] going to be long term [in these partner communities]—it took several hundred years for the Delta to get where they are and hopefully it won't take several hundred years to get out, but it's not going to be something that will happen overnight' (ID#26, AR, M).

Despite such sentiments, however, many of these same officials—including those who voiced strong support for TFA growth—also maintain that long-term TFA partnerships are not an ideal outcome for any Delta community. In the words of one Mississippi official:

[TFA doesn't] really fix the teacher shortage problem. So as I always say with things like [TFA], those types of things, they can be used as a way to help the situation—they really can help—but we can't rely on them to be the only answer or the solution to our problem. The true solution to our problem is going out and [determining] how do we effectively bring quality people [from local Delta communities] into [Delta teaching positions] (ID#2, MS, M).

In this way, numerous officials highlighted the need for some long-term 'exit strategy' that enables TFA partner districts to eventually develop and maintain their own local teacher labour supply. Sentiments such as these resonate with the second

criterion, which weighs TFA's supplementary value by its capacity to address structural causes of the Delta teacher shortages and, in doing so, contribute to their long-term resolution.

Thus far, the discussion has focussed on short-term outcomes, exploring the ways in which Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers might engage with TFA to ensure that students currently enrolled in hard-to-staff Delta schools receive the best education possible. Building on this foundation, certain state policies and supplementary TFA strategies could transform this increased student achievement into an increased supply of highly qualified local teachers. In particular, this section will consider the feasibility and potential outcomes of developing state-run GYO programmes in TFA partner districts, discussing the ways in which this combination might eventually produce a large and highly educated local teacher labour supply within the poorest and/or most isolated rural Delta communities.

Reconsidering the teacher recruitment and retention literature

As evidenced in Chapter Three's review of existing academic literature, education researchers have documented a wide variety of approaches to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff schools; yet, as was also discussed in Chapter Three, few of these strategies seem appropriate for the rural Delta context. Table 8.4 lists each of the major teacher recruitment and retention tactics discussed within the existing body of education research, grouping them by the 'objective', 'subjective', and 'critical contact' categories provided in Maier and Youngs (2009).¹²⁰

¹²⁰ As discussed in Chapter Three, objective factor recruitment/retention strategies increase the concrete rewards for teaching and/or decrease the costs of becoming a teacher—including increased pay, better benefits, and eased requirements on teacher certification. Subjective factor strategies improve the resources and support networks that shape a teacher's success in the classroom, for

Table 8.4 Potential teacher recruitment and retention strategies

Objective Factors	Subjective Factors	Critical Contact Factors
Financial incentives** Increased wage Targeted incentives Home loans, in-kind payment	Improved work conditions** Better resources Schedule flexibility More classroom authority	Grow-your-own (GYO) programmes
Relaxation of licensure requirements**	Induction and mentorship programmes**	Coordinated manpower policy
Creation of alternative certification programmes**		

*Using the categorisations provided by Maier and Youngs (2009), this table groups all the teacher recruitment and retention strategies described in Chapter Three. Those approaches marked with ** are policies already implemented by Mississippi and Arkansas state policy makers.*

Examining Table 8.4 more carefully, the current teacher labour policyscapes in Mississippi and Arkansas (discussed in Chapter Seven) are composed entirely of objective and subjective factor strategies. Despite these efforts, Tables 6.3a and b and Figure 6.3 illustrated that Delta-specific and state-wide teacher vacancies have actually increased over the past two decades. As a consequence, fifteen state policy makers commented that no amount of money or improved working conditions would be able to entice teachers to live and serve in the most understaffed Delta communities. As one Arkansas board member explained, ‘We can do all we want [to improve financial incentives and work conditions], but that doesn’t change the fact that the Delta’s just—that no one wants to live there’ (ID#25, AR, M). In the words of another board member from Mississippi, ‘I don’t know how great the incentives

example, by offering more and/or higher quality classroom materials as well as teacher mentoring and induction programmes. Finally, critical contact strategies seek to more evenly distribute teachers by ensuring that understaffed schools have frequent positive interactions with new teachers deciding where to work; such strategies include GYO programmes and coordinated manpower policies. While each of these strategies will be summarised briefly below, Chapter Three provides a more in-depth discussion of the empirical findings surrounding these various approaches.

would [have to be to attract enough teachers], but we never really seem to get there’ (ID#1, MS, M, Black).

By contrast, Mississippi and Arkansas policyscapes do not yet contain any major critical contact recruitment strategies. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the critical contact approach operates on the assumption that teacher vacancies arise because teachers have limited and/or negative interactions with hard-to-staff schools; to address this challenge, critical contact policies promote positive exposure between new teachers, hard-to-staff school leaders, and the surrounding community.

Also noted in Chapter Three, the ‘coordinated manpower policies’ discussed in works by Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) and Murphy, DeArmond, and Guin (2003) are intended to improve the flow of information on vacant teaching posts so that teachers looking for work might better distribute themselves to fill these vacancies; more proactive manpower policies actually place new teachers in hard-to-staff regions for their student teaching. To date, this approach remains theoretical and largely under-studied, though preliminary discussions suggest that manpower policies would be ill-suited for Delta reform. As Hammer et al. (2005) are quick to note, these coordination policies are usually discussed at the national level or in states with aggregate teacher surpluses. In states like Mississippi and Arkansas, where states suffer from an aggregate shortage of teachers, such policies offer relatively little guidance.

In contrast, the GYO programmes advocated by researchers such as Boyd et al. (2003), Henderson (2010), Hull (2004), and Proffit et al. (2004) appear to provide a

powerful vehicle for creating high-quality teachers who already live in the Delta region. Under these types of programmes, middle and high school students are encouraged to become teachers and offered basic training while they are still completing their high school degrees. This training is counted towards their college-level coursework, and the state and/or local government often subsidise the tuition costs of any remaining training. In exchange for this accelerated training and financial support, graduates must return to their hometowns to teach for a minimum number of years, though empirical research demonstrates that most GYO graduates remain as teachers in their hometown for many years after their initial contracts have ended (Madda and Schulze, 2009; Osterling and Buchanan, 2003; *Teaching in South Carolina*, 2010).

For these reasons, a growing number of rural education leaders have identified localised GYO programmes as one of their best resources for increasing teacher recruitment and retention. In a national teacher recruitment and retention survey of rural superintendents, 14 per cent of the 597 respondents claimed to employ GYO programmes within their districts, and 12 per cent of total respondents listed these programmes as one of their three most useful strategies for filling teacher vacancies (Hammer et al., 2005). These statistics suggest that nearly all superintendents employing GYO programmes had experienced highly positive results, leading Hammer et al. (2005) to name GYO programmes as one of the top five most useful rural teacher recruitment and retention strategies. Schwartzbeck et al. (2003) conducted a similar survey of rural superintendents, reporting that 34 per cent of their 896 respondents considered GYO programmes to be one of their top resources for filling teacher vacancies.

Looking to some of the major limitations to these initiatives, many rural leaders have complained that GYO programmes require years of upfront training and investment before they produce any highly qualified local teachers; consequently, they leave the immediate teacher shortage unanswered (Collins, 1999). Compounding this problem, if a rural community already struggles with widespread teacher shortages, those students training in GYO programmes will most likely receive a poor education themselves, making it highly probable that they will either become ineffective teachers or drop out of the training programme altogether (Monk 2007). TFA's capacity to provide an immediate teacher supply could address such drawbacks, prompting further exploration as to how policy makers might pair these two programmes to resolve the Delta teacher shortages in the long term.

Beyond the literature: Partnering TFA with GYO programmes

In many ways, TFA seems an ideal short-term complement to the development of more long-term GYO training initiatives in hard-to-staff Delta regions; unfortunately, there is no discussion of such partnerships within the existing academic literature. As such, this section offers a theoretical account of the ways in which Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers could develop GYO programmes in hard-to-staff TFA partner districts to address the structural underpinnings of the Delta teacher shortages.

As mentioned previously in the chapter, TFA could increase student performance in understaffed Delta communities by fully saturating their local teacher vacancies; in turn, GYO programmes would capitalise on improved student performance in local schools, training the most successful of these students—particularly those interested

in hard-to-staff subjects such as maths or science—to eventually become teachers in their understaffed hometowns. Under this model, policy makers would provide financial incentives for TFA to fully saturate the districts that struggle most to bring in outside teachers. At the same time, state leaders would invest in a GYO training programme that operates in all TFA partner districts, using state funds to train middle and high school students interested in becoming teachers; these funds could also be used to cover the college tuition costs students would incur after they graduated high school.

Academic research on the localised nature of teacher labour markets as well as preliminary results from other rural GYO initiatives suggest that once Delta students complete this training and return to their hometowns to teach, many will remain as lifetime teachers there (Baugh and Stone, 1982; Boylan and Bandy, 1994; Clewell and Villegas, 2001). Moreover, these local graduates would be highly aware of the resources and challenges facing their schools and students. As more and more of these new young teachers returned home, TFA could be phased out of that district and presumably transferred to another hard-to-staff district so as to repeat the process. The GYO programme would expand into that new partner district, though it would also maintain its services in former TFA partner districts, ensuring that the next generation of local students become highly qualified teachers as well.

The localised nature of teacher labour markets makes GYO initiatives a particularly promising programme for Delta schools. Moreover, Chapter Six emphasised that many of the region's local communities want long-time residents to fill their relatively stable and high-paying teacher positions. Following the logic of Boylan and Bandy

(1994), it seems likely that these local residents would embrace programmes that promise future teaching positions to local youth rather than outside teachers.

As an added benefit, implementing GYO programmes in TFA partner sites would require relatively few new resources, as policy makers could coordinate training programmes and subsidised tuition for GYO trainees through the teacher training programmes at established state-run universities and/or local community colleges. According to Jeandron (2006), some rural GYO programmes that capitalise on local resources such as these spend as little as \$2,200 per student per year, making them considerably less expensive than long-term reliance on TFA or the perpetual use of targeted financial incentives.

Policy makers seemed open to the possibility of pairing TFA with GYO initiatives. As one Mississippi official posited, ‘Since [the Delta] is already [students’] home, they won’t want to leave. That [type of GYO programme] would be ideal’ (ID#22, MS, F). Bureaucrats in the MDE and ADE noted that neither state currently funds a systemic approach to this long-term strategy. As one explained, some communities have tried to create this type of programme ‘pretty much on a district-by-district basis’ (ID#43, AR, F), but due to limited funding at the local level and a need for immediate resolution to existing teacher shortages, these efforts have only bred very limited success. In the words of another official, ‘We’ve worked hard to try to [develop] teachers from the Delta... and to the degree of success, well, we haven’t had much. But we’d like to’ (ID#24, MS, F).

If officials were to develop a state-run GYO programme within TFA partner districts, they would have to address two potential challenges. First, they would need to ensure that students in GYO programmes were training to fill the types of vacancies most prevalent in local schools. For example, since most teacher vacancies occur in high school-level maths and science classrooms, GYO programme administrators must ensure that a large share of their graduates becomes qualified to teach these hard-to-staff subject areas. Second, most GYO programmes rely on a network of local community, technical, and/or four-year colleges to train students in hard-to-staff school districts. In rural Delta communities that are too remote to access such networks, policy makers must use other channels to provide student training. Such adaptations could include student mentoring from local highly qualified teachers and/or the use of telecommunications programmes to provide distance training.

Beyond the literature: Stakeholder analysis of TFA-GYO partnerships

The proposal to combine TFA saturation with local GYO programmes has potential to improve the quantity and quality of Delta teacher labour in both the short and long term. At the same time, however, much of this potential depends on the amount of support garnered amongst stakeholders. The remainder of this section offers a theoretical overview of the ways in which four types of stakeholders—state-level policy makers, TFA-Delta officials, district superintendents and school principals, as well as the Delta community members themselves—might engage with a TFA-GYO partnership proposal.

This strategy seems appealing to many state policy makers—especially central policy makers with whom TFA-Delta leaders have developed close working relationships—

but also bears significant political costs. 90 per cent of policy makers expressed support for TFA within the Delta, and one in three officials named TFA's capacity to target the most desolate communities as its greatest contribution to local education reform. Creating relatively low-cost GYO programmes that complement TFA saturation could further enamour state officials, as this strategy would target long-term resolution in communities where most other efforts have failed. Such promise notwithstanding, many officials will still feel reticent to invest their states' limited financial funds into TFA; as such, private fundraising outcomes will significantly shape state-level support for TFA saturation.

Turning to the next set of stakeholders, TFA-Delta leaders might hesitate to accept the proposal described above, for fear that it would eventually 'put them out of business.' And yet, in reality, this strategy offers TFA a distinct opportunity without any real risk to the organisation's long-term presence. First, saturating districts in the short term closely aligns with one of the organisation's stated goals. As one TFA-Delta official noted during her interview:

...we do our best to try to concentrate [corps members] in schools, because that way there's more support. And also, that we can also show, like, that we do make a difference, if all the 6th grade teachers are TFA and the scores consistently go up for two years we can draw a correlation there, which is something we like to do (ID#47, TFA, F).

A saturation policy would thus enable TFA to achieve this goal and, in doing so, provide new justification and incentives for potential donors. At the same time, the Delta is so expansive that it seems unlikely TFA would ever run out of districts to move into as existing partnerships developed their own local teacher labour force. At present, TFA places corps members in less than half of all Delta districts; it would take decades to reach every community. Furthermore, even if the Delta were to

eventually develop a self-sufficient local teacher labour force, TFA could easily expand into regions outside of the Delta. As was noted in Chapters Five and Six, teacher shortages are widespread throughout both Mississippi and Arkansas, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, TFA-Delta officials have already gained a foothold in Jackson (Mississippi's capitol city). It is, thus, highly unlikely that a saturation-GYO partnership model would ever impinge upon TFA's long-term viability. In reality, the opposite seems true, as this strategy offers them justification for further growth and saturation in the short term as well as a new angle for fund-raising amongst state officials and private donors in the long term.

Focussing on stakeholders within these Delta communities, district superintendents and school principals would probably have mixed responses to a TFA-GYO partnership programme, though two common challenges would permeate all partner districts. First, it would be necessary to find some way to discount or waive the \$3,000 headhunting fee, as the financial burden of hiring numerous corps members would make saturation unattainable for impoverished districts. Additionally, some superintendents and principals would inevitably face local pressure to resist an influx of 'outsider' corps members into their schools. The degree to which state-level officials are able to pre-empt these two issues—by negotiating a waiver of headhunting costs and by preventing nepotistic school hiring practices—will heavily shape Delta superintendent and principal support for a TFA-GYO approach.

Similarly, community member response to TFA saturation will depend largely on the ways in which the policy is introduced. On the one hand, some will reject efforts to replace under-qualified native teachers with young TFA outsiders. On the other hand,

GYO programmes could be used to create local jobs in the short term (in the way of transportation, meal services, and other provisions for all student-teacher training sessions) and would return teaching jobs to local residents in the long term; if community members felt like these teaching positions would eventually be filled by their own children—including those posts already occupied by TFA corps members under the current partnership model—they might accept such an arrangement. In instances where resistance remains, state-level education officials could limit community pushback by carefully monitoring and enforcing the policies already in place to prevent nepotistic hiring practices within Delta public schools (*i.e.*, the ban on long-term substitutes in Arkansas and the burden to prove that only emergency certified teachers were available for a given post in Mississippi).

In total, the TFA saturation / GYO partnership strategy creates a complex set of costs and benefits for all stakeholders, and the success or failure of such an approach would hinge largely on ‘buy-in’ from these many parties. Effective execution of this strategy would require substantive negotiations and coordination, and not without considerable costs, but such partnerships would be well worth the cost for all stakeholders they offered relief to the region’s pervasive teacher shortages.

8.3 Conclusion: An integrated approach to engaging TFA

TFA has demonstrated both the capacity and the proclivity to provide a highly educated supply of corps members to some of the most hard-to-staff Delta schools. And yet, current TFA expansion strategies have precluded total saturation of partner districts’ aggregate teacher vacancies—in fact, TFA partner districts recorded no statistically significant changes in teacher vacancy rates even after local corps member presence grew 600 per cent from 2008 to 2010. In many ways, these

findings represent a missed opportunity: because partner districts continue to employ a large number of under-qualified, emergency-certified teachers, most of their students receive too poor an education to eventually become teachers themselves. In turn, the local teacher labour supply remains limited and partner districts become dependent on TFA to fill vacant classrooms in the long term.

These current outcomes create certain dilemmas for local education leaders, as they must decide to invest their limited resources in TFA headhunting fees—an approach that presently offers no long-term resolution—or in other, more long-term strategies that do little to address the immediate need for new teachers. This chapter offers insights on the forces behind these dilemmas and also explores the ways in which Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers might engage with TFA to make it a more powerful resource for hard-to-staff schools in both the short and long term.

First, having explored the financial motivations behind recent TFA partnership strategies, it seems that state-level monetary support would produce concentrated TFA growth in the poorest, most isolated Delta communities, thus providing a vehicle to fully saturate teacher vacancies in the most hard-to-staff Delta school districts. Though clearly orientated towards the short term, such efforts would also be essential to long-term reform, as total saturation of local teacher shortages should improve students' academic performance—a prerequisite to the development of a highly qualified local teacher labour supply.

Indeed, this effort to increase immediate TFA presence within hard-to-staff partner districts provides the foundation for a long-term 'exit strategy', enabling local

communities to eventually staff their classrooms without TFA. In particular, GYO teacher training programmes could serve as a highly effective complement to the TFA employment strategies outlined above. While TFA corps members would provide short-term instruction in hard-to-staff schools, GYO programmes would encourage local middle and high school students to become teachers by offering a fast and financially subsidised track to receive teacher certification. As these students received the proper credentials to become highly qualified teachers, TFA would relinquish local teaching posts to them and move corps members into new partner districts facing similar challenges.

By coupling increased TFA presence with the development of GYO initiatives orientated towards the long-term production of highly qualified local teachers, policy makers could maximise the short-term benefits of TFA partnerships without becoming overly dependent on TFA to fill the same teacher vacancies in perpetuity. Obviously, this strategy does not mark the only route to Delta reform, nor do the insights above provide an exhaustive discussion as the ways in which state officials might engage TFA in coming years. That said, the insights developed within this chapter offer a seemingly feasible route to reform that would be highly compatible with current social, economic, and political contexts defining the Delta region, as well as with policy makers' short- and long-term goals for systemic Delta reform.

-9-

**Concluding thoughts:
A new direction for the TFA debate**

Chapter Abstract: This final chapter combines the issues established in Chapters Two and Three with the findings from Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight to address the overarching research question. Upon reviewing this evidence, TFA does seem to be a highly effective tool for filling teacher shortages in rural Southern communities. Looking to the Delta case study, TFA fills a significant share of the region's total teacher shortages, targeting those communities whose social, historic, and economic characteristics make them especially hard-to-staff. That said, there is clear room for growth and increased effectiveness within this effort. Such conclusions merit a more careful discussion in future TFA research – one that develops site-specific definitions of TFA 'effectiveness'. In the case of the rural South, one of TFA's largest and fastest-growing partnership regions, future research must explore TFA's changing role and impact in realigning local teacher labour market outcomes.

As TFA has grown into a more visible force for US education reform, the debate surrounding it has become increasingly acrimonious. Politicians, business leaders, and numerous philanthropic organisations have promoted TFA as an exemplar for recruiting high-quality teachers into some of the nation's most hard-to-staff classrooms. At the same time, leaders from traditional teacher certification programmes and national teachers unions have warned that under-trained corps members may be driving high-quality professionals out of teaching.

Receiving relatively less attention, however, are the distinct implications of TFA presence in rural partnership sites. To date, much of the research has evaluated TFA outcomes across all communities, ignoring the potentially serious disparities between urban and rural contexts. As researchers such as Collins (1999) and Monk (2007) point out, the educational needs and resources of rural communities are markedly different from those in more urban areas; Heilig and Jez (2010) draw similar conclusions, noting that TFA's impact on a partner site depends largely on the size and composition of the local workforce—a consideration that is significantly affected by how urban or rural a community might be. Geographic location further affects TFA's role and purpose, as rural communities in one region of the United States are defined by very different social, economic, and educational contexts than communities in another region.

The rural South—one of TFA's largest and fastest-growing partnership subsets—struggles with some of the nation's most acute teacher shortages. Though the small, dispersed agrarian communities within the rural South face more teacher vacancies

per capita than any other region in the United States, Chapter Two highlighted that researchers have not adequately documented the reasons behind these local shortages. Additionally, Chapter Three noted that the literature on teacher recruitment and retention strategies has overlooked the particular needs and resources of these communities; consequently, few empirical resources are available to guide local education leaders' teacher labour reform efforts. These gaps in the literature mark a need for further research, both on TFA and on rural Southern teacher labour needs.

9.1 Summary of findings and a return to the central research question

This research offers a preliminary response to these gaps, examining the ways TFA has affected the small, isolated teacher labour markets of the rural Southern Mississippi-Arkansas Delta—especially after TFA corps member presence there increased 600 per cent from 2008 to 2010. More specifically, it has sought to understand the ways in which TFA may supplement the region's existing teacher labour policyscapes to fill rural local teacher vacancies in the short and long term. These many issues are reflected in the central research question:

How—if at all—has Teach For America been able to supplement state efforts to address teacher shortages in the rural South, particularly since the programme's rapid growth from 2008 to 2010?

Using a labour market model to unpack questions of teacher supply, teacher demand, and school district budget functions, Chapter Two documented gaps within the existing teacher shortage literature. Chapter Three elucidated an additional gap in the teacher labour literature, noting the ways in which rural needs have been marginalised within most teacher recruitment and retention research. As it stands, few empirical

strategies actually target the underlying causes of rural Southern teacher shortages, and TFA constitutes a significant share of the total teacher supply. This substantially changes the type of value TFA offers to local education policy makers in the rural South, making it a potentially valuable resource for local teacher labour reform.

To understand when and how TFA might supplement local teacher labour policyscapes to mitigate acute teacher vacancies, Chapter Three also developed a decision-taking framework to determine which state officials' preferences for TFA matter most in shaping TFA growth, how they form those preferences, and how they are likely to act on them. This policy framework provides a useful structure for analysing TFA's potential to supplement pre-existing teacher labour policies in a way that the teacher labour market model established in Chapter Two cannot. Essentially, these two models frame separate sides of a single loop: the labour market model frames the shortages themselves, whereas the policy model unpacks state officials' reactions to them (by implementing a new strategy, partnering with TFA, etc.). From there, the labour market model illustrates the impact of these policy reactions on the original teacher shortages, provoking a new round of policy maker responses, and so on.

Chapter Four documented the methodological strategies for conducting this research. Because this site-specific focus is so new, a case study of a single rural Southern TFA partnership region seemed to provide the greatest exploratory research potential. Additionally, the Delta seemed the best site for analysis because it is the oldest, largest, and most established TFA partnership site. Additionally, the state divide between the Mississippi Delta and the Arkansas Delta provided a 'natural experiment'

for examining the ways in which TFA may complement state-level teacher labour strategies in some political contexts but not in others. Additionally, this chapter discussed the potential biases that arose from the researcher's unique status as a 'TFA insider.' This positioning created significant opportunities to access TFA leaders and relevant data, but it also tinted the lens through which this information was analysed, thus raising meaningful questions as to the neutrality of the research project. The reader must bear such factors in mind as he or she engages with this text.

As the final chapter in Part One, Chapter Five highlighted some of the common forces shaping education in the Delta, throughout Mississippi and Arkansas, and across the rural South. Whereas Chapter Four justified the decision to represent the rural South through a case study of the Delta, this chapter developed a detailed account of the typically 'rural Southern' features that characterise the Delta. Here it became evident that the highly agrarian and racially divided structures in the Delta have hamstrung the historical evolution of local public education. Drawing from this context, the chapter's final discussion developed criteria for conceptualising the many ways in which TFA might supplement state-led efforts to resolve the Delta teacher shortages. The first considered if and to what extent TFA has been able to provide immediate relief to the Delta's persistent local teacher vacancies. Building on this short-term focus, it was also necessary to consider TFA's potential to foster long-term resolution of the structural challenges underlying local teacher vacancies.

Building on this foundation, the chapters from Part Two presented the findings from the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta case study. First, Chapter Six explored the driving forces and defining features of the Delta teacher shortages, seeking in particular to

understand policy maker attitudes towards TFA in light of these many challenges.

Guiding this discussion, the chapter centred on the following research sub-question:

- What social, historic, and economic forces underlie the Delta's chronic teacher shortages? How do Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers perceive Teach For America within the context of these many forces?

According to the findings, the Delta's history of agricultural dependence is closely interwoven with the area's history of slavery and post-bellum racism, all factors that appear to drive on-going Delta teacher shortages. As discussed in Chapter Five, the Delta's labour-intensive agricultural economy led white Delta plantation owners to bring a large number of slaves to the region in the antebellum era; Chapter Six connected these institutions to the high concentration of African Americans still living in the Delta today. This chapter also found that most black Delta residents fell into extreme poverty when agriculture became highly mechanised, as the need for field labour withered but no new industries entered the region. This lack of local industry ultimately resulted in severe geographic as well as social isolation; in some cases, it also has produced a deeply rooted contempt for 'outsider' teachers.¹²¹

Within the context of the teacher labour framework, these questions of race, rurality, and poverty have suppressed both the local teacher supply curve and the school budget curve, thus contributing to the Delta's acute teacher shortages. And yet, while Delta teacher shortages are typically higher than shortages throughout other parts of Mississippi and Arkansas, they are by no means unique: the same supply-demand gap

¹²¹ Though local residents may not have the education credentials to receive teacher certification, they may fill teacher vacancies on an emergency licence if no qualified teachers apply for the post—and thus receive the same pay and benefits as a certified teacher would.

that characterises the Delta region permeates most communities across each state. This creates an added dilemma for state policy makers, who must try to attract new teachers to Delta schools without drawing them away from almost equally hard-to-staff areas outside of the Delta region. When analysed within the policy framework from Chapter Three, this challenge appeared to be one of the biggest drivers of widespread policy maker support for TFA.

Given these findings, it is tempting to assume that TFA used its rapid growth from 2008 to 2010 to simply fill as many vacancies as possible as quickly as possible. In actuality, Chapter Seven provided evidence that TFA has adopted a refined strategy for distributing corps members, funnelling its teachers into the districts least affected by previous state-led teacher labour reform efforts. According to the first criterion established in Chapter Five—which weighs TFA’s ability to supplement state efforts that immediately fill Delta teacher shortages—this approach qualified TFA as a highly valuable supplement for Delta reform. Guiding these conclusions, the second research sub-question provided the central thrust of this chapter’s analysis:

- In light of its recent growth from 2008 to 2010, what role does Teach For America now play within the overarching set of state strategies meant to ameliorate the Delta teacher shortages?

This chapter began with a discussion of the education financing currently available to Mississippi and Arkansas schools. Though the sources of education revenue are different in either state—with Mississippi schools depending more on local and federal tax dollars and Arkansas schools receiving the overwhelming majority of their funds from state coffers—total education spending is nearly equal for each state, and

schools in each state are granted roughly similar amounts of money per student. Officials in both states have used these finances to develop three different types of teacher recruitment and retention strategies—improved teacher work conditions, targeted financial incentives, and development of alternative teacher certification programmes—to grow the state-wide teacher labour supply and/or draw a larger share of the available teachers into understaffed Delta communities.

Despite these many efforts, policy makers from both states felt their efforts had produced only limited results; indeed, teacher vacancies increased in each state from 1998 to 2010. Officials reported that teacher vacancies had been especially problematic within those Delta communities most characterised by the issues of race, rurality, and/or poverty described in Chapter Six. According to policy makers, these three drivers are so deeply entrenched in some Delta communities that no feasible state policy can draw teachers in to fill local vacancies. Of interest, the tobit regression analysis suggested that TFA targeted these very types of hard-to-staff schools during its expansion from 2008 to 2010, making it a ‘last resort’ teacher supply to the communities where century-old legacies and institutions have undermined numerous state-led efforts for reform. These findings led to the conclusion that TFA meets the first criterion for being labelled a ‘valuable supplement’ to state reform efforts.

Such benefits notwithstanding, Chapter Eight found that recent TFA partnership strategies have also resulted in missed opportunities for more long-term resolution of the Delta teacher shortages. This final findings chapter explored the nature and causes of these challenges and then used this information to draw insights as to how policy

makers might engage with TFA to produce more optimal outcomes in the future. The third and final sub-question provided guidance for this discussion:

- How might Teach For America's growth outcomes from 2008 to 2010 inform immediate as well as future engagement between relevant state policy makers and TFA leadership in rural partnership sites?

Statistical analysis and policy maker interview responses highlighted two major ways in which TFA strategies had failed to capitalise on TFA's recent growth, in both cases overlooking the opportunity to more fully resolve partner communities' widespread teacher shortages. First, graphical analysis and one-way ANOVA tests demonstrated that TFA had not saturated vacancies in its partner districts from 2008 to 2010, thus tacitly ensuring that these districts remain dependent on emergency-certified teachers to staff local classrooms. During this time, TFA appears to have imposed a corps member ceiling for districts in either side of the Delta, clustering only a certain number of its teachers in any partner district before funnelling the rest of its corps members into new communities regardless of the vacancies that remained. Further examination revealed that TFA has no 'exit strategy' for partner districts to eventually develop and maintain their local teacher supply without TFA; indeed, all those districts employing TFA in 1996—when the current TFA-Delta executive director was first appointed—were still reliant on corps members to fill local vacancies in 2010. Because the second criterion measured TFA's supplementary power as a function of its ability to provide long-term resolution to Delta shortages, partner districts' on-going dependency on TFA marks a major shortfall in the programme's recent strategies.

Speaking to this issue, the remainder of Chapter Eight drew insights as to how policy makers might engage with TFA to produce more optimal short- and long-term outcomes for TFA partnerships in both sides of the Delta. First, the analysis suggested that increased state-led financial support could realign TFA's incentives to expand, persuading TFA leaders to maintain the programme's role as a 'last resort' for the poorest, most isolated Delta schools. Second, the discussion considered TFA's potential to supplement state-run GYO programmes to create a highly qualified local teacher labour supply in the long term. Taken together, these two strategies offered one possible route (though by no means the only route) for more constructive long-term engagement between state officials and TFA-Delta leadership.

9.2 Extending the debate: Generalisations of TFA engagement in rural sites

Chapter Four mentioned that the findings from this case study would be intrinsically valuable and also instrumental in nature; so far, this final discussion has emphasised the intrinsic components of the research. Broadening this focus, the remainder of the chapter will discuss the instrumental application of these conclusions, considering how Delta-specific answers to the central research question might be applied to other rural TFA partnership sites and what repercussions these conclusions might hold for the larger debate surrounding TFA.

In the 2011-12 school year, TFA listed forty-two different partnership sites, ten of which are characterised as rural.¹²² Though the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta represents the single largest rural TFA site, it can be difficult to apply the findings to these other regions, each of which has its own unique history, population, and resources. For

¹²² In addition to the Delta, these sites include Alabama**, Appalachia, Eastern North Carolina**, Hawai'i, New Mexico, the Rio Grande Valley, South Carolina**, South Dakota, and South Louisiana**. Those sites marked with ** are a part of the Southern Black Belt of the United States, a region sharing much of the same geographic, historic, and social issues as the Delta.

example, many of the findings may not be applicable to TFA partnerships in rural South Dakota, where corps members serve students from local Native American reservations, or in rural Hawai'i, where corps members teach indigenous Hawaiian islander students. In both of these cases, the local history, geography, and population are clearly distinct from corresponding features of the Delta; as such, the research findings may offer relatively little space to infer TFA's role within either of these sites.

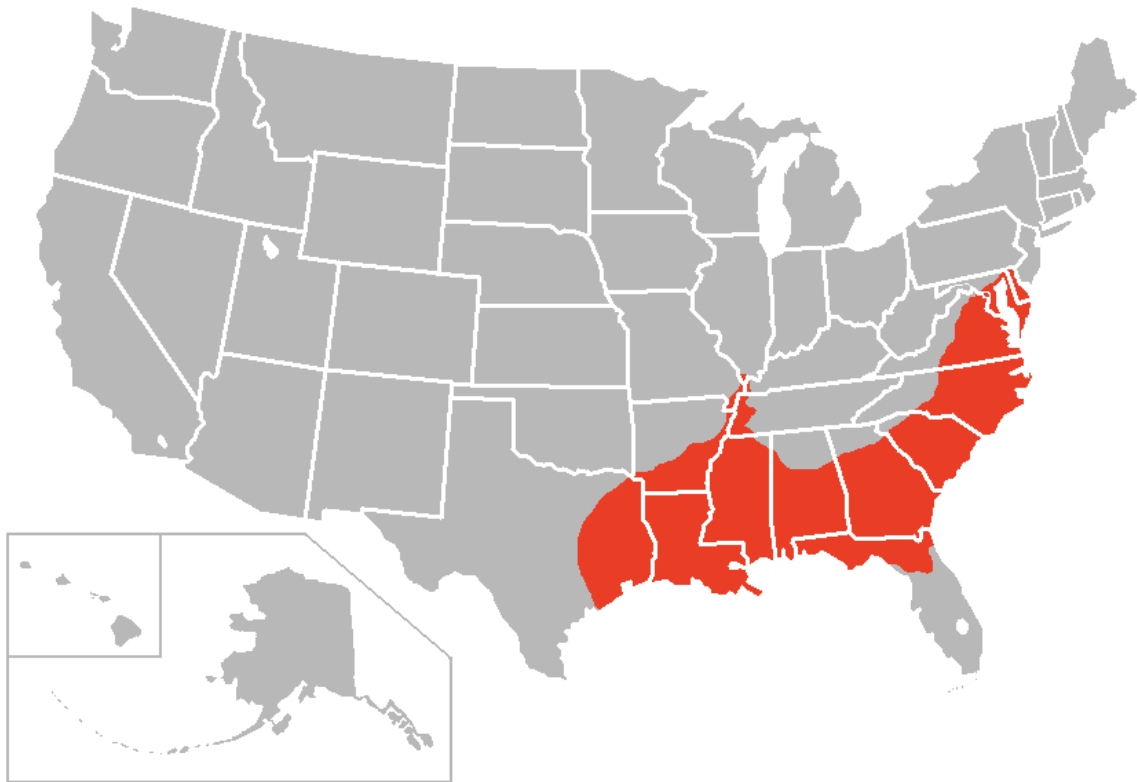
By contrast, the findings are much more readily extended to TFA's rural Southern partner sites, especially those sharing the same racial history and demographics as the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Seven of TFA's ten rural sites are in Southern states, and five of these (including the Delta) are confined to the 'Black Belt', a region of the Southern United States defined by the same racial and agrarian legacies that permeate the Delta.¹²³ As Whimberley and Morris (1996) explain:

In the United States ... nearly all the counties [containing a concentrated African American population] are southern and nearly all are rural. The historic Black Belt's conditions remain some of the worst in our nation. The Black Belt is home to persistent poverty, poor employment, low incomes, limited education, poor health, high infant mortality, and dependence. (ix)

Related to the rural Southern history described in Chapters Two, Three, Five, and Six of this research, Whimberley and Morris (1996) go on to conclude that issues of 'region, race, and rurality...signal an ongoing crisis in quality of life ... for this historic rural region [the Black Belt]' (p. 118). According to these findings, rural TFA sites within the Black Belt share the same institutional and historical legacies that appear to drive acute teacher shortages within the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Thus,

¹²³ See Figure 9.1 for a map of the Black Belt.

Figure 9.1 The ‘Black Belt’ of the Southern United States



The areas in red represent the ‘Black Belt’ of the Southern United States, a region characterised by its high concentration of African Americans. Source: wikimedia.org

while further research must be conducted on the particular partnership and expansion strategies that local TFA leaders have adopted in each of those five sites, it appears that TFA is operating within much the same context there as it has in the case study site, the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta.

All five of TFA’s hard-to-staff Black Belt sites—Alabama, Eastern North Carolina, South Carolina, South Louisiana, and the Delta—struggle with the same legacies of race, rurality, and poverty discussed in this research. In the light of these parallels, the educational needs and challenges in each of these sites are presumably similar to those within the Delta context; in this way, the case study findings serve as an

instrumental first step, enabling a broader understanding of TFA's potential role within the teacher labour markets of rural, hard-to-staff Southern communities.

9.3 The larger TFA debate

Having considered TFA's role within the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, and having briefly discussed the applicability of the findings to other rural Southern TFA partner sites, it is necessary to position this research within the larger debate surrounding TFA.

As noted in the introductory chapter and again briefly in the opening thoughts of this final discussion, this debate has become increasingly controversial in recent years, with two major camps emerging on either side. On the one hand, many 'outsider' education reformers—including politicians, businessmen, and leaders of several major philanthropic organisations—have pushed to compartmentalise education into discrete inputs and outputs, seeking to reward those teachers and administrators who can improve certain measures of student performance (standardised test scores, graduation rates, college matriculation rates, etc.) and to punish those who cannot. Within this camp, TFA is often touted as the model for future teacher labour reform, as elite college graduates are placed in hard-to-staff classrooms with the explicit goal to immediately and quantifiably increase student performance.

On the other hand, many education 'insiders'—including leaders from teachers unions and traditional teacher certification programmes—have argued that the TFA model is at best misguided and at worst dangerous to comprehensive long-term education reform efforts. These critics assert that teaching is a much more collaborative, fluid,

and complex process than is assumed within the TFA model, calling into question the preparedness and commitment of a corps member receiving only five weeks of training and signing on to only two years of teaching. As many would also contend, TFA corps members appear to directly crowd out lifelong teachers—filling local classrooms while other teachers are laid off because of district-wide budget cuts—and to also indirectly crowd out teachers by de-professionalising the teaching field and removing the impetus for policy makers to prioritise meaningful education reform.

Education researchers seem divided on the matter, with some recent works drawing favourable conclusions on the TFA model¹²⁴ and others finding it to have a negative impact on local schools and students.¹²⁵ Unfortunately, this empirical research has provided little clarity to the polemic debate surrounding TFA’s growth and purpose. Perhaps reflective of the ‘outsider’ demand that researchers quantify teacher quality, the existing body of TFA literature has focused almost exclusively on a quantitative measurement of an exceedingly narrow definition of ‘TFA teacher effectiveness’. Specifically, most empirical studies have relied on a value-added model, wherein the improvements in test scores of students with TFA teachers are compared to those of their peers learning under non-TFA teachers. Interestingly, even those opposed to the quantification of teacher quality have adopted this model as their primary—if not only—metric for evaluating TFA.

Far from providing clarity on the merits of TFA, this narrow focus has only further polemicised the debate described above. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Anderson (2009) meta-analysis concludes that the highly inconsistent outcomes

¹²⁴ See Glazerman et al. (2006), Raymond et al. (2001), Kane et al. (2008), and Xu et al. (2007).

¹²⁵ See Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) and Laczko-Kerr and Berliner (2002).

across these empirical studies appear to be strongly connected to the agendas of the organisation conducting the research, suggesting that this field has been used more for political purposes than for an increased understanding of TFA's relative merits. In many instances, these types of studies appear to have been shaped around the political beliefs of those funding them rather than the other way around.

As an added drawback, this 'value-added' research focus places little to no emphasis on TFA's role within the context of a given partner community's history, resources, or needs. Perhaps as a consequence, the current academic literature examines TFA through a rather detached (if not esoteric) lens, providing little practical information for school leaders and state policy makers trying to decide if and how far they should engage with TFA. Such limitations point to a gap in the existing body of academic literature, particularly in the current understanding of what makes TFA an asset or a detriment to the creation of a high-quality teaching force in a given community. The heated debate surrounding TFA, as well as the programme's massive expansion in recent years, intimate a real and substantive need to fill this gap.

This research has identified and examined one type of consideration within this academic gap. In particular, the case study of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta provides an exploratory examination of TFA's potential to shape aggregate teacher labour outcomes within sparsely populated rural Southern communities. Rapid growth from 2008 to 2010 has allowed TFA to become a significant contributor to the Delta teacher labour supply; moreover, the programme demonstrated the rare capacity to target the most isolated hard-to-staff Delta schools as it underwent expansion from 2008 to 2010.

These findings are all the more interesting when state-specific outcomes are compared. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the Delta was selected as a case study site in part because it provides a ‘natural experiment:’ the Mississippi-Arkansas state boundary divides this otherwise homogenous region in half, allowing the researcher to compare and contrast the effects of policy maker actions on teacher labour outcomes. At the broadest level, Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers have prioritised the same three types of teacher labour policies—improving teacher work conditions, developing targeted financial incentives, and streamlining the certification process—though in subtly different ways. In Mississippi, officials have emphasised financial incentives over improved work conditions while Arkansas leaders have reversed these two priorities. Additionally, when looking to streamline teacher certification, Mississippi policy makers have created multiple alternative certification programmes and eliminated obstacles to certification, whereas Arkansas policy makers have introduced charter schools whose teachers are altogether exempt from certain certification requirements.

Despite these different tactics, teacher vacancy rates within either side of the Delta have remained in lockstep for years. Such outcomes lend evidence to the conclusion that subtle changes in a rural Southern state’s teacher labour policyscape are not likely to produce any significant changes to the region’s teacher labour supply. Instead, these rural Southern teacher vacancies, which tend to be the product of century-old socio-economic institutions, must be resolved through a more comprehensive policy approach.

Narrowing focus to one policy approach in particular, this case study also illuminates the ways in which state engagement with TFA can trigger significantly different growth outcomes for the organisation. TFA enjoys widespread political support in Mississippi and Arkansas alike, especially amongst central education officials. In turn, this backing has created more opportunities for TFA entry within local Delta towns (as each state has defended TFA from nepotistic hiring discrimination) and, thus, has contributed to the organisation's impressive growth in either side of the Delta from 2008 to 2010.

At this point, however, outcomes diverge, as Mississippi's State Superintendent of Education successfully lobbied the state for TFA funding while Arkansas's State Chancellor of Education unsuccessfully lobbied federal grant sources towards this same end. As a result, TFA grew twice as fast in Mississippi as it did in Arkansas from 2008 to 2010, and the organisation has since located its first rural summer training site within the Mississippi side of the Delta. These findings suggest that political support matters insofar as it allows local TFA leaders to drive their own growth. At the same time, states looking to develop TFA as a major source of teacher labour could accelerate this growth through increased financial support for the local partnership office.

Finally, outcomes from this 'natural experiment' may lend some insight as to the logic behind TFA's school selection strategies. Chapter seven used tobit regression analysis to demonstrate that TFA is statistically more likely to enter geographically isolated Delta schools in both states—a factor linked to Delta shortages in every policy maker interview. From there, TFA targeted different types of high need schools in either side

of the Delta, opting for communities that identified as predominantly black in Mississippi and for communities with particularly low high school graduation rates in Arkansas. Given that TFA-Delta leaders described a blanket approach for selecting partner schools across the region, this finding seems counter-intuitive and in need of further research. As a preliminary hypothesis, it seems possible that these diverging patterns are a reflection of subtly different policy maker perceptions of what makes a school 'high needs' in either state; as TFA develops close working relationships with these officials, its leaders may internalise policy maker perceptions into their decision-taking paradigms and thus opt for slightly different types of partnership schools in each side of the Delta. This hypothesis should be tested in future research, as it could shed new light on TFA's tendency and potential to integrate itself within state officials' vision for their broader teacher labour policyscape.

These findings hold important repercussions for understanding the existing academic literature as well as the larger TFA debate. In particular, TFA's potential to significantly alter aggregate teacher labour market outcomes in rural partner sites would suggest a need to rethink what it means for TFA to be 'effective' within the rural context. Heilig and Jez (2010) conclude that TFA corps members typically outperform teachers in isolated communities with limited human capital; according to Monk (2007), these traits stand as a defining characteristic of most rural environments. As such, rural-specific evaluations of TFA may warrant relatively less emphasis on the 'value-added' considerations that dominate current empirical discussions of TFA and relatively more attention to the ways in which this programme may supplement state efforts to reform local teacher labour supplies. Put simply, it seems necessary to re-conceptualise rural TFA partnerships in a way that

places greater emphasis on the organisation's engagement with a rural region's aggregate teacher shortages in both the short and long term.

With these considerations in mind, the final portion of this chapter will explore the relevance of these conclusions when discussing some specific questions within the TFA debate. In particular, the remainder of this work will use the findings presented in Part Two to ask: 1) if TFA should be used in rural public schools, and 2) if so, when and in what capacity.

Should TFA be used in rural Southern public schools?

As a precursor to most other questions entangled in the TFA debate, this discussion must begin by asking whether or not policy makers should allow TFA to partner with constituent communities at all. A basic cost-benefit analysis of TFA partnership offers insights to this complex question. Earlier sections of this chapter have summarised many of the benefits: namely, corps members serve as an immediate supply of relatively well-qualified teachers to the schools that would be least likely to find instructors through another means. Moreover, the growing number of corps members entering the Delta each year constitutes a large enough share of the total teacher labour pool that TFA has the potential to fill most, if not all, of the existing vacancies in numerous partner districts.

This merits a more careful discussion of the costs associated with TFA partnerships. On a financial level, Delta districts pay \$3,000 per corps member; these rates are roughly similar in other TFA partnership sites. As mentioned in Chapter Eight, such costs create a dilemma for school officials, who must decide whether to invest their

limited resources in attracting TFA corps members who provide a ‘quick fix’ but do not fill teacher vacancies in the long term. Further complicating matters, hiring corps members may even worsen vacancy rates by creating a constant churn of teacher turnover while also drawing out money (i.e. the money used for headhunting fees) that could be used to invest in classroom resources, teacher induction and mentorship programmes, and other teacher retention programmes.

Beyond these financial burdens, one must consider several more abstract costs of TFA partnerships as well. Returning to the question of teacher crowd-out, it is important to ask if TFA presence might come at a detriment to the traditional teacher labour supply. Some TFA critics argue that TFA ought not to be employed even when there are many under-qualified teachers because TFA inevitably takes the jobs of highly qualified veteran teachers as well. While findings presented here cannot speak to the matter in urban areas, they would suggest that questions of direct and indirect teacher crowd-out seem irrelevant in rural sites like the Delta.

To begin with, there are so many vacancies amongst Delta communities that there is a near-zero probability that traditionally certified teachers would ever be crowded out to make room for entering corps members—a point mentioned by state policy makers as well as local teachers and administrators during classroom observations of Delta schools. Moreover, the argument that TFA indirectly crowds out traditional teachers by de-professionalising the field seems similarly thin in the Delta context, as the only alternative option (to fill posts with under-qualified individuals on emergency certification) has likely produced the same damage to perceptions of the teaching profession.

As a final potential cost, TFA could provide just enough of a ‘quick fix’ to dissipate pressure on politicians to formulate long-term comprehensive reforms for hard-to-staff rural teacher labour markets. This argument seems to be more relevant to the Delta than those arguments related to teacher crowd-out, and it ought not to be dismissed without careful evaluation. Unfortunately, this issue is almost impossible to measure; within this case study, for example, there is no way of knowing how much more (or less) policy makers would be willing to invest in the Delta if TFA had not been present for the last twenty years. As such, it is up to local school district leaders to evaluate the possibility of this trade-off within their specific contexts.

A wide array of costs and benefits must inform the debate that asks if TFA should be encouraged (or even allowed) to operate in rural schools. On the one hand, TFA provides relatively high-quality educators to the communities whose historical, social, and economic characteristics make them least likely to attract teachers otherwise. On the other hand, TFA saps limited financial resources from these already under-resourced schools and could potentially remove the impetus for policy makers to craft more comprehensive policies aimed at long-term education reform. In some cases, the benefits of using TFA will outweigh the costs, rendering TFA as a valuable resource for rural teacher labour reform. Within these contexts, it seems pragmatic to allow or even encourage TFA partnerships with local rural schools.

When and to what extent should TFA be employed?

The context of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta seems to qualify as one such case, leading from questions of ‘if’ policy makers should employ TFA corps members, to

questions of ‘where’ and ‘how’ they should do so. This research has not considered if and when urban school districts should employ TFA, but it should be clear from the discussion so far that this programme seems a particularly adept tool for targeting rural communities with too little human capital to produce a high-quality teacher labour supply. Heilig and Jez (2010) offer findings that support this conclusion, naming TFA as one of the best teacher labour resources in isolated communities that lack a sufficiently large pool of educated adults to create a high-quality teacher labour force. By extension, then, it seems logical to argue that TFA ought to be concentrated within the communities that are the least capable of establishing a highly qualified teacher labour supply on their own—as it is in these instances that TFA appears to provide the greatest benefit.

Thus, one could use the evidence from this research to argue that rural communities—particularly those in the Black Belt of the Southern United States—should exhibit two specific characteristics to employ TFA. First, they should demonstrate a long history of systemic educational failure and, as a result, low levels of educational attainment amongst local adults. Second, partner communities should be too isolated from other areas to have access to alternative labour pools, or they should be surrounded by communities with similarly deficient levels of human capital. By concentrating TFA in these types of areas, policy makers could use it to benefit from the organisation’s ability to place teachers in the regions whose teacher labour markets are least responsive to policies intended to redistribute a state’s aggregate teacher labour supply. Put in economic terms, policy makers ought to capitalise on TFA’s comparative advantage, namely, on its ability to place corps members in the

communities where no other potential teachers exist and where no current teachers are willing to work.

Within these isolated rural communities, the findings of this research would suggest that TFA should expand up to the point that corps members hold all posts that would otherwise be filled by under-qualified individuals working on emergency licences. Though this allows extensive TFA growth in the short term—a pattern that may cause concern of long-term dependency on TFA—it also provides the foundation for a long-term TFA ‘exit’ strategy, such as a complementary GYO teacher training programme, which could guard against TFA employment as a long-term crutch. Thus, earlier evidence would support plans for rather significant concentration of corps members in the short term, but only as a means to providing some long-term solution that allows districts to develop and maintain a high-quality local teacher labour supply.

TFA is not a cure-all solution for the inequitable distribution of high-quality teachers throughout the United States; indeed, there may be many instances where this programme is not an appropriate match for a local community’s particular education needs. Nevertheless, TFA appears to offer a targeted approach to staffing some of the most isolated and poorly educated rural communities. By identifying these communities, policy makers could capitalise on TFA’s unique abilities, providing both a short-term fix and a foundation for more long-term reform.

Clearly, the discussions above do not provide any definitive answers to the TFA debate; quite to the contrary, they are meant to trigger new types of research and debate. More specifically, they are meant to demonstrate the value of a more

comprehensive, contextually orientated approach to examining the merits of TFA partnerships, specifically within rural communities. If education researchers were to place more emphasis on such an approach, they could provide some much needed clarity within the polarised debates that have surrounded recent TFA growth.

9.4 Closing thoughts and a call for future research

Standing at the intersection of two different academic fields, this research sheds light on the need for several different types of future research. First and foremost, the analysis has centred on an examination of TFA, considering its particular roles and responsibilities within the rural-specific context of the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Second, this research also contributes to the existing recruitment and retention literature. Numerous researchers have bemoaned the lack of rural-specific teacher recruitment and retention strategies; to date, there have been relatively few studies of those strategies suited to the needs and resources of rural schools, and even fewer that address the needs and resources of particular *types* of rural regions (rural Southern communities versus rural Northeastern communities, rural agricultural communities versus rural coal-mining communities, etc.). Extensive additional research is needed to better understand the teacher recruitment and retention strategies suited to particular types of rural communities throughout the United States.

And finally, there is need for research that further explores the intersection of these two academic fields, asking what outcomes might be expected when TFA interacts with other teacher recruitment and retention strategies. This analysis considered the theoretical outcomes of combining TFA with GYO training programmes. Building on this preliminary exploration, future research should ask if TFA could complement other teacher recruitment and/or retention strategies to produce mutually

advantageous outcomes for each programme, and conversely, if there are any programmes that should not be implemented in a TFA partner site, lest each undermine the efficacy of the other. By identifying the recruitment strategies that provide the best (or worst) complement to TFA in a hard-to-staff area, researchers could provide some much needed direction for state policy makers and local school leaders trying to craft a multi-pronged approach to filling teacher vacancies.

It is important to note that future research must incorporate the varied perspectives of TFA, teacher certification, and education reform. This research project has been anchored in the claim that academics' understanding of TFA must be contextualised by the history, needs, and social structures of each specific partner community.

Towards this end, future research of TFA not only should be focused on specific geographic regions (for example, the rural South), but also characterised by a plurality of research perspectives. Additionally, academics should find a way to engage with local-level superintendents and school principals throughout the research process; in doing so, they could more effectively align their research goals and methods with the realities community-level practitioners encounter as they decide if and how to engage with TFA. As far as these standards are achieved, researchers can develop a more sensitive body of literature that is capable of providing school leaders with tangible evidence and direction.

Since its inception in 1990, TFA has been mired in an increasingly polemic debate, one that threatens to move beyond critical discussion and towards a divisive rhetoric that distracts all parties from the larger issues at hand. As such, it will be up to researchers to ensure that it is fact—and not politic—that provides the central thrust

of this debate in coming years. By providing a more comprehensive, multi-faceted exploration of the issues surrounding TFA, researchers may keep this debate in focus and, in doing so, ensure that the true mission of TFA is eventually attained: ‘One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.’

-Bibliography-

Bibliography

- About NEA*. (2010). Available from: <<http://www.nea.org/home/2580.htm>>. Accessed 30-Mar-2010.
- AFT: Key Issues*. (2010). American Federation of Teachers. [Online]. Available from: *About Us*. (2006). New York, NY: Teach For America. <<http://www.aft.org/issues/>>. Accessed 27-Mar-2010.
- Allen, S.G., Clark, R.L. and McDermed, A.A. (1993). Pensions, bonding, and lifetime jobs. *Journal of Human Resources*, 28 (3), pp. 463-481.
- Anderson, B. (2009). *Analyzing the Impact of Education Reforms on the Achievement Gap: an Analysis of Teach For America*. Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.
- Andrews, D.H. and Goodson, L.A. (1980). A comparative analysis of models of instructional design. *Journal of instructional development*, 3 (4), pp. 2-16.
- Angrist, J.D. and Guryan, J. (2004). Teacher testing, teacher education, and teacher characteristics. *American Economic Review*, 94 (2), pp. 241-246.
- Antos, J.R. and Rosen, S. (1975). Discrimination in the Market for Public School Teachers. *Journal of Econometrics*, 3 (2), pp. 123-150.
- Arias, J. and Scafidi, B. (2009). When Does Teacher Licensure Make Sense? *The BE Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 9 (1), pp. 1-37.
- Arkansas*. (2010). US Department of Education. [Online]. Available from: <<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/state-profiles/arkansas.pdf>>. Accessed 28-Mar-2010.
- Bachmann, D., Elfrink, J. and Vazzana, G. (1996). Tracking the progress of e-mail vs. snail-mail. *Marketing Research*, 8, pp. 31-35.
- Bacolod, M.P. (2007). Do alternative opportunities matter? The role of female labor markets in the decline of teacher quality. *The review of economics and statistics*, 89 (4), pp. 737-751.
- Baird, R.N. and Landon, J.H. (1972). The Effects of Collective Bargaining on Public School Teachers' Salaries: Comment. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 25 (3), pp. 410-417.
- Baker, B.D. and Dickerson, J.L. (2006). Charter Schools, Teacher Labor Market Deregulation, and Teacher Quality: Evidence From the Schools and Staffing Survey. *Educational Policy*, 20 (5), pp. 752-778.
- Baker, W.D. (1991). *Minority Settlement in the Mississippi River Counties of the Arkansas Delta, 1870-1930*. Little Rock, AR: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.
- Baker-Doyle, K. (2010). Beyond the Labor Market Paradigm: A Social Network Perspective on Teacher Recruitment and Retention. *Arizona State University education policy analysis archives*, 18 (26).
- Ball, S.J. (1999). Labour, learning and the economy: a 'policy sociology' perspective. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 29 (2), pp. 195-206.
- Ball, S.J. (1997). Policy sociology and critical social research: a personal review of recent education policy and policy research. *British Educational Research Journal*, 23 (3), pp. 257-274.
- Ball, S.J. (1994a). *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach*. Open University Press Milton Keynes, England.
- Ball, S.J. (1994b). Some reflections on policy theory: a brief response to Hatcher and Troyna. *Journal of Education Policy*, 9 (2), pp. 171-182.

- Ball, S.J. (1993). What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, 13 (2), pp. 10-17.
- Ball, S.J. (1990). *Politics and policy making in education: Explorations in policy sociology*. New York: Routledge.
- Ball, S.J. and Bowe, R. (1992). *Reforming education and changing schools: Case studies in policy sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Ballou, D. and Podgursky, M. (1998). Teacher recruitment and retention in public and private schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17 (3), pp. 393-417.
- Ballou, D. and Podgursky, M. (1997). *Teacher Pay and Teacher Quality*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. UpJohn Institute for Employment Research.
- Barley, Z. and Brigham, N. (2008). *Preparing teachers to teach in rural schools*. Washington, DC: Regional Education Laboratory.
- Barnett, C. and Monda-Amaya, L.E. (1998). Principals' knowledge of and attitudes toward inclusion. *Remedial and Special Education*, 19 (3), pp. 181.
- Barro, S.M. (1992). Models for projecting teacher supply, demand, and quality: An assessment of the state of the art. In *Teacher supply, demand, and quality: policy issues, models, and data bases: proceedings of a conference.*, ed. Boe, Erling E., and Dorothy M. Gilford, Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, pp. 129-209.
- Batteson, C. and Ball, S.J. (1995). Autobiographies and Interviews as Means of 'Access' to Elite Policy Making in Education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 43 (2), pp. 201-216.
- Baugh, W.H. and Stone, J.A. (1982). Mobility and Wage Equilibration in the Educator Labor Market. *Economics of Education Review*, 2 (3), pp. 253-274.
- Baumol, W.J. and Blinder, A.S. (2008). *Microeconomics: principles and policy*. 11th Edition. ed. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Becker, G.S. (1983). A theory of competition among pressure groups for political influence. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 98 (3), pp. 371-400.
- Becker, G.S. (1962). Investment in human capital: a theoretical analysis. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 70 (S5), pp. 9-49.
- Beckett, T.R. (2010). *Teacher recruitment and retention in a hard-to-staff, at-risk, rural school district in Southeast South Carolina that serves high populations of children of poverty*. Capella University.
- Behling, O., Labovitz, G. and Gainer, M. (1968). College recruiting: A theoretical base. *Personnel Journal*, 47 (1), pp. 13-19.
- Bempah, E.O. (1994). An Econometric Analysis of Teacher Mobility. *Economics of education review*, 13 (1), pp. 69-77.
- Benner, A.D. (2000). *The cost of teacher turnover*. Austin, TX: Texas Center for Educational Research.
- Berger, M.C. and Toma, E.F. (1994). Variation in state education policies and effects on student performance. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 13 (3), pp. 477-491.
- Bernard, H.R. (2000). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Berry, B. (2004). Recruiting and retaining “highly qualified teachers” for hard-to-staff schools. *NASSP Bulletin*, 88 (638), pp. 5.
- Berry, B. (2001). No Shortcuts to Preparing Good Teachers. *Educational Leadership*, 58 (8), pp. 32-36.

- Berry, B., Noblit, G.W. and Hare, R.D. (1985). A qualitative critique of teacher labor market studies. *The Urban Review*, 17 (2), pp. 98-110.
- Boal, W.M. (2000). *The effects of minimum salaries on employment of teachers*. paper ed.
- Boal, W.M. and Ransom, M.R. (1997). Monopsony in the labor market. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 35 (1), pp. 86-112.
- Boardman, A.E., Darling-Hammond, L. and Mullin, S.P. (1982). A Framework for the Analysis of Teachers. *Economics of Education Review*, 2 (2), pp. 127-155.
- Boulding, K.E. (1956). General systems theory-the skeleton of science. *Management science*, 2 (3), pp. 197-208.
- Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*. New York: Routledge.
- Boyd, D., Goldhaber, D., Lankford, H. and Wyckoff, J. (2007). The effect of certification and preparation on teacher quality. *The Future of children*, 17 (1), pp. 45-68.
- Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S. and Wyckoff, J. (2009). "Who Leaves?" *Teacher Attrition and Student Achievement*. Working Paper 23. ed. Washington, DC: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, The Urban Institute.
- Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S. and Wyckoff, J. (2006). How changes in entry requirements alter the teacher workforce and affect student achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, 1 (2), pp. 176-216.
- Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S. and Wyckoff, J. (2003). *The draw of home: How teachers' preferences for proximity disadvantage urban schools*. Working Paper 9953 ed. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S. and Wyckoff, J. (2002). *Do high-stakes test affect teachers' exit and transfer decisions? The case of the 4th grade test in New York State*. Mimeo ed. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Graduate School of Education.
- Brewer, D.J. (1996). Career paths and quit decisions: Evidence from teaching. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 14 (2), pp. 313-339.
- Bruner, J.S. (1977). *The process of education*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2001). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buckley, W. (1967). *Sociology and modern systems theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Burgess, R.G. (1984). *In the field: An introduction to field research*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Byrne, D.S. (2002). *Interpreting quantitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, Ltd.
- Cahuc, P. (2004). *Labor economics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Cain, G.G. (1976). The challenge of segmented labor market theories to orthodox theory: A survey. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 14 (4), pp. 1215-1257.
- Cameron McCarthy and Dimitriadis, G. (2000). Governmentality and the Sociology of Education: Media, Educational Policy and the Politics of Resentment. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 21 (2), pp. 169-185.
- Cannata, M. (2007a). Teacher applicants' perceptions of the structure of the teaching field. *Proceedings from the American Sociology Association*. New York, NY: The American Sociology Association.
- Cannata, M. (2007b). Teacher community in elementary charter schools. *education policy analysis archives*, 15 (11), pp. 29-38.

- Carnoy, M. and Loeb, S. (2002). Does external accountability affect student outcomes? A cross-state analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24 (4), pp. 305.
- Carroll, T.G. (2007). *The High Cost of Teacher Turnover*. Washington, DC: The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.
- Chambers, J. and Fowler Jr., W.J. (1995). *Public school teacher cost differences across the United States*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Charters Jr., W.W. (1970). Some factors affecting teacher survival in school districts. *American Educational Research Journal*, 7 (1), pp. 1-27.
- Clotfelter, C.T., Ladd, H. and Vigdor, J.L. (2007a). *How and Why Do Teacher Credentials Matter for Student Achievement?* Washington, DC: NBER.
- Clotfelter, C.T., Ladd, H. and Vigdor, J.L. (2007b). *Teacher credentials and student achievement in high school: A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects*. Washington, DC: NBER.
- Cobanoglu, C., Warde, B. and Moreo, P.J. (2001). A comparison of mail, fax and web-based survey methods. *International Journal of Market Research*, 43 (4), pp. 441-452.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2003). Sometimes it's not about the money. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54 (5), pp. 371-375.
- Cockburn, A. (2004). *Recruiting and retaining teachers: Understanding why teachers teach*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Collins, T. (1999). Attracting and retaining teachers in rural areas (ERIC Digest). Charleston, WV: *ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools*. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED438152. Retrieved from http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed438152.html
- Common Core of Data*. (2011). National Center for Education Statistics. [Online]. Available from <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/pub_overview.asp>. Accessed 14-Apr-2011.
- Conlon, J.R. and Kimenyi, M.S. (1991). Attitudes towards race and poverty in the demand for private education: The case of Mississippi. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 20 (2), pp. 5-22.
- Connolly, P., (2007). *Quantitative data analysis in education: a critical introduction using SPSS*. London: Routledge.
- Corcoran, S.P., Evans, W.N. and Schwab, R.M. (2004). Changing labor-market opportunities for women and the quality of teachers, 1957-2000. *American Economic Review*, 94 (2), pp. 230-235.
- Crutchfield, L.R. and Grant, H.M.L. (2007). *Forces for good: The six practices of high-impact nonprofits*. Jossey-Bass.
- Currie, J. (1991). Employment determination in a unionized public-sector labor market: the case of Ontario's school teachers. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 9 (1), pp. 45-66.
- Dalton, H. (1932). *The principles of public finance*. London: Routledge.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda. (2009). "Educational Opportunity and Alternative Certification: New Evidence and New Questions," Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education Policy Brief. *A SCOPE Policy Brief*, .
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000a). Reforming teacher preparation and licensing: Debating the evidence. *The Teachers College Record*, 102 (1), pp. 28-56.

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000b). *Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand, and Standards: How We Can Ensure a Competent, Caring, and Qualified Teacher for Every Child*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching & America.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). What Matters Most: A Competent Teacher for Every Child. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78 (3), pp. 193-201.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1990). Teaching and knowledge: Policy issues posed by alternate certification for teachers. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 67 (3), pp. 123-154.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D.J., Gatlin, S.J. and Heilig, J.V. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach For America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13 (42), pp. 1-48.
- Darling-Hammond, L. and Sykes, G. (2003). Wanted: A national teacher supply policy for education: The right way to meet the “highly qualified teacher” challenge. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 11 (3).
- Decker, P.T., Mayer, D.P. and Glazerman, S. (2004). *The effects of Teach For America on students: Findings from a national evaluation*. Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison. Institute for Research on Poverty.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research*. Third Edition ed. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Digest of Education Statistics*. (1991). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Dillman, D.A. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. 4th ed. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Dillman, D.A., Christenson, J.A., Carpenter, E.H. and Brooks, R.M. (1974). Increasing mail questionnaire response: A four state comparison. *American Sociological Review*, 39 (5), pp. 744-756.
- Doeringer, P.B. and Piore, M.J. (1971). *Internal labor markets and manpower analysis*. Lexington, MA: Heath Lexington Books.
- Dolton, P. (1996). Modelling the Labour Market for Teachers: Some Lessons from the UK. *Education Economics*, 4 (2), pp. 187-205.
- Dolton, P. and Van der Klaauw, W. (1995a). Teaching salaries and teacher retention. In *Assessing Educational Practices: the contribution of economics.*, ed. R.R. Nelson, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 239-272.
- Dolton, P. and Van der Klaauw, W. (1995b). Leaving teaching in the UK: A duration analysis. *The Economic Journal*, 105 (429), pp. 431-444.
- Dolton, P.J. (2006). Teacher supply. In *Handbook of the Economics of Education.*, eds. E.A. Hanushek and. Welch, Cambridge, MA: Elsevier, pp. 1079-1161.
- Dolton, P.J. (1990). The Economics of UK Teacher Supply: The Graduate's Decision. *The Economic Journal*, 100 (400), pp. 91-104.
- Donaldson, M.L. (2008). Teach For America teachers' careers: Whether, when, and why they leave low-income schools and the teaching profession. *Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, ed. American Educational Research Association, pp. 1.
- Donaldson, M.L. and Johnson, S. (2011). Teach For America teachers: How long do the teach? Why do they leave? *Education week online magazine Phi Delta Kappan*. <<http://www.edweek.org/>> Accessed 20 July 2012.
- Downs, A. (1957). An economic theory of political action in a democracy. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 65 (2), pp. 135-150.

- Eberts, R.W. and Stone, J.A. (1985). Wages, fringe benefits, and working conditions: an analysis of compensating differentials. *Southern Economic Journal*, 52 (1), pp. 274-280.
- Eckes, S.E. (2006). Barriers to Integration in the Mississippi Delta: Could Charter Schools Be the New Vehicle for Desegregation? *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 6 (1), pp. 15-30.
- Ehrenberg, R.G. and Brewer, D.J. (1995). Did teachers' verbal ability and race matter in the 1960s? Coleman revisited. *Economics of Education Review*, 14 (1), pp. 1-21.
- Ehrenberg, R.G. and Brewer, D.J. (1994). Do schools and teacher characteristics matter? Evidence from high school and beyond. *Economics of Education Review*, 13 (1), pp. 1-17.
- Eide, E., Goldhaber, D. and Brewer, D. (2004). The teacher labour market and teacher quality. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 20 (2), pp. 230-244.
- Elazar, D.J. (1972). *American federalism: A view from the states*. Washington, DC: Crowell.
- Eppley, K. (2009). Rural schools and the highly qualified teacher provision of No Child Left Behind: A critical policy analysis. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 24 (4), pp. 24-24.
- Evans, B.R. (2010). Teacher quality, content knowledge, and self-efficacy in one mathematics Teach For America cohort. *Northeastern Educational Research Association Annual Conference 2010*. Boston, MA: Northeastern Educational Research Association.
- Faciance, V. (2009). *South Louisiana, Mississippi Delta to get influx of Teach For America teachers next fall*. New Orleans, LA: The Times-Picayune.
- Farkas, S., Johnson, J. and Foleno, T. (2000). *A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why. A Report from Public Agenda*. New York, NY: Public Agenda.
- Farr, S. (2010). *Teaching as Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher's Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Feistritzer, C.E. (2005). *Profile of alternate route teachers*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Information.
- Feng, Li (2005). "Hire Today, Gone Tomorrow: The Determinants of Attrition Among Public School Teachers." Unpublished Manuscript. Tallahassee: Florida State University Press.
- Ferguson, R.F. (1991). Paying for public education: New evidence on how and why money matters. *Harvard Journal of Legislation*, 28 (2), pp. 465-468.
- Ferguson, R.F. and Ladd, H.F. (1996). *How and why money matters: An analysis of Alabama schools*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.
- Feyerick, D. and Steffen, S. (28 May 2010). *Teaching corps attracts recent graduates*. CNN.
- Fink, A. (2010). *Conducting research literature reviews: From internet to paper*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Finn, C.E., Finn Jr., C.E., Manno, B.V. and Vanourek, G. (2001). *Charter schools in action: Renewing public education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Flyer, F. and Rosen, S. (1997). The new economics of teachers and education. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 15 (S1), pp. 104-139.
- Fowler Jr., W.J. and Monk, D.H. (2001). *A Primer for Making Cost Adjustments in Education: An Overview*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

- Freeman, R.B. (1972). *Labor economics*. Second edition ed. Princeton, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Routledge Publishing Co.
- Gage, H. (2010). *Personal Communication*.
- Gellerman, S. (1964). *Motivation and productivity*. New York, NY: American Management Association.
- Gillers, G. (2006). *The Inside Scoop on Teach For America*. New York, NY: Current Magazine.
- Glaser Barney, G. and Strauss Anselm, L. (1999). *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Third edition ed. Rutgers, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Glass, G.V. (2008). *Alternative certification of teachers*. Boulder, CO: Education and the Public Interest Center, Education Policy Research Unit.
- Glazerman, S., Mayer, D. and Decker, P. (2006). Alternative routes to teaching: The impacts of Teach For America on student achievement and other outcomes. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 25 (1), pp. 75-96.
- Goldhaber, D. (2006). *Teacher pay reforms: The political implications of recent research*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.
- Goldhaber, D. (2002). The mystery of good teaching. *Education Next*, 2 (1), pp. 50-55.
- Goldhaber, D., Destler, K. and Player, D. (2009). Teacher labor markets and the perils of using hedonics to estimate compensating differentials in the public sector. *Economics of Education Review*, 29 (1), pp. 1-17.
- Goldhaber, D.D. and Brewer, D.J. (2001). Evaluating the evidence on teacher certification: A rejoinder. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23 (1), pp. 79-86.
- Goldhaber, D.D. and Brewer, D.J. (1996). *Evaluating the effect of teacher degree level on educational performance*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Gorard, S., See, B.H., Smith, E. and White, P. (2006). *Teacher supply: The key issues*. London: Continuum.
- Gorard, S. (2008). *Quantitative research in education*. London: London : SAGE.
- Gorard, S. (2003). *Quantitative methods in social science*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Goyder, J. (1985). Face-to-face interviews and mailed questionnaires: The net difference in response rate. *Public opinion quarterly*, 49 (2), pp. 234-252.
- Green, B. (2009). *Spaces and Places: The NSW Rural (Teacher) Education Project*. Centre for Information Studies.
- Greenberg, D. and McCall, J. (1974). Teacher mobility and allocation. *Journal of Human Resources*, 9 (4), pp. 480-502.
- Greenwald, R., Hedges, L.V. and Laine, R.D. (1996). The effect of school resources on student achievement. *Review of Educational Research*, 66 (3), pp. 361-396.
- Grissmer, D. and Kirby, S. (1997). Teacher turnover and teacher quality. *The Teachers College Record*, 99 (1), pp. 45-56.
- Gritz, R.M. and Theobald, N.D. (1996). The effects of school district spending priorities on length of stay in teaching. *Journal of Human Resources*, 31 (3), pp. 477-512.

- Guarino, C.M., Santibanez, L. and Daley, G.A. (2006). Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 76 (2), pp. 173.
- Gustman, A.L. and Clement, M.O. (1977). Teachers' Salary Differentials and Equality of Educational Opportunity. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 31 (4), pp. 61-70.
- Ham, C. (1985). *Policy process in the modern capitalist state*. Brighton: Harvester Press.
- Hammer, P.C., Hughes, G., McClure, C., Reeves, C. and Salgado, D. (2005). Rural Teacher Recruitment and Retention Practices: A Review of the Research Literature, National Survey of Rural Superintendents, and Case Studies of Programs in Virginia. *Appalachia Educational Laboratory at Edvantia*, pp. 1-32.
- Hannaway, J. and Bischoff, K. (2005). Philanthropy and labor market reform in education: The case of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and Teach For America. *Proceedings of the American Enterprise Institute Conference, 'With the Best of Intentions: Lessons Learned in K-12 Education Philanthropy*, ed. American Enterprise Institute Conference, Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, pp. 1.
- Hanushek, E.A. (1997). Assessing the effects of school resources on student performance: An update. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis*, 19 (2), pp. 301-308.
- Hanushek, E.A. (1992). The trade-off between child quantity and quality. *Journal of Political Economy*, 100(1), pp. 84-117.
- Hanushek, E.A. (1989). The impact of differential expenditures on school performance. *Educational researcher*, 18 (4), pp. 45-51.
- Hanushek, E.A. (1986). The economics of schooling: Production and efficiency in public schools. *Journal of economic literature*, 24 (3), pp. 1141-1177.
- Hanushek, E.A., Kain, J.F., O'Brien, D.M. and Rivkin, S.G. (2005). *The market for teacher quality*. Washington, DC: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Hanushek, E.A., Kain, J.F. and Rivkin, S.G. (2004). Why public schools lose teachers. *Journal of Human Resources*, 39 (2), pp. 326-371.
- Hanushek, E.A. and Luque, J.A. (2000). Smaller classes, lower salaries? The effects of class size on teacher labor markets. In *Using what we know: A review of the research on implementing class-size reduction initiatives for state and local policymakers.*, eds. S.W.M. Laine and J.G. Ward, Oak Brook: IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, pp. 35-51.
- Hanushek, E.A. and Pace, R.R. (1995). Who chooses to teach (and why)? *Economics of Education Review*, 14 (2), pp. 101-117.
- Hanushek, E.A. and Rivkin, S.G. (2006). Teacher quality. In *Handbook of the Economics of Education.*, eds. E.A. Hanushek and F. Welch, Cambridge, MA: Elsevier, pp. 1051-1075.
- Hanushek, E.A., Rivkin, S.G., Figlio, D. and Jacob, B. (2010). Generalizations about using value-added measures of teacher quality. *American Economic Review*, 100 (2), pp. 267-271.
- Hanushek, E.A., Rivkin, S.G., Rothstein, R. and Podgursky, M. (2004). How to improve the supply of high-quality teachers. *Brookings papers on education policy*. The Brookings Institution, pp. 7.

- Hare, D. and Heap, J.L. (2001). Effective Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategies in the Midwest: Who Is Making Use of Them? Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Education Lab.
- Harris, D.N. and Adams, S.J. (2007). Understanding the level and causes of teacher turnover: A comparison with other professions. *Economics of Education Review*, 26 (3), pp. 325-337.
- Harris, D.N. and Sass, T.R. (2010). Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 75 (7), pp. 798-812.
- Haselkorn, D. (1997). *Tackling America's teacher deficit*. Education Week on the Web. [Online]. Available from <<http://www.edweek.org/ew/vol-17/02hasel.hl17>>. Accessed 2-Apr-2010.
- Hatcher, R. and Troyna, B. (1994). The 'policy cycle': a ball by ball account. *Journal of Education Policy*, 9 (2), pp. 155-170.
- Heale, P.A.G. (1993). *Improving schools from within: school-based inset programmes for professional development*. Harlow: Longman Information and Reference.
- Heberlein, T.A. and Baumgartner, R. (1978). Factors affecting response rates to mailed questionnaires: A quantitative analysis of the published literature. *American Sociological Review*, 43, pp. 447-462.
- Heckman, J.J. and Singer, B. (2009). *Longitudinal analysis of labor market data*. Second edition ed. Washington, DC: National Center for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).
- Hedges, L.V., Laine, R.D. and Greenwald, R. (1994). Does money matter? A meta-analysis of studies of the effects of differential school inputs on student outcomes. *Educational Researcher*, 23 (3), pp. 5-14.
- Henderson, A. (2010). *Community Organizing to Rethink the Teacher Pipeline: The Grow Your Own Teacher Movement in Chicago*. Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University.
- Henke, R., Zahn, L. and Carroll, D. (2001). *Attrition of new teachers among recent college graduates*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Henry, M. (1993). What is policy? A response to Stephen Ball. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 14 (1), pp. 102-105.
- Herrnstein, R.J., Loewenstein, G.F., Prelec, D. and Vaughan, W. (1993). Utility maximization and melioration: Internalities in individual choice. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 6, pp. 149-185.
- Hess, F.M. (2009). Revitalizing Teacher Education by Revisiting Our Assumptions About Teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60 (5), pp. 450-457.
- Hill, M.J. and Hupe, P.L. (2002). *Implementing public policy: governance in theory and practice*. New York: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hirsch, E., Koppich, J. and Knapp, M. (2001). *Revisiting What States are Doing to Improve the Quality of Teaching*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.
- Hoddinott, S.N. and Bass, M.J. (1986). The Dillman Total Design Survey Method. *Canadian Family Physician*, 32 (November), pp. 2366-2368.
- Hodges, G.M. (2005). *Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP): An analysis of spending and academic performance in Mississippi school districts*. PhD dissertation from Mississippi State University.
- Hoff, D.J. (2005). Governors Seek New Teacher-Pay Methods. *Education Week*, 24 (21), pp. 22-28.

- Holloway, D.L. (2002). Using research to ensure quality teaching in rural schools. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*. Winter. 21X12. Vol, 17 (3), pp. 138-153.
- Holmes, A.B. (2008). Union activity and teacher salary structure. *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, 18 (1), pp. 79-85.
- Hoxby, C.M. and Leigh, A. (2004). Pulled away or pushed out? Explaining the decline of teacher aptitude in the United States. *American Economic Review*, 94 (2), pp. 236-240.
- Hull, J.W. and Representative, R. (2004). *Filling in the gap, solving teacher shortages: Teacher recruitment, licensure and retention in southern states*. Atlanta: Southern Office: The Council of State Governments.
- Hunt, J. (2002). Unraveling the “teacher shortage” problem: Teacher retention is the key. *A symposium of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and NCTAF State Partners*, ed. T. Carroll, Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, pp. 1.
- Hussar, W.J. (2002). *Predicting the need for newly hired teachers in the United States to 2008-09*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Ingersoll, R. and Kralik, J.M. (2004). *The impact of mentoring on teacher retention: What the research says*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.
- Ingersoll, R. and Smith, T.M. (2004). Do Teacher Induction and Mentoring Matter? *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), pp. 28-40.
- Ingersoll, R.M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38 (3), pp. 499-534.
- Ingersoll, R.M. (1999). The problem of underqualified teachers in American secondary schools. *Educational Researcher*, 28 (2), pp. 26-37.
- Ingersoll, R.M. and Smith, T.M. (2003). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership*, 60 (8), pp. 30-33.
- Israel, M. (2006). *Research ethics for social scientists: between ethical conduct and regulatory compliance*.
- Jacobson, L. (2006). Teacher-Pay Incentives Popular but Unproven. *Education Week*, 6 (5), pp. 1-20.
- Jang, E.E., McDougall, D.E., Pollon, D., Herbert, M. and Russell, P. (2008). Integrative mixed methods data analytic strategies in research on school success in challenging circumstances. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2 (3), pp. 221-243.
- Jimerson, L. (2004). The Devil is in the Details: Rural-Sensitive Best Practices for Accountability Under No Child Left Behind. *Rural School and Community Trust*, Washington, DC: The Rural School and Community Trust.
- Jimerson, L. (2003). The Competitive Disadvantage: Teacher Compensation in Rural America. Policy Brief.
- Johnson, J. and Strange, M. (2005). *Why Rural Matters 2005: The Facts about Rural Education in the 50 States*. Arlington, VA: Rural School and Community Trust.
- Johnson, M.B. and Mack, D.L. (1978). Monopsony in the Market for Public School Teachers: Empirically: A Reply. *State & Local Government Review*, 10 (3), pp. 112-114.
- Johnson, S.M., Kardos, S.M., Kauffman, D., Liu, E. and Donaldson, M.L. (2004). The support gap: New teachers' early experiences in high-income and low-income schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 12 (61), pp. 1-25.

- Johnson, S.M. and Birkeland, S. E. (2003). Pursuing a ‘Sense of Success’: New Teachers Explain Their Career Decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40 (3), pp. 581-617.
- Kadushin, C. (2006). *The American intellectual elite*. Second edition ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Kane, T.J., Rockoff, J.E. and Staiger, D.O. (2008.) What does certification tell us about teacher effectiveness? Evidence from New York City. *Economics of Education Review*, 27 (6), pp. 615-631.
- Kane, T.J., Rockoff, J.E. and Staiger, D.O. (2006). *What does certification tell us about teacher effectiveness? Evidence from New York City*. National Bureau for Economic Research Working Paper 12155.
- Kardos, S.M., Johnson, S.M., Peske, H.G., Kauffman, D. and Liu, E. (2001). Counting on colleagues: New teachers encounter the professional cultures of their schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37 (2), pp. 250-290.
- Kelly, B. (2006) *Staying power: Teach For America alumni in public education*. Washington, DC: Education Sector.
- Kenny, L.W. and Denslow, D.A. (1980). Compensating differentials in teachers' salaries. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 7 (2), pp. 198-207.
- Kirby, S. and Grissmer, D. (1993). Teacher Attrition: Theory, Evidence, and Suggested Policy Options. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 364 533).
- Kirby, S.N. and Grissmer, D.W. (1983). Teacher attrition: Theory, evidence, and suggested policy options. *World Bank/Harvard Institute for International Development Seminar on Policies Affecting Learning Outcomes Through Impacts on Teachers, Cambridge, Mass.*
- Kittleson, M.J. (1995). An assessment of the response rate via the postal service and e-mail. *Health values*, 19, pp. 27-27.
- Klagholz, L. (2001). State policy and effective alternative teacher certification. *Education Digest*, 67 (1), pp. 33-36.
- Kogan, M. (2000). Higher education communities and academic identity. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 54 (3), pp. 207-216.
- Labaree, D. (2010). Teach For America: Heads they win, tails we lose. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61 (1-2), pp. 48.
- Laczko-Kerr, I. and Berliner, D.C. (2002). The effectiveness of “Teach For America” and other under-certified teachers on student academic achievement: A case of harmful public policy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 10 (37), pp. 480-727.
- Ladd, H.F. (2007). Teacher labor markets in developed countries. *The Future of Children*, 17 (1), pp. 201-217.
- Lakdawalla, D. (2002). Quantity over Quality. *Education Next*, 2 (3), pp. 66-72.
- Lakdawalla, D. (2001). *The declining quality of teachers*. NBER Working Papers 8263, National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Landon, J.H. and Baird, R.N. (1971). Monopsony in the market for public school teachers. *The American Economic Review*, 61 (5), pp. 966-971.
- Lankford, H., Wyckoff, J. and Papa, F. (2000). *The Labor Market for Public School Teachers: A Descriptive Analysis of New York State’s Teacher Workforce*. New York, NY: New York State Educational Finance Research Consortium.

- Lashway, L. (2003). Finding leaders for hard-to-staff schools. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management*, [Online]. Available from <<http://hdl.handle.net/1794/3234>>. Accessed 22-Apr-2011.
- Laszlo, E. (1972). *Introduction to systems philosophy: Toward a new paradigm of contemporary thought*. Second ed. Gordon & Breach Science Pub.
- Legler, R. (2002). The Impact of Alternative Certification in the Midwest. *Policy Issues*, (12), pp. 1-13.
- Leland, H.E. (1979). Quacks, lemons, and licensing: A theory of minimum quality standards. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 87 (6), pp. 1328-1346.
- Leonard, E. and Box, J.A.L. (2010). The Impact of Increased Funding for the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) on State Assigned School Accreditation Levels. *Online Submission*, p. 19.
- Leonard, L. and Leonard, P. (2003). The continuing trouble with collaboration: Teachers talk. *Current Issues in Education*, 6 (15), pp. 1-13.
- Levinson, A.M. (1988). Re-examining teacher preferences and compensating wages. *Economics of Education Review*, 7 (3), pp. 357-364.
- Lilienfeld, R. (1978). *The rise of systems theory: An ideological analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Wiley.
- Lingard, B. (1993). The changing state of policy production in education: some Australian reflections on the state of policy sociology. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 3 (1), pp. 25-47.
- Lipsky, D.B. and Drotning, J.E. (1973). The influence of collective bargaining on teachers' salaries in New York State. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 27 (4), pp. 18-35.
- Liu, E. and Johnson, S.M. (2006). New teachers' experiences of hiring: Late, rushed, and information-poor. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42 (3), pp. 324-360.
- Loeb, S. and Reininger, M. (2004). *Public Policy and Teacher Labor Markets. What We Know and Why It Matters*. Lansing, MI: The Education Policy Center.
- Luekens, M.T., Lyter, D.M., Fox, E.E. and Chandler, K. (2004). Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the Teacher Follow-up Survey, 2000-01 (NCES 2004-301). US Department of Education. *National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office*.
- Luizer, J. and Thornton, R. (1986). Concentration in the labor market for public school teachers. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 39 (4), pp. 573-584.
- Macdonald, D. (1999). Teacher attrition: A review of literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15 (8), pp. 835-848.
- Madda, C.L. and Schultz, B.D. (2009). (Re) Constructing Ideals of Multicultural Education Through Grow Your Own Teachers. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 11 (4), pp. 204-207.
- Madrian, B.C. (1994). Employment-Based Health Insurance and Job Mobility: Is There Evidence of Job-Lock? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 109 (1), pp. 27-54.
- Mahoney, J.T. (1992). The choice of organizational form: vertical financial ownership versus other methods of vertical integration. *Strategic Management Journal*, 13 (8), pp. 559-584.
- Maier, A. and Youngs, P. (2009). Teacher Preparation Programs--and Teacher Labor Markets: How Social Capital May Help Explain Teachers' Career Choices. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60 (4), pp. 393-407.

- Manski, C.F. (1987). Academic Ability, Earnings, and the Decision to Become a Teacher: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972. In *Public sector payrolls*, ed. D. Wise, Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press, pp. 291-324.
- Maxwell, J.A. (1998). Designing a qualitative study. *Handbook of applied social research methods*, pp. 69-100.
- McBride, P. (2002). It's not too late for non-education majors to teach. *Black Collegian*, [Online]. 32 (3), pp. 10 November 2009. Available from: <Retrieved from Academic Search Elite database>. Accessed 10-Nov-2009.
- McCall, J.J. (1974). *Teacher Mobility and Allocation*. Boston, MA: Rand Corp.
- McCarthy, C. and Dimitriadis, G. (2000). Governmentality and the sociology of education: Media, educational policy and the politics of resentment. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 21 (2), pp. 169-185.
- McClure, C. and Reeves, C. (2004). *Rural Teacher Recruitment and Retention Review of the Research and Practice Literature*. Charleston: Appalachia Educational Library.
- Medcalfe, S. and Thornton, R.J. (2006). Monopsony and teachers' salaries in Georgia. *Journal of Labor Research*, 27 (4), pp. 537-554.
- Mehta, R. and Sivadas, E. (1995). Comparing response rates and response content in mail versus electronic mail surveys. *Journal of the Market Research Society*. Vol, 37 (4), pp. 429-439.
- Merrifield, J. (1999). Monopsony power in the market for teachers: why teachers should support market-based education reform. *Journal of Labor Research*, 20 (3), pp. 377-391.
- Merritt, R.L. and Coombs, F.S. (1977). Politics and educational reform. *Comparative Education Review*, 21 (2), pp. 247-273.
- Meyer, J.W. and Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American journal of sociology*, 83 (2), pp. 340-363.
- Miller, J.G. (1955). Toward a general theory for the behavioral sciences. *American Psychologist*, 10 (9), pp. 513-531.
- Mississippi. (2010). U.S. Department of Education. [Online]. Available from <<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/state-profiles/mississippi.pdf>>. Accessed 28-Mar-2010.
- Mississippi Delta. (2010). Teach for America. [Online]. Available from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/about/regions/mississippi_delta.htm>. Accessed 8-Aug-2010.
- Mississippi Department of Education (2010). *Fiscal Year 2012 budget request: Legislative budget committee hearing*. Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Education.
- Mitchell, D.E. and Romero, L.S. (2010). The Politics and Practice of Alternative Teacher Certification. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46 (3), pp. 363.
- Monk, D.H. (2007). Recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers in rural areas. *The Future of Children*, 17 (1), pp. 155-174.
- Mont, D. and Rees, D.I. (1996). The influence of classroom characteristics on high school teacher turnover. *Economic inquiry*, 34 (1), pp. 152-167.
- Morrill, R.L. and Donaldson, O.F. (1972). Geographical perspectives on the history of black America. *Economic Geography*, 48 (1), pp. 1-23.
- Mulkey, D. (1993). *Education in the rural south: Policy issues and research needs*. Jackson, MS: Southern Rural Development Center.

- Murnane, R.J. (1996). Staffing the nation's schools with skilled teachers. Eds. E.A. Hanushek and D. Jorgenson, *Improving America's schools: The role of incentives*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, pp. 241-258.
- Murnane, R.J. (1984). Selection and survival in the teacher labor market. *The review of economics and statistics*, 66 (3), pp. 513-518.
- Murnane, R.J. (1981). Teacher mobility revisited. *Journal of Human Resources*, 16 (1), pp. 3-19.
- Murnane, R.J. (1975). *The Impact of School Resources on the Learning of Inner City Children*. Cambridge, MA: Balinger Publishing Company.
- Murnane, R.J. and Cohen, D.K. (1986). Merit Pay and the Evaluation Problem: Why Most Merit Pay Plans Fail and a Few Survive. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56 (1), pp. 1-17.
- Murnane, R.J. and Olsen, R.J. (1990). The effects of salaries and opportunity costs on length of stay in teaching: Evidence from North Carolina. *The Journal of human resources*, 25 (1), pp. 106-124.
- Murnane, R.J., Singer, J.D. and Willett, J.B. (1989). The influences of salaries and "opportunity costs" on teachers' career choices: Evidence from North Carolina. *Harvard Educational Review*, 59 (3), pp. 325-346.
- Murnane, R.J. and Steele, J.L. (2007). What is the problem? The challenge of providing effective teachers for all children. *The Future of children*, 17 (1), pp. 15-43.
- Murphy, P., DeArmond, M. and Guin, K. (2003). A national crisis or localized problems? Getting perspective on the scope and scale of the teacher shortage. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 11 (23).
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools *Issues Statement on Mississippi Charter School Law*. (2010). Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). *Public elementary and secondary school student enrollment and staff counts from the Common Corps of Data: School year 2009-2010*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- NEA Research. (2009). *Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2009 and Estimates of School Statistics 2010*. Atlanta, GA: National Association of Educators.
- Newman, C. and Thomas, K. (1999). Alternative Teacher Certification. ERIC Clearinghouse, pp. 1-18.
- Nurnberg, R. (22 March 2010). *Web Seminar: The Critical Need in the Mississippi Delta*. Teach For America.
- Osterling, J.P. and Buchanan, K. (2003). Tapping a Valuable Source for Prospective ESOL Teachers: Northern Virginia's Bilingual Paraeducator Career-Ladder School-University Partnership. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 27 (3), pp. 503-521.
- Owens, R.G. (2007). *Organizational behavior in education: adaptive leadership and school reform*. Boston, MA: Pearson Allyn and Bacon Publishing.
- Ozga, J. (1990). Policy research and policy theory: a comment on Fitz and Halpin. *Journal of Education Policy*, 5 (4), pp. 359-362.
- Palmaffy, T. (1999). Measuring the teacher quality problem. In *Better teacher, better schools*. Eds. M. Kanstoroom and J. Finn E., Washington, DC: The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, pp. 19-29.

- Parsons, B.D. (2003). *Alternative pathways to the classroom*. Masters of Education. University of North Carolina.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications.
- Peck, H.W. (1925). *Taxation and welfare*. New York: Macmillan.
- Perna, L.W., Gerald, D., Baum, E. and Milem, J. (2007). The status of equity for Black faculty and administrators in public higher education in the South. *Research in Higher Education*, 48 (2), pp. 193-228.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In Search of Subjectivity One's Own. *Educational Researcher*, 17 (7), pp. 17-21.
- Peter D. Hart Research Associates (2008). *Teaching as a second career*. Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.
- Phillips, R. (1998). The Politics of History: Some Methodological and Ethical Dilemmas in Elite-Based Research. *British Educational Research Journal*, 24 (1), pp. 5-19.
- Player, D. (2009). Monetary returns to academic ability in the public teacher labor market. *Economics of Education Review*, 28 (2), pp. 277-285.
- Plunkett, M. and Dyson, M. (2011). Becoming a Teacher and Staying One: Examining the Complex Ecologies Associated With Educating and Retaining New Teachers in Rural Australia? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36 (1), pp. 3.
- Podgursky, M., Monroe, R. and Watson, D. (2004). The academic quality of public school teachers: An analysis of entry and exit behavior. *Economics of Education Review*, 23 (5), pp. 507-518.
- Polachek, S.W. (1981). Occupational self-selection: A human capital approach to sex differences in occupational structure. *The review of economics and statistics*, 63 (1), pp. 60-69.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual review of sociology*, 24 (1), pp. 1-24.
- Prince, C.D. (2003). *Higher pay in hard-to-staff schools: The case for financial incentives*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Proffit, A.C., Sale, R.P., Alexander, A.E. and Andrews, R.S. (2004). The Appalachian Model Teaching Consortium: Preparing Teachers for Rural Appalachia. *Rural Educator*, 26, pp. 24-29.
- Ransom, M.R., Boal, W.M. and Beck, P.M. (1999). *Empirical Tests of Labor Monopsony: School Teachers in Missouri*. Manuscript ed.
- Rarick, K. (21 December 2010). *Teach For America Background Material*. Teach For America.
- Raymond, M., Fletcher, S.H. and Luque, J. (2001). *Teach For America: An evaluation of teacher differences and student outcomes in Houston, Texas*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University.
- Reeves, C. (2003). Implementing the No Child Left Behind Act: Implications for rural schools and districts. *Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Educational Library*.
- Reichardt, R.E. (2001). *Toward a comprehensive approach to teacher quality*. Denver, CO: Office of Educational Research and Improvement: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Ritter, G. (2006). *School Reform and School Funding in Arkansas*. Fayetteville, Arkansas: Office for Educational Policy, University of Arkansas.

- Rivkin, S.G., Hanushek, E.A. and Kain, J.F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73 (2), pp. 417-458.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Boston, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Rothstein, J. (2010). Teacher Quality in Educational Production: Tracking, Decay, and Student Achievement. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 125 (1), pp. 175-214.
- Rowan, B., Correnti, R. and Miller, R. (2002) What Large-Scale Survey Research Tells Us About Teacher Effects on Student Achievement: Insights from the Prospects Study of Elementary Schools. *The Teachers College Record*, 104 (8), pp. 1525-1567.
- Rubin, J. and Rubin, I. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Salisbury, D. (2010). *Saving Money and Improving Education: How School Choice Can Help States Reduce Education Costs*. Washington, D.C.: The Cato Institute.
- Sammons, P., Gu, Q., Day, C., and Ko, J. (2011). Exploring the impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes: Results from a study of academically improved and effective schools in England. *International Journal of Education management*, 25 (1), pp. 83-101.
- Scafidi, B., Sjoquist, D. and Stinebrickner, T.R. (2002). *Where do teachers go*. Mimeo ed. Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University.
- Schaefer, D.R. and Dillman, D.A. (1998). Development of a standard e-mail methodology: Results of an experiment. *Public opinion quarterly*, 62 (3), pp. 378-397.
- Schwartzbeck, T., Prince, C., Redfield, D., Morris, H. and Hammer, C. (2003). *How Are Rural Districts Meeting the Teacher Quality Requirements of No Child Left Behind?* Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL).
- Scott, C. (1961). Research on mail surveys. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (General)*, 124 (2), pp. 143-205.
- Scribner, J.P. and Heinen, E. (2009). Alternative Teacher Certification: A Program Theory Analysis. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 36 (2), pp. 19.
- Sheehan, K.B. and McMillan, S.J. (1999). Response variation in e-mail surveys: An exploration. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39 (4), pp. 45-54.
- Shinn, J.H. (1900). *History of Education in Arkansas*. Washington, DC: Government Print-off.
- Shouji, W. and Zhaoshan, Y. (2010). The Strategy for Rural Teacher Professional Development in America and its Inspiration. *Studies in Foreign Education*, 4.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text, and interaction*. Third edition ed. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Simon, H.A. (1995). Rationality in political behavior. *Political Psychology*, 16 (1), pp. 45-61.
- Sjaastad, L.A. (1962). The costs and returns of human migration. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 70 (S5), pp. 80-93.
- Skinner, E.A. (2011). Grow Your Own Teachers: Community-Based Change in Teacher Education. *Breaking the Mold of Preservice and Inservice Teacher Education: Innovative and Successful Practices for the Twenty-first Century*.
- Smith, C.B. (1997). Casting the net: Surveying an Internet population. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 3 (1), pp. 43-49.

- Smith, C.C. and Joshua, L.W. (2003). *Educating the masses: the unfolding history of Black school administrators in Arkansas, 1900-2000*. Little Rock: University of Arkansas Press.
- Sorensen, P., Young, J. and Mandzuk, D. (2005). Alternative routes into the teaching profession. *Interchange*, 36 (4), pp. 371-403.
- Sproull, L.S. (1986). Using electronic mail for data collection in organizational research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 29 (1), pp. 159-169.
- Stake, R. E. (2000). Case studies. *Handbook of qualitative research*, pp. 435-454.
- Stake, R.E. (1999). *The art of case study research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Stinebrickner, T.R. (2002). An analysis of occupational change and departure from the labor force: Evidence of the reasons that teachers leave. *Journal of Human Resources*, 37 (1), pp. 192-216.
- Stinebrickner, T.R. (2001). A dynamic model of teacher labor supply. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 19 (1), pp. 196-230.
- Stinebrickner, T.R. (1998a). An empirical investigation of teacher attrition. *Economics of Education Review*, 17 (2), pp. 127-136.
- Stinebrickner, T.R. (1998b). *Serially Correlated Wages in a Dynamic, Discrete Choice Model of Teacher Attrition*. Ontario, Canada: Economics Research Reports.
- Stoddard, C. (2005). Adjusting teacher salaries for the cost of living: The effect on salary comparisons and policy conclusions. *Economics of Education Review*, 24 (3), pp. 323-339.
- Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J.M. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Third edition ed. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Strauss, R.P. and Sawyer, E.A. (1986). Some new evidence on teacher and student competencies. *Economics of Education Review*, 5 (1), pp. 41-48.
- Strotz, R. (1955). Myopia and inconsistency in dynamic utility maximization. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 23(3), pp. 165-180.
- Sullivan, C.C. (2001). *Into the Classroom: Teacher Preparation, Licensure, and Recruitment. Elements of Teacher Effectiveness*. Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association.
- Swars, S.L., Meyers, B., Mays, L.C. and Lack, B. (2009). A Two-Dimensional Model of Teacher Retention and Mobility: Classroom Teachers and Their University Partners Take a Closer Look at a Vexing Problem. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60 (2), pp. 168.
- Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2010). *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. Sage Publications.
- Tatel, E.S. (1999). Teaching in under-resourced schools: the Teach For America example. *Theory into Practice*, 38 (1), pp. 37-45.
- Tatum, B.D. (2003). *"Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other conversations about race*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Taylor, L.L. (In press). *Competition and Teacher Pay*. Economic Inquiry.
- Teacher Salary Info. (2012). Earn More! Average Teacher Salaries by State and District. <<http://www.teachersalaryinfo.com/>>. Accessed 16-Jan-2012.
- Teaching in South Carolina. (2008). Terrace Rock Hill, SC: Center for Education Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement.
- Tell, C. (2001). Making Room for Alternative Routes. *Educational Leadership*, 58 (8), pp. 38-41.

- Temin, P. (2002). *Teacher quality and the future of America*. Cambridge, MA: NBER.
- Thornton, R.J. (1975). Monopsony and Teacher's Salaries: Some Contrary Evidence: Comment. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 28 (4), pp. 574-575.
- Tibbetts, K. (2006). *"Teach For America" and the quality of public education in target communities*. Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools–Research & Evaluation.
- Toder, E.J. (1972). The supply of public school teachers to an urban metropolitan area: A possible source of discrimination in education. *The review of economics and statistics*, 54 (4), pp. 439-443.
- Topel, R.H. (1986). Local labor markets. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 94 (S3), pp. 111-143.
- Toppo, G. (29 July 2009). *Teach For America: Elite corps or costing older teachers jobs?* USA Today.
- Tourangeau, M. (2003). Teach for America. *Graduate paper written for a Masters in Education, Grand Valley State University*. Learning to Give online archive. <learningtogive.org/papers/paper161.html> Accessed 20 July 2012.
- Torres, C.A. (1989). The capitalist state and public policy formation. Framework for a political sociology of educational policy making. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 10 (1), pp. 81-102.
- Trimble, S. (2001). The Teacher Applicant Pool: What Top Administrators Seek. *Principal Leadership*, 1 (7), pp. 44-47.
- Tsebelis, G. (1995). Decision making in political systems: Veto players in presidentialism, parliamentarism, multicameralism and multipartyism. *British Journal of Political Science*, 25 (3), pp. 289-325.
- Turner, S.E. (1998). The training of teachers: The changing degree output in the area of education. *Annual meeting of the Association of Public Policy and Management* New York, NY: The Association of Public Policy and Management.
- US Census Bureau (2010). *Public Education Finances, 2008*. Washington, DC: Government Division US Census Bureau.
- US Department of Agriculture (2010). *State Fact Sheets*. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture.
- US Department of Education (2010). *The Three Myths of High School Reform: Secretary Arne Duncan's Remarks at the College Board AP Conference*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.
- Vandenberghe, V. (2000). Leaving teaching in the French-speaking Community of Belgium: A duration analysis. *Education Economics*, 8 (3), pp. 221-239.
- Vedder, R. and Hall, J. (2000). Private school competition and public school teacher salaries. *Journal of Labor Research*, 21 (1), pp. 162-168.
- Vogt, W.P., Gardner, D.C., and Haeffele, L. W. (2012). *When to use what research design*. New York, NY: Guildford Press.
- Voke, H. (2003). Responding to the teacher shortage. In *Keeping Good Teachers*. Baltimore, MD: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Warren, K., Franklin, C. and Streeter, C.L. (1998). New directions in systems theory: Chaos and complexity. *Social work*, 43 (4).
- Weaver, W.T. (1983). *America's teacher quality problem: Alternatives for reform*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Weeks, S.B. (1912). *History of public school education in Arkansas*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

- Weingast, B.R., Shepsle, K.A. and Johnsen, C. (1981). The political economy of benefits and costs: A neoclassical approach to distributive politics. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 89 (4), pp. 642-664.
- White, S. (2008). *K-12 public school finance in Mississippi: A history and policy analysis*. Submitted for Honors towards the Degree of Bachelor of the Arts, University of Mississippi.
- Wieling, M. and Borghans, L. (2003). Discrepancies between Supply and Demand and Adjustment Processes in the Labour Market. *Labour*, 15 (1), pp. 33-56.
- Willis, R.J. and Rosen, S. (1979). Education and self-selection. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 87 (5), pp. 7-36.
- Wimberley, R.C. and Morris, L.V. (1996). *The Reference Book on Regional Well-Being: US Regions, the Black Belt, Appalachia*. Mississippi State, MS: Southern Rural Development Center.
- Winter, P.A., Ronau, R.N. and Munoz, M.A. (2004). Evaluating Urban Teacher Recruitment Programs: An Application of Private Sector Recruitment Theories. *Journal of school leadership*, 14 (1), pp. 20-32.
- Wooldridge, J. (2006). *Introductory econometrics: A modern approach*. Third ed. Mason, OH: Thomas Higher Education.
- Xu, Z., Hannaway, J. and Taylor, C. (2007). *The Effects of Teach For America in High School*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Young, I.P. and Heneman III, H.G. (1986). Predictors of Interviewee Reactions to the Selection Interview. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 19 (2), pp. 29-36.
- Young, I.P., Place, A.W., Rinehart, J.S., Jury, J.C. and Baits, D.F. (1997). Teacher recruitment: A test of the similarity-attraction hypothesis for race and sex. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 33 (1), pp. 86-106.
- Young, I.P. and Rinehart, J.S. Place, A.W. (1989). Theories for teacher selection: Objective, subjective and critical contact. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 5 (4), pp. 329-336.
- Zabalza, A. (1979a). The determinants of teacher supply. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 46 (1), pp. 131-147.
- Zabalza, A. (1979b). From shortage to surplus: the case of school teachers. *Applied Economics*, 11 (1), pp. 55-70.

-Appendices-

2A. A brief introduction to rational actor theory

Rational actor theory is essentially an argument that all individuals act so as to maximise their overall happiness or satisfaction (i.e. their utility). Thus, it is argued, macro-level outcomes can be understood by examining the incentive structures (i.e. the social context) that actors face when deciding how to behave or which option to choose. In this way, rational actor theory/utility maximisation theory is an extension of economics, mathematical statistics, and psychology that ‘predicts that the alternative will be selected which maximizes utility’ subject to the constraints of ‘“information costs” entailed in this search [for the maximising alternative], uncertainty about consequences of alternatives, and certain conceptual and measurement modifications, particularly with respect to costs and benefits’ (Merritt and Coombs, 1977, p. 261).

Though this theory provides the foundation of most economic research, the incentive structures and utility models of each individual are by no means limited to financial or monetary concerns. Indeed, a cornerstone to utility maximisation theory is the idea that individuals (and organisations) try to maximise their total utility along all vectors—including but not limited to familial, economic, and social factors. In this way, utility maximisation theory humanises the decision-taking process by expanding the driving motivations to include all aspects of an actor’s life. This allows us to explore complex human motivations—like love and family—through the lens of a very restricted, economic framework for analysis.¹²⁶ Merritt and Coombs (1977) highlight the merit of this approach within the context of education research:

¹²⁶ A more explicit handling of these complex human events will be handled in Subsection 4.2: Mechanisms of Utility Maximisation.

Because rational [utility maximisation] theories focus upon decision making in the narrow sense, they are more valuable for explaining when or why publics or groups become dissatisfied with school policy, how issues arise, what kinds of reforms can be successfully implemented, or in what ways new policy will affect the educational (or the political) system. (p.262)

Since this research is focussed on policy-based outcomes, it seems appropriate to give special attention to utility maximisation works that focus on the decision-making process and its outcomes in a political context. Simon (1995) explains that political utility maximisation theory ‘borrows the basic assumptions of neoclassical economics about the nature of human rationality and applies them to the explanation and prediction of behavior in the political domain’ (p.45).

Becker (1983) furthers this understanding as he notes the powerful explanatory potential utility maximisation theory holds for understanding the policy process and policy outcomes: ‘The economic approach to political behavior assumes that actual political choices are determined by the efforts of individuals and groups to further their own interests’ (p. 371). He goes on to explain that in political utility maximisation, individuals and groups compete for political influence; political equilibrium depends on the relative efficiency, power, and size of each group and the deadweight costs and benefits inherent in each group’s aims. Thus, Becker (1983) asserts that these groups and individuals will maximise their political utility by exerting themselves (in terms of time, energy, and money) until the marginal cost of political manoeuvring equals the marginal gain from conducting those manoeuvres.

3A. Stephen Ball's 'three spheres' within the Delta context

Undoubtedly, the networks and hierarchies that connect Mississippi and Arkansas policy makers to one another impact the ways in which these policy makers engage with TFA. As such, the goal of this section is to outline roughly the positions, roles, and responsibilities of relevant actors within each state's education policy network, giving particular attention to officials' connections to TFA and/or to the education reform agenda in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Ball and Bowe (1992) offer a means of structuring these policy considerations, offering three separate conceptual spheres—*influence*, *text production*, and *implementation*—to represent the complex interactions defining the education policy making process. Understanding how TFA interacts with policy makers in each of these three spheres will provide valuable insights as to when and how it has been able to impact state-level initiatives to reform the Delta teacher labour supply.

First, the 'influence' sphere represents any portion of the political process wherein different actors compete, cooperate, and negotiate with one another to determine which issues become legislative priorities. Essentially, individuals act within this sphere to establish which aspects of the Delta teacher shortages will be addressed through which types of teacher labour policies. The second sphere established in Bowe and Ball (1992) is that of 'text production'—the actual writing of legislative priorities into text. As soon as educational agendas have been established, policy makers must set their intentions into print, thus lending significant political power to those responsible for crafting the required legislative texts (Ball, 1990).

As the third sphere outlined by Bowe and Ball (1992), 'practice' refers to any and all matters concerned with the actual implementation of policy texts. In this way, there occurs yet another transformation as policy text is decoded and carried out by those responsible for the day-to-day management of local education systems. This causes further opportunity for distortion or change from the original policy intentions because, as noted by Ball (1993), 'Reactions are not constructed in circumstances of their own making. Policies pose problems to their subjects. Problems that must be solved in context. ... We cannot predict or assume how they will be acted on, what their immediate effect will be, what room for manoeuvring [policy implementers] will find for themselves' (p.12).

Ball sees education reform as a highly decentralised process, and thus contends that numerous policy makers have some role to play within each of the spheres named above; as a result, he concludes it is impossible to fully capture the processes driving education policy development and implementation, processes characterised by a 'sociology of complexity, uncertainty, and doubt' (Ball, 1994, p. 180). That said, the 'three spheres' model developed in Ball and Bowe (1992) may still be employed to represent a simplified version of the complex networks and hierarchies that dictate education policy outcomes in Mississippi and Arkansas. Given their position within the policy networks described above, it appears that three different individuals or groups of individuals hold considerable authority within one or more of Ball's three spheres. Namely, there appears to be a semi-centralised education policy structure wherein the state governor, the state superintendent/commissioner, and the chairs of

the State Education Committee and State Appropriations/Budget Legislative Committee primarily shape TFA-related policy outcomes in either side of the Delta.¹²⁷

Of course, the concentrated power of these three primary agenda setters does not necessarily translate into the execution of their intended education goals; according to Ball, the many feedback loops and iterations of the education policy formation process allow those actors at the periphery of the political network to influence the outcomes of those agendas first advanced by the more central education leaders. This research does not discount the role of other such actors in shaping TFA outcomes in the Delta. Indeed, Chapter Four notes that interview responses from forty-four different officials were used in the research analysis. This research does not ignore the insights offered by ‘non-central’ officials; rather, it uses the concept of ‘central’ policy makers to identify the officials whose goals and perspectives appear to most directly influence teacher labour outcomes in the Delta. This influence includes but is not limited to officials’ ability to shape state decisions to promote TFA expansion alongside or in place of other potential teacher supply strategies.¹²⁸ This framework thus provides a more developed understanding of how and why each state has engaged with TFA to reform the Delta teacher supply.

¹²⁷ For a discussion of how these actors were identified as ‘central’, as well as a discussion of other influential actors—including teachers union leaders, local district superintendents, and local TFA leadership—see Appendix 3A.

¹²⁸ For a discussion of the ‘three spheres’ model as a framework for analysis, see Hatcher and Troyna (1994) as well as Ball (1993, 1994).

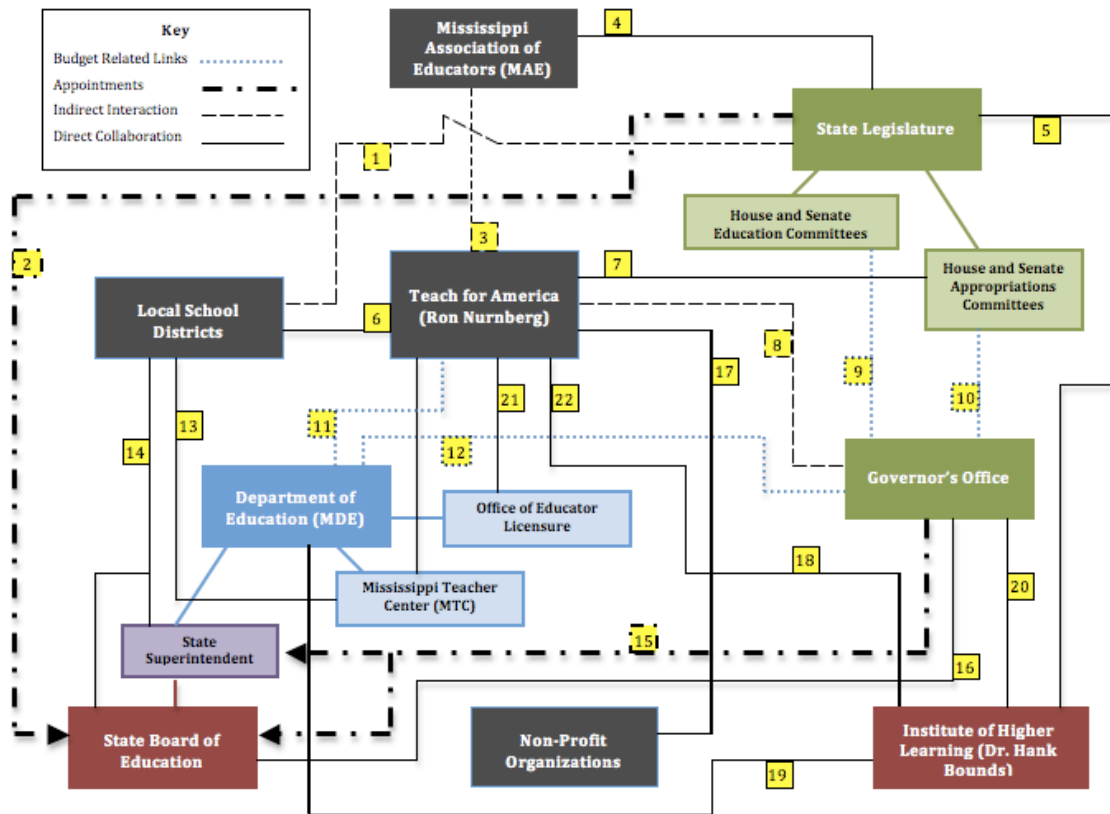
3B. Identifying the three ‘central’ policy makers under Ball’s ‘spheres of influence’

Ball sees education reform as a highly decentralised process, and thus contends that numerous policy makers have some role to play within each of the spheres named above. This is certainly true within the context of this research; as illustrated in Figures 3A.1 and 3A.2, policy makers work with one another to manage Delta schools as well as corresponding education reform in numerous ways.¹²⁹ As Ball would contend, local school district and community leaders also engage with these policy networks through one or more of the three spheres to shape education outcomes. As a result, Ball rightly concludes that it is impossible to fully capture the processes driving education policy development and implementation, processes characterised by a ‘sociology of complexity, uncertainty, and doubt’ (Ball, 1994, p. 180).

The maps presented in Figures 3B.1 and 3B.2 are by no means intended as an exhaustive list of the relationships and connections between various policy makers; all the same, they provide sufficient information to demonstrate the complex networks through which education policies are formulated for the Mississippi and Arkansas sides of the Delta. Given this complexity, subsequent analysis of policy maker engagement with TFA and Delta teacher labour reform must rely on some simplifying assumptions. Namely, it is necessary to establish a simplified framework for determining when, how, and why state policy makers have reacted to TFA’s role within the Delta teacher labour supply; to determine which policy makers have been most influential in setting the state agenda for TFA growth and/or Delta reform, it is

¹²⁹ See Chapter Four for a discussion as to why certain positions were included in the policy networks and others not.

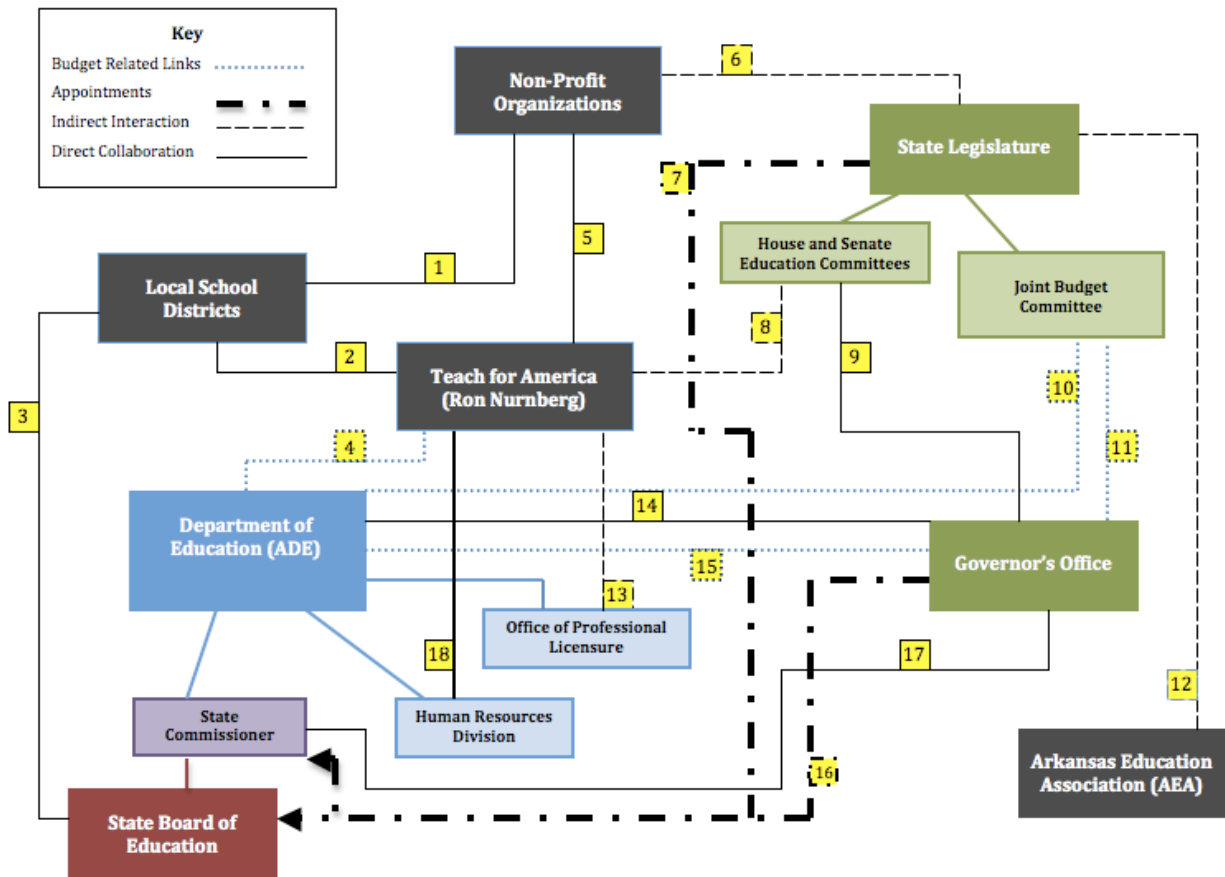
Figure 3B.1 A visual representation of the Mississippi education policy network



A map of some (though by no means all) of the relationships between relevant Mississippi policy makers. Each colour represents one of four types of positions: blue for bureaucrats, green for elected officials, red for appointed officials, and black for non-governmental actors. The State Superintendent, who is appointed to manage bureaucrats, is in purple to reflect his position between bureaucrat and appointed official. Numbers correspond to the descriptions below, which offer one example as to how the different actors are connected.

1. It is the duty of local district superintendents to implement/enforce any relevant education legislation.
2. The Speaker of the House appoints three board members to the State Board of Education.
3. TFA teachers may seek union protection while teaching.
4. Unions hold the right to lobby the state legislature provided proper registration and practice.
5. State Commissioner must work with the state legislature to compile all higher education legislation.
6. District superintendents have the duty to fill all teaching positions with qualified individuals.
7. Budget Committee required to appropriate school funds by the Mississippi Adequate Education Plan.
8. Governor may endorse supplemental education programmes and organisations (like Teach For America).
9. Governor required to make an executive recommendation on the state education budget.
10. Education subcommittee oversees budget before recommendation to appropriations committee.
11. State Superintendent must collect estimation of all TFA costs for the state education budget.
12. MDE responsible for implementing all laws passed by governing bodies.
13. The MTC must coordinate the placement of teachers, including TFA teachers, in districts with vacancies.
14. Local superintendent must carry out all mandates from the state board and state superintendent.
15. The Governor appoints the state superintendent and three other board members.
16. State board must policies in accordance with the laws approved by the governor.
17. TFA seeks donations and political support from local non-profit organisations.
18. Commissioner oversees all tertiary institutions, including those responsible for TFA summer training.
19. MDE may coordinate with IHL when necessary for educational matters.
20. Governor appoints the Commissioner of Higher Education at the IHL.
21. MDE responsible for distributing TFA teacher licences in accordance with certification requirements.

Figure 3B.2 A visual representation of the Arkansas education policy network



A map of some (though by no means all) of the relationships between relevant Arkansas policy makers. Each colour represents one of four types of positions: blue for bureaucrats, green for elected officials, red for appointed officials, and black for non-governmental actors. The State Commissioner, who is appointed to manage bureaucrats, is in purple to reflect his position between bureaucrat and appointed official. Numbers correspond to the descriptions below, which offer one example as to how the different actors are connected.

1. Local superintendents hold discretion to work with community actors and organisations.
2. Local superintendents are required to fill all teacher positions with highly qualified teachers.
3. The State Board requires district superintendents to fill all teaching positions.
4. State Commissioner must collect estimation of all TFA costs for the state education budget.
5. TFA seeks donations and political support from local non-profit organisations.
6. Non-profit organisations lobby the state legislature provided proper registration and practice.
7. The state legislature approves governor appointment of board members.
8. TFA lobbies senators for resources and TFA-friendly policies from the state legislature.
9. The governor directs the education policy agenda and signs off on education legislation.
10. The ADE sends an annual education budget proposal to the joint budget committee to receive funding.
11. The Governor sends an annual education budget to the budget committee and signs budget legislation.
12. The AEA holds the right to lobby the state legislature for teacher-related policies.
13. TFA coordinates all licensure for Arkansas TFA teachers with the Office of Professional Licensure.
14. The ADE must implement all mandates sent out by the Governor.
15. The ADE must send an annual education budget proposal to the Governor.
16. The Governor appoints the State Commissioner as well as all State Board of Education members.
17. The State Commissioner reports on issues of educational ‘best practice’ to the Governor and coordinates ADE action with the Governor’s agenda.
18. The Human Resources Division of the ADE helps place TFA teachers as necessary.

necessary to identify the policy makers exercising the most direct authority in each of Ball's three spheres.

Thus, to consolidate the complexities of Ball's decentralised model into an intelligible framework for analysis, this section will identify those policy makers who, given their position within the policy networks described above, hold the greatest direct authority within one or more of Ball's three spheres. During semi-structured interviews, state officials identified three such policy maker positions: the Mississippi and Arkansas state governors, the state superintendent/commissioner of education, and the chairs of the state Education Committee and Appropriations/Joint Budget Committee.

Based on the roles and responsibilities described below, it seems reasonable to conclude that these three positions serve as foci in the semi-centralised education policy formation processes of Mississippi and Arkansas. They seem to form a majority, wherein they generally collaborate with one another to set the tone for the state education agenda on all matters, including those related to TFA and the Delta teacher labour shortage.

Exploring the ways in which each of these officials—or, in the case of the legislative chairmen, group of officials—affects education reform within the Delta provides a simplified framework for understanding: 1) who is most directly responsible for shaping state engagement with TFA in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, and 2) how they do so.

State governors and the sphere of 'influence'

The state governors of Mississippi and Arkansas are overwhelmingly responsible for influencing their states' education agendas. In the words of one Mississippi official, the amount of state support TFA receives 'depends [a lot] on who happens to be the governor at the time [and] their appreciation or lack thereof for [TFA]'. As other officials from both states explained, the governor is responsible for setting the tone within the state congress, heavily influencing which types of programmes will receive state support. Thus, each state governor's perceptions of TFA significantly shape the programme's potential to interact with state officials to realign Delta outcomes.

Interviewed policy makers in Mississippi and Arkansas frequently described their governors as the most powerful individuals in their states' respective education policy networks.¹³⁰ The authority of the state governors typically fell into what Ball would categorise as the influence sphere, though they are also fairly involved in the sphere of text production. Indeed, the Mississippi and Arkansas State Governors seem to be the single most important figures within the influence context of education policy development. Much of this influence may stem from the fact that the governors of Mississippi and Arkansas hold the power to veto legislation, and state legislatures rarely have the cohesion to override the veto.¹³¹

Further enhancing the power to influence, the governors of Mississippi and Arkansas are central in the development of their states' education budgets. Each year, the state Department of Education will generate a budget request for all public school services,

¹³⁰ See Chapter Four for a discussion of the policy makers chosen for interviews.

¹³¹ The legislature must have three quarters of all members of the House of Representatives and three quarters of all members of the Senate vote to overrule the gubernatorial veto.

programmes, and administration. As is the case for both states, this budget is then sent to the acting governor as well as the state's legislative appropriations/budget committee. The governor alters the budget he receives from the Department of Education before submitting his own version to be considered alongside the Department version in the state legislature. Given these powers to influence education policy as well as the annual state education budget, governors in Mississippi and Arkansas hold significant power to redirect political and/or financial capital towards (or away from) TFA.

Legislative chairmen and the sphere of 'text production'

When considering the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta, a few top positions are primarily responsible for the production of all education policies and supporting texts. Namely, the chairmen of the Education Committee and Appropriations/Joint Budget Committee in each state's legislature are responsible for all state laws and financing dedicated to education. From there, the Mississippi State Superintendent of Education and the Arkansas State Commissioner of Education also hold the right to produce and enforce any mandates imposed on their states' public schools.

Like the state governors, chairmen of the Mississippi and Arkansas Education Committee and Appropriations/Joint Budget Committee may shape TFA outcomes in significant ways. There are a total of four such chairmen in each state, with two chairing the education committees and two chairing the appropriations/budget committees.¹³² Within the Ball framework, their authority generally qualifies as a part of the 'text production' context, though they hold some lesser sway in the influence

¹³² For each of these two types of committees, one chair will head the committee in the State Senate and the other the committee in the State House of Representatives. Thus, there is the Chairman of the Mississippi State Senate Education Committee, the Mississippi State House of Representatives Education Committee, and so on.

sphere as well. The two chairs of the education committees in Mississippi and the two in Arkansas decide what initiatives by other state policy makers are actually translated into official state texts. While the governor may veto any texts that the legislature does produce, he may not pass his own education agendas into law without the state education committees first drafting these priorities into bills and voting on them. In this way, the chairs of the education committees hold significant power in deciding if agendas intended to grow (or contract) TFA in the Delta region are ever translated into text.

For the chairs of the appropriations or joint budget committees (of the Mississippi and Arkansas state legislatures, respectively), influence over the state education agenda looks somewhat different. These groups are responsible for appropriating state funds to the public education system managed by the MDE/ADE. According to multiple policy maker interviewees, while the appropriations/budget committees are technically free to override the authority of the governor or state superintendent/commissioner when voting on the state education budget, they almost never do. Instead, they generally defer to the authority of these two individuals, particularly to their state governor. Thus, one may argue that while all three categories of these policy makers—the state governor, the state superintendent/commissioner, and the chairs of the state Education and Appropriations/Budget Legislative Committee—are central in the development of TFA-related policies, the former two are relatively more influential than the third group of actors. Nevertheless, chairmen of these committees remain a powerful source of influence over TFA outcomes, as they may decide to champion (or oppose) TFA needs when developing state education policies.

The State Superintendent/Commissioner and the sphere of ‘implementation’

Like the state governors, policy makers frequently named the Mississippi State Superintendent of Education and the Arkansas State Commissioner of Education as influential in the expansion of TFA. Yet, while the governors shape TFA growth by setting state education legislative agendas, the state superintendent/commissioner¹³³ seem to impact TFA growth through this manner as well as via more direct interactions with the organisation. Within the Ball framework, this position impacts TFA outcomes in all three policy spheres—though it is particularly well poised to control the implementation of education policies in local Delta communities. Given the high level of involvement of both the Mississippi State Superintendent and the Arkansas State Commissioner in each of Ball’s three spheres, it is hardly surprising that many interviewed officials identified the Superintendent/Commissioner as the actors most responsible for determining the nature of their states’ working relationships with TFA.

Turning first to the influence sphere, the state superintendent/commissioner serves as a member of the state Board of Education, a group of appointed officials that collectively influences state policy by deciding what constitutes ‘best practice’ for all aspects of K-12 education. As discussed in Chapter Eight, the state superintendent/commissioner is also particularly responsible for influencing state funding outcomes for TFA growth in Delta schools. Moving to the sphere of text production, the Mississippi State Superintendent of Education and the Arkansas State

¹³³ The Mississippi State Superintendent of Education and the Arkansas State Commissioner of Education are the official heads of all public schools in their respective states. Though they have different titles, these two positions hold the same duties and responsibilities. Likewise, the Mississippi State Appropriations Committees and the Arkansas State Joint Budget Committee hold different names but the same responsibility for appropriating state funds to the necessary programmes and services.

Commissioner of Education hold the right to produce and enforce any mandates imposed on their states' public schools.

Finally, because the superintendent/commissioner each serve as the head of his state's Department of Education, they are ultimately responsible for the implementation of all regulations required by a new piece of education legislation. Acting on behalf of the superintendent/commissioner, bureaucrats from each state's Department of Education monitor the practices of individual school districts, ensuring that they are in compliance with all state laws and mandates. These bureaucrats report directly to the office of the superintendent/commissioner, granting the superintendent/commissioner a substantial amount of authority to decide how strictly (or loosely) a particular piece of legislation will be implemented.

4A. List of interviewed policy makers

Total interviewed officials: 44

- **State Board of Education members: 20 officials interviewed**
 - Mississippi board members
 - Mississippi State Superintendent of Education
 - Arkansas board members
 - Arkansas State Commissioner of Education

- **State-run alternative certification programmes: 4 officials interviewed**
 - Mississippi alternative certification programmes
 - Mississippi Alternative Pathways to Quality Teachers (MAPQT)
 - Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI)
 - Arkansas alternative certification programmes
 - Arkansas Department of Education Non-Traditional Licensure Program

- **Teacher licensure bureaucrats: 6 officials interviewed**
 - Mississippi Office of Educator Licensure
 - Arkansas Professional Licensure coordinators
 - Arkansas Office of Teacher Quality
 - Arkansas Human Resources Division

- **Elected Officials: 8 officials interviewed**
 - State Governors and their education policy advisers
 - Chairmen of the State Legislature's Education Committees (both states, both houses: Senate and House of Representatives)
 - Chairmen of the State Legislature's Appropriations and Joint Budget Committees (both states, both houses: Senate and House of Representatives) State senators and representatives involved with TFA because they represent Delta constituencies

- **Other: 6 officials interviewed**
 - Teachers union leaders
 - Mississippi Teacher Center (MTC)
 - Teach For America-Delta administrators
 - Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning

4B. List of semi-structured interview questions

During my semi-structured interviews with policy makers, I employed a wide range of questions to determine:

- The nature and severity of the Delta teacher shortages, both in their own right and relative to shortages throughout each state
- Which policy makers were responsible for shaping TFA outcomes and in what ways
- How and why TFA had been included into state strategies for Delta reform
- What expectations/hopes/concerns policy makers held for future TFA engagement in Delta schools

The following contains a list of all questions asked during the interview process. The questions employed in each particular interview depended upon:

- The phase in which that interview was conducted (i.e. in the first, second, third, fourth, or fifth round)
- The nature of that interviewee's state powers and responsibilities
- The nature of previous answers given by that interviewee
- The nature of answers given by other interviewees from previous interview rounds
- The amount of time granted/receptivity of the interviewee

Questions with ** are more technical questions reserved for a particular individual, as opposed to a more general question asked to multiple policy makers. The title in parentheses () after ** denotes the position(s) whom were asked that question.

Basic Background

1. What is your background in education? How/when were you selected as (*interviewee's position*)?
2. What is your exact job title and what responsibilities does that entail?
3. How long have you worked with (*name of office or organisation*)?
4. What are your goals for Mississippi's/Arkansas's state-wide education? Are these goals shared by (*interviewee's organisation or affiliation*)? By the State Governor and/or Mississippi/Arkansas Department of Education?
5. What are the biggest advantages/challenges your education system faces?
6. In what capacity do you work with the Governor? The State Legislature? That is, how often and how directly do you work with each and on what types of issues? *** (State Superintendent/Commissioner of Education)
7. What are the biggest advantages/challenges your education system faces?
8. Approximately how many different organisations and programs receive funding in the state budget? (Only a few? Hundreds? Thousands?) **

(Chairmen of the State Legislature's Appropriations/Joint Budget Committees)

Delta- and Teach For America-specific questions

9. Have you had any chance to work with Teach For America (TFA) either directly or indirectly? If yes, in what ways?
10. What is the process for appropriating funding to Teach For America? (Please explain in terms of who first requests the appropriation, how this request is negotiated, brought to a vote, and how the funding is distributed.) **
(Chairmen of the State Legislature's Appropriations/Joint Budget Committees)
11. Do you think Teach For America is a cost-effective solution to chronic teacher shortages in the Mississippi Delta?
12. Do you see Teach For America as a short-term programme, or do you anticipate it will receive long-term state funding? Why?
13. Has there been any pushback anywhere in the state against TFA? Or has it been universally accepted/supported?
14. What are the biggest strengths/challenges you face in designing policy recommendations for places like the Delta?
15. What are your thoughts on Teach For America?
 - a. Has it been a helpful tool in remedying the Delta shortages?
 - b. Has it helped/hurt Delta schools in other ways?
16. What are your short- and long-term goals for education in the Delta?
 - a. How does Teach For America fit into those goals?
 - b. Would you like to see TFA expand, shrink, or maintain its current size in your state?
 - c. What other tools (besides TFA) are you using to pursue these goals?
17. Who else in Mississippi/Arkansas decides the size and role of Teach For America in the state?
18. Why have there been chronic teacher shortages in the Delta region?
19. Has the Governor worked with Teach For America at all? If so, in what capacity? **(education policy aides to the State Governor)
20. Why has Teach For America grown so rapidly in Mississippi/Arkansas over the last few years? Do you think it should expand further, remain the same size, or shrink? Why?

21. Teach For America charges a headhunting fee for each of the teachers it places in the Delta region. How is this cost covered (e.g. by a line item appropriation in the state budget, local school districts out of their total budgets, through the Arkansas Department of Education, etc.)? ** (Chairmen of the State Legislature's Appropriations/Joint Budget Committees)
22. What have been your top education priorities as Governor? ** (Governor)

Closing

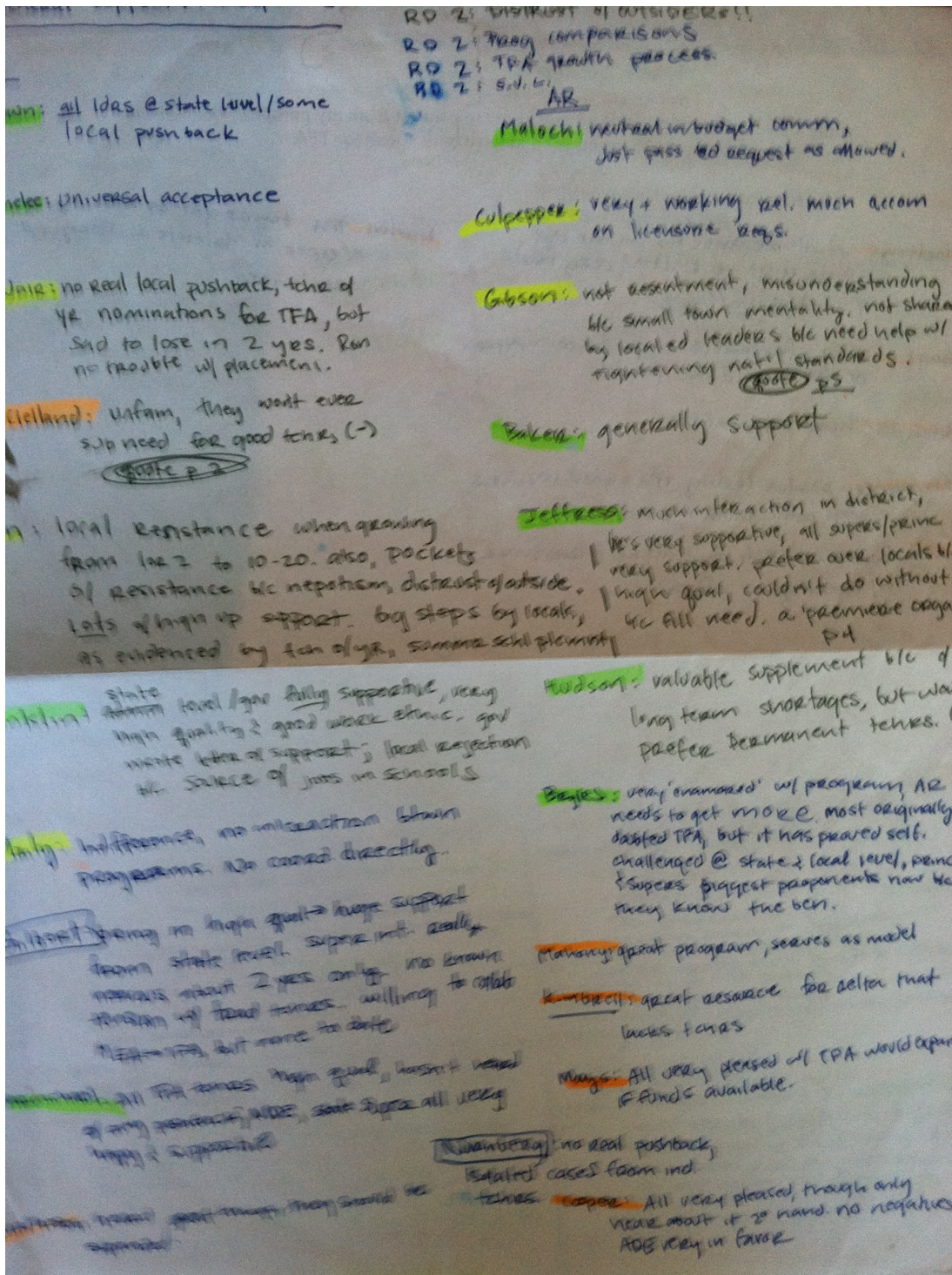
23. Who in the state deals most directly with Teach For America's administration?
 - a. Who decides the size and role of Teach For America in the state?
24. What factors (state-wide education legislation, the education budget, individual state leaders, etc.) most dictate the course of Teach For America in Mississippi/Arkansas?
25. Is there anything else important to understand about the role of Teach For America in the Mississippi/Arkansas Delta?

4C. Process for qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews

Designing, collecting, coding and analysing fifty-three semi-structured interviews with Mississippi and Arkansas state policy makers, TFA-Delta leadership, and other individuals involved in Delta teacher labour reform required an approach that was both methodical and highly iterative. After conducting a review of the literature, it was possible to create a preliminary list of research questions and relevant people to interview. I then piloted the interview questions with a professor from the University of Mississippi who had worked closely with Mississippi leaders on several teacher labour policies. As discussed in section 4.3.1, he helped me to refine the content and language of the research questions so that they would be accessible and politically neutral; he also offered the names of relevant policy makers (whom I had not included in my original list) and agreed to contact a few of these officials on my behalf so that they would be willing to meet with me.

Once the first round of interviews were complete, I transcribed the recordings and coded them in two ways: first, by categorising them into the major themes from my review of teacher recruitment, retention, and attrition literature (sample shown in Figure 4C.1) and, second, by creating categories for policy makers' perceptions of and support for / resistance to TFA growth in the Delta (sample shown in Figure 4C.2). Though the transcriptions were typed in Microsoft Word (and coded using the 'Track Changes' feature, as shown in the following appendix, 4D), the categorisations were done by hand. Hand-writing these grouping made it easier to map out non-linear

Figure 4C.2 Round one interview analysis: Policy maker reactions to TFA



In addition to coding first-round interviews around the findings from the literature review, I also summarized and grouped policy maker comments that signalled their perceptions of TFA as well as their support for / resistance to its growth in the Delta. I used here the same colour-coding and labels as shown in Figure 4C.1

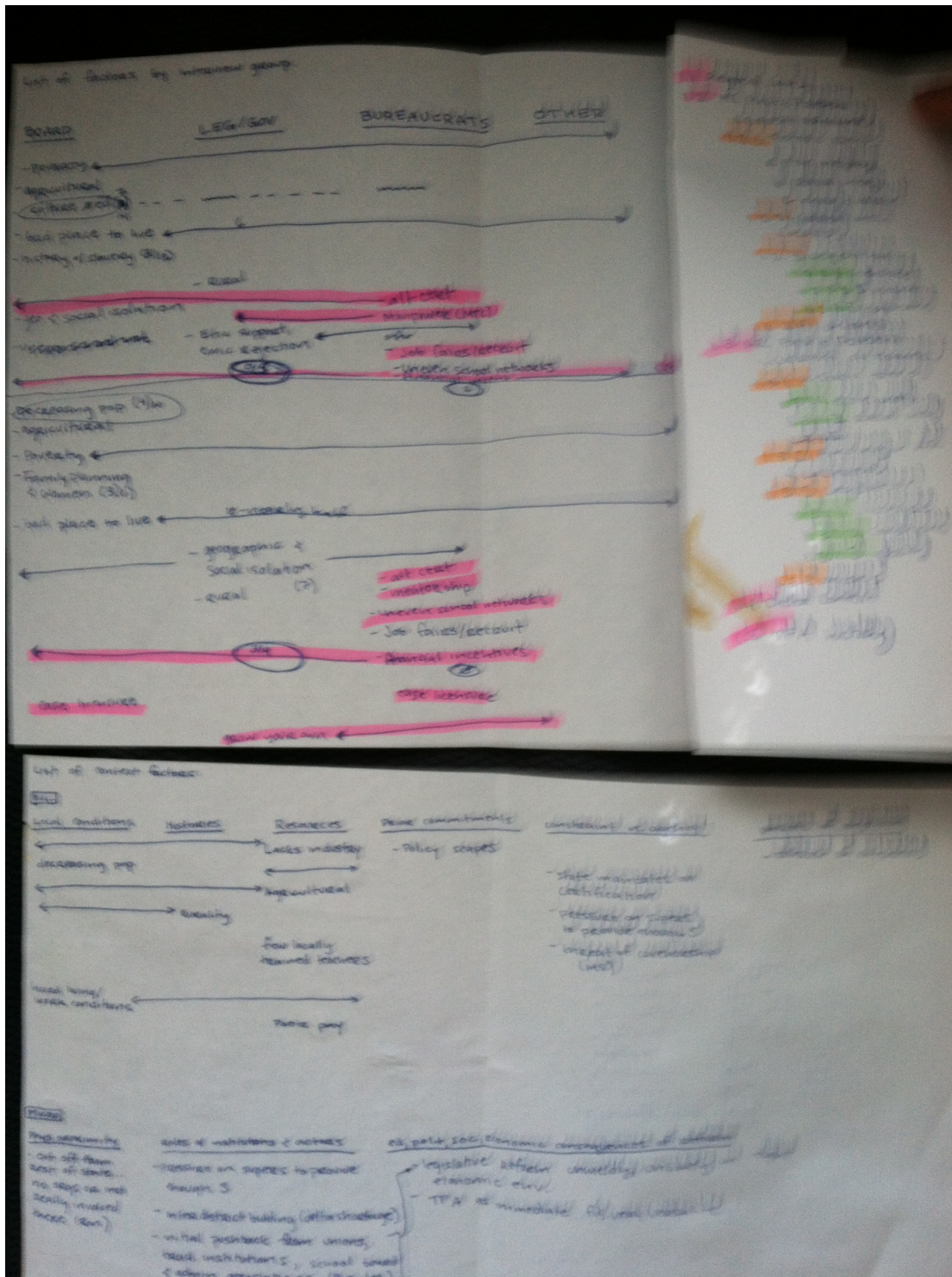
connections and, thus, to identify more subtle themes that emerged from the interviews. These hand-written categorisations were also colour-coded to identify the type of policy official ('elected official', 'appointed official', 'bureaucrat', or 'other') and their state identification was also included, which enabled a comparison of beliefs / statements by state and by position. Finally, the page number of a quotation 'showing' that theme in the interview transcript was included so that I could easily find relevant quotations later (as shown in the following appendix, 4D, quotations were labelled with a corresponding 'tag' word so that I could easily identify them once I was on the correct transcript page).

After coding the first round of interviews, I was able to identify emerging themes and questions; I then refined the list of interview questions accordingly for round two. Round two interviewees consisted of those individuals unavailable for round one interviews and/or those individuals identified as important figures in their states' teacher labour policies by round one interviewees. Once round two interviews had been completed, I coded them thematically, based on the initial impressions from round one analysis and also for any nascent themes that appeared (in the latter case, I returned to the round-one transcripts and coded them for the same themes). This allowed me to refine the initial groupings created in the round one analysis, to establish several distinct thematic clusters, and to theorize as to the connections between these clusters (see Figure 4C.3).

I next prepared for round three interviews using the same methods for refining research questions and identifying new interviewees as I had used to prepare for round two. In total, I conducted five rounds of interviews; at the end of each round, I

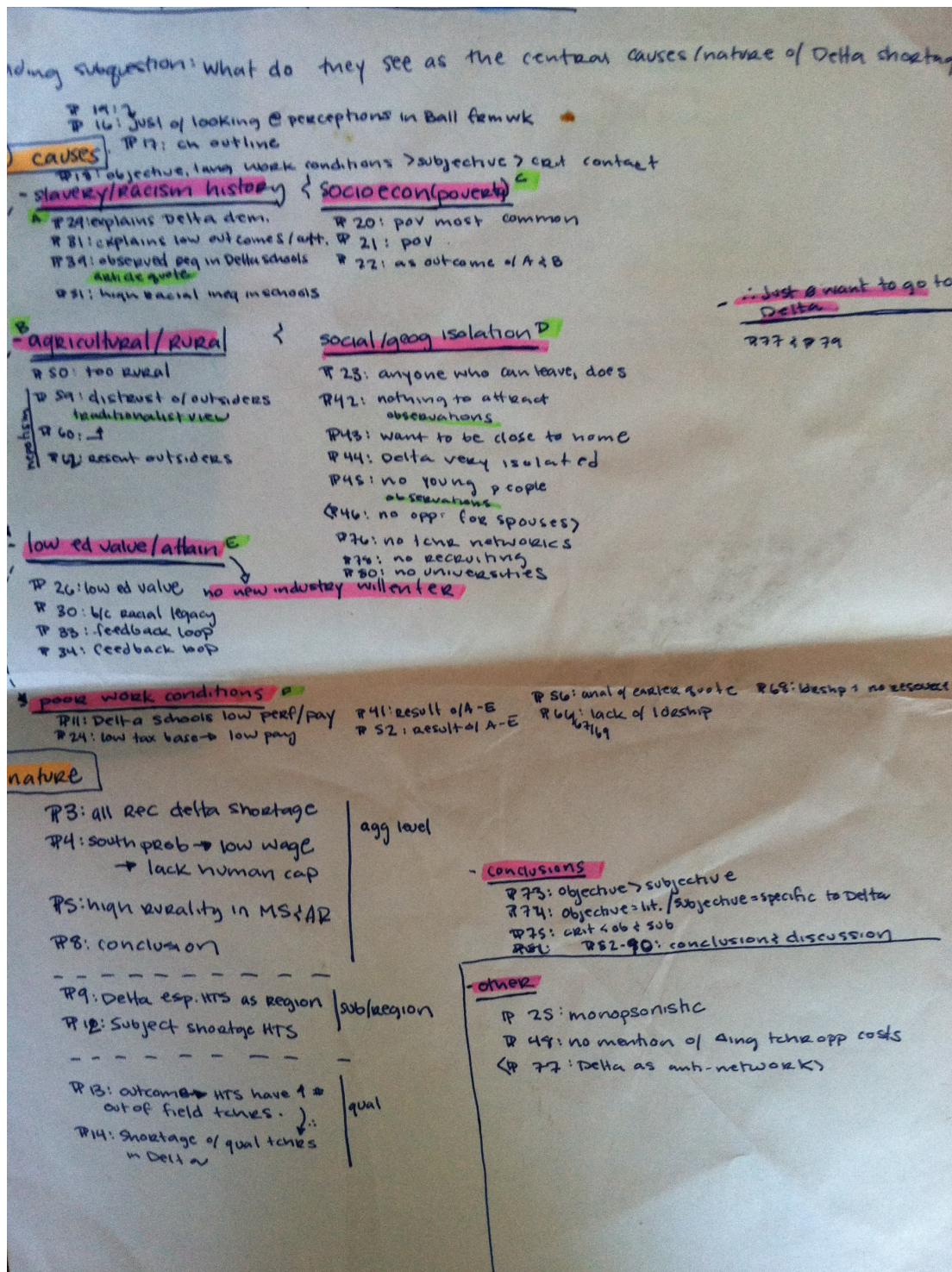
rearranged and refined emerging thematic clusters as necessary. Figure 4C.4 shows a sample of the conceptual reframing that occurred between rounds two and three; the new categories developed in this image were later populated with findings from all three rounds of interviews. Additionally, I applied these new labels and categorisations to interviews collected in previous rounds so that all themes were considered within the context of all the interview transcripts and so that I could determine the frequency with which interviewees touched on major and minor themes. This iterative process was repeated for all five rounds of interviews, though organisational changes made in rounds four and five were far less common and fairly subtle in nature. After all interviews had been conducted, transcribed and coded, it was possible to produce a final organisation of the findings for analysis, and to include relevant quotations and frequency estimates for a given theme (see figure 4C.5)

Figure 4C.4 Refining round two themes for round three interviews and analysis



After completing a new round of interview analysis, it was necessary to refine themes and clusters in a way that reflected emerging trends and/or new ideas. This document shows the conceptual changes made between rounds two and three.

Figure 4C.5 Final organisation of the interview findings



Once all interviews had been completed, transcribed, coded and thematically organised, the themes that had emerged during the five rounds of analysis were organised so that it would be possible to craft an over-arching argument. This figure shows a sample of the inter-theme organisation developed for a first draft of Chapter Six.

4D. Sample transcripts and final coding analysis: One Mississippi policy maker and one TFA-Delta official

SAMPLE CODED POLICY MAKER TRANSCRIPT- (ID#18, MS, F)

Interview date: 22 September 2010

Transcription date: 22 September 2010

Coding date: 30 September 2010

First of all, thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me today.

Several years ago, and I don't have the exact dates for you, I'm sorry, but the Mississippi Teacher Center is an agency of the department that is authorized from state law for the recruitment of teachers. And they contracted with TFA a number of years ago to bring TFA teachers into the Mississippi Delta region, which is a hard-to-staff area, their schools are considered critical needs and critical shortage areas. It's difficult to find highly qualified teachers in that area. We have a number of incentives to get teachers to that part of the state, like they will pay moving costs and pay off their student loans, they'll do a number of things in the critical shortage act that we have to try to get teachers into that area. So one of the things the teacher center has done is to contract with TFA to bring teachers to that area. And that's been true for a number of years. We started off just, you know, maybe 30 TFA teachers each year and they'd stay about 2 years so any give year you'd have about 60 and I think they'd work with about 9 different school districts there and TFA trained down in Houston, TX, that was the training sites for those who came to MS until probably about this year. And then, probably about 2 or 3 years ago, then-superintendent Dr. Hank Bounds increased that contract with TFA to bring about 80 new teachers into the state. So we already had about 60 and he brought in 80 new ones and tried to get more highly qualified teacher because what we were having was not just a difficulty to staff, but a lot of school districts were trying to hire teachers on emergency license that had no certification and were not highly qualified. And any teacher on an alternative route, you know with TFA they've already passed their PRAXIS test, they have a degree, they're considered highly qualified. So that was the premise, was to bring—we're trying to change a culture here, do you understand what I'm saying?

Absolutely.

So the area is so poor and so, just so desolate, that things still weren't changing. So last year, for the first time, they upped the aunty so to speak, and brought in 250 new TFA teachers, in addition to the ones that were already there for their second year. And some teachers stay, a number of them do their two years and leave, but there are some who stay each year. And so, bringing in the 250 teachers was a challenge because a lot of the school districts would sign on for 1 or 2 but not 10 or 20. So we had to tell them, you cannot hire anybody else on an emergency license until you utilize as many of these TFA teachers as you can. So there was a lot of directives with these districts because we wanted them to understand that these teachers will be good

for your students. And whether they stay on for two years or not, at least you'll have a highly qualified teacher for two years.

That brings up quite a few questions for me. The first being, the steep increase of 250 teachers, what triggered that? Was it Dr. Bounds or TFA wanting to do that? How did that happen?

Well he had already increased it to the 80 so we had such a – they would look at the lists of those districts and still see that there were a number of teachers who were on emergency license and not highly qualified. School districts were pulling in someone local who were not qualified and so he said 'you know, we need to put a stop to this practice of pulling in so-and-so's nephew when they're not qualified to teach this class' and utilize our TFA teachers. So I think he initiated it, but TFA was good with it. So he and Ron Nurnberg had many conversations about it, along with Dr. Daphne Buckley, and so they decided to do that, and the logistics of that and working that out were not easy, making that big of a jump in one year.

Right.

But that prompted what we have done for this coming year. So TFA then made the proposal to the national TFA organization that if we're going to bring that many TFA teachers into MS, let's just make a training site right there. So they're in the process of training right now at Delta State University, training 600 TFA teachers who will go into Arkansas, and Mississippi, and Louisiana and I don't know how many states, and those 600 teachers are doing teaching summer school in 14 different delta school districts for the summer. And doing their training there has been quite an undertaking. And all of the other TFA training sites are in inner-city urban regions and not rural areas so this is all rural and there are 100s of miles spread out all over the place trying to teach summer school. And this fall, we'll keep our 250 and that's our number right now, and the 350 will go to other states. We actually, the school districts have never done that before, having summer school. You know, they have to have a certified teacher who's supervising them and the school district said if these teachers are going to be the teachers of record, then for these students to get credit these teachers need to have a license. So we actually issued over 600 summer school licenses, which we've never done before. But we called it a TFA summer institute certificate just so they could do their teaching.

So it sounds like you've taken a lot of steps to make sure this program will really take off.

Well we believe in it. We believe in the model and the training they do, they bring in good candidates and the training they do in the summer and the support they've got with each other. The training they do and even out in their districts for the two years they're not alone, they get a lot of support and they need it. For kids to commit to moving into those types of areas that are totally different from what they're accustomed to and commit for two years I think speaks well of them.

Sure, absolutely.

And there have been so any TFA teachers who have raised the bar and have been teachers of the year in the districts they were at and it is certainly worth the effort.

And has the support that Dr. Bounds showed for TFA continued with Superintendent Burnham becoming superintendent?

Yes. Yes I think so but Dr. Burnham has just been with us for 6 months and we've had tremendous budget woes right now so we're not sure if we can keep up with what we've started. We're not sure the funding can keep up with and give us a hold on that. Because there is a state match that must be done with the money that the legislature has appropriated for TFA and so we're not certain what that's going to look like in the long run. But we know right now, what with the money we've budgeted for this year, I've heard Dr. Burnham say that he thinks it's a really good idea.

Now clearly budgets play an important role, are there other types of things like policy or licensure that play a role in TFA growth?

Well, as I said, this was legislated by our state lawmakers that we do this and MDE has done the Mississippi Teaching Center a contract for this to operate. The problem is for next year that the funding might not be there that was initially in place. So we already have the licenses in place next year for TFA and as I said we instituted the summer one so this summer is a first for us and we don't know exactly how well it will all play out. But hopefully it will all work out because I know TFA has put in a huge amount of work to get this all facilitated.

I only have two more questions if you have time for those?

Okay.

Besides your department and the state superintendent, are there any other individuals who have played an important role in TFA growing?

Yes, Cecily McNair from the MTC. She's the one who facilitates the contracts with TFA, so she would be a good person to talk to. Now she and Dr. Daphne Buckley, who is the Deputy Superintendent, she is both my boss and Cecily's boss. So she would be the one who would be dealing with all of this. Both of them are in Washington DC but they should be back Thursday. I don't know if they will be back tomorrow.

Great, and one final question. You've obviously seen a lot as TFA has grown over the last couple of years. Who have been the biggest supporters of TFA and who have been its biggest opponents, if there has been opposition?

Uh, I think I've not seen any opposition here at the Mississippi Department of Education. I think everyone here sees the need for it and the successes. I have not seen any opposition of it here at MDE, everyone's been a proponent of it. Now the alternate route programs in the state, I feel like especially those working in the Mississippi Delta feel like taking the number and increasing the number of TFA teachers teaching in there, it has taken away from some of these programs. Those that were trying to place teachers and get them jobs in some of those same areas. I don't

know that—they were not opposed to it but they were competing with it. I think also some of the district superintendents in that area. I think a lot of them were old school, a lot of them were set in their ways. A lot of them were ‘those people aren’t from around here’ that kind of thing. A lot of them had some reservations about not hiring the local people and brining in people they didn’t necessarily want even if they were highly qualified. And we did fight that battle with a lot of people. So, for them to agree to summer school, for 14 different school districts and superintendents to say yes we want to do this, I think is a great stride for them.

Well thank you so much, this has been very helpful.

SAMPLE CODED TFA TRANSCRIPT- (ID#47, TFA, F)

Interview date: 10 December 2010

Transcription date: 11 December 2010

Coding date: 13 December 2010

The big question I have is sort of the why behind [the numbers you sent me]. So it's pretty obvious that the Delta site has not only grown, but grown way faster than a lot of other sites, especially now that you guys have a training center. But was that always the plan for the Delta?

That's actually a fairly easy question.

Perfect.

Okay, so the Delta has been around, it's one of our regions that has been around the longest. I want to say, 18 years. And so we've always seen the Delta as a place that we could really saturate if we could get the funds, but the problem was that it's a very rural region where it's hard to find the money. So essentially, Hank Bounds was instrumental in talking to the state for us. He said, "You know, TFA is doing great things, but they need money. And we want more of them, um, but we're going to have to spend money to get them." So essentially, two or three years ago, Ron and Hank convinced the state to start giving so \$5million a year.

Wow.

Um, and that was just through showing the evidence that TFA works and look at what we're doing in these small communities and just think of what we could do if we could replicate throughout other communities in the Delta, what a transformative change that could make. So that's how it happened.

Got it, so I saw that you guys have been getting [that money]—what exactly is it going to? Is it bringing in more teachers? Or more training?

So that money goes to, well the recruitment and selection process, which you went through—of sending people to campuses to talk about TFA and getting people on board, and the interviews, the selection process is incredibly painstaking on our end because we want to make sure we get people of the right caliber. And that is a huge cost. Then the other part that goes into the cost of the corps member is the professional development that goes on during your two years. We've got weekly professional development, monthly professional development, institute. Institute is a huge cost for us. And all the staff that it takes to support all that. There's national—which I guess is overhead—and then there's the regional staff. So it takes about, throughout the organization, it takes about \$20,000 a year per corps member. In the Delta it's a little less, because the cost of living is a little less, so it's about \$18,000 a corps member.

And you only charge \$3,000 from the school district for a corps member?

That's right, we ask the district for \$3,000. And the state, in the State of Mississippi, depending on how much they give us each year, which is kind of troublesome. Because they initially said \$5,000,000 a year and then the economy tanked so it went down to \$3million because they just couldn't find the money in their budget. So we're trying to tap into new resources to find more money to try and cover that gap.

Wow. And so, what kind of resources are you guys finding?

The Waltons, for sure, the Waltons give TFA quite a bit of money and that varies, it's a three-year grant. So, depending on how much money they give in the grant, it changes. And we're trying to go to Jackson this year, so we'll hopefully have a chance to work with more corporations. Because throughout the delta there are not a ton of corporations, but through Jackson there are. In the Delta, there are actually a lot of really high net worth individuals because it's a combination of, like, asking our supporters for more and cultivating new people. So it's both of those things. And in Jackson it's cultivating both of those things to have more political and financial support.

Now one thing that I saw was really interesting, is it seems like TFA will go into a district, reach a certain saturation point of around 11 people and then maybe go into the next district. Is that a strategy? Or when do you decide when to go to a new district?

Are you talking about the Delta specifically?

Yea.

Well there's really no strategy but I'd say we tried a little last year and we're definitely trying this year to cluster our corps members. Also when we're talking about these districts we're in, in the Delta, they're usually pretty small. A lot of times we're talking one elementary, one middle school, one high school and they're usually the best-paid, that's the best paying job in that community. Therefore, usually there's not a lot... we can't take over an entire school or an entire community, not that we're not trying. We're trying. But some of the teachers already there are excellent teachers and that's not our goal [to replace them]—our goal is not to get all the old teachers out and bring all the new teachers in. Our goal is to make sure that all the teachers are quality. So that means if you've been teaching 40 years and you're a quality teacher, by all means stay. So I think that's why our numbers are so low in each district. We have more districts than any other TFA site, we have 45 districts and our numbers are hopefully going to be going up to 50 this next year. So when you take 280 people and you take 50 districts, they're going to be sprinkled, but we do our best to try to concentrate them in schools, because that way there's more support. And also, that we can also show, like, that we do make a difference, if all the 6th grade teachers are TFA and the scores consistently go up for two years we can draw a correlation there, which is something we like to do.

Sure. Now, I'm about done, I realize I'm pelting you with questions. Sorry...

Oh no, it's okay.

But about how much money are you bringing in total? Not counting the head-hunting fee you're bringing in from schools, about how much money are you give to work with?

Well, I mean, I guess at the beginning of the year we're not getting any money because we have to raise it all. So I guess I don't have a clear answer for that because we'll think, like, you know "oh we're getting \$3million from this corporation" and then they'll bump it down to \$2million and so then we have to go find that money somewhere else. Um, I can tell you that our goal is \$10.3 million.

How much?

10.3 And it's quite a challenge being in the Mississippi Delta but we're committed to figuring it out because we have a goal to be bringing in a minimum of 280 plus each year. So we have to figure it out, I mean Mississippi is the perfect environment to saturate, and the one amazing thing about the Mississippi side—and I'm not clear about the Arkansas side—but you only have to teach for three years to be an assistant principal or principal. And you have to take some administrative classes, so if people are really serious about becoming an administrator we encourage them to stay on after their second year, do classes for a third year, and we make sure that they are registered and involved in an administration class so that after that third year they can be a principal somewhere in Mississippi. So that's huge because what we have found to be the largest thing that impacts these schools is the school leader—the principal, assistant principal, dean of students, something like that.

Sure.

So not only are the people we bring into the classroom leaders, because that is one of the things we look for is leaders, and also compassion and empathy and you have to have those or else you're not going to survive. So we look for leaders to put into our classrooms but then to make our cause that much stronger and our change that much more real, we try to put people in as school leaders. Right now we currently have 8. And for being in 45 districts that's not really good enough. Every school district we're in we need to have a leader in those schools, because a lot of the time the problem is that the schools don't have very good leaders. So right now we have 8 teach for America alums and hopefully in the next 4 or 5 years we'll be able to increase that number to 20.

And how many people are you getting to stay into the third year and beyond?

So right now about 50% of all teachers stay for a third year. And some beyond that. I mean it does fall off when we get to the 4th, 5th, 6th year but it does fall off. And I don't know the statistics off the top of my head. But what's impressive to me is that I taught in Philadelphia, where about only 40% stays on for a third year. So the fact that half of teachers are staying in the Mississippi Delta, a rural, kind of different place, most people in their 20s don't want to be in the middle of nowhere, is a testament to their commitment to the community. And that's just what they do, they go into these communities and they stay in these communities. They fall in love with the people there, with the church atmosphere or the farmer's market or whatever the community offers they fall in love with it and they fall in love with the kids. And they really like

the fact that they are in a small community and they have their other corps members with them and they all get along. So that's why a lot of them stay for a third year. You can also really see change. I mean, in Philadelphia it's such a bureaucracy that it would be impossible to see the same kind of change that you see in the Delta. Um, but if you get 6 or 7 corps members in one school, I mean within two years there is a *significant* difference.

Sure.

And I think that's why they stay. For lack of a better phrase, the sense of possibilities is really there.

So my final question, is where do you see this going long-term? Do you want to be throughout the entire state or is there a number of teachers you want to have?

Um, currently, it changes all the time. It fluctuates all the time but I can tell you up through FY 15.

Mhmm.

Okay, for FY 15 we, there are several big goals we want to hit. One, we want to bring in 300 corps members. So we will have close to 590 teaching corps members. Today, we have 520. So, that's one thing. As far as the number of districts, we don't have any clear goals around the amount. I think we want to get to around 50 or maybe a tiny bit above that and then just saturate. We really want to saturate Jackson, that's a big goal. Which we right now have a total of like 20 corps members, and they hired like 200 new teachers last year. So we need to be at least half of the new teachers they bring in every year. That's not necessarily a goal on paper, that's like a goal in my head. And we need, what that means for our budget I'm not quite sure because again, depending on where the money comes from and what kind of long-term donors we can find, I'm not quite sure what that means. I would say it probably means getting into the \$14 million range, but that's a guess. On the programme side, we've done a pretty good job of creating a vision for 2015. And that vision is that, for every student that we teach, they will be college-ready by the time they graduate high school, which means a 21 on their ACTs. We want to make sure that when they're done with 8th grade, they're on the 8th grade level so that by the time 9th grade comes around, they're ready for 9th grade. So hopefully, by the time they get to 11th or 12th grade they're on grade level, which means a 20 or 21 ACT.

Sure. And how much control and autonomy does the Delta site have in setting these goals and in growing? Is it pretty much just up to you and Ron and everyone in that office or do you get directives from the national headquarters?

I mean, I think both, because every year we do get directives from the national office because we do have goals that we want to achieve throughout the nation. And those have to do with gains, which, it depends how much your kids grow in a year, whether there are significant [80% or more of students on grade level] or solid gains [70% or more on grade level].... On a regional level though, that's where we set a lot of the other goals. We set the 21 ACT goal, and the placement team and the development team, which is the one that I run, we're the ones that set the 300 corps member goal.

So that's all backed on funding. National is not going to let us grow if we don't have funding.

And how are you getting so many kids to come to the Delta over other TFA sites?

That's a really good question... and I think there are several things. One, we do highlight it, when students are rating their regions. Also, we really focus on the need. And you could make the argument that there's need everywhere, and that's true, but we're talking about rural Mississippi, where there is not only a need but, there is also a huge, um, what am I trying to say, there's a huge ability to make a real difference. So there's a real need there, but there's also a lack of bureaucracy, there's a lack of structure, so you can come in and really actually get things done and see the results in 2 to 3 years and I think that's incredibly attractive to people. And I think the fact that we have so many corps members makes the corps members not worry so much about being isolated. I mean, yea, you're going to be in a small town but your going to have at least 3 or 4 other corps members with you.

** institute floats the economy of Cleveland Mississippi, pays Delta state money.
1000 students in summer school to 6000 students in summer school.

4E. Summary of interview identification codes

To protect interviewee confidentiality, the discussion presented in the findings chapters identifies quotations by an anonymous identification code. The following chart documents the affiliation, gender, professional position, and self-identification as ‘black’ and/or as a former teacher. In doing so, this table is meant to contextualise quotations for the reader by giving them a better understanding of who made a given claim without compromising that interviewee’s right to confidentiality.

ID#	Affiliation ^a	Gender	Position ^b	Other markers ^c
1	MS	M	Appointed	Black
2	MS	M	Appointed	
3	MS	F	Appointed	Teacher
4	MS	M	Appointed	
5	MS	F	Appointed	
6	MS	M	Appointed	
7	MS	M	Appointed	
8	MS	F	Appointed	Teacher
9	MS	M	Appointed	Teacher
10	MS	M	Appointed	Teacher
11	MS	M	Elected	
12	MS	M	Elected	
13	MS	M	Elected	
14	MS	M	Elected	
15	MS	M	Elected	
16	MS	M	Other	Black
17	MS	M	Bureaucrat	
18	MS	F	Bureaucrat	
19	MS	M	Bureaucrat	
20	MS	M	Bureaucrat	
21	MS	F	Bureaucrat	
22	MS	F	Bureaucrat	
23	MS	F	Bureaucrat	
24	MS	F	Bureaucrat	
25	AR	M	Appointed	
26	AR	M	Appointed	
27	AR	M	Appointed	Black
28	AR	F	Appointed	
29	AR	M	Appointed	Teacher
30	AR	F	Appointed	
31	AR	F	Appointed	Black
32	AR	F	Appointed	Teacher
33	AR	F	Appointed	
34	AR	M	Appointed	Teacher
35	AR	M	Elected	
36	AR	M	Elected	
37	AR	M	Elected	
38	AR	M	Elected	
39	AR	M	Elected	
40	AR	F	Bureaucrat	
41	AR	F	Bureaucrat	

ID#	Affiliation ^a	Gender	Position ^b	Other markers ^c
42	AR	F	Bureaucrat	
43	AR	F	Bureaucrat	
44	AR	F	Bureaucrat	
45	TFA	M	TFA Admin	
46	TFA	F	TFA Admin	
47	TFA	F	TFA Admin	
48	MS	M	Other	
49	MS	M	Other	
50	AR	M	Other	Teacher
51	AR	F	Other	
52	AR	M	Other	
53	AR	M	Other	
54	AR	M	Other	

^a 'Affiliation' corresponds with the state for which the interviewee is employed: 'MS' for Mississippi, 'AR' for Arkansas, and 'TFA' for Teach for America employees.

^b Five classifications are used to categorise interviewee's professional position: 'appointed' for appointed state-level education policy makers, 'elected' for elected state-level education policy makers, 'bureaucrat' for non-partisan individuals hired by the state to coordinate some facet of state-level education policy, 'TFA Admin' for administrators of the TFA-Delta branch, and 'Other' for any interviewee not falling into one of the previous categories (such as aides to policy makers, local union officials, Delta-specific education non-profit leaders, etc).

^c This column identifies other individual markers that might be relevant to an interviewee's perceptions of education in the predominantly African American Delta region. Namely, interviewees are labelled in 'Other markers' if they had served as a full-time teacher at some point ('Teacher') or if they self-identify as African American ('Black').

4F. Questionnaire messages and surveys

Pre-Notice Letter

Dear <Superintendent>,

A 2009 Rhodes Scholar is working with the Mississippi (Arkansas) Department of Education to research the role of Teach For America in supplying teachers to the Delta schools. She will be collaborating with our office as well as specialists from the University of Oxford to analyze survey information from you and other district Superintendents, as well as from the principals of schools within these districts. The results from this survey will be essential to her research as a doctoral candidate at the University of Oxford; they will also help us to determine whether Teach For America and other state and national resources have provided sufficient amounts of teachers to your community.

In about a week, you will receive an email containing a link to a brief electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire should take no longer than a half hour to complete and will contain important questions regarding the role of Teach For America in teacher recruitment and retention in your district. The questionnaire also will be e-mailed to you as a word attachment so that you can review the type of questions and length of the survey before completing it online.

We sincerely hope you will take a few moments to complete this questionnaire, as your insights will contribute to our understanding of your schools' needs.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you do not receive a questionnaire within one week, please contact Mallory via e-mail (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 07531 391 219; she will be happy to respond to any queries you may have.

Thank you for your time and support.

Best wishes,

[Aide to the State Superintendent/Commissioner signature]
Mallory Dwinal
2009 Rhodes Scholar
DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford

1st Mailing letter (including PDF version of questionnaire and link to online questionnaire)

Dear <Superintendent>,

About a week ago, I informed you that a doctoral candidate from the University of Oxford would be researching the role of Teach For America in supplying teachers to your district and others in the Delta region. Information collected for this research will be used to better determine if your community is receiving sufficient amounts of qualified teachers; findings will be shared with local as well as national education policy analysts.

To access the online questionnaire please click on the following link: <insert link here>. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to answer. Attached to this mailing you also will find a PDF copy of the same survey. **The attached copy is for your reference only; you do not have to answer the questions on the PDF,** as it is the same questionnaire accessed through the online link.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and any information you do choose to provide will be used only at an aggregate level to ensure confidentiality. Until all of the questionnaire responses can be aggregated, they will be stored in a secure and confidential database. Once all data has been aggregated, the database will be destroyed. Neither you nor your district will be identified at any point in this research.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Mallory Dwinal via email (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 7531 391 219.

Thank you for your time and commitment to serving your community!

Best wishes,

[Aide to the State Superintendent/Commissioner signature]

Mallory Dwinal

2009 Rhodes Scholar

DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford

1st reminder email (containing link to online questionnaire)

Dear <Superintendent>,

A couple of weeks ago, you should have received a link to an online questionnaire regarding the role of Teach For America in your district's teacher recruitment and retention processes. If you have already completed the questionnaire, please accept our thanks! The responses you provide will be essential in determining whether your community has received sufficient amounts of qualified teachers.

If you have not yet had an opportunity to complete the online questionnaire, please take a few moments to do so. It can be accessed at <insert link here>. Your insights are important in documenting the successes and needs of educators in the Mississippi Delta.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you are having trouble accessing the survey link, please contact Mallory Dwinal via e-mail (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 7531 391 219.

Thank you very much for your continued support!

Best wishes,

[Aide to the State Superintendent/Commissioner signature]

Mallory Dwinal

2009 Rhodes Scholar

DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford

2nd Survey Mailing (containing PDF copy of questionnaire and link to online questionnaire)

Dear <Superintendent>,

Near the beginning of this month, I sent you a link to a brief questionnaire regarding the role of Teach For America in providing teachers to your district. If you have already completed this online survey, please accept my deep thanks. Your responses will provide valuable insight in evaluating whether your community has received the necessary level of qualified teachers to ensure academic success. You may disregard this email.

If you have not yet completed the online survey, please take a few moments to do so. To access the online questionnaire please click on the following link: <insert link here>. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to answer. Attached to this mailing you also will find a PDF copy of the same survey. **The attached copy is for your reference only; you do not have to answer the questions on the PDF,** as it is the same questionnaire accessed through the online link.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and any information you do choose to provide will be used only at an aggregate level to ensure confidentiality. Until all of the questionnaire responses can be aggregated, they will be stored in a secure and confidential database. Once all data has been aggregated, the database will be destroyed. Neither you nor your district will be identified at any point in this research.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Mallory Dwinal via email (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 7531 391 219.

Thank you for your time and commitment to serving your community!

Best wishes,

[Aide to the State Superintendent/Commissioner signature]

Mallory Dwinal

2009 Rhodes Scholar

DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford

Final reminder and thank you (containing link to questionnaire)

Dear <Superintendent>.

I would like to wish you the best of luck in planning for the year to come!

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research on the role of Teach For America in school districts throughout the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. If you have not yet completed the online questionnaire, please take a few moments to do so at <insert link here>.

Again, thank you for your time and invaluable insight into the successes and needs of schools within your district. If I can ever be of assistance in the future, please feel free to contact me via e-mail or at +44 7531 391 219.

Best of luck with the new school year,

Mallory Dwinal

**Mississippi-Arkansas Delta School Districts:
Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and the Role of Teach For America**

This questionnaire aims to better understand the role of Teach For America in the teacher supply available to your school district and others in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Your response will provide valuable information on the degree to which more or less teachers are needed in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta.

Please answer the following questions carefully. If a question asks that you give a rating, please circle the number that most closely corresponds to the situation in your district.

***1. Which state is your district in?**

Mississippi

Arkansas

2. How many Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers were employed in your district for the following school years:

2007-2008 school year:

2008-2009 school year:

2009-2010 school year:

3. How many Teach for America teachers were employed in your district for the following school years:

2007-2008 school year:

2008-2009 school year:

2009-2010 school year:

4. What percentage (%) of your students were non-white for the following school years:

Percent (%) in 2007-2008:

Percent (%) in 2008-2009:

Percent (%) in 2009-2010:

5. What percentage (%) of your students received free or reduced-price lunches for the following school years:

Percent (%) in 2007-2008:

Percent (%) in 2008-2009:

Percent (%) in 2009-2010:

6. Approximately what percentage (%) of parents (with children enrolled in your schools) had at least a high school diploma or equivalent for the following school years:

Percent (%) of parents in 2007-2008:

Percent (%) of parents in 2008-2009:

Percent (%) of parents in 2009-2010:

7. What was the average salary in dollars (\$) for full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in your district for each of the following years:

Average salary in dollars (\$) 2007-2008:

Average salary in dollars (\$) 2008-2009:

Average salary in dollars (\$) 2009-2010:

8. How many full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching vacancies went unfilled in each of the following school years:

2007-2008 school year:

2008-2009 school year:

2009-2010 school year:

9. Your gender (gender of the District Superintendent):

Male

Female

10. Your age (age of the District Superintendent) and time spent as District Superintendent in years:

Years of age:

Years as District Superintendent:

Thank you for your time and insights!

Please save your completed form to your computer and then email an electronic copy to:

mallorydwinal@gmail.com

All information and data gathered in this survey will be analyzed and reported at the aggregate level. I will not associate your responses with you or your district. Neither you nor your district will be identified by name in any reports resulting from this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, please call Mallory Dwinal at the University of Oxford Department of Education: +44 7531 391 219

Pre-Notice Letter

Dear <Principal>,

A 2009 Rhodes Scholar is working with the Mississippi (Arkansas) Department of Education to conduct research the role of Teach For America in supplying teachers to the Delta schools. She will be collaborating with our office as well as specialists from the University of Oxford to analyze survey information from you and other principals working with Teach For America Teachers throughout the Mississippi Delta. The results from this survey will be essential in determining whether Teach For America and other state and national resources have provided sufficient amounts of teachers to your community.

In about a week, you will receive an email containing a link to a brief electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire should take no longer than a half hour to complete and will contain important questions regarding the role of Teach For America in teacher recruitment and retention in your school. The questionnaire also will be e-mailed to you as a word attachment so that you can review the type of questions and length of the survey before completing it online.

We sincerely hope you will take a few moments to complete this questionnaire, as your insights will contribute to our understanding of your school's needs.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you do not receive a questionnaire within one week, please contact Mallory via e-mail (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 07531 391 219; she will be happy to respond to any queries you may have.

Thank you for your time and support.

Best wishes,

[Aide to the State Superintendent/Commissioner signature]
Mallory Dwinal
2009 Rhodes Scholar
DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford

1st Mailing letter (including PDF version of questionnaire and link to online questionnaire)

Dear <Principal>,

About a week ago, I informed you that a doctoral candidate from the University of Oxford would be researching the role of Teach For America in supplying teachers to your school and others in the Delta region. Information collected for this research will be used to better determine if your community is receiving sufficient amounts of qualified teachers; findings will be shared with local as well as national education policy analysts.

To access the online questionnaire please click on the following link: <insert link here>. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to answer. Attached to this mailing you also will find a PDF copy of the same survey. **The attached copy is for your reference only; you do not have to answer the questions on the PDF,** as it is the same questionnaire accessed through the online link.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and any information you do choose to provide will be used only at an aggregate level to ensure confidentiality. Until all of the questionnaire responses can be aggregated, they will be stored in a secure and confidential database. Once all data has been aggregated, the database will be destroyed. Neither you nor your school will be identified at any point in this research.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Mallory Dwinal via email (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 7531 391 219.

Thank you for your time and commitment to serving your community!

Best wishes,

Aide to the State Superintendent/Commissioner signature]
Mallory Dwinal
2009 Rhodes Scholar
DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford

1st reminder email (containing link to questionnaire)

Dear <Principal>,

A couple of weeks ago, you should have received a link to an online questionnaire regarding the role of Teach For America in your school's teacher recruitment and retention processes. If you have already completed the questionnaire, please accept my thanks! The responses you provide will be essential in determining whether your community has received sufficient amounts of qualified teachers.

If you have not yet had an opportunity to complete the online questionnaire, please take a few moments to do so. It can be accessed at <insert link here>. Your insights are important in documenting the successes and needs of educators in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you are having trouble accessing the survey link, please contact Mallory Dwinal via e-mail (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 7531 391 219.

Thank you very much for your continued support!

Best wishes,

Mallory Dwinal

2nd Survey Mailing (containing PDF copy of questionnaire and link to online questionnaire)

Dear <Principal>,

Near the beginning of this month, I sent you a link to a brief questionnaire regarding the role of Teach For America in providing teachers to your school. If you have already completed this online survey, please accept my deep thanks. Your responses will provide valuable insight in evaluating whether your community has received the necessary level of qualified teachers to ensure academic success. You may disregard this email.

If you have not yet completed the online survey, please take a few moments to do so. To access the online questionnaire please click on the following link: <insert link here>. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to answer. Attached to this mailing you also will find a PDF copy of the same survey. **The attached copy is for your reference only; you do not have to answer the questions on the PDF,** as it is the same questionnaire accessed through the online link.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and any information you do choose to provide will be used only at an aggregate level to ensure confidentiality. Until all of the questionnaire responses can be aggregated, they will be stored in a secure and confidential database. Once all data has been aggregated, the database will be destroyed. Neither you nor your school will be identified at any point in this research.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact Mallory Dwinal via email (mallorydwinal@gmail.com) or at +(44) 7531 391 219.

Thank you for your time and commitment to serving your community!

Best wishes,

Aide to the State Superintendent/Commissioner signature]
Mallory Dwinal
2009 Rhodes Scholar
DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford

Final reminder (containing link to questionnaire)

Dear <Principal>.

I would like to wish you the best of luck in planning for the year to come!

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research on the Role of Teach For America in schools throughout the Mississippi Delta. If you have not yet completed the online questionnaire, please take a few moments to do so at <insert link here>.

Again, thank you for your time and invaluable insight into the successes and needs of your school. If I can ever be of assistance in the future, please feel free to contact me via e-mail or at +(44) 7531 391 219.

Best of luck with the new school year,

Mallory Dwinal

Mississippi-Arkansas Delta Schools: Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and the Role of Teach For America

This questionnaire aims to better understand the role of Teach For America in the teacher supply available to your school and others in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Your response will provide valuable information on the degree to which more or less teachers are needed in the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta.

Please answer the following questions carefully. If a question asks that you give a rating, please circle the number that most closely corresponds to the situation in your school.

***1. In which state is your school located?**

Mississippi

Arkansas

***2. How many full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching positions are there currently in your school?**

Number of FTE teaching positions:

***3. How many of those full-time equivalent (FTE) positions are currently filled by Teach for America (TFA) teachers?**

Number of TFA teachers holding FTE positions:

4. How many full-time equivalent (FTE) job vacancies are there currently in your school's teaching force?

Number of currently unfilled FTE teacher vacancies:

5. What percentage of your school's total professional staff currently meets the 'highly qualified' requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act? Please give your best estimate of the approximate percentage (%) for each:

Percentage of teachers holding 'Highly Qualified' Certification?

Percentage of teachers holding a Bachelor's degree or higher?

Percentage of teachers with proficiency in subject area(s) taught?

6. What percentage of your school's Teach for America staff currently meets the 'highly qualified' requirements of the NCLB Act? Please give your best estimate of the approximate percentage (%) for each:

Percentage of TFA teachers holding 'Highly Qualified' Certification?

Percentage of TFA teachers holding a Bachelor's degree or higher?

Percentage of TFA teachers with proficiency in subject area(s) taught?

7. Which three (3) subject areas or specializations represent the biggest challenges for your school when it comes to hiring highly qualified teachers? (Please list up to three.)

Subject area 1:

Subject area 2:

Subject area 3:

8. In which three (3) subject areas or specializations are most of your Teach for America teachers hired? (Please list the subject/specialization and then the approximate number of Teach for America teachers in that subject area.)

Subject area 1:

Subject area 2:

Subject area 3:

9. How would you rank your Teach for America teachers' effectiveness (in instructing students) compared to other teachers in your school?

- Substantially less effective
- Less effective
- Equally effective
- More effective
- Substantially more effective

10. How involved in your school were Teach for America teachers (managing after school programs, attending school staff meetings, etc.) compared to other teachers in your school?

- Significantly more involved
- More involved
- Equally involved
- Less involved
- Significantly less involved

Thank you for your time and insights!

Please save your completed form to your computer and then email an electronic copy to:

mallory.dwinal@education.ox.ac.uk

or

mallorydwinal@gmail.com

All information and data gathered in this survey will be analyzed and reported at the aggregate level. I will not associate your responses with you or your school. Neither you nor your school will be identified by name in any reports resulting from this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, please call Mallory Dwinal at the University of Oxford Department of Education: +(44) 7531 391 219

6A. A brief history of racially motivated socio-economic inequities in Mississippi and Arkansas, 1865-1964

After the US government officially abolished slavery in 1865, leaders in most Southern states channelled their on-going racial bigotry into less overt forms of discrimination. Officials in Mississippi and Arkansas were no exception, passing legislation that systematically oppressed African Americans' social, political, and educational opportunities. The purpose of this appendix is to highlight the laws and institutions that most seriously restricted black education in Mississippi and Arkansas after the abolition of slavery; it is my hope that in achieving this end, I may provide a foundation for understanding the systematic under-education of African Americans in the modern Delta region.

In the case of Mississippi, Chapter Five notes that the Equalizing Fund served as the state's education funding formula throughout all of the Civil War Reconstruction Era. This fund never reached its full size, and the gaps in funding had to be covered through local property taxes of each school district. According to White (2008), this gap ensured that education inequities persisted between wealthy and poor districts well into the twentieth century. As the divide between wealthy and poor was almost synonymous with the divide between white and black, such a gap tacitly oppressed black education efforts. This disparity would not be undone for more than sixty years—until the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) finally replaced the Equalizing Fund in 1954—thus allowing disparities in black and white schooling to gain momentum throughout the entire first half of the 1900s.

Interestingly, Arkansas's black schools initially proved more resilient to the governmental measures that caused their Mississippi counterparts to flounder. In the years following reconstruction, Arkansas's black schools prospered; indeed, the amount of funds for these schools actually outpaced their white counterparts at the onset of the Reconstruction Era. However, as a result of the same socio-economic—and thus racial—retrenchment that occurred in Mississippi in 1890, black schools in Arkansas soon faced the same barriers as those plaguing black schools on the other side of the Mississippi River.

Unlike Mississippi legislators, racist Arkansas officials did not pass a central law to discriminate against African Americans, instead employing a more diffuse, district-level approach. State funds became more and more concentrated in all-white school districts during the 1890s; compounding these state-level disparities, many mixed-race school districts failed to properly appropriate what funds they did receive to their black schools. For example, for the 1927-8 school year, Chicot County received \$28,382.88 in state monies for its black schools but spent only \$23,054 on black students; the rest was illegally diverted to white schools. In this way, the disproportionate burden placed on black Arkansans to fund their education paralleled the experiences of Mississippi's black population.

During this time, black schools in Mississippi and Arkansas alike came to subsist largely on philanthropic Northern funding, but their available resources still fell far behind those in white schools. As White (2008) argued, throughout the retrenchment of the late 1800s and early 1900s, 'structural means to educate the black population ... [of the South] were conspicuously absent', and nearly a century would pass before

racial inequity would be treated as a serious flaw within the education systems of Mississippi or Arkansas (p. 13).

Indeed, racism remained a powerful, if not defining, facet of this region's education system up through the 1950s. As discussed earlier in the chapter, overt social and economic injustice directed at black schools typified the first forty years of the twentieth century in Mississippi and Arkansas. As a result of the economic burdens placed upon black schools, the poor communities surrounding them struggled to maintain these schools or to offer their teachers a decent wage, leading to the suppression of educational opportunities in historically black regions. As White (2008) furthered, 'Little change would occur [for racial equity] until the 1950s brought increased prosperity, the threat of federally enforced integration, and eventually the Civil Rights Movement, forcing a re-examination of political and social attitudes' (p. 23).

7A. Federal, state, and local revenue sources for elementary and secondary education

Schools receive governmental financing through three separate sources—federal aid, state aid, and local funding. The types of services provided through each of these separate streams are outlined in Figure 6A.1. The US Congress appropriates federal money for schools, collected through federal taxes, to the US Department of Education. In turn, this Department administers funding to school districts through two separate channels: it either deposits funding directly into the district’s financial holdings, or it delivers such funding to the relevant state’s department of education, which then passes the money along to the district in question.

State aid, generated and appropriated in much the same way as federal aid, is collected through state taxes and then appropriated by the state congress to the state-level department of education (or equivalent government organisation). That department then distributes the money to each school district accordingly. Providing the final major revenue source, the local city authority directly distributes local funding—generated almost entirely from local property taxes—to the school districts under their jurisdiction. Once a school district receives funds from one or more revenue streams, its administrative office is then responsible for distributing that funding to each of the affected schools.

Table 7A.1 Sources of school district revenue

Federal aid
<i>Direct payment to school district</i>
Head Start programme
Gifted and Talented programme
Magnet Schools
Dropout Demonstration Assistance programme
<i>Distributed by state's Department of Education</i>
Children nutrition programmes
Compensatory (Title I) funding
Special Education programmes
Vocational training
Unspecified federal aid
State aid
Capital outlays/debt service
Compensatory (at-risk) programmes
General school funding formula
Teacher benefit and retirement schemes
Special Education programmes
Professional Development programmes
Transportation services
Vocational training
Local funding
General funding: Property taxes
Charges (school lunch fees, tuition and transport fees, other)

Public schools receive funding through three different sources: federal aid, state aid, and local funding. The types of programmes and services generally covered by each of these three sources is outlined in the table above. Information provided by US Census Bureau (2010).

This description provides a rough estimate as to the revenue sources available to each public school district in the United States. That said, it is difficult to break down the exact types of funding provided by state and local bodies due to irregularities in accounting practices. As the US Census Bureau explained in a 2010 report, ‘The exact amounts derived from [local] taxes or other revenue sources available to parent [i.e. state] governments for their school systems frequently cannot be determined from state education agency accounting records’ (p. vi). Thus, while it is possible to provide general statistics on the share of total educational revenue stemming from federal, state, and local sources, it is very difficult—if not impossible—to discern the exact types of programmes funded (let alone to what degree) by state and local

7B. Breakdown of spending within public school districts

Table 7B.1 Distribution of total school expenditures, by percentage, 2007-8

	Current spending	Capital outlays	Other
National average	85.4	11.6	3.0
Mississippi	89.7	8.7	1.6
Arkansas	87.4	10.0	2.6

Table 7B.1 shows the breakdown of the average school district budget nationally, as well as amongst those school districts in Mississippi and Arkansas. ‘Current spending’ consists of those items listed in Table 2B.2, while ‘capital outlays’ includes debt servicing and facilities costs. ‘Other’ accounts for all additional miscellanies, which vary by district needs, services, facilities, compensation schemes, etc.

revenue streams in each school district. As becomes apparent in Table 7B.1, public school districts appropriate the overwhelming share of their total budget to current spending, a category which includes personnel wages and benefits as well as supporting materials and services to benefit classroom instruction. This current spending accounts for 87 per cent of Arkansas districts’ total budget, and nearly 90 per cent of Mississippi districts’ total budget; most of the remaining resources are allocated to capital outlays—namely, paying down the overhead costs of facilities as well as any additional debt services.

Table 7B.2 Distribution of current spending, by percentage, 2007-8

	Instruction	Support services	Other
National average	60.1	34.7	5.2
Mississippi	58.4	34.8	6.8
Arkansas	58.3	35.7	6.0

Table 7B.2 highlights the breakdown of those items covered in total current spending.

Looking at Table 7B.2, the majority of current spending is invested in teacher instruction costs (including wages, benefits, and professional development) and teacher support services (classroom materials, spending stipends, library resources, etc.).

7C. 'Goodness of fit' outputs for potential iterations of tobit regressions

The following tables are from a STATA .do file built during the preliminary stages of the regression analysis phase. The pseudo R2 scores have been highlighted for each output; ultimately, the regression using 'pctBLACK' and dropping the other three variables ('pctPOV', 'engFAIL', and 'mathFAIL') produced the highest pseudo R2 score; as such, this model was used for the two state-specific regressions run to determine predictors of TFA entry into Delta school districts.

```
. tobit TFAtthatYR EMLicense pctPOPchange pctPOV pctHSdegree popDENSITY dummy2009
> dummy2008, ll(0)

Tobit regression                Number of obs   =       272
                                LR chi2(9)       =       111.62
                                Prob > chi2       =       0.0000
                                Pseudo R2          =       0.2088

Log likelihood = -424.51492

. tobit TFAtthatYR EMLicense pctPOPchange mathFAIL pctHSdegree popDENSITY dummy2009 dummy2008, ll(
> 0)

Tobit regression                Number of obs   =       281
                                LR chi2(7)       =       105.66
                                Prob > chi2       =       0.0000
                                Pseudo R2          =       0.2078

Log likelihood = -437.15775

. tobit TFAtthatYR EMLicense pctPOPchange engFAIL pctHSdegree popDENSITY dummy2009 dummy2008, ll(0
> )

Tobit regression                Number of obs   =       272
                                LR chi2(7)       =       104.72
                                Prob > chi2       =       0.0000
                                Pseudo R2          =       0.2053

Log likelihood = -431.96783

. tobit TFAtthatYR EMLicense pctPOPchange pctBLACK pctHSdegree popDENSITY dummy2009 dummy2008, ll(
> 0)

Tobit regression                Number of obs   =       321
                                LR chi2(7)       =       116.09
                                Prob > chi2       =       0.0000
                                Pseudo R2          =       0.2100

Log likelihood = -454.81384
```

8A. Connections between teacher quality and educational attainment

In the words of Baker and Dickerson (2006), ‘Improving the quality of the teacher workforce is paramount to improving the quality of public schooling’ (p.752).

According to Eide et al. (2004), teacher quality can account for as much as one full year’s growth differences between the lowest and highest quality teachers in a single school, with the lowest quality teachers accounting for only half a year’s growth in one year and the highest quality teachers accounting for one and a half years’ growth in the same year. Building on this finding, Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) find that high-quality teachers can even offset negative effects from students’ familial and socio-economic backgrounds. Similarly, Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) assert that US student performance would make dramatic gains relative to other OECD countries if schools could replace the bottom 6 to 10 per cent of instructors (that is to say, the lowest quality teachers) with an average instructor.

Defining and measuring teacher quality

Despite extensive examinations of ‘teacher quality’, the proper definition and measurement of this term remain highly debated. Many researchers, such as Trimble (2001), assert that teacher quality cannot be measured by simple student achievement tests, as such exams fail to capture immeasurable and/or intangible qualities such as ‘strong work ethic, people and communication skills, and enthusiasm for teaching’ (p.755). Because such factors are hard to measure, Dolton (2006) asserts that these more comprehensive examinations of teacher quality fall victim to the ‘principal-agent’ problem, in which outside observers (i.e. administrators) cannot truly know a teacher’s behaviour in her classroom or school, and thus can never fully capture her aptitude for these intangible skills and abilities.

Further complicating the matter, a single teacher's effectiveness may change based on her teaching environment. As Eppley (2009) points out, high-quality rural teachers are usually those who are familiar with the challenges and resources typical in rural communities and who are capable of gaining certification in multiple subject areas. In all areas—rural or otherwise—student learning has been shown to improve when led by a teacher with the same racial and socio-economic background (Eide et al., 2004; Hanushek et al. 2005, 2006; Sorenson et al., 2005). In this way, the same teacher investing the same time and resources may be more or less effective depending on the type of students she is teaching.

There has been an increase in the total share of non-white students and students in poverty enrolled in US public schools since the 1970s, from 31 per cent non-white in 1970 to 42 per cent in 2003, and from 15 per cent of students living below the poverty line in 1970 to 17 per cent in 2003. According to Murnane and Steele (2007), 'These trends create a demand for teachers who can meet the needs of students who historically have not been well served by America's public schools. ... But the share of [non-white] teachers in the workforce remains low, at 15 percent in 2005' (p.22). So as to address this point, TFA has invested considerable resources in attracting African American and Latino teachers to work in their partnership sites. Indeed, contrary to this aggregate statistic, over 40 per cent of TFA corps members were non-white in the 2001-2 school year (McBride, 2002).

Given these context-specific ambiguities, most of the teacher quality research has continued to measure teacher quality only as it relates to student performance on

standardised tests. Such an approach is admittedly flawed because, in the words of Hanushek (2006), these tests ‘capture just a small portion of the overall variation in teacher effectiveness’ (p.1064). Additionally, the author furthers that the predictive power of such tests also varies by subject and grade level; for example, secondary school mathematics instruction is more predictable than primary school reading (Rothstein, 2010). Despite such limitations, standardised testing remains one of the only existing proxies for measuring the nebulous concept of teacher quality. As such, this section will review the literature that has empirically measured the impact of various teacher characteristics on student test performance, bearing in mind that such examinations may systematically misinterpret the quality of teachers working with certain types of students in certain types of subjects, schools, and/or communities.

According to Greenwald et al. (1996), education researchers conducted more than 400 separate studies of teacher quality by the early 1990s. Though the findings are far from conclusive, this extensive body of research has granted some insight into which teacher characteristics consistently produce higher student performance on standardised tests. First, most evidence suggests that teachers who perform higher on such tests produce students who also perform better (Ehrenberg and Brewer, 1995; Ferguson 1991; Ferguson and Ladd, 1996; Palmaffy, 1999; Parsons, 2003). Strauss and Sawyer (1986) documented one of the most direct relationships between teacher and student performance on standardised tests, finding that a 1 per-cent increase in teacher performance on standardised tests results in a 5 per-cent drop in student failure rates for high school competency exams. Drawing related conclusions, Goldhaber et al. (2010) finds that the selectivity and rigor of a teacher’s

undergraduate institution was positively related with that teacher's performance in the classroom.

Interestingly, much of the same empirical evidence would negate the assumption that teacher certification status and experience also impact student outcomes. In terms of certification and teaching degrees attained, most research suggests that increased teacher education (i.e. having a master's or doctoral degree) has no impact on student performance (Fergusson, 1991, 1996; Hanushek, 2006; Parsons, 2003; Sullivan, 2001), while other studies have found a statistically significant negative correlation between a teacher's degrees attained and student performance (Berger and Toma, 1994). According to a meta-analysis by Greenwald et al. (1996), 15 per cent of empirical studies found a positive correlation between master's degree attainment and student performance, whereas 13 per cent found a negative correlation.

In fact, Brewer (1997) argues that a teacher's university degrees do not matter at all except in the case of maths and science, where a degree in the specific subject (not in education or teaching) is positively related to student performance. Such findings lead to the broader conclusion that subject-specific training should be most heavily emphasised in maths and science—the two fields with the greatest rate of out-of-field teachers. In response to this challenge, TFA heavily recruits college graduates with maths and science degrees: in 2005, one in five TFA teachers held a maths, science, or engineering degree from a four-year institution (Kelly, 2006).

Similar to degree attainment, teaching experience does not appear to be a powerful predictor of student performance. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of research

concludes that teacher experience only improves student performance in the first two or three years of a teacher's career (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Hanushek, 2006; Murnane, 1975; Sullivan, 2001). After these first few years of teaching, the marginal returns to additional experience are minimal and sometimes have even had a negative impact on student performance. In the words of Parsons (2003), 'Traditional [teacher] hiring criteria—number of degrees, certification status, and years of experience—appear to have little bearing on effectiveness in the classroom' (p.3). Despite these findings, a teacher's degree attainment and years of experience—not his or her academic ability or institutional selectivity—remain the main criteria used in setting pay scales for America's public educators. This disconnect between research and education policy may adversely affect teacher supply outcomes, as it fails to reward teachers exhibiting the greatest predictors of teacher quality.

Distributing high-quality teachers

While there may be some dispute as to how we should define and measure a high-quality teacher, there is significant evidence that the current distribution of quality teachers is highly inequitable, with understaffed schools hiring a disproportionate share of the nation's least qualified teachers. These outcomes create serious concerns for our research on teacher labour reform, as teacher quality is considered one of the best predictors of student achievement (Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 2003; Goldhaber and Brewer, 1996; Hanushek, 1986, 1997, 2010; Hanushek et al., 2005; Hedges et al., 1994; Goldhaber, 2002b; Lankford, Wyckoff, and Papa, 2000; Podgursky, Monroe, and Watson, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain, 2005; Rowan, Correnti, and Miller, 2002).

Researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2000a) argue that quality teachers are one of the single most inequitably distributed educational goods; Murnane and Steele (2007) further this point, observing that:

Poor children and children of [colour] are disproportionately assigned to teachers with the least preparation and the weakest academic backgrounds. Teacher turnover is high in schools that serve large shares of poor or non-white students because the work is difficult and the teachers who undertake it are often the least equipped to succeed. (p.15)

The authors substantiate this assertion by noting that amongst schools where greater than 20 per cent of enrolled students scored at or below the lowest proficiency level in fourth grade English in 2000, 35 per cent of teachers had required multiple attempts to pass teacher qualification tests, compared to only 9 per cent in high-scoring schools; and 26 per cent of teachers came from non-competitive and non-rigorous colleges, compared to only 10 per cent in high-scoring schools (Murnane and Steele, 2007). Related to these assertions, Loeb and Reininger (2004) conclude that schools with predominantly white students face lower teacher turnover rates than do schools with higher rates of African American and Hispanic students.